Uganda vice chancellors' Forum (UVCF)

Workshop Report on Enhancing Financial Management & Resource Mobilization in Higher Education Institutions
Workshop held on 25th April, 2025
at The Voice Hotel, Bwebajja – Entebbe Road

4/25/2025

Table of Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As institutions of higher learning in Uganda and the broader region face increasing financial constraints, effective financial management and innovative resource mobilization strategies have become essential for sustainability and growth. It is with this spirit that the Uganda Vice Chancellors forum Secretariat organized a workshop on *Enhancing Financial Management and Resource Mobilization in Higher Education Institutions* commenced held on 25th April, 2025.

The workshop brought together a diverse group of participants from various institutions of higher learning across the country. Registration commenced at 8:30 a.m., with attendees warmly received and guided through the check-in process. The participants included University Secretaries, accountants, bursars, and other key administrative and finance personnel.

This composition reflected a well-rounded representation of stakeholders directly involved in financial planning, management, and resource mobilization within higher education institutions. Their presence not only underscored the relevance of the workshop's theme but also enriched the discussions by bringing a variety of perspectives and institutional experiences to the table.

The session officially opened with a warm welcome and coordination by the Master of Ceremonies, Dr. Joseph Kaaya. An opening prayer was led by Ms. Isabella Kirabo from St. Ignatius University, Kabale, setting a reflective and collegial tone for the day's proceedings. The registration and self-introduction phase also provided a valuable opportunity for networking and professional interaction among participants from different institutions, laying the foundation for a collaborative and engaging workshop experience.

1.1 Opening Remarks:

Prof. Eraibu Lugujjo, the Executive Director of the Uganda Vice Chancellors' Forum (UVCF), officially welcomed all participants to the workshop on *Enhancing Financial Management and Resource Mobilization in Higher Education Institutions*. A seasoned academic leader and one of the profound icons of higher education in Uganda, Prof. Lugujjo has played a pivotal role in shaping collaborative dialogue among universities in Uganda.

He highlighted that while Uganda has 124 registered universities, only 54 of them—comprising both universities and other degree-awarding institutions—are currently members of UVCF. He further stressed the importance of the Forum's role in identifying and addressing policy issues, particularly those related to financial management, through collective dialogue to strengthen the sector's voice.

Additional remarks:

Before departing for another equally important engagement, the Executive Director delivered his closing remarks, reflecting on the nature of human development. He explained that who we become as individuals is shaped by the sum of our life experiences, which he referred to as the "curriculums of life." These experiences, especially within the educational journey, significantly influence the final outcome—producing a well-rounded graduate.

He further emphasized that industries often engage with higher education institutions with profit in mind. In response, the Uganda Vice Chancellors' Forum (UVCF) is promoting stronger collaboration between academia and industry. Since quality students serve as key inputs into the workforce, there is a pressing need for a legal framework to support this relationship. Such partnerships are crucial for identifying gaps and guiding policy reforms that can enhance the relevance and impact of higher education in Uganda.

1Figure 1:Prof. Eraibu Lugujjo giving Opening Remarks

He pointed out the financial realities affecting both public and private universities - as they all have one common denominator – shortage of the resource envelope. In private institutions, finance managers are compelled

to actively mobilize resources, often accessing loans. In contrast, public universities face restrictions, as most funds are externally controlled — for instance, in institutions like Makerere University, over 90% of students are privately sponsored yet all collections are channeled to the central government funds collection unit – Uganda revenue authority. This highlights the urgent need for workshops like this one, which offer practical guidance on navigating persistent financial constraints.

Prof. Lugujjo concluded by emphasizing the necessity of embracing the triple helix model—where universities actively collaborate with the private sector and government—to build sustainable financial models. He noted that in some countries, such partnerships even attract tax benefits. He urged participants to use the workshop as a platform for generating actionable resolutions that could inform national policy and guide institutions in leveraging technology and innovation, even in the face of limited resources. On that note he wished them prosperous deliberations as he ushered in the first presenter.

2.0 Presentation 1: Financial Management in Higher Education:

By Mr. Paul Mark Kayongo FCCA/ACCA.FCRA, CPA(UG), MBA (MAK), BSc Oxford.

Who is Mr. Paul Mark Kayongo?

Mr. Paul Mark Kayongo is a highly experienced finance professional and certified public accountant with a strong track record in financial management, budgeting, and risk oversight. He currently serves as the Finance Manager and Risk Management Officer at Ndejje University, where he has demonstrated exceptional leadership in streamlining financial operations and promoting institutional accountability.

In addition to his role in higher education, Mr. Kayongo brings his financial expertise to the sports sector. He serves as the Treasurer of the Association of Uganda University Sports (AUUS) and is a member of the Finance Committee of the Uganda Olympic Committee. Through these roles, he has contributed to the sound financial governance of sports institutions in Uganda, ensuring transparent and sustainable management of resources. His unique ability to integrate financial discipline into both academic and sports environments underscores his versatile and impactful professional profile.

