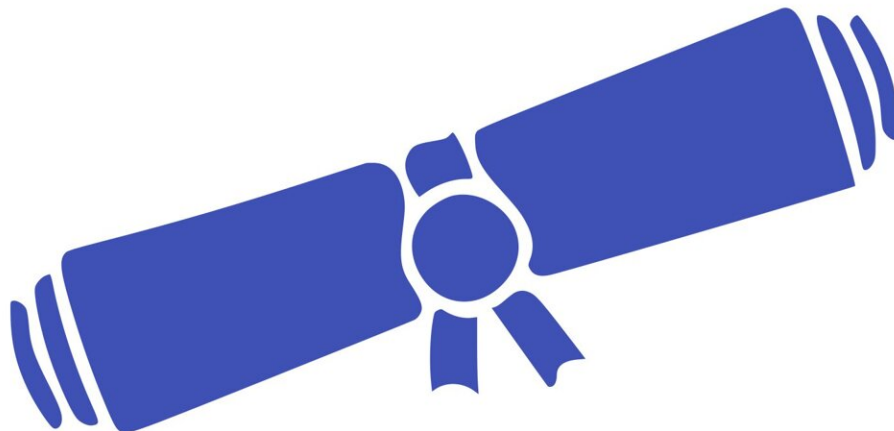
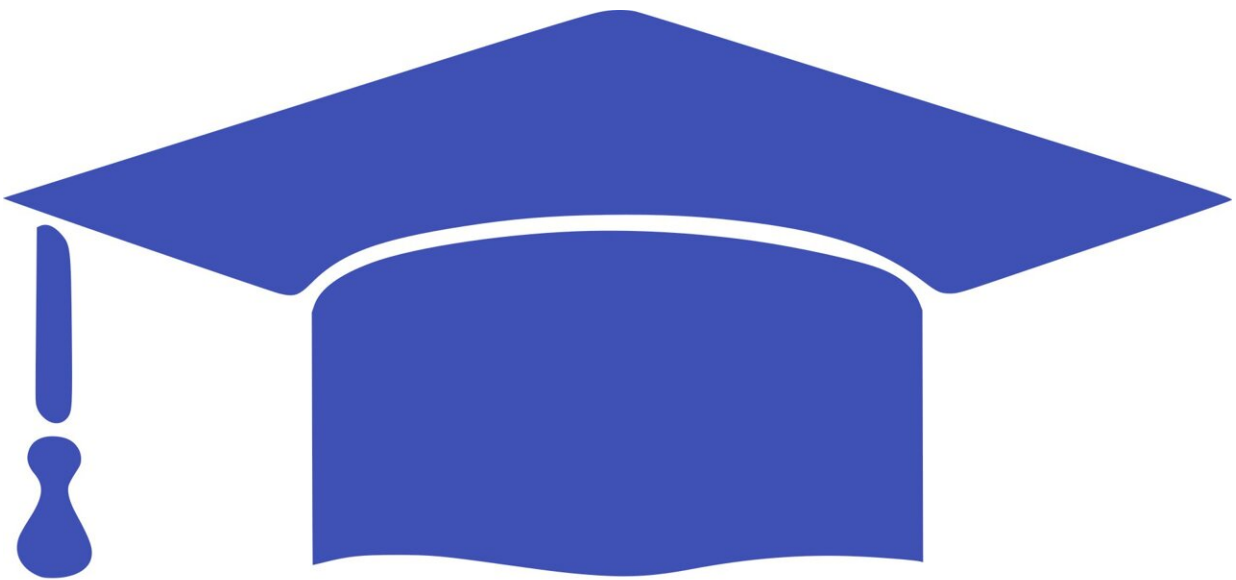


Business and management graduates can become sustainability champions—lessons from Uganda and Tanzania

May 1 2024, by David Ssekamatte



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There is no doubt about it: the world is in the grips of a [climate crisis](#). The headlines are full of reports about extreme weather events and the negative effects of the fossil fuel industry.

This reality means that anyone entering the worlds of business or [management](#) today needs to understand climate change. They need the right skills and attitudes to build sustainable enterprises, and to contribute to [climate change mitigation](#) and adaptation efforts.

I am a lecturer in management with a particular interest in [sustainability](#) and climate change education. Recently I conducted [a study](#) at two [higher education](#) institutions: Makerere University in Uganda and the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. They are two of the continent's largest and most respected universities.

I wanted to know how climate change and sustainability education were integrated into their various faculties' programs.

The answer? Not very much at all. Students, faculty and administrators all recognized this as a shortcoming. There was a strong sense that sustainability and climate change education should be woven into faculties' curricula, research and community engagement programs. But they've not yet done so, most often because none of their academic staff are trained in these issues.

Given my research and teaching interests, I was especially interested in how business and management schools were performing in this area. Sadly, they are as behind the curve as other faculties I studied.

I suggest that the continent's business and management schools are missing a valuable opportunity. Who is better to instill the necessary attitudes, knowledge and skills than business and management schools? They produce many graduates who join various public, private and voluntary organizations and agencies and become influential professionals in these sectors. With the right training, those graduates can become the kind of sustainability champions the world needs today.

The study

My study explored the perspectives and views of lecturers, administrators and students in two academic units, on their institutions' existing climate change and sustainability education. I asked where they thought they were doing well. I also wanted them to identify the gaps in training, curriculum and research. Participants were encouraged to think about how their institutions could do better.

At both institutions, only academic units within the natural science disciplines had programs and courses on climate change and sustainability. No such programs were offered by the arts and social sciences, education, or business and management faculties.

Based on what academics, administrators and students told me, I have devised ideas for what African business and management schools at universities should do, and how, to become champions of sustainability and climate change education.

Getting started

This doesn't involve reinventing the wheel.

The faculty and students in these schools are already conducting scientific research. More emphasis could be placed on research that relates to climate change and sustainability.

Business and management schools are often already supporting communities based on their research. They are also constantly looking for solutions to community challenges across sectors. They could use their existing [community outreach](#) and engagement programs to support and encourage communities on climate change adaptation options and sustainability-friendly practices.

Working with small artisans, retail shop owners and market vendors to create awareness of climate change and sustainability-friendly business practices can significantly contribute to climate action and sustainability.

However, there will need to be some bigger shifts alongside tweaks to existing outputs and programs.

Policy recommendations

I have several recommendations for policymakers and [decision-makers](#) in business and management training institutions. Here are some of them:

1. Mainstream and integrate climate change and sustainability education in all the school's academic programs.
2. Integrate sustainability practices in governance and management policies, systems and operations. For example, administrators might consider how to use energy and water sustainably. They could get involved in efforts to green the wider campus. Non-motorized transport systems could be introduced to ensure fewer

- vehicles are used on campus.
3. Integrate sustainability indicators within the performance management system for staff and institutional departments. This will encourage staff and units to establish activities that promote climate action and sustainability on campus and in the communities they work with.
 4. Encourage faculty and students to conduct research on climate change and sustainability issues.
 5. Organize events and engage policymakers to disseminate research findings and [policy recommendations](#) on climate change and sustainability issues.

There is also a role for national governments and regulators here. In Uganda, for instance, the National Council for Higher Education should integrate sustainability indicators in its assessment of institutions. This is a way to encourage [business](#) and management schools to promote sustainability. It's also a great opportunity for schools and institutions to learn from each other about what works and what doesn't.

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