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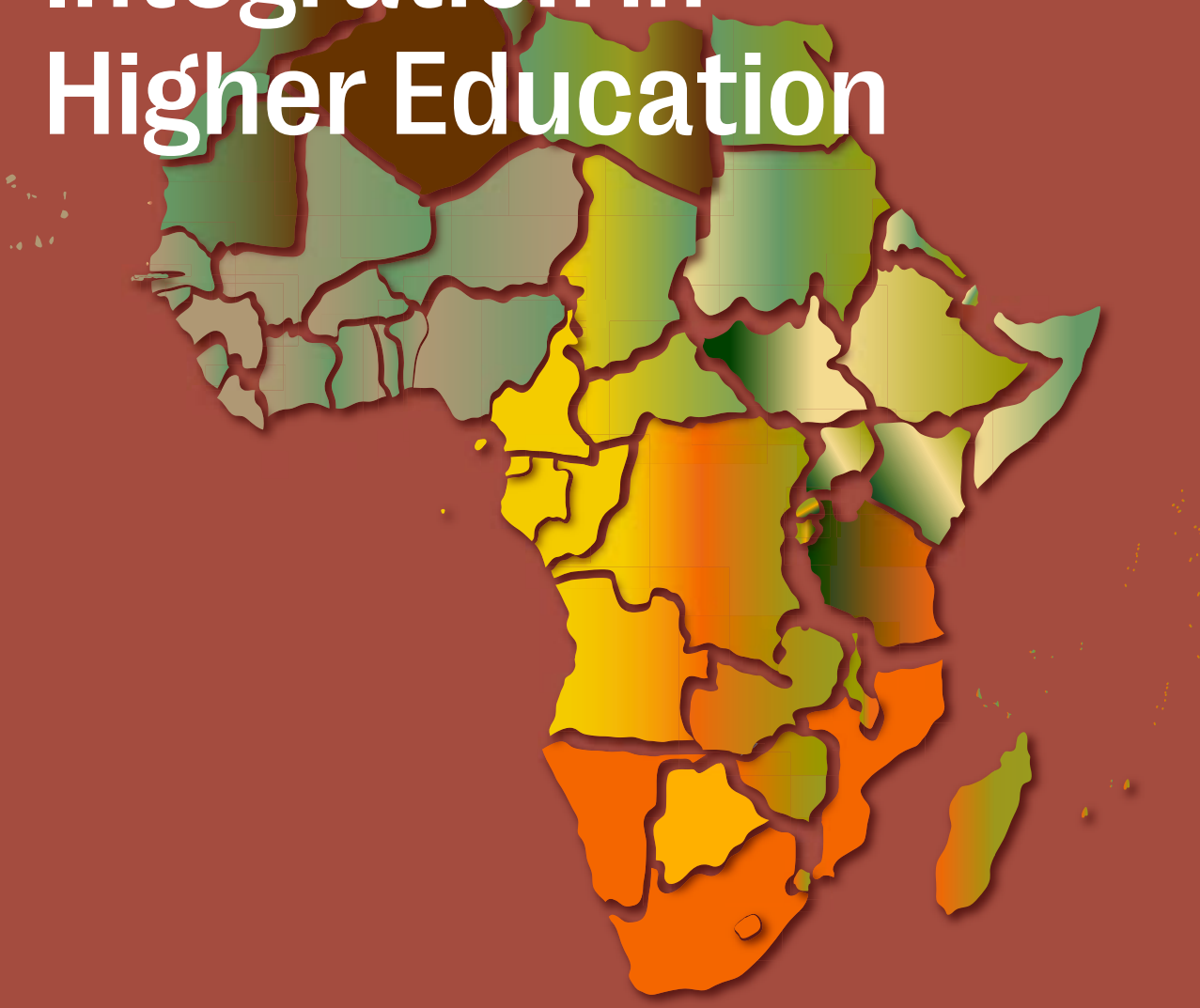
Materials on African Regional and Continental Integration in Higher Education



African Union

THE AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP
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HAQAA2
Harmonisation, Accreditation and Quality Assurance in African Higher Education

Materials on African Regional and Continental Integration in Higher Education

These Materials have been produced under a contract with the European Union (HAQAA-2). The opinions expressed are those of the contractor only and do not represent the contracting authority's official position.

First version: October 2022

Table of Contents

Presentation of the materials

I. Orientation, Purpose, and Content of the Materials — R. Torrent 4

II. Barriers to African Continental Integration in African Higher Education — O. Oyewole 9

Part 1

The Analytical Framework 15

Chapter 1. The Analytical Framework of Regional Integration — R. Torrent 16

Chapter 2. The Analytical Framework of Higher Education Policy — R. Torrent 33

Part 2

Higher Education in the framework of African continental and regional integration 64

Chapter 3. Higher Education in the framework of African Continental and Regional Integration — H.B. Asmelash / T. E. Kassahun 65

Chapter 4. Integration of Higher Education in Africa: an Overview — J. Shabani 96

Part 3

Elements of comparison with other regions/continents 124

Chapter 5. ASEAN Regional Integration in Higher Education — National Higher Education Research Institute, Universiti Sains Malaysia 125

Chapter 6. 30 years of regional academic integration in MERCOSUR. Insights from a region of the South for a Dialogue with Africa — M. Larrea 143

Chapter 7. EU Integration in the Area of Higher Education — R. Torrent 175

Part 4

Issues of substance 190

Chapter 8. Recognition of credits and academic qualification. The EU experience 191

A) The two tracks: academic and professional qualifications — H. Davies 192

B) Recognition of credits. The ECTS — H. Davies 212

Chapter 9. Curriculum. Learning and Teaching — Charmaine B. Villet 225

Chapter 10. Quality and Quality Assurance — J. Mukora 239

Chapter 11. Research and innovation: Learning and Innovation strategies for sub-Saharan Africa — M. Dosso 252

Chapter 12. Recent developments in Internationalization in Africa — J. O. Jowi 265

Part 5

Viewing integration from the perspective of specific African regions or countries 275

Chapter 13. Identifying Issues: Challenges and Perspectives of North African Universities: A Window on African Higher Education — W. Benjelloun 276

Chapter 14. A regional perspective: Higher Education in the East African Community — M. Kuria and G. Banyankimbona 285

Chapter 15. Ethiopian Higher Education Reform and Regionalization of Higher Education in Africa — K.M. Haile 294

List of Authors 322

Presentation of the materials (I)

Orientation, Purpose, and Content of the Materials

Ramon Torrent

President of OBREAL Global (lead institution of the Consortium implementing HAQAA-2)

These **Materials on African Regional and Continental Integration and Cooperation in Higher Education** have been conceived to facilitate a process of reflection on this topic from an African perspective, i.e. not "by applying to Africa" approaches conceived in the different regions, countries and centers of power of the North. This is why they were conceived as Materials for a Series of Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) on the topic that would progressively broaden that process of reflection to the widest possible participation by African professionals.

The Materials respond to three main criteria:

- *Not to sell models*. As I keep repeating below in the presentation of one of the Parts of the Materials, Africa has received in the past probably too many recommendations, in the area of higher education and in many others, coming from different countries, institutions and international organisations from the North, that simply exported models and recipes not well adapted to the situation in Africa. It must be emphasized that the Materials have been conceived to avoid this.
- *To become "living Materials".* The Materials avoid the title "Study" to emphasize that they have not been conceived as a point of arrival but, rather, as a point of departure. Their ambition is to receive additions that deepen and broaden their scope and outreach. They are open to, and welcome, criticism, and this is why, to facilitate it, they will be uploaded in a dedicated website.
- *To become absolutely open and accessible. They are offered to any citizen and institution who wants to make a legitimate use of them, in particular if it is for learning and teaching purposes.* Financed with public funds (see the last paragraph of this Presentation), the Materials intend to meet the highest standards in terms of Open Access and public, unrestricted and free use. The more they will be reproduced, circulated and used, the better.

The Materials are structured in five parts that address, each one of them, a "Challenge" for the reflection process:

- **Part 1** presents THE ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR REGIONAL AND CONTINENTAL INTEGRATION AND FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

  The challenge it addresses can be formulated as *How to think about two issues so complex and multi-faceted as Regional/Continental Integration, on one side, and Higher Education, on the other?*

  This part does not discuss specific issues related to the situation in Africa. Its purpose is simply to offer some analytical instruments that can frame that reflection. It includes two chapters of mine, both tested in other contexts but that have also been discussed in 2021 and 2022 in the African context and adapted to it.

  ## Chapters

  1. The Analytical Framework of Regional or Continental Integration
  2. The Analytical Framework of Higher Education Policy

- **Part 2** offers an overview of the present situation of HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF AFRICAN REGIONAL AND CONTINENTAL INTEGRATION AND COOPERATION

  It addresses the challenge of *How to view the very complex reality of a) African Continental and Regional Integration and Cooperation, and b) the processes of Continental and Regional Integration and Cooperation in the specific area of Higher Education?*

  Indeed, it is extremely difficult to bring into a single and coherent reflection process a reality that is organized in a very complex multi-level set of agreements and institutions that, furthermore, overlap (sometimes contradictorily). This part comprises two chapters. The first is written by two distinguished, relatively young, Ethiopian specialists in the area of International, mainly International Economic, Law: Henok B. ASMELASH and Tilahun E. KASSAHUN. The second is written by one of the most ex-

perienced and recognized African academics and researchers in the field of Higher Education, Juma SHABANI, from Burundi.

Chapters

3. Higher Education in the framework of African Continental and Regional Integration
4. Integration of Higher Education in Africa: an Overview.

- **Part** 3 offers ELEMENTS OF COMPARISON WITH OTHER REGIONS/CONTINENTS

  Africa has received in the past probably too many recommendations, in the area of higher education and in many others, coming from different countries, institutions and international organisations from the North, that simply exported models and recipes not well adapted to the situation in Africa. Part 3 intends to change this approach. Its main objective is that of addressing the challenge of *What to learn from others without copying or accepting "models"?* It includes three chapters. The two first ones present two experiences from different regions of the South: that of ASEAN (in a chapter written by one of the more prestigious specialized research institutes of the region, the National Higher Education Research Institute – IPPTN- of the Universiti Sains Malaysia) and that of MERCOSUR in Latin America, written by the person who probably better knows MERCOSUR integration in the area of higher education, Marina LARREA, from Argentina.

  It was impossible not to include also a chapter on EU integration in this area. I have written it myself trying to avoid the too typical attitude of "copy us: learn from Bologna". On the contrary, the chapter intends to problematize the issue and clarify many misunderstandings that are present in the literature (and in the minds). To begin with, the chapter distinguishes sharply between the Bologna process and the EU's rules-based approach.

Chapters

5. ASEAN Regional Integration in Higher Education
6. 30 years of regional academic integration in MERCOSUR. Insights from a region of the South for a Dialogue with Africa
7. EU Integration in the area of Higher Education

- **Part** 4 moves from generalities to specific ISSUES OF SUBSTANCE

  This part will certainly have to be deepened and enlarged in the future, in order to adequately face its challenge: *How to deal with the issues of substance that have attracted more attention in the African context?* Indeed, the first question that can be raised is what other ones should be addressed.

  In this first version of the Materials, five issues are addressed. Three of them because they certainly have been and remain prominent in African regional and continental activities and initiatives: Recognition, Quality Assurance and Internationalization. The first one – recognition – is the object of two very detailed analysis written by one of the best European specialists on this topic, Howard DAVIES. Their object, once again, is not that of preaching the European approach but that of showing how immensely difficult it is to deal with this issue (and how much remains to be done in Europe at large and in the EU). The chapter on Quality Assurance has been written by Jeffy MUKORA, from Mozambique, one of the leading African specialists in the area, who has been playing a very active role in the production of two basic instruments in this area: the African Standards and Guidelines in Quality Assurance for higher education (ASG-QA), one of the main results of HAQAA's first phase, already endorsed by the AU; and the User's Guide for them, just finalized in the framework of HAQAA-2. The overview of recent developments in the area of Internationalization has been at the charge of James O. JOWI, able to draw from his twofold perspective as Principal Education Office in the East African Community and as founder of ANIE (the African Network for the Internationalization of Education).

Two additional issues have been selected for treatment in this first edition of the Materials as they seem absolutely strategic. The first is that of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning. Is it enough to simply "modernize" curricula, just following fashionable recommendations? or is it necessary to go much deeper and adopt (albeit progressively) an entirely new "transformational" approach that breaks with the traditional one of accumulation of separate courses and credits, leading to a fragmented curriculum, which seems no longer able to meet the current demands of society? Its author is the Namibian Charmaine B. VILLET, a leading specialist in the area. The second is that of Research and Innovation. Its author, Mafini DOSSO, from the Ivory Coast, has become one of the best relatively young specialists in these issues and knows also from inside the EU strategies and funding programmes in this area (she has been working for nine years in the EU's Joint Research Centre, studying and promoting Innovation strategies).

Chapters

8. Recognition of credits and academic qualification. The EU experience
    a. The two tracks: academic and professional qualifications
    b. Recognition of credits. The ECTS
9. Curriculum. Learning and Teaching
10. Quality and Quality Assurance
11. Research and innovation: Learning and Innovation strategies for sub-Saharan Africa
12. Recent developments in Internationalization in Africa

- **Part 5**, VIEWING INTEGRATION ON HE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SPECIFIC AFRICAN REGIONS OR COUNTRIES, addresses an essential, but quite difficult, challenge: *How to look at the continent from the different regions and countries and to regions and countries from the continent?*

  This is, again, a part that should be deepened and enlarged in the future. In fact, the three chapters can be taken as examples to be generalized in this future work. However, they are sufficient to lead to a very interesting reflection: Are there common, quite similar problems, in the different African regions, even if the instruments to apply to their solution can be different? In other terms, and reversing the question: are there different paths to the solution of problems that have a lot in common? The first chapter is written by an academic, researcher and HEI leader of the highest level, Wail BENJELLOUN, from Morocco, former President of the more important University in Morocco and of the Conference of University Presidents. The second is coauthored by Gaspard BANYANKIMBONA and Mike KURIA, Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General of IUCEA (the Inter-University Council of East Africa), the leading African regional organization in the area of higher education. The third focuses Ethiopia, a strategic country as one that has experienced a broad and deep change in the HE sector, coupled with a huge increase in population. It is written by Kibrome H. HAILE, who, while been relatively young, combines a great deal of experience in the governance of HE institutions with that of having provided expert advice to the Government.

Chapters

13. Identifying Issues: Challenges and Perspectives of North African Universities: A Window on African Higher Education
14. A regional perspective: Higher Education in the East African Community
15. Ethiopian HE Reform and Regionalization of HE in Africa

The Materials have been elaborated in the framework of the EU-funded project HAQAA-2 (i.e. the second phase of the initiative Harmonisation, Accreditation and Quality Assurance in African Higher Education). In 2020, and partly in order to adapt to the dramatic change in circumstances brought about by the COVID pan-

demic, HAQAA-2 workplan was adapted. Its policy component was strengthened, allowing for the elaboration of these Materials. Of course, the usual disclaimer applies: The EU and its institutions cannot be held responsible for the content of these Materials, which remains the entire responsibility of the authors. However, on behalf of all of them, I do want to thank the European Commission for the support that has been received.

So, the Materials are now in your hands, dear readers. We hope they will help you to think: to think, from an African perspective, on African higher education and on African integration and cooperation. Please read them with a critical attitude; and do not hesitate to come back to us with your comments and criticisms.

Presentation of the materials (II)

Barriers to African Continental Integration in African Higher Education

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Secretary General of the Association of African Universities, Accra, Ghana

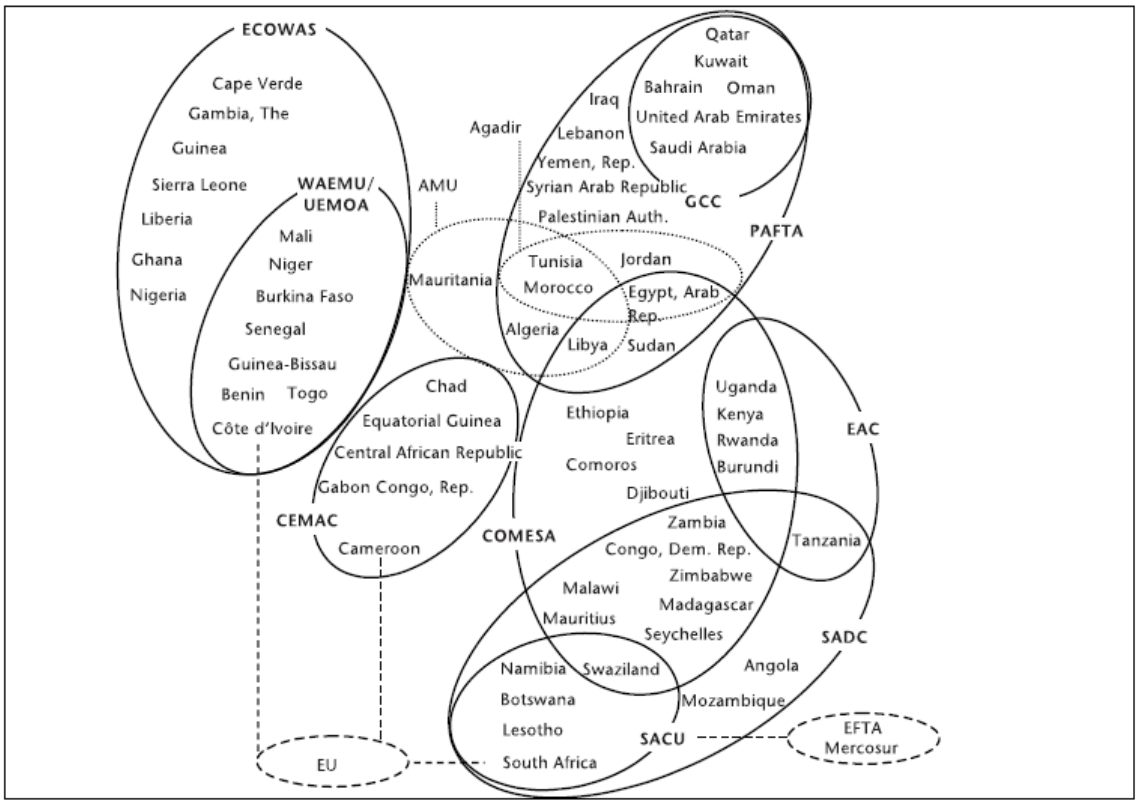
Introduction

There exists a wide literature on Regional Integration. If you go to the World Bank's website, (https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/regional-integration/overview), you'll find what could be considered a sort of summary of it:

> *Regional integration helps countries overcome divisions that impede the flow of goods, services, capital, people and ideas. These divisions are a constraint to economic growth, especially in developing countries. The World Bank Group helps its client countries to promote regional integration through common physical and institutional infrastructure.*
>
> *Divisions between countries created by geography, poor infrastructure and inefficient policies are an impediment to economic growth. Regional integration allows countries to overcome these costly divisions integrating goods, services and factors' markets, thus facilitating the flow of trade, capital, energy, people and ideas.*
>
> *Regional integration can be promoted through common physical and institutional infrastructure. Specifically, regional integration requires cooperation between countries in:*
>
> - *Trade, investment and domestic regulation;*
> - *Transport, ICT and energy infrastructure;*
> - *Macroeconomic and financial policy;*
> - *The provision of other common public goods (e.g. shared natural resources, security, education).*
>
> *Cooperation in these areas has taken different institutional forms, with different levels of policy commitments and shared sovereignty, and has had different priorities in different world regions.*
>
> *Regional integration can lead to substantial economic gains. Regional integration allows countries to:*
>
> - *Improve market efficiency;*
> - *Share the costs of public goods or large infrastructure projects;*
> - *Decide policy cooperatively and have an anchor to reform;*
> - *Have a building block for global integration;*
> - *Reap other non-economic benefits, such as peace and security.*
>
> *However, there are risks to regional integration that need to be identified and managed.*
>
> - *Countries may have different preferences on priorities for regional integration, depending on their connectivity gaps, economic geography, or preferences for sovereignty in specific areas.*
> - *Regional integration's impact on trade and investment flows, allocation of economic activity, growth, income distribution are often difficult to assess.*
> - *Lack of adequate complementary policies and institutions may lead to inefficient outcomes. For instance, policy barriers at the border may offset the gains transport infrastructure cooperation.*
> - *Regional integration creates winners and losers, notably within countries. Policies and institutions are needed to ensure that regionalism is inclusive and social, environmental, governance risks are managed.*

These HAQAA-2 Materials offer, in its first Chapter, an Analytical Framework to analyze Regional Integration. It emphasizes the need to distinguish its pre-conditions, its objectives, its instruments and its dimensions. Concerning objectives, they vary from economic to political and security. And it has been observed that objectives can change during the development of the process, and new objectives can be generated from within the integration process itself, as seen in the case of the European Union. In Africa, regional and continental integration is seen mainly as an instrument of development; and this is my assumption for this presentation.

