



Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI)-Africa, African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) and the Association of African Universities (AAU)

8TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOPS ON QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AFRICAN QUALITY ASSURANCE NETWORK (AfriQAN)

And

SYMPOSIUM OF RECTORS, VICE-CHANCELLORS AND PRESIDENTS OF UNIVERSITIES

FOUR EVENTS IN ONE

September 19-24, 2016

Venue: Nampower Convention Centre, Windhoek, Namibia

CONFERENCE THEME:

MULTIDIMENSIONS OF INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA: TOWARDS ENHANCING QUALITY AND ACCELERATING REGIONAL HARMONISATION

Report and Communiqué

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Background

After the 7th International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa (ICQAHEA) held in September 2015 in Abuja, Nigeria, there have been several notable developments in the promotion of quality in higher education in Africa. These include the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Education 2030 Framework for Action; the adoption of the Continental Strategy for Education for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA) which reiterates quality as one of its main objectives; the adoption of the Pan African Quality Assurance Framework (PAQAF); support for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Convention on mutual recognition of qualifications; the start of the Harmonisation, Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) initiative and the scaling up of the Harmonisation and Tuning Africa initiative; the upcoming dialogue between Africa and the Bologna Follow-Up Group; the reiteration of the commitment of EU and AU Commissions to mobility, harmonisation and skills at the April 2016 College to College meeting; and the First Erasmus+ calls fully open to Africa and the launch of the Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme.

However, in spite of these achievements, quality assurance and regional harmonisation are still facing some challenges at national, regional and global levels. These include:

- (i) The lack of capacity for using the different dimensions of innovation for developing quality culture at the institutional and national levels; enhancing quality in higher education teaching, learning and research and managing national quality assurance agencies;
- (ii) The lack of capacity for effective implementation of sub-regional and continental reforms, frameworks and programmes including: the “Licence-Master-Doctorate” (LMD) reform; and the Harmonisation, Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) initiative; and
- (iii) The lack of capacity for improving internal and external quality culture in the African higher education system using ranking and rating mechanisms including the U-Multirank and African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM).

The 8th ICQAHEA

The 8th ICQAHEA was organised to consolidate the results achieved in the process of implementation of the recommendations of the 7th ICQAHEA; address the above challenges and propose relevant strategies for building capacity for the effective use of innovations for enhancing quality and accelerating regional harmonisation. The conference also provided a platform for the formal launch of the Harmonisation, Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) initiative.

Objectives of the Conference and Workshop

The objectives of the 8th ICQAHEA were to:

1. review different dimensions of innovation in African higher education that address quality and regional harmonisation;
2. promote awareness among the African higher education community of recent developments in accelerating regional harmonisation under the Africa-EU partnership including the Continental Strategy for Education for Africa 2016-2025 (CESA); the Pan African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework; Tuning and Erasmus+;
3. provide a platform for the launch of key initiatives under the Africa-EU partnership especially Harmonisation, Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA);
4. train participants in modern and innovative methods of developing quality culture at the institutional and national levels;
5. showcase innovative practices in teaching and learning; entrepreneurial thinking and practice; research; graduate employability policies and practice; funding; open and distance learning and management of higher education systems from Africa, Europe and other regions of the world as experiences for participants to adopt or adapt;
6. identify barriers to innovation in the African higher education systems and strategies for breaking the barriers;
7. address emerging challenges to quality in higher education in Africa including academic corruption and degree mills; and
8. examine the impact of rating/ranking on the promotion of internal and external quality culture in the African higher education system.

Expected outcomes

- Participants who would have deepened their understanding of the different dimensions of innovation that address quality and regional harmonisation in higher education in Africa.
- Raising of the awareness of the African higher education community to be change agents in the support of implementation of recent developments in regional harmonisation under the Africa-EU partnership.
- Launch of initiatives to bolster quality in African higher education to ensure the visibility of such initiatives at national, regional and global levels.
- Participants whose capacities would have been strengthened to enable them effectively implement innovative methods of developing quality culture at the institutional and national levels.
- Participants whose capacities would have been strengthened to learn from modern and innovative methods and good practices in order to improve practices related to teaching and learning, research, entrepreneurship and management of higher education at national and institutional levels.

- Provision of expanded and enriched documentation on the various dimensions of innovation related to quality assurance and regional harmonisation.
- Approval of the Report and Communiqué reflecting the conclusions and action plan arising from the debates and deliberations of the conference.

