

# International Co-operation for Building Capacity in Quality Assurance in African Higher Education



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# QA in African Higher Education

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- Continuing challenges of sustainable development in Africa-both local/regional initiatives and international co-operation needed, same for QA capacity development
- GIQAC African QA project facilitates this
- Great expectations that revitalisation of African HE will allow it contribute to knowledge needs and high level human resources for social and economic development



# QA in African Higher Education

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- Need for efficient, effective, responsive HEIs producing credible graduates and useful knowledge-quality as key
- Quality concerns around transnational and private HE, increased demand and limited supply, new modes of delivery, student mobility, emergence of NQFs and RQFs, etc.



# QA in African Higher Education

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- Quality/QA as necessary but not sufficient condition for successful revitalisation-sufficient conditions include social and political stability, enabling policy, effective governance and management, funding, infrastructure renewal



# QA in African Higher Education

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- 7 capacity development priorities identified in discussion with African Univ(HED 2007)-faculty development; curriculum and teaching; institutional leadership and management; research, technology and problem-solving; financial diversification and resource mobilisation; improvement of T and R facilities, linkages.



# QA in African Higher Education

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- QA-priority in international HE arena (UNESCO,OECD,WB)
- QA also identified at Africa wide, sub-continental, national, institutional levels as HE priority. Flurry of QA planning, dev. and implementation activities-several workshops and conferences including 3rd UNESCO Global Forum on Internat QA, Accred. and the Recognition of Qualif(Sept 2007 Tanzania)



# QA in African Higher Education

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- In place already: Arusha Convention (1981, revised 2002), Crossborder recog of qualif and joint accred of qualif by Inter-Univ Council in East Africa, SADC technical committee in Southern Africa and CAMES in Francophone Africa
- Recognition of need for more systematic attention to quality at national and institutional levels



# QA in African Higher Education

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- Promotion, development and assurance of Quality flagged as ministerial priority area in Plan of Action for Second Decade of Education for Africa(2006-2015)
- AU-projects on harmonisation of qualifications and ratings mechanism(2007)
- SADC framework for improvement of national QA systems(2007)



# QA in African Higher Education

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- Development of external QA systems in many countries e.g. 11 of 14 SADC countries have QA systems in place- different stages of implementation
- QA still in government departments in many countries
- Institutional QA frameworks under construction both in response to requirements of external QA systems and in their absence
- Several regional and continental workshops, study visits and exchange of information-local, regional and international dimensions



# QA in African Higher Education

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- AAU identified QA as priority in 1997 emphasising strengthening of institut and regional level QA- stressed assistance to African HEIs in developing benchmarks and processes to assess and upgrade quality in T and R(keeping international context in mind)



# QA in African Higher Education

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- First phase QA programme launched in 1999
- Survey of institut needs-focus on institutional self-eval-6 institut completed self eval, site visits by audit panels, validation of self eval.
- Finding at the time-few institutions with credible QA systems or culture of quality. Need for more workshops for info sharing-funding and capacity a problem



# QA in African Higher Education

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- Second phase AAU QA prog(2006)-funding from WB/GIQAC
- Context required 3 levels for QA attention-building similar and different capacities
- Strengthening of institutional systems (internal QA)
- Support for national systems (external QA)
- Regional recognition of qualifications (strengthening of Arusha Convention)



# Progress to date

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- AAU QA Prog-advisory committee of African and international expertise
- Needs assessments completed for different regions
- 3 regional 'train the trainer' workshops held in SA, Nigeria and Burkina Faso- 21 Countries, 93 participants and over 50 HEIs. Use of regional expertise.



# Progress to date

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- African QA Network launched 17 Sept 2007 with CAMES, NUC and HEQC as founding members-membership drive
- Workshop materials into training manual
- March 08 workshop on harmonisation of qualifications-AUC, AAU and UNESCO
- QA in other AAU prog. e.g. leadership development training workshops for senior admin and acad staff have substantial QA module



# Progress to date

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- Is proliferation of QA development and training activities improving QA and building sustainable QA-is it building Quality?
- Scale of challenge-53 African countries, +300 universities, 5 members of African Network, 8 countries full members of INQAAHE, 14 SSA countries with agencies, 20 countries ratified Arusha Convention.



# Progress to date

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- Slow process started of building African QA community, access to QA info, training, increased networking, policy messages back to institutions and systems about QA importance (power of accreditation status), practical information about interventions.
- Many tasks ahead-need for effective coordinating capacity



# Types of QA capacity

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- Technique, Contextualisation and Approach
- Technique: QA planning and policy dev; developing benchmarks and criteria for quality/equivalence/comparability; from policy to implementation; self-eval; external/peer review; gathering/evaluating evidence; developing improvement plans; monitoring; sharing good practices



# Types of QA capacity

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- Context analysis, establishing purposes of QA, and choosing appropriate methodologies
- Customising QA from outside, consistent and fair implementation, continuous learning and asking about QA value add to HE, research on QA



# Scope of QA-Capacity Implications

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- Comprehensive needs-QA cannot have narrow focus
- Governance and Management
- T and L-including curriculum, pedagogy
- Research Management
- Comparability, Equivalence across institutions, across borders



# Opportunities, Limits, Risks

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- QA capacity development structured on regional/subregional lines is effective way of strengthening QA professionalism-common contextual challenges, info exchange, benchmarking, mutual learnings for existing, new and planned QA initiatives
- Vast scope of challenge-sustainability of initiatives/funding is key



# Opportunities, Limits, Risks

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- Targeting individuals, building systems, strengthening institutions-individual and team approaches necessary
- Avoiding international/regional transfer of QA policy and practice and customising QA to context and purpose



# Opportunities, Limits, Risks

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- First wave of formal QA from developed world, next phase is insertion/strengthening of QA in developing world.
- Opportunity for innovation in next generation QA-what is fit for purpose QA in the developing world and how will this enrich global thinking about QA for higher education