Figure 2: Mr. Paul Mark Kayongo giving his presentation on Financial Management in Higher Education

Mr. Kayongo, delivered an insightful presentation focused on strengthening financial management and resource mobilization within higher education institutions. His session provided a comprehensive overview of core financial principles tailored specifically to the university context, with a strong emphasis on aligning financial practices with institutional strategic goals and national development plans (NDPs).

2.1 Key Topics Covered:

i. **Financial Management Principles in Higher Education:**
Mr. Kayongo outlined foundational financial management concepts, emphasizing their relevance and application within the governance and operational frameworks of universities.

ii. **Budgeting Techniques and Financial Planning:**
He discussed practical budgeting methods, highlighting the importance of proactive financial planning in supporting academic programs, research, infrastructure development, and student services.

iii. **Financial Reporting Standards and Compliance:**
The presentation addressed the need for adherence to financial reporting standards, transparency, and regulatory compliance as key pillars of institutional accountability.

iv. **Developing Resilient Financial Models:**
Drawing on case studies and real-world examples, Mr. Kayongo demonstrated how institutions can design resilient financial models that support long-term sustainability and are responsive to both internal and external challenges.

2.2 Focus Areas and Strategic Insights:

i. **Strengthening Financial Management Practices:**
He emphasized that robust financial systems are essential for institutional credibility, operational efficiency, and long-term success.

ii. **Sustainable Resource Mobilization Strategies:**
Mr. Kayongo encouraged institutions to diversify income streams through partnerships, grants,

endowment funds, and innovative fundraising approaches, thereby reducing overreliance on tuition fees.

iii. **Best Practices in Financial Planning, Risk Management, and Technology Integration:**
The session highlighted the importance of embracing technology to streamline financial operations and enhance data-driven decision-making. Risk mitigation strategies were also discussed as crucial components of sound financial governance.

iv. **Peer Learning and Knowledge Sharing:**
Mr. Kayongo concluded by advocating for continued collaboration among finance professionals across institutions. He underscored the value of peer learning platforms in fostering innovation, accountability, and shared growth in the higher education sector.

2.3 Approach and Methodology:

The presentation blended theoretical frameworks with practical applications, enabling participants to relate concepts to real institutional scenarios. Through interactive discussions and case-based learning, participants gained hands-on insights into effective financial management tailored to the Ugandan higher education landscape.

2.4 Conclusion:

Mr. Kayongo emphasized that effective financial management in higher education institutions requires visionary leadership and a strategic balance between long-term goals and day-to-day operational needs. He noted that modern accounting practices are evolving beyond traditional fixed budgeting to embrace wealth generation and sustainability. Institutions must therefore adopt forward-looking financial strategies that not only ensure compliance and efficiency but also drive innovation, growth, and resilience in a dynamic education environment.

Note: A detailed version of Mr. Paul Mark Kayongo's presentation has been uploaded on www.uvcf.ac.ug for further reference and in-depth review of the concepts and strategies discussed.

2.5 Q&A Session

Following Mr. Kayongo's presentation, participants engaged in an interactive question-and-answer session that further enriched the discussion on enhancing financial management and resource mobilization in higher education institutions. Key issues raised and responses provided are summarized below:

i. Gaining funding from research grants and industry partnerships: How can this be embraced in Ugandan institutions of higher learning?

Response:
Mr. Kayongo emphasized the need for finance managers to work collaboratively with the Research and

Grants Management Units at their institutions. He advised that institutions should develop strategic plans specifically aimed at growing research and grant portfolios. Finance directors should actively participate in these units to ensure alignment with financial goals. He encouraged institutions to utilize their internal human capital—challenging faculties and departments to secure a set number of grants annually.

He also stressed the importance of foundational elements such as having ethical clearance processes and a clear Research and Grants Policy in place. Once these structures are established, institutions can more effectively engage in Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and pursue collaborative grant opportunities.

ii. Misalignment between management and financial operations managers: Why does this persist and how can it be addressed?

Response:
According to Mr. Kayongo, this misalignment often stems from individual egos, poor communication, and a lack of cohesive teamwork across institutional structures. He noted that effective financial strategies require a collective, inclusive approach involving all relevant stakeholders. Institutions must promote team-building and a culture of shared responsibility, ensuring that financial planning and operational decision-making are well integrated. Persistence, dialogue, and a willingness to engage across departments are key to overcoming such organizational challenges.

iii. Enhancing opportunities for grants and building industry partnerships: What are the practical steps?

