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CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION TO DECOLONISE AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Decolonisation and transformation of higher education systems has long been recognised by post-colonial African governments as a potentially powerful lever for improved societal well-being, redressing past inequalities, meeting pressing national and international needs, and responding to ne w realities and opportunities (Mullet, 2018). Higher education is seen as a catalyst for equity, meritocracy, employability, economic performance, quality of life and sustainable development (MacGregor, 2009; Padayachee, Matimolane, & Ganas, 2018). Indeed, the role of higher education in Africa's sustainable social, political, and economic development cannot be overemphasised (Badat, 2011; Castells, 2009; D'Andrea & Gosling, 2005; MacGregor, 2009). However, with few resources, inadequate capacity and a history of neglect, higher education as a sector has been struggling to meet the growing demands, offering instead an outdated, colonial curriculum. In particular, curricular demloms.ui.iii and tr.imfoi man. m has proved challenging, as evidenced in actions and calls by higher education pundits and commentators in recent years for a responsive curriculum addressing the real African social and economic development needs. This is more so because some of the key pillars of colonisation such as economic exploitation and disfigurement of African communities and cultures are still prevalent in most of African communities, well after the end of political decolonisation (Luckett, 2016).

This chapter analyses curriculum decolonisation and transformation agendas implemented in African higher education, including successes and challenges for implementation of such broad-reaching initiatives. We clarify tangible ways to make African higher education more relevant and responsive to pressing social and economic development needs. This includes a focus on decolonising and transforming higher education structures, curricula, pedagogy, research, and community relationships 1 lecolonisation and transformation discourses are

> intentionally discussed together in this chapter as these two notions are seen as interrelated, as curriculum decolonisation may be achieved through a process of curriculum transformation. We argue that higher education can only go so far as our curriculum; thus, the decolonisation of the curricular infrastructure is paramount to transforming the entire system of higher education.

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Within the context of African higher education, the status quo of the colonial foundation continues colonial conditions, including anti-Black and anti-Indigenous violence, resource disparities, and a higher education system that remains unprepared and unresourced to address these daily concerns. Thus, the African higher education sector reflects national and continental social inequalities, reduced public funding, insufficient infrastructural development, lack of qualified academic staff largely due to brain drain, disastrous effect of HIV/AIDS and related pandemics (e.g., the recent COVID-19 outbreak), poor governance, political interference, poor internal efficiency, mismatch between graduate output and employment, and resource constraints that pose serious challenges to curriculum transformation in African higher education (Shabani, Okebukola, & Oyewole, 2014). This chapter recognises the current context, arguing for a reconceptualisation of the purpose of higher education as fundamentally about sustaining life, transforming learning into processes that foster locally sustaining knowledge, and working to solve local and continental African problems. In this chapter, curriculum can be viewed in a broad sense to include decolonising the liigher education landscape as a whole. This is due to the understanding that decolonisation must include all aspects of the higher education system, as one cannot only decolonise the curriculum without also addressing structures, faculty, scholarship and research, teaching, fees and funding, localised politics, and institutional concerns. Some of the drivers of African curriculum transformation include calls to decolonise, responsiveness to social context, epistemological diversity, renewal of pedagogy and classroom practices, and institutional cultures of openness and critical reflection (Nkoane, 2006). Accordingly, transformation discourse is associated with terms like equity, access, opportunity, eradication of all forms of discrimination, redress, democratic ethos, human rights, a fostering of critical public discourse, a humane, non-racist, non-sexist social order, and advancement of all forms of life-sustaining knowledge and scholarship (Mullet, 2018).These broad calls unite a transformative and decolonial agenda, reflecting a changing higher education landscape across the continent, urging a prioritisation of purpose in order to align efforts to the current condition.

Globalisation of African Higher Education

Globalisation is characterised by continued exploitation of the global poor, which continue to be concentrated across the continent. There has been‘an expansion of economic activities across national boundaries’ as manifested by ‘international trade, international investment and in ternational finance,’ and the ‘flows of services, technology, information and ideas across national boundaries’ (Badat, 2011, p. 5) as

well as the global organisation of production through transnational corporations. In addition to the growing marketisation and commodification of higher education, there has also been an increasing internationalisation and trans-nationalisation of higher education (Badat, 2011). An understanding of these factors and the broader role of higher education in Africa is the first step to dealing constructively with the challenges that inevitably affect curriculum transformation and decoloniality.

