THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

CURRICULUM FOR

EXECUTIVE MASTERS IN MEDIA LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION

[EMMLI]

THE AGA KHAN

APP

PROG

2017

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NOVEMBER 2019

COMMISSION FOR UNIVERSITY EDUCATION RESOURCE CENTRE

This Degree Programme Was approved by the Commission for University Education on:

09 NOV 2019

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Authorised Signature

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2.0 THE CURRICULUM

2.1 Title of the Programme

Executive Masters in Media Leadership and Innovation

2.2 Philosophy of the Programme

The educational needs of media organisations today are broad ranging. They require relevant and transformational learning experiences that will empower stakeholders to reimagine the media ecosystem, locally and globally. Accordingly, industries are looking to univesitites to help find solutions that will support media viability into the future. Media are in this situation as a result of rapid globalization, changing economic conditions, the reshaping of political power and the emergence of new technologies, which are weakening journalism and media institutions, locally and globally. These trends are raising concerns about how to save journalism, sustain media businesses and ensure media institutions remain viable.

In response to these challenges and opportunities, the AKU Graduate School of Media and Communications has developed the Executive Masters in Media Leadership and Innovation (EMMLI). The programme is part of AKU-GSMC's commitment to strengthening media viability and enhancing media quality across the region in the wake of accelerating technological change, the rise of fake news and the loss of trust in the media.

EMMLI contributes to this mandate by supporting visionary leadership and enhancing media leaders' capacity to discover innovative solutions to current and future problems. EMMLI complements the school's MA in Digital Journalism to provide a comprehensive education programme aimed at strengthening the media in Kenya, East Africa and the Continent . The MA in Digital Journalism aims to enhance the digital production and storytelling skills of journalists and public communicators, whereas EMMLI is tailored to the unique leadership and innovation challenges facing current and future media leaders. It also aligns with the vision of the AKU Innovation Centre for Media Sustainability, which provides an intellectual and practical space, where a sustainability agenda for East Africa's media can be imagined, tested and put into action.

EMMLI has been designed to address the specific leadership and innovation needs of the media and communications industries operating in the complex context of emerging economies, like Kenya, in this era of relentless change and uncertainty. Focusing on local issues but addressing global trends, the Executive Masters in Media Leadership and Innovation is designed to bolster the knowledge, leadership and innovation management skills of current and future media executives in order to ensure media viability.

2.3 Rationale of the Programme

2.3.1 Needs Assessment / Market Survey / Situation Analysis

Leading and managing media firms and ventures requires specialist expertise that can ensure relevant and impactful content whilst sustaining diversified revenue streams. In short, it requires innovation and visionary leadership. Progressively, the traditional business

models - that have relied heavily on advertising - are under strain, both locally and globally, as technology companies become the preferred medium for advertisers. The effects of this disruption have implications for all stakeholders including those who manage media firms, policy makers and regulatory bodies.

Until recently, East Africa (and Africa more broadly) had been shielded from the economic and business disruptions experienced elsewhere in the world. Now, however, media enterprises are feeling the full impact of new technologies, changing market conditions, and tightening economies. New and sustainable business models are needed to support quality journalism and public information services across Africa, where media freedom is highly vulnerable and technological infrastructure patchy.

Our Executive Masters in Media Leadership and Innovation is designed to address the unique and complex challenges facing media in the developing world to ensure Africa's media can survive and thrive in this era of rapid and relentless change.

Market research indicates there are very few programmes offering media management education and training across the globe – despite the very real need for education in this area. Apart from the Sol Plaatje Institute for Media Leadership at Rhodes University in South Africa (which offers a Post-Graduate Diploma in Media Leadership), no other university in Africa offers specialized education for media executives and related stakeholders who need to comprehend the importance of strengthening media independence to ensure socio-ecological progress at local and global levels.

