

Navigating the Post-2000 Terrain

A Policy Diagnostics of African Studies in Uganda

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ABSTRACT

The field of African Studies in Uganda has undergone significant transformation following major national and continental policy shifts. This evolution has created a complex institutional and intellectual landscape, necessitating a systematic analysis of the prevailing policy environment and its impact on knowledge production. This policy analysis aims to diagnose the contemporary state of African Studies in the country, identifying the principal policy-driven challenges and opportunities that have shaped the discipline. It seeks to evaluate the coherence between national higher education frameworks and the operational realities within academic departments. The study employs a qualitative policy diagnostics approach, combining a critical review of relevant policy documents with in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a purposively selected cohort of senior academics, department heads, and research institute directors. A central finding is a pronounced thematic reorientation towards applied, development-focused research, with over two-thirds of interviewees noting a corresponding de-emphasis on foundational historical and philosophical scholarship. The analysis identifies a critical misalignment between decentralised curriculum mandates and centralised university funding mechanisms. The post-policy terrain has fundamentally reconfigured the priorities and practices of African Studies, creating a fragmented ecosystem where instrumentalist agendas often undermine disciplinary depth and critical intellectual autonomy. Policymakers should establish a dedicated cross-institutional funding stream for foundational humanities research within African Studies. University senates must be empowered to develop more integrated curriculum frameworks that reconcile national development goals with core disciplinary rigour. African Studies, policy analysis, higher education, knowledge production, Uganda, curriculum development This article provides the first comprehensive policy diagnostics of the field, introducing a novel analytical framework that links macro-level education policy with micro-level departmental governance and scholarly practice.

Keywords: *African Studies, policy analysis, Uganda, higher education, decolonisation, knowledge production*

Article Highlights

- Diagnosis reveals a critical misalignment between decentralised curriculum mandates and centralised university funding.
- Over two-thirds of scholars report a de-emphasis on foundational historical and philosophical scholarship.
- The post-2000 policy terrain has fundamentally reconfigured the priorities and practices of the discipline.

Policy Recommendation

Establish a dedicated cross-institutional funding stream for foundational humanities research within African Studies to reconcile national development goals with core disciplinary rigour.

This analysis introduces a novel framework linking macro education policy with micro-level scholarly practice.

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

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