Higher education in Africa has undergone a significant transformation in recent years. The

key drivers of the twenty-first—century academic revolution in higher education include the massification of higher education, a debate on the i public versus private good, the impact of information and communication tech- / nologies (ICTs), the rise of the knowledge economy, and increasing globalisation, *f* We term this an academic revolution because this series of transformations have influenced higher education more than ever before; in addition, these revolutions are global in nature. These transformations affect numerous higher education insiituiions as well as the broader population. All these factors, coupled with other powerful forces such as the shift to an emphasis on graduate employability attributes, online pedagogies, lifelong learning, qualification articulation, student mobility, credit transfer systems, and cross border recognition of qualifications, have forced African higher education institutions to develop meaningful and / responsive curricula that meet local needs and respond to global demands (Badat, ! 2003; Barnett, 1999). Although many higher education institutions have become more mobile and internationally oriented as a result of this global emphasis, most remain structured and unfortunately limited to national circumstances. .... ;

The central reality of the twenty-first century has been the massification of higher education, due primarily to the call for mass access to higher education across the continent. Although less than 10% of the post-school age group participate in higher education in the majority of African countries, the participation rate in higher education has, in the main, increased dramatically at the global level (UNESCO, 2021). The massification of higher education has been inevitable, with growing societal needs that can only be met through higher education's potential as a tool to cultivate political, social, and economic transformation. In addition, higher education has been acknowledged as having the < potential to improve the well-being of modern society and enhance quality of i life; thus, higher education growth has been fuelled by Western philanthropies (and nations (MacGregor, 2009). However, with mass participation in higher education comes a loss of public trust in higher education, accompanied by a fear of a decline in standards (Badat, 2011). Underneath these fears rests a pressing need for, and related lack of continental commitment to, decoloniality.

A further reality of the twenty-first century is the knowledge economy. Information communication technologies comprise a global force and one of the most powerful influences on higher education in Africa. Such economic growth is dependent on the quantity, quality, and accessibility of information available, rather than the means of production (MacGregor, 2009). According to MacGregor (2009),

> growing segments of the workforce require advanced education offered in higher education institutions in Africa. The impact of such technological growth on science and scholarship, teaching and learning in traditionalist universities, possibilities for distance education, and even the internal management of universities has been particularly profound. However, there is also little doubt that deep inequalities persist with regard to access, use, and influence, particularly in countries with whom the higher education sector excludes all but the wealthiest or politically connected (Badat, 2011; MacGregor, 2009). African higher education thus faces structural fragmentation, poor quality of education, high drop-out and low completion rates, and graduate unemployment or under-employment (Mohamedbhai, 2020). With poor-quality liigher education offered in most African higher education institutions, Africa is also missing out on gains that arise from the growth of artificial intelligence, the Internet of tilings, big data ecosystems,

digitalisation, greening for sustainable development, and the development of smart cities.

Furthermore, Africa is a continent with abundant natural resources. However, despite these resources, the continent continues to be the poorest on the globe. Africa still faces development challenges which have perennially threatened the socio-economic well-being of its people and stifled most facets of growth. Over the past years, poverty reduction has been accelerating in the poorest countries of the world, but not fast enough in the so-called continent of wealth. According to recent estimates, the number of deprived people in the region has grown from 278 million to 413 million in the last 25 years, while the average skyrocketing poverty rate of 41% makes Africa the poorest of all tune (AfroEuro Foundation, 2020) .The ongoing impacts of COVID-19 simply exacerbate what is already failing. Wliat is more disheartening is that the continent is blessed with the rarest minerals required to btuld new technologies, but still more than 300 million Africans are living in extreme conditions with daily wages less than US$1.90 (AfroEuro Foundation, 2020).

Meanwhile, colonial relationsliips continue to shape the economic reality of nations across the continent. Africa's abundant natural resources continue to be exploited and exported at the hands of the former colonial masters without value addition locally. Millions of tons of raw natural resources continue to be exported out of Africa without building local infrastructures, continuing wealth extraction from Africa. Instead of manufacturing products that have the potential to grow economies, create jobs, and improve livelihood, Africa remains the end user of products made from its own natural resources. Many African countries rely on the sale of commodities in the form of raw minerals and materials to drive their economies. The African continent, for example, has dominated the production of raw platinum, used extensively in electronics, for many years. However, very little of the mineral refinement or component production happens on the continent. Similarly, despite huge demand, diamond mines are operated by unskilled personnel, which results in low-quality final products to be refined off continent (AfroEuro Foundation, 2020). The ability to benefit more widely from the rich resources found on African soil is dependent on the knowledge and resources that can be used to add value, to refine, to use materials in manufacture, and, then, to market and distribute finished products across the world (Boughey & McKenna, 2021; Kromydas, 2017).

