QUALITY EDUCATION
AND THE AFRICAN UNIVERSITY OF THE FUTURE

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THE KEY ISSUES

1. **What** is 'quality education'?

2. What experiences of education, and what outcomes of education, are **valued** by young African graduates?

3. Are there any **skills missing**?

4. How can key moments of **transition** – into higher education, through higher education and into livelihoods – be supported better?

5. *Towards a future African university: promise and rupture*

QUALITY IS CONTESTED AND CONTEXT-SPECIFIC

What counts as high-quality education depends on the context and the expectations and experiences of different stakeholders.

QUALITY EDUCATION NEEDS RESOURCES

Students value...

- ✓ High-quality teaching and lecturing
- ✓ A conducive learning environment (ICT, infrastructure)
- ✓ Wrap-around support and skills training

QUALITY EDUCATION INVOLVES 'SOFT' ISSUES

Preference is:

- ✓ High expectations for academic success
- ✓ Feeling of belonging
- ✓ Studying abroad

QUALITY PRODUCES RETURNS
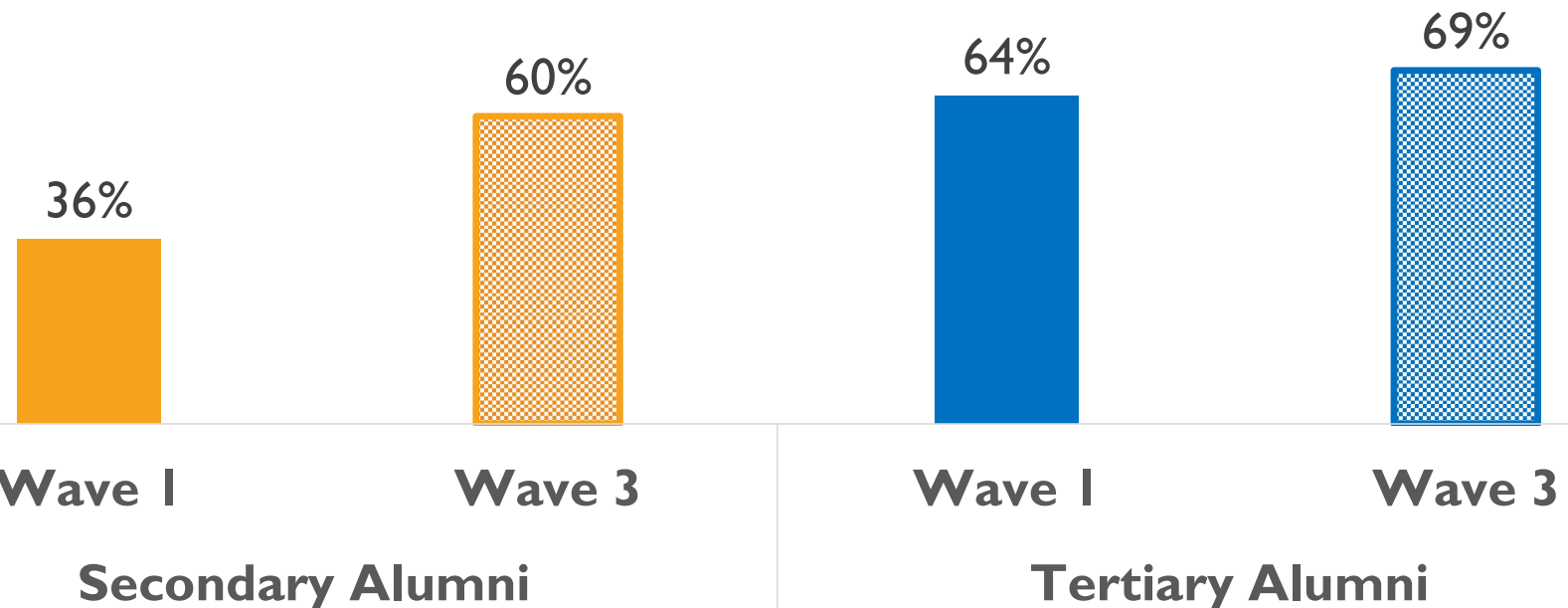
With high-quality education:

- ✓ I am on course with achieving my career aspirations (employment, further studies, entrepreneurship)
- ✓ I gained the networks and skills needed

mastercard foundation
Scholars Program

HSRC
Human Sciences
Research Council

The Imprint of Education

Progress and Pitfalls
23 to 29 July, 2023
Diamonds Leisure Beach & Golf Resort
Diani Beach, Kenya