Melo and Tsikata (2015)1 reported that over the last thirty years, Regional Integration Agreements, and simpler Preferential Trade Agreements2, have been spreading everywhere including across Africa, where they have given rise to a complex and overlapping system, as reflected in Figure 1, and in which Regional Economic Communities are prominent.



Source: WTO Secretariat.
Note: AMU, Arab Maghreb Union; CEMAC, Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (Communauté Économique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale); COMESA, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa; EAC, East African Community; ECOWAS, Economic Community of West African States; EFTA, European Free Trade Association; EU, European Union; GCC, Gulf Cooperation Council; Mercosur, Southern Cone Common Market; PAFTA, Pan-Arab Free Trade Area; SACU, Southern African Customs Union; SADC, Southern African Development Community; WAEMU/UEMOA, West African Economic and Monetary Union/Union Économique et Monétaire Ouest-Africaine.

Figure 1: Regional arrangements in Africa

But, in all these analyses, the concrete examination of the specific Barriers to Integration faced by each Regional Integration process is usually missing. This is why, by reference to the specific area of Higher Education (the area for which Chapter II of these Materials also offer an Analytical Framework), I want to concentrate this short Presentation on the discussion of Barriers.

1. Melo, Jaime de and Tsikata, Yvonne (2015) Regional Integration in Africa: Challenges and Prospects. Discussion Paper No. 10598. Centre for Economic Policy Research 77 Bastwick Street, London EC1V 3PZ, UK.www.cepr.org

2. Regional Trade Agreements are also 'preferential' because they involve favourable access from each Member State to all the other that is not extended to non-Member States

Regional and Continental Integration of Higher Education in Africa

The Colonial-shaped Integration

Most countries in Africa have colonial pasts. One of the legacies left behind by the colonialists is their attempt to promote integration between the countries under their control even following the termination of colonial rule. Cooperation in the field of education, especially higher education, feature prominently in the colonial-shaped integration. This effort has worked easily because many of these countries adopted the language of the colonialists as their national language, extending it into the educational system, thus causing, or at least strongly favouring, the integration of the educational setup through the medium of expression (and making difficult the integration with other countries that use a different language in their educational systems).

Looking to the future

For a long time, African countries and governments have seen the need to pursue higher education integration. It is envisaged that such integration will strengthen the capacity and competitiveness of higher education institutions, facilitate mobility of staff and students across the continent, foster continental solidarity and overcome the colonial legacy in the continent. And, by reaching these objectives, promote development and enhance the peoples' well-being. One of the strategies being adopted was to introduce the integration of higher education within the scope of the Regional Economic Communities.

However, over five decades into independence in many African countries, it is becoming apparent that there is a need to break down the colonial-shaped integration. This is because, while having been more or less able to integrate the colonies under the same groups, it has failed to integrate the African continent. The African Union has therefore been working on various initiatives to integrate the continent as a "single region". A recent success in this direction has been the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). There is high hope that the AfCFTA will serve as an instrument to integrate the countries of Africa economically through the promotion of free trade and free movement of goods, services and people across the continent. And there is a great prospect that this initiative will help to improve the economic well-being of the various countries of Africa.

From the HE perspective, a broad and ambitious effort at promoting continental higher education integration has been carried out through the use of the following vehicles:

a. The Arusha Convention, revised and replaced in 2014 by the Addis Convention, on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African states

b. The Continental Education Strategy for Africa – CESA- 2063, which was adopted at the 26th ordinary session of the AU in January 2016. It seeks to 'bring coherence and integration in the development of the various sub-sectors into a holistic system that addresses the needs of imparting knowledge, skills, and values required for systematic response to the socioeconomic demands in the 21st century'.

c. The African Continental Qualifications Framework, which is an AU-led initiative launched in September 2019 that plans to integrate the existing national and regional frameworks for comparability and equivalencies of qualifications into a continental framework.

d. The Pan African University.

e. The African Standards and Guideline for Quality Assurance n Higher Education (ASG-QA)

f. The Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STIGA)

g. The Pan -African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF)

h. The African Credit Transfer System

However, there has also been some unexplainable resistance to higher education integration in Africa. despite the fact that one of the major features of the 1963 Charter of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was already the cooperation in the field of education, science, and technology. Resistance continues to exist even if education has also featured in the latest legal instrument of the agreement establishing the AfCFTA. Indeed, the AfCFTA protocol on Trade in Services calls for the recognition by each State Party of education, experience, licenses, certification, obtained in the other State Parties. One thing is very clear: as of today, it has been difficult to establish the African Higher Education space. Repeated recommendations to learn from the European experience (EU law and the Bologna Process) have not yet been successful.

In fact, information about the many integration initiatives going on in Africa is not yet even fully known by many academic in African Universities. Many countries in Africa are still grasping with many internal challenges, mainly political and economic, which leave little space and capacity to think of promoting the continental integration strategies. Multiple turn-over in governance in Africa has not made things easy either, as many government functionaries that ought to propagate these regional initiatives do not know what it is all about. This accounts for example, and at least partly explains, why the 2014 Addis Convention has only been ratified by 13 signatories, only 12 African if the Holy See, also a signatory, is excluded, and only one – South Africa- from the 12 African more populated States (see https://en.unesco.org/about-us/legal-affairs/revised-convention-recognition-studies-certificates-diplomas-degrees-and).

Barriers to Higher Education Continental Integration in Africa.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to look squarely to the main barriers that must be overcome to really promote continental integration in African higher education, to advance in the creation of an African Higher Education space and to achieve the purpose of true students and staff mobility, and quality assurance in the African continent. In order to launch the discussion and reflection process that these Materials, and the course programmes based on them, intend to promote, I will very summarily point to the following ones:

a. Multiplicity of membership of the Regional Economic Communities.

Many African countries are members of more than one Regional Economic community, and this has caused some conflicts in the implementation of integration strategies. African Countries have multiple priorities for regional integration, and they seem to be aligned with the REC which offers more on their expectations (but this can change depending on the specific area or sector).

b. Lack of African funding to promote regional integration.

African States and REC, if they were aware of the benefits to be obtained, should provide a minimum amount of funds to drive initiatives towards integration. It is not a positive commentary on Africa that, very often, the main financial support for activities that support integration has to come from the European Union or other international organisations.

c. Insufficient Political Leadership.

The African Union Commission (AUC) should be in the driver's seat for integration and intra-African cooperation in Africa, in general and in the HE sector. They will be serving the purpose of their existence if they do this. But issues have arisen, too often, about the responsiveness of the African Union Commission in facilitating, even simply at the political level, integration initiatives. The AUC and other African agencies should adopt a much more proactive stance, not only for intra-African, but also for international cooperation.

d. Lack of cohesive Inter-regional collaboration among the regional blocks in Africa.

The various regional economic blocks in Africa need to work together much more than they do now and accept the need for an all-African perspective. This is the necessary condition a) to avoid duplication of efforts and resources (always very scarce), b) to avoid the existence of holes and empty spaces and c) to strengthen individual efforts and achieve an impactful collective one.

e. Language barriers in Africa

There is no need to re-emphasize that integration in Africa has been divided on the line of the colonial languages that had been enforced on the people. And, in many countries, deliberate efforts had been made to discourage the use of indigenous languages. In East Africa, the use of Swahili as a regional language is now being pursued as a tool of integration. Such efforts at promoting regional integration through the promotion of indigenous languages should be further encouraged and multilingualism must be accepted and promoted as the only vehicle to intra-African cooperation.

f. Disintegration in the African educational system.

There is little coordination between Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary (both HE and TVET) education institutions and policies in Africa. Current efforts at developing the African Qualification Frameworks (both at the Regional and the Continental levels) should be seen as an opportunity to progressively overcome this Barrier.

g. Ignorance of Regional integration is a major challenge

Finally, there is an urgent need to educate Academia and all other players in Africa on the needs and benefits of regional integration. The pursuit of a permanent open learning program on regional integration is very commendable.

I hope that all of you, dear readers, will contribute, by studying and using these Materials, to overcome these barriers.

Part 1

The Analytical Framework

Chapter 1. The Analytical Framework of Regional Integration — R. Torrent

Chapter 2. The Analytical Framework of Higher Education Policy — R. Torrent

Chapter 1

The Analytical Framework of Regional or Continental Integration Processes[1]

R. Torrent

1. This contribution to the HAQAA Materials is mainly the result of research made by the author in the context of a research project of the Department of Trade and Integration of the IADB (InterAmerican Development Bank). It was published in English as a chapter named “Regional Integration Instruments and Dimensions: An Analytical Framework” in the book “Bridges for Development: Policies and Instruments for Trade and Integration, eds. R. Devlin and A. Estevadeordal, 2003, Washington DC. Since 2003, it has been used and adapted for the purposes of many courses, mainly online, including in particular those organized with UNCTAD’s Virtual Institute. It will again be the object of further discussion and adaptation as an outcome of its use as a material for the training activities organized by the HAQAA initiative.

Presentation

Regional integration[2] is sometimes presented as a unidirectional process, proceeding in stages from the creation of a free trade area to wider and deeper forms of integration.

This contribution applies a different approach: regional integration follows various paths that may lead in different directions, and, even if these paths share some common elements, they do not necessarily follow "five successive stages" in integration (free trade zone, customs union, common market, monetary union and political union). To this end, we draw the reader's attention to a comparison between NAFTA[3] and MERCOSUR. The former one includes very important aspects of the common market that go further than trade in goods (services, investment), without having to go through the previous stage, the customs union. And MERCOSUR has touched upon many aspects of the political union (from the democratic clause to education, judicial and police cooperation) without much advance in becoming a common market. Not even the European process conforms to this series of stages because many aspects relative to the common market were raised in the initial moment and not at a later stage, and it was conceived from the very beginning as a Customs Union. And finally, ASEAN demonstrates that the process can be reversed by starting with politics and ending up with trade in goods.

We'll come back later to a possible typology of regional integration processes. But the African reader can already begin thinking about how do the African integration processes, both at continental and regional levels, fit into this comparison: like NAFTA, like MERCOSUR, like ASEAN ...?

The chapter focuses more on the nature of regional integration (RI) processes than on their economic consequences. This nature is defined essentially by the legal instruments that support and provide the framework for each process (keeping in mind that the same law can lead to different practices). The chapter does not aim at deepening the analysis of the different aspects of regional integration, but at contributing to the overall understanding of it by developing an analytical framework (or road map) for discussion and research oriented towards policymaking. It builds on pre-existing material, while emphasizing some aspects that are not generally addressed.

RI aims to mould social and economic **preconditions** in order to reach its **objectives** using certain **instruments.** Its development can be analyzed in terms of different **dimensions,** allowing for the establishment of a typology of regional integration processes. The chapter discusses these topics, emphasizing the different instruments and dimensions. The final section makes recommendations for strengthening regional integration.

Contents of the Chapter

1. Preconditions and Objectives Of Regional Integration
2. Instruments of Regional Economic Integration
3. The Dimensions of Regional Integration
4. The Typology of Regional Economic Integration
5. Favouring The Progress of Regional Integration

2. To simplify the drafting, the term "regional" is used as applying to any process of integration between countries. It is well known that, in Africa, there exist two such processes, one developing at the "continental" level, and the other at that of the different "regions". In Latin America, for example, this twofold process of integration also exists, but the terminology used is different: "regional" and "sub-regional" are the terms that are used, instead of "continental" and "regional".

3. The text keeps the references to NAFTA. As it is well known, NAFTA has been replaced (but with substantially the same provisions) by USMCA (United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement), entered into force in July 2020.

1. Preconditions and objectives of regional integration

1.1. Preconditions

Regional integration does not begin in a vacuum. It is conditioned by a diversity of factors. The following are usually considered (Page, 1999):

- Geography is important, including ease of communications, a precondition frequently not met even between neighbouring countries (for example in South America).
- Population matters, although experience proves that difference in size between member states does not necessarily create an obstacle to successful integration.
- The size of the economy and income per capita are important, but experience demonstrates that divergences in this respect are common.
- Political congruence was important in the European process (including its successive expansion) and also for the birth of Mercosur.
- Common background (and common history) or sense of community may be the most important factor underlying integration, as in the case of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) or, clearly, in Africa.

Beyond these preconditions, two major factors impact the strength of REI processes. First, the credibility and effectiveness of the law supporting integration is important. RI processes cannot be guaranteed solely through regional institutional arrangements. Particularly in Europe, experience has shown that strength results from a general attitude of respect for the rule of law among member states. Thus, this attitude becomes an extremely important precondition for integration.

Second, the level of public expenditure and the tax structure of member states are also important factors. If public income relies heavily on duties, trade policy becomes in fact subordinate to fiscal policy. And a low level of public expenditure makes it much more difficult for member states to cope with some negative consequences of integration. It is worth mentioning that within the European Union, disputes on public spending (for example, State aid to firms) are kept within reasonable limits. This is not only because a regional competition policy exists, but also because the member states have the budgetary capacity to fund aid programs within established limits.

1.2. Objectives

The existing literature quite adequately discusses the economic and political objectives served by regional integration (and their intended or unintended effects). From an economic point of view, integration is mainly looked at as an instrument of development (or of competitiveness and growth). This ultimate goal is pursued through a series of intermediate objectives, commonly analyzed from two standpoints. First, competition and scale develop as the larger market permits economies of scale and brings producers in member countries into closer contact with each other. Second, regional integration changes the pattern of trade and the location of production (World Bank 2000). A dynamic perspective is needed to discuss these dimensions because the net benefits of the dynamics of integration, coupled with the so-called non-traditional effects, such as signalling and lock-in[4], can be several times larger than their static reallocation effects (Devlin and Ffrench Davis 1999).

It is now accepted that “integration is political” (World Bank 2000). The broader political objectives are commonly summarized as follows (Page 1999; World Bank 2000; Bouzas 1999):

- Intraregional and extraregional security

4. The English term “lock-in” transmits the idea of “bolting the door” over a policy or rule when acquiring international obligations that impede their reform.

- Bargaining power in the global/multilateral system
- Locked-in[5] internal policy reforms, not only in the areas directly covered by each REI process, but also in other related areas.

As regards strictly economic objectives, when the attraction of foreign direct investment from third countries becomes the main goal of participating in preferential trade agreements, this policy's systemic global consequences must be carefully analyzed – taking account of the differences between South-South and North-South agreements – in a context going beyond the usual creation/diversion alternative applied to trade.

Objectives can change during the development of the process. The European Community's history and the European Union's birth are undoubtedly illustrative examples of this. At first, the objectives were predominantly internal (peace and security); external objectives (such as greater presence in the international arena) acquired increasing importance only in the 1980s and 1990s. A change in objectives can give new life to the process and revitalize the political will behind it. But it can also create confusion (not only in public opinion, but also among politicians who might lose sight of what the process is fundamentally about). It can also lead to trying to fit new objectives into a framework that was originally designed to meet other goals, and does not necessarily adapt well to the new ones. Here again, the case of the European Union is paradigmatic (probably for the worst).

New objectives can be generated from within the integration process itself. This can happen if specific institutions (such as the European Commission, for example) are entrusted with the task of generating initiatives and proposals. In any case, it should not be forgotten that regional integration, however important, is only a means to an end and should not become an end in itself. The objectives of member states' whole political systems are broader than those served by integration. Integration may be a success in itself without necessarily being a success in terms of those broader objectives. The evolution of the European Union during and after the 1990s provides a suitable case for discussion, including the monetary union. It has been a success in terms of integration as it has had a great deal of effective content and dynamism. However, while no single major negative effect can be singled out during the first 30 years of European integration, even during its periods of relative stagnation, a growing disaffection among citizens with regard to European institutions seems to underlie its later evolution.

For the purposes of these Materials, what needs to be emphasized about the objectives of RI is that the definition of objectives cannot consist of a long list of them. Experience proves that such long lists of objectives end up in a dispersion of efforts that leads to no objective been achieved. Well on the opposite, the definition of objectives must prioritize and articulate the objectives (one or two overriding and concrete political objectives and a few intermediate ones): "Gouverner c'est choisir, si difficiles que soient les choix" (To govern is to choose, as difficult as the choices might be). This motto certainly applies to regional integration as to any area of policy (and of general politics).[6]

2. Instruments of regional economic integration

Regional integration is a common endeavor of a plurality of states that requires them to use the instruments available in order to influence social and economic reality. This chapter classifies these instruments in three categories: legislation (rules); public activities (including subsidizing specific economic activities carried out by private operators); and income redistribution through budgetary transfers. As REI processes are an international phenomenon, they also make use of the traditional diplomatic instruments of dialogue and cooperation. For analytical purposes, all these instruments must be neatly differentiated from the techniques used to create them and the institutional arrangements used to guarantee their adequate implementation.

5. See previous note.

6. The motto is from the French politician Pierre Mendès-France in its speech for the first investiture as Prime Minister in June 1953. He failed that time but succeeded just a year later (June 1954). The author loves citing it, not only because it states a very valuable political principle but, in particular, because, by applying it, Mendès-France chose to make one of the more difficult choices in France in his time: to accept defeat in the Indochina war and bring to an end French colonization in that region of the world.

The subject matter of the instruments defines the content of regional integration; techniques and institutional arrangements affect its strength and dynamism, but not its content.

The following example highlights this distinction. Both the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the European process deal with government procurement by enacting rules. Although the instrument (the rules) is similar and affects recipients (public administrations and private operators) of the norms in a similar manner, the technique used is completely different. NAFTA inserts the rules in the constitutive treaty; the European process gradually defines rules through a specialized organization. Different institutional arrangements (regional institution's role and judicial control) guarantee implementation of the rules.

2.1. Two integration techniques

For the purposes of these Materials, two different techniques must be differentiated to enact regional rules and provide a framework for regional public activities: to insert already the rules in the constituent treaty or to create in it a mechanism of law production. The traditional distinction between "intergovernmental" and "supranational" aims at defining them. But it may be claimed this distinction has been used too loosely, in particular as a tool for comparing the European process (considered wrongly as the incarnation of supranationality) with other processes. On the one hand, the European process has an extremely high degree of intergovernmentalism. To take just two examples, the elimination of tariffs within the zone was achieved essentially through an intergovernmental method, and the European Monetary System was, from its beginning in the 1970s to its end, an intergovernmental mechanism based on an agreement among Central Banks with no intervention from the European Community (until the process launched by the Maastricht Treaty ended up in 1999 with a truly supranational outcome: the creation of the European Central Bank). On the other hand, supranationality is an important element for the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other international organizations (for example, when approving waivers, i.e. ad hoc exemptions).

Thus, it can be better to replace that terminology with the more neutral of the two techniques that can be used by an integration treaty (as a matter of fact, by any international treaty) in order to enact rules.

The European Community, now the European Union, —a legal entity with its own competences— provides certainly the paradigm for using the second technique. But, the European process still relies just as much on the first one: the treaty itself contains a set of rules imposing far-reaching obligations on member states when they exercise their own competencies, obligations which are underscored by the general overarching obligation of non-discrimination as regards nationality in any area covered by the Treaty[7].

NAFTA, by contrast, relies exclusively on the first technique. There are advantages and disadvantages to both techniques. The first tends to give strength and credibility to the risk of lack of flexibility and capacity for adaptation; the second tends to have the opposite effects.

7. As will be seen later on in these Materials, the distinction is very well illustrated, precisely in the area of higher education. We have, on one side, the specific regulation on professional qualifications enacted through the second technique. And, on the other, the general application of the national treatment principle established in the treaty through the first technique.