Response:
To expand grant opportunities and strengthen industry linkages, Mr. Kayongo advised institutions to begin with internal audits of existing research data and outputs. This includes reviewing past and current research from each faculty and analyzing dissertations or theses by graduates, many of which contain viable, problem-solving ideas. These ideas can be developed into commercially relevant research projects. By nurturing such prototypes into full proposals and engaging industry stakeholders, institutions can translate academic research into impactful, fundable initiatives.

These exchanges highlighted the critical role of strategic collaboration, internal capacity building, and institutional alignment in advancing financial sustainability in higher education.

3.0 Presentation 2: Resource Mobilization Strategies:

Mr. Paul Mark Kayongo FCCA/ACCA.FCRA, CPA(UG), MBA (MAK), BSc Oxford.

In his presentation on Resource Mobilization Strategies, Mr. Kayongo focused on how higher education institutions can secure diverse funding sources and manage resources effectively to support institutional growth and long-term sustainability.

3.1 Overview and Strategic Purpose

The presentation emphasized that a well-structured resource mobilization strategy is essential for achieving organizational goals. Mr. Kayongo highlighted the need for a systematic approach to soliciting, acquiring, utilizing, managing, and reporting on both financial and non-financial resources**.** He noted that institutions must intentionally plan and execute resource mobilization strategies to ensure continued relevance and resilience.

3.2 Identifying and Accessing Diverse Funding Sources

Mr. Kayongo stressed the importance of **diversified revenue streams** for sustainability in higher education. Key funding sources include:

i. **Government Grants**: Often based on student enrollment numbers and research output.
ii. **Tuition Fees**: Structured by academic program and institutional capacity.
iii. **Research Funding**: Secured through national and international agencies such as the World Bank and UNESCO.
iv. **Industry Partnerships**: These provide not only funding but also platforms for **technology transfer**, collaborative research, and commercialization of innovations.

3.3 Financing Foreign Projects

The presentation also addressed the dynamics of financing international academic and development projects. Mr. Kayongo explained that foreign currency financing is often employed by multinational institutions to minimize currency mismatch risks. Options include: i) Internal and parent company financing, ii) Subsidiary financing, and iii) Third-currency financing

Specific instruments highlighted included Euro-currency loans, syndicated loans, and Euro bonds, with a note on the importance of assessing service costs, tax implications, and risk profiles before selecting any financing option.

3.4 Islamic Sources of Finance: Mr. Kayongo also introduced Islamic finance as an ethical and growing avenue for resource mobilization. Instruments such as Murabaha and Sukuk were discussed, with emphasis on their prohibition of interest and promotion of asset-based transactions. While valuable, he noted that these instruments may have limitations such as slower market responsiveness and higher compliance costs.

3.5 Approaches to Resource Mobilization: The session outlined five key approaches necessary for mobilizing resources effectively:

i. **Material Resources** – Physical assets and infrastructure
ii. **Human Resources** – Skills and expertise of staff
iii. **Social Resources** – Networks and partnerships
iv. **Organizational Resources** – Governance and administrative structures
v. **Cultural Resources** – Institutional identity and values

3.6 Key Steps in Resource Mobilization Planning: Mr. Kayongo guided participants through the essential steps in resource mobilization planning including:

i. Designing a resource mobilization strategy
ii. Identifying and engaging strategic partners
iii. Negotiating funding and partnership agreements
iv. Managing and reporting on resource use
v. Communicating results and demonstrating impact

3.7 Sources of Development Capital: He categorized development capital into six forms critical for institutional advancement:

i. **Financial Capital**: Grants, loans, and direct funding
ii. **Manufactured Capital**: Equipment, infrastructure, and technology
iii. **Intellectual Capital**: Research outputs and proprietary knowledge
iv. **Human Capital**: Staff expertise and competencies
v. **Social Capital**: Partnerships and institutional networks
vi. **Natural Capital**: Ecological systems that support institutional activities

This presentation reinforced the importance of strategic thinking, financial innovation, and stakeholder collaboration in resource mobilization. It provided participants with practical frameworks and tools to broaden their institutions' funding bases while maintaining integrity, efficiency, and long-term vision. The detailed copy of the presentation is uploaded on www.uvcf.ac.ug for reference purposes.

4.0 Presentation 3: Financial Sustainability & Risk Management :

By Mr. Peter Clinton Mutumba ACCA, BCOM, PRESIDENT MUAB –

Mr. Peter Clinton Mutumba, a certified accountant and finance professional with a background in commerce and membership in the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), delivered a compelling presentation on Financial Sustainability and Risk Management in the context of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Uganda. His presentation emphasized the urgency of integrating sustainability principles with robust risk management practices to ensure the long-term viability and relevance of institutions in a dynamic socio-economic environment

Figure 1: Mr. Peter Clinton Mutumba giving his presentation on Financial Sustainability and Risk Management.