Participants

The conference was attended by 253 participants from 38 countries. These included Ministers in charge of Education/Higher Education/Science and Technology/ICTs and Labour, Permanent Secretaries/Directors-General of Education and Senior Officials, Heads and management teams of national and regional quality assurance agencies, Vice-Chancellors, Rectors and Presidents of higher education institutions, officers and members of AfriQAN, officers in charge of higher education at the African Union Commission, and Quality Assurance practitioners. Other participants were experts in ICT, teaching and research in higher education, civil society, staff unions, students and students' associations, professional associations, employers or employers' associations, development partners notably the European Union, European higher education associations and HEI institutions and EU Member State organisation representatives. ICQAHEA partners such as Peregrine Academic Services, stakeholders in education in Africa and stakeholders in higher education from other regions of the world also participated in conference.

Highlights of the Conference, Workshops, AfriQAN General Assembly and VC's Symposium

Opening Ceremony

The Namibian Honourable Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation, Dr. Itah Kandjii-Murangi, declared the 8th ICQAHEA open. The Minister expressed delight that the 8th edition of the Conference was held in Namibia, noting that the Conference would explore the untapped multi-dimensions of innovation in quality assurance and welcomed the launching of important initiatives such as HAQAA. She particularly, expressed appreciation to GUNi-Africa, AfriQAN and AAU for the honour done her country while expecting excellent, meaningful, quality implementable results from the Conference.

Earlier, the President of GUNi-Africa, Professor Peter A. Okebukola welcomed participants to the conference and expressed delight that GUNi-Africa has succeeded over the years to work with partners in implementing the series of ICQAHEAs. Professor Lazarus Hangula, Vice-Chancellor, University of Namibia, the host University, welcomed participants and highlighted the importance of higher education and quality assurance in Africa. He charged participants to come up with innovative ways of increasing funding to higher education, which is important for achieving quality higher education systems.

The Chairman, ICQAHEA, Professor Juma Shabani welcomed participants on behalf of the International and Local organising Committees to the Conference which was holding 10 years from the maiden outing in Kenya. He enumerated the gains of the series of the Conference to the African continent and informed participants that the best presentations at the Conference will be published after the necessary reviews.

In his remark, the Vice-President AfriQAN, Professor Bertrand Mbatchi, thanked all partners that contributed to the successful organisation of the 8th ICQAHEA. He enjoined all stakeholders to collaborate in moving higher education and quality assurance to the next level.

The Ambassador of European Union (EU) to Namibia, H.E. Ms Jana Hybaskova, underscored the importance of strong collaborations at all levels for quality delivery of higher education. She reiterated the readiness of EU to continue to support Africa in its higher education developmental efforts.

Professor Etienne Ehouan Ehile, Secretary General, Association of African Universities (AAU), Dr. Yohannes Woldertensae, Senior Education Expert, African Union Commission and Dr. Olin O. Oedekoven, President and CEO, Peregrine Academic Services presented goodwill messages to the Conference on behalf of their organisations.

The 2016 GUNi-Africa–AfriQAN Awards for Distinguished Contribution to Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa was presented to Professor Bertrand Mbatchi, the Executive Secretary, CAMES and Vice-President AfriQAN. The Opening Ceremony also witnessed the formal launch of the following Continental initiatives:

- Africa-EU Harmonisation, Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) Initiative
- Virtual Institute for Higher Education in Africa (VIHEAF)
- Quality Assurance for Higher Education Leaders (QAHEL)
- Quality Assurance for Higher Education Personnel (QAHEP)

Plenary and special sessions

The 8th ICQAHEA proceeded in twelve plenary and special sessions. There was a parallel contributed paper session. The presentations were followed with discussions during which the sub-themes of the conference were thoroughly examined and far-reaching recommendations made. Extensive visibility was given during the course of the conference to the HAQAA initiative and AQRM. The information session and workshop on AQRM were particularly helpful in further raising awareness on the AQRM process.

Workshops

A rich menu of workshops was carefully prepared to enhance knowledge and skills of participants. Each workshop was hands-on and practical in delivery.

These workshops built capacity of participants who went back enriched with skills to enable them implement quality assurance practices at the institutional, national and continental levels. These workshops have formed a unique characteristic of ICQAHEAs over the years. Feedback from participants at previous ICQAHEAs has encouraged the organisers to continue with this tradition.

