



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst  
German Academic Exchange Service



**HRK** German Rectors' Conference  
The Voice of the Universities

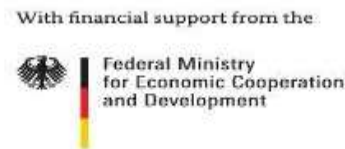
## DIES DIALOGUE EVENT REPORT

### ORGANISING COMMITTEE

<p><b>Prof. Ann Nangulu</b> Principal, Bomet University College</p>  <p><b>Margaret Kirai</b> -Deputy Director, Administration and Finance</p> 	<p><b>Beate Schindler-Kovetz</b> -Head of the Branch Office, Representative of the DAAD in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, South Sudan,</p>  <p><b>Prof. Mike Kuria</b> -Deputy Executive Secretary of the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA)</p> 	<p><b>EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA)</b></p>   <p>With financial support from the <b>Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development</b></p> 
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### ABSTRACT

Coronavirus (COVID-19) global pandemic has exposed, universities and related institutions of higher learning to how prepared or unprepared they are in handling their core mandate, which includes access to quality teaching, training, research, outreach, entrepreneurial skills, innovations, and integrating technology and digital transformations in their operations. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone and all institutions including universities/higher learning on a global scale. The East Africa region has not been spared.



It is against this background that a strategy was proposed to engage East Africa Higher Education Stakeholders to share the experiences, challenges and responses by the regulatory bodies and universities and eventually deliberate on best practices going forward, and also formulate some mitigation measures and plans to ensure readiness for similar pandemic in the future.

**Outcome:** This Dialogue event for East Africa Higher Education Stakeholders provided a platform for dialogue on impact and implication of COVID-19 on quality of training, learning, research, and community service and came up with implementable strategies for the present and future of university/higher education in the East Africa region continued learning training and research during and post-COVID-19 era.

**Target Group:** Representatives for East Africa Commission/Regulatory Bodies; University: Vice Chancellors and Principals, Deputy Vice Chancellors and Deputy Principals in-charge of Academic and Quality Assurance Directors/Coordinators/Officers from East Africa and Representatives for Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA)



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## DAY ONE (6<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021)

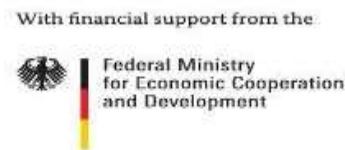
### The Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Global Pandemic on Quality of Training, Learning Research and Community Service in the Universities/Higher Education Institutions in East Africa Community Partner States.



#### 1. FINDINGS, EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNT

- i. It was established during the Dialogue Event that; in the new normal there is a shift from pure face-to-face teaching and most Institutions of Higher Learning are opting to:
  - Blended Learning - a combination of face-to-face and remote engagement.
  - Remote engagement

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- Hybrid (dual) – concurrent face-to-face and remote engagement via Interactive Video for Distance Learning (IVDL) - Type mode of delivery
- ii. It was further established that most Institutions of Higher Learning are moving towards students' day to-day learning experiences as a mode of continuous assessment rather than a series of an end of course tests.
- iii. The pandemic presented an opportunity to rethink and redesign the educational process – including engaging educational stakeholders (students, staff) remotely and facilitating accessibility to quality educational resources remotely.
- iv. Use of existing training platforms developed earlier for regular courses have been accelerated for immediate online/distance training
- v. Investment in new platforms, training the trainers and the students in using virtual tools
- vi. Developing the capabilities of academic staff to modify face-to-face courses for the delivery through distance learning,
- vii. Call Centre /hotline was set up through which support could be given to staff and students
- viii. Enforce institutional attendance policy to virtual classes
- ix. Students' Online registration to each course unit with Active Learning engagement
- x. Minimum login time requirements (establishment of a minimum amount of time that student must be spent logged-in to coursework per day or week and mandating that students complete a series of regularly scheduled tasks on a daily or weekly basis)
- xi. The provision of and access to educational resources to continue with teaching and learning has been a major challenge to Higher Education stakeholders.
- xii. Furthermore the dialogue revealed that;