4.1 Understanding Sustainability and Its Urgency in Uganda

Mr. Mutumba opened the session by outlining the concept of sustainability, defining it as the practice of meeting current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. He highlighted Uganda's growing environmental challenges such as the loss of cloud cover, rising temperatures, and polluted water bodies, urging HEIs to adopt urgent and intentional sustainable practices. These practices are not only environmentally imperative but also foundational to long-term financial and institutional survival.

4.2 Objectives of Sustainability from an Environmental Perspective:

He presented four key environmental objectives that institutions should incorporate into their operational frameworks:

i. **Reducing carbon emissions** through the adoption of clean energy technologies.
ii. **Promoting waste-to-energy innovations** to encourage recycling and circular economies.
iii. **Conserving biodiversity** by supporting sustainable land use and forest management.
iv. **Enhancing resource efficiency** in both operations and supply chains.

These environmental objectives, when aligned with institutional strategies, can open new avenues for funding and innovation.

4.3 Why Sustainability Matters

Mr. Mutumba explained that engaging in sustainable activities enhances access to green financing and strengthens potential for strategic partnerships. HEIs that prioritize sustainability are better positioned to minimize environmental harm while simultaneously unlocking financial opportunities that support academic excellence and infrastructure development.

He introduced key green finance partners, including international institutions like Proparco, FMO, IFC, DEG, and AFD, as well as climate-focused funds such as the Acumen Fund and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). These entities offer support for green ventures, particularly those aligned with sustainability goals.

4.4 Achieving Sustainability Objectives

To achieve these goals, Mr. Mutumba advised institutions to:

- **Align sustainability targets** with institutional mission and business strategy.
- **Identify high-impact opportunities** with measurable environmental and financial returns.
- **Utilize green financing instruments**, including green bonds and social bonds.
- Address **regulatory and data barriers** that hinder compliance and transparency.
- Foster **stakeholder engagement** to ensure collective ownership of sustainability agendas.

4.5 Role of Higher Education Institutions in Promoting Sustainability

Higher education institutions, Mr. Mutumba noted, are in a unique position to model and drive change. They should:

i. Promote energy efficiency and minimize the use of hazardous materials.
ii. Transition towards a paperless environment.
iii. Uphold social equity through fair labor practices and inclusive policies.
iv. Commit to biodiversity protection as part of their community engagement and research agenda.

4.6 Financial Sustainability and Risk Management

In the second part of his presentation, Mr. Mutumba addressed the concept of financial sustainability, which he defined as an institution's ability to consistently generate sufficient revenue to meet operational costs, maintain infrastructure, and invest in academic quality.

He highlighted the key challenges faced by HEIs in Uganda, which include:

i. Limited and delayed government funding
ii. Overreliance on tuition fees as the primary source of income
iii. Inflation and economic instability impacting student enrollment and institutional operations

4.7 Strategies for Achieving Financial Sustainability

Mr. Mutumba proposed several strategic interventions for strengthening financial sustainability:

i. Diversification of revenue streams, including income-generating projects and establishment of endowment funds.
ii. Engagement in public-private partnerships (PPPs) to fund infrastructure and research.
iii. Adoption of efficient financial planning and resource utilization practices.
iv. Development of institutional endowment funds to support long-term financial stability and autonomy.

4.8 Risk Management in Higher Education Institutions

The presentation concluded with a detailed examination of **risk management**. Mr. Mutumba stressed that effective risk management is central to institutional stability and governance. He categorized risks into six major areas:

i. **Financial risks** – e.g., revenue fluctuations, delayed disbursements.
ii. **Operational risks** – such as poor infrastructure and data management.
iii. **Academic quality risks** – stemming from low staff retention and outdated curricula.
iv. **Governance and compliance risks** – including procurement irregularities and regulatory non-compliance.
v. **Technological risks** – including cybersecurity threats and digital obsolescence.

vi. **Environmental and health risks** – such as pandemics and climate change impacts.

4.9 Key Strategies for Effective Risk Management

To mitigate these risks, Mr. Mutumba recommended the following actions:

i. Establishing institutional risk frameworks with clearly defined processes.
ii. Conducting regular risk assessments to identify vulnerabilities.
iii. Developing risk mitigation plans, including financial buffers and insurance coverage.
iv. Strengthening internal controls and ensuring compliance with financial and academic regulations.
v. Integrating risk management into strategic planning processes.
vi. Leveraging technology for real-time risk detection, data management, and reporting.

Mr. Mutumba's presentation was equipped participants with practical tools and insights to improve institutional resilience, financial sustainability, and environmental accountability in Uganda's higher education landscape. A copy of the presentation is uploaded on www.uvcf.ac.ug

4.10 Combined Q&A Session: Financial Sustainability and Resource Mobilization Strategies

Following the presentations by Mr. Paul Mark Kayongo on *Resource Mobilization Strategies* and Mr. Peter Clinton Mutumba on *Financial Sustainability and Risk Management*, participants engaged in a joint Q&A session. This interactive segment provided a platform to delve deeper into the challenges and opportunities faced by institutions of higher learning in Uganda concerning financial independence and sustainability.

