



ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES
ASSOCIATION DES UNIVERSITES AFRICAINES
اتحاد الجامعات الإفريقية

ASSOCIATION OF
AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

OUR JOURNEY TO 2025

2020 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN
(Abridged Version)



**Promoting Socioeconomic
Development through Higher Education**

CONTENTS

- 3 Why Higher Education is Key**
- 4 The Association of African Universities**
- 5 Our Vision**
- 5 Our Mission**
- 5 Our Core Values**
- 7 Our Strategic Priorities**



WHY HIGHER EDUCATION IS KEY

Higher education is central to social and economic development of all societies. The crucial role of higher education in economic and social development has been acknowledged by various international development agendas including the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA 16-25); and Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 (STISA 2024). Higher education underpins all development targets, from poverty reduction to employability, health to environmental sustainability. Meeting these targets depends upon skilled graduates and research evidence.

Universities and other higher education institutions equip people with the skills they need to create jobs, take up employments, and drive innovation, progress, and prosperity through cutting-edge research. Furthermore, universities

are a critical part of the education ecosystem underpinning SDG Goal 4 on quality education since they train teachers and create pedagogical content for basic schools (primary and secondary schools), and support lifelong learning. Universities also equip people with skills to develop solutions that address local, national, and global challenges.

The past decades have seen a rapid and vast increase in the number of people studying at university. However, access to quality education continues to be dependent on geography and wealth, and gender parity at postgraduate level and in many academic disciplines is yet to be achieved. More young women need to be supported to enhance their skills at both Masters and PhD levels. Higher education's contribution to meeting the SDGs is a priority, while higher education access and inclusion, including gender equity, is key.



The Association of African Universities (AAU)

The Association of African Universities (AAU) promotes collaboration, cooperation, academic linkages and exchange of information on higher education issues across the continent as well as supports its members in their core functions of teaching, learning, knowledge generation and its dissemination through fundamental and applied research and community engagement.

The Association sets higher education intellectual agenda by, inter alia, convening biennial international conferences of university leaders

which plays a key advocacy role in raising awareness for and about the major needs of African higher education institutions.

As a longstanding education stakeholder at the continental level, the AAU is a champion of higher education uniquely positioned to execute various strategic activities such as the World Bank ACE Project; African Union's CESA Higher Education Cluster, Sida Research Corporation & Institutional Support, and IDRC Research Management initiatives.



SETTING INTELLECTUAL AGENDA

The AAU sets the Intellectual Agenda on the African higher education landscape that interrogates issues that underpin the continent's socioeconomic development.

The Association engages its higher education audience via various activities including biannual high-quality journal and other publications; webinars; AAU TV programmes; cutting edge and policy relevant research.



A PLATFORM FOR COLLABORATION

At AAU, we believe that regional and international collaboration is central to Africa's developmental aspirations. Through its biennial and other high-level conferences and events, the Association brings university leaders and other higher education stakeholders together from around the world and through this helps to promote collaboration, advance knowledge, promote understanding, and ultimately improve lives of Africans.



A CHAMPION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The AAU is the African Union's Implementing Agency on Higher Education and coordinates the CESA Higher Education Cluster.

It advocates for African higher Education and maintains close working relationships with regional bodies and international organizations such as ECOWAS, IUCEA, CAMES, RUFORUM, PASGR, IAU, AWAU, IRD, AUF, OBREAL Global and ESSA.

- One of Africa's oldest higher education organizations, established in 1967.
- More than 400 member universities in 46 African countries.
- Governed by member universities through an elected Council of Institutional Heads.
- More than 2,000 higher education personnel benefit from AAU training programmes annually.
- Member university visibility through the AAU TV.
- Research Outputs Visibility through the Database of African Theses and Dissertations (DATAD).



AAU VISION

To be the leading advocate for higher education in Africa, with the capacity to provide support for its member institutions in meeting national, continental and global needs



AAU MISSION

To enhance the quality and relevance of higher education in Africa and strengthen its contribution to Africa's development



AAU CORE VALUES

-  Academic freedom
-  Transparency
-  Accountability
-  Equity and Inclusiveness
-  Excellence and Professionalism
-  Responsiveness
-  Sustainability
-  Teamwork, cooperation and solidarity





AAU STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1 Strategic Result 1: Favourable Policy Environment

- The AAU will lead dialogue and policy debates around key issues in African higher education and promote the role of universities in sustainable development by:
- Advocating for higher education policies that promote academic freedom by guaranteeing freedom of teachers and students to teach, study, and pursue knowledge and research.
 - Setting intellectual agenda and advancing knowledge by generating credible evidence as basis for providing reliable advice on policies and practices in higher education in Africa;
 - Promoting cutting edge and policy relevant research on the SDGs;
 - Convening and facilitating fora for debate and dialogue on higher education in Africa eg COREVIP;
 - Publication of biannual International Journal of Higher Education Policy in Africa (IJHEPA), as well as commissioned studies and webinars;
 - Promoting scholarly work via AAU TV Programmes;
 - Lobbying African states to domesticate and operationalize continental and regional frameworks for higher education eg ASG; and
 - Promoting gender responsive and gender transformative initiatives.

2 Strategic Result 2: Strengthening Institutional Capacity of Stakeholders

The AAU will strengthen the institutional capacity of key stakeholders by:

- Undertaking capacity strengthening programmes for member HEIs;
- Decentralisation of AAU functions and service delivery;
- Organizing Africans in the diaspora to leverage capacity in African HEIs;
- Harnessing ICT among HEIs to enhance their access to and sharing of knowledge;
- Strengthening the capacity of AAU secretariat to effectively and efficiently serve its stakeholders.

3 Strategic Result 3: Promoting Harmonization, Standardization for Competitiveness and Collaboration

The AAU will promote harmonization and standardization in order to enhance competitiveness and inter-institutional collaboration and networking by:

- Establishing higher education data bank that will be a one-stop information centre for HEIs in Africa;
- Operationalizing the African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM);
- Establishing platforms for knowledge exchange and visibility of member HEIs eg DATAD; AAU TV.

4 Strategic Result 4: Resource Mobilization for Sustainability

The AAU will explore other mechanisms for sustainable financing by:

- Mobilizing more HEIs to join the Association;
- Strengthening the capacity of AAU to competitively bid for funding;
- Exploring other funding sources such as endowment, investments and partnerships.



ASSOCIATION OF AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES
ASSOCIATION DES UNIVERSITES AFRICAINES
اتحاد الجامعات الإفريقية

Association of African Universities (AAU)

African Universities House,
Trinity Avenue, East Legon,
P. O. Box AN 5744,
Accra, Ghana

Phone:

+233 302 774495
+233 302 761588

Email:

secgen@aau.org