

Towards employability of graduates in higher education system
Institute for Social Research, Kampala International University

The Minds-on*Hearts-on*Hands-on Learning Engagements (MHHLE) highlighted
by ACU on March 17, 2016

**The Association
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Articles



Social responsibility in action

Dr. Novembrieta R. Sumil, PhD, Director, Institute for Social Research, Kampala international University, Uganda

The Kampala International University is introducing a greater focus on social responsibility with a programme of direct interactions with the local population and staff across the institution. Dr Novembrieta Sumil, Director of KIU's Institute for Social Research, explains the work done in their *Minds On*Hearts On*Hands On* project. [Read more](#)

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Social Responsibility In Action (cont.)

NB: The KIU blog that follows was the final edited article by ACU sent to ISR-KIU by e-mail. If you wish to access this article on line (<https://www.acu.ac.uk/membership/member-communities/engage/>) you may have to follow their instructions and requirements as you register or log in.

Beyond the fundamental precepts on social responsibility: the minds-on hearts-on and hands-on learning engagements of Kampala International University

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Published 17 March 2016

Abstract:

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give” (Winston Churchill).

“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future” (Franklin Delano Roosevelt).

On September 28-29, 2015 at the Iddi Bassajabalaba Memorial Library, [Kampala International University \(KIU\)](#), Uganda, East Africa, I opened the First In-House Research Forum with these two striking principles. Their inclusion, passionately expressed by the opening speaker, introduced the fundamental precepts on social responsibility as the theme of the forum.

Defining social responsibility

Social responsibility orchestrates proactive stance, voluntary and philanthropic behaviors in one direction, which positively influences a society and its people. However, many individuals perceive, and strive towards the concept of social responsibility in many different ways. Some reflect their good intentions in voluntary work, but spend less time, money and effort than others, while, to some people, social responsibility is never a choice.

On the other hand, to some other people, social responsibility is very important. Their commitment to these principles, values and belief systems become integral to their way of life. It is this type of people who are the real socially responsible inhabitants in this planet.

Hence, if we do our part, we can make the world a better place for us and the next generation. In the light of this noble orientation on social responsibility, Kampala International University, through its [Institute for Social Research \(ISR\)](#), hosted the First In-House Research Forum to align our institution with the United Nations Academic Impact and Association of Commonwealth Universities in the realization of a shared culture of intellectual social responsibility through research, dissemination and consequent utilization of research findings.

Social responsibility in practice

Dr. Annette Kezaabu Kasimbazi, in her keynote address during this forum, described further social responsibility as making a difference to the socio-economic well-being of our communities and the wider society through teaching, research, public events and activities such as engaging policy-makers with one's research, taking part in environmental sustainability initiatives, starting a social enterprise and getting involved with the community-university partnership initiatives.

Teaching and academic research enrich and inform society and provide the context in which policy and technological innovations can advance. She emphasized the benefits of going back to the original research participants and communicating the projects' conclusions in a simple and understandable manner, thereby enabling the participants to accept and utilize the research findings. She linked this to the practice of participatory action research that encourages dialogue between the community, organizations and government.

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The forum featured an anthology of empirical studies linked to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), published internationally through the efforts of KIU's Institute for Social Research. These empirical studies and corresponding authors were:

- [*Trend, Levels and Differences for Under-Five Mortality Rate in Uganda \(U5MR\): Is Uganda on Track in Achieving the Millennium Development Goal 4?*](#) (Edson Mwebesa);
- [*Information Technology \(IT\) Based Education Services in Selected Kenyan Universities*](#) (Tindi Nuru Seje);
- [*Economics of Tuition Fees: Cost-Benefit Analysis of a Differentiated Tuition Fee System in Selected Ugandan Universities*](#) (Kibs Muhanguzi)
- [*Challenges from Language Shift in Rwanda: Advocating Intercultural Dialogue as a Commitment Principle for the Millennium Development Goals*](#) (Asingwire Richard).

The eight, time-bound targets of the MDGs ended in September 2015, however the ongoing influx of empirical data can contribute to the sustainability of the MDGs and work towards meeting the new [SDGs](#) for the next 15 years.

Uganda's MDG success

The MDGs regime in Uganda within the context of the keynote address of Prof. Peter Kazinga Tibenderana highlighted these facts: Uganda received a reward of EUR21.7 million (about UGX 88 billion) from the European Union (EU) for its [commendable work towards the attainment of the MDGs](#). The funds were part of the general budget support from the EU in recognition of the progress Uganda has made in sustaining socio-economic development and attaining its MDG agenda between 2013 and 2014. The EU rewarded Uganda for keeping a favorable macro economic environment in the past years, characterized by low and stable inflation and resilient growth rates. Uganda has also experienced strong economic growth rates, averaging 5% annually over the past ten years.

The EU support also sought to reward the government's efforts in decreasing absolute poverty; impressive progress in school enrolment rates; girls' education; increased immunization rates and fight against HIV/AIDS and malaria. According to the HIV and AIDS Uganda Country Progress Report, 2014, Uganda is among 7 out of 21 countries that have experienced a reduction in new infections among children by 60%. The country also made recommendable progress on measles immunization with the rate increasing to 75.8% in 2011. Uganda is among the few countries that halved extreme poverty before the 2015 MDG deadline. According to the Uganda Poverty Status Report, 2014, the poverty levels dropped from 33.8% in 1999/2000 to 19.7% in 2012/2013 and the number of pupils enrolling for the Universal Primary Education (UPE), started in 1997, increased with at least 67% of enrolled pupils completing a full course of primary schooling.

Minds-on, hearts-on, hands-on

The In-House Research Forum is held twice a year and is part of the **Minds-On Hearts-On Hands-On Learning Engagements (MHHLE)** in three types of learner engagements; cognitive, affective/behavior and motor engagements. The MHHLE is an ongoing research-based project of the ISR, KIU since March 2014 that utilizes applied research and development components (action research, evaluation research, experimental research). This project is in support of the proactive stance of KIU on the triad functions of higher education institutions (HEI) which is teaching, research and community service.

The KIU staff, students, and alumni may participate in any of these engagements for free.

Engagement 1 (Teaching) is held weekly, consisting of free hands-on sessions with statistical software (EXCEL, SPSS, STATA) or enhancement workshops on research topics and social issues,

Engagement 2 (Research) is our in-house research forum which provides guidance on statistical computations, assistance on research mechanics, editing of articles, international publications and power point presentations.

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Engagement 3 (Community Engagement) looks at extension services and community based research which is held twice a year in a 3 pronged approach:

- *knowledge sharing* through seminars and lectures;
- *skills development* through hands-on computer sessions and
- *goods for free* after attending the two latter activities.

Employability in local education

On March 3, 2016, the team from the Institute for Social Research (ISR) of KIU connected with over 230 students and staff from Bugema University, Uganda, to share a culture of intellectual social responsibility and help develop efforts to improve the employability of young people in the region.

In my presentation I stressed that, aside from academic qualifications, employers worldwide are concerned about the soft skills of the people they want to hire, skills such as communication, teamwork, working under pressure, emotional intelligence, and influencing others. Dr. Manuel Sumil, on the other hand, discussed how to write an effective curriculum vitae and how to be successful at a job interview.

Other presentations focused on grants; exploring their life cycle and giving advice on bid writing. It was stressed that being accepted for a grant is a rich nutrient to one's career progression, credibility and experience.

Furthermore, on March 16, 2016, 32 secondary school teachers from Top Times High School and Kirojo College Nakasongola, Uganda, were trained by the ISR team to proactively engage with their students. This training targeted both secondary school students and trainee teachers to embed the concept of employability in a secondary school setting.