The African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) General Assembly

This was held on Thursday, 22nd September 2016. Remarks and goodwill messages were delivered by the Vice-President, AfriQAN, Professor Bertrand Mbatchi, AAU Secretary General, Professor Etienne Ehile, Dr. Yohannes Woldetensae, Dr. Olin Oedekoven, Peregrine Academic Services and AfriQAN Coordinator, Professor Jonathan Mba. The meeting was presented with the report of activities of the Network (2015 – 2016) and some initiatives ready for execution. These are: the Quality Assurance for Higher Education Leadership (QAHEL) Workshop series, Quality Assurance for Higher Education Practitioners (QAHEP) Workshop series, Staff Exchange and Peer Review. Members were encouraged to pay up their dues to enable the Secretariat execute its planned activities and many institutions showed interest in joining the network.

Symposium of Rectors, Vice-Chancellors and Presidents of Universities

The symposium presented a platform for Rectors, Vice-Chancellors and Presidents of universities to share information on the achievements, challenges, opportunities and prospects of their respective institutions in the use of different dimensions of innovation towards enhancing quality and accelerating harmonisation. In discussing the theme of the symposium - *Preparing Higher Education Managers in Africa for Multidimensional Innovations in Quality Assurance and Regional Harmonisation*, the panel of VCs, confirmed their readiness to implement the emerging innovations and willingness to confront possible challenges.

Communiqué

We, the participants at the 8th International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa (ICQAHEA) with the theme *Multi-dimensions of Innovation in Higher Education in Africa: Towards Enhancing Quality And Accelerating Regional Harmonisation* held at NamPower Convention Centre, Windhoek, Namibia from 19 – 23rd September, 2016 agree as follows:

Multidimensions of Innovation in African Higher Education and Regional Developments in Enhancing Quality and Accelerating Harmonisation

Participants:

endorsed the African Union **Agenda 2063** as a strategic framework for the socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next 50 years;

expressed faith in Africa's attainment of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals driven by strong and committed leadership;

applauded the new initiatives of the African Union Commission in promoting quality in higher education in the region notably the:

- Africa-EU Harmonisation, Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) Initiative.
- African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM)
- Tuning Africa initiative
- Reiteration of the commitment of EU and AU Commissions to mobility, harmonisation and skills at the April 2016 College to College meeting
- First Erasmus+ calls which are now fully open to Africa
- Launch of the Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme.

appreciated the immense support of the European Commission in catalysing multi-dimensions of innovation in African higher education towards improving quality;

further appreciated the European Commission for providing financial and logistical support for the last two ICQAHEAs aimed at raising regional awareness of the initiatives and building capacity for their implementation at the institutional, national, sub-regional and regional levels;

desirous of continued support for the ICQAHEA series and its capacity-building workshops to sustain the gains in the years ahead;

noted:

- The "Addis Convention" which is the revised and updated version of the 1981 "Arusha Convention" and that AUC is working jointly with UNESCO to facilitate its ratification;
- That 34 African countries, 243 partnerships and 4375 mobilities between Africa and Europe are due to begin, 158 African students will receive scholarships for Joint master degrees and 26 capacity building projects involving Africa are all about to start under Erasmus+;
- Results for first call for Intra-Africa Mobility Scheme are due out in the coming weeks and a second call will be launched before the end of 2016;
- The Tuning initiative, which involves 107 Higher Education Institutions from 42 African Countries in eight subject areas and aimed at developing the curriculum by identifying learning outcomes and competences;

- The development of PAQAF to establish harmonised Quality Assurance practices in the Continent and to facilitate the establishment of a Continental Accreditation Agency;
- That the HAQAA initiative aims to support PAQAF in the context of Africa-EU Strategic Partnership to harmonise quality assurance practices in Africa and that it will be implemented from 2016 – 2019;
- That it will be very important to support harmonisation at regional level alongside the continental level so that all actors can accompany the process.

recommend

- That the ratification of the “Addis Convention” should be speeded up in view of the fact that ratification is a generally slow process;
- That the African Union Commission should encourage member States to establish national Quality Assurance Authorities (where there is none) and Information Centers to facilitate the implementation of the Addis Convention; and
- That an African Credit Transfer System should be put in place to facilitate the harmonisation of higher education in Africa.