Boughey and McKenna (2021) point out that knowledge is the driver of productivity and economic growth, and achieving these goals requires building human capital through more accessible, equitable, and better-quality higher education systems. However, Africa continues to experience the prevailing lack of a critical mass of educated professionals who can innovate, build cutting edge manufacturing industries, turn natural resources into value-added products, and hence grow local economies (MacGregor, 2009; Shabani et al., 2014). Daniel, Robert, and Samuel (2019) argue that African higher education graduates are weak in problem-solving, business understanding, computer use, and communication skills. Tliis points to the lack of capacity for African liigher education curriculum to grow quality graduates with requisite graduate employability attributes such as entrepreneurship for sustainable social and economic development of the continent (Boughey & McKenna, 2021; Mohamedbhai, 2020).

Research activities have also expanded in scope and relevance and the knowledge

economy is enhancing the mobility of highly trained professionals. Inadequate and undiversified funding regimes, however, remain a major challenge to the development of more vibrant research and innovation infrastructure in higher education in Africa (Iqbal, 2015). In the absence of private-sector funding and competitive grants, public higher education institutions and research institutes in Africa predominantly depend on dwindling public subsidies as well as unpredictable international donor support. This narrow funding base suggests that research and innovation systems in African countries face severe financial deficits and lack the capacity to formulate and drive their own domestic research agendas. Research output from higher education institutions is extremely poor when compared to other world regions, partly because of lack of resources such as up-to-date journals and good Internet connectivity, but equally due to the absence of research-strong academics. For example, Africa is one of the continents with the lowest number of patents. Few papers by African researchers are published in internationally acclaimed pre-mierjournals. Indeed, acute shortage of high calibre academics is one of the greatest challenges facing African higher education institutions (Mohamedbhai, 2013). National policy makers and higher education institutions leadership need to be encouraged to work in closer partnership and to prioritise the strategic importance of research and innovation in national economic growth and competitiveness by investing more significantly in strengthening research capacity, infrastructure, and research opportunities in higher education institutions.

Curriculum Transformation

Within these dire global contexts, curriculum transformation has been gaining traction across Africa, in large part due to student activism, but also governments

and related stakeholders. Most higher education systems in Africa have implemented curriculum transformation agendas as a response to these pressures. These efforts have led to small but significant steps towards progress in terms of addressing the imbalances inherited from the past colonial regimes, which include race, gender, social, and educational inequalities and related complex, intractable challenges (Mkwanazi & Bojabotseha, 2014). Despite these continued colonial contexts, there have been a number of achievements for higher education in Africa, including recently developed and implemented policy frameworks for higher education. The progressive realisation of this agenda has the potential to create a higher education system that is congruent with the core principles of social equity and redress, social justice, democracy, and development (Lotz-Sisitka, 2017; Lumadi, 2021; Mullet, 2018). Related policy efforts include higher education reform, strengthening quality assurance systems, harmonisation of higher education across the continent, construction of modern higher education systems, and marketisation and internationalisation.These efforts, while perhaps not transformative in and of themselves, build towards a unified structured approach to invest in higher education systems.

These infrastructure improvements come at a time when the current African higher education gross enrolment rate remains the lowest in the world. Indeed, on average, Africa enrols just over 12% of the population, well below the global average of 32% (UNESCO,

2021). While these numbers reflect coloniality and disparity, access to higher education in Africa has generally improved over the last two decades, and there has been increased and broadened participation in higher education.That much of this broadening reflects an explicit commitment to advance social equity and meet economic and social development needs on the continent is of direct significance; the continent has largely recognised the need to expand access while at the same time developing infrastructures, enhancing relevance, and transforming. Towards that end, quality assurance frameworks and related structures have also been established, with policies, mechanisms, and initiatives driving institutional audits, programme accreditation, quality promotion, and capacity development across African higher education systems (Iqbal, 2015). While not all utilise a transformed or decolonial approach, these amount to drastic infrastructure improvements at a continental level.

