

THE ROLE OF THE AFRICAN UNIVERSITY IN THE CONTINENT'S DEVELOPMENT

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<https://doi.org/10.37602/IJREHC.2025.6204>

ABSTRACT

This article deals with the role of African universities and higher education institutions in the development of the continent. Knowledge production is the responsibility of higher education institutions. Knowledge can only be useful if it can be used for the wellbeing of humanity. African governments therefore, believe that investing in higher education and producing many university graduates is a gateway to their development. In most cases, these governments forget about the need to churn out the personnel that is crucial for their development and produce them just for the sake of it. The notion of having many university graduates as a means to achieve the country's development is therefore in balance since the universities produce graduates of all cadre. Some of these may be unemployable and may not meet the current needs of the society. Most of the businesses, government parastatals, educational institutions, and ministries heavily rely on manpower that is a product of a university or a higher institution of learning. Without knowledge production, it is impossible to talk about the achievement of the Millenium Development Goals which many countries are hoping for by the year 2025. In these goals, the emphasis is put on poverty eradication, education for all, health for all, food security for all among others. The important question therefore that this paper attempts to answer is as to whether African universities actually play an important role in providing the required knowledge that Africa and the world badly require for development. The paper will scan through the continent's major universities and attempt to make an assessment of the impact in terms of knowledge and contributions that these universities are making to Africa's development. Governments in Africa need to look at their needs in terms of the priorities to bolster their development and gear their curricular towards meeting those priorities.

Keywords: Africa, universities, higher education, development, knowledge production

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The research paper examines the role of African universities and higher education institutions in the development of the continent. Education, according to the Cambridge Conference on African Education (1952) is the united concern of a people for the right upbringing of its children and improvement of its national life. Cohn (1978) as cited in Owolabi (1987) and in Addo (2010), also defines education as the deliberate systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke or acquire knowledge, attitudes and values, skills and sensibilities and any

learning that results from the effort, direct or indirect, intended and unintended. Higher education, according to UNESCO Conference on the development of higher education in Africa held in 1962 at Tannarive is all types of education of an institutional nature (academic, professional, technological, teacher education) such as universities, university colleges, liberal arts colleges, technological institutes and teacher training colleges, for which the basic entrance age requirement is completion of a full secondary education, of which the usual entrance age is about 18 years and in which the programme leads to the giving of a named award (degree, diploma or certificate) of higher studies. The world over, universities are expected to keep changing to keep in tandem with changes in their host environment. According to the UNESCO (1991), the content of higher education should focus on the following three areas:

- 1) Supporting teaching and training designed specifically to reply directly to the identified needs of specific contexts including basic education which was the emphasis of the Jomtien 1990 Conference on Education for All.
- 2) Promoting innovation in content and methods which can assure enhanced access to higher education while still preserving the quality of education and its relevance to social requirements.
- 3) Continuing to encourage research in higher education as a means of strengthening the social function of this domain.

In most of Europe and United States, the value of higher education is often questioned for resources spent, while in developing countries education institutions are particularly valued for the contribution they can make towards national development (Aligaweesa, 1987). In Africa, the contemporary view is that, to fulfill their role, higher education institutions have to move away from the traditional Ivory Tower stance and operate in the context of their host societies(*ibid*). However, the developing countries are still investing in higher education and producing many university graduates with the hope that it is the gateway to their development.(Gardner,2003),points out in his study that adoption of productivity enhancing technology is one the factors that causes rural development. This technology is as a result of research conducted at university. According to Salazar-Xirinachs; Nubler and Kozul-Wright (2014), no country has made the arduous journey from widespread rural poverty to post-industrial wealth without employing targeted and selective government policies to modify its economic structure and boost its economic dynamism. It goes without saying that this government policies are the work of universities or at least higher education institutions of these countries.

