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Uganda: Reduce Intake, Mamdani Tells Makerere

BY FRANCIS KAGOLO, 2 JULY 2012

Makerere University needs to cut down on the student population if it is to improve the quality of teaching and research that has reached an all-time low, celebrated scholar Prof. Mahmood Mamdani has advised.

Mamdani, in his latest write-up delivered at the university's doctoral convention last week, argued that Makerere's decision to increase students' intake following the World Bank policy to reduce funding on higher education in the late 1980s has done more harm than good.

"The reform was predicated first of all on producing numbers. Student admissions were increased recklessly, without any thought to the need for corresponding expansion of the material infrastructure or human capacities," he noted.

"As enrolment ballooned, classes exploded, tutorials ended, and the quality of teaching reached an all-time low."

He urged the university administration and ministry of education to recognise the current reality of Makerere no longer being the country's only university.

"Unlike in the past, we share the responsibility for undergraduate education with a growing number of universities in the country. At the same time, our first responsibility as the country's leading public university is to provide quality undergraduate education," he explained in support of manageable student numbers.

He suggested more radical measures including compelling all PhD students to teach tutorials as part of their overall training.

This, argues the world's award-winning academic, will help to restore tutorials to support large lectures at the undergraduate level and make closer supervision of students possible.

Details of Mamdan's statement is in today's New Vision.

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