MORE TERTIARY THAN SECONDARY ALUMNI FELT THEY EXPERIENCED HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION

% Alumni who **"Strongly Agreed"** that they experienced high quality education

Secondary Alumni		Tertiary Alumni	
36%	60%	64%	69%
Wave 1	Wave 3	Wave 1	Wave 3

QUALITY EDUCATION PRODUCES MATERIALLY SECURE CHANGE AGENTS

"I think beyond the technical abilities there is also the soft skills that sell people more so now than ever… But we are also thinking beyond that" [Institution G, 2020]

(1) be comfortably employed or a successful entrepreneur

(2) have the skills and dispositions to be change agents in society

EDUCATION AND TRANSITION SUPPORT MUST BE CONTEXT-SPECIFIC

"The job market is such that it's a local job market.

… support in transitions is preparing a student to enter, to land back home, after graduation, with everything equipped to help them find a job in the local market …

… whether that's through one-on-one career coaching, through CVs, their workshops, professional development workshops, etc.

… I very much see the career transitions as like a learning and development process rather as a placement process"

(Institution A, 2022)

UNEMPLOYED GRADUATES PERCEIVE MORE SKILLS GAPS

% Tertiary Alumni who "Strongly Agreed"

	Working, studying and/or entrepreneur		Unemployed	
	Wave 1	Wave 3	Wave 1	Wave 3
	53%	60%	31%	53%
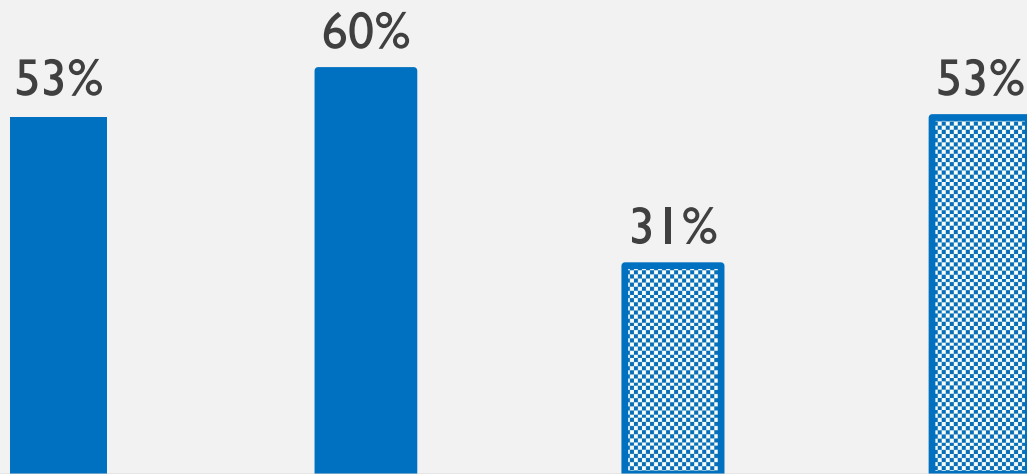
"The courses and subjects I took gave me the skills that I needed for the career I wanted"

PRACTICAL SKILLS ARE CRUCIAL

"I had some skills I acquired from school, but then when I reached my career, then I had **big gaps** because I know them from theory, but I never practised them"

(Josiane/Rwanda_2017_F30_2021_III)

