

# **Developing Innovation Competence for Recreating the African University of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

**Paul Kibwika**

# Dilemma for Africa!!!

- **Why are Africans failing to solve African problems?**

***“ Universities play a crucial role in generating new ideas, and in accumulating and transmitting knowledge and yet they have remained peripheral to development concerns” (iiep, 2007)***

**.....WHY?**

# The African University

- **Universities in Africa were never created to solve African problems**
- **Main goal was to create a small group of elites detached from the wider community**



- **Not embedded in African virtues of collectivity**
- **Promote individualism & structured around disciplinary fragmentation rather than synergy**



# The Development paradigms

<b>Development Era</b>	<b>Critical Resources</b>
Agricultural	Land & labour
Industrial	Capital & Machinery
Global Economy (today)	Knowledge & expertise

**Where are we???**

**Can we disentangle from the Global Economy??**

# Challenges for universities

- **Complex problems with multiple causation and feedback loops**
- **Development change in community requires more than disciplinary expertise**



- **Competence of graduates to influence change in community is contested**
- **More graduates – increasing levels of poverty & environmental degradation**



- **Invisible impact of university research**
- **What is the relevance of the African university to poverty, hunger, democracy...?**



# What is the Problem?

- **Universities need to transform to be more innovative and relevant to development**
- **BUT how can this be effected?**
- **Change in curricula without change in mindsets and “retooling” of lecturers is less hopeful**

**“The limitation any university in a developing country faces in trying to be developmental is the competence of its professorial body – its members were never trained to think, act or teach development” (Coleman, 1984),**

- So nothing is likely to change unless they retool themselves**
- Innovation competence has to be learnt – starting with university lecturers**

# Innovation competence of Agric. graduates

- **Systemic thinking that allows integration of disciplines and knowledge**
- **Information and knowledge brokerage**



- **Local organisation development and empowerment**
- **Facilitate learning platforms and experimentation**
- **Develop and manage partnerships**
- **Develop teams and work in teams**
- **Enterprise and entrepreneurial development**

# Implication

Can the present lecturers in the university produce a graduate of this profile?????

**“You cannot give what  
you do not have!!!”**

*(Boniface Orum 2006)*

**Innovation competence  
development should start  
with the lecturers**

# How: A Personal mastery/soft skills approach at Makerere University

## Background

- Bellagio meeting of Deans in RF FORUM grantee universities in E&SA to review impact of Agric. training on poverty and food security
- Developed preferred graduate profile

- Realised that curriculum did not fit the desired graduate – deficient of social competences (soft skills)
- Staff also lacked the required soft skills to produce the desired graduate
- Proposed a pilot competence programme for university lecturers – implemented at Makerere University (2003-2005)

