

African Renaissance University (AfRUn)

*Considerations about the Nature and the
Necessary Fundamental Elements of AfRUn*

or

How a University can serve African Renaissance

1. All-inclusive when it comes to Africa

African Renaissance will not be African, *if AfRUn is not Pan-African*, which means **an all-inclusive and all-covering institution when it comes to all things African.**

In other words, AfRUn is to be an **extraordinary Pan-African university** and is therefore to have **extraordinary Pan-African needs and extraordinary Pan-African characteristics.**

2. Anti-colonial University

African Renaissance will not be *African* and will not be *Renaissance*, if AfRUn is not **an anti-colonial institution**.

If African Renaissance is nowadays sought after, this is **due to the destructions brought about across Africa during the colonial / postcolonial times**.

3. A Pan-African project to be based on African peoples and ethno-linguistic groups – not states

To duly serve African Renaissance vision,
achieve AfRUn goals,
cover the entire continent, and
bring forth the necessary breakthrough,

**AfRUn must view Africa as an aggregation
of peoples and ethno-linguistic groups –
not states!**

3. A Pan-African project (cont.)

The reason is simple:

- a. There is almost **no nation-state in Africa**.
- b. Wherever there is a nation-state, there was **never a proper nation-building effort**.
- c. As neo-colonial forms of government able to merely prolong the current, unacceptable situation across the Black Continent, **the African states and inter-African organizations proved to be the worst enemies of any perspective related to the African Renaissance and Afro-centrism**.

3. A Pan-African project (cont.)

- d. This can also be understood through another standpoint: *had the African states and governments viewed the necessity for Afro-centrism and the African Renaissance, they would have materialized it through any of their educational - academic - political - diplomatic tools available.*
- e. **The only reality of Africa is that of the African peoples**, i.e. the numerous indigenous ethno-linguistic groups across Africa.

3. A Pan-African project (cont.)

f. By definition, *every Renaissance project sooner or later clashes with the governments of its period* because they don't want Renaissance (i.e. 're-birth') to sweep them away.

History tells us that this happened in Europe before 500 - 600 years; *it will therefore certainly occur in Africa as well,* if true Renaissance is systematically sought after.

4. Linguistically African

*African Renaissance will not be African,
if AfRUn is not linguistically African.*

Renaissance in Europe triggered a direct interest to the native languages *at the detriment of the old, academic and 'international' languages, i.e. Ancient Greek and Latin.*

Without offering prevalence to the native language – at the prejudice of the international languages – **no Renaissance will ever take place in Africa.**

4. Linguistically African (cont.)

English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, German, Dutch, Afrikaans, & Italian are not African – but colonial languages. As such, **they must be kept aside.**

AfRUn must be basically – but not exclusively – an **English medium university** – in the sense that *English is the main international medium of communication* (NOT a colonial language in Africa)

Next to English, *several important African languages are to be selected as main, official, languages of AfRUn.* Initially, these languages will be:

4. Linguistically African (cont.)

Arabic

Berber

Tuareg

Coptic

Hausa

Yoruba

Igbo

Fulani

Mande

Dogon

Oromo

Somali

Afar

Sidama

Beja

Nubian

Luo

Malagasy

Shona

Zulu

Bamum

**5. Ideologically Pan-African,
Intellectually / Academically
Afro-centric,
Searching for - Reinstating -
Propagating
AFRICAN IDENTITY**

By definition, any concept of Renaissance, i.e. re-birth, concerns **the soul of an entity and needs to define its Identity.**

This is so critical that to say that 50% of the eventual success of AfRUn relies on this point would be an understatement.

5. Ideologically Pan-African (cont.)

All fields and disciplines must be taught, studied and researched through an *Africa-centered / Afro-centric viewpoint*, and with top priority *the coverage of the existing African practices, traditions, patterns and models.*

All colonial theoretical approaches, historical syntheses, linguistic classifications, academic terms, ideological considerations, intellectual evaluations, interpretations, and conclusions are to be beforehand rejected.

6. A long-term project

It would be catastrophic to view AfRUn as an uphill effort only up to the completion of the construction and the launching of the university itself.