Innovations for Enhancing Quality in Higher Education Teaching and Learning

Participants:

Noted

- The depreciating quality of higher education teachers as one of the top 10 challenges militating against the advancement of quality assurance in Africa;
- That the Virtual Institute for Higher Education in Africa (VIHEAF) is a veritable means of improving the quality of higher education teachers in Africa;
- The various modules of VIHEAF developed to enhance the quality of higher education teachers;
- That 1 January, 2017 is the commencement date for the next in the series of training of higher education teachers through VIHEAF;

Recommend

- The provision of pedagogic training for higher education teachers in Africa; and

- That relevant higher education authorities in Member States should promote VIHEAF in order to build the capacity of their higher education teachers in pedagogy.

Global Best Practices in Developing a Quality Culture at the Institutional and National Levels and Tackling Academic Corruption

Participants:

Noted

- The rising tide of innovative practices across the world aimed at addressing quality in higher education;
- That academic corruption is a global menace, which has deleterious impact on quality;
- The standard elements of quality assurance, which include regulations and guidelines produced by the Quality Assurance Agency, self-evaluation by the institution and appointment of a peer group to review the institution or programme, starting by reviewing the self-evaluation;
- That focus in quality assurance is shifting from inputs to outputs and outcomes;
- The various innovations associated with online delivery of higher education;
- That higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance;
- That quality assurance responds to the diversity of higher education systems, institutions, programmes and students and supports the development of a quality culture;

Recommend

- The promotion of quality assurance and peer review of Open Education Resources (OER).
- The development of mechanisms for the assessment and certification of learning outcomes achieved through OER.
- The strengthening of internal quality assurance mechanism which will not only guarantee continuous quality improvement but also minimize academic corruption;

- Adoption of the CHEA/CIQG quality principles and the recommendations of the consortium of CHEA/CIQG and UNESCO-IIEP in combating academic corruption; and
- Effective quality assurance of Quality Assurance agencies to ensure the entrenchment of best practices.

Innovations in Research, Funding and Management of Higher Education

Participants:

Noted

- The global increasing innovations in managing higher education systems;
- The various innovative initiatives of the Association African Universities geared towards promoting the development of higher education in Africa;
- The the HAQAA initiative and its envisaged impact on the harmonization of the African quality assurance process and implementation;
- That the HAQAA initiative will promote the Pan African Quality Assurance Framework (PAQAF) and the African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM);
- That the demand for higher education will continue to increase as a result of which more higher education institutions will be established;
- The advent of new methods of higher education delivery, including ODeL, which calls for innovation in teaching, research and community engagement.
- That over the last five years, African universities and research centres have systematically innovated on postgraduate research through effective exploitation of ICTs.

Recommend

- That the Managements of African higher education institutions should ensure that internet service is available in their respective institutions all year round;
- That the African Peer Review Mechanism should be institutionalized to quality assure the African Quality Assurance Agencies;

- That African higher education institutions should establish their respective quality assurance Units/Directorates to promote strong internal quality assurance;
- That higher education institutions should use appropriate methods including the use of anti-plagiarism software to check plagiarism and promote the conduct of high quality research; and
- That quality assurance agencies and institutions of higher learning should forge strong collaborations to make innovation in higher education systems effective.

Erasmus+ Funding for African Universities and Bodies in Charge of higher Education

Participants:

Noted

- Impact of the Erasmus+ programme in supporting education, training, youth and sports;
- The Erasmus+ funding for programmes, projects and scholarships as well as fostering EU-EU and EU-international cooperation;
- The opportunities for Higher Education Institutions from Erasmus+ Partner Countries which include: International credit mobility, Joint Master Degrees, Capacity Building for Higher Education and others; and
- That Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorate Programmes will continue to select doctoral candidates up to 2017.

Recommend

- Greater advocacy and sensitization of higher education institutions on the opportunities available through Erasmus+; and
- African quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions should take advantage of Erasmus+ for capacity building.

Innovations in Quality and Open and Distance Learning Delivery Systems

Participants:

Noted

- That Open and Distance Learning has a long history and has, through innovations, emerged into its present state;
- That Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is fast gaining traction in the higher education system;
- That Universities are more open than they used to be;
- That higher education is now open on all dimensions as a result of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs);
- That MOOCs are not in themselves the transformation of higher education, but they have been the catalyst for the transformation;
- That ODL has the potential of producing disciplined life-long learners; and
- The role of the African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) in implementing ODL in Africa.

Recommend

- That African higher education institutions should take greater awareness of issues concerning unbundling in ODL and strive to deliver quality education in single or blended mode depending on the thrust of the institution;
- That there should be quality assurance for MOOCs if they are to lead to credentials; and
- That stakeholders should continue to do more advocacy and sensitisation on ODL to improve acceptability of the mode of learning.

