



## Increased Investments in Partnerships, Innovation to Drive Sustainable Growth

**Universities have been challenged to align their academic programmes with market-driven needs to promote skill development and entrepreneurship among the youth.**

University leaders were advised to review their curriculum to promote practical and entrepreneurial components relevant to the current job market. During the Third Forum for the Alliance of Entrepreneurial Universities in Africa, stakeholders recommended that the higher learning institutions should shift from primarily theoretical to a blended, skills-based curriculum that emphasises on both knowledge and application.

The experts identified skills-based learning as a significant area for improvement within higher education. They recommended the uptake of a practical approach to teaching through project-based assignments and problem-solving tasks aligned with market needs to equip students with essential and actionable insights.

The forum, which was held at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology (DeKUT) from 23-24 October 2024, was organised to promote discussions on fostering innovation and sustainable economic development across universities.

Guests and participants included government representatives, entrepreneurs, higher education experts, students, and senior leaders across local, regional and global private and government sectors.

The event was organised by Alliance for Entrepreneurial Universities in Africa, Origin Research and Innovation Labs, Universities Fund and Dedan Kimathi Students Innovation Centre. The event spotlighted innovation in various sectors including technology, digital arts, clean



*University students pitch their business idea during the Alliance of Entrepreneurial Universities in Africa forum.*

energy, and health, with practical examples from Hamara Africa, Semiconductor Technologies Ltd. (STL), Equity Group, and Intel Corporation.

State Department of Industry Principal Secretary Dr Juma Mukhwana emphasised the critical role of universities in aligning academic programmes with industry needs to support youth employment and economic resilience. Dr Mukhwana urged higher learning institutions to promote entrepreneurial culture, private-sector partnerships and research-driven revenue initiatives.

Increasing calls were made for the institutions to explore collaborative opportunities to address emerging challenges. According to the communiqué, the stakeholders underscored the significance of exposing learners to the job market through apprenticeship and internship to enable them gain hands-on experience and ease their transition from school to the job market.

“Regular corporate visits, guest lectures, and interaction sessions with established entrepreneurs can motivate students to pursue their entrepreneurial ambitions with a clearer

**From page 1**

vision of what success looks like and the steps required to achieve it," the document read.

Another key recommendation was strengthening investments in youth-led clubs to nurture entrepreneurship and innovation culture. The clubs, the document indicated, will provide members with access to mentorship programmes, funding avenues and training on leadership and strategic planning.

Universities Fund Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Monari underscored the need for universities to be self-sufficient by exploring alternative revenue streams aside from government funding.

Mr Monari said the forum was established to promote entrepreneurship to close the skills gap afflicting the Kenyan job market.

## **Universities Fund Plants Trees to Support Conservation Agenda**



*Universities Fund staff launch a tree-planting exercise at CEMASTEIA in Karen, Nairobi, on October 10, 2024.*

**The Universities Fund planted 1,000 trees to mark Mazingira Day that is aimed at shoring up the national government's efforts to tackle climate change and promote reforestation.**

Board Chairman Karuti Kanyinga and Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Monari led the staff in planting trees at the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEIA) in Karen on October 10, 2024.

The Fund was joined by Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Services Chief Executive Officer Agnes Mercy Wahome, officers from State Department for Higher Education and Research and members of the National Committee on the Review of

the New University Education Funding Model.

The group planted 1,000 seedlings. The effort will help the national government meet its target of planting at least 15.9 billion trees by 2032.

The team held another tree-planting session at the Kenya Medical Training College (KMTC). Some of the seedlings planted included apple, mango, hass avocados, loquats and oranges.

The campaign is anchored on the African Landscape Restoration Initiative launched by President William Ruto on December 22, 2022 to improve livelihoods and reduce greenhouse emission. It is also expected to mitigate deforestation.

With more than 700 million trees planted since the beginning of the campaign, the government hopes to increase the country's tree cover to 30 percent.

The initiative will combat the effects of climate change and environmental degradation brought about by years of deforestation, while restoring 5.1 million hectares of deforested and degraded landscapes.

Last year, the Fund teamed up with Kenya Forest Service in a tree planting exercise in Machakos County. The team planted 200 trees at Muumandu Forest.

The initiative sought to address issues of unpredictable rainfall patterns, floods and drought, as well as disease outbreaks.

## IN PICTURES: UF Celebrates Mazingira Day

**The Universities Fund (UF) and its stakeholders convened at the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEА) in Karen, Nairobi, on October 10, 2024 to celebrate Mazingira Day.**

The day was designated as a public holiday to promote environmental conservation through tree planting.

The occasion was led by Universities Fund Board Chairperson Prof Karuti Kanyinga and Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Monari. Below are the highlights:



*UF Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Monari plants a tree at CEMASTEА on October 10, 2024.*



*Universities Fund staff members plant trees at CEMASTEА in Karen on October 10, 2024 to promote environmental conservation.*



*Universities Fund Board Chair Karuti Kanyinga and Board member Diana Mutisya water a tree during Mazingira Day at CEMASTEА on October 10, 2024.*

## UF Celebrates Stakeholders during Customer Service Week

**Universities Fund celebrated its stakeholders during Customer Service Week from October 7-11, 2024.**

Under the theme “Above and Beyond”, UF organised various activities to celebrate stakeholders, including staff, who are key in supporting its mission.

A key activity carried out was a social media trivia challenge to test knowledge levels of stakeholders regarding the Fund’s services.

Participants who answered the questions correctly won various prizes. UF also celebrated its staff who work tirelessly to ensure stakeholders receive the best service. Speaking during a cake cutting ceremony



*Universities Fund employees launch Customer Service Week on October 7, 2024*

on October 9, Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Monari appreciated the support from partners and stakeholders, and reaffirmed the agency’s commitment to offering quality services towards transforming university education in Kenya.