Here however it will be worth remembering that almost **all major, famous and renowned Afro-centrists** – despite their basically correct approach – **achieved too little or next to nothing**, simply because *they never envisioned their projects properly, analytically and in-depth*, while they wanted to 'get it done with them in no-time' which is purely unrealistic.

6. A long-term project (cont.)

For a groundbreaking university that is heralding what an entire continent has been missing for centuries, success hinges equally (50-50%) on

- the pertinent concept, and
- the persistent, systematic implementation of a correct action plan.

Following the inauguration, much more is to be expected from the operation and the function itself of AfRUn, because **to efficiently, deeply, radically and successfully influence situations across the continent, *AfRUn will need at least 10 to 15 years of engagement and achievement.***

Real success will come after 25 to 40 years – people involved must be familiar with that.

6. A long-term project (cont.)

What is it after all a span of 25 years? By coincidence, today, a good example is offered by **the 'recent' collapse of the Soviet system in 1989** – before exactly a quarter century!

In Kazakhstan, **Astana was declared new capital (instead of Almaty) in 1997** – 8 years later.

Now, Astana is Central Asia's Dubai (article published in 2006: <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P3-1011658581.html> & pictures: https://www.google.com/search?q=Astana+pictures&num=100&safe=off&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=V-DhU_LALiaz0QXSkODQAg&ved=0CAgQ_AUoAQ&biw=824&bih=596).

6. A long-term project (cont.)

Then, even more so for a transcontinental university like AfRUn, **because the impact is sensed and attested**
.....long after the first graduates go back home, diffuse the university culture and viewpoint, and
promote, through diverse projects,
..... the basic goals of *a continentally-concerned and continent-reshape-aspiring university.*

7. Short-term-minded & strictly business-oriented people to be kept at bay

A Pan-African project envisaging, defining, implementing and promoting African Renaissance at the academic level is by definition **a long-term undertaking**; it cannot and must not be evaluated in terms of common, lucrative business. **Any short-term vision will be catastrophic for this project**; it must therefore be kept at bay. **Any search for an early ROI (return on investment) will cause irreparable damage**; consequently, it must be left aside from the beginning.

7. Short-term-minded & strictly business-oriented people to be kept at bay (cont.)

In this case, it is advisable to take into consideration that Renaissance in Europe took 100 to 300 years to acquire deep roots and to reshape the thought, the study, the research, and the worldview of the Europeans.

8. Humanities-Arts-Social Sciences - Oriented

African Renaissance will not be Renaissance, if AfRUn is not mainly focused on **Humanities, Moral-Social-Political Sciences, Arts-Architecture**, and Education.

When **in Europe** the **Renaissance** took place over a span of 200 years (1300-1500), **it was basically a movement spanning across Humanities** – i.e. the academic disciplines that study human culture; added to them was the circle of **Moral-Social-Political Sciences**, and that of **Visual and Performing Arts**.

8. Humanities-Arts-Social Sciences – Oriented (cont.)

The aforementioned draws the *circumference* and highlights the *contents* of what AfRUn must be.

It must contain both, **an epicenter** and **a periphery**.

A. Epicenter disciplines (Faculties)

To truly embody a pertinently conceived African Renaissance phenomenon, AfRUn must cover following **7 circles of disciplines**.

8. Humanities-Arts-Social Sciences – Oriented (cont.)

A. Epicenter disciplines (Faculties)

- Ancient and Modern languages, Literature - Philology, Linguistics
- History, Archaeology, History of Religions, Art History
- Philosophy, Theology, Psychology, Cultural Studies
- Ethnography (Social Anthropology), Sociology, Moral & Political Science, Area Studies, Communication Studies

8. Humanities-Arts-Social Sciences – Oriented (cont.)

A. Epicenter disciplines (Faculties) (cont.)

- Arts {Poetry, Fine Arts (Drawing, Painting, Sculpture, Music), Dance, Theatre, Design (industrial, graphic, fashion, interior) & Decorative Art, Photography, Filmmaking, Printmaking, Crafts}
- Architecture
- Education

8. Humanities-Arts-Social Sciences – Oriented (cont.)

A. Periphery disciplines (Faculties)

Beyond the aforementioned university focus, AfRUn will also encompass the following 7 circles of disciplines:

- **Economics**
- **Law**
- **Sciences**
- **Natural Sciences**
- **Medicine and Nursery**
- **Engineering**
- **Business Administration**

8. Humanities-Arts-Social Sciences – Oriented (cont.)

Africa today is not in need of a Renaissance because of the lack of engineers, doctors, lawyers, and experts in Finance and Business Administration.