- Access to online learning resources is expensive (Data)
- There is limited capacity in accessing online resources amongst Faculty and Students.
- There is a challenge of acquisition and access to ICT facilities and equipment– laptops, smartphones to access resources and services
- There is poor internet connectivity in some locations of learners/resource users

xiii. It was established from the dialogue that, Inequality poses challenges of access to educational resources like:

- a. Library resources (both print and electronic) and services,
- b. Teaching and Learning facilities (Laboratories, studios, workshops, etc.)
- c. Human resources (Teaching staff, support staff, mentors, etc.)

xiv. It was also established that in response to the challenges brought by the Pandemic, there has been rapid expansion of:

- Electronic library resources and services
- Virtual labs
- Online interfaces with learners/library users

Therefore need for guidelines for ensuring quality of education in this situation



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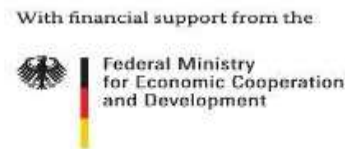
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## 2.0 RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES AND FUTURE PLANS

**The Dialogue established that in response to COVID-19 Pandemic, Institutions of Higher learning have adopted the following strategies and future plans;**

- Mandatory capacity building in digital Skills to both academic staff and Students.
- Mandatory training on how to undertake online learning to new students during Induction week to recognize the requirement of IT skills to all students.
- Continuous development for Staff Capacity in online Teaching, Module/Course Design, Assessments and Collaborations with EdTech tools.
- Continuous Support in Research and Innovations in EdTech to improve Faculty and Students learning experiences remotely.
- Strengthen National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) to mediate between higher education and the market to increase services of connectivity, provision of digital libraries, subsidized or free software, and cloud services.
- Audiovisual contents to be prepared for Lab Practical Sessions.
- Disseminate concepts and practices of Blended mode of Learning.
- Strengthen institutional governance processes for approval of platforms, software and/or tools to support blended learning and align licenses and tools across disciplines where possible.
- Revise, expand and strengthen communication processes to ensure that staff and students are aware of the existence and availability of educational Technologies and resources.

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- Ensure the physical teaching and virtual teaching space are equipped with appropriate infrastructure for supporting blended and transformative learning.
- Develop incentive mechanism such as opportunities for scholarship for e-learning education.
- Develop an institutional framework for quality learning, teaching and Assessment that incorporates a focus on blended learning.
- Develop and embed opportunities for research into student-centered blended learning.
- Recruit, promote, and reward staff researching on student-centered blended learning activities and disseminate examples of good practice in research- informed blended learning.
- Undertake self-assessment and benchmarking to provide sector specific contexts.
- Partnerships with Telecom companies for zero rated internet services to access virtual/e-learning platforms
- Increasing access to offline resources.
- Encourage lecturers and learners to use remote library centers.
- Provide evidence-based evaluation to support best-practice blended learning by developing and use of a robust LMS.
- Undertake iterative improvement in curriculum design and teaching practices and processes in a blended Learning context.
- Provide student support for engagement with a blended learning environment and provide flexibility so that students can stay connected during e-Learning.
- Establishment of Structured partnerships among higher education institutions for increased access to educational resources by remote learners.

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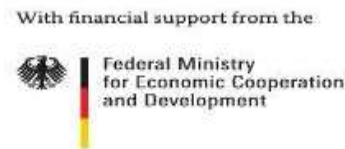


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- Enhanced direct collaborations with private organizations to facilitate easy access to ICT facilities and services.
- Increased investment in ICT by both governments and Higher Education Institutions to increase access to educational resources and services remotely.
- Establishment of ICT hubs in remote areas where learners can easily access ICT resources.