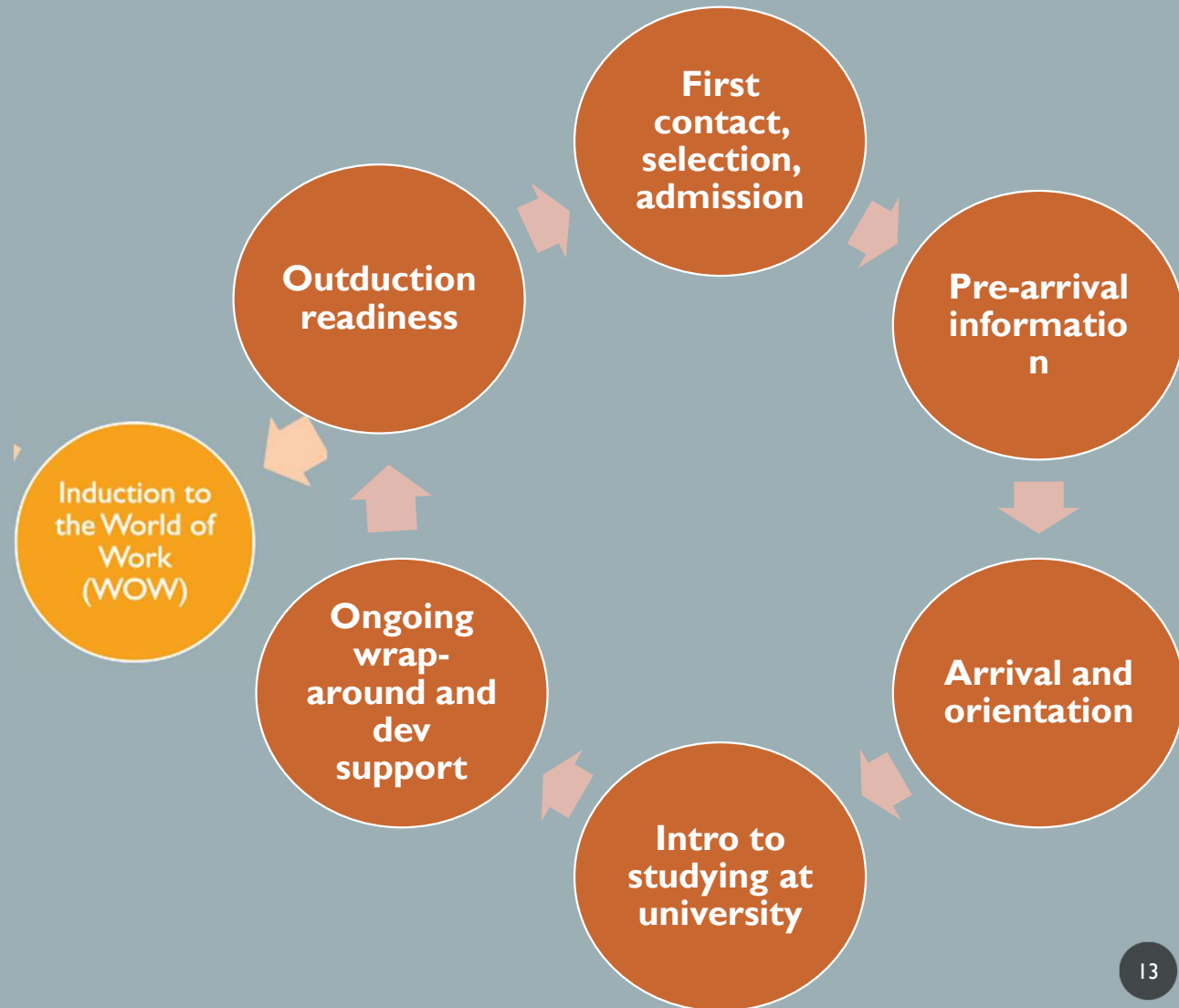"It's the same communication studies, but one is teaching students literature in English, … asking people … to read Hamlet, and answer questions on Hamlet. **The other university** is preparing students to make podcasts based on an identified niche, publish that podcast and **make money** out of it"

(Pedro/Ghana_2018_M26_2021_III)

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TRANSITION 'WRAP AROUND' SUPPORT

"You can actually identify someone... who has been on the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program and one who hasn't… *we win because we have been trained to*"

(Shirley/Uganda_2020_F24_2021_III)

First contact, selection, admission

Pre-arrival information

Arrival and orientation

Intro to studying at university

Ongoing wrap-around and dev support

Induction to the World of Work (WOW)