Although these sectors are to be represented in the respective faculties, **the epicenter disciplines (see above Part A) must always correspond to more than 65% of AfRUn staff members and students**; in other words, the organization of these faculties must be *pioneering, groundbreaking, duly oriented to African Identity-defining, and vast enough to cover all parts of the continent.*

9. Afro-centric Academic Curricula in Humanities - the Structure of a Pan-African University

For AfRUn to **define, establish, teach, analyze, study, implement, diffuse and market the African Identity - which is at the very foundations of African Renaissance - much more is needed than a typical, academic curriculum.**

What follows is a brief description of some of the extraordinary needs that are essential for AfRUn in order to materialize the goals mentioned in the first paragraph.

9. Afro-centric Academic Curricula in Humanities - the Structure of a Pan-African University (cont.)

Initially all major African languages, literatures, civilizations, cultures, religions, behavioral philosophical systems, arts of Africa (across History) must be offered.

Expansively, an effort will be made to cover more African languages, literatures, and cultures.

9. Afro-centric Academic Curricula in Humanities - the Structure of a Pan-African University (cont.)

In the beginning, following Curricula will be offered:

- Arabic
 - Berber
 - Tuareg
 - Coptic
 - Hausa
 - Yoruba
 - Igbo
 - Fulani
 - Mande
 - Dogon
 - Oromo
 - Somali
 - Afar
 - Sidama
 - Beja
 - Nubian
 - Luo
 - Malagasy
 - Shona
 - Zulu
- * Bamum

9. Afro-centric Academic Curricula in Humanities - the Structure of a Pan-African University (cont.)

This will be achieved through the creation of **separate departments in the Faculty of Humanities**. *The scope and the sub-division of these departments will follow the breakdown of the aforementioned 'epicenter' disciplines.*

However, to strengthen African languages as means of academic communication and research, **AfRUn will help also create as soon as possible bilingual departments** (English/ Arabic, English/Somali, etc.) **within the faculties that offer 'periphery' disciplines, such as Law, Sciences, and Medicine.**

9. Afro-centric Academic Curricula in Humanities - the Structure of a Pan-African University (cont.)

Furthermore,

for neglected African languages that failed so far to become fully accredited means of academic communication and research for their own native speakers (who consequently have to study Medicine, Law, Sciences, etc. in other languages), AfRUn will setup **workshops to fully address these academic - educational needs of all neglected African nations by means of**

9. Afro-centric Academic Curricula in Humanities - the Structure of a Pan-African University (cont.)

- writing down hitherto non-written African languages,**
- developing scientific and general academic vocabulary in African languages with underdeveloped academic language skills,**
- localizing terms used in international languages.**

9. Afro-centric Academic Curricula in Humanities - the Structure of a Pan-African University (cont.)

Once, **the workshop delivers successful results** - involving the issuance of several manuals in a neglected language - **AfRUn will launch a new bilingual department in the 'periphery' disciplines for which the workshop delivered manuals** (ex. English / Nubian department of Sciences or Law or Medicine).

(Further reading:

<http://www.punchng.com/opinion/who-is-killing-nigerian-languages/>)

10. Afro-centric Academic Contents - the Structure of a Pan-African University

Among other measures, AfRUNn will have to get fully engaged in the following points:

A - Particular selection of the staff members to hire

- * Mere academic qualifications will not be considered as enough
- * A pro-Pan-African predisposition and an Afro-centric approach will have to be viewed as more important criteria
- * Demonstrable publications will be demanded in this regard
- * Candidates will have to accept AfRUN values and pedagogical system and be ready to deliver accordingly

10. Afro-centric Academic Contents - the Structure of a Pan-African University (cont.)

B - Afro-centric Orientation Seminar

To better introduce the newly hired staff members into the philosophy, the worldview, the values and the goals of AfRUn

C - New Manuals for every course

Even if the hired instructor published books on the course topic earlier – except there is full proof of Afro-centric viewpoint in the proposed publications

10. Afro-centric Academic Contents - the Structure of a Pan-African University (cont.)

D - Correct balance between core courses (those focused on the main part of the syllabus) **and the elective courses**, which will have to offer students the necessary Pan-African academic background that best reveals the diachronic African identity

11. Rejection of Euro-centric Academic Contents - the Structure of a Pan-African University

Among other measures, AfRUNn will have to get fully engaged in the following points:

A - Particular selection of the staff members to hire

* Candidates inconsiderately repeating the Euro-centric model in their publications, seminars and lectures must be eliminated without reserve.