In the study of Grunfeld (2011), Information and Communication Technology; an aspect of modern higher education has caused immense development in Cambodia in areas such as health, education and farming. The role of ICT in development is emphasized when reference was made to it in connection with the World Summit on the Information Society(W SIS) in 2003.Again at the second phase of the summit in 2005 known as the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, the role of ICT was emphasized as an enabler of development linking it to the Millennium Development Goals(*ibid*).In these goals, the emphasis is put on poverty eradication, education for all, health for all, food security for all among others. Another argument raised by Mourad (2013), is that Higher Education plays a critical role in the modernization of societies and the enhancement of its economic development. He goes further to state that due to new globalization trends, the Higher Education Institutions(HEI's)

contribute to the development of sustainable solutions by producing research innovations for sustainable development, educating responsible future decision makers and by being a role model for sustainable management.

Adedeji and Bamidele (2003) listed three unique features of education, which could translate to economic growth; these are content of education, access education and openness of education to labour market demand.

i. Content of education: that the need of the society, in most cases, must determine the contents of educational curriculum, which are transferred into individual participant of educational opportunities. Education exposes human capital to various ideas, knowledge, skills and attitudes that cut across all spheres of life through training and schooling.

ii. Access to education by many people: that education enhances human capital development by providing access to a large number of the society, which in turn leads to the production of large number of human capital resources needed for the creation of accelerated economic growth.

iii. The openness of education to labour market demand. That education creates a “push and pull” scenario between skill acquisition and demand in the labour market. This suggests the need for adaptive university responses vis -a -vis the labor market for public and private employment. However, Saint et al, (2003) citing from the work of Boateng (2002) opined that “the supply of education services is market blind. Admission policies of higher education institutions are not related to labour market requirements, nor to individual student interests but mainly to secondary school grades. Elsewhere in the world, emerging institutional adaptations to the demand of labour market mismatch include the formation of “knowledge coalitions” with other knowledge producing centers in society (Clark 2001) the establishment of more effective labour market information systems linked to career counselling in universities, and greater private sector involvement in curriculum consultations, faculty attachments, student placements, and research funding (Boateng, 2002).

In a document prepared for UNESCO in 1990, it was stated that analyses of the African situation agreed that the economic situation had had devastating effects on universities which have suffered a process of constant deterioration. Their facilities, the quality of their services and in particular, the quality of instruction had been seriously affected. Research capabilities are said to have declined and their services for development are seriously threatened and the consequences of these processes are dramatic (UNESCO, 1991). According to Singh and Manuh (2009), most education and policy frameworks in developed and developing countries acknowledge that basic education is a right and that it plays a crucial role in promoting social and economic development, especially in relation to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals(MDGs) and Education for All (EFA) targets. Education agenda contains 17 goals including a new global education goal (SDG 4). SDG 4 is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' and has seven targets and three means of implementation. In so called poor countries specifically, governments and donor commitments to and investments in basic education are premised on huge expectations about its role and the development, formulation and implementation. The researcher argue that to date almost three decades later, this scenario is not any far different from the one just described if not even worse than it. Following this submission therefore, it is

extremely difficult for African universities to produce graduates that can cause development in their countries when they suffer these deficiencies.

To add on to the argument above, the World Bank cites four inter-related weaknesses which threaten to a very big extent the contribution of higher Education to Africa's development and they include:

- i. Production of many graduates of academic programmes of dubious quality and relevance and generating too little new knowledge and direct development support
- ii. The quality of outputs shows in many unmistakable signs in many countries of having deteriorated so much that the fundamental effectiveness of those institutions are also in doubt.
- iii. The costs of higher education are needlessly high
- iv. The pattern of financing higher education is socially inequitable and economically inefficient (World Bank, 1988).

From the above definitions of education and higher education that education is a process which intentionally transmits what is considered by society to be valuable, in an intelligent and voluntary manner. Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995) defines development as a recent, important event which is the latest in a series of related events. National development can be defined as a series of national important events which are needed by the citizenry for improvement of their lives. To assess the needed impart from education and higher education for that matter, it is important to examine carefully the contribution of higher education to national development, in other to assist policymakers and donor funders to appreciate its role in national development. This would assist in developing new approaches in tackling the growth and development in Africa.