Outduction readiness

HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION AND SUPPORT IS OFFERED THROUGHOUT THE LIFE-CYCLE
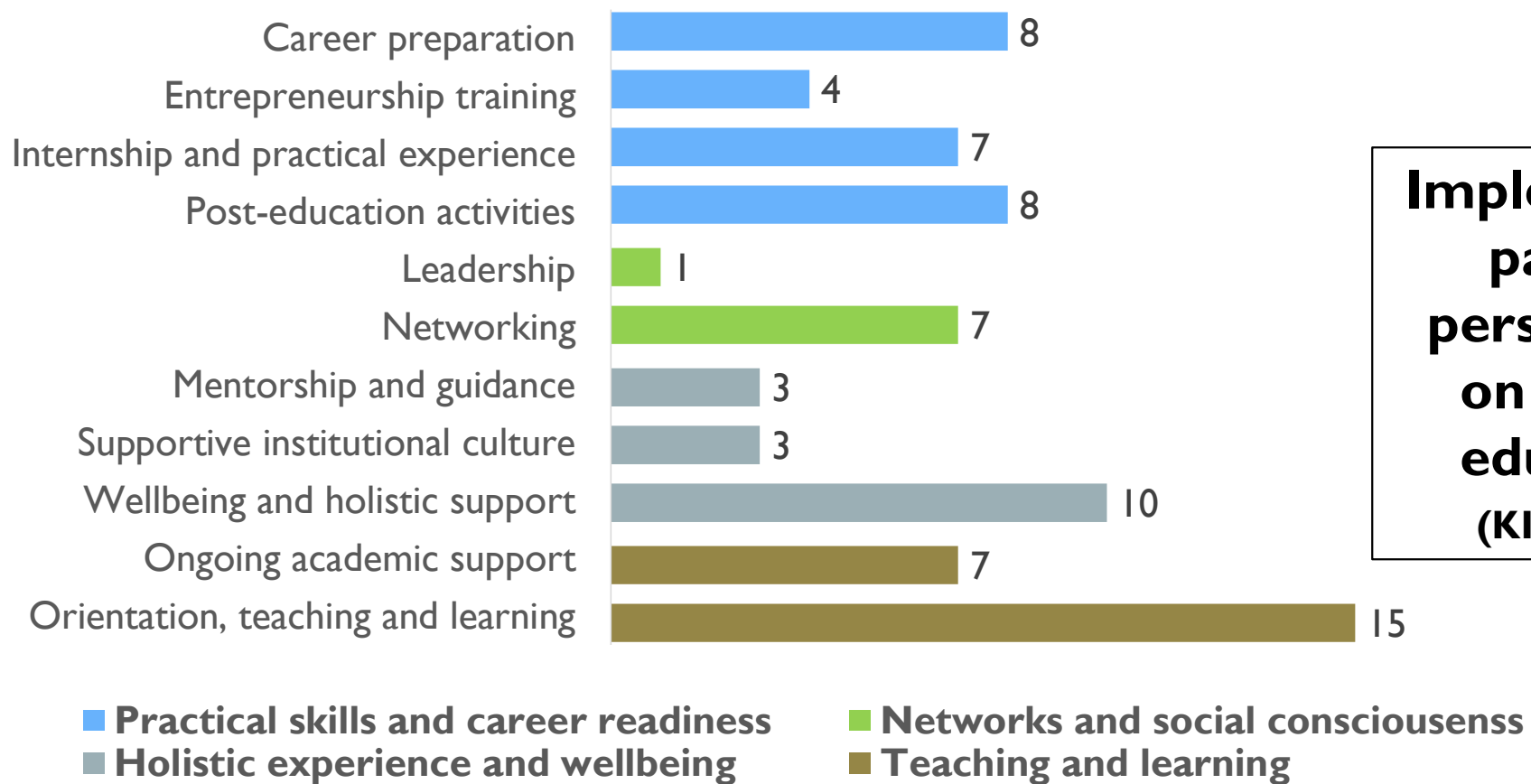
Implementing partner perspectives on quality education
(KIIs Year 1)

Career preparation — 8
Entrepreneurship training — 4
Internship and practical experience — 7
Post-education activities — 8
Leadership — 1
Networking — 7
Mentorship and guidance — 3
Supportive institutional culture — 3
Wellbeing and holistic support — 10
Ongoing academic support — 7
Orientation, teaching and learning — 15

- **Practical skills and career readiness**
- **Networks and social consciousenss**
- **Holistic experience and wellbeing**
- **Teaching and learning**

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WRAP-AROUND AND TRANSITION SUPPORT IS HIGHLY VALUED

"The first one is the financial support... and also the psychosocial support. ...They used to bring people to talk to us. Leadership, things to do with transitioning from university to work,... HR management, how do you prepare ... write your CV and with African Careers Network....They prepared us for all that life and ... you're wholly prepared to transition"

(Deborah/Uganda_2019_F25_2022_III)

"The Mastercard Foundation was more of a whole package. There is the mentorship, there is leadership training, there is all sorts of things that you get to learn and also become a leader and also they will give you roles … they delegate something for you and you do it as if you're the one responsible for it…."