11. Rejection of Euro-centric Academic Contents - the Structure of a Pan-African University (cont.)

B - Orientation Seminar - Refutation of Greco-Romano-Euro-centric Academia

Geared for the newly hired staff members, it will help them best understand the existing anti-African, anti-Asiatic, anti-Pre-Colombian American, anti-Oriental, anti-South, anti-indigenous *biases of the European, Canadian, Australian and US universities* – and of their dependencies worldwide; in addition, it will strongly push newly hired staff members to refute – each in his/her own field – all possible aspects of Euro-centric approach that exist in current bibliography).

11. Rejection of Euro-centric Academic Contents - the Structure of a Pan-African University (cont.)

C - Special section in the Manuals

The refutation of the Euro-centric approach per subject will be effectively discussed, and its nefarious consequences for the African nations fully revealed and denounced, in every course manual.

12. AfRUn Academic Curricula in Education - the Structure of a Pan-African University

Following AfRUn academic curricula in Humanities (as per above section I), **AfRUn curricula in Education will form Primary and Secondary Education instructors in a great number of African languages** (*in full correspondence with the existing departments of the Faculty of Humanities*).

These instructors will be duly equipped with **in-depth understanding of the African Identity, unbiased academic knowledge, and African / Afro-centric know how to teach schoolchildren in a manner that will be fully adjusted to the vision and the goals of AfRUn.**

12. AfRUn Academic Curricula in Education - the Structure of a Pan-African University (cont.)

The School of Education will offer **degrees in African Education in all the African languages originally offered by the School of Humanities** (see above, unit 9).

Graduates with major in one African language will have working knowledge of two other African languages other than their own native tongue.

13. AfRUn staff members, students, and Inter-African exchange

All efforts deployed by AfRUn administration, academic staff members, and students for many consecutive years *risk having minimal, regionally limited, and precarious impact*, if due attention is not paid to a matter of the utmost importance: **inter-African exchange.**

African Renaissance cannot become a reality without being present, vigorous and proactive among all African peoples and nations - irrespective of size, language and religion.

13. AfRUn staff members, students, and Inter-African exchange (cont.)

In this regard, *AfRUn cannot adopt for itself the concept of 'point of emanation' as it would contradict the perception of African Renaissance as the major concern and of all African peoples, nations and ethnic groups.*

To make every African adhere to the African Renaissance vision and movement, **AfRUn must become an academic meeting point whereby the cultural inter-exchange will bring forth mutual knowledge, study and understanding among students originating from any African ethno-linguistic group, belonging to any African religion and system of faith, and participating in any class or party back in their country.**

13. AfRUn staff members, students, and Inter-African exchange (cont.)

This suggests that **different types of quota systems must be used** carefully, and **student registration / enrollment in the different syllabuses must represent all parts of the continent proportionally.**

If only Arabic native speaking students enroll in the Department of Arabic Language and Literature, if only Hausa native speaking students enroll in the Department of Hausa Language and Literature, and if only Oromo native speaking students enroll in the Department of Oromo Language and Literature, AfRUn will have failed.

13. AfRUn staff members, students, and Inter-African exchange (cont.)

Through different incentives, involving also studentships, and by employing systematic Marketing techniques, AfRUn will have to create **a deep, genuine and permanent interest in other African cultures, languages, literatures, histories, antiquities, religions and philosophies** among African youngsters. The measure of **success** will be the threshold of 50%, **when only 50% of the students taking a syllabus are native of the culture (language, literature, history, archaeology, religion, art, philosophy) under study** and the rest originate from other parts of the Black Continent.

14. African Renaissance, AfRUn, & non-Western continents (Asia, Latin America)

AfRUn will have to **break with another colonial tradition**, less obvious but highly dangerous, which greatly jeopardized the Black Continent's chances to rise to global prominence.