2.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Knowledge production and dissemination is the responsibility of higher education institutions. Knowledge can only be useful when it can be used for the wellbeing of humanity. African governments still have the notion of not having many universities in their purview because of their political will that are not tailored toward human development, rather self-serving in aims. Therefore, they believe that investing in higher education and producing many university graduates is a gateway to their development. In most cases, these governments forget about the need to churn out the personnel that is crucial for their development and produce them just for the sake of it. The notion of having many university graduates as a means to achieve the country's development is therefore in balance since the universities produce graduates of all cadre. Some of these may be unemployable and may not meet the current needs of the society. Most of the businesses, government parastatals, educational institutions, and ministries heavily rely on manpower that is a product of a university or a higher institution of learning. Without knowledge production, it is impossible to talk about the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals which many countries are hoping to accomplish by the year 2025. In these goals, the emphasis is put on poverty eradication, education for all, health for all, food security for all among others. The important question therefore that this paper attempts to answer is as to whether African universities actually play an important role in providing the required knowledge that Africa and the world badly require for development.

2.1 Objectives of the paper

- i. To analyze and establish the contribution of African Universities to its national development.
- ii. To identify and documents the areas of contribution of African Universities in its national development.
- iii. To suggest ways in which the African universities can improve on their role of contributing to their countries development

2.2 Theoretical Underpinnings of Human Capital Theory

This theory attempts to answer the question on “Why the decision to invest in education?” The theory is therefore relevant at decision making stages. The proponents of this theory (Schultz, 1988; Becker, 1967,) see human capital as how education increases the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of their cognitive skills. In other words, they see human as the stock of economically productive human capabilities, which can be formed by combining innate abilities with investments in human beings. Examples of such investments include expenditure on education, on the-job training, health and nutrition. Such expenditures increase future productive capacity at the expense of current consumption. The provision of education is seen as a productive investment in human capital, an investment which the proponents of the human capital theory consider to be equally worthwhile than that in physical capital. The notion of education as a capital good is rooted in this concept of human capital, which attached a high premium to human skills as a factor of production in the development process. Human skills or productivity has been found by this theory to be just as important an input in the process of development as finance, natural wealth, and physical plant. The proponents of the theory have established that basic literacy enhances the productivity of workers in low skill occupation. In this regard, an instruction that demands logical or analytical reasoning, or provides technical and specialized knowledge, increases the marginal productivity of workers in high- skill or professional position. Thus, educational choices may be assimilated to investment decisions where rational individuals decide on the optimal amount of education they wish to acquire so as to maximize the net return to education. Access to schooling ensures increases in the stock of human capital in the society. This enhances national productivity and economic growth.

Additional schooling however is expected to generate benefits in terms of enhanced future earnings, but also entails costs: direct as well as opportunity cost resulting from delayed entry into the labour market. It is also noteworthy that the human – capital theory contends that education participation / enrolment is an investment decision by which individuals forego time and resources in return from higher wages in future. People invest in education due to consideration they have given to the future earnings streams that will result. From these submissions, it would be possible for individuals or households to build up human capital by investing in education with the expectation of deriving some satisfactory future benefits. Incidentally, such benefits would include increased earnings. Heightened social status, higher economic prestige associated with higher educational qualifications such as a first, second and doctorate degrees. It can be inferred from the foregoing submissions that basic literacy enhances the productivity of workers in low skill occupations. Furthermore, an instruction that

demands logical or analytical reasoning, or provides technical and specialized knowledge, increases the marginal productivity of workers in high- skill or professional positions.

Few studies have investigated the rate of return expectations on educational decisions. In Goux and Maurin (1997) analytical study of France, it was found out that neglecting the income expectations of students will lead to the problem of overestimating the impact of social background on school enrolment. Kodde (1985), integrated future income, foregone earnings, overall unemployment and education – specific employment in a model of demand for education. He tested the model on a sample of Dutch high school graduates, and found that both monetary arguments and employments prospects influence the demand for education. This submission is confirmed by Mingat and Tan (1996), who found that on the basis of aggregate data, college enrolment rates are sensitive to unemployment level and economic conditions in the nation in question. Related studies were also carried out by Wilson (2000), who focused on the extent to which American youth's high school graduates decision on enrolment respond to economic incentives, in particular, expected income return. The result however suggests that youths appear to be likely to opt for graduating from high school when expected returns from additional schooling increase.