(Clementine/Kenya_2018_F31_2022_III)

ELEMENTS OF QUALITY EDUCATION

1. Offers institutional <u>resources</u> (infrastructure, ICT, quality teaching and learning) and <u>opportunities</u>

2. Challenges and exceeds students' <u>expectations</u>

3. "Opens up the <u>eyes</u> and the <u>mind</u>"

4. Develops <u>self-confidence</u>, exposure, career and soft skills

5. Provides wrap-around <u>transition</u> <u>support</u> in HE and into the WOW

6. Empowers to achieve <u>aspirations</u> with <u>skills</u>, <u>knowledge</u>, <u>attitudes</u>, and <u>networks</u>

THE FUTURE AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

1. African universities have distinct histories, trajectories, and mandates

2. There are generalist undergraduate; narrow and specialist; tertiary TVET (polytechnic); and research-oriented institutions

3. Key challenges include:

   Governance, resources, staffing (brain drain), students (massification), curriculum renewal (decolonisation), student transition support

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THE FUTURE AFRICAN UNIVERSITY MUST BE ACCESSIBLE

"Many universities have struggled with issues of **cost and access**, with only a fraction of the youth graduating from high school and an even smaller fraction going to university… The potential for **aggregation** produced by the **economies of scale** in the virtual world, which have been evidenced by the success of Facebook and Google, offer the possibility of **knowledge being made much more widely available in an affordable way**"
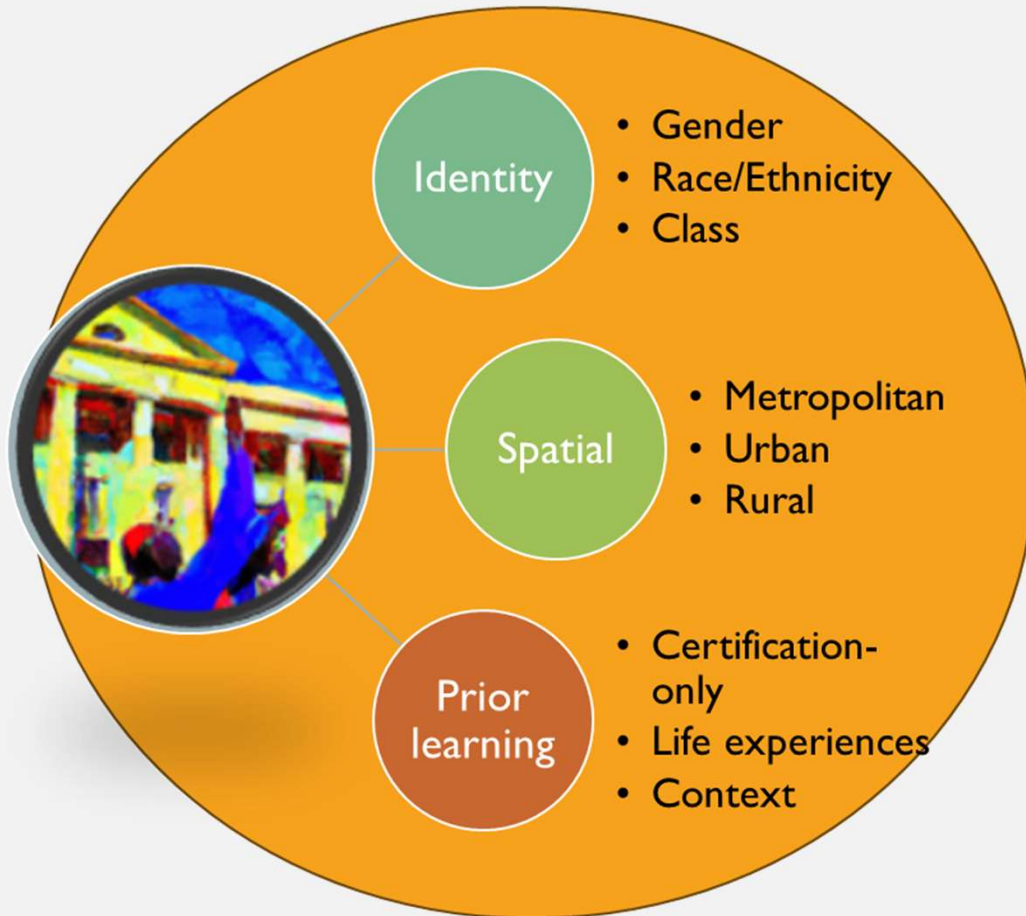
(Condo_Odora-Hoppers_LA4_2021_EARTH-University-Team)