Due to a pernicious Anglo-French – US policy, *the Black Continent was almost cut off from sizeable parts of the world that represent different cultures with possibly rewarding exchange and interaction.*

14. African Renaissance, AfRUn, & non-Western continents (Asia, Latin America) (cont.)

To name some of them indicatively:

- Russia
- Pakistan – India – Bangladesh
- Turkey & the Caucasus region
- Iran
- Central Asia
- Malaysia – Indonesia
- China
- Latin America

14. African Renaissance, AfRUn, & non-Western continents (Asia, Latin America) (cont.)

The creation of departments of language and literature, history, archaeology, art, history of religions, philosophy and culture that cover the aforementioned civilizations will have to be for AfRUn **a priority** over the formation of departments of area studies specializing in Northwestern Europe and North America.

14. African Renaissance, AfRUn, & non-Western continents (Asia, Latin America) (cont.)

With reference to Latin America, AfRUn will have to give **priority to the study of indigenous cultures and languages** (Nahuatl, Quechua, Aymara) **and of Pre-Columbian civilizations over Spanish and Portuguese.**

Furthermore, in the establishment of the departments, **predilection will be shown to Mexico Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese, rather than Castilian Spanish and Iberian Portuguese.**

14. African Renaissance, AfRUn, & non-Western continents (Asia, Latin America) (cont.)

Since its inception, AfRUn must deploy all efforts to become

the Pan-African epicenter of study of

Russia, India, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, Malaysia – Indonesia, China, and Latin America –

and **Africa's best window to these 'worlds'.**

14. African Renaissance, AfRUn, & non-Western continents (Asia, Latin America) (cont.)

Viewed reversely, AfRUn will also seek to

- **achieve global recognition and**
- **become the best window to Africa**
*for academia and students originating from all these 'worlds' – poles of today's multi-polar global system: **Russia, India, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, Malaysia – Indonesia, China, and Latin America.***

14. African Renaissance, AfRUn, & non-Western continents (Asia, Latin America) (cont.)

Again, AfRUn must deploy a great effort to keep its **standards, practices and quota systems of really Pan-African of nature**, and to have *all parts of the continent proportionally represented in the courses and the syllabuses of the aforementioned departments.*

15. AfRUn, African Renaissance & Afro-centrism – an academic project with determinant impact on African Education and Society

Most African Renaissance theorists delivered **accurate understanding of Africa's problematic postcolonial conditions**, but *failed to find the proper remedy*.

15. AfRUn, African Renaissance & Afro-centrism – an academic project with determinant impact on African Education and Society (cont.)

Several Afro-centrists denounced the worldwide prevalent Euro-centric model of History and Weltanschauung, but *failed to properly diffuse their analyses and make of them the common educational background of all Africans across the Black Continent.*

15. AfRUn, African Renaissance & Afro-centrism – an academic project with determinant impact on African Education and Society (cont.)

To address these issues, AfRUn must act as **an institution wider than a simple university** and **incorporate other activities** that do not fall within the scope of common, average universities.

What follows is a list of associated institutions and eventually a brief description their activities.

15 A. AfRUn Program - Primary & Secondary Education Manuals for Africans

The **manuals** of Language, Literature, History, Geography, Religion and Philosophy that are currently in use across the Black Continent are **more harmful than helpful**; in different languages, indigenous or colonial, *these manuals perpetuate the colonial vision of a dependent, underdeveloped, and ignorant Africa that is good only to be exploited by the Western colonial powers.*

15 A. AfRUn Program - Primary & Secondary Education Manuals for Africans (cont.)

These manuals every year and every moment *destroy the minds and the souls of millions of young Africans* to whom they instill a viciously erroneous, lethally narrow, disastrously superficial, dramatically undermined, colonially useful, and definitely anti-African vision of the world and representation of Africa.