3.0 CONTRIBUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Economic Contribution and Financial Satisfaction

People all over the world are looking for survival in terms of livelihood. Acquiring the educational degree for some people is regarded as meal tickets. Simultaneously, every individual who pursues higher education does so with a certain aim in mind. Some are for promotion in future, to get pay rise, for political reason and achieve status in the society. Higher Education also gives knowledge to people to create economic benefits for the nations. As we are all aware, the new knowledge and skills acquired by way of education helps with the overall human development of the nation. According to Harbison (1973) cited in Addo (2010) he maintains that human resources not capital, nor material resources, constitute the ultimate basis for the wealth of nations. He stated further that, capital and natural resources are passive factors of production; human beings are active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations and carry forward national development.

3.2 Research, Teaching and Community Services

Awoyemi (2006) cited in Addo (2010), stated that due to cross boundary developments, increased university roles have come to focus on the following: Research and publication; development of critical and independent thinking in the learners, and community service and development. All the advanced countries of the world have achieved their development through these process. In today's information societies, knowledge drives economic growth and development (IIEP, 2007). Higher education (HE) is the main source of knowledge – its production, dissemination and its absorption by any society. Economic growth currently depends on the capacity to produce knowledge based goods.

However, the future of knowledge economy depends more on their capacity to produce knowledge through research and development, rather than on knowledge based goods. Hence,

knowledge economies place greater value and accord higher priority to production and distribution of knowledge. Higher education institutions are a major source for producing the human capital required for knowledge production. It is however noteworthy today, that even if much knowledge is available at very low cost, its accessibility and use depends on human capacity to process and absorb it. If a nation's capacity to produce knowledge is weak, its capacity to access and absorb it determines the pace at which that country develops (IIEP, 2007).

3.4 Enhancing Human Capacity Building

Higher Education therefore, plays a crucial role in enhancing a nation's human capacity to absorb and use knowledge. Then, if knowledge is a source of economic growth, disparities in its distribution become a source of inequalities among nations. Studies have shown that income inequalities are high where enrolments in HE are low. Individual benefits of HE include ensuring better employment, high salaries, and a greater ability to consume and save. HE emerges as an important variable contributing significantly toward improving individual earnings.

Mankiw, Romer and Weil (1992) in their studies have proved that HE has immeasurable impacts on economic growth and development. In the first way, it increases the human capital inherent in the labour force, which increases labour productivity and thus transitional growth towards a higher equilibrium level of output. HE can increase innovative capacity of the economy and the new knowledge on new technologies, products and processes; and consequently promotes growth as presented in theories of endogenous growth (Lucas 1988). Also, HE facilitates the diffusion and transmission of knowledge needed to understand and process new information. It helps to implement successfully new technologies devised by others which again promote economic growth. Proponents of human capital see it as the stock of economically productive human capabilities which can be formed by combining innate abilities with investments in human beings.

3.5 African Universities' Contribution to their Countries' Development

The African Union Commission in its attempt to make sure that the African university plays a role in the technical, social and economic development or indeed makes a contribution to its growth through research has identified five critical areas in five different locations in the continent. This is in the spirit of the Pan African University (PAU) whose major aspiration is to position Higher Education as a driver for social and economic development and attainment of Africa's collective vision (Woods, Chanie, Padayachee, Olson, 2012).

