# Editorial

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*"We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors;*
*we borrow it from our children."*
Haida Proverb

As a continent, Africa is often branded as the continent plagued with wars, terrorism, coups and a range of social self-inflicted woes. The narrative is changing as the Continent's citizenry becomes increasingly aware of democratic practices and governance processes taking place in other countries. This is, in the main, buoyed by telecommunications and, particularly, social media, which is increasingly playing an educational role in Africa's citizenry. Signe and Gurib-Fakim (2019) commented that the transformation that Africa has undergone in recent decades has been remarkable. Africa is shaping its own destiny and should be referred to as the 'African opportunity' instead of the threat. Recognising Africa as an opportunity rather than a threat is critical for governments, citizens and researchers globally as it will position Africa's countries to face challenges and further boost desired development trends.

In this edition of the *African Journal of Governance and Development*, we explore issues of foreign aid, secondary education, higher education and social media. We explore these issues with a view to scope out the opportunities and challenges in shaping Africa's development trajectory and build the Africa we want.

In the article *Foreign Aid, External Debt and Economic Growth in Africa, Mwakalila* uses governance indicators to empirically analyse the impact of foreign aid and external debt on economic growth in Africa. The results of Mwakalila's study first suggest that in general, both foreign aid and external debt have a negative impact on the economy of Africa, with external debt causing more harm to the economy than foreign aid when taking the coefficient magnitude into account. Second, elements of good governance significantly affect the extent to which foreign aid and external debt affects the economy. This implies that those African countries that apply good governance processes are most likely to benefit from foreign aid and loans in boosting desired development trends.

Foreign aid requires judicious use so that countries progressively wean themselves from it. One way that this can be done is through research and training. The role of institutions of higher learning should not be underestimated in this regard. For it is only when countries innovate and research local solutions that they will realise desired development outcomes.

What is the state of research in our higher institutions of learning? **Ayiorwoth and Kyohairwe** bemoan the fact that higher education institutions have become arenas of political betting rather than places of knowledge and skill generation and development, yet universities and other higher

education institutions (HEIs) have visions, missions, goals, strategic objectives and core values that act as guidelines for rational managerial decisions that typically relate to research and teaching as well as community engagement. A matter that rarely receives recognition is the management of institutions of higher learning and managing academics themselves – a phenomenon that Garrett and Davies refer to as *'herding cats'* in reference to the unique challenge of leading and managing in HEIs. Ayiorwoth and Kyohairwe unpack this phenomenon using the Thomas's analytical framework and concur with Thomas's view (2003) that neither real managerial work has much to do with the classical functions of planning, organising, issuing commands using formal and scientific techniques in sync with Fayol's view, nor is it a neutral administrative function executed for the benefit of those who cooperate in productive activity. In the agency and Marxist perspective, management is seen as an exploitative and repressive function by managers (agents) who engage in the maintenance of the organisational and power systems and take advantage of the principals of HEIs. This diversity of views suggests that management is no simple function to define or undertake. Individual managers apply context-specific objective or subjective means to obtain either collective or personal benefits or outcomes. There is thus a level where HEIs become arenas of political betting rather than places of knowledge and skill development.

It is not only management of HEIs that should be of concern in Africa's pursuit to generate knowledge and skills that drive our development ideals, for these are at the exit end of the education system. The entry side should be much of a concern too and specifically, the quality of pedagogical practices in public secondary schools in Uganda as these determine the calibre of youth that join the labour market. In his article, *Teacher Support Systems and Quality of Pedagogical Practices in Public Secondary Schools in Uganda,* **Malunda** examined the extent to which supervision and evaluation of teachers explain variations in the quality of pedagogical practices. Malunda concludes that the quality of pedagogical practices is significantly anchored on teacher support systems yet the formative evaluation systems are barely in place and summative teacher evaluation is irregular in Uganda's public secondary schools. The situation is, in part, attributed to the fact that head teachers of several public secondary schools lack the competence in teacher performance appraisal. This calls for a nationally-driven standardised teacher evaluation tool to be used in the continuous assessment of performance for all secondary schools in Uganda. An effective secondary school system significantly contributes to the socio-economic development of a country and is the foundation of not only a strong labour force, but also a critical society that participates in and contributes to public discourse in a mature and responsible manner.

A critical and responsible citizenry is important in a thriving democracy. This is particularly so in a decentralised governance system where participatory and accountable governance contributes to effective delivery of public services. Inculcating accountable governance, however, remains a challenge. **Shava and Mubangizi's** article explores the challenges encountered by the City of Tshwane in responding to citizen demands for social accountability. They conclude that a myriad factors, including limited skills, political interference and a lack of compliance with legislation, adversely affect the capacity of the municipality to exercise social accountability. Based on this

finding and drawing on best practice elsewhere, they recommend that participation of citizens in social accountability can be improved through the use of the already existing digital platforms (Wi-Fi hotspots, social network platforms, Facebook, Twitter and municipal website). These modern information communication technology (ICT) innovations can be utilised effectively to exercise accountability to communities while enabling communities to voice their concerns. Further, wide publicity is required to ensure that citizens are enlightened on how social accountability mechanisms, including social audits and citizen-based monitoring, can be utilised to bring local government officials to account.

But the blessings of modern ICT and digital platforms do not leave us unscathed. Specifically, many social media users tend to embrace and utilise health remedies posted on social media without questioning their authenticity, thus exposing themselves to harmful health practices. In their article, **Kaguhangire-Barifaijo and Kibazo** question the role of 'development education' in employed and ethnography inquiry and interactive techniques to unravel the reasons why social media users do not employ a critical approach to analyse information published on social media. The authors bemoan the paucity of development education in Uganda's educational system and a weak focus on critical pedagogy and processes of learning in the curriculum.

The Africa Union has set Agenda 2063 as the lighthouse of building the Africa we want and reflects the efforts and commitment by Africans to accept greater ownership and chart a new direction for the future that eliminates extreme poverty and encourages inclusive growth. While many African countries will rely on foreign investment and external debt in the foreseeable future, the ideals of Agenda 2063 enjoin African countries to increasingly wean themselves of foreign aid and aspire to be a prosperous continent, with the means and resources to drive its own development and long-term stewardship of its resources. As **Mwakalila's** work shows – this is possible when judicious governance processes are applied in the planning, implementation and evaluation of development programmes and where capable institutions and transformative leadership exists at all levels

Discussions in this edition show that strong education systems that nurture critical pedagogy and community education will ensure that the citizens of Africa are actively involved in decision-making in all aspects of development and are empowered to play their rightful role in all spheres of life. Indeed - a fundamental aspect of good governance is the nurturing of a citizenry that is responsibly critical of its leadership, one which participates in governance processes of budgeting, planning and monitoring of agreed plans. The concept of governance is the central theme of the review of a book featured in this Issue. In the book the authors argue that the term governance is "facing a substantial risk of losing urgency and relevance as it drowns in multiple definitions, forms and applications" Everatt (2019). In her review of the book **Ruffin** highlights the effort made by the authors to unpack and make sense of the, often illusive, term governance while advising on the need to craft new Africanised frameworks of governance in the transformation of African countries.

# References

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