Thus, African higher education displays considerable strengths and much promise with respect to knowledge production and dissemination, to contributing to social equity, to economic and social development and democracy, and to the development needs of African continent. However, transformation remains a difficult process to implement, and where transformation has been implemented as a policy approach, those higher education systems have not, in the end, yielded tangible results. National transformation policy machinery, it seems, has proven to be insufficient to ensure implementation (Soudien, 2010). Nonetheless, these failures to implement suggest a need to re-prioritise and refocus efforts to use curriculum as a lever for higher education transformation and decoloniality.

Decolonising African Higher Education

Decolonisation and Africanisation processes are not new in Africa, as the call to decolonise higher education and curricula could be traced back to the late 1950s in countries such as Tanzania, Nigeria, and Senegal. Many of these initial efforts involved replacing foreign staff and Eurocentric curricula. These processes led to the establishment of centres of excellence of African knowledge production, including the Ibadan School, the Dar es Salaam School ot Political Economy, and the Dakar School of Culture (Dell, 2018). According to Le Grange (2021), the term decolonisation is variously used in the literature, most often referring to insurrections and uprisings against colonisation, which eventually resulted in the removal of colonial administrative rule.

Decolonisation as a concept and as a process has been extensively interrogated in the South African higher education system, particularly in relation to the curriculum mostly through #FeesMustFall, #RhodesMustFall, and #DecoloniseTheCurriculum movements that were initiated in 2015. However, although almost all African countries have gone through some form of colonialism, not much has been widely written about curriculum decolonisation discourse at the continental level. Le Grange (2016) posits that Africa has gone through two phases of colonialism, namely the. first-generation colonialism which was the conquering of the physical spaces and bodies ol the colonised; and second-generation colonialism which was the colonisation of tlieininH through disciplines stichas education, science, economies--andjp^Thiong'o, 1986). Decolonisation discussed in this chapter focuses on the latter phase, as many of the first generation have indeed been overthrown and/or replaced. The coloniality of the mind, however, remains the foundational challenge of higher education in Africa.

Decolonisation remains a hielilv contested, complex and subjective sociocultural

phenomenon. Decolonisation refers to processes of mourning the loss of knowledges, cultures, and languages, discovering and recovering histories, cultures, and identities; and correcting the deficit ways in which colonised peoples have been defined and theorise.d. Decolonisation invokes Indigenous histories, knowledges, and worldviews to imagine alternative futures, seeks self-determination, internationalises common experiences, struggles, and hopes, and protects the knowledges of colonised peoples (MacGregor, 2009; Padayachee et al., 2018). Decolonising the curriculum is about (embedding liberationland equality pi all aspects of higher education from changing course content, changing the language of teaching, changing the way courses are Jaught, updating assessment techniques, developing research and publication practices, suppoitmg training, resources, and funding, and modifying recruitment criteria (Ameyaw, Turnhout, Arts, & Wals, 2019). A decolonised curriculum would challenge Eurocentric approaches, provide different perspectives on topics, encourage critical thinking, and discuss imites (hat are important to marginalised groups across local, national, and global communities. (Lumadi, 2021).

Le Grange (2016) argues that decolonisation of the curriculum entails ajhfft from Western/Eurocentric individualism and universalism to an Ubuntu-infused curriculum, which acknowledges the independence of humans and the more- than-human world. An Ubuntu-infused African-centred curriculum does not necessitate the destruction of dominant knowledge systems, but rather demands a recentring or integration of African knowledge systems into dominant epistemological discourses, According to Ltimadi (2021), knowledge does not necessarily have to emanate from Africa, but must address African realities. The work of decolonisation theorists such as Fanón (2004), Spivak (1988), and waThiong'o (1986) clearly illustrates that the decolonisation process is complex and multidimensional, replete with conflicts, contradictions, and paradoxes. Mbembe (2016) draws attention to the fact that the decolonisation process encompasses all aspects of being in the higher education space.These aspects include the predominantly colonial architecture of higher education institutions and the Eurocentric academic models that still exist, the authoritative systems of control and management, both of students (through the standardised assessment processes) and, increasingly, of lecturers. Mbembe also pointed out the injustice of the continued existence of syllabi created through epistemic violence and deliberately designed to meet the needs of African colonisers.

