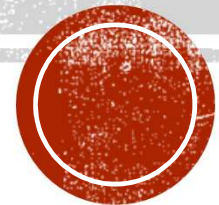


PRIVATE PROVISION AND HIGHER EDUCATION AS A PUBLIC GOOD IN AFRICA: IMPLICATIONS FOR EQUITY AND QUALITY

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INTRODUCTION

- ❑ In 2020, over 235 million students were enrolled in higher education worldwide, more than doubling the 100 million in 2000. The global gross enrolment ratio reached 40%, only 9% in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- ❑ Diversification of plays in higher education provision is a key factor
- ❑ Global average enrolment for PHEIs is 33% (one-third of students)
- ✓ Oceania – 15%
- ✓ Latin America and the Caribbean – 54%
- ✓ Africa - 18%

(UNESCO,2022; Tamrat & Teferra, 2024)



PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE PUBLIC GOOD DEBATES

- ❑ Public good discourses located within the broader roles of universities in meeting societal needs
- ❑ The public good perspective of universities advocates for government funding of higher education
- ❑ Although public good benefits of HE in developing countries are acknowledged, total costs of HE are substantially higher than the available public sources of financing.
- ❑ “Public good can be provided by actors other than the government” (Deneulin & Townsend, 2006:3)



PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE PUBLIC GOOD IN MALAWI AND ZAMBIA – A BOON OR BANE?



NUMBER OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Country	Typology of university	1966	2009	2018	2025
Malawi	Public	1	3	4	6
	Private	-	4	30	33
Zambia	Public	1	3	8	10
	Private	-	8	60	53



THE BOON SIDE

❑ Increased enrolments

- Malawi. 30,972 in 2018, an increase from 8,168 students enrolled in 2008 (Mukonchi, 2021)
- Zambia – 156,944 university students in 2022, 54.4% (private universities) and 45.6% (public universities) - (HEA,2023)

❑ Provision of tuition fees based scholarships

❑ Addressing rural-urban divides

❑ Diversification of learning programmes

❑ Aligning higher education missions to produce public-good professionals (Walker & McLean, 2013), supporting glocal (global, national, and local) development (Chankseliani et al., 2020), and fostering university-community engagements



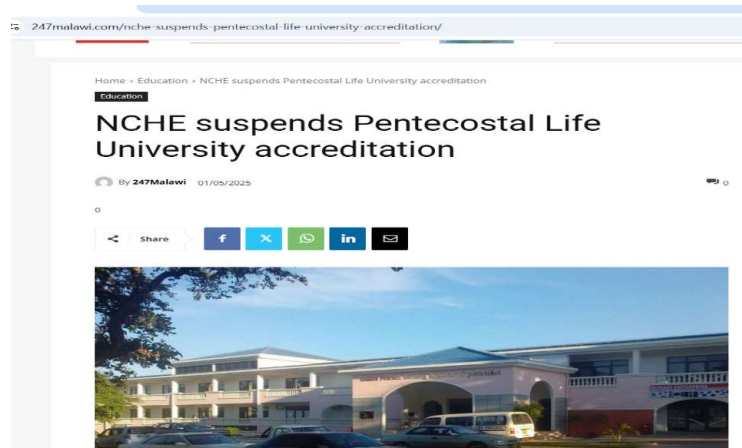
THE BANE SIDE? COSTS, QUALITY AND EQUITY

❑ Funding issues

In Malawi, private universities are more expensive than public ones. As of 2016, tuition fees were \$350 for public universities and nearly \$600 for private ones. (Naphiyo & Kamwamba, 2024).

- Fostering a trend of knowledge commodification
- Epistemic inequalities
- Discriminatory government student funding policies
 - Zambia – Government funded loans available only to public universities
 - Malawi – Government is supposed to fund 20% of students in PHIEs but only 7% have access (Mondiwa, 2022).





- Quantity versus quality
- Academic moonlighting
- Inadequate infrastructure
- Underqualified staff – For both countries less than 30% of academics have PhDs.
- Weaker quality assurance architecture
 - Quality assurance regulatory agencies were established after development of private universities.



CONCLUSIONS, QUESTIONS, AND FEEDBACK!

**“The private sector is not entirely malevolent,
nor is the public sector entirely benevolent”
(Tristan McCowan, 2004:460).**



Perspectives on Education in Africa

WIDENING UNIVERSITY ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

**USING THE ZAMBIAN CONTEXT TO INFORM OTHER
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

Edward Mboyonga

