

**Dons in Kenyan varsities not active in research, Report  
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CPS Research International lead researcher Herman Manyora during the release of a report on the state of research funding in Kenyan universities at the Intercontinental Hotel in Nairobi, on August 14, 2018. Photo | Dennis Onsongo| Nation Media Group

By Ouma Wanzala

A study has revealed the shocking state of research in Kenyan universities, with 35 per cent of the institutions not prepared to conduct research. The study, which was released in Nairobi on Tuesday by CPS Research International, indicates that out of 71 institutions, 3.5 per cent

confirmed to have more than 100 academic staff fully active in research. “More than 18 per cent of the universities have less than 10 staff for research. Only 34 per cent of the institutions have 20-39 staff fully active in research and only 8 per cent have 50-79 qualified academic staff for research,” reads the study, which was released by lead researcher Herman Manyora. On research infrastructure, the study indicates that only 65 per cent of universities own research laboratories and incubation centres. The rest hire them when needed. “This is a clear indicator that about 35 per cent of Kenyan universities are not prepared to handle researches that require laboratories and incubators. It is, however, unfortunate that most of research funds are directed towards science-related researches that require labs and incubators,” reads the study.

## **SH1.53 BILLION**

In the study, University of Nairobi emerged tops in investment in research. The study shows that University of Nairobi leads in the volume of publications, citations and referrals at 39.7 per cent, followed by Kenyatta University, Moi University and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology at 11.3 per cent, 10.5 per cent and 8.9 per cent respectively. “Therefore, there seems to be a correlation between volume of research and volume of publications by a university in Kenya,” read the study. The study also shows that 69.71 per cent of the total research funds disbursed to institutions of higher learning by governments, institutions, industry, NGOs and other donors were given to top 10 public universities. “From the survey, the top 10 public universities received a total of Sh1.53 billion compared to Sh117 million received by top 10 private universities,” the report adds.

## **LARGEST CONTRIBUTOR**

These funds were given to universities for the 2018/2019 academic year. The study shows that in 2017/2018, universities received approximately Sh1.85 billion from government for research. “They also got Sh1.16 billion from industry, donors and other sources. The government thus

happens to be the largest contributor of funds geared towards research in Kenyan universities,” reads the report titled ‘The state of research funding in Kenyan Universities’. Based on the research funds survey, University of Nairobi tops the list with a total of Sh0.56 billion, representing 17.7 per cent of total research funds received in 2018. Other universities which followed were Kenyatta University (15 per cent), Moi University (9.9 per cent), Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (7.8 per cent), Egerton University (4.0 per cent), Maseno University (3.6 per cent), Strathmore University (3.3 per cent), Masinde Muliro University of Science & Technology (3.0 per cent) and Mount Kenya University (2.9 per cent). Strathmore University and Mount Kenya University were the only private institutions that appeared among the top 10.

## **INCREASING FUNDS**

The study shows 68 per cent of the funding for universities is from government (national and county) and internal sources, compared to 32 per cent which comes from industry, NGOs and other donors. Mr Manyora asked the government to consider increasing funding to universities, saying the current budget is not sufficient. “We have to take research seriously the way other institutions, such as multinationals, have taken it,” said Mr Manyora. This survey was supported by Pan Africa Educational Foundation and was conducted between May and June 2018. The report recommends that the government should consider increasing research funds from the current 0.8 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to the Unesco recommended 2-3 per cent of GDP. Currently, US, Singapore, Israel, Germany and Korea Republic spend 2.8 per cent, 2.2 per cent, 4.3 per cent, 2.4 per cent, and 4.3 per cent respectively on research.