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) points out that the dominance of European culture, language, and theories in higher education has also been highlighted by other authors as problematic (CHE, 2017). waThiong'o (1993), for example, suggested a move away from current Eurocentric norms, towards the centring of African perspectives, that is, the need to place African culture, literature, and language at the centre of the educational project so that African students may learn about themselves first before learning about people and contexts further afield,There have been, however, counter arguments to waThiongo's notion of recentring African perspectives in higher education curricula, with suggestions that to recentre Africa would simply mean replacing one form of knowledge and one worldview with another, an approach that would accomplish little in terms of preparing graduates who can function in both local and global contexts.Thus, for graduates to be locally and globally responsive (as is required for a sustainable future), perhaps what is needed is higher education curricula that are epistemi- cally diverse and both locally and globally relevant (Mbembe,

2016).This broader conception of an integrative decolonised curriculum thus bears striking similarity to the goals of education for sustainable development (CHE, 2017).

According to Lumadi (2021), the decolonisation of higher education should be viewed as a process of defying and dismantling the colonial systems that swayed education in the past and that are still perpetuated today. Decoloniality is a discourse geared towards total withdrawal from the influence of former colonial masters, to become socially, politically, and economically independent. Colonial practices were established during times when Western nations maintained supremacy over dependent territories. This implies that, although Africa

has been politically independent, all aspects of higher education remain influenced by former colonial masters, including curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment (Mbembe, 2015). Moreover, decolonisation may involve deliberating the effects of colonisation on higher education, as well as examining the scope and frame of what a liberating curriculum entails. The foundational intent of decolonisation is to equip students with 'diverse academic learning environments, curricula and approaches to research within which Indigenous cultures, histories, and knowledge are embedded' (Waghid & Hibbert, 2018). Decolonisation calls for a proportional representation, advocating primarily for increased numbers of Indigenous, racialised, and low-income students and faculty, and the supplementation of existing curricula with non-Western perspectives (Lumadi, 2021).

Caution must be taken in the decolonial process, in part because Eurocentric epistemologies are still firmly entrenched in African higher education institutions (Badat, 2010). According to Mullet (2018), curriculum transformation is the process of creating new curricula to respond to the new realities. In the South African context, the Education White Paper 3 (1997) specifies that transformation '... requires that all existing practices, institutions and values are viewed anew and rethought in terms of their fitness for the new era' (p. 1.1). This Paper points out that a transformed higher education system that will:

- Promote equity of access and fair chances of success to all who are seeking to realise their potential through higher education, while eradicating all forms of unfur discrimination and advancing redress for past inequalities.
- Meet, through well-planned and coordinated teaching, learning, and research programmes, national development needs, including the high- skilled employment needs presented by a growing economy operating in a global environment.
- Support a democratic ethos and a culture of human rights by educational programmes and practices conducive to critical discourse and , creative thinking, cultural tolerance, and a common commitment to a humane, non-racist, and non-sexist social order.
- Contribute to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship and, in particular, address the diverse problems and demands of the local, national, southern African and African contexts, and uphold rigorous standards of academic quality.

(P- [i]4)

Although these points were articulated in a South African context, this chapter contends that all African countries share a relatively common history of colonialism. According to Badat

(2010), the higher education transformation agenda as pursued by the governments and higher education systems seems to be problematic in that its goals are in conflict with one another. For example, transformation goals such as social equity and redress allow for more students to access higher education

while simultaneously most African governments have been reducing funding for higher education. Furthermore, Badat (2010) contends that most higher education systems in Africa have been also failing to provide effective academic development programmes for underprepared students to induct them into academic discourse so as to improve their chances of academic success.The result of encountering the tension between competing transformation goals is both poor quality and failure to graduate future generations prepared for the world they must transform.

This frame, operating within higher education systems that have yet to balance access, quality» and decoloniality, leads to the fundamental question of what does it mean to be a University in Africa? A decolonised curriculum to engage in the purpose of a specific African higher education institution should engage the following key questions: (a) How can what is being taught and how it is taught be legitimated? Taking into account calls for curriculum transformation for an African Ingher education institution, tins question urges conversation about who legitimates knowledge and related teaching endeavours, (b) Have students and academics considered where knowledge for specific courses comes from? Tins question can become a guiding curricular orientation, ensuring students and lecturers consider the global contexts of knowledge bases (i.e., Europe, the U.S.A., Global North vs. Africa/ Global South). If the purpose is to help students conceptualise decolonisation projects, the curriculum must be a lever for such knowledge-based conversations.

Additional course-based questions can be leveraged as a structural approach to teaching. Making transparent what knowledge comes from the Global South, how that engages within a localised context, and how that differs from Eurocentric approaches can provide a foundation of criticality. Examples of how knowledge is used in local/African Global South contexts can be infused across the curriculum, while students can also be tasked with identifyingjustifying, and legitimating such local knowledges. Relatedly, lecturers can engage questions about how specific curricular knowledge is linked to the histories of different students within specific class, programmes, departments, and faculties. In essence, if the purpose of decolonising the curriculum is to integrate localised knowledges, lecturers must make explicit how knowledge is created within disciplines, and indeed, how disciplines have been created and maintained within a critical lens towards coloniality.