2.2. The institutional arrangements

Institutional arrangements (including dispute settlement and judicial control) are not in themselves instruments of integration. One could argue that they are, in any case, "instruments for the fulfilment of the instruments". The markets are successfully integrated to one degree or another by the rules liberalizing trade in goods or capital movement (or for harmonizing standards). Institutional arrangements help to increase or decrease the effectiveness of these rules and facilitate their adaptation.

Based on a comparative examination, one may claim that as long as the rules are effective, integration can proceed successfully (or risk failure) regardless of the institutional arrangements adopted in each process. NAFTA and the European process share some successes in spite of their completely different approaches to institutions. And Mercosur, which is institutionally light, shares some of the same failures as the institutionally heavier Andean Community.

This argument applies also to policies governing regional competition. It would seem that an effective competition framework cannot exist without regional institutions or bodies to implement it. However, the example of the European Economic Area proves the opposite. The European Economic Area Agreement includes provisions on competition policy, but their implementation is left to the institutions on both sides of the agreement: the pre-existing ones on the European Community side and the new European Free Trade Area (EFTA) Surveillance Authority and EFTA Court on the EFTA side. Thus, here again, there is a clear-cut distinction between the instruments (common regional rules) and the institutional arrangements (left to each part) for implementation.

The existence or lack of a regional budget must also be discussed as a problem of institutional arrangements and not of proper instruments. Regional public activities (which are an instrument as such) can be implemented through regional or national budgets, or through a combination of both.

2.3. The four types of instruments

This section discusses four types of instruments: regional rules, public activities, income redistribution through budgetary transfers and diplomatic instruments.

A. Regional Rules

Regional rules can cover any social and economic situation. From an analytical perspective, it is best to analyze the subject matter of the rules under the heading of "content" (one of the dimensions of regional integration that will be discussed later) rather than under instruments for regional integration. The analysis of rules as instruments must relate to the three main approaches (or instrumental ways, or types of rules) that exist for promoting integration. The first is to impose obligations on liberalization and access to markets (or to higher education systems).

The second is to impose certain obligations of non-discrimination on the legal framework applicable to transactions and operations covered by the agreements—basically most-favoured-nation (MFN) status or national treatment (NT) obligations—while leaving domestic legislation intact. The third is to create uniform legislation establishing a common legal framework for transactions and operations covered by the agreement. These three approaches differ legally and in terms of their political and economic implications.

The obligations that accompany liberalization and market access are strictly limited in scope to international transactions. Obligations as regards treatment (in particular if they apply to treatment of foreign firms and professionals after their establishment in the host country) as well as uniform or harmonized rules apply essentially to internal transactions (unless they are simple rules of non-discrimination of treatment between foreigners- MFN rules- in national market access). They are much more "intrusive" politically (and, as a consequence, much more difficult to tackle) than the former. But many argue that integration cannot rely solely on liberalization obligations in order to make sense in legal terms. Furthermore, seen from a strictly economic perspective, market integration is not achieved by simply liberalizing access as long as internal rules continue to differ.

The two latter types of rules pose a difficult political dilemma. Uniform rules serve integration goals extremely well, but are very difficult to set up for three reasons. First, they are technically difficult to agree upon because of the different legal traditions and contexts of the parties, making it difficult to agree even on terminology and definitions. Second, they are intrusive in relation to the internal political process insofar as they are locked-in by international law, which precludes policy changes that may follow a switch of domestic governments and political majorities. And third, they threaten the adaptability of the regional scheme because they are more difficult to change than domestic rules, requiring a consensus (or a qualified majority) among all parties.

Obligations regarding treatment reduce these difficulties by allowing much greater discretionary power when it comes to domestic legislation, provided that content is non-discriminatory. But such obligations also pose new difficulties. Uniform rules follow the same logic and have the same scope at the international and domestic levels. This is not the case with international obligations on treatment (in particular on treatment of enterprises). These obligations have a sort of double universality: they apply to all sectors and they cover all aspects of the legal framework applicable to enterprises (or professionals).[8] On the domestic front, however, there is not a single rule or set of rules that has this double universality. Different rules apply to different sectors (energy or air transport, for example) and to different aspects of the legal framework (from company law to taxation, through labour conditions or expropriation, for example). With the sole exception of the European Community, experience shows that far-reaching obligations of treatment of enterprises can be accepted only if they are accompanied by a list of exceptions. But this list of exceptions tends to expand geometrically as the number of parties to the agreement increases and in the end, may overwhelm MFN and national treatment.[9]

B. Public Activities

States do more than just enact and implement general legislation. For example, they also finance and manage public services like education, build physical infrastructure, and subsidize specific economic activities. We refer to these as public activities and not as policies because policies can also be implemented exclusively through general rules (on environment, social and labour standards, or education, for example).

The same distinction applies at the regional level. Public activities can play a relevant role in regional integration schemes. Some analysts argue that some regional public activity must be carried out in order to avoid regional integration becoming simply a remake of market liberalization (Page 1999). Here again, the subject matter for these activities fits best under “content” (one of the dimensions of regional integration, as we have also seen in the case of rules). What must be emphasized under instruments is that such activities may be needed in order to enact liberalizing rules. The European Community’s Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) serves again as a prime example of this.

In the 1950s, when the European Community Treaty was negotiated, agriculture posed two major problems as a sector. First, national budgets heavily subsidized it, and this would have created huge distortions for competition if intrazone trade had been liberalized. Second, public intervention was linked to the existence of producer organizations and systems of price controls that constituted an infringement of norms on the principles of free competition and antitrust. The alternatives were either to exclude agriculture from the scope of the treaties or to bring the issue as part of the common policies. Member states chose to create a specific set of common rules for agricultural markets that would be inconceivable outside the realm of agriculture. Throughout the history of the Common Agricultural Policy, these rules have involved price controls, public purchases, and buffer stocks, as well as cartels with ceilings on production and penalties for exceeding them.

Leaving aside their merits in terms of economic policy, public activities can have very positive effects on the integration process. We refer here to the definition and management of such policies, which keep regional integration going even in periods of stagnation, and to the fact that regional integration is about real economic life and not simply about politics.

8. It is different when the obligation of treatment applies to goods: its scope is much narrower

9. This was one of the main reasons for the failure of the OECD’s 1995-98 negotiations on a Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI).

C. Income Redistribution through Budgetary Transfers

All public activities may affect income distribution. Income redistribution becomes a specific regional instrument when it targets specific categories of beneficiaries defined in terms of their income or some other broad economic characteristic. This instrument is typically European.

Internally, an embryonic income redistribution policy based on personal criteria dates back to the 1950s (the European Social Fund). But this instrument only became meaningful (also in budgetary terms) in the 1980s and 1990s when it included the comparative situation of geographically defined collectives, firstly specific areas within member states (structural funds), and finally whole countries (cohesion fund). Externally, the first round of European Community agreements with Mediterranean countries in the 1970s and 1980s included budgetary commitments. Later on, this practice was discontinued and foreign aid was taken out of the agreements (except for the African, Caribbean, and Pacific [ACP] states), and the European Community dealt with it autonomously.

D. Diplomatic Instruments

As an international phenomenon, regional integration relies on the typical international diplomatic instruments of dialog and cooperation. Their use may promote the emergence of a proper regional policy (implemented through legislation or public activities), but this is not necessarily or commonly the case.

These instruments are diplomatic in origin, and extend to all other areas covered by each process, in particular the economic areas. This development goes beyond regional integration, as the number of international forums on all areas of economic, social, and political life has multiplied. Their effects on integration are greatly enhanced when they are able to effectively involve social and economic actors, in particular businesses, promoting exchanges and common activities among them, such as in the case of the negotiations of Free Trade Area of the Americas while they took place.

3. The Dimensions of regional integration

It is not easy to understand the meaning of **“dimensions”** when we apply the term to the analysis of a specific policy. It requires a previous discussion of some basic epistemological issues.[10]

Reality is necessarily looked at from very different perspectives (through very different lenses, if you want to say so).

Classical mechanics provides one of them, to which we are all used. Applying the lens of classical mechanics, we are all used to look at reality (to consider “what matters”) in terms of the three dimensions of space (length, width and height), plus the dimension of mass plus that of movement/acceleration/force (depending on how you formalize the basic abstraction of classical mechanics). However, even when we apply this lens, to which we are so used, we must be very careful as most of us tend to confuse “mass” with “weight”, without being aware that a mass can have no weight when, as in spatial trips, it is not subject to the gravitational force.

But modern physics taught us that this way of looking at reality, acceptable for the observation of most phenomena we find in our everyday life, is no longer adequate for the observation of many macroscopic (or microscopic) phenomena. We must, therefore, change our view of “what matters”, or in other terms, our multidimensional framework. Dimensions that we considered before as independent from each other are no longer so, etc. Discussing how modern physics changed our view of the world is a fascinating subject, but it is not the purpose of this chapter.

The examples can be multiplied. A lawyer or an economist does not look at reality as another profession: aspects that are very relevant for them (the degree of kinship to other people, or the richness, of someone who has deceased are very relevant “dimensions” for the former two but are completely irrelevant for the doctor who took care of that person when dying). The examples can even be extended to the world of art. Picasso

10. The author considers that an adequate knowledge of some basic epistemological issues should be a component of the “horizontal competences” in any HE curriculum, so much talked about as so little believed in.

and the other painters of his generation taught to their contemporaries how to look differently to African or Papuan art and find in them "something" of the highest artistic quality that had never been considered before.

When we turn to the analysis of policies, we must define which are the dimensions that are relevant. Dimensions must not be confused with objectives (which we can pick up or discard); dimensions "are there", we cannot discard them. What we can do is to give more importance to one or to the other, but not to eliminate them.

Some examples can help to understand this. For the purposes of having a container, the first thing that matters is volume, and in many cases, we can disregard whether the form of the container is a cube or that of another parallelepiped with different length, width and height; but we cannot push this to the limit: it would not make sense, for most purposes, to build a container extremely wide but with an extremely small height. Dimensions matter; they are there.

For many of us, unprofessional urban planners, the only dimensions that matter are the two that allow us to calculate surface (we see a town as a map). But a professional urban planner will very easily convince us that height also matters and that the right units for urban planning are those of volume related to surface (as the units of volume are those relevant for the purposes of urban planning: how many people should/could leave in a given area).

The same argument applies to policy analysis. As we'll see in the following chapter, higher education has many dimensions "that are there" when we decide to define and implement a policy. We can legitimately decide to give more importance to one dimension (quality, for example) than to the other (access, for example), or vice versa, but we cannot forget the existence of the latter: does it make sense to enhance quality to the expense of access (or vice versa)? This is the type of choice (and analysis) that must be conducted.

Regional integration develops in a multidimensional space, and does not necessarily move continuously forward in all dimensions. It has four main dimensions: external, content, strength, and dynamism.

3.1. The external dimension

Customs Unions are sometimes presented as a deepening of free trade areas (FTAs). This may not be fully accurate because customs unions are also a widening of their material scope: They define a policy at the regional level that FTAs leave to individual member states: trade relations with third countries. For the purposes of these Materials, we will not compare customs unions and FTAs in terms of deepening or widening: Rather, we will view them from a different perspective or dimension, as different ways of inserting RI processes into the global system. The same approach is applicable to any other area covered by an RI process (such as services, capital, right of establishment and treatment after establishment, and movement of workers or of students or of self-employed people).

The analysis of this dimension must refer to the number of matters that are dealt with at the regional level in relation to third countries. This is essential, for example, in the case of the European process. It is often forgotten that the European Community (that in terms of international trade in goods has been a consolidated Custom Union for decades) did not develop until very late (and when it did, it did not do it completely) a unified external policy in matters such as services, the right of establishment of foreign firms, or the so-called reform of the global financial architecture.[11] These are all matters in which individual member states continued (and continue) to develop different and sometimes contradictory policies.

The external dimension is of paramount importance in these processes (in particular South-South agreements), where the main goal is that of increasing the bargaining power of members and, in general, improving conditions for insertion into the global system. In general, the existence or absence of an external dimension permeates the whole approach to integration. Where there is no external dimension, the process tends to focus on policy restraints (because domestic policies could endanger intrazone liberalization). Where there is an external dimension, the focus turns to policy building (that is, a common external policy), at least as a reaction to third-country demands.

11. This is the reason why member states continued to sign separate investment treaties with third countries and are members of the WTO or parties to many agreements with third countries, jointly with the European Community.

Analysis of an RI's external dimension is essential in order to evaluate its effects on the global system and other countries. Often, such a discussion centres on the misuse of trade policy instruments, and some conclude that customs unions are more likely to be misused than FTAs in order to inhibit trade liberalization12. Discussions on WTO compatibility often concentrate on the quantitative meaning of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Article XXIV, on the notion of substantially all trade. One may argue for a different approach: look at RI processes in terms of their possible misuse as regards their structural contribution (good or bad) to the global architecture. This approach will be deepened in the following chapter of this unit.

In this regard, the existence or absence of an external dimension of RI processes seems relevant with regard to two of the main specific problems created by the multiplication of preferential agreements (and, in particular, by individual countries' multiple membership in them). The first concerns the risks of diversion of trade and investment. The participation of a country in different FTAs has the effect of increasing the risk of trade and investment diversion. By limiting such a possibility, customs unions seem to positively contribute to building global architecture. The second problem is that of transforming the global system into a spaghetti bowl of intertwined agreements, whose negative effects have already been discussed. By hypothesis, customs unions limit this possibility by compelling their members to act as one in their trade relations with third countries. By contrast, FTAs allow each member to conclude agreements for the formation of an FTA, multiplying the spaghetti effect.

Discussion on these problems may need to refine the usual recourse to alternative geometrical or mechanical comparisons (concentric circles or hub and spokes). Indeed, a hub-and-spokes model becomes a concentric circle when the hub is constituted by an REI process. Typical examples are the agreements linking the European Community (alone or jointly with all member states) to third countries, but this would also have been the case of NAFTA within a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) that was NAFTA-minus in terms of content. The essential point in these two cases is that all members of the REI process are in the same position in relation to third countries. This does not create any specific problems as regards architecture.

The real architectural problem is that of multiple memberships in RI processes by different members of any one of them (without being accompanied by its partners). Then the problem results from overlapping rather than concentric circles. In the second comparison, the issue is whether a vehicle can adequately function when the spokes connect the outer points of the wheel simultaneously to different hubs. Chapter 3 of these Materials emphasize the extreme importance of this problem in the African context.

The consideration of the external dimension seems essential for the analysis of African continental and regional integration. Raising simply two questions seems sufficient at this stage: How the external dimension of continental integration fits with the existence of separate different international agreements of individual African countries, even in the same policy areas? And how does it fit with the existence of external policies of the different Regional Economic Communities?

12. World Bank (2000)

3.2. Effective content

A. Width x Depth

The width of any international agreement or organization (including regional ones) can be defined in terms of the number and scope of the areas it covers. Depth refers to the degree in which these areas are subject to common rules or public activities. An example taken from the multilateral level helps to clarify both notions. The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is wide because it covers all service sectors and all aspects of post-establishment treatment of foreign firms; but it may be argued that it is not deep (and unequally deep at any rate) because the market access and national treatment commitments depend on members' respective schedules.

Apparently, width can easily be determined by looking at the subject matter of the different regional instruments that are being used. This apparent ease does not exist in relation to rules because the width of rules must be analyzed in terms of a matrix: vertically when referring to sectors (such as agriculture or financial services) and horizontally (taxation, competition, and labour standards). Depth is neither easy to determine, in particular in relation to rules. The best criterion for determining depth is the extent to which member states remain free to regulate specific topics differently; the more they do, the shallower the process will be in terms of depth. Application of this criterion requires careful analysis of the relevant legal provisions for establishing actual regulatory meaning, especially because ambitious language may be associated with a lack of actual regulatory effect.

For analytical purposes, the distinction between width and depth is sound but can also be misleading. Indeed, width and depth are not independent characteristics of integration. What matters is the content of the process, and width and depth are but two aspects of it that must be considered jointly. Reality offers us examples of bilateral economic agreements that are wide in terms of scope, but with no depth in terms of obligations or effective cooperation.

This chapter does not allow a detailed discussion on the width and depth of REI processes. But it must emphasizes the need to distinguish between rules applicable to intrazone and to third-country operators. The European Community, for example, has established rules applicable to European air carriers in European airports. However, these rules are not applicable to American or Japanese carriers in these same airports (the same argument applies to professionals, for example). The same distinction can be applied to students or to academic staff.

B. Content versus Effective Content

As RI processes occur within a multilateral system in which members have already accepted obligations, to get to actual RI value added requires analyzing the effective content of the processes and not merely their content. Effective content must be defined by subtracting multilateral obligations from regional content. Here again, reality offers examples of bilateral/regional agreements that create content by restating already accepted bilateral and multilateral obligations.

An illustrative example is Mercosur's treatment of services in its 1997 Montevideo Protocol on services, which consisted of including obligations that already existed among the four Mercosur Members as a result of their WTO membership and its acceptance of GATS. The subsequent negotiation rounds under the Mercosur framework in the end allowed the widening of the corresponding schedules of commitments beyond those that the four members had already annexed to the GATS in 1994. The Montevideo Protocol and the subsequent annexes with the lists of commitments however entered into force only in 2006. Until then, the multilateral obligations in force between the parties were thus greater than those agreed upon in the framework of their own regional integration process.

3.3. Strength

As with width and depth, we suggest analyzing the strength of an RI process by examining two aspects jointly: the credibility and effectiveness of the law of integration, and member states' political commitment. Here again, both aspects are better understood as multiplying each other rather than simply adding up. Many examples show that political commitment is not enough to strengthen an REI process if it is not accompanied by credibility as regards the law of integration. At the same time, legal mechanisms cannot compensate for the absence of political commitment. The strength of the process tends to be 0 if either its legal or political component is 0 (even if the other one is positive).

A. Credibility and Effectiveness of the Law

RI can undoubtedly proceed on the basis of the previously outlined fourth instrument (instruments of dialogue and cooperation), and without any specific law of integration. But if it is supported or regulated by law, then the law must be credible and effective. If it is not, the process becomes a failure and could be successfully replaced by de facto integration.

No law is 100 percent credible and effective; credibility and effectiveness are always a matter of degree. A high degree of credibility can be achieved through different mechanisms. However, credibility is not necessarily linked to the existence of a regional mechanism of law enforcement. It seems much more dependent on the existence of a general attitude of respect for the rule of law in member states and the perceived interest (political as well as economic) in strengthening integration. At this point, it is worth recalling that within the framework of the European Community Treaty, the Court of Justice of the European Community had, for 40 years, no effective mechanism at its disposal to enforce its decisions. Reprisals among member states are absolutely forbidden, even in cases where one of them violates European Community law. The system worked (until 1992) based on voluntary compliance by member states (including compliance with the Court's judgments).

B. Political Commitment

The degree of political commitment of member states to the RI process may be difficult to measure with precision. However, its existence is absolutely necessary. Political commitment is political in that it can go further than the effective economic content of integration. By going further, it strengthens the process. An example is the common actions on the part of the remaining three member states of Mercosur when the fourth member, Paraguay, was in a deep political crisis. Another example is the intervention by the United States when Mexico was affected by a serious financial crisis. These actions (in areas not properly covered by the processes) strengthened Mercosur and NAFTA, respectively.

If political commitment exists, the diplomatic instruments of dialogue and cooperation may become an effective means of enhancing integration.

3.4. Dynamism and the Capacity for Adaptation

According to Page 1999, a region can be defined as a group of countries which have created a legal framework of co-operation covering an extensive economic relationship, with the intention that it will be of indefinite duration, and with the possibility foreseen that the region will evolve or change because countries' economic structures change, and with them the nature of their linkages.

One may not go so far in the argument by taking the view that evolution or the capacity to adapt (the ability to change the instruments of integration in terms of content or to add new ones) is only a dimension of REI processes, not a defining characteristic. In the first place, the need for adaptation depends on the goals pursued and the adequacy of the initial instruments. In the second place, the capacity to adapt (or too much of it) can endanger the strength of the process (and, in particular, its credibility).

The capacity to adapt has to do essentially with mechanisms to create laws and the swiftness with which the new or reformed laws can adapt to new circumstances. Does the new or reformed law require a new treaty? Alternatively, does the treaty provide for some mechanism of adaptation? The distinction between the static and dynamic nature of regional integration processes depends on the answers to these questions.

