

**PULSAR 2012**

**Residential Workshop**

*Johannesburg, 5-9 November 2012*

**Outline of Overall Presentation**

1. Quality of and QA in African Universities  
*(Tea Break)*
2. African Quality Rating Mechanism
3. Global Rankings of Universities

**Goolam Mohamedbhai**



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**Quality of and Quality Assurance in  
African Universities**

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# Outline of Presentation

1. Background to Quality in African Universities
2. African Universities at End of 20<sup>th</sup> Century
3. Agenda for Improving Quality
4. Approaches to Quality Assurance
5. Quality Assurance Initiatives in Africa
6. Challenges in Implementing Quality Assurance
7. Discussion

# 1. Background to Quality of African Universities (1)

- Modern public universities in Africa have their roots in university colleges created during European colonial period
- After independence in 1960s, colleges became universities modelled on European ones – same academic structure, governance, curricula, methods of instruction, etc.
- 1960-1980: African universities thrived with generous support from their government & Europe
- Several became centres of excellence, e.g. Makerere, Ibadan, Khartoum, Cheikh Anta Diop.

# 1. Background to Quality of African Universities (2)

- 1970s & 1980s:
  - economic crisis
  - political upheavals, wars
  - military regimes, dictatorship
  - gross misuse of resources
- These inevitably had an impact on funding of HE
- 1990s: World Bank's decision to support basic education and not higher education
- In spite of being cash-strapped, African universities continued to survive & to increase HE provision, vital for development; but Quality suffered
- 1998: the saving grace – UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education

## 2. African Universities at End of 20<sup>th</sup> Century

- Increased enrolment – institutional massification
- Reduced public funding, insufficient infrastructural development
- Lack of qualified academic staff – brain drain
- Disastrous effect of HIV/AIDS
- Poor governance, political interference
- Poor internal efficiency
- Mismatch between graduate output & employment
- Increasing presence of private HEIs and CBHE, often of dubious quality
- Wide consensus on importance of improving quality of universities in Africa for them to play development role in achieving EFA targets and MDGs

### 3. Agenda for Improving Quality of Universities

- Control student enrolment according to capacity
- Improve & expand infrastructure
- Recruit & retain qualified academic staff – and replace ageing ones
- Increase research output
- Generate alternate sources of funding – cost-sharing
- Ensure relevance of programmes, greater linkages with productive sectors & improve employability of students
- Improve governance & efficiency in management of universities
- Wide use of ICT in T&L, research, administration, etc.
- Meet demands for greater transparency & accountability

## 4. QA Approaches to Improving Quality (1)

Two complementary but different approaches to QA:

### 1. Accreditation:

- Meeting standards set by governments, national agencies or professional bodies
- Can be applied to programmes, academic units or the whole institution
- Mainly externally driven
- Several countries set up accreditation bodies, Kenya being the 1<sup>st</sup> in 1985, followed by Nigeria in 1990s; initially, mainly for accrediting private HEIs, later also accrediting public university programmes & institutions



## 4. QA Approaches for Improving Quality (2)

2. Academic Evaluation/Assessment/Audit :
  - Undertaken by governments or national agencies
  - Uses the *fitness for purpose* approach i.e. is the institution achieving its own set objectives and standards?
  - Applied to whole or part of the institution
  - Involves preparing an institutional self-assessment report which is reviewed by a panel of external assessors who undertake a site visit & submit their report
  - Objective is development & enhancement, but in some countries linked to accountability & public funding
  - Evaluation process now widely used internationally

Both Accreditation & Evaluation processes are important for improving Quality in African universities

## 5. QA Initiatives in Africa (1)

### National Initiatives

- End 1990s & early 2000s: several HEIs e.g. U of Mauritius , St Mary's Uni College, Ethiopia, U of Dar es Salaam, introduced QA at institutional level through collaboration with European universities, before introduction of national QA processes
- c. 2001: South Africa's Council for Higher Education was first to introduce national QA processes through its HEQC
- In several of African countries a QA unit/section under the Commission or Council for HE undertakes this function (Nigeria, Kenya, Mauritius, Ghana); in some countries Quality is assured by the Ministry responsible for HE
- A few countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Tanzania) have now set up specific QA agencies for Accreditation and/or Evaluation processes in HEIs. 19 of 55 African countries now have a QA agency

## 5. QA Initiatives in Africa (2)

### Regional Initiatives

- 2003: HEQMISA, an initiative started to promote QA in SADC (Southern African) universities with support from GIZ(GTZ); assistance provided to Malawi, Namibia, etc.
- 2005: IUCEA embarks on promoting QA systems in public & private universities in 5 East African countries with support from DAAD
- 2005-06: CAMES undertakes LMD reform as per the Bologna Process in Francophone HEIs to improve Quality; it is also responsible for Accreditation; but no explicit activities in Evaluation processes; same with CEMAC for Central African countries; and UNESCO Bamako Cluster Office & UEMOA for West African countries
- 2007: Ass of Arab Uni (AArU) sets up QA & Accreditation Council (QAAC) to assist members in QA. Helped setting up Arab Network for QA in HE (ANQAHE) with World Bank support to assist in creation of QA agencies & develop standards

## 5. QA Initiatives in Africa (3)

### Continental Initiatives (1)

- 2007: After surveying universities' needs for QA in a first phase, AAU launches its second phase for promoting QA in universities
- 2009: AfriQAN re-activated and hosted by AAU. Mainly for capacity building of national QA agencies, but also universities. Supported by World Bank & UNESCO
- 2007: African Union's Strategy for Harmonisation of HE in Africa launched – one objective to develop QA mechanisms in Africa (part of AU's Plan of Action for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Decade of Education 2006-2015)
- 2009: Pilot African Quality Rating Mechanism for rating HEIs launched by African Union; uses self-assessment against set standards + external evaluation i.e. a mixture of Accreditation & Evaluation processes

## 5. QA Initiatives in Africa (4)

### Continental Initiatives (2)

- 2009: AAU & EUA launch the Europe-Africa Quality Connect Project to introduce in African universities, on pilot basis, the Institutional Evaluation programme of EUA
- 2011: ADEA launches study on creating AHERS, QA to be a component
- ICQAHEA held every year by UNESCO Bamako Cluster Office with support from GUNI Africa, 5<sup>th</sup> Conference in Abidjan in September 2012

## 6. Challenges in Implementing QA Africa

- Many initiatives in promoting QA in HE in Africa but they are disparate & uncoordinated, mostly at regional levels, with little collaboration among regions & key organisations
- Effective application of QA process requires institutional QA systems to be set up; lack of knowledge about QA process, inadequate capacity, too heavy teaching & administrative load of academic staff & lack of financial resources are major handicaps
- National QA agencies also lack trained staff & capacity for implementing Evaluation process in HEIs; few have developed guidelines and standards
- Evaluation process rarely applied to private HEIs – mainly Accreditation
- Lack of experience in Africa in applying QA process to ODL and CBHE

## 7. Discussion

- Who is responsible for QA in your university?
- Is there a system (unit or committee) in place to implement QA in your university? Is it operating effectively? What are the challenges?
- Is there a national QA agency in your country?
- Has your university undergone an external academic evaluation? Was the outcome useful?
- Has any programme or part of your institution been accredited? If yes, by whom?
- Is your university participating in any regional or continental QA initiative?



**THANK YOU**