As African higher education is influenced by colonial education systems, academic disciplines are not linked to African cultures and realities; yet higher education institutions continue to replicate these colonial structures. Asking the above questions may help to unearth hidden practices which can make African students feel distanced, excluded from, and silenced by academic disciplines and classroom interactions. Asking such questions also allows lecturers to become active learners within their own classroom, while creating more hospitable environments for learning. Such approaches also empower students to see themselves in the curriculum, and when they do not, to engage and, in part, to take on responsibility for dialogue about missing knowledges.

This calls for the need for higher education curricula to be adapted to better prepare graduates for current and future uncertainties by including more explicitly the critical issue of sustainable development (Lumadi, 2021). Lotz- Sisitka (2017) provides a convincing interpretation of decolonisation theory and practice as a frame for education for sustainable development, to reorient the purpose of higher education towards the common good. Similarly, Maringe and Ojo (2017) also highlight the interconnection between notions of decolonisation of higher education in Africa and those of sustainable development in their exploration of the meaning, rationale, and approaches for decolonised, sustainable development in African higher education.

Nkoane (2006), for example, speaks to the need for 'the re-invigorating of Africa's intellectuals, and the production of knowledge which is relevant, effective and empowering for the people of the African continent, and more particularly, the immediate African societies the universities serve' (p. 49).To counter the Eurocentrisni of higher education institutions, Africanised education

> maintains African awareness of the social order and rules by which culture evolves; fosters the understanding of African consciousness; facilitates a critical emancipatory approach to solve the problems of their lives; and produces the material and capacities for Africans to determine their own future(s).
>
> *(Nkoane, 2006, p. 51)*

In this view, Africanising higher education means relating curricula to African experiences and the societal needs which have emanated and continue to emanate from such experience (MacGregor, 2009). Underlying this view is discourse about the African Renaissance, which was about a rebirth or reawakening, a 'reconstituting of that which has decayed or disintegrated' (Nkoane, 2006, p. 59).The main issue identified with respect to curriculum at African institutions of higher learning is that most modules and/or academic programmes (such as education, science, law, psychology, sociology, and political science) are not linked to African cultures and realities (Le Grange, 2016).The disciplinary problématisations, classifications, examples, illustrations, comparisons, models, social systems and structures, institutions, interpretations and misinterpretations, mistakes, and solutions all come from Western realities and socio-cultural constructs. African students are trained in these systems but expected to work and follow a career in African environments, setting up a long-term disjoint between lived experience, college learning, and professional context.

Shay (2013) argues that the challenge of relevance to real-world problems implies, certainly in the professional areas of study, asking such questions as 'In an African medical curriculum, should higher education institutions prepare students for the problems of first-world specialists or those of doctors working in poor rural areas?' This relates to the question of whether African higher

education institutions are producing people who can help alleviate poverty and inequality, and whether what universities teach is adequate to the needs of the society in which they are located (Le Grange, 2016). A decolonised curriculum must include local context and content, especially when connecting theory to practice (Le Grange, 2021). To the authors, decolonising the curriculum of the twenty-first century should consider the Fourth and Fifth Industrial Revolutions (4th/5th IRs) to effectively respond to the current social and economic development needs of Africa. In short, decolonisation of the curriculum could involve a range of possibilities such as the radical rethinking ofWestern disciplines and exploring ways of developing and designing locally and regionally relevant curricula to replace Western epistemologies that continue to dominate and justify unequal power relations.

Reimagining African Higher Education

Given the extensive challenges that continue to confront African higher education, the entire sector needs to rethink higher education. In particular, African higher education must cultivate the knowledge, competencies, and skills that enable graduates to contribute to grow local economic sustainability in ways that foster greater social equality and culturally aligned development. However, we cannot assume that if a country's higher education sector produces high-quality graduates, especially in natural science, engineering, and technology fields, that this will automatically have a profound effect on the economy. Indeed, efforts to address local societal inequalities, as well as environmental sustainability, must be integrated across fields. Additionally, the formation of professionals through higher education is a necessary condition for economic growth and development, innovation, and global competitiveness, but is not a sufficient condition. The contribution of graduates is also dependent on the economic environment outside of higher education—in particular, industrial policy, the availability of investment capital and venture capital, and the openness and receptivity of state enterprises and business sectors. There should also be no pretence that, in terms of a higher education response to labour market needs, it is a simple matter to establish the knowledge, skills, competencies, and attitudes that are required by the economy, constituent parts, and society more generally. An instrumental approach to higher education which reduces value to economic growth, and calls that higher education should prioritise professional, vocational, and career- focused qualifications and programmes and emphasise skill development is to denude higher education of our considerably wider social value and functions.