A comparison between NAFTA, the European Community, and Mercosur reveals three major differences. First, NAFTA has a static character. It is a comprehensive agreement that is "once and for all"; there is no explicit mechanism to create laws. Adaptation must come from new agreements that modify or supplement the constitutive agreement. Second, the Treaties establishing the European Community are two-fold in character. They have a solid, static nature because they are classical international treaties, creating (once and for all) far-reaching obligations for member states (as NAFTA), but they also create a specific mechanism for producing new law that gives them a dynamic nature. Furthermore, the practice of periodic revision and modification of the founding Treaties has boosted their dynamic nature. Third, we look at Mercosur. From the static point of view, it may be claimed that it does not have the set of obligations typical of NAFTA and the Treaties that establish the European Community. Mercosur was conceived as dynamic, but its dynamism depends on the functioning of its mechanisms for creating laws.

The need for dynamism (or adaptability) is linked to the other three dimensions. First, if there is an external dimension to the process, the need for adaptation comes from outside, from other participants in the global system and its multilateral institutions. A customs union's commercial policy (or other external policies if they exist) cannot remain unchanged over time; it must be adapted. This need is not present in the case of FTAs, where each member adapts its commercial policy towards third countries on its own.

Second, as far as content is concerned, the need for adaptation arises if the RI process includes regional public activities or income redistribution. These must be defined, adjusted, and implemented. Adaptation is also linked to the question of deepening (much more than to the question of widening because it is not likely that, by adaptation, an RI process could cover areas not covered in the initial Treaty). If the agreement is static (like NAFTA), all provisions affecting depth must be included in the initial treaty. If the agreement is dynamic, the initial treaty may be limited to defining some relatively open or broad rules or obligations, leaving deepening to the future.

Third, adaptability is also related to strength. The static nature of an RI process certainly contributes to strengthening it; but an adequate dynamic nature can also contribute to it if, by adapting, it is able to avoid becoming obsolete in legal terms. A dynamic nature can also enhance legal adequacy and consequently prevent violation.

4. The typology of regional economic integration

A complex typology of RI processes can be constructed by combining the preconditions and objectives, instruments, and dimensions presented earlier in this Chapter. Instead of engaging in this rather abstract exercise, a few types that can be useful in discussing actual integration processes are outlined below.

The first type is a "no-rules", purely political framework for de facto economic integration. The best example of success is the first 25 years of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).13 It was built on the basis of solid geographical-historical preconditions. It had a significant external dimension as well as internal strength via political commitment and dynamism.

The second type is that of the pure FTA. It has no external dimension and is static. It has some effective content, which is normally limited to trade in goods (usually with significant exceptions), and without much depth (it does not attempt to create uniform rules). Finally, the degree of political commitment is low. This model roughly fits many of the "regional" agreements between WTO Members.

These agreements should be discussed in terms of their internal and external effects. Such a discussion would go beyond the scope of the present chapter. As far as their global systemic effects are concerned, these agreements may 'muddy' the clarity of international economic relations as they might allow for multiple memberships in different integration schemes by different members.

In the third type of RI process, institutions strengthen the community of states. This process typically integrates states with relatively small populations and territories and some sense of shared history and culture. The key motivation of the integration process is not so much the actual and potential intensity in intraregional

13. Of course, ASEAN did not fit the model exactly because it had some rules on preferences, but these rules were just an accessory to the main nature of the agreement.

economic relations; external considerations weigh relatively more. One of the main arguments for integration is the need for institutional strengthening in order to maximize the allocation of scarce human resources while also enhancing the capacity for regulatory and economic policy formulation (Jessen and Rodriguez 1999). An example could be CARICOM.

Precisely because human resources and institution-building capacity are both so scarce, these processes face two main challenges. First, they have to adequately define the extent of their external dimension. Second, they must make the right choices as regards their effective content (rules versus public activities) while maintaining or increasing political commitment among member states.

The fourth type of RI process is a broad-based, halfway internal economic area with strong rules and no public activities. It shares the characteristic of not having an external policy dimension with the second type, and consequently shares some of its systemic risks. But this type has more ambitious objectives and more effective content, going much further than trade in goods, although it does not cover many aspects of economic relations. It is strong in terms of both law and political commitment. The model has two main varieties: static and dynamic. NAFTA is an illustrative example of the static variety. The European Economic Area, created by an agreement between the different EFTA countries (with the exception of Switzerland) and the European Community and its member states, could be seen as the main example of the dynamic variety.

The fifth model is the strong, broad-based, internal plus external, static plus dynamic, incomplete general integration process. It corresponds to the one launched by the European Community Treaty in the 1950s. This type is based on strong geographical/historical foundations. It has a definite external policy dimension, but is incomplete because, as far as third countries are concerned, different national policies continue to target many aspects even in the purely economic area. It has a high effective content that has increased over time, but its width and depth and the number and the importance of its public activities should not be exaggerated. The legal strength of the process is remarkable and explains a great part of its success. This has been achieved mainly through voluntary compliance by member states. The degree of political commitment to the process has always been high, but it has suffered visible erosion in the past 20 years, particularly in terms of public opinion. The process has a strong static foundation (the far-reaching obligations imposed on member states by the Treaties), but it is also dynamic because it has a well-lubricated mechanism of law creation and treaty reform that leads to an increase in the content of the process. The Andean Pact/Community and Mercosur were conceived as other examples of this fifth type, but probably must be analyzed as failed examples.

Do the African continental integration process fit any of these categories? Which one? And how would the reader classify the existing African Regional Economic Communities?

5. Favouring the progress of regional integration

The analytical framework outlined above should promote policy-oriented discussion on regional integration. This section describes some of the main arguments.

5.1. Taking care of the External Dimension of regional economic integration

RI processes may or may not have an external dimension. When they do have such a dimension, its consolidation is at least as important, and sometimes more so, than internal widening or deepening. A strong external dimension lends credibility to the process and strengthens it legally as well as in terms of the political commitment of its members. It also provides stability to the multilateral system. The experience of the European Community tends to support this argument in particular as regards the exclusive competence of the European Community in the area of foreign trade. The day-to-day management of the Customs Union has kept the Community alive and functioning even during its worst periods of stagnation.[14]

To achieve consolidation, 100 percent uniformity is not necessarily the main goal; a common or single policy would be sufficient. Even the European Community maintained differentiated national legal regimes within the common imports framework for decades (not only for textiles, toys, and bananas, but, more significant-

14. This is management in the regulatory sense because customs authorities continue to be national.

ly, for automobiles). Sectoral national exceptions, permanent or transitory, are legitimate provided that the regional community agrees to and manages them. Indeed, RI schemes with an external dimension should have some mechanism to expeditiously adapt their common external framework to members' specific sector problems. The principle of free circulation of imports among members after they have entered the common customs territory (when no national exception applies) is just as important as the principle of uniformity (that can be subject to exceptions).

Rules-based RI processes pose an important external problem even if they do not have an external dimension: the hierarchy between regional and multilateral rules. From the standpoint of regional agreements, there are three possibilities: the agreement is silent on this question, the agreement recognizes the primacy of the multilateral agreement; or the agreement establishes its primacy over the multilateral agreement.

Internally, European Community law and the jurisprudence of the Court of Justice of the European Community in general respect the primacy of international law. However, externally, all bilateral agreements that the European Community has negotiated with third countries fall within the first possibility (remain silent). By contrast, NAFTA falls within the other two. As a general rule, its article 103 establishes that it prevails over other overlapping multilateral agreements; but its specific articles on standards (articles 713 and 903), for example, seem to recognize the primacy of international agreements.

This problem is not only legal - It is, rather, political because it points to a basic policy choice: favouring either the unilateral/bilateral/regional or the multilateral approach. This issue may need to be addressed directly through ways such as introducing a conformity clause in regional agreements as regards multilateral agreements[15].

5.2. Choosing the right content

Regional integration should be multilateral-plus. This idea is not new, but it may be forgotten in practice, in terms of both substance and procedure. In substance, regional rules on services may fall short of schedules for specific commitments on GATS; the Mercosur example that we have analyzed before when discussing "content", one of the dimensions of regional integration, provides an example of this. In procedure, regional mechanisms to create new rules and settle disputes may be less powerful than those of the WTO. There is a need to increase awareness regarding existing multilateral obligations, and to deepen research on the overlap between multilateral and regional agreements in order to determine the plus in the latter's effective content.

From the internal perspective, experience with regional integration proves that too much content may be a potential danger, especially in dynamic processes. It could weaken the process if rule production at the regional level exceeds the capacity of domestic systems and the demands from citizens and businesses to assimilate them. In case the potential danger becomes a reality, a redefinition and narrowing down of the agenda is the only way to avoid a progressive degeneration of the process.

5.3. Gaining Strength and Adaptability at the same time

If REI schemes are not only political frameworks for de facto economic integration, the law that creates and regulates them must be strong and credible. In addition, they must have some capacity to adapt to new problems or unforeseen circumstances, as well as built-in adequate legal instruments so as to avoid de facto solutions that are contrary to the law. Adaptability and strength can go together. Along with adequate legal mechanisms, a well-developed capacity to adapt helps to avoid violations of the law and strengthens it. But the capacity to adapt can only rest on a sufficiently solid, static foundation.

The question of how to strengthen the law of integration while increasing the capacity to adapt constitutes a dilemma for discussion beyond the limits of this chapter.

15. See Torrent (1998, chapter 9), for a more in-depth discussion about such a conformity clause.

Summary of the chapter in a few questions

In all likelihood, you will not be able to give a full and detailed answer to the following questions, but you should be able to understand their meaning and you have the obligation, at least as a participant in HAQAA training activities, to think about them.

1. Do you agree with the thesis that regional integration follows various paths that may lead in different directions?
2. If you do, how would you compare the African continental integration process and, if this is the case, that of your Regional Economic Community, with other integration processes in the world?
3. Are you able to briefly state the main preconditions of the African continental integration process and, if this is the case, of your Regional Economic Community? Do you think that there is a clear and articulated set of objectives for continental and regional integration in Africa? If you think this is the case, can you state it? Which are the main instruments that area used in them? Which are the dimensions of integration that are (or should, in your opinion, be) prioritized?
4. If the instrument of legal rules is applied, which is (or are) the technique or techniques through which they are enacted?

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Chapter 2

The Analytical Framework of Higher Education Policy

R. Torrent

Presentation

This chapter has already been "tested". Indeed, its first version was prepared for the 2016 Annual Conference of the SPHERE-1 project. SPHERE, an EU funded project, stands for *Support and Promotion for Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs).* The European Commission had set up, in all EU neighbouring countries in the East, South-East and South, teams of HE Reform Experts, headed in each country by the National Erasmus Officer. On that basis a Network of all of them was created, which was supported and promoted by a Consortium led, at the University of Barcelona, by OBREAL Global's team, and with the participation of the European University Association.

The 2016 Annual Conference intended to offer an overall view of HE policy that could help to provide a better framework for the design and implementation of reform policies and initiatives. A paper proposing an Analytical Framework for Higher Education Reform was prepared and send prior to the Conference, together with a survey for participants (around 100). It was, together with the results of the survey, the basis for the two-day discussions, which proved extremely interesting and enriching for participants as well as for the organizers. A document was finally prepared that includes the initial paper together with a summary of the discussions and some conclusions drawn form them. This is the document that provides the basis for this chapter. Some additional contribution (mainly the section on Equity as a dimension) is the result of discussions held in the last 18 months in the framework of HAQAA-2.

To allow for an independent reading of the Chapter, its first section summarizes the Analytical Framework for Regional Integration that was the methodological basis for the construction of the Analytical Framework for Higher Education Policy Reform. Readers who have studied Chapter 1 of these Materials, can jump to Section 2, or, maybe better, can read this first section in diagonal, simply as a reminder, but paying some attention to a few references to HE that have been introduced.

The chapter intends to follow very strictly the general orientation of the whole Materials:

- Not being prescriptive nor proposing a "model", but facilitating a process of reflection and discussion that can lead in very different directions.
- But emphasizing the need to look at reality in all its complexity and interdependences and advising not to simplify its vision nor look for silver bullets able to solve all problems with one single shot.
- And allowing to discuss, in order to tackle this very complex reality, **what** to specifically do (there are so many things that can be done…) **in what level** (there are so many levels: that of Universities and HEIs themselves, the national, the regional, the continental…) **by whom** (there are so many different actors…) **with what instrument** (there are so many instruments, which not all serve the same purpose or have the same effect…).

Contents of the Chapter

1. Why an Analytical Framework for Higher Education Reform? Its origin and main content. Preconditions, Objectives, Instruments and Dimensions
2. The Dimensions of Higher Education Reform
3. The Instruments of Higher Education Reform
4. Using the Analytical Framework for Policy Discussion
5. Some General Conclusions

1. Why an analytical framework for higher education reform? its origin and main content. preconditions, objectives, instruments and dimensions

I developed and published in 2002[1] an Analytical Framework for Regional Economic Integration (REI). It has proved successful, at least for pedagogical purposes. But such an analytical framework can be adapted to most political processes. Therefore, it can be useful to adapt it to Higher Education Reform (HER). In this first section, I'll briefly summarize it. This offers a first approximation to the methodological approach proposed for the 2016 Barcelona HERE Conference. I shall keep to the minimum the references to the original work, which, furthermore, is freely accessible on Internet (see the footnote).

In general, political processes are not unidirectional nor unidimensional. They follow various paths that may lead in different directions. They do not proceed in pre-established "stages". Therefore, we cannot, and should not, prescribe a one-fits-all path or road; our task is, on the contrary, to develop a road map that helps to find the best road, in each country, to go from the point of departure (different in each case) to the desired point of arrival (different also, most likely, in each case).

Political processes aim to mould existing **preconditions** in order to reach its **objectives** using certain **instruments**. Its development can be analysed in terms of different **dimensions**. While these are the four elements to be taken into account in any discussion of a political process, what is, usually, more difficult is the definition and analysis of the different instruments and dimensions. These four elements of the analytical framework must first be discussed and understood separately in order to be able to analyse their interaction: the task of the HER expert.

1.1. Preconditions

Political processes do not begin in a vacuum. They are conditioned by a diversity of factors. Many of them are general factors affecting all, or most, social phenomena: History, geography, economy, the general nature of the political system... But some are very specific to each area of social policy.

Which are the specific preconditions of HER? A few very specific ones were already proposed in the paper prepared for the 2016 Conference:

- Demography and, in particular, the age pyramid. A precondition so self-evident as this has, in some cases (Spain, for example), not been adequately taken into account.
- The situation of primary and secondary education.
- The legal regime not only of HE institutions but also of staff. Some legal staff regimes are very resilient and make it very difficult to implement HER, as they are able to "absorb" partial changes into a general structure that remains unmodified.

But the survey conducted prior to the Conference suggested the addition of other specific preconditions with a particular relevance for Higher Education and its reform. I would select the following ones:

- Corruption.
- The number of HEIs.
- Gender disparities.
- Cultural attitudes towards education from students, staff and the population as a whole.
- Current status of the research and innovation.

1. It was the result of research made by the author in the context of a research project of the Department of Trade and Integration of the Inter American Development Bank (IADB). It was published in English as a chapter named "Regional Integration Instruments and Dimensions: An Analytical Framework" in the book "Bridges for Development: Policies and Instruments for Trade and Integration, eds. R. Devlin and A. Estevadeordal, 2003, Washington DC. It has been later used very often, mainly in the framework of online and life courses, in English and Spanish, on International Economic Law and Policy (see, for example: www.ielpo.org) and Regional Integration. It is also adapted as Chapter 1 of these Materials

1.2. Objectives

Very often, specific political processes serve very general objectives that apply to a great number of areas. For example, there is a large degree of agreement on the idea that, in itself, Regional Economic Integration pursues an objective of economic development (or of competitiveness and growth). However, it is also accepted that "integration is political" and that broader objectives are at its basis, and explain and give a sense of direction to it: Intraregional (as in the case of the birth of the European Communities in the 1950s[2] and Extra-regional, as peace and security, or bargaining power in the global/multilateral system, They can also be used in order to lock-in internal policy reforms, not only in the areas directly covered by each REI process, but also in other related areas.

Many processes of HER serve also, in the very first place, political objectives that are much wider than HE. HER is very often an element or accompanying factor of very wide processes of political or economic change. This has been the case in many countries, in the neighbourhood of the European Union, but also, particularly, in Africa..

Objectives must be adequately articulated: this is probably the greatest policy challenge concerning objectives. It is very easy to list a series of objectives in which more or less everyone would agree, but this is nearly meaningless: the longer the list of objectives, the higher the risk of dispersion of efforts and of not reaching any one of them. So, the survey conducted prior to the conference suggested the following specific objectives (certainly too many for a well-designed and focused HE policy):

- Strengthening links between universities and private enterprises in terms of research and development.
- Improving quality of higher education (study programs, teaching, research and preparation of academic staff) to meet the needs of economic development of the country and of the individuals. Sustainable growth.
- Improve employability – strengthen the link with the labour market.
- International integration and cooperation with different regions.
- To adapt university curricula to cope with the era of fast-moving knowledge-driven information technologies & networks.
- Improvement of the competitiveness of education and science.
- Developing the country and the humankind based on intellectual achievements of higher education (knowledge-based society).
- Reinforce the scientific research as a priority of HE.
- Continuing professional development for academic staff working in HE.
- To improve the social dimension of higher education
- Technological development
- Standardization of higher education through the Bologna Process and convergence with the policies of other signatory countries of the Bologna countries members of the EHEA.

The articulation has two main aspects:

- First, most likely, the objectives in the list cannot be pursued, even less be reached, all at the same time; and not all of them must be considered equally important: which are the priorities to be established among them?

2. It is not easy to find the right terminology to refer to the integration process launched by the European Economic Community Treaty – EEC Treaty - (and other accompanying treaties) in the years 1950. The European Community does not longer exist, replaced by the European Union, And the widespread expression of "European integration" or "European process", which are used below, are very misleading because the integration process launched by the EEC Treaty was not, and continues not being, "European" but "Western European", enlarged towards Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, but without never intending to become "all-European".

- Second, the time-dimension and the interdependence between the objectives must be very well analysed. Which comes first, second and third? Which ones must be considered not so much as ends in themselves but as intermediate objectives to the service of the more important overriding ones.

Here again, the evolution of European integration, with its current crisis, offers a very good example of good (in its first decades) and bad (in the last ones) articulation of objectives.

Which is the articulation of objectives specific to each HER process? This is the right and essential answer, which cannot be answered by resorting to too easy, and rhetoric, politically correct language.

The discussion on objectives could be confused with those on dimensions, in particular because both give a sense of direction and can be prioritised. But objectives can legitimately be "chosen" (and discarded), while dimensions, as we shall see, have to be taken necessarily into account, even if we can prioritise them. There is no need (or it might be impossible) to advance in all of them at the same rhythm, but a step backwards in any of them must be considered, in itself, a negative development (maybe compensated by movements forward along other dimensions).

Objectives can change during the development of the process. New objectives can also be generated from within the process itself. A change in objectives can be motivated because the initial objectives have been reached or, contrariwise, as an acceptance of failure and of the need to reformulate the policy. New objectives can give new life to the process and revitalize the political will behind it. But the change in objectives can also create confusion (not only in public opinion, but also among politicians who might lose sight of what the process is fundamentally about). It can also lead to trying to fit new objectives into a framework that was originally designed to meet other goals, and does not necessarily adapt well to the new ones. Some developments in the framework of the Bologna process are a good example of all this.

If we turn to HER, the question about objectives must receive a rather concrete answer, even if it comprises different layers and an internal articulation of them. The answer cannot be, of course, "because we must copy... whatever", not only because this always tends to be a bad answer but, even more, because, in all likelihood, the persons who would offer this answer do not really know what they intent to copy. Of course, the best example of this are the political errors incurred to by attempting to "copy or to adapt to the Bologna process" without knowing the very fundamentals of such a process of reform, and without being aware that the objectives of the process have changed (at least those proclaimed to justify it).

1.3. Instruments

Political processes use different instruments in order to influence social and economic reality.

In the case of Regional Integration these instruments fall into four main categories: legislation (rules); public activities (including subsidizing specific economic activities carried out by private operators); income redistribution through budgetary transfers; and diplomatic instruments.