The five areas of emphasis identified are:

- 1) Water and Energy (including Climate Change) based at the University of Algeria in North Africa
- 2) Life and Earth Sciences, University of Ibadan, Nigeria in West Africa
- 3) Space Science for Telecommunication(Southern Africa-Location not yet identified)
- 4) Basic Sciences Technology and Innovation, Jomo Kenyatta University, Juja in Kenya in East Africa

- 5) Governance, Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Yaounde 11, Cameroon in Central Africa

3.6 The Case of East Africa

Literature on how African universities contribute to their countries' development has been published by authors such as Nyangau (2014). He presents the case of Kenya as one African country which still has a long way to go in making sure the country's universities contribute to the economic development there. His argument is that Kenya in 2008 had come up with development strategies much similar to those of the contemporary world tigers such as Brazil, China, Korea, India, Singapore and Taiwan, the country has not been able to attain the same level of economic growth to date. According to him, it is important for a country's higher education system to prepare the human capital which is necessary for the construction of a knowledge economy. Higher education also plays an important catalytic role in the process of social and economic transformation (ibid). This assertion notwithstanding the political, cultural, economic, geographical, historical differences between Kenya and the newly industrialized countries and that these policy differences impact education policy borrowing/transfer in varied ways.

African universities have an uphill task to contribute to their countries' development because the countries are dogged with a myriad of challenges such as: massification, over-crowding, ever-growing demand, declining public funding, curricular that are not responsive to contemporary labour market demands, erosion of the non-university sector due to acquisitions and take-overs by universities, declining quality, lack of basic laboratory supplies and equipment, crumbling infrastructure, poorly equipped laboratories, poor governance and rigid management structures (ibid). In this kind of situation which is experienced in Kenyan universities and most universities in Africa, it is quite unrealistic for the universities to deliver on their role of producing graduates in possession of competences to bring out development of any kind to the concerned countries. Two neighbours in East Africa; Kenya and Uganda have made attempts to focus their emphasis on the teaching of Science and Technology in order to achieve their Visions 2030 and 2040 respectively. Both countries wish to be transformed to middle-income industrializing countries providing high quality life to their citizens by the prescribed times. As to whether this becomes a reality for these two countries is something that one is in real doubt about. The Partnership for Higher Education in Africa (PHEA) has been a contributor to higher education improvement in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Madagascar. The partnership was a response to trends in democratization, public policy reform and the increasing participation of civil society organizations in a growing number of African countries (Lewis, Friedman and Schoneboom, 2010). Without doubt, the African university system is broken and fundamental reforms are needed for the universities to play catalytic roles in transitioning African nations from subsistence nations to knowledge economies (Nyangau, 2014).

3.7 The Case of Central Africa

The Partnership for Higher Education in Africa (PHEA) has played a role in improving higher education in Central Africa. Consideration here is made of four countries in the region looking at the role of the university in their development. The first country that we discuss is Cameroon. The country cuts a figure as one that is bilingual where French and English are spoken as

official languages. Since the 2000s, Cameroon together with sister African countries such as Zambia and Malawi, Ethiopia have made concerted efforts to reduce poverty. Cameroon together with Ethiopia specifically planned increases in their higher education budgets for this cause (Armel and Shizhou, 2022). In Angola, the history of higher education can be divided into three phases namely: Non-existence (until 1962), Final Colonial (until 1975), Civil War (Until 2002) and Post-Peace (since 2002) and Current. The Angolan higher education only saw meaningful recovery after the civil strife in the 2000s when there was growth and expansion of universities. Higher education here is relied on for the badly needed for the training of cadres to reconstruct the country so its growth in quality and quantity and territorial expansion is great value to the Angolan government (Portelinha and Patatas, 2023).

The next country that we turn to in this section is Botswana. The country has a small population compared to other Central African countries but at the same time university access is cutthroat making university education hard to access to the extent that 40% of the applications are turned down at every intake. The government is however turning to technology to offer opportunities to those who may not get admitted to face to face academic programmes (Kuruba, 2010). There is great need for higher education in Botswana that does not yet meet the manpower needs to cause the desired development in the country much as it does far better than many of her Central African counterparts in terms of GDP. However, the study conducted by Charowe (2021) raises controversy against the theory that education enhances economic growth. The study findings reveal to the contrary showing that while higher education enrolment rates in Angola rose during the study period (2019 -2021), the non-mining GDP was declining. It is very evident that from this account that all is not alright in the Central African region as far as the university causing the desired development is concerned.