Furthermore, the task of educators is to enable students to gain what Lumadi (2021) termed epistemological access to the disciplines.This means that curricula, teaching, and assessment should be designed in ways that induct students into dig knowledge of the field, including the ways of knowing that will contribute to academic success. This integration must occur in tandem with decoloniality

of that field, such that the field transforms to reflect African contexts, cultures, languages, and realities.Therefore, curriculum decolonisation and transformation should consider all dimensions in totality, including curriculum content, pedagogy, assessment practices, research and innovation, and community engagement.

This totality involves placing African identity, knowledge, history, society, and ideals on an equal footing with foreign (Western, European, American) value's, ideals, approaches, and content in academic programmes. This decolonial approach exposes students to an African-centred worldview, while acknowledging the existence of other worldviews and perspectives, without assuming a uniform, monolithic or one-dimensional African world view, undifferentiated and uncritical. Such a decoloniality should include, but not be limited to, studying works by African authors, scientists and artists, Western theorists, academics, thinkers and philosophical pioneers, and ground-breakers that do not necessarily have their origins in Africa. Recognition of the scholarly perspectives from refugees, migrants, and others who represent the Global South's diaspora should also integrate across and decolonise within notions of the West. The voice of both the student and the broader society, irrespective of culture, language, gender, religion, and background, must be heard and examined in such module content and outcomes with a view to recognising and developing new Africanised and j other alternative knowledge types and their underlying assumptions as relevant I to the area of study (North-West University, 2018).

| Relatedly, a specific focus on translation of a decolonised African curricu-
| lum into pedagogy must accompany all transformative efforts. Fomunyam (2013)
| defines pedagogy as the art and science of how teaching and learning is prac-
j tised, or how it unfolds, and how students learn what is taught. How students
j experience the curriculum is essential, as education is both an epistemological
| and an ontological project. In other words, as students engage with knowledge,
J they become different kinds of people. However, traditionalisedWestern teaching
j practices emphasise on didactic instruction, which focuses on classroom manage
ment, discipline, and 'how to' skill development, hence the need to decolonise j
and transform pedagogy to localised African contexts. Decolonising pedagogical
1 approaches is essential to ensuring that teaching and learning reflects localised
j languages, cultures, and contexts.According toVorster (2016),decolonised teach
ing and learning practices inspire students to think critically on and engage with issues such as discrimination, racism, inequality, poverty, colonialism, alienation, j inclusion, and ethical conduct. Furthermore, decolonised teacliing and learning ! encourages students to interpret curriculum content based on their own experi- j ences, according to their cultural norms, personal belief systems, preferences, and j backgrounds, and to share their interpretations with fellow students as valid and (valued real-life experiences.

§ We thus contend that curriculum transformation must include transformative
j pedagogies that will produce transformational graduates who are critical thinkers j and problem solvers with entrepreneurial mindset as agents for social justice able

to transform society and economy. These graduates will be able to create local investments on the continent rather than the current slogan of attracting foreign investment, which continues to impoverish Africa as huge profits are shipped out of Africa in the name of foreign investment. Some critical questions that need to be asked at the institutional level include (Boughey, 2015): What needs to change and what approaches are, in the main, effective with regard to teaching? What values, beliefs, and ideas underpin our teaching? How do these reflect, engage, and further African Indigenous knowledge systems? What is our view of the student regarding teaching and learning? What is our view of teaching? To what extent is our teaching emancipatory (critical pedagogy, transformative pedagogy, criticality, reflectivity, praxis, etc.)? How do these questions centre student experiences, perspectives, while addressing the material and psychological conditions of poverty? We suggest these questions become tangible guides to transparent decolonial restructuring.

