

Press Release

Boost for social science education in African universities

Nairobi – 27th August 2018: Teaching and learning of social sciences in African universities will benefit from a new initiative that seeks to shape graduate programmes to deliver exceptional learning experiences.

The Pedagogical Leadership in Africa (PedaL) partnership, launched on August 6th, 2018, aims to prepare graduate level teaching staff to produce social science graduates who meet Africa’s labour market needs and can contribute to economic and social development.

“Africa’s emerging economies are in need of graduates with innovative minds, critical thinkers and people with an entrepreneurial spirit, to take the continent to the next level,” said Ambassador Amina Mohamed, Kenya’s Cabinet Secretary for Education, in a speech read by Mr Charles Obiero, Senior Assistant Director, University Education, during the launch event.

PedaL is one of nine partnerships supported by Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform (SPHEIR), a programme supported by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) that aims to catalyse systemic change in teaching and learning in universities.

PedaL is a collaborative initiative led by the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR), and involving the Alliance for Research Universities in Africa (ARUA) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) of the University of Sussex, UK.

It is currently being implemented by five universities across Africa: Egerton University in Kenya, University of Ibadan in Nigeria, University of Ghana, University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and Uganda Martyrs University.

The launch event that marked the dawn of a new era in teaching and learning was attended by senior officials from Kenya’s Ministry of Education, representatives of SPHEIR and DFID, vice chancellors, the PASGR Board, and teaching staff and students from universities across the continent.



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According to Prof Tade Aina, PASGR's Executive Director, the greatest dilemma facing African universities is how to become relevant to local needs and social realities, while simultaneously responding adequately to the opportunities and risks of globalisation. "PedaL is a movement which hopefully will take root on this continent, that will transform the way we teach and learn in our universities," he said.

The partnership will prepare university teaching staff to produce high quality social science graduates who are employable and creatively able to use their education to sustain opportunities that stimulate economic growth and social transformation.

PedaL's training programme blends face-to-face sessions and online engagement in a dynamic mechanism that enables teaching staff to immediately make learning interesting and effective both inside and outside the classroom.

It aims to influence teaching and learning outcomes of 7,000 students over three years by training 1,000 graduate teaching staff. So far, 175 tutors have been enrolled across 20 universities.

"We hope to achieve a critical mass once other universities come on board and the programme is replicated across other disciplines," said Dr Beatrice Muganda, PASGR's Director for Higher Education.

PedaL is designed to enable university teaching staff to create the appropriate environment for a holistic teaching and learning experience that integrates the student, content and a variety of learning materials.

The training approach uses a combination of strategies, such as use of case studies, flipped classroom, role plays, tricky topic teaching tools and a range of problem-based learning activities aimed at maximising learning outcomes and producing holistically grounded graduates.

Particular attention is paid to gender dynamics in the content of modules, selection of teaching and learning materials as well as classroom interactions. It also applies best practices on inclusivity, such as equitable class participation and seeking the voices of the marginalised groups to bring issues that affect them.



About PASGR

PASGR is a not-for-profit organisation based in Nairobi, Kenya. It aims to augment the capacity of African individual academics and researchers, as well as their institutions, to produce research that can better inform social policy and governance. For more information about PASGR please visit: <http://www.pasgr.org>

About SPHEIR

The SPHEIR (Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education Innovation and Reform) programme is established by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). It is designed to catalyse innovative partnerships in low-income countries to improve the performance, governance and influence of higher education systems and institutions.

SPHEIR partnerships seek to transform the quality, relevance, access and affordability of higher education to achieve sustainable change in higher education systems.

For more information visit: <http://www.spheir.org.uk/> and follow on social media via [#SPHEIR](#).

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