- Affordable for all
- Wrap-around and transition support
- Safe, diverse, inclusive, developmental environment
- Accessible for all, conducive infrastructure
- Online and blended learning

Access

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WE NEED TO HOLD CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ACCESS

Identity
- Gender
- Race/Ethnicity
- Class

Spatial
- Metropolitan
- Urban
- Rural

Prior learning
- Certification-only
- Life experiences
- Context

"The argument that universities should be open to all and… government targets for expanding massification have placed great strain on these institutions…

An alternative approach would be to cut the size of student cohorts…
There would then be the problem of how to cater to those youth who have now been denied the opportunity to access a university education"

(Chikane_Luescher_LA4_2021_YTL)

WE NEED TO HOLD CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ACCESS

"It is in a nation's interests that its most talented young people, wherever they may be found, are provided with the best available educational opportunities and experience. Every effort to overcome the obstacles to such access, whether these are financial or based on disability or gender, needs to be taken"

(Atewologun_Everatt_LA4_2021_SCH)
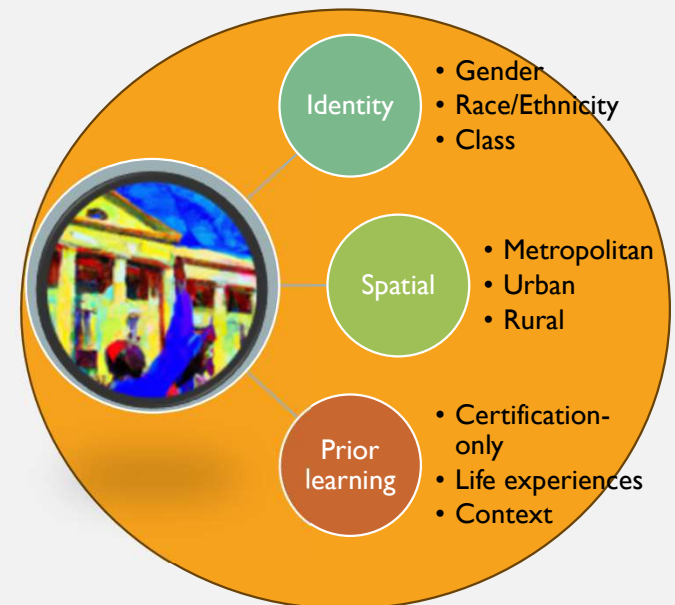
THE FUTURE AFRICAN UNIVERSITY NEEDS THE **5 IQS**

"The future African university should be an open hub of innovation, dealing with issues such as "entrepreneurship, problem-solving, innovation, technology, climate change, teamwork and [offer] an inclusive environment that allows people to dream of a new future"

(Manu/Ghana_2018_M28_Par18_2021_III)

Internat'l

ICTs

Inclusive

5 iQs

Innovative

Indigenous

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AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES MUST CREATE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

Applied knowledge and skills

Internships and links to employers

Entrepreneurship skills

LLL and transferable skills

WOW transition support

"I would design a university whereby I collaborate with the employers, like let's say there's a software developer, like myself, collaborate with say IBM, Microsoft, Facebook, to have them build their labs on the university. And then they can make use of our students in those labs to work on some of the problems"

(Henry/Ghana_2019_M33_Par 9_2021_III)

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WHAT MUST CHANGE

#1 **MF/Institutions:** Support interventions offered to Scholarship recipients should be **mainstreamed** institution-wide (e.g. skills development, mentoring).

#2 **Institutions** should **work closely with employers** to renew curricula and infrastructure and offer practical training and internships to be more career-relevant.

#3 **MF/Partners/Institutions:** Investment made in training lecturers and student affairs practitioners to **professionalise** higher education.

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A TWEET/THREAD TO SUMMARISE

High quality education gives talented, young African graduates the tools to pursue opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship and to be change agents in their social environment #ReimagineHigherEducation

WHAT WE'D STILL LIKE TO KNOW

1. What struck you about the presentation "Quality education and the African university of the future"? Agreements? Disagreements? What's missing?

2. What are the key skills that you missed when you graduated or are still missing now?

3. What would have been realistic and helpful transition support for you upon completing your degree? Who should provide this support?

4. If you started a new university, what would be some of the improvements and innovations you would make?