Towards a transformative lifelong learning agenda for non-traditional students at university

PB Tumuheki, J Zeelen, GL Openjuru, Journal of Adult and Continuing Education, 14779714231196044

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Abstract

Liberalisation of higher education in Uganda meant opening its provision to the private sector, and also running a public-private mix model at public institutions. Consequently, the composition and needs of the student population at universities have changed due to flexibility in provision of study programmes and access routes. Students who had previously been excluded are also joining in increasing numbers. This article uses the feminist frameworks to equality and difference, discourses of integration and exclusion, and the concepts of Othering and Other to unpack equality of access, equity and inclusivity spaces of these new types of students. The aim is to contribute towards a learning agenda that promotes quality and sustainable educational development for all. We draw our findings from the voices of non-traditional students at a public university in Uganda. We validate these with voices of other germane actors to understand better the institutional policy and practice environments available to them. The equal opportunity provision has widened access for NTS but their equity and inclusivity spaces remain inadequately filled. To achieve sustainable inclusive and equitable quality higher education, we suggest a policy, practice and provision environment that promotes a transformative lifelong learning agenda.