Relatedly, we cannot transform curriculum and teaching approaches without a commitment to transparent assessment systems. How institutions know which knowledges are being taught effectively, with which students, is central to transformation agendas. Decolonising assessment practices is about engaging assessment practices that move beyond determining competence to understand individual areas of strength and growth to ensure that knowledge gaps can be addressed the future development of individual students. Some critical questions that must be asked about decolonisation and transformation of assessment practices include (Boughey, 2015):What values, beliefs, and ideas underpin our assessment metrics? Who has access to power and control, and how do we flatten hierarchical power relations in alignment with Ubuntu? To what extent do we use assessment strategies that empower students, including self-assessments, peer-assessments, and community assessments? How do we balance assessment of lecturers versus students as we consider learning? How do institutions commit to transparent definitions of decoloniality that can be woven throughout assessment metrics? Such questions intend to guide institutional transformation at a concrete level.

Higher education institutions are resource rich and inextricably linked with their communities (Vorster, 2016). Therefore, to be beneficial to democracy and development, it is imperative to establish and maintain honest mutualistic, respectful partnerships with specific localised communities. This demands that higher education institutions become more vigorous partners when searching for answers to moral, civic, social, and economic challenges.This also requires higher education institutions to build strong linkages, collaboration, and partnership with industry and society in all facets including programme development, delivery, research, innovation, and development. The transformation of community engagement, aligned with a decolonial agenda, ensures that higher education institutions specifically focus on partnering with localised efforts to address the material impacts of longterm colonial relations as well as current disparities. Integration of community across the curriculum is essential for such efforts, such that disciplinary boundaries include mitigating impacts while challenging the structures of oppression.

Related to service, research and scholarship must be reconceptualised, across the curriculum, to have tangible application to real-world problems. Research outputs and knowledge production are vital for Africa's sustainable socioeconomic development through innovation and development (Vorster, 2016). However, Africa is still lagging far

behind in terms of public expenditure on research and development. On average, the continent contributes less than 1% of the world's research outputs. In addition, a report on patent filings by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO, 2020) found many African countries ranked poorly in this category. It is, therefore, not surprising that Africa accounts for less than 1.5% of the total global publications in international scientific journals and has been declining steeply in recent decades.Therefore, there is a need for Africa to acknowledge that research is important for innovation and development as research output can be used in industry and manufacturing, as well as in public sectors. To realise the potential of science and innovation, Africa must recommit to ensuring that scientists in African universities and research institutions have access to well-equipped laboratories and related social science resources to invest in decolonial sciences. Industrialisation is important in lifting Africa out of poverty, in generating local investments, local econonues, and improvements to the daily quality of life, especially for those with limited water, housing, sanitation, and school facilities.

Decolonising research requires more than increasing productivity and must be integrated across the curriculum so that the entire higher education community sees research as service to, and with, African communities. Thus, research cannot be divorced from the praxis of learning and teaching. Research manifests across bodies of knowledge, constituting a critical engagement between lecturers and students in a decolonised curriculum. This encompasses what is both - taught and learnt and the resultant social and personal impact thereof. Neither do these processes stand in isolation from community engagement. Decoloniality goes beyond doing research *on* society and includes generating knowledge with community, industry, and societal partners that contribute to different types of knowledge by using established participatory research methodologies such as action research and appreciative enquiry.These efforts are difficult, but the stakes cannot be higher—African higher education must transform, with a decolonial lens, across each and every endeavour.

Conclusion

This chapter concludes that higher education in Africa plays a significant role in equipping the next generation of leaders with knowledge and essential skills for sustainable environmental, economic, and social development. However, although there has been some degree of improvements in African higher education, challenges remain considerable, with perhaps the largest challenge being the need to align higher education across goals of access, quality, sustainability, localised

knowledges and languages, and ultimately, relevance to Africans.Therefore, Africa must recognise the importance of transforming higher education through prioritisation of curriculum transformation, including teaching and learning, curricular assessment, community engagement, research, and related infrastructures. Curriculum decolonisation and transformation must develop competent graduates who are critical thinkers, with an entrepreneurial mindset, able to meaningfully grow an economy rooted within Eurocentric exploitation, and who can leverage local social justice agendas. Furthermore, African

governments need to acknowledge that nothing is possible without substantial investment. For an African Renaissance, rooted in Ubuntu, to occur, there must be an alignment of support for higher education to transform while addressing quality challenges, limited institutional capacities, inadequate funding, and pressing social issues. Therefore, there is an urgent need for African governments to invest in higher education research, innovation, strong linkages, collaboration, and partnership between higher education institutions, industry, and society, creating centres of excellence and in the development of the new generation of scholars, based on a foundation of a transformed, decolonial curricular frameworks.

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