A commissioned study undertaken by Everette Dennis (2011), *see Appendix XII.b* concluded the appetite for media management education (locally and globally) is likely to grow. His study found a high level of interested in a Masters' level programme "calibrated to continuous vigilance about media freedom, capacity building for technology, business acumen, content development and improvement, visual and graphic development, linkages between traditional media outlets and digital platforms and personnel management and infrastructures". Interviews (see Appendix XIII) with media leaders across the region reinforced these findings. There was consensus on the:

- need for formalized instruction in media management, both at the graduate study level and executive and managerial training (short courses);
- desirability of a curriculum and practical training that emphasizes the business of media in the broadest sense with focus on financing, media revenues, content development across information and entertainment realms, advertising, promotion and distribution issues;
- demand for education around leadership and leadership strategies;
- connections between overall leadership and managerial responsibilities;
- capacity to connect business-oriented media people with creative content personnel—and those with technical and engineering backgrounds;
- recognition of a special need to prepare senior editorial personnel for broader company-wide leadership roles;

- importance of navigating change—and staying current with new development in three key areas: media economics and management, new technologies and their applications, and consumer preferences;
- awareness of audience economics and research including traditional and new metric.

This feedback has informed the design of the Executive Masters in Media Leadership and Innovation and the complementary programmes and activities offered by AKU GSMC – namely a suite of executive style leadership short courses, the establishment of an Innovation Centre aimed at promoting media sustainability and the Transforming Leadership for 21st Century Africa Programme offered in collaboration with the J.F Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

2.3.2 Stakeholder Involvement

A planning team, including Professor Everette E Dennis, Professor Robert Picard and former Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Professor Rhonda Breit, has undertaken extensive industry consultation to explore the needs and future concerns of media leaders, locally and globally. Two consultation sessions have been conducted with leading media executives across Kenya: the first set of consultations were conducted in 2010 (see Appendix XII.*a*, with follow up interviews and meetings being conducted regularly between 2016 and 2018 (see Appendix XIII).
These interviews and specialized focus groups were conducted to ascertain:

1. The perceived need for and Executive Masters in Media Leadership and Innovation
2. Demand and the likely reception from media executives
3. Curricular needs and ideas
4. Employment prospects for graduates.

Those who shared their knowledge and opinions in the interviews included members of the governing board of Kenyan media houses, including the former and current CEO of Nation Media Group, senior executives and managers concerned with overall operations of various media houses in the areas of finance, legal affairs, editorial and content development, broadcasting, digital media and other functional/operational areas. In addition, experts on media and audience research as well as education and training were interviewed (see Appendix XII.*a* and XIII)

While many of the questions asked elicited information relevant to media industries generally, a number of specific needs of Kenya and East Africa were identified. Analysis of the interviews and focus groups revealed a number of common issues which need to be addressed by the academy (identified above).

The unique and crucial role of media in Africa was seen as the underlying reason to develop a specialized executive-style masters to improve leadership across the sector. Media in Africa are not just commercial enterprises, but also have a socio-dimension to spur development, one respondent claimed. Media are agents of change, he said, but they need to make money. Beyond generic management skills and knowledge, therefore, media managers need to know how different platforms and roles relate to each other, conflict with each other and change (see Appendix XII.*a*).

As one respondent observed, media products are perishable and must respond with speed to the audience and changing demands. Complications of the media industries are like quick sand requiring media leaders to be versatile, understand media bias and possess in depth understanding of how journalists think and behave. "Media managers should have the humility to cast broadly for information and knowledge from those who know best. And in East Africa, a media vision is crucial, especially as old technologies are leap-frogged," it was observed (see Appendix XII.*a* page 280).

One interviewee emphasized the need for programmes that promote an holistic understanding of the entire media organization. Media leaders need to understand market and audience research and to be especially sensitive to the differences between and among markets-and their audiences. Media managers must know "how to read a community", it was stated (see Appendix XII.*a* page 276). Efforts to expose editorial people to advertising needs and practices, although difficult to sustain, are important to "understanding the whole organization," without losing sight of one's specific function (see Appendix XII.*a* page 276).

Convergence issues that integrate the traditional newspaper with Internet and mobile media was seen as a matter of special concern. Employees need new skills to manage digital enterprises. New product development linked to sales is key and requires a new way of thinking. Courses are needed to build what was described as "strategic intelligence and a penchant for entrepreneurship" (see Appendix XII.*a* page 277). This feedback highlights the need for a programme to build expertise in media leadership as well as inculcating new thinking and problem-solving strategies that foster innovation and entrepreneurialism.