These instruments must be neatly differentiated from the techniques used to create them and the institutional arrangements used to guarantee their adequate implementation. Techniques and institutional arrangements are, in any case, "instruments for the instruments": without the instruments, they are empty. This distinction is subtle but it is essential. I'll illustrate it with an example: Both the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the European integration process deal with government procurement by enacting rules. Although the instrument (the rules) is similar and affects recipients of the norms (public administrations and private operators) in a similar manner, the technique used is completely different. NAFTA inserts the rules in the constitutive treaty; the European process gradually defines rules through a specialized organization (the European Community – the EU now-). And the institutional arrangements used to guarantee implementation of the rules are also completely different in the two cases (in the EU case a Regional Court is established while this is not the case in the NAFTA framework).

HER designers and implementers must also be very conscious of the instruments at their disposal, the use that can be made of them and the possible effects of their use. Below, in Section 3, we will discuss in more detail the 7 HER instruments that we propose to take into account:

a. Legal frameworks/ laws and regulations

b. Finance

c. Institutional infrastructure/ technology

d. Staff

e. Teaching practices

f. Quality assurance

g. External partners

These instruments should be conceived as a toolbox; they only make sense if they are adapted to the result that is looked for. The "instrumentality" of instruments is what matters; none of them can be considered as a silver bullet that will arrange everything; in all likelihood, they will have to be used in an adequate combination. But this result is not easy to analyse because HE reform is multifaceted or multidimensional: the result can be positive in one or some of these dimensions and negative in other.

1.4. Dimensions

Political processes develop in a multidimensional space. "Dimensions are there" to be necessarily taken into account; they cannot be discarded. It is like "space" and "time" in Classical Mechanics (or the reformulation of the dimensions in Modern Physics). They are "dimensions on which to move", all of them "good – or, at least, necessary" dimensions. But political processes do not necessarily move continuously forward. Very often, they are not even able to advance in all directions: they advance in one dimension and go backwards in another. Very often, a trade-off is established between these dimensions: an advance in one must "be paid" with a setback in another. When this is the case, the question, in terms of political judgement, is whether the final (maybe contradictory) outcome is positive or negative? Does the advance in one direction compensate the setback in the other? And the easy answer of "let's advance in all directions at the same time" is very often completely unrealistic: it leads nowhere. The old P. Mendès-France's motto of "Gouverner, c'est choisir, si difficiles que soient les choix" ("to govern is to make choices, as difficult as these choices might be") applies also to this discussion.

Many dimensions could be considered for any political process. But if we want to take into account too many of them, the analytical framework loses sharpness and interpretative capacity. The definition of the different dimensions must capture the "true nature and main effects" of the political process we are analysing.

For the SPHERE 2016 Conference and HE policy, we considered the following dimensions:

I. Access/ retention/ study success

II. Quality

III. Employability

IV. Internationalisation

V. Democratic governance and autonomy

Before turning to their discussion in the next section (section 2), it can be helpful, in order to understand the methodological approach that we will follow, to finalize this first section with a summary of how the four dimensions of REI can be defined and analysed.

1. The external dimension

REI must be looked at as a possible way of insertion into the global system. How much is this the case? In the case of NAFTA, this is not the case at all: NAFTA is "intra-regional"; outside the borders of its three members, NAFTA does not exist. Of course, this has always been different with the European Community. However, it is often forgotten that the European Community (which in terms of international trade in goods has been a – "a" meaning "one, a single one" -consolidated Custom Union for decades) did not develop for decades a unified external policy in matters such as services, the right of establishment of foreign firms, or the so-called reform of the global financial architecture (and even now such a policy is only very partial). These are all matters in which individual member states have developed different and sometimes contradictory policies.

2. Effective content

REI must not become an empty word; it must have effective content. But effective content comprises two elements: width and depth.

Apparently, width can easily be determined by looking at the subject matter of the different regional instruments that are being used. This apparent ease does not exist in relation to rules because the width of rules must be analyzed in terms of a matrix: vertically when referring to sectors (such as agriculture or financial services) and horizontally (taxation, competition, and labour standards).

Depth is neither easy to determine, in particular in relation to rules. Application of this criterion requires careful analysis of the relevant legal provisions for establishing actual regulatory meaning, especially because ambitious language may be associated with a lack of actual regulatory effect.

For analytical purposes, the distinction between width and depth is sound but can also be misleading. Indeed, width and depth are not independent characteristics of integration. What matters is the content of the process, and width and depth are but two aspects of it that must be considered jointly. Reality offers us examples of bilateral economic agreements that are wide in terms of scope, but with no depth in terms of obligations or effective cooperation. Better to understand content as a sort of multiplication of width by depth.

3. Strength

As with content (width and depth), the strength of a REI process must examine two aspects jointly: the credibility and effectiveness of the law of integration, and member states' political commitment. Here again, both aspects are better understood as multiplying each other rather than simply adding up. Many examples show that political commitment is not enough to strengthen a REI process if it is not accompanied by credibility as regards the law of integration. At the same time, legal mechanisms cannot compensate for the absence of political commitment. The strength of the process tends to be 0 if either its legal or political component is 0 (even if the other one is positive).

4. Dynamism and the Capacity for Adaptation

The capacity to adapt (the ability to change the instruments of integration in terms of content or to add new ones) is only a dimension of REI processes, not a defining characteristic. In the first place, the need for adaptation depends on the goals pursued and the adequacy of the initial instruments. In the second place, the capacity to adapt (or too much of it) can endanger the strength of the process (and, in particular, its credibility).

The capacity to adapt has to do essentially with mechanisms to create laws and the swiftness with which the new or reformed laws can adapt to new circumstances. Does the new or reformed law require a new treaty? Alternatively, does the treaty provide for some mechanism of adaptation? The distinction between the static and dynamic nature of regional integration processes depends on the answers to these questions.

The need for dynamism (or adaptability) is linked to the other three dimensions.

- First, if there is an external dimension to the process, the need for adaptation comes from outside, from other participants in the global system and its multilateral institutions.
- Second, as far as content is concerned, the need for adaptation arises if the REI process includes re gional public activities or income redistribution. These must be defined, adjusted, and implemented.

Adaptation is also linked to the question of deepening. If the agreement is static (like NAFTA), all provi sions affecting depth must be included in the initial treaty. If the agreement is dynamic, the initial treaty may be limited to defining some relatively open or broad rules or obligations, leaving deepening to the future.

- Third, adaptability is also related to strength. The static nature of an REI process certainly contributes to strengthening it; but an adequate dynamic nature can also contribute to it if, by adapting, it is able to avoid becoming obsolete in legal terms. A dynamic nature can also enhance legal adequacy and consequently prevent violation.

2. The dimensions of higher education reform

for the purposes of the 2016 HERE Barcelona Conference, five central "dimensions" were considered to be taken necessarily into account when designing and implementing a process of Higher Education Reform and on which this process can/should advance, or on which HE Reform can be evaluated:

1. Internationalisation
2. Democratic governance and autonomy
3. Access/ retention/ study success
4. Employability
5. Quality

In a first discussion with the "HAQAA Ambassadors"[3] it was decided that

6. Equity

had to be added as a very relevant dimension, at least for the application of the Analytical Framework to the African context.

In order to begin their discussion, it can be useful to begin with another possible dimension that we do not take into account but that many (even myself) could perfectly well take: Pluralism. Let's see how it was approached in a very interesting joint publication from the EUA and the American Council on Education: *Higher Education in a pluralist World: A Transatlantic View*[4]. The quotation offers, furthermore, a methodological suggestion (underlined) that we already used for the preparation of the Barcelona Conference.

> *"As any veteran of conversations across borders, languages, and cultures will acknowledge, many discussions stumble because of an absence of shared definitions and common terminology. These difficulties are not limited to international dialogues; they occur just as frequently in a national context in which there are many more shared experiences and assumptions. Even on a single campus, individuals assign different meanings and bring different value frameworks to terms such as globalization, affirmative action, positive discrimination, or "Europeanization."*
>
> ***Thus, the 2003 Transatlantic seminar began by elaborating on the multiple dimensions of pluralism and exploring the similarities and differences in interpretations among the participants. Indeed, definitions proved to be significantly diverse**. For at least one European participant in the seminar, the term that supplied the meeting's focus—pluralism—did not resonate at all. Before the meeting, the seminar organizers had asked participants to define pluralism in the higher education context by completing the sentence, "A pluralistic higher education institution..."*
>
> ***To launch the discussion, the organizers created a list of salient themes from the responses they received, which included the following dimensions of pluralism in higher education institutions:***
>
> - *Diverse by race, ethnicity, gender.*

3. The "HAQAA Ambassadors" are the group of participants in the training activities of HAQAA's first two stages who remain committed to the promotion of the initiative's activities.

4. Higher Education in a pluralist World: A Transatlantic View. MADELEINE GREEN, American Council on Education ANDRIS BARBLAN, European University Association, 2003 http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/Transatlantic_Dialogue_2003.1129208931860.pdf

- *Socially diverse.*
- *Politically diverse.*
- *Multilingual.*
- *Multigenerational.*
- *International.*
- *Open to different intellectual approaches and perspectives.*
- *Promoting academic freedom.*
- *Providing safe space for debate.*
- *Engaged with community stakeholders.*

As the seminar opened, the organizers proposed an exercise in which the participants would vote on the most important characteristics of pluralism for higher education in their countries as the decade ended. The vote revealed several strongly shared views, and some divergences."

Indeed, many of us, at least those who were born and educated in monolithic dictatorships, would consider that "pluralism", understood as "politically diverse, open to different intellectual approaches and perspectives, providing safe space for debate, promoting academic freedom..." but also as "diversity in gender, ethnicity ...", is a very important dimension to be necessarily taken into account and on which to advance, even if this implies slowing the advance in other (good) dimensions.

2.1. Internationalization

A quite recent and extensive study, commissioned by the European Parliament, on *Internationalization of Higher Education*[5] defines *Internationalization* as

'the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education' (Knight, 2008, p. 21). However, there is also increasing acknowledgement of the complexity of the concept and its relationship to globalisation and regionalisation, and the role of higher education in those two processes (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley, 2009; Kehm and de Wit, 2005; Knight, 2008; Maringe and Foskett, 2010; Scott, 1998; Teichler, 2004). Internationalisation has become a broad umbrella term that covers many dimensions, components, approaches and activities. It includes credit and degree mobility for students, academic exchange and the search for global talent, curriculum development and learning outcomes, franchise operations and branch campuses, for both cooperation and competition."

It introduces the topic by discussing first the shift in the rationales for Internationalisation:

"From the second half of the 1990s onwards, there was a gradual shift from political to economic rationales for internationalisation. As we (de Wit and Hunter, in press) note, 'Although after September 11, 2001, a renewed focus has since emerged on political rationales related to the war on terrorism, advocating the need to understand better Islamic culture and their languages, the principle driving force for internationalisation has now become economic.' International student recruitment, preparing graduates for the global labour market, attracting global talent for the knowledge economy, cross-border delivery of education, and capacity building have become important pillars of the internationalisation of higher education over the past decade. The emergence of national and global for-profit higher education conglomerates, franchise operations, articulation programmes, branch campuses, educational hubs, and more recently,

5. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/540370/IPOL_STU(2015)540370_EN.pdf
July 2015 Authors: Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI): Hans de Wit, Fiona Hunter; European Association for International Education (EAIE): Laura Howard; International Association of Universities (IAU): Eva Egron-Polak
See also:
Knight, J. (2008) 'Internationalisation: key concepts and elements', Internationalisation of European Higher Education: an EUA/ACA Handbook. Berlin: RAABE Academic Publishers. IAU's http://www.handbook-internationalisation.com/index.php

virtual learning and Massive Online Open Courseware (MOOCs) are ways in which this development expresses itself."

And goes on discussing *"a new concept: comprehensive internationalization"*:

"Consequently, much of the current discourse now revolves around the concept of comprehensive internationalisation, discussed and defined in detail by Hudzik (2011, 2015) as 'a commitment, confirmed through action, to infuse international and comparative perspectives throughout the teaching, research and service missions of higher education. It shapes institutional ethos and values and touches the entire higher education enterprise. It is essential that it be embraced by institutional leadership, governance, faculty, students, and all academic service and support units. It is an institutional imperative, not just a desirable possibility. Comprehensive internationalisation not only impacts all of campus life but the institution's external frames of reference, partnerships and relations. The global reconfiguration of economies, systems of trade, research and communication, and the impact of global forces on local life, dramatically expand the need for comprehensive internationalisation and the motivations and the purposes driving it' (Hudzik, 2011, p. 6).

Comprehensive internationalisation puts the emphasis on the need to develop an institution-wide approach to internationalisation if it is to make a key contribution to institutional purpose and provide responses to environmental challenges. However, internationalisation in many universities that claim to be international or internationalised institutions does not always match this rhetoric and the reality is often more a collection of fragmented terms and activities, rather than a comprehensive process and concept. It takes time to develop strategic capacity."

In the preparation of the Barcelona 2016 Conference, we asked registered participants to provide a very short answer to the question of "What do they understand by 'Internationalisation". A summary list of the answers is the following:

- Establishing and developing strategic partnerships and cooperation agreements for teaching, research and capacity building
- As one great consequence of Globalization, Internationalization means extending the borders of Educational Integration (exchange programs, joint degree programs, cross-border delivery of education) which in turn provides better quality of education, better developed and /or adapted curriculum, graduates of international caliber, and more importantly the graduates with greater tolerance and internationally accepted values.
- Making the graduates of a HEI capable of pursuing their further education at other HEIs by providing them with the skills and competences and theories to enable them to do so
- Internationalization as a process of quality advancement of the studies by initiating joint programmes with HEIs all over the world, supporting incoming and outgoing motilities of students, teachers and administrative staff, and by establishment of foreign HEIs in the partners countries (internationalization at home) and cross-border cooperation in quality assurance enhancement and analyses of data about motilities.
- Performing university research in consortia and networks; attracting visiting professors and world-renowned researchers; increasing number of education and research projects, as well as scientific publications in collaboration with foreign partners
- In terms of the Survey on "Study on the achievements of tempus iv projects in the internationalization of higher education in Central Asia": 'Internationalization' can be described as the opening up of higher education institutions, faculty, staff and students, to international influences and experiences from other countries. In this context, for example, internationalization is a process by which universities change and adapt in response to external conditions, become more competitive globally by adopting structures, methods, processes and practices which enable greater convergence and compatibility with Higher Education systems in other countries, thereby enriching the experience of their students, staff and faculty.

- Equipping local students with capacities to act effectively in the global world through mobility and teaching and learning in English and attracting foreign students, preferably to learn together with local students in order to enhance the openness to a multicultural atmosphere
- The internationalization of the higher education is, first of all, standardization of the education, correspondence to the world standards and norms, centralization of the laws, regulations and rules in the given field, the creation of the unique mechanism at last.

It is extremely meaningful, in my opinion, that these answers look at Internationalization much more as an Instrument, or a means, than as a Dimension. These answers do not tend to conceive Internationalization as *"the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education"*. It could be argued that only those who put forward, as a main characteristic of Internationalization "Fostering International cooperation and solidarity" place themselves into this conception of Internationalization. Of course, this can easily lead to a reflection that largely exceeds the purpose of this document: whether, even in the more illustrated communities (that of experts on Higher Education), there is a sort of unsolved contradiction between the recognition that we live in an interdependent world and an interdependent society while, at the same time, intending to keep to narrow country-based approaches and definitions of interest.

2.2. Democratic governance and autonomy

There is a wide agreement on the thesis that Universities, and, in general, Higher Education institutions, cannot leave aside their genome: that of being "Universitates magistrorum and scholarium" ("communities of teachers and students") independent (or more or less independent) from the Church and from political authorities[(6)]. In fact, and in a comparative perspective, it could be perfectly well argued that Universities, even if they are public ones, enjoy a degree of autonomy, by reference to regulators, higher than that of most other regulated entities. In some States, the autonomy of Universities is a principle enshrined in the Constitution (i.e. Spain and its 1978 Constitution currently in force): in many other, even if this is not the case, a high degree of University autonomy goes uncontested.

Traditionally (and historically in its origin), University autonomy goes together with some degree of, more or less democratic, self-government (authority comes from inside). This is an extremely important structuring factor, very often misunderstood, even by University administrators. Indeed, Max Weber, when he discussed in Economy and Society the Forms of Domination, explained masterfully that Bureaucracy, as one of these forms of domination (or of "administration" if one wants to put it mildly: Hersschaft in German) is characterized by a transmission top-down of legitimacy and authority, precisely because the main legitimacy, that of the head of the bureaucratic structure, comes "from outside": from the political authority (be it democratic or charismatic) or from economic power – capital- if we turn to the structure of a firm, for example.

The twofold exceptions to this are Universities. First, the authority and legitimacy (once recognized by law their autonomy with self-government) comes from within and not from outside. Second, the authority and legitimacy of the lower levels of the structure (Faculties/Schools, Departments) come not so much from the top but also from the bottom; therefore, conflict of authorities and legitimacies is not a malfunction but rather the rule.

Autonomy and self-government of Public Universities raise necessarily a challenge: how to reconcile them with social and political responsibility, in particular when a large part of their funding comes "from outside", from the budgets of political institutions. Different ways of facing this challenge have been designed and implemented in history. However, in the last two decades, a strong ideological war has been triggered, precisely in countries that had always championed self-governed autonomy, in order to declare the incompatibility between it and social and political responsibility.

6. The terms "Universitates magistrorum and scholarium" – in Latin- applied to European Universities as they were born from the 11th century (Bologna, founded in 1088). But, much earlier, in the Arab world, in Africa, Al Qarawiyine in Morocco (859), Ez Zaytouna in Tunisia (864) and Al Azhar in Egypt (972) were also all renowned Universitates Magistrorum et Scholarium, probably a bit more dependent from the Church than the European ones.

Autonomy and democratic governance has been one of the main areas in which the EUA has been active. EUA's website[7] offers a very good introduction to this work:

> *Universities are increasingly expected to fulfil a wide range of needs of the rising knowledge societies and their demands. Beyond the university's traditional functions of teaching, research and innovation, new roles and tasks emerged, such as widening participation, continuing professional development, etc.*
>
> *These changing expectations have led to reforms on university governance at system and institutional level, both with regard to the relation between universities and public authorities and internal university organisation. University governance is strongly related to university autonomy, academic freedom and institutional accountability. EUA has monitored and analysed the development and impact of these reforms through a wide array of studies (see EUA's governance and funding projects), stakeholder debates and conferences as well as through its Institutional Evaluation Programme.*
>
> *EUA strongly believes that increasing institutional autonomy is a key element to enable universities to best respond to new demands. However, perceptions and terminology around institutional autonomy vary greatly in Europe. To compare systems reliably, a systematic mapping of universities' autonomy and accountability through a set of common indicators is necessary.*

EUA's work in this area is based on four dimensions of university autonomy which have been explored in the first Autonomy Study (2009):

- *academic autonomy (deciding on degree supply, curriculum and methods of teaching; deciding on areas, scope, aims, and methods of research)*
- *financial autonomy (acquiring and allocating funding, deciding on tuition fees, accumulating surplus)*
- *organizational autonomy (setting the university structures and statutes, making contracts, electing decision-making bodies and personas)*
- *staffing autonomy (responsibility for recruitment, salaries and promotion)*

> *This work has informed the development of EUA's Autonomy Scorecard, which treads new ground in developing a methodology to collect, compare and weight such data. This project has been carried out in close collaboration with the university sector, including EUA's collective members (the national rectors' conferences.*

This scorecard was updated in 2017[8]. Just prior to the update, the EUA's 2107 Annual Conference (Bergen, Norway, April 2017: http://www.eua.be/activities-services/events/event/2017/04/06/default-calendar/eua-2017-annual-conference) was monographically devoted to "Autonomy and Freedom: the future sustainability of Universities". The presentations available in the website should be a good source of inspiration for all HERE teams.

However, many would disagree at putting at the same level the four "sub-dimensions" of autonomy that the EUA distinguishes in the paragraphs just quoted. Precisely because of the tension between self-governed autonomy and external public funding and social responsibility, many would argue that what matters are academic, "organizational" and staffing autonomy, and that they should be fully effective with a quite limited degree of financial autonomy.

This was discussed in depth in the Barcelona Conference and a summary of the discussion will be offered below. On my side, I have always thought that the structure of the University of California (one public University with its different, widely autonomous campuses, but with its central governing bodies, and its centralized funding) is an extremely useful case study for discussion9.