Q1: What are some of the endowments through which universities can generate revenue?
Response:
While this question was posed, the responses and discussion focused more broadly on strategies such as the creation of independent investment and endowment units within universities. These units can operate semi-autonomously, engaging in income-generating ventures without full government control. Such units can attract tax waivers, initiate private sector partnerships, and establish branches within faculties or departments to expand their reach and impact.

Q2: What criteria can be used to identify and mobilize financial strategies in Ugandan universities with limited funding?

Response:
One practical approach is to emphasize the cottage industry model. Each faculty or department should be encouraged to establish small business enterprises—examples include juice production, shoe repairs, and mobile phone repair centers. These can be staffed by students and recent graduates, offering them hands-on experience while generating revenue for the institution. Kenyan universities have already adopted such models with notable success, showing that starting small with strategic intent can lead to substantial outcomes.

Q3: For public universities that operate on fixed budgets, what solutions can be pursued after government budget cuts?

Response:
A viable solution is the establishment of an independent investment and endowment unit within each university. This unit would be allowed to operate outside the constraints of the central government funding model. It would be empowered to negotiate tax waivers and operate business ventures separate from the institutional central accounts, similar to how MUASA investments at Makerere University function independently of government-controlled funds. Such an entity could register as a private business arm of the university, making it more agile and financially self-reliant.

Q4: How can universities navigate the challenge where revenues from innovations are redirected to the consolidated fund?

Response:
Universities can advocate for policy reform to allow them to manage their own revenues more flexibly. A proposal was made that government policy should allow universities to maintain multiple operational accounts, particularly for revenue generated from short courses and other innovations. The Non-Tax Revenue (NTR) ceilings imposed by the government often hinder institutions from maximizing and reinvesting their earnings. Flexibility in NTR policy would allow for a more realistic and responsive supplementary budgeting process, reflecting the actual financial potential of these institutions.

Q5: What steps can be taken to influence government policy and ensure institutions retain their internally generated revenues?

Response:
Participants emphasized the need for engaging government through formal policy development processes. Institutions must collaborate through platforms like the Uganda Vice Chancellors' Forum (UVCF) to present unified and legally binding arguments for retaining funds generated from staff and student innovations. By framing such proposals within a formal policy dialogue, institutions can secure more autonomy over their financial affairs and advocate for the removal of bureaucratic bottlenecks that stifle innovation and growth.

This Q&A session featured the critical need for Ugandan universities to adopt entrepreneurial mindsets, push for policy reforms, and create independent financial mechanisms that promote innovation, sustainability, and institutional resilience.

5.0 Presentation 4: Cybersecurity Security:

By Mr. William Kibirango, RENU

Figure 2: Mr. Kibirango William Giving the presentation on Cyber security

Mr. William Kibirango from the **Research and Education Network for Uganda** (**RENU**) delivered a compelling presentation on cybersecurity, emphasizing its increasing importance within institutions of higher learning.

Drawing from RENU's extensive work in the field, he highlighted the urgent need for universities in Uganda to adopt proactive and coordinated cybersecurity strategies to safeguard their digital infrastructure and data assets.

5.1 Security as a Way of Life

Mr. Kibirango stressed that cybersecurity should be treated as a way of life, not just a technical function. This means integrating security considerations into everyday decision-making and operational practices across all levels of an institution. He pointed out that effective security requires balancing accessibility, innovation, compliance, and risk management to ensure the safety and resilience of institutional systems.

5.2 Cyber Threat Landscape in Africa

He noted that cyberattacks are on the rise across Africa, and universities are increasingly being targeted due to the sensitive and valuable nature of the data they hold—ranging from student records to financial and research data. In this context, higher education institutions in Uganda must recognize that they are vulnerable and should take timely measures to strengthen their cybersecurity frameworks.

5.3 Institutional Preparedness: Taking Action

In addressing the question, *"What are you going to do?"*, Mr. Kibirango outlined key actions institutions must take. These include aligning cybersecurity strategy with budget priorities, optimizing the use of Digital Information and Communication Technology Services (DICTS), and implementing regular security awareness training for all staff and students. He also recommended routine system testing and audits to uncover potential vulnerabilities and strengthen defences before breaches occur.

5.4 Security as a Shared Responsibility

One of the central messages of the presentation was that cybersecurity is everyone's responsibility**.** Mr. Kibirango emphasized that ensuring digital security requires collective effort—not only from IT professionals, but also from academic leaders, faculty, administrative staff, and students. He encouraged institutions to cultivate a culture of vigilance, collaboration, and continuous learning to strengthen institutional resilience.