DAY ONE PANELIST

<p><b>Prof. Joshua Bagaka's</b></p> 	<p><b>Prof. Gustave Tombola</b></p> 	<p><b>Dr. Yves Ndayikunda</b></p> 	<p><b>Prof Anne Nangulu</b></p> 
<p><b>Dr. Nsubili Isaga</b></p> 		<p>With financial support from the</p>  <p>Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development</p>	<p><b>Dr. Philip Ayoo</b></p> 







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## DAY TWO (7<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021)

**Assuring Quality of Training, Learning, Research and Community Service in University/Higher Education in EAC Partner States in the New Normal.**

DAY TWO SPEAKERS

<b>Prof. Isaac Maragia</b>	<b>Prof. Paul Nzioki</b>	<b>Prof. Mabel Imbuga</b>	<b>Prof. Michael Mawa</b>
			

**Prof Anne Nangulu**



## FINDINGS, EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNT

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**BOMET UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

(A Constituent College of Moi University)

Green Economy for Sustainability





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## OPPORTUNITIES

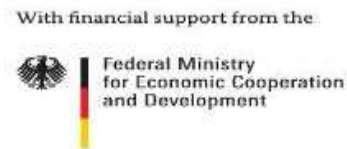
- a. Up scaled use of online services
- b. Automation of university functions
- c. Business continuity arising from automation i.e. a lecturer can have more students where class room space was a problem.
- d. Research Opportunities towards COVID 19 related solutions.
- e. Improved meeting attendance due to automatic recording of the log-ins and log-out of staff.
- f. Acceptability for virtual teaching by teaching staff and students

## POLICY RECOMMENDATION

### 1. Practical Teaching and learning

- i. Universities should start to adopt virtual lab sessions for example the use of Virtual Control Labs Experiment Systems.
- ii. Staff and students to have high integrity especially during zoom meetings and virtual lab sessions by avoiding unfriendly environment and making sure those logged in are authentic.
- iii. Virtual platform to be interactive by encouraging staff and students, students to student's interaction through cloud platform.
- iv. Constantly assess the ever changing environment and come up with innovations and leverage them in their competencies.

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## 2. Virtual administration of examination and assessment

- i. It was established that current policy in most universities evaluates and awards marks as follows;
  - 30% Coursework (CAT 10%, Assignments 5%, and 15% Practicals)
  - 70% Main Examination

It was recommended that Policy on the above mode of student evaluation has to change, award of marks in virtual examination should be as follows;

- Award of marks for online attendance.
  - Award of marks for active participation online through discussion forums.
  - Award of marks for punctual submission of assignments.
  - Award of marks for originality of submitted work
- ii. It was recommend that universities acquire software to authenticate teaching learning and assessment.
  - iii. Encourage universities to have **Examination Proctoring Software** for all staff. This ensures monitoring of students during examination to retain integrity and curb cheating.
  - iv. Create a platform for buying and selling of software and hardware for example **SURF spot** which offers smart deals for education (to support students and staff).
  - v. To have an umbrella platform for universities to develop teaching materials and examining common courses by sharing resources.

## 3. Institutions of Higher Learning

- i. Universities should establish centres/campuses in different counties/districts where students can go for blended learning for a specified period of time.
- ii. Repackage Academic programs for the current situation i.e. **Adopt Modular Teaching** CFA CPA and CIFA.
- iii. Staff to be trained to develop modules.
- iv. Universities encouraged to develop a curriculum for online teaching and not just doing a direct transfer of face to face to online learning.
- v. Students to use their institutional mails to log in online/virtual learning platforms to curb use of abusive names/language.
- vi. Access/purchase of laptops to be part of admission requirement for new students.
- vii. Facilitating acquisition of laptops by staff to enable them work remotely hence decongesting the office workspace.

#### 4. Commissions and Councils

- i. CUE to develop HR, pedagogy policy guidelines and regulations on how to teach and build capacity for virtual teaching programs as well as infrastructure designs etc.
- ii. CUE should be ready to;
  - Accredit curriculum specific for virtual learning
  - Accredit curriculum blended learning
  - Accredit curriculum for face to face learning

- iii. Association of Africa Universities as a continental body should develop Standards and guidelines for Online learning together with different National Agencies i.e. CUE-Kenya, TCU-Tanzania, HEC-Rwanda, NCHE-Uganda so that any online program in Africa is recognized on the continent i.e. Continental Accreditation Body.