# Objectives

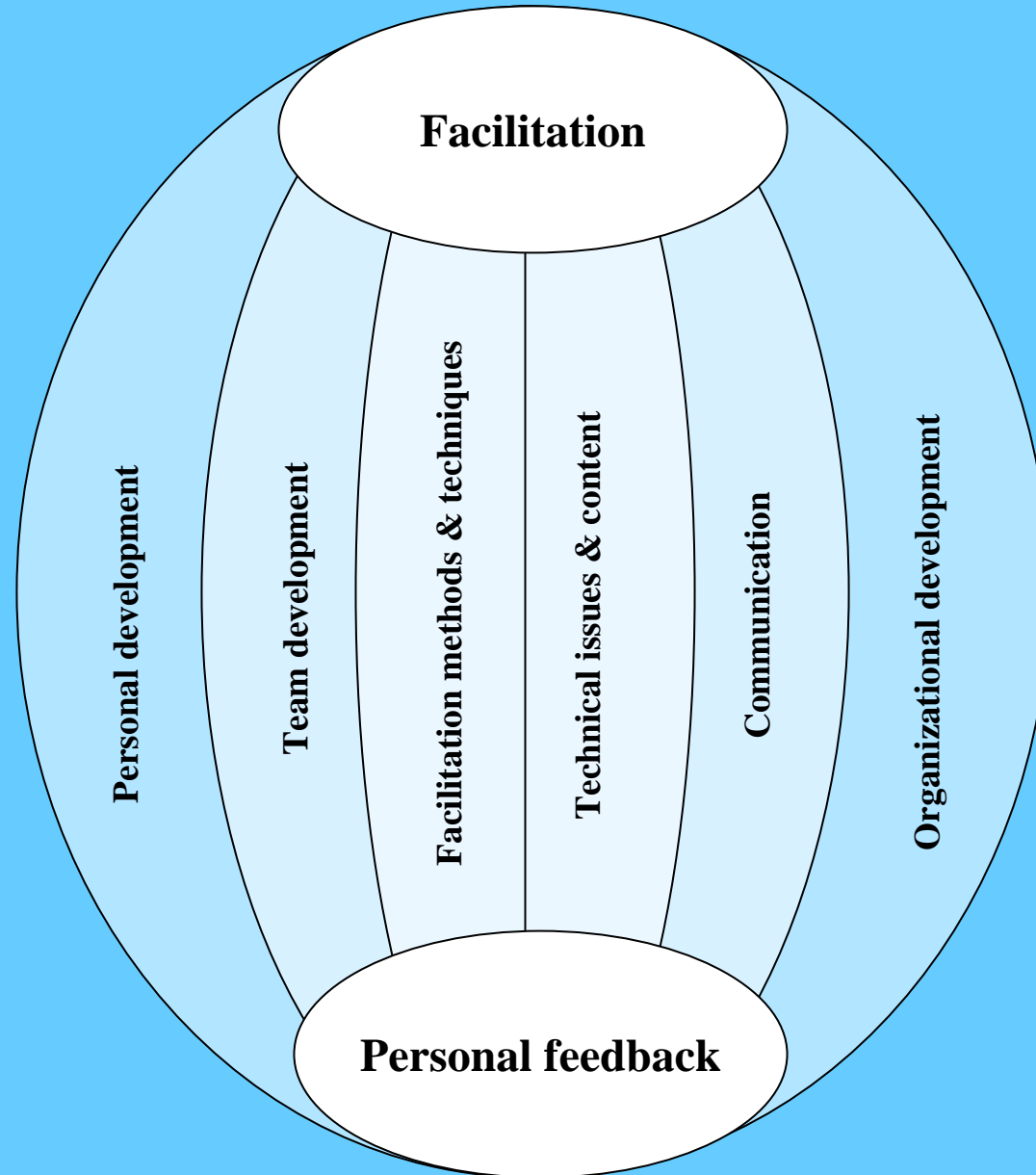
- **Target a shift towards systemic thinking that allows broader integration of disciplines and knowledge system**
- **Build skills for facilitating interactive learning**
- **Change mindsets and build values that support the new ways of thinking and learning**

# Goal

***“Enhance adaptive capacity of people to use and enlarge their space and freedom to operate and foster personal growth and productivity as a member of their social system”***

# Integrated design

26 Lecturers  
from  
Faculties:  
Agric. Vet  
Med, & FNC



# **Outcome: Innovation competence for lecturers**

- **Self-awareness & able to support people to develop their hidden potentials**
- **Influence organizational learning and change through feedbacks**

- **Work in teams, develop teams and promote peer learning**
- **Facilitate interactive learning and collective action processes**



- **Take risk to try out new things and learn from action as reflective practitioners**
- **Enhance effective communication for problem solving**



- **Think systemically and influence development through action research**
- **Instill culture of honesty, commitment and integrity**

# Take-home messages

- **There is a systemic problem in reforming and recreating the African University in a development context**
- **Trigger for reform in universities is change in mindsets and challenging entrenched beliefs & values**
- **New development paradigms demand new competence sets among lecturers and graduates**

# Take-home messages

- **The meta-challenge is shifting from producing “disciplinary experts” to producing “change makers”**
- **African university needs support to reform for relevance**

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# Learning to make change



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for recreating the African university  
of the 21<sup>st</sup> century

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**Thank you  
very  
much for  
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