

AFRICA

The Future of
Management Education
Volume 2

*To the Thomas, Lee and Wilson families
who are the foundation of our lives*

AFRICA

The Future of Management Education Volume 2

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

FOREWORD: THE JOURNEY CONTINUED

It became clear from the first volume of this book, *Africa: The Management Education Challenge* (2016), that to achieve a deep understanding of Africa as a continent, it was essential to explore and understand the different histories, contexts and cultures of the 54 nation states within it.

Additional visits made more recently to Africa have reinforced this belief, supported by the testimony of many educators, business leaders, government officials and students. Their stories, concerns and viewpoints have been interpreted, as closely as possible, from an African rather than a Western perspective.

Our initial findings were presented at various book launches, including those at Singapore Management University and the EFMD Annual Conference in Rome 2016. They were also presented elsewhere, including at EFMD, AABS and GBSN conferences in Accra, Barcelona, Dar-Es-Salaam, Johannesburg and Lagos. In each case, there was very positive feedback on how the work reflected important African views and perspectives on management education.

We have continued to appreciate the genuine warmth and kindness of all the people – and particularly the younger generation – that we have met. Their obvious energy and enthusiasm derives from a strongly held desire not only to improve their own personal circumstances, but also to grow their own country's economy and prosperity.

Their hopes for a better future can be seen in a number of recent events, including the widespread demonstrations in 2016

about fairness, access and equality in higher education, as part of the ‘Fees Must Fall’ movement in South Africa. And, more recently in early 2017, the strong popular support in the Gambia (and neighboring African countries) for upholding the results of democratic elections, despite the reluctance of a power-grabbing and apparently corrupt, defeated incumbent President to cede power, demonstrates the popular desire for democratic solutions to be enforced and enacted as African countries evolve politically.

As a consequence, enlightened political leaders across the continent are increasingly aware of the relentless pressure for change from a growing younger generation and an urban middle class. Political, economic and social change is inevitable. In these VUCA – volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous — environments, it is crucial to recognise that the past is, therefore, not the future of each country and economic growth is paramount. As economies and countries evolve, the pressure for strong business development and leadership is clear. Therefore the future challenge for management development is also evident. Will management educators build carefully on the exciting future? Will future pathways be innovative and ‘values-led’? Will future strategic options be designed and implemented to improve the quality and value of management education? Will it produce exciting, charismatic and ethical leaders who will lead their companies and countries towards strong economic growth and increasing prosperity across African countries?

These are the issues and questions that are the focus of this volume, which examines future scenarios for change and assesses how, and by what means, important future developments may be facilitated. These insights and ideas can provide the fuel for continued debate about, and improvements in, management education in Africa.

Howard Thomas / Lynne Thomas
March 2017

REFERENCE

Thomas, H., Lee, M., Thomas, L., & Wilson, A. (2016) *Africa: The management education challenge*. Bingley, U.K.: Emerald Group Publishing

NOTES

AABS refers to the African Association of Business School

EFMD refers to the European Foundation for Management Development

GBSN refers to the Global Business School Network

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