5.5 Support from RENU-CERT

Mr. Kibirango introduced participants to RENU-CERT, a key support unit under RENU dedicated to helping education and research institutions manage cybersecurity. RENU-CERT offers services such as incident response**,** cybersecurity audits**,** network filtering, and awareness resources**.** He encouraged institutions to actively engage with RENU-CERT to improve their preparedness and response to cyber incidents.

In conclusion, Mr. Kibirango's presentation was a strong call to action for Ugandan universities to institutionalize cybersecurity practices. By adopting a holistic, strategic, and inclusive approach**,** higher education institutions can better protect their digital ecosystems, uphold academic integrity, and support the continuity of education in an increasingly digital world. A copy of the presentation is uploaded on www.uvcf.ac.ug .

5.6 Q&A Session: Cybersecurity in Institutions of Higher Learning

Following Mr. William Kibirango's presentation on cybersecurity, participants engaged in a robust question-and-answer session, raising pertinent issues regarding digital security in higher education institutions. Below are some of the key highlights from the interactive session:

i. Data Security and Institutional Backup Options

Question: *Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) has partnered with RENU for data security. Are there other institutions or mechanisms available to back up RENU's services in case of failure?* **Response:** RENU is registered as a data controller with the National Information Technology Authority (NITA-U) and is ISO certified, which assures a high level of data security for its member institutions. However, institutions are encouraged to implement their own internal data backup strategies through their respective DICTS units. Where capacity is limited or uncertain, institutions are advised to consult RENU for guidance on best practices in data security and redundancy planning.

ii. The Role of Block chain and AI in Cybersecurity

Question: *At a finance conference in Sydney, block chain was recommended as the most secure technology for universities. What is block chain cybersecurity?*

Response: Block chain is an integrity-based IT method that ensures transparency and immutability of digital transactions. It is increasingly being explored for enhancing data security due to its decentralized nature. However, institutions should remain vigilant against threats like ransomware, where attackers demand payment to release data. The best defense is maintaining secure backups and avoiding interaction with suspicious emails or messages.

iii. AI-Driven Threats and Institutional Readiness

Question: *With the emergence of AI-generated viruses, such as the one that targeted universities in Paris, how can institutions stay protected?*

Response: In the AI era, universities must prioritize regular system updates, staff training, and robust firewalls. Cybersecurity awareness campaigns and institutional preparedness plans should be regularly updated to match the evolving nature of AI threats. Engagement with expert entities like RENU-CERT is also vital for proactive protection.

iv. Identifying Unsafe Websites

Question: *How can one recognize if a website is fraudulent or unsafe?*

Response: Users should examine the domain and URL structure for authenticity, avoid clicking on unfamiliar or suspicious links, and be wary of sites requesting sensitive information unnecessarily. The presence of a padlock icon does not guarantee safety—always assess what the page is prompting. Staff should be trained to act as a "human firewall," remaining alert to digital red flags.

v. The Greatest Threat to Cybersecurity

Question: *What is the greatest threat to modern digital security, and how can it be mitigated?*

Response: The human element is both the greatest vulnerability and the strongest line of defense in cybersecurity. Many cyberattacks, including ransomware, rely on human action to be effective. Thus, continuous awareness training and empowering all staff and students with cybersecurity knowledge are essential steps toward institutional protection.

vi. **Clarification on Block chain Technology**

Comment: *Block chain is fundamentally an integrity-based technology that secures data by making it nearly impossible to alter past transactions.*

Follow-Up: Its potential in academic settings includes secure credentialing, research data protection, and decentralizing digital records to prevent tampering. However, institutions must balance exploration of such technologies with comprehensive user training and integration planning.

This Q&A session featured the complexity of modern cybersecurity and the shared responsibility among all institutional stakeholders in building a secure digital environment.

6.0 Presentation 5: Technology in Financial Management:

Figure 5: Mr. Paul Mulema giving his presentation on Technology in financial management

By Mr. Paul Mulema CSSM, DCS, BCS, MSCIS & ICT CONSULTANT, Motherwell Investments Ltd.

In his presentation, Mr. Paul Mulema explored the transformative role of technology in financial management, emphasizing how digital tools and systems are reshaping financial practices in institutions of higher learning.

The discussion focused on practical benefits, implementation strategies, and how to ensure secure and efficient financial operations in a digital age.

6.1 The Role of Technology in Financial Management

Technology has become indispensable in modern financial management. It supports the automation of core tasks such as data entry, report generation, and reconciliation, which traditionally consumed a great deal of time and were prone to human error. By integrating technology into accounting and finance functions, institutions can not only increase productivity but also improve the accuracy and reliability of their financial records.

Cloud computing has further enhanced financial operations by enabling real-time collaboration among finance teams and stakeholders. With cloud-based platforms, financial data can be accessed and shared securely from any location, supporting remote work and timely decision-making.