Tuning and Innovative Education and Training

Participants:

Noted

- That the Tuning methodology, whose goal is quality enhancement and employability of graduates, is fast gaining ground in the African higher education system;
- That innovation hubs surrounds great universities;
- That Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliances are important instruments in the EU for developing collaborations between higher education institutions, SMEs and public sector organisations.

- That Tuning and the Knowledge Alliance initiatives of Erasmus+ can be inspirational for African higher education institutions under the international actions of Erasmus+, Capacity Building in particular; and
- That building sustainable collaborative relationships with higher education institutions allows SMEs to boost their innovation capacity and competitiveness through academic research and that such collaborations can be a direct response to efforts by public authorities to increase the growth of a given region.

Recommend

- That higher education institutions should build sustainable collaborative relationships with SMEs and local public authorities to provide opportunities through which they can generate direct economic benefits from their research; and
- More advocacy for Tuning to enable more higher education institutions plug into the initiative.

African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM)

Participants:

Noted

- That quality assurance of higher education institutions is one core area to revitalising higher education and research in Africa;
- The leading role of the African Union Commission (AUC) in the development of the African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM);
- That AQRM is not a ranking instrument and it does not promote listing of institutions in a league table;
- That AQRM is a tool to facilitate culture of continuous quality improvement in African HEIs through self-evaluation exercises and external validation; and
- That AQRM will strengthen African higher education institutions for local relevance and global competitiveness as well as promote harmonisation and mutual recognition of academic qualifications.

Recommend

- AQRM should be publicised among African higher education institutions who are expected to drive the process of its implementation;

- Steps should be taken to ensure that AQRM is adopted by African Universities as one of the mechanisms for assessing and improving quality; and
- The AAU and the external quality assurance agencies should encourage African higher education institutions to adopt AQRM for quality improvement.

Innovative Practices in Higher Education

Participants:

Noted

- The various innovative practices in higher education institutions as presented by the University of Abuja, Nigeria, National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), University of Namibia, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology and Botswana College of Open and Distance Learning (BOCODOL);
- The training on pedagogy for teachers of professional programmes; and
- The ascendancy of ODL in many higher education institutions in Africa.

Recommend

- That Universities should be meaningful to their environments by positively contributing to their development;
- That Universities should be engaged by Governments in the provision of solutions to national challenges that would ordinarily be outsourced through contracts;
- Higher education institutions should ensure that there is connection between research and relevance; and
- U-Multirank should be considered for adoption by willing African higher education institutions.

Symposium of Rectors, Presidents and Vice-Chancellors

The Symposium revealed that:

- African Higher Education Managers are ready for the multidimensional innovations in quality assurance and regional harmonisation;

- Higher education managers are the Chief Quality Assurance officers of their institutions. Consequently, good institutional leadership is critical to the success of quality assurance systems;
- There is the need to promote awareness of the multidimensional innovations in quality assurance and regional harmonisation;
- Directors of Quality Assurance in Universities and their equivalence in the Polytechnics and Colleges of Education should form a network to promote multidimensional innovations in quality assurance. The Quality Assurance Agencies should facilitate the process; and
- Quality Assurance should be given the desired attention by the Directors of Quality Assurance in higher education institutions as the job of quality assurance cannot be done on part-time basis.

Venue of the 9th ICQAHEA

Participants were glad to receive the approval in principle of the offer to host the 9th ICQAHEA by Mozambique jointly under the auspices of Universidade Eduardo Mondlane and the National Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency of Mozambique. Participants considered this a unique opportunity to hold the conference for the first time in 10 years in a Lusophone country with the high expectation of helping to catalyse higher education quality improvement in Mozambique. The dates are 18 to 22 of September, 2017.

Appreciation

Finally, participants express gratitude to the Global University Network for Innovation GUNI-Africa, the African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) and the Association of African Universities (AAU) for organising the 8th International Conference on Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa on *Multi-dimension of Innovations in Higher Education in Africa: Towards Enhancing Quality and Accelerating Regional Harmonisation*. We also appreciate the following organisations for their support to the Conference: European Union (EU), National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), Namibia, Okebukola Science Foundation (OSF), University of Namibia, and Peregrine Academic Services, USA.

Dr. Biodun Saliu
RAPPORTEUR GENERAL
 September 23, 2015