

# Community University Engagement and Higher Education: the case of Gulu University in Uganda

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# Gulu University

- Gulu University is a public institution of higher education established by Statutory Instrument No. 31 of 2003.
- The University was set to serve as a launch pad for equitable development of Uganda providing knowledge and skills and stimulating innovations in education, technology, economic advancement and social development.
- The university was established as part of the restoration efforts in Northern Uganda after a very long period of about 50 years of social and economic disruption

# COMMUNITY UNIVERSITY ENGAGEMENT IS NOT NEW IN AFRICA

- CUE was talked about in 1963 by Julius Nyerere, who made a plea to African universities to shake off their elitist colonial mentality and contribute to society:
- *'...let us be quite clear; the University...has a very definite role to play in development in this area, and to do this effectively it must be in, and of, the community... The University of East Africa ... must direct its energies particularly towards the needs of East Africans...it's in this manner that the university will contribute to our development ...In this fight the university must take an active part, outside as well as inside the walls,'* (Nyerere,1963, cited in Mwaikokesya, 2012).

# Vision; Mission and Motto of Gulu University

- **Vision:**

- To be a leading academic institution for the promotion of **rural transformation** and **industrialization** for **sustainable development**.

- **Mission**

- To expand access to higher education, provide quality professional training for the delivery of appropriate social services and conduct research geared towards **rural transformation and sustainable development**.

- **Our motto is**

- “For **Community Transformation**”

# Current Academic Units at Gulu University

- **Currently, we have six faculties and two institutes informed by our Vision; Mission and Motto and stated above, these are:**
  - 1. Faculty of Agriculture and Environment
  - 2. Faculty of Business and Development Studies
  - 3. Faculty of Medicine
  - 4. Faculty of Science
  - 5. Faculty of Education and Humanities
  - 6. Faculty of Law
  - 7. Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies
  - 8. Institute of Research and Graduate Studies

# Gulu University Faculty of Agriculture

This was on the occasion of the visit by the Minister of Education and Sports The First Lady and Minister of Education and Sport Visiting the New Building that had just been completed by the government



# Community University Engagement at Gulu University

- At Gulu University this is not the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mission of the University but one of the three mission of the university because they are all of equal importance to the university.
- The University has a policy that guides and inform Community University Engagement. This makes engagement a core focus of the university.
- Note that in our formulation COMMUNITY come first and not University because the university exist for the community and not the other way round. University Community Engagement.

# Key areas for CUE Activities at Gulu University

- Tradition Medicinal Knowledge
- Climate Change initiative through addressing the national energy challenges for domestic cooking in Uganda.
- Indigenous Knowledge Systems. This one works in tandem with the traditional Medicinal Knowledge
- Conflict Resolution and reconciliation including Human Animal Conflicts, land conflict, including promotion of traditional justice system that focus on reconciliation and not the western retributive justice system.
- Issues of mental health care at community level.
- Improved farming practices

# Engagement with Traditional Herbalist

To illustrate the outcome of the benefit of knowledge democracy or multiple epistemology, I have picked one aspect of our engagement of with Traditional Medicinal Practitioners in the region.

# Dialogue Among Knowledge Systems

Our team of scholars at the forefront of CUE at Gulu University engaging in

- Community University engagement
- Indigenous Knowledge Systems
- Innovation
- acceptance and use of all forms of knowledge
- crossfertilisation of between different forms of Knowledge for the wellbeing of humanity.



# Meeting with the Community elders

This meeting is being held within the University facility established for the purpose.

It mimics the setting from which the elders come and the meeting is conducted in the way it is traditionally done under trees in the open compound of the Home.

This is intended to remove constraints in the thinking processes.



# Night meeting at the fireplace

This is a meeting at the fire place. Again we are engaging with the elders who are the traditional knowledge holders in creating a setting in which such meeting takes place.

In this kind of setting we engage in knowledge co-creation and the elders have authority and the traditional Medicinal practitioners have authority





# Training within formal university facilities

We do training in our modern institutional facilities. this is a training we conducted for the herbalist



## Some of the outcomes of our Engagement with the Traditional Herbalist

The Outcome of our continuous engagement with the traditional medicinal practitioners led to the realisation of COVID-19 remedies

This was a traditional respiratory tract infection therapy