6.2 Benefits of Integrating Technology

Mr. Mulema highlighted several key benefits that come with using technology in financial management:

- **Cost and Time Savings:** Automating repetitive financial tasks significantly reduces manual workload, allowing finance teams to focus on strategic planning and analysis.
- **Efficiency and Collaboration:** Cloud-based systems streamline communication between departments and enable seamless collaboration, particularly during budget planning and reporting cycles.

- **Improved Decision-Making:** The use of data analytics tools empowers institutions to analyze trends, predict financial outcomes, and make informed decisions based on real-time insights.

6.3 Financial Management Information Systems (FMIS)

A central focus of the presentation was the role of Financial Management Information Systems (FMIS). These systems help track income and expenditure, monitor budgets, and ensure compliance with financial regulations.

The successful implementation of FMIS involves several steps:

- **Assessing Current Systems:** Institutions must review existing financial processes to identify gaps or inefficiencies.
- **Defining Needs:** Clear objectives and requirements should be established based on institutional priorities.
- **Selecting Appropriate Vendors:** The choice of software or service provider should align with both budget and technical needs.

Ongoing system monitoring and user support are essential to ensure the FMIS remains functional, secure, and user-friendly.

6.4 Leveraging Technology for Efficient Operations

Technology also improves operational efficiency across financial departments:

- **Mobile Banking Tools:** These tools allow finance staff to manage transactions and monitor accounts from anywhere, facilitating faster responses to financial matters.
- **Enhanced Security:** The use of encryption and secure login protocols helps protect sensitive financial data from breaches.
- **Workflow Automation:** Redundant manual tasks are minimized, resulting in shorter processing times and reduced administrative costs.

6.5 Data Security and Integrity

With the increasing reliance on digital systems, safeguarding data integrity is paramount. Mr. Mulema emphasized several best practices:

- **Validation and Audits:** Routine checks and validations ensure that financial data is accurate and reliable.
- **Access Control:** Limiting access to financial data only to authorized personnel minimizes the risk of internal fraud or accidental data loss.
- **Employee Training:** Staff should be regularly trained on data handling, cybersecurity protocols, and software usage to uphold the integrity of financial systems.

6.6 Conclusion

Mr. Mulema concluded by urging institutions to fully embrace technology as a foundation for effective financial planning and resource management. Tools like Xero, SunSystems, and other FMIS solutions empower Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) and finance teams to make well-informed, data-driven decisions. Ultimately, the integration of technology into financial management is not just a convenience—it is a strategic necessity for sustainability and growth in higher education. Mr. Mulema's presentation is uploaded on www.uvcf.ac.ug for further reference.

7.0 Key Take Home Points and Recommendations:

Finance leaders, bursars, university secretaries, or their representatives from the various institutions specialists from both public and private higher education institutions gathered for a day of intensive learning and collaboration. Guided by expert facilitators, participants explored best practices in budgeting, resource mobilization, risk management, and digital security. The discussions and Q&A sessions generated a rich set of take-home points and practical resolutions, which will guide UVCF and its member institutions toward enhanced financial resilience and innovation. These are highlighted below:

7.0. 1 Key Take Home Points:

A. Institutional Financial Governance and Strategic Leadership

1. **Strengthen Collaborative Financial Strategy Development**: Universities should institutionalize collaboration between Vice Chancellors, academic heads, and finance officers to ensure coherent financial strategy and budget alignment.
2. **Capacity Building for Finance Managers**: Finance officers must be empowered with strategic planning, innovation, and resource mobilization skills beyond technical financial roles.
3. **Enhance Governance Structures for Financial Oversight**: Institutions should implement and regularly review financial policies, audit systems, and internal control frameworks to reduce financial malpractices.
4. **Incorporate Financial Management into Leadership Training**: HEIs should integrate financial literacy into leadership development programs for Deans, Heads of Departments, and Unit Managers.
5. Continuous training in **financial literacy and strategic management** should be institutionalized for all leadership and senior management teams in higher education institutions.

B. Income Diversification and Financial Sustainability

1. Diversify Revenue Streams Beyond Tuition Fees hence institutions must aggressively explore alternative funding including:

i. Research grants
ii. Income-generating projects (IGPs)
iii. Alumni contributions
iv. Public-private partnerships (PPPs)
v. Short courses and vocational skilling

2. Establish and Strengthen Endowment Funds: HEIs should establish autonomous endowment funds, driven by alumni networks and donor outreach, to support long-term financial resilience.

3. **Promote Institutional Investment Units**: Universities should establish commercially viable investment units to manage IGPs, venture capital, and innovation incubation.
4. **Optimize Use of Redundant Assets**: Conduct institutional audits to identify idle land, buildings, and facilities that can be commercialized or leased out.
5. **Strengthen Alumni and Philanthropic Engagement**: Institutions should develop structured alumni relations units with clear fundraising goals, annual appeals, and donor engagement strategies.
6. **Institutionalize Sustainability Reporting**: All universities should adopt sustainability reporting to assess environmental, social, and financial performance.