These points were echoed by other respondents who emphasised the need to build the strategic management capabilities of editorial leaders (see Appendix XII.*a*)

Collectively, there was agreement that media management presents a complex career ladder – whereby people can be drawn from various sectors of the industry. Training is needed at all levels of the leadership spectrum from emerging leaders to high level executives who need to plan and oversee organizational renewal in this era of rapid and dramatic change. The curriculum needs to be rooted in local realities of media operating in Kenya and the African continent (see Appendix XII.*a*)

Feedback indicates that media leaders need to enhance their forecasting capacity to identify new markets and diversify product offerings and services. Here, it is important to look to the lessons learned from failures as well as business successes. Thus case studies, drawn from local and global contexts, are seen as an important pedagogical strategy to be utilized.

Other respondents highlighted the importance of including education in the areas of ethics, media policy and governance. It was emphasised that senior management should understand media regulation, corporate governance, and the various constituents of the business. Risk management is especially key in Africa.

Accordingly, we have developed the Executive Masters in Media Leadership and Innovation, which aims to transform media leadership to stimulate innovation, entrepreneurialism, responsibility, and sustainability of media firms and start-ups in Africa and the developing world.

2.3.3 Justification for the Programme

'Saving journalism' and 'ensuring sustainable business models to support independent media' were the two key issues to emerge from the recent World Media Economics and Management Conference in Cape Town in May 2018. Our proposed Executive Masters in Media Leadership and Innovation directly tackles the later issue, by providing an MBA-style programme designed to ensure Africa's media can survive and thrive in this era of rapid social, economic, political and technological change.
can be justified on a number of levels including:

1. Supply and Demand
2. Academic need
3. Market gap
4. Aligning AKU-GSMC operational and strategic vision

1. Supply & demand
Dennis (2011), Appendix *XII.b* notes a "paucity" of offerings in media management that highlight the uniqueness of the challenges facing media industries globally. These findings are supported by more recent interviews, conducted by former Associate Dean Rhonda Breit and Consultant Professor Robert Picard in March 2016 (see Appendix XIII). Dennis' recommendations to AKU to invest in developing educational programs for media managers were supported by recent interviewees, who highlighted the changing media structures across Africa, the need for media leaders to understand the unique issues facing media enterprises and start-ups; the importance of media companies "getting the best out of technology"; the need for more nuanced understandings of media consumers and audiences; building capacity to survive hostile regulation and political interference as well as getting proper grounding in the basics of effective leadership, management, strategy development and adapting to rapidly changing environments.

2. Academic need
Media management and leadership in the 21st Century poses a set of unique challenges in terms of the nature of the business and the need to reinvent current business models. This has led to a clearly defined field of study which draws on multi-disciplinary approaches and engages in "real world" experience — either by accumulating best practice knowledge, developing case studies or conducting field research. According to Dennis, media management education and training focuses on (1) distinguishing leadership (navigating change) from management (coping with complexity); (2) codifying and synthesizing a growing literature across most of the topics noted above, (3) defining media management in a digital economy and (4) developing strategies for understanding and teaching about globalisation.

Dennis (Appendix XII.*b*) acknowledged, however, that AKU GSMC should not replicate business school programmes that focus on management, recommending:

Media management educators will make a great mistake if they focus all their energies into finding elegant insights into the media industries—and where they are going.

Leadership skills are needed to ensure media sustainability across the region. The need to enhance leadership skills of media executives is supported by the recent work of Lucy Kung (2016), who sought to identify why some digital news businesses succeeded and others failed. In short, the answer came down to how media organisations were structured and how they were led. The common elements of success she identified included:

- A clear vision that clearly specifies what the organisation is trying to do and this vision brings benefits to its audiences;
- A clear strategy and coherent business model;
- Strong leadership and a smart workforce;
- Synthesised talent pool;
- An enabling culture that values technology;
- A flexible organisation that can innovate and adapt (Kung 2016, p. 106).