### 5. On Ministry of Education

It was established that Higher Education Policy needs to be reviewed to align with current COVID-19 Protocols in East Africa Partner States.

Ministry of Education to have a policy on:

- Virtual learning
- Access to technology (hardware & software) for staff and students
- Reskilling and retooling Universities Managers to embrace virtual learning as a strategy to manage and optimize available resource.

### RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES AND FUTURE PLANS

Short-term (4-12 weeks)	Medium-term (3-6months)	Long-term (6months - Beyond)
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ensure protection and safety of students and employees</li> <li>-Mitigate disruption to learning</li> <li>-Communicate effectively</li> <li>-Be alert to any form of emergency</li> <li>-Create effective pathways for coordination with new partners e.g. PPEs, (masks &amp; sanitizers etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Innovate &amp; pilot</li> <li>-Relax standards and guidance</li> <li>-Build new partnerships</li> <li>-Higher turn up of students and staff</li> <li>-Avoid inequalities amongst staff and students</li> <li>-Evaluate and adjust to new Covid-19 related protocols</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Develop contingency plans</li> <li>-Prepare for cyclical shutdowns</li> <li>-Redevelop standards &amp; guidance</li> <li>-Strengthen and establish effective partnerships</li> <li>-Review and adjust budgets and Plans after assessing COVID-19 effects</li> <li>-Create virtual accredited programs</li> <li>-Engage industries that will also have evolved post-COVID</li> <li>-Develop capacity in teaching, research, extension and innovation to align to COVID-19 Protocols</li> </ul>
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- Adaptation of quality assurance policies and guidelines that allow flexibility in online and blended learning.

DAY TWO PANELIST

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### DAY THREE (9<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021)

## The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Implications for Leadership, Regulation and Partnerships for the Future of Higher Education in the EAC Partner States

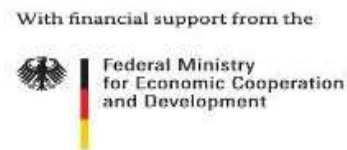


### 1. FINDINGS, EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNT

#### From the Dialogue it was Established that;

- There is general Student's inability to meet the required threshold for completion of courses
- The Integrity of assessment items including examination needed to be reviewed and harmonized
- There is need for enhancing Faculty Competence in the development of eLearning/Online Learning
- There is Increased Faculty members teaching workload and in some cases allocation of teaching load to non-teaching staff.
- That Staff in the Institutions of Higher Education are Facing Challenges including Finance, brought about by the pandemic
- There is increased Mental Health Issues due to lack of social exchange between Students, and off campus life.
- There is limited spatial capacities considering the distance regulations
- There is need for special support for first-year students and international students

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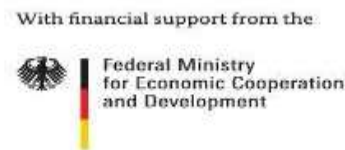
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- Physical mobility is very limited leading to a lack of personal academic exchange and student exchange
- Financial hardship for students because the lockdown due to reduced job opportunities.
- That the pandemic led to an increase in the use of digital tools: Online learning, Digital Communication with students and use of LMS.
- That some disciplines lend themselves more to remote teaching and learning than others
- That majority of the HEIs curricula have more theoretical than practical focus because of the restrictions brought about by COVID-19 Pandemic (IAU Survey 2021)
- That there was slightly higher decrease in salaries among staff in private than public institutions (16-17% vs. 8-10%) and the same trend was seen for academic and administrative staff.
- Effect on internationalization strategies at the majority of HEIs, that has not resulted in a change of the strategy yet (31% changed but 43% are thinking about it), only 20% of African HEIs changed their internationalization strategy 64% are reflecting about it
- Increased importance of virtual exchanges and collaborative online learning (81% of HEIs) and also internationalization of the curriculum/at home (58%)
- Student and teachers mobility: high level of inequality with three different groups of HEIs clearly identifiable, but in Africa the biggest group report a decrease. Moreover while attraction of International Students remains a priority at many HEIs in all regions, there was decreased importance of exchanges globally.
- There was Decreased importance of academic staff mobility for teaching, especially in Africa which led to Increased importance of academic and administrative staff training in global and intercultural competences.
- Research priorities have not changed although Research activities have been delayed as a result of travel restrictions made it impossible to attend conferences, do field work and Share Laboratory Spaces and Equipment.
- At global level, there is decrease in the number of publications in peer reviewed journals scholarships and number of PhDs due supervision challenges and increase in the time to completion.