C. Research, Grants, and Innovation

1. **Create Research and Grants Mobilization Units**: Universities must institutionalize grant offices to support proposal writing, compliance, reporting, and partnerships.
2. **Promote Faculty-Led Research Commercialization**: Faculties should be tasked to initiate income-generating research, and universities should support the incubation of student innovations and community-based projects.
3. **Promote Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations**: Establish a tracking mechanism for active partnerships and MoUs to leverage collaborative grant opportunities.
4. **Advocate for Grant Writing and Proposal Development Training**: HEIs should invest in training sessions and mentorship programs to improve competitiveness in grant acquisition.

D. Risk Management and Internal Controls

1. **Develop and Implement Risk Management Frameworks**: All HEIs must adopt risk management frameworks covering:

   i. Financial risk
   ii. Academic and quality risks
   iii. Operational and compliance risks
   iv. Technological and cybersecurity risks
   v. Environmental and health risks

2. **Institutionalize Periodic Risk Assessments**: Regularly assess institutional risk levels and develop mitigation plans, particularly around delayed government funding and regulatory shifts.
3. **Leverage Technology for Financial Integrity**: Adopt secure and updated systems (e.g., blockchain, AI tools) for budget tracking, audit trails, and fraud prevention.
4. **Cybersecurity Awareness and Digital Risk Management**: Conduct mandatory training on digital security, cyber hygiene, and secure data handling for all finance and administrative staff.

7.2 Recommendations

Recommendations for UVCF and Government

1. **Policy and National Engagement:** There's dire need to engage Government on University Financial Autonomy. Government should be petitioned to review ceilings on Non-Tax Revenue (NTR) to reflect actual income levels and allow flexible budgeting and reallocation of surplus funds. In that regard, UVCF should lobby for reforms allowing public HEIs to:

   i. Retain and manage their internally generated funds (IGF)
   ii. Access independent bank accounts
   iii. Establish independent commercial arms
   iv. Borrow against institutional assets

2. **Advocate for Government Equipment and ICT Support**: Universities are encouraged and should make a deliberate effort to present well-written, impact-based proposals to ministries, UCC, and development partners for laboratory, ICT, and infrastructure support.

3. **Call for National Sustainability Policy in Higher Education**: Together with the relevant bodies, like the Ministry of Education the UVCF should spearhead the development of a framework that encourages sustainability, reporting and long-term investment planning in universities.

Recommendations for Individual Universities

1. **Strategic Thinking for Financial Officers:** Finance teams should transition from bookkeeping to financial leadership—actively participating in planning, strategy, and fundraising.

2. **Tuition Alone is Unsustainable:** Overdependence on tuition threatens long-term viability; diversified income models must be institutionalized.

3. **Research is a Revenue Source:** Faculties should view research not just as academic activity but as a revenue-generating opportunity with real impact on university growth.

4. **Idle Assets Must be Activated:** Asset optimization—using idle land, buildings, and equipment—offers low-hanging fruit for income generation and partnerships.

5. **Cybersecurity is a Real Risk:** Institutions must recognize technological risks (e.g., outdated systems, hacking threats) and implement robust cybersecurity protocols.

6. **Financial Sustainability Must Be Measured:** Sustainability reporting is essential to track performance, secure donor confidence, and ensure accountability.

7. **Government Engagement Requires Evidence:** Government is more likely to support institutions that present clear, data-driven proposals showing community or national impact.

8. **Endowment Models Must Be Institutionalized:** Structured endowment management can secure long-term goals, but must be guided by policy and alumni involvement.

8.0 Certificate Awarding Ceremony

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants were formally recognized for their active engagement and commitment through the awarding of Certificates of Participation. This session marked an important moment of appreciation and acknowledgment of the time, insights, and contributions made by each attendee throughout the event.

The certificates were officially handed over by Mr. Paul Mark Kayongo, who commended the participants for their dedication to advancing knowledge in areas such as financial sustainability, cybersecurity, and institutional resource mobilisation within higher education institutions in Uganda.

This ceremony not only served to honor individual participation but also reinforced the workshop's objective of fostering capacity building and professional development among stakeholders in the higher education sector.

9.0 Closing Session

The closing session began with a **group photo** of all participants, capturing the unity and collaborative spirit of the workshop. This was followed by a special photo session where **members of the Secretariat**

took photographs with the presenters, marking the successful conclusion of the day's presentations and engagements.

After the photo sessions, a **closing prayer** was led by **Ms. Winifred Kyomugisha** at **4:08 PM**. Her prayer offered a moment of reflection and thanksgiving for the fruitful discussions, knowledge shared, and the smooth running of the workshop. Participants departed with renewed commitment to applying the insights gained to improve financial sustainability, cybersecurity, and resource mobilization within their institutions.