Picard (2000) reminds us, however, that this is a technological revolution not a content revolution; resulting in transformations in the speed and flexibility of communication thereby "creating new economies of scope and integration that change the economies of content distribution". Leadership for 21st Century media requires a fundamental and insightful understanding of the dynamic industry combined with creativity and complex problem-solving skills to identify and implement sustainable strategies and action. Our Executive Masters seeks to build on foundational knowledge to bolster flexibility and creativity in leadership to help media firms and start-ups to survive the continuing cycle of disruption.

3. Market gap

Currently, there are no Masters' level programs in media leadership and innovation being offered across Africa. Rhodes University in South Africa offers a Graduate Diploma in Media Management but it does not have the scope and focus of our Executive Masters' which is targeted at fostering leadership, managing innovation and building an entrepreneurial media enterprise. Therefore, GSMC has a unique opportunity to target a new segment of learners from across the media and communications sectors in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia.

4. Aligning AKU-GSMC operational & strategic vision

Introduction of this program will ensure GSMC is on track to deliver on its strategic vision articulated in the school's 2013 Strategic Plan, which has been endorsed by the current GSMC leadership. GSMC was established to become "the pre-eminent graduate professional school for preparing future media leaders, professionals and entrepreneurs to thrive in developing world contexts" (GSMC, 2013). Our remit is to "foster a diverse cadre of media leaders and professionals across the developing work who will be distinguished by the highest standards of competence, ethics and independence, innovation and social responsibility". Accordingly, the Executive Masters in Media Leadership and Innovation is essential to achieving our mission and that of the wider AKU.

2.4 Goal of the Programme

The Executive Masters in Media Leadership and Innovation aims to improve media viability by strengthening leadership and promoting innovative solutions to the media's current and future problems by:

- enhancing business and managerial knowledge of leaders in the media and communications sectors.
- improving quality and financial sustainability of media and communications firms and start-ups through effective leadership and innovation.
- Building leadership and innovation expertise to respond positively to the specific challenges facing the media and communications sectors in resource-constrained regions in times of unprecedented change.

It is designed to develop media leaders, who can think broadly about their organisation's future and to find innovative and sustainable solutions. Accordingly, the 18-month MBA style programme will develop participants' leadership skills to advance and convey vision and strategy, foster innovation and entrepreneurial skills to commence new businesses or transform firms in response to changing market needs.

This programme is built around four pillars:

- Strategic thinking
- Creative and responsible leadership
- Innovation and constructive change
- Sustainable enterprise

The programme comprises 640 instructional hours, including 12-months of coursework (encompassing eight, four-credit point courses offered in the first year of study) plus a final eight-credit point capstone project, which can be directly implemented in the workplace. In all other respects, the Executive Masters in Media Leadership and Innovation will comply with AKU and CUE requirements for a Masters level degree.

In accordance with PROG/STAD/05 Guideline 5, the Executive Masters in Media Leadership and Innovation offers a capstone project instead of an academic thesis. Therefore, it is a terminal degree that does not qualify the holder to teach at the university or to enter a doctoral programme.

2.5 Expected Learning Outcomes of the Programme

2.5.1 The expected learning outcomes of the programme.

Learning outcomes for the proposed programme canvass the three domains of learning described in Bloom's Taxonomy[1], namely cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Bloom's Taxonomy suggests that a learner cannot effectively address higher levels until those below them have been covered. As well as providing a basic sequential model for dealing with topics in a curriculum, it suggests a way of categorising levels of learning, in terms of the expected ceiling for a given programme[2].

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[1] S Atherton J S (2013) Learning and Teaching; Bloom's taxonomy [On-line: UK] retrieved 8 January 2016 from http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/bloomtax.htm.

[2] Ibid.

Accordingly, course level outcomes in the proposed programme build expertise sequentially so that on successful completion of this programme of study, graduates will be equipped with the necessary intellectual integrity, critical independence and advanced professional skills and attitudes to enable them to compete effectively for a media leadership role, at local and global levels, because the learner is able to:

L.O. 1:
Exhibit enhanced leadership proficiency attained through critical engagement with contemporary discourses in leadership, sustainability and the social responsibility of media organizations.