15 A. AfRUn Program - Primary & Secondary Education Manuals for Africans (cont.)

These manuals are no 1 enemy of every effort toward an African Renaissance, being also the reason of

- deep mutual ignorance among all African nations,*
- further inter-African divisions,*
- extended colonial servitude, and*
- generalized lack of interest in Africa.*

15 A. AfRUn Program - Primary & Secondary Education Manuals for Africans (cont.)

AfRUn Manuals is a wide project that will work **independently from but in parallel with AfRUn**, hiring **own staff members** who will be **native in any AfRUn official language** (initially: Arabic, Berber, Tuareg, Coptic, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Fulani, Mande, Dogon, Oromo, Somali, Afar, Sidama, Beja, Nubian, Luo, Malagasy, Shona, Zulu, and Bamum) and will have a thorough knowledge of English or French.

15 A. AfRUn Program - Primary & Secondary Education Manuals for Africans (cont.)

AfRUn Manuals staff members will carry out – among other activities – the following tasks:

1- Lists of data pertaining to African Languages, Literatures, History, Arts and Monuments, Geography, Religion, Philosophy, and Foreign Languages that have to be incorporated into the manuals that will be progressively composed by AfRUn Manuals staff members and later shared/used by all African students

15 A. AfRUn Program - Primary & Secondary Education Manuals for Africans (cont.)

2 - **Planning** – in the light of the aforementioned lists – **of genuinely African manuals to be written** (inv. lists of manuals, compulsory contents, uniformity standards, texts, historical sources, Afro-centric bibliography, maps, diagrams, and related photographic / multimedia documentation) **in all official languages plus English and French**

15 A. AfRUn Program - Primary & Secondary Education Manuals for Africans (cont.)

3- Elaboration of the abovementioned programmed manuals - up to completion
Approximation: **more than 1200 manuals to be written in about 25 languages, i.e. ca. 60 manuals per native language** (for all levels of the primary and the secondary education), **by an average of 5 writers per language, involving a group of 125 manual writers**

15 A. AfRUn Program - Primary & Secondary Education Manuals for Africans (cont.)

- 4- **Uniformity control of the written manuals** as per subject and levels – to be carried out by other AfRUn Manuals staff members
- 5- **Publication, distribution, online uploading**

15 A. AfRUn Program - Primary & Secondary Education Manuals for Africans (cont.)

6- **Collection of the existing manuals** of African Languages, Literatures, History, Arts and Monuments, Geography, Religion, Philosophy, and Foreign Languages that are currently in use at all levels of Primary and Secondary Education across Africa

15 A. AfRUn Program - Primary & Secondary Education Manuals for Africans (cont.)

7- Study of the collected manuals

- identification of errors, oversights, inaccuracies and falsifications**
- revelation of their anti-African character – evaluation of damages caused**
- publication – refutation of the material collected and studied**

15 B. Center of Endangered African Languages

Documentation, salvation,
promotion projects

15 C. Anti-analphabetism campaigns

In different African countries - to promote native languages, not state languages

In close cooperation with AfRUn workshops mentioned in unit 9

15 D. Organization of week-long cultural inter-exchange seminars in various countries

Featuring **another African country's cultural heritage & existing economic opportunities in the local language** – progressively covering all AfRUn official languages (first stage) and many minor languages (second stage).

Examples:

Presentation Somali Culture in Morocco

Presentation Hausa Culture in Tanzania

Presentation Oromo Culture in South Africa

Each inter-exchange featuring photographic exhibition, small book fair, and distribution of published manuals and other informative material (flyers and brochures in the local language)

Suggested rhythm at the beginning: 1 seminar per trimester

15 E. AfRUn Cinema - Preparation of cultural inter-exchange documentaries

Featuring one African country's cultural heritage in all AfRUn official languages (first stage) and many minor languages (second stage)

15 F. AfRUn Radio - TV channel

15 G. AfRUn Inter-African Museum

15 H. AfRUn Publication House

15 I. AfRUn Inter-African Translation Center

15 J. AfRUn Library – Archives

**15 K. Open Lectures, Seminars,
Conferences, & African Renaissance
Annual Congresses**

15 L. Organized Cultural Travels
(either Inter-African or bilateral, e.g.
African-Chinese, etc.)

15 M. Launching of continental and intercontinental branches of the university

- AfRUn Cairo
- AfRUn Algiers
- AfRUn Mombasa
- AfRUn Dakar
- AfRUn Mozambique
- AfRUn Mexico
- AfRUn New Delhi
- AfRUn Beijing
- AfRUn Moscow
- AfRUn Rome

THANK YOU!