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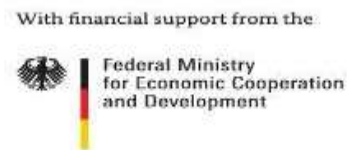
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## 2. RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES AND FUTURE PLANS

**The DIES Dialogue recommended and suggested the following strategies and Future Plans:**

- HEIs should continue to invest in ICT and eLearning infrastructure to ensure seamless delivery of services to students and Enhance HEI data security
- HEI should negotiate with service providers to ensure that students have the necessary ICT gadgets to facilitate eLearning
- Bring HEIs together for a joint procurement and development of ICT requirements such as internet, data security and university management systems
- Sustained advocacy with relevant government arms for wider internet coverage especially in the rural and semi-urban areas where most students reside.
- HEIs should Invest in systems that safeguards the integrity of online examination
- Continuous training of HEI community especially faculty and Students on the operations of online learning
- HEIs should diversify their revenue stream to minimize the over-reliance on tuition fees
- Each HEIs to develop a competitive edge by Initiating a niche/flagship programs that a HEI should be known for to increase their visibility.
- HEI should find innovative ways of developing exchange programs to include online exchange which is cheaper than the traditional exchange programs
- Encourage HEIs to improve on the quality of academic programs they offer to compete with other attracting students from across the globe
- Weed out redundant academic programs that do not attract enough students
- Encourage HEIs to diversify their revenue streams and Provide guideline on financial prudence to ensure financial sustainability
- HEIs should Rationalize their financial expenditure, Human Resource Needs and operations to core functions
- Create the right balance between investment in the physical infrastructure and e-resources

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- A modification of regular framework to lay emphasis on e-resources
- Enhance counselling services to help HEI community members deal with mental health issues exacerbated by the pandemic.
- Continuous improvement of ODeL policies and guidelines
- Regular inspection of HEIs to ensure quality standard in both teaching and examination
- Encourage HEIs to engage in Collaborations that ensure efficient utilization of the available resources at the disposal of HEIs in the region
- Set aside and grow a disaster fund.
- Champion for increased government financial assistance to Public HEIs and extending the same to private ones

## CONCLUSION

### The Dialogue Concluded that:

- The impact of the pandemic on higher education has been very uneven between different regions of the world and also between different HEIs in the same region of the world.
- For many aspects, Africa shows a higher degree of inequality and a more negative impact of the pandemic
- The pandemic stimulated innovation and accelerated transformations, especially in teaching, learning and Research
- The transition to distance or blended learning is the most relevant change that can be sustained beyond the pandemic, but it is not the solution to all the challenges created by the pandemic, and its introduction also brings new challenges.
- The pandemic has brought out the existing inequality between HEIs in terms of Resource Capabilities to cope with new normal
- The most important challenge for the future of higher education is to maximize the opportunities created by the pandemic while minimizing the associated risks.
- The pandemic has shown that global challenges can only be solved globally and that the contribution of the higher education community to Society is needed more than ever, but the lesson is still to be learned

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- More collaboration between HEIs globally is absolutely necessary to create a better and more sustainable future
- HEIs should allocate funds specifically for the containment of the pandemic and the same should be in the vote heads with a line item on the same
- Strictly Observing Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education health guidelines and Protocols
- Working closely with various stakeholders so that our laws for example Universities Act 2012 is amended to cover education in emergencies
- Signing bilateral agreements and MOU's with our development partners for capacity building , revision of our curriculum and support with various equipment

**Report Written By:**

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