3.8 The Case of North Africa

In North Africa, Egypt happened to benefit from the (PHEA). In one of its universities; the Assiut University, its Faculty of Law established a training programme to build a human rights culture and promote the concept of voluntary action among its students. Additionally, the University of Cairo established a new professional training programme for Skills Development and a Career Advising Centre (Lewis, Friedman and Schoneboom, 2010). This section also considers the situation of higher education in yet another North African country known as Algeria. The situation obtaining in this country is that it is characterized major policies since independence such as massification which led to favouring quantity other than quality of the graduates to cause the desired country's development. Much as the country has made considerable efforts to cause through extension of the university research network, there is still great need to establish a link between the university and the labour market (Bouchikhi and Zine, 2017). Interestingly, in Tunisia, the present unemployment rates increase with higher levels of education. In other words, the higher the education one receives, the harder it is for them to get job placement. This means that the graduates get constrained in terms of contributing to the Gross Domestic Product and paying taxes accruing from their salaries etc. (Abdessalem, 2010). This means that much as the Tunisian populace has realized growing graduate numbers, their contribution to the country's development has been curtailed to a great extent.

Last but not least in considering the West African states in this regard is Morocco. The country gained her independence in 1956 and realizing that the country could only attain economic and social progress through imparting knowledge and skills on the people. The Moroccan government set herself four objectives in regard to this role and these included the following: the Arabization of the school and administration sectors, the Moroccanisation of the personnel especially in teaching and public administration, the unification of the school systems and the generalization of education to all school children (Meziani, 1999). The Moroccan higher education has grown from one university; Quarawiyine University in Fes, one of the oldest in the world and University of Rabat to now many universities offering diverse academic programmes to the surging population. The programmes include Law, Economics, Sciences, Pharmacy, Medicine, Islamic Studies, Translation, Engineering, Business and Marketing to mention but a few. While Moroccanisation and unification of the school systems have so far been largely satisfied, the Arabization of the school and administration sectors and the generalization of all school going children are yet to be realized. Before this is done, there will be gaps in realizing a fundamental effect of higher education in the country and in the continent at large.

3.9 The Case of Southern Africa

As for Southern Africa, the (PHEA) has played a role in improving higher education and solving national problems in countries such as Mozambique and South Africa. This increased relevance of university research, teaching and learning in the countries. In South Africa in particular, the universities of Pretoria and Western Cape established a Master's degree programme in International Trade and Investment to develop Sub-Saharan Africa's international negotiation capacity. In South Africa also, the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE), the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET), South African Institute for Advancement (Inyathelo) and the Southern Africa Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) were strengthened. These will serve the continent for many years to come with locally based insights and knowledge (Lewis, Friedman and Schoneboom, 2010). Still through the (PHEA), South Africa produced the first generation of certified Black South African Accountants through a new degree programme of the University of Johannesburg (formerly Rand Afrikaans University) and Fort Hare. In Botswana, the Botswana Vision 2016 and the National Development Plan highlighted the role of higher education in the country's transformation into a player in both the globalizing world and the world economy. The plan and the vision projected that the country would in the short run be able to produce appropriate human capital outcomes through its education and training functions and technology through its research and innovation function. This would propel the country's economy into a higher growth path than the one based on primary commodities (Cloete, Bailey, Pillay, Bunting and Maassen, 2011).

3.10 The Case of West Africa

As far as West Africa is concerned, the beneficiaries of the (PHEA) happened to be Nigeria and Ghana. In Nigeria, the University of Ibadan is using distance learning programmes to extend university access to marginalized groups. Having attained independence in 1960, Nigeria has suffered military dictatorship accompanied with civil strife till 1999 when a civilian government assumed control of the country (Brennan; King and Lebeau, 2004). Besides

the University of Ibadan, other sister Nigerian universities have among other roles played that of driving the developmental ideology. The structural adjustment policies negotiated with the international financial institutions in Western world in the 1980s, the social and institutional fabric suffered tremendous effects. This called for the intervention of state and faith founded universities but the society still awaits the results of this intervention. Much as these universities came into place, the need for graduates that cause fundamental socio-economic and political transformation for the benefit of the populace remains a far cry in Nigeria. The Senegalese higher education landscape is far thinner that of Nigeria and had its roots in the French colonization era(*ibid*). In West Africa still, Burkina Faso, is among the other countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya that has adopted laws supporting biotechnology research in her higher education system. Biosciences are included in the four flagship research programmes in the consolidated plan of Action for Africa's Science and Technology adopted by African Ministers of Science and Technology in 2005(Chukwuemeka, 2014). All these attempts by the universities in West Africa to cause the development that this region desires have not yet borne fruit.

3.11 Ways in which African Universities can improve on their Role of Contributing to their Countries' Development

Through an idea of cooperation popularly known as UNITWIN (University Twinning) which is a brain child of UNESCO, the following suggestions are being fronted to assist African universities to improve on their role of contributing to their countries' development:

- i. To give fresh impetus to twinning and other linking arrangements between universities in the developing and industrialized countries.
- ii. To help establish sub-regional, regional and inter-regional cooperation networks of universities and research institutions
- iii. To develop centres for specialized studies and advanced research, by agreement among universities in the developing countries and with international support (Nyangau, 2014).
- iv. To solicit support from organizations such as UNESCO such as books, periodicals and laboratory materials and to develop self-sustainable capabilities in the production of books and teaching and learning materials in the developing countries
- v. To make fuller use of potential offered by inter-university cooperation and to further expand the dimension of university education.
- vi. To bring to the fore-front of public awareness the idea of inter-university partnership and to attract widely based funding.
- vii. To raise the low level of illiteracy (Nyangau, 2014).
- viii. To suggest to their governments ways of raising the percentage to 1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) allocated higher education as recommended by African Union and UNESCO (*ibid*).
- ix. To suggest ways to raise the levels of funding for academic research and development (R&D) (*ibid*). For example, in Kenya, Safaricom; the largest telecommunication company has partnered with the Strathmore University to establish the Safaricom Academy which provides entrepreneurial talent with certified qualifications and experiential training for students(Ozor, Acheampong, Lamptey and Njagi,2016)

- x. To propose ways of curbing brain drain of non-returning students and others leaving their countries of origin (Nyangau, 2014).
- xi. To construct the requisite infrastructure to match expanded enrollment and curricula reforms with a major focus on quality and the changing needs of the modern economy

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The researchers conducted a desk review of documents at both global and country levels. This enabled the researcher to obtain information on the role of higher education and its development in Africa, and is mainly secondary data gathered from books, journal, and reports.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the discussion above, it is quite clear that Africa should take the following path if it has to have its countries benefit from the universities it has established:

- i. To train human resource at a very high level and involve in high level research to assure its sustainable development.
- ii. To undertake urgently and compulsorily in-depth higher education reforms with a clear mind on how the implementation is to be done and what standards to set in doing so.
- iii. To do away with the artificial compartmentalization of various educational levels and disciplines.
- iv. To address the imbalance between the science and humanities disciplines and the orientation of some research disciplines more useful for publication than for solving concrete problems.
- v. To address the issue of irrelevance of training obtained abroad which does not assist in fixing the local realities, African states have still tailored their university education to European traditions.
- vi. To provide foreign exchange required for the purchase of the badly needed journals, laboratory equipment and books.
- vii. To install new equipment in laboratories to match the modern trends in distance and online education.
- viii. To subsidize students pursuing higher education in terms of feeding and accommodation costs.
- ix. To create a conducive environment for a prosperous university and productive sector.
 - x. To strengthen university relevance by aligning their research to national and international challenges which fit developmental policies such as the African Union Science and Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024).
- xi. To strengthen university leadership which makes university-industry partnership a priority.
- xii. To create continuous and sustained investment in research and development.
- xiii. To undertake reforms necessary to enhance relevance of university education to the labour market in Africa.

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