L.O. 2:
Employ theory and best practices to interpret, and where appropriate, challenge existing leadership and innovation perspectives and actions at individual, organizational and industry levels.

L.O. 3:
Use sophisticated knowledge and insights about the relationship between strategy and environment and the impact of change to lead change in enterprises and/or project and new ventures.

L.O. 4:
Engage in continuous personal and professional development, independence and reflective learning.

S.L.O. 5:
Creatively and effectively lead change by finding innovative solutions to organizational challenges and developing opportunities.

S.L.O. 6
Develop and implement innovative and sustainable business strategies and plans to effectively lead media operations and/or startups in the developing world.

A process of curriculum mapping has ensured the proposed programme is sequential; learner centred and contributes to the institutional graduate attributes of AKU and the educational standards of the region. Curriculum mapping involves categorising, at course level, how the learning experiences and assessments scaffold the learner from introductory to mastery of outcomes. By utilising this process and using a variety of diagnostic and summative assessments, GSMC can guarantee the proposed programme level learning outcomes and course level learning outcomes are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and tailored to the programme.

2.5.2 Specialisation/option areas

This programme offers no specialisations.

2.6 Modes of Delivery

This programme will be delivered in face-to-face classes, conducted in the evenings and Saturdays. Once the curriculum is approved and tested, elements of the programme will be delivered in blended format via our Learning Management System, Moodle. All course materials and activities will be hosted on Moodle.

The teaching and learning methods and strategies utilised in the proposed programme are based on adult-learning principles and will include face-to-face classes on campus, virtual classes and activities, webinars and self-directed learning and practical tutorials and workshops operated to simulate a real work environment.

Accordingly, the proposed programme has been designed to traverse a range of formal/informal, digital/mobile and face-to-face learning spaces. To ensure students can seamlessly navigate these distributed spaces, special attention has been paid to scaffolding of essential skills and digital literacies through online support programmes, self-help videos and a range of student services designed to orient students to the GSMC Learning Environment.

In addition, the proposed programme will utilise electronic portfolios, case studies and interactive sessions to support learner reflection and the development of generic competencies. This will include students undertaking real-life projects, requiring initiative, writing skills and technical competence. GSMC faculty will work with students on these projects providing support, feedback and the intellectual rigour needed to successfully complete assignments, projects and research.

2.7 Academic Regulations for the Programme

2.7.1 Admission requirements for the proposed programme

a) This programme is a post-graduate Executive Masters, therefore there is no admission directly from secondary school.

b) Alternative requirements applicable to candidates seeking admission including indirect admission requirements

Applicants must meet the minimum university requirements for admission to graduate studies; therefore, all applicants to the proposed programme will need to demonstrate:

- Academic and intellectual ability.
- Outstanding written and verbal communications skills in English.
- Basic computer literacy.

Experience and a foundational understanding of media business as evidenced through prior work experience and education in the areas of managing budgets, capital and

investment processes and issues; the structure and operations of circulation, subscription, and consumer sales (circulation, subscription, etc.,) in their enterprise, audience measurement reporting for their media, structure and operation of advertising department in their medium and company, advertising measurement reporting for their media, marketing and sales activities in their medium and company, primary supplies and suppliers in their medium and company, market structures and competition, managing personnel.

To be considered for admission to the proposed programme, candidates must fulfill one of the following sets of admission criteria:

1. A four-year undergraduate degree (or equivalent) in media, communication, business or cognate discipline/s from an accredited/recognised university with a minimum CGPA of 3.00 (on a four- point scale). Additionally, a minimum of five years professional experience in a related field is required.
2. A four-year undergraduate degree (or equivalent) from an accredited/accredited university with a minimum CGPA of 2.50 will be considered provided the candidate has a minimum of seven years of proven experience in media or a related field.

Prerequisites

The Executive Masters in Media Leadership and Innovation is designed for existing leaders and experienced media workers – including journalists, bloggers and correspondents - who wish to assume a leadership role in a media related enterprise, regardless of size. Media and/or related industries include advertising and marketing, media research, internet and mobile phone businesses, as well as government agencies related to media and communications policy. Throughout the programme, students will explore how to turn risk into opportunity in order to strengthen media viability.