7. http://www.eua.be/policy-representation/governance-funding-and-public-policy/governance-autonomy.aspx
http://www.university-autonomy.eu/

8. https://www.eua.eu/downloads/publications/university%20autonomy%20in%20europe%20iii%20the%20scorecard%202017.pdf

9. See, for example: http://academic-senate.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/about-senate/pp_jd_sharedgov_198_1.pdf

2.3. and 2.4. Access/Retention/Study Success and Employability

It seems fully justified to distinguish as different dimensions Access / Retention / Study Success, on one side, and Employability, on the other. But it can also be thought-provoking to treat them under one single overall perspective, as a very well documented study prepared in the framework of the Eurydice Network, Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access, Retention and Employability 2014 10, does:

Access

Although European policy documents stress the priority of the social dimension of higher education, and countries have made commitments in the Bologna Process to develop strategies and define measurable targets, only nine countries have actually defined attainment targets for specified groups. These countries nevertheless present interesting examples of policy development in this area, illustrating that action is taking place at national level, and that a variety of policy models and approaches exist.

Findings on monitoring suggest that there is still a great deal of progress to be made. Practices regarding which characteristics of the student body are monitored and at what stage in the higher education process varies considerably. There is therefore a long way to go before a convincing, evidence-based, European-wide picture of progress in widening access is possible to obtain.

At national level, it appears that a number of issues that are a major part of the discussion of underrepresentation in higher education are not frequently monitored. Migrant status data is captured in 13 systems and data on ethnicity of students and staff in only eight. Meanwhile only 13 systems collect data on the labour market status of students prior to entry in higher education.

Even when data is collected, it is not necessarily always exploited. When asked about the main changes that have taken place over a period of ten years, 19 systems – including a majority that collect information related to different characteristics of students – were unable to report on changes to the diversity of the student body.

Monitoring is also an issue in relation to entry routes. In a number of countries where alternative entry routes have been developed as one of the measures to help widen access there is no official monitoring of the numbers of students actually entering via the different possible routes. In the countries where monitoring does exist, there is very commonly a pattern of one route dominating as the primary means of entering higher education.

Both bridging programmes and recognition of prior learning are an access feature of about half of the European higher education systems. However, clear geographical patterns are visible, as they remain most prevalent in the north and the west of Europe. There are few examples of an alternative route accounting for more than 10 % of entrants.

The evidence from quality assurance agencies suggests that their role in widening access is extremely limited, and that a focus on access and admissions is far from being the norm. While quality assurance agencies may examine some issues related to admissions systems, they generally do not do so from a perspective of ensuring that the system is fit for the purpose of widening access. Instead agencies tend to check only that the admissions process is coherent with programme requirements. No agency claimed to look at the differing impact of admissions systems on different types or profiles of student.

Retention

Student retention can be considered as a basic and key performance indicator for higher education systems. The aim should be for as many students as possible to progress and successfully graduate. In the context of widening participation, if governments encourage a broader range of students into higher education, there is also a social responsibility to help reduce the psychological, financial and/or emotional risks of non-completion.

10. Modernisation of Higher Education in Europe: Access, Retention and Employability 2014
http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/165en.pdf

The report's findings suggest that firstly there may be a need for greater clarity in definitions – both at the level of national steering documents and definitions used for statistical purposes. For example a 'completion rate' may refer in some countries to the percentage of students that enter a programme and complete it several years later, while in others only the student cohort in the final year of a programme is considered.

A matter of concern, however, is that a significant number of countries (13) do not systematically calculate completion and/or drop-out rates. This includes countries that have policies addressing retention and completion, but clearly lack basic data to analyse their impact. Even when completion rate data is collected, it is hardly ever differentiated by specific student profiles or characteristics.

Clear and precise targets related to the improvement in the rates of retention are not commonly found. Instead, countries usually mention the general, overarching goal of reducing drop-out and strengthening retention and completion of studies.

While funding might be expected to have a major impact on policy to improve retention rates, the report finds that improvements in retention and completion would affect higher education institutions' funding in only half of the countries. Performance-based funding mechanisms, whereby a part of an institution's funding is dependent on reaching agreed results in a defined timeframe, are found in only ten systems.

A number of developments have taken place, however, to encourage students to finish their studies during a 'regular' period of time. The focus tends to be on measures that incentivise students who finish within a defined period, or penalise those who do not.

The trend to encourage students to undertake and complete their studies in a timely manner goes in parallel with the development of more flexible options to study.

One of the main ways of tackling non-completion is through providing information, advice and guidance, and particularly for those who are most 'at risk' of dropout. While guidance is ubiquitous in all systems, both country information and site visit experience showed that there are often difficulties related to the level of resources: typically guidance and counselling services are too stretched by increased demand to be able to target and reach those most in need.

Although around half of the higher education systems claim to use data on retention and dropout in their quality assurance processes, there is little evidence that such information is followed up in an attempt to understand and address the underlying causes of dropout. Similarly to access and admissions, the role of quality assurance agencies is a limited one, with the rates of dropout seen purely as indicators of the success and viability of programmes and/or institutions.

Flexibility

Flexibility may relate to a number of dimensions of study organisation, including time (full-time or part-time), modes of learning, (open and distance learning), or to a more student centred instructional approach. The report shows that most European countries offer opportunities for students to formally organise their studies in a more flexible way compared to traditional full-time arrangements. However, the understanding of part-time studies varies greatly across Europe, and even in countries with no formal offer of part-time studies, students may have the possibility to organise their programme to study in a de facto part-time mode.

The existence of formal part-time programmes and/or student statuses gains a specific importance when considering private financial investment in studies. In several countries part-time studies require, or are likely to require, higher private financial investment compared to traditional study modes. In addition, part-time students are often eligible only for a limited amount of financial support. This reality suggests that part-time provision is not always organised with the aim of widening participation to more disadvantaged societal groups, but rather targets other categories of the population.

In almost all countries, higher education institutions are able to decide the amount of part-time provision offered, and most countries claim that the majority of higher education institutions offer parttime studies.

The experience from the study visits shows, however, that the degree of activity can vary significantly between faculties and departments.

Employability

The report finds that, while employability of higher education graduates is a topic of considerable priority in higher education policy debates, the approaches and level of engagement differ considerably.

Some countries conflate employability with employment by taking an employment-centred approach that focuses primarily on graduate employment rates. Others put the accent on skills development, emphasising the competences relevant for the labour market that need to be acquired through higher education. Several countries combine these two perspectives.

Differences also exist regarding the measures through which countries are encouraging higher education institutions to improve their employability performance. The most common way is through quality assurance: the majority of systems now require higher education institutions to submit employability-related information in quality assurance procedures. In addition, several countries have established incentives for higher education institutions to improve their employability performance, with one prominent mechanism being to make employability-related information public for both current and prospective students. In some countries, public funding levels are linked with employability performance.

There are, however, limitations to the way in which quality assurance agencies consider information on graduates. In particular, there is no evidence of any country or agency systematically analysing employment opportunities in relation to the social profiles of graduates. It is therefore impossible to know whether factors such as socio-economic disadvantage or ethnicity – which are known to have an impact on access and completion of higher education – may also have an impact on employment after graduation.

In 18 education systems, institutions are required to involve employers in at least one of the following areas: curriculum development, teaching, participation in decision-making bodies and external quality assurance. Several countries also oblige higher education institutions to include practical training in (some) higher education study programmes.

Financial incentives can be found in some countries for higher education institutions to establish university-business cooperation projects. Funding is also used to stimulate students' practical training in order to improve their work-related skills.

Evaluating the impact of existing measures is not straightforward. One successful way of doing so is through graduate surveys at both national and European level. Currently such surveys do not exist in all countries, and where they do exist, they are not always undertaken regularly.

Irrespective of the approach and measures taken in relation to employability, countries tend to target students or graduates as a whole, without concentrating on specific – disadvantaged – groups of students. This indicates that there is often a need for the widening participation agenda to be followed through to cover retention issues and also employability policies and practice.

"Employability", however, is a very tricky concept and policy issue. The Eurydice Report itself makes this abundantly clear:

Conceptualising employability

Employability is a complex concept encompassing many definitions and approaches. For this reason, this first section discusses some assumptions and limitations of the different conceptualisations of employability. In doing so, the section emphasises the importance of employability for all students and graduates, and also places employability within the widening participation agenda. The section also outlines the potential role of higher education institutions in enhancing employability, and shows how European countries define this term in their policy documents.

A focus on graduates' success

Definitions of employability focus on graduates' transition to the labour market after finishing higher education. There are two main types of definition: employment-centred and competence-centred.

An employment-centred definition is used for example within the ET 2020 process, in the abovementioned 2012 Council conclusions on employability [11]. These Council conclusions define employability as 'a combination of factors which enable individuals to progress towards or enter employment, to stay in employment and to progress during their career'. Similarly, within the Bologna Process, the term is understood as 'the ability [of graduates] to gain initial meaningful employment, or to become selfemployed, to maintain employment, and to be able to move around within the labour market' (Working Group on Employability 2009, p. 5).

An alternative (or complementary) approach is to focus on the skills and competences higher education students gain during their studies. For example, Yorke defines employability as 'a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations'. Such skills and competences are usually understood as needed (and demanded) by employers. In essence, the 'student exhibits employability in respect of a job if he or she can demonstrate a set of achievements relevant to that job' (Yorke).

There are many existing classifications of such relevant skills and competences. There are the socalled 'generic', 'transferable' or 'key skills', which are not necessarily related to specific professions, but generally enable graduates to find jobs and move around in the labour market (e.g. communication skills, entrepreneurial skills, 'learning to learn' skills, but also being able to work in a team, etc., see e.g. Teichler). In addition, there are skills and competences related to specific professions or the subject of study (e.g. medicine, law, etc.).

In terms of all definitions, however, it has to be emphasised that employability does not equal employment. Employment-centred definitions can sometimes blur the difference, especially when using employment rates as proxies for measuring employability. Competence-centred definitions – especially if formulated as in Yorke (2006) – can help to clarify the relationship between employability and employment: certain skills and competences make graduates 'more likely' to gain employment, but do not guarantee it.

Indeed, employment certainly does not only depend on the quality of education graduates had received during their studies. On the one hand, changes in the general state of the economy and the labour market are the most important determinants of job opportunities. On the other hand, there are many factors that influence the employment prospects of an individual, which means that not all graduates who received the same education have similar labour market opportunities. Such factors include the mode of study (full-time or part-time), the students' location and mobility, graduates' previous work experience as well as their age, gender, ethnicity or social class (Harvey). Regarding the last set of factors, the discriminatory practices graduates might face in the labour market are often overlooked by employability discourses (Morley). For example, as shown by Moreau and Leathwood, 'non-traditional' learners (based on their ethnicity, socio-economic background, disability or other characteristics) are systematically at a disadvantage when looking for jobs in the graduate labour market (see also Gorard et al.).

The policy issues related to employability therefore have a dual aspect. Firstly, it is crucial to strengthen employability for all students, and this has been identified as an issue of importance for all public authorities as well as for the EU 2020 agenda. It is also necessary to recognise that employability is an integral element of the widening participation agenda in higher education (Thomas and Jones, 2007). Widening participation does not stop at providing access to students from underrepresented groups (or in other words, to 'non-traditional' learners), but has to include measures ensuring that such students complete their studies and have a successful transition to the labour market (Ibid.). This highlights the complex role of higher education institutions in the context of employability.

However, it is very easy to preach that Widening participation does not stop at providing access to students from underrepresented groups (or in other words, to 'non-traditional' learners), but has to include measures ensuring that such students complete their studies and have a successful transition to the labour market

11. Council conclusions of 11 May 2012 on the employability of graduates from education and training, OJ 2012/C 169/04, 15.6.2012

(Ibid.). We would all agree on this. However, the relevant policy issue, the really difficult one, is: when it is impossible, in actual practice, to ensure that … (all or many) … students … have a successful transition to the labour market, which is the dimension we should prioritize: access-plus-retention or employability? But this is, in all likelihood, one of the problems that, as will be discussed in the section on Conclusions, we cannon "solve" but only manage.

2.5. Quality

Everybody would agree that Higher Education policy must pursue quality. However, here again, it is not easy at all to give an adequate operational definition of "quality". For example, if we look at one of the European Commission's websites[12], we will find, under the heading "What is it (quality)", the following:

> *High quality and relevant higher education is able to equip students with the knowledge, skills and core transferable competences they need to succeed after graduation, within a high quality learning environment which recognises and supports good teaching.*

Many, including myself, would consider this approach very reductionist, and making Quality nearly equivalent to Employability.

There are many different definitions of quality in Higher Education[13]. A study commissioned by the European Commission itself warns against any reductionist view of "Quality".

REPORT to the European Commission on Improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe's higher education institutions (June 2013)

High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education[14]

> *Nobody would contest that we need high quality teaching and learning throughout our education and training systems. In our schools, public inspectorates are charged with ensuring exactly that. But what do we mean when we talk of quality teaching and learning in higher education, where there may be no set curriculum, training in pedagogical skills is rarely on the menu, and higher education institutions are so varied in their sizes, budgets, missions and objectives, not only between but within individual countries? A generic one size fits all standard of quality teaching and learning in higher education may be hard to define given the level of disparity in the higher education sector; but that hardly justifies the current reluctance to acknowledge the need for professional teaching skills for those who are already teaching or who intend to become career teachers in higher education.*

A Report from the EUA that will be mentioned in the next section in the framework of the discussion of Quality Assurance as an instrument of HE policy states very clearly that:

> *Quality is contextual. This is important in order to take account of and further promote the diversity of the sector, both the diversity of institutional missions and profiles, as well as of national contexts and traditions, including national quality assurance procedures. There is no one-dimensional definition of quality for the purposes of quality assurance. Defining quality must take into account the specific institution and the national context.*

However, accepting what necessarily must be accepted (i.e. : that "quality in HE" has very meanings) does not solve many of the main policy issues concerning quality that were discussed in the 2016 Barcelona Conference but that require much further discussion. Some of them are the following:

1. The contradiction that might exist, in practice, between promoting quality in Education (teaching/learning) and focusing peer-reviewed Research as the main criterion for the selection and career advancement of lecturers (in particular in an area so polluted by ideological considerations as Social Sciences, broadly considered).
2. The risks incurred in putting together systematically Teaching and Learning in the context of discussions on Quality. Indeed, this approach gives a very wrong idea of both processes. Most of our "lear-

12. http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/quality-relevance_en

13. See, for example: Laura Schindler, Sarah Puls-Elvidge, Heather Welzant, Linda Crawford, Quality Assurance, Meet Quality Appreciation: Using appreciative enquiry to define Faculty Quality Standards
http://www.hlrcjournal.com/index.php/HLRC/article/view/244

14. http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/repository/education/library/reports/modernisation_en.pdf

ning" (including in the framework of Higher Education institutions) has nothing, or very little, to do with "teaching"; it is the result of many other processes (mainly, studying on one's own; or learning by doing; or discussing with colleagues). So, from a Quality perspective, the main question to be raised concerning teaching is "teaching FOR WHAT learning"? What can teaching ADD to the learning process". This approach is as self-evident as non-applied in standard literature.

3. The risk incurred in the use of politically correct language on "excellence" (i.E. high quality) as an essential goal of HE when everybody knows that only a very small number of HE institutions have the means to achieve, or even approach, "excellence", whatever be the criterion used to define it.

2.6. Equity

'Equity' is a very tricky term, not only from a purely semantic/linguistic perspective but also from a political one.

First, we must never forget that it is extremely polysemic (and this has always to do with the connotations of the term in any of its uses). Have a look at the definitions in the Cambridge Dictionary (https://dictionary.cambridge.org/es/diccionario/ingles/equity) or, more summarized, at Merriam-Webster

(https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/equity):

> *Definition of* **equity**
>
> **1a:** *justice according to natural law or right specifically: freedom from bias or favoritism;* **1b:** *something that is equitable* ('equitable' being defined in the same dictionary in the typical circular way – 'having or exhibiting *equity*' - that demonstrates why the creators of modern logic insisted so much on the fact that usual languages are 'bad languages' for many purposes).
>
> **2a:** *the money value of a property or of an interest in a property in excess of claims or liens against it;* **2b:** *the common stock of a corporation;* **2c:** *a risk interest or ownership right in property;* **2d:** *a right, claim, or interest existing or valid in equity.*
>
> **3a:** *a system of law originating in the English chancery and comprising a settled and formal body of legal and procedural rules and doctrines that supplement, aid, or override common and statute law and are designed to protect rights and enforce duties fixed by substantive law;* **3b:** *trial or remedial justice under or by the rules and doctrines of equity;* **3c:** *a body of legal doctrines and rules developed to enlarge, supplement, or override a narrow rigid system of law.*

For our purposes, if we want to find some universally accepted terminology, we can turn to the General Assembly of the United Nations and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):https://sdgs.un.org/goals and https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

The terms 'equity/equitable' appear only in the definition of goal 4, but no definition is given of them: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4 (emphasis added in order to underline the references to higher education – or to all levels of education):

> *4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes 4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education* ***4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university*** *4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship* ***4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations*** *4.6 By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable deve-*

lopment and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development 4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all ***4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries*** *4.c By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States.*

If you look for further guidance while remaining in the multilateral UN system, turn to UNESCO: http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/equity-education . You will discover that, concerning Equity, the focus is placed on gender disparities and the situation of 'vulnerable' groups; and that a subtle distinction is established between 'lack of equity' and 'inequality'. If, within UNESCO, you go to a specific report just issued in 2021 by its specialized IESALC Institute: https://www.iesalc.unesco.org/en/2021/09/24/equity-in-access-and-success-in-higher-education-at-crossroads-new-report-shows/, you will not find any contribution from someone based in Africa, but you will find different definitions of 'vulnerable', one of which certainly includes 'low-income students': but isn't it true that, at least in African countries, the category of 'low-income population' covers the vast majority of the population?

Therefore, for the purposes of our Analytical Framework of HE Policy, it is better to use the term as indicating that "social composition of the student body matters". When you discuss Access and Retention, for example, it is not enough to look at the total numbers; you must also look at the composition of the student body. How and how much this composition matters are questions to which a univocal answer cannot be given: it depends on the ideological-political views of those who intend to give such an answer. As with all other dimensions, you cannot get rid of the dimension: it is there, whether you want or you don't. And, as with the other dimensions, one way of reflecting about it is by raising the question: are you in favour of advancing into this dimension at the cost of slowing progress (or even going backwards) in other dimensions?

Because it would be so nice advancing in all dimensions evenly and at the same time ..., but this is impossible in the real world, simply because of the scarcity of available resources.

3. The instruments of Higher Education reform

As with dimensions, one could consider many **"instruments"** that can/must be used in order to make HE policy reform advance in those dimensions. However, if we consider too many, the Analytical Framework loses sharpness and usefulness. Therefore, we initially consider seven:

1. Legal frameworks/ laws and regulations
2. Finance
3. Institutional infrastructure/ technology
4. Staff
5. Teaching practices
6. Quality assurance
7. External partners

Understanding the different instruments is much easier than understanding the dimensions. Therefore, it will suffice making some comments on each of them, except for Quality Assurance, which maybe requires some more explanation.

3.1. Legal frameworks/ laws and regulations

Education, including Higher Education, is a heavily regulated sector. Therefore, the change of the legal framework is always an essential instrument and is always present. The two difficult policy questions are the following:

What legal framework? Two levels of legislation must be considered: that of the HE institution itself, which normally has some – or even a lot of – normative capacity, and that of Government and Parliament, which in more or less Federal States can divide itself in two levels ("central" and "subcentral"). And one of the main policy questions is precisely that of the distribution of competences between these different levels: i.e. the definition of the degree of autonomy of HE institutions.

The limits of legislation: many problems needing reform cannot be solved by the use of legislation. Experience even shows that legislation is used too often precisely as an excuse for not going to the heart of the problems, that are not mainly of a legal nature. See below, as the best possible example, the discussion on "Teaching practices".

3.2. Finance

Different levels and questions must also be distinguished when analyzing finance:

- The overall funding for the Higher Education system as a whole.
- The origin of finance: contributions from the state's general budget or direct payments by students.
- The distribution of this funding among the different HE institutions.
- The use of HE funding as an instrument for pursuing objectives not directly related to Higher Education.
- The distribution of the funding among the different types of expenditure (and the related question of who decides such a distribution)

Very often, most discussions on HE finance do not concern the first level but the second, the third and the fourth:

- When contributions from the state's general budget are important, which are, if any, the criteria for the distribution of the overall budget among individual HE institutions?

- Must tuition fees paid by students increase because the contributions from the state's budget do not?
- It can be legitimate to address greater funding to areas relatively poorer or disadvantaged. But can this legitimate objective of "territorial equilibrium" be charged to the budget for HE education or should it be financed by a different section of the budget?
- Where should be addressed the increases (or decreases) in the budget? Here, the instrument (finance) is directly related to one dimension (autonomy and democratic governance): can we rely in self-governed institutions to decide whether a decrease in the budget must be borne by the personnel or by the finance addressed to labs?

These issues were discussed, even passionately, in the Barcelona Conference. But, very often, the arguments on finance (as an instrument) were interlinked with those on autonomy and democratic governance (as a dimension) and, in particular, with the role of "financial autonomy".

3.3. Institutional infrastructure/ technology

Infrastructure (buildings and facilities, Information and communication technologies - ICT) is of key importance for higher education, and has a major impact on learning and teaching, but also on administration and management. The importance of it can be easily tested by comparing, in different HE institutions, its impact on the way university members, students and staff, interact with each other, or by imagining the absence of infrastructure or of parts of it.

More fundamental concepts for the development of university infrastructure are under discussion with regards to environmental approach (concepts for green sustainable campus), and, more in particular, the discussion on learning innovation and e-learning (see, for example, the inspiring discussion on the "flipped classroom" http://www.uq.edu.au/teach/flipped-classroom/what-is-fc.html).

Institutional leaders or planners of HE have a great part of their time occupied by problems of infrastructure: restructuring and refurbishing immobile buildings (e.g. through installation of labs, ICT, installation for access of disabled) or trying to build new ones. Nevertheless, infrastructure is not often a central topic in the HE policy discussion. This has certainly to do with the fact that the situation is so diverse within and between institutions. But it is also revealing of the abyss separating writers of academic articles from the realities of everyday life in HE.

It was envisaged that the Barcelona Conference would become a good opportunity to discuss how infrastructure contributes to the institutional environment for learning and teaching and impacts its quality, how it encourages or limits certain learning and teaching approaches, and how it also impacts the physical and mental well-being of students and staff, and their interrelation and cooperation. The idea was to focus the academic facilities (rooms for teaching and student work, libraries, laboratories, computer labs, internet etc.) and only refer to non-academic facilities (such as student dorms, cantines, sanitary facilities, facilities for extracurricular activities etc.) if they have a major impact on learning and teaching. However, this was not a topic that attracted a wide attention in the different sessions, besides the obvious (but very relevant) calls of attention to HEIs located in areas most affected by military conflict.

3.4. Staff

Staff is also multifaceted as an instrument. Besides the typical facets of numbers and different levels or categories, level of education and training, degree of effective dedication to the institution (professionals of HE and research vs. professionals in other professions who simply go to teach some lecture to the HE institution), geographical origin, etc., a very specific facet is that of their legal regime (including whether or not lecturers have a tenure and of which type). In some HE reform processes, for example that of Spain in the period of the democratic transition in the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, this was the decisive issue. Many would argue that the lack of adequate reform in the legal regime of staff has been a liability that has negatively affected HE reform ever since.

Indeed, the legal regime of staff (but also the type of political and social culture concerning free criticism of people in senior positions) has a decisive influence on many aspects of HE, including on the perspective in which training and formation is approached: centered on the students (and, more widely, on society as a whole) or centered on professors, who are conceived as those having the undisputed knowledge not only in the different specific disciplines but on how the University should conceived and run.

Therefore, the discussion of staff as an instrument could be approached from very different perspectives. And these different perspectives have a bearing on another instrument: teaching practices.

3.5. Teaching practices

One of the great positive aspects of the Bologna process has been, undoubtedly, the emphasis brought to the teaching practices and to their effects on students learning. As a result, nobody denies any longer the need to address them. However, the change in teaching practices is not, very often, addressed as a specific instrument for HE reform.

In some EU Member States, the issue of the "teaching practices" has been merged and confused with other issues also present in the framework of the Bologna process. As a result, the change in teaching practices has been managed as if it was simply a side-product of other elements of the Bologna process instead of an essential part of it. And, also very often, problems that could have been addressed by changes in teaching practices (and adequate motivation to lecturers to introduce them) have been addressed through another instrument (changes in legislation, including legislation on teaching practices !!!), which anyone experienced in Higher Education knows is not adequate to reach that result. This is a development that HERE (and African!!!) teams should take extremely into account when looking to the Bologna process as a source of inspiration for their own country's reforms.

Teaching practices are essential to advance in a direction so much alluded to as misconceived: that of a "student – centered" process of Higher Education.

3.6. Quality assurance

Quality Assurance seems one of these notions (and instruments) so much talked about as misunderstood. The specific chapter on QA in these Materials discusses the issue in greater detail.

Therefore, for this instrument, as indicated at the beginning of this section, I consider necessary to offer a clear statement of how, in my opinion, it should be conceived and used. I'll do it simply by reproducing a Policy Statement on the topic by the EUA, the *October 2010 EUA Policy Statement on Quality and Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*[15]

Preamble

Improving the quality of teaching and learning has been at the heart of the Bologna Process reforms and continues to be of crucial importance for the further implementation of these reforms. The growth in interest in rankings, as well as recent student protests further illustrate the need for universities to reiterate their continued commitment to improving the quality of teaching and learning. Therefore, EUA's policy position has been updated to take account of recent developments and to provide a solid basis for policy work and advocacy in the years to come.

This policy position focuses on the need to promote cultures of quality at the system as well as the institutional level. At institutional level, ownership of quality processes among the university community is fundamental to the creation of true quality cultures, which means it is crucial to ensure the commitment of students, academics and support staff alike. Governments for their part are encouraged to ensure that external quality assurance frameworks focus on promoting quality cultures aiming at institutional development rather than attempting to measure quality in quantitative terms.

15. http://www.eua.be/Libraries/publications-homepage-list/EUA-QA-Policy-2010.pdf?sfvrsn=4

Guiding principles

For Europe's universities quality assurance should be based on the following key principles:

I. *Primary responsibility for quality assurance lies with universities themselves. The role of external quality is to review these internal processes while respecting and promoting the primary responsibility of HEIs in designing them.*

II. *Institutional quality management requires a comprehensive, all-encompassing approach. This covers all activities of a university: research, teaching and learning, service to society and support services. Quality management should be derived from the mission statement and strategic goals of each institution and constitutes a fundamental part of an overarching institutional quality culture that aims at continuous enhancement of the quality.*

III. *Quality is contextual. This is important in order to take account of and further promote the diversity of the sector, both the diversity of institutional missions and profiles, as well as of national contexts and traditions, including national quality assurance procedures. There is no one-dimensional definition of quality for the purposes of quality assurance. Defining quality must take into account the specific institution and the national context. Equally, quality assurance processes should be flexible and adaptable so as not to stifle diversity, innovative teaching practices and creative research.*

IV. *The ultimate goal of all quality assurance – both internal and external - is to enhance quality thus promoting trust among stakeholders. Regardless of how quality is defined, the ultimate aim of all quality assurance processes – whether they are internal or external and related to research, teaching and learning or other activities – should always be to enhance quality levels through a considered examination of processes and their outcomes and by maintaining a balance between accountability and improvement. Furthermore, the evidence shows the following:*

- *There is an integral link between institutional autonomy and accountability. One of the main finds of both TRENDS V and TRENDS 2010 is that the greater the institutional autonomy, the more robust the internal quality processes introduced in universities, and vice versa.*
- *The importance of the existence of internal quality processes for interinstitutional cooperation: TRENDS 2010 shows that institutions closely involved in international inter-institutional cooperation, in particular at European level, are more likely to evaluate both teaching and research activities regularly than institutions that are less active internationally.*
- *The importance not only of enhancing quality but also of improving transparency. As part of their commitment to quality and their responsibility to society, universities must be prepared to provide accurate information about institutional mission, activities, performance and results obtained to learners, employers and other stakeholders.*
- *Transparency tools such as rankings or classifications cannot be used as a means of accountability or as a proxy for quality. They can only – at best – serve as a means of comparing universities and thus indicating their relative position in relation to other universities using certain indicators. Thus, they do not serve the same purpose as internal or external quality assurance which examine processes and outcomes with the aim of producing a judgement reflecting strengths and concerns to be addressed.*
- *Grassroots cooperation among the various stakeholders is a crucial success factor in bringing about sustainable change and improvement. One of the on-going challenges for the next decade will be to ensure the continuing engagement and active involvement of all stakeholders – universities, quality assurance agencies and students – in the development of quality assurance. This will require promoting regular and ongoing dialogue between the partners at all levels.*

Principles for implementing internal and external quality processes in teaching and learning

The development of quality assurance in teaching and learning has been an integral part of the Bologna Process reforms and the TRENDS 2010 report shows the need for further consolidation of the changes made as the European Higher Education Area takes shape over the next decade. In this context, the emphasis is put on improving the teaching and learning process, albeit in the institutional context of overall

quality management as outlined above. The following principles have been developed taking account of the association's work over the last decade.

Internal quality assurance must:

- *Promote shared values and attitudes about quality (i.e. quality culture) rather than regarding it as simply a managerial process and ensure that the internal evaluation processes develop professional attitudes and competence, thus fostering creativity and innovation.*
- *Be fit for their purposes. While there is no single way to set up these processes, the cycles and scope of internal evaluations should be linked in a pragmatic and cost-effective way and attention should be paid to the global picture that emerges through the internal evaluation of the different activities.*
- *The role of leadership consists in communicating the need for these processes, framing them in consultation with the university community – students, academic and support staff – and using their results in the strategic cycle.*
- *Ensure central institutional data collection and analysis to measure institutional performance of all activities.*
- *Ensure an appropriate leadership and staffing of a quality unit in order to avoid over-bureaucratisation.*

External quality assurance must avoid undue bureaucratic processes and thus:

- *Seek a balance between autonomy and accountability by promoting institutional audits or evaluations based on an evaluation of internal quality processes.*
- *Adopt a fitness for purpose approach respecting national, institutional and disciplinary diversity with the institutional mission statement as a starting point.*
- *Demonstrate an improvement orientation that stresses the self-evaluation phase and confidentiality of parts of the process while promoting the transparency of the results.*

The key success factor will be finding meaningful ways of improving the articulation of internal and external quality assurance processes so that they are in balance and thus complement each other in support of a sustainable quality development in the context of the enhanced university autonomy and institutional responsibility for quality. In this context EUA continues to promote the implementation of the ESGs, and, in as far as this is compatible with national quality assurance frameworks, to advocate freedom of choice for institutions in selecting their external quality assurance agency from among those agencies listed on EQAR.

As I am not at all an expert in Quality Assurance, I can try to summarize all this statement in a sentence that summarizes my understanding of QA as I learned (rightly, I hope) from one of its great experts and inventors in Europe (Nick Harris): Quality Assurance is about helping HE institutions to achieve what they have legitimately committed themselves to achieve, thus furthering their social responsibility. The discussions in Barcelona in the break-out groups on Quality were lively, but rather inconclusive, probably because of a lack of clarity and or agreement on the objectives of Higher Education.

3.7. External partners

By its very existence, the HERE Network (and many African HE institutions that receive funding from international donors) must assume, as a working hypothesis, that external partners can be a valuable instrument of HE Reform. And they certainly can.

But, for what aspect of the reform process? One cannot rely on External Partners for the hard core of reforms, those that require the use of instruments like funding or changes in the legal regime of staff, for example. But they can be very helpful, for example, when this instrument is made instrumental to the use of other instruments: Changes in teaching practices or Quality assurance, for example.

In fact, the European Commission (and its Executive Agency for Education and Culture – EACEA-) is such an External Partner. It should be discussed in a frank and open manner which are the aspects of HE Reform for which such a powerful external partner can be a good instrument. This should have been one of the main issues to be discussed in the Barcelona Conference, but, again, the discussion was rather inconclusive.

4. Using the analytical framework for policy discussion

The analytical frameworks outlined above should not be considered as academic niceties. They are meant to promote policy-oriented discussion on Regional Integration or on Higher Education Reform. In order to illustrate this, it can be useful to show first how our analytical framework can allow to summarize, in simply one page and a half, the present state of EU integration and the explanation of its current deep crisis.

4.1. "Viewing" the recent evolution of EU integration in terms of the Analytical Framework for RI

Dimensions

1. It is undoubtful that, in the last three decades, EU integration has advanced enormously in the dimension of Content. And this advance has been the result of the high degree of Capacity of Adaptation that has always characterized the process. The Treaty of Maastricht, in 1992, enlarged its scope, not only to Monetary Union but to other areas, including Foreign Policy and Military Cooperation. Enlargement has also broadened its geographical scope.
2. However, nobody denies that this progress in Content has gone together with very serious setbacks in Strength, both from the perspective of political commitment by Member States (Governments and populations) and from that of respect of the law. And, even if many would contest this, there are very good arguments to hold that the promise that the increase in content would help strengthening the External Dimension of the process has not been fulfilled at all. Many would argue that, at least in terms of its influence in world affairs, the EU is rather declining.

Instruments

3. f this is the situation, the analytical framework would give some answers, or at least some hints, about the reasons for it. And this is certainly the case. The increase in content has not been accompanied by the utilisation of the right instruments. The process continues to have as main instrument the Legal Rules. But, concerning rules, the Maastricht Treaty unbalanced the very wise equilibrium designed in the Treaty of Rome in 1957, and kept since, between the different types of rules and the techniques no enact them. In particular, it introduced, in the very sensitive and important area of macroeconomic and monetary, a completely contradictory approach:
    - In the monetary area, it placed all the emphasis in the conferral to the European Community (and its Central Bank) of an exclusive competence, separating Monetary Policy from all other main economic policies, mainly still under Member States competence, while
    - in the economic area, the approach was completely the opposite: deepening the obligations imposed to Member States without any conferral of effective competences to the European Community[16].
4. And, in order to compensate the lack of adequacy of Legal Rules to the new situation, a great expansion of the Diplomatic Instruments took place. The European Council (a sort of very High Level diplomatic conference) has been transformed into a decision-taking body, producer of rules, modifying, thus, contrary to the letter and the spirit of the laws, the essence of the "Community method": i.e. the interaction between the European Commission and the Council of the European Union (an institution completely different, in nature and purpose, from the European Council), with a variable degree of intervention of the European Parliament at the side of the Council.

16. This approach squarely contradicts the one proposed by the Report Delors on the Economic and Monetary Union. See, on this, Torrent R., "¿Cómo se engendró en los años 1980 la crisis del proceso de integración europea que ha estallado en los años 2000?", Cuadernos Europeos de Deusto, vol. 37, 2007.

Objectives and Preconditions

5. And, behind this lack of adequacy of the Instruments, which explains the setback in one essential dimension (Strength) and the lack of advancement (to put it mildly) in another one (External Dimension), lies the inability to define and articulate a set of Objectives that replaces or adapts those that gave a very clear orientation to the process in the 1950s. A replacement and adaptation that were made indispensable because the original objectives had already been reached for the most part and because of the very important change in the Preconditions that was the result of the crumbling of the Soviet bloc, the changes in global politics and the global economy, and the EU enlargement.

4.2. "Viewing" HE and its Reform in terms of the Analytical Framework for HER

The discussions in the Barcelona Conference hinted to many problems of Higher Education policy by using the Analytical Framework that was proposed. I will briefly describe this in the next paragraphs. However, many participants insisted on two needs.

The first is that of "metabolizing" better the Analytical Framework in order to allow the development of coherent overall views (in plural; not in singular because the assumption is that there are different roads that can legitimately be pursued to conceive and reform Higher Education).

The second is that of "bringing life" to the analysis by means of specific examples and study-cases and the comparative examination of them. This, of course, requires additional work. However, some cases were already put forward in the discussions in Barcelona.

The paper prepared for the Conference proposed some initial arguments. They were the following:

Dimensions

In practice, advancing in all dimensions of HE Reform at the same pace is impossible. Difficult choices must be made. Nobody will deny that the search for **quality** and **employability** (two main dimensions) is made difficult by the increase in the number of students acceding the University. But for many (including myself) advancing in the dimension of **access, retention and study success** is good, in itself, even it is not accompanied by quality and employability. However, it must also be accepted that this dimension is in itself polyhedric, multifaceted, even contradictory. **Democratic governance and autonomy** does not have the same implications in small, highly selective HE institutions or in gigantic institutions with open access. **Internationalisation** seems able to accompany the advance in all other dimensions, but we have maybe too little historical perspective to judge this by reference to "new internationalization"[17].

But very basic political choices underlye the discussion of dimensions and their prioritization. Five decades ago, any politically active student or lecturer was well aware of the basic ideological alternative of considering expenditure in Education (and Higher Education) as an investment (to offer a return) or an expenditure of consumption, private or public, that can be considered an end in itself, as any type of consumption. Since, the hegemony of the Human Capital has tended to proclaim as an uncontested truth, at least in academic journals, that Education is an investment, private or social. And later arguments that Education is at the same time an Investment and a Consumption service have not helped either because the heuristics of the alternative lies precisely in the fact that you cannot hold the two branches of the alternative at the same time.

Instruments

How, and how much, does the availability of instruments limit the choice of objectives and the possibility of advancing in all dimensions? Which are the best instruments in order to pursue specific objectives and to allow advancing in different directions?

The development of the Bologna process in the different countries participating in it could be written as an answer to these questions. Are changes in legal rules the best instrument to advance in quality or, rather,

17. I add the qualification "new" because no one should forget that, as with the dimension of "autonomy and self-government", internationalization is in the genome of Higher Education institutions, from their early beginning not only in Europe but also in the Arab/Muslim world. The oldest recognized University in the world, that of Fez in Morocco, was, from its start, a very powerful center of internationalization of knowledge.

what matters is the change in teaching practices? But can you really expect a change in teaching practices when the legal regime of staff is very rigid and guarantees to lecturers long-life employment and discourages the incorporation of new (and foreign) lecturers? Which are the dimensions in which progress can be achieved even in the absence of an increased funding? Is self-government an instrument for creating awareness and favouring the involvement of personnel and students in the reform process or becomes, rather, an instrument of corporatist interests and resistance to change?

Objectives and preconditions

The scope of HE Reform can (and must) be very different according to the extremely different preconditions in different countries. Attempting to set the same set of objectives for all countries without considering the extreme differences in the respective preconditions can lead to all sort of unexpected consequences. Taking this into account, which is the internal articulation of the set of objectives that are proposed, both in terms of relative importance and in terms of time perspective?

The break-out sessions of the Barcelona Conference were organized along the five proposed dimensions, which were discussed successively in three different groups. The discussion was very lively in all cases but quite uneven in its results. For some dimensions (Autonomy and Democratic Governance, Access/Retention/Succes and Quality) the discussions led to a more or less definite set of conclusions; for the other dimensions the discussion led in particular to point to a list of specific issues that should be further analyzed. We summarize all of them in the next paragraphs in accordance with the contributions by the different rapporteurs.

Access/ retention/study success

Access, retention, and study success are very "country-specific" because they depend a lot on the different types and origin of the students. University students have different backgrounds, age, and gender. These factors should be studied carefully to improve the quality of access, retention, and study success.

1. When it comes to **access**, there are many different experiences. It was argued that in many countries students tend to choose the program of study based on the employment opportunities. The strategy and the tools of each country to increase access to higher education can be different as well. Some countries develop a previous strategy in order to encourage them to enroll.

Each context requires differentiated strategies based on the diverse needs and preconditions. For many, Internationalization is looked as a strategy for access and recruitment.

Pre-student advice, early recruitment, close collaboration, and the implementation of a good communication strategy are also elements that contribute to the access dimension.

2. With regard to retention, the participants presented many insights and information from different countries. In some, the problem seems to be that of the combination of mass enrollment and a big dropout rate.

To achieve retention, there is a need to establish a legal framework that addresses the financial issues. In addition, teaching strategies of faculty members need to be improved (moving from teacher-centered approach to student-centered approach). Furthermore, the issue of recognition of qualification should be solved to enable student mobility.

3. Regarding study success at university levels, many participants highlighted the importance of implementing sustainable quality assurance systems.

In the discussions in the Groups, participants highlighted the major instruments for reform regarding the dimension of access/retention/study success. In order to favor the progress in this dimension, participants focused on the role of:

1. Staff: because they have a key role in welcoming new students and motivating them to pursue their university study journey when they present new teaching practices. This will increase retention and study success
2. Legal framework: this instrument is crucial to contribute to policy reform by providing institutional strategy for increasing access, retention, and study success.

3. Financial instruments are critical to encourage students to choose a specific specialization at university level and keep them committed to continue its requirements since some institutions have high fees that prevent student from choosing those study programmes. Fundraising activities at university level seem needed.

In short, there was some sort of agreement that the following factors contribute to Access/ retention/ study success:

1. Establishing specific procedures to guarantee the selection of students who will enroll in a specific study programme.
2. Enhancing the role of scientific research and the development of a student-centered approach to improve study success.
3. Reforming teaching approaches and assessment techniques based on intended learning outcomes at university levels.
4. Creating a strategic plan to track quality assurance of access, retention, and study success.

Quality

Quality in HE should first be defined in rather concrete terms for each country in order to be able to use the right instruments to support progress in this dimension. The definition should also identify the purposes of the quality dimension. It would seem that the definition, and in particular the prioritization, of these purposes must take into account the opinions of the different HE stakeholders including those outside the HE system.

Each country has its own objectives and purposes when planning for the quality dimension of HE. For some countries, quality is linked to employability more than to the content of teaching; for other countries, quality is linked to accountability. In some, quality becomes more linked to competitiveness of, and between, HEIs, since the number of them is considerably high.

Progressing in the dimension of quality requires the use of all instruments: in particular, teaching practices, QA instruments, financial support, staff and external partners...

Dimensions are always interlinked and intertwined when discussing higher education's reform policy. However, the quality dimension is linked directly, in particular, to the access dimension. The choice of instruments to improve access and retention must take into account that quality should be improved in turn.

Finally, in order to improve quality it seems also necessary:

- Getting international accreditation.
- Working on self-assessment.
- Creating dialogue between the different programmes and between HE and the market.
- Involving Values in all instruments of quality assurance and control.

Employability

The discussions on Employability did not give rise to a set of articulated conclusions. They were oriented to the identification of some basic problems and some means that could be used to contribute to their solution.

Among the problems, the four that attracted more attention are the following:

- The too high level of unemployment in many countries, caused by different reasons. On the one hand, it makes difficult for graduates to find a job and, on the other, tends to draw young people to Universities for lack of alternative ways of insertion into society.
- The Brain Drain problem from many HERE countries to EU countries and USA, but also to some countries in the Gulf.

- The gap and separation in approaches that continues to exist between the world of the economy and Academia.
- The insufficient creation of research based jobs in the economic sector
- Some of the solutions suggested by participants to these problems are the following:
- Transferring and sharing technology and knowledge from developed to developing countries.
- Enhancing the development of new curricula that fit the needs of the labour market.
- Involving self-learning to improve personal skills including vocational and soft skills.
- Changing the regulatory framework of HE in order to organize education and employability more in accordance with market demands.
- Creating technology parks and incubators for innovations that help graduates to set-up new start-ups and promote the spin-offs form research projects.
- Promoting the involvement of professional bodies in the areas of specialized training.

Internationalization

As already mentioned, the discussions on Internationalization tended much more to view Internationalization as an Instrument than as, properly, a dimension. From this perspective, the following "international instruments" were the object of particular attention:

- The transfer of knowledge and technology to improve research and related projects.
- The enhancement of student mobility to improve education.
- The setting up of joint and double-diploma Masters and PhD programmes.
- The enhancement of international quality assurance mechanisms in order to gain international recognition
- The need to gain international visibility and attractivity.
- Institutional strategies.
- The possibility of generating income through International programmes and agreements as well as through the recruitment of foreign students.

Autonomy and Democratic Governance

For this dimension, a set of quite articulate conclusions was reached, beginning by the importance of defining different types of autonomy and their different meanings in the European context and in the HERE countries.

1. Autonomy has two different meanings or logics depending on whether we apply the term to Public or Private Universities. In the first case, it is a fundamental problem that concerns the structure of the State. In the second, it is an aspect of the more general problem of the limits to private initiative and its regulation.
2. However, certain institutional arrangements on governance can be common to both Public and private Universities (see below).
3. Autonomy must go together with accountability. But it is not easy to combine them. A posteriori controls match much better the logic of autonomy than a priori controls, but the risk is that controls came "after the harm has been done" or are ineffective. However, autonomy means accepting risks; and the risk of autonomy must be compared with the risk of bad centralized government.
4. Autonomy has different aspects. For many, but not for all, Academic and Organizational Autonomy (including selection of Personnel) must be neatly differentiated from Financial Autonomy; they consider that what matters are those aspects. The doubts lie on whether they can be effective without

a substantial degree of financial autonomy. On this, it is clear that political cultures and practices are very diverse in the different countries. For many, on the contrary, and on the experience of their own countries, it is impossible, in practical terms, to conceive academic and organizational autonomy without academic autonomy.

5. Autonomy and democratic governance are two interlinked, but very different issues. Democratically governed institutions can be very little autonomous (examples were given from some HERE countries). And this can also be the case the other way around,
6. On this, the difference between public and private HEIs is very relevant. However, some instruments can be established, common to all of them. One example is the Boards of Trustees, with a mix of internal and external participation.
7. There was a general agreement on the thesis that Autonomy and Democratic Governance should be considered a positive dimension on which to advance. However, the advance is always very dependent on the Preconditions, from the type of political cultures prevailing to the size and history of the institutions.
8. Finally, a very relevant conclusion of the discussions, seldom emphasized in the literature, is that this dimension necessarily generates "tension" because it implies the overlapping of legitimacies and competences (those of the governments and the HE institutions as well as, internally, those of the different layers of internal democratic government). This tension cannot be avoided: it must be "managed", through the creation of adequate institutional arrangements and a well lubricated practice of finding compromise solutions. This seems to require, as an essential precondition, the existence of a political culture of defending one institution's rights interests and positions knowing that there are other legitimacies and managing the conflict by looking at public interest.

5. Some general conclusions

The Analytical Framework proposed for the Conference, as well as the discussions during the Conference, were recognized as a very useful tool in order to:

- Analyze higher education policy reforms, considering examples from other systems
- Understand the development and implementation of higher education reform, including the interplay of national policy levels with higher education institutions, organizations and other stakeholders
- Design higher education policies with concrete and realistic plans for implementation
- Further develop their role as HERE are their own countries, with an eye towards policy impact.
- Participants shared and welcomed the main approach that Higher Education Reform is not a unidi rectional/unidimensional process and that, on the basis of the existing preconditions, and in order to achieve a set of well-ordered objectives, it can follow different "roads". Some of the conclusions reached in the discussion of some dimensions were also widely shared.

One that seems particularly relevant is that of recognizing problems, including some of the main ones, as an inherent feature of Higher Education and of HE policy. Therefore, the right analytical and political approach is not that of intending to "solve" them but that of "managing" them in the more effective way. This argument was initially developed in the framework of discussions about Autonomy and Democratic Governance but can then be generalized to other areas including that of the possible conflict between the progresses in the different dimensions that are considered for HE.

A second one is that of the importance of the articulation of Objectives as a requirement for any project of HE Reform. It was widely recognized that many reforms have been launched without adequately considering this point. The result has been that "reforms to the reforms" have been needed, making the reform process never-ending and the use of resources, including political will and capacities, very ineffective.

Therefore, the Conference had significant and positive learning outcomes, as it was envisaged when it was convened. However, some insufficiencies in the Analytical Framework were also put forward. In general, it

was considered that it is very difficult to address Higher Education without taking into account at the same time Research. Some argued also that Values should be explicitly introduced in the Analytical Framework.

There was a general agreement that the Conference should be considered only a starting point. The use of the Analytical Framework in order to produce "views and visions" should be promoted and more comparative analysis is needed in order to fill the framework with specific examples and counterexamples, and good and bad practices from different countries that could be considered when designing and implementing processes of HE reform.

Summary of the chapter in a few questions

In all likelihood, you will not be able to give a full and detailed answer to the following questions, but you should be able to understand their meaning and you have the obligation, at least as a participant in HAQAA training activities, to think about them.

1. What are the preconditions that you consider more relevant for the analysis of higher education in your country? In particular, have you compared the age pyramid of your country with those of a few other countries in Africa and in the world (go to https://www.populationpyramid.net/ : Countries suggested to look at for the comparison: a) Germany/Italy/Spain; b) China; c) Russian Federation; d) Ethiopia/Nigeria; d) Morocco/South Africa)?
2. Can you determine the set of objectives of higher education in your country and region as well as in Africa as a continent?
3. Which are, in your country, the dimensions of higher education that you would prioritize for advance/progress, even at the expense of moving back in certain others?
4. Do you consider that changes in the rules on curricula, or an increase in the amount of funding, are sufficient in order to bring about a real change in the content and the practices of teaching? If you don't think so, what would be the instruments you would use to achieve that objective?
5. What do you think about the assertion in the Conclusions that there are "problems, including some of the main ones, that are an inherent feature of Higher Education and of HE policy. Therefore, the right analytical and political approach is not that of intending to 'solve' them but that of 'managing' them in the more effective way. Can you find some examples of this?

Part 2

Higher Education in the framework of African continental and regional integration

Chapter 3. Higher Education in the framework of African Continental and Regional Integration — Henok Asmelash & Tilahun E. Kassahun

Chapter 4. Integration of Higher Education in Africa: an Overview — J. Shabani

Chapter 3

Higher Education in the framework of African Continental and Regional Integration

H.B. Asmelash / T. E. Kassahun

Presentation

The pursuit of regionalization of higher education has produced multiple and competing initiatives in Africa. These initiatives operate both at the continental and regional levels with substantial vertical and horizontal overlaps. ("Regionalization" and "regional" are the terms used in the chapter to refer, in general, to processes of integration between a number of countries. When focusing specifically the different African initiatives, the "continental" - in singular- and "regional" - in plural- levels must be distinguished.

"Integration" is used, most often, to refer to all these integration processes, whether at the continental or at the regional level. In some contexts – even in official African Union documents-, the term "subregional" is used as equivalent to "regional". The reader will easily distinguish the different meanings of "regional" – or "subregional"- all along the chapter's text).

This chapter examines the fragmented and complex set of legal and institutional frameworks underpinning these initiatives. It does so by first situating the regionalization of higher education within the broader framework of regional and continental integration in Africa. Cooperation in the field of higher education features prominently in the legal and policy instruments of African integration from the Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the recently established African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Why higher education seats high on African countries' integration agenda? The chapter associates the pursuit of regional and continental higher education integration in Africa with the desire of African countries to strengthen the capacity and competitiveness of their higher education institutions, to facilitate the mobility of students and staff across the continent and foster continental solidarity and overcoming the colonial legacy of higher education in the continent.

Having established the place of higher education within the African integration process and explained the key reasons behind it, the chapter then closely examines higher education integration initiatives both at the continental and regional levels. The major initiatives at the continental level include the Arusha Convention, the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA)and the African Continental Qualification Framework. At the regional level, almost all Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have their own specific regionalization initiatives.

The chapter also identifies some of the key characteristics of higher education integration in Africa. These characteristics include the multiplicity of initiatives and competition for agenda among the various continental and regional institutions, the relationship between the level of higher education integration and the level of integration in other policy areas and the reliance on a mixture of binding and non-binding legal instruments.

Contents of the chapter

1. Introduction
2. African regional integration and higher education
3. Rationales for regional Higher Education Integration in Africa
4. Continental Higher Education Integration Initiatives
5. African recs and cooperation in Higher Education
6. Key features of Regional Higher Education integration in Africa
7. Conclusion

1. Introduction

The last few decades have witnessed significant developments in the regionalization of higher education across the world. The most advanced form of regional higher education integration has taken place in Europe, but other regions of the world have also made great strides in the regionalization of their higher education systems. In Africa, the quest for regionalization of higher education has been one of the major themes of the continent's integration agenda since the early independence days. African countries have been pursuing continental and regional higher education integration as a key strategy for socioeconomic and political development. This pursuit has produced multiple and often overlapping initiatives for higher education integration. This chapter examines the legal and institutional frameworks underpinning these initiatives both at the continental and regional levels.

The chapter is structured in six parts. Section 2 provides a brief background on the legal and institutional frameworks of African integration to situate higher education within these frameworks. Section 3 considers the key rationales behind higher education integration in Africa. Section 4 examines some of the continental initiatives to promote the coordination, cooperation, and integration of higher education in Africa. Section 5 examines the nature and scope of the various higher education integration initiatives launched at regional level. Section 6 identifies some of the defining characteristics of higher education integration process in Africa. Section 7 concludes the discussion.

2. African regional integration and higher education

Higher education integration is deeply embedded within the legal and institutional frameworks of continental and regional integration in Africa. Cooperation in the fields of education, science and technology has featured prominently in the legal and policy instruments of African integration from the 1963 Charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the 2018 Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).[1] Understanding these legal and institutional architecture is therefore central to a proper and complete understanding of the nature and scope of higher education integration in Africa

Aspirations for integration in Africa predate the advent of the OAU, but its establishment in 1963 marks the most important milestone in the African integration process. Driven by the ideals of continental solidarity and collective self-reliance, postcolonial African states created the OAU to 'coordinate and harmonize their general policies' in the socioeconomic and political domains.[2] While the anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles dominated the early OAU years, the social and economic dimensions eventually become the principal drivers of integration in Africa.[3] Modern African integration is geared towards the realization of the Pan African vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful continent. This vision underlies the 1991 Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC) and the transformation of the OAU into the African Union (AU) at the start of the twenty first century. While the AU provides the overarching institutional framework for regional integration, the Treaty establishing the AEC (herein after the Abuja Treaty) sets out the blueprint for African economic integration. The six-stage blueprint envisages the gradual and scheduled economic integration of

1. See, e.g., Art II:2(c)&(e), Charter of the Organization of African Unity (adopted 25 May 1963, entered into force 13 September 1963); Art 10(1), Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (adopted 21 March 2018, entered into force 30 May 2019).

2. Art II:2, OAU Charter.

3. See Ernest Toochi Aniche, 'From Pan-Africanism to African Regionalism: A Chronicle' (2020) 79 African Studies 70.as rooted in pan-Africanism, is a strategy for decolonisation, anti-colonial and neo-colonial struggles, and continental unity. Modern African regionalism is a means to achieving continental unity, collective self-reliance and economic transformation as well as to creating an agenda for solving African developmental challenges. The main objective of this paper, therefore, is to examine the historical evolution of pan-Africanism and regionalism in Africa from colonial to post-colonial era in order to trace the interface between them. The paper assesses the extent to which regional integration in Africa has been able to achieve its stated objectives and targets over the years. It also investigates the various obstacles, constraints and challenges that militate against the accomplishment of its objectives, opportunities and prospects. It then interrogates the narratives of the Western neoliberal theories of integration or approaches to African integration. Subsequently the paper suggests that there is a need to deconstruct them in the search for paradigm shift in African integration. It contends that there is also a need to evolve a new theoretical approach to African integration anchored on neoneo-integrationism of post-neo-functionalism or post-modern integrationism of post-neo-nationalism.","container-title":"African Studies","DOI":"10.1080/00020184.2020.1740974","ISSN":"0002-0184, 1469-2872","issue":"1","journalAbbreviation":"African Studies","language":"en","page":"70-87","source":"DOI.org (Crossref

the continent using regional economic communities (RECs) as building blocks.[4] The strategy was to begin the continental integration process at the subregional level by organizing the continent into five subregions (in the form of RECs) based on physical proximity. According to the Abuja Treaty, the RECs will eventually merge into a single continental entity (i.e. the AEC) once they establish free trade areas (FTAs) and customs unions within their respective regions.[5] The choice of this gradual approach was informed by the challenges of forming closer economic integration among over 50 countries at different stages of development.[6] However, uncoordinated efforts towards the implementation of the Abuja Treaty led to the formation of multiple RECs with overlapping objectives and memberships.[7] The continent currently hosts three times more than the number of RECs envisaged by the Abuja Treaty. The AU has recognized eight of these RECs as the building blocks of the AEC and imposed a moratorium on the recognition of new RECs to help resolve the dissonance between the Abuja Treaty and the reality on the ground.[8] However, despite this and other efforts to align them with the Abuja Treaty, the RECs have continued to operate and pursue their own regional integration agenda within their respective regions.

Together with the AU and other continental bodies, the RECs have produced – and continue to produce – a complex web of legal and policy instruments and institutional arrangements governing intra-African relations on a wide range of fields and sectors. Virtually all the key legal instruments of African integration (both at the continental and regional levels) recognize higher education (or education more generally) as an important area of cooperation. The OAU Charter, for example, entrusted African countries to harmonize and coordinate their policies in the fields of education, culture, science and technology.[9] The Constitutive Act of the AU established a specialized 'Committee on Education, Culture and Human Resources' to coordinate the educational and cultural policies of AU Member States.[10] Education features even more prominently in the Abuja Treaty. The Treaty recognizes the harmonization of national policies in the fields of education, culture, science and technology as one of the key factors for the realization of its overarching objective – socioeconomic and cultural development.[11] It dedicates a specific chapter on 'education, training and culture' that calls upon African countries to harmonize and coordinate their national educational policies to bring about the necessary social progress and economic development in the continent.[12] The Treaty also envisages the adoption of a 'Protocol on Education, Training and Culture' to provide detailed guidance on the harmonization and coordination of national educational and cultural policies across the continent.[13] However, it is worth noting that this Protocol is yet to be adopted and the Abuja Treaty is silent on the time frame for the adoption of the Protocol.

Education also features in the latest major legal instrument of economic integration in Africa – the Agreement establishing the AfCFTA. The AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Services calls for the 'mutual recognition' of education, experience, licenses, certifications, etc.[14] AfCFTA Members may apply mutual recognition either autonomously or by entering into mutual recognition agreements or arrangements with each other. However, AfCFTA Members cannot apply their criteria for mutual recognition in a discriminatory manner.

The constitutive legal instruments of RECs also pay due attention to the harmonization and coordination of educational policies within their respective regions (see section 5). Among the constitutive instruments of

4. See Art 6, Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (signed 3 June 1991, entered into force 12 May 1994) (Abuja Treaty).

5. Art 6(2), ibid.

6. See Guillaume Gérout, Jamie MacLeod and Melaku Geboye Desta, 'The AfCFTA as yet Another Experiment towards Continental Integration: Retrospect and Prospect' in David Luke and Jamie MacLeod (eds), Inclusive trade in Africa: the African continental free trade area in comparative perspective (Routledge 2019).

7. See Melaku Geboye Desta and Guillaume Gérout, 'The Challenge of Overlapping Regional Economic Communities in Africa: Lessons for the Continental Free Trade Area from the Failures of the Tripartite Free Trade Area' in Zeray Yihdego and others (eds), Ethiopian Yearbook of International Law 2017, vol 2017 (Springer International Publishing 2018).

8. See African Union, 'Decision on the Moratorium on the Recognition of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) DO. EX.CL/278 (IX)' (2006) Assembly/AU/Dec.112 (VII)). The eight officially recognized RECs are the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU/UMA), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), East African Community (EAC), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD).

9. Art II:2(c)&(e), OAU Charter.

10. Art 14(1)(g), Constitutive Act of the African Union (signed 11 July 2000, entered into force 26 May 2001).

11. Art 4(2)(e), Abuja Treaty.

12. See Chapter XII and Art 68, ibid.

13. Art 70, ibid.

14. Art 10, Protocol on Trade in Services - Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (adopted 21 March 2018, entered into force 30 May 2019).

RECs, the Treaty establishing the East African Community (EAC) incorporates detailed provisions on regional cooperation in the field of education, science, and technology. Besides giving due consideration to the importance of cooperation in the field of education for the achievement of its objective, the Treaty enjoins EAC Members to 'undertake concerted measures to foster cooperation in education and training within the Community'.[15] The identified areas of regional cooperation range from the coordination of policies and programs and the promotion of student mobility to the establishment of common research and training institutions and harmonization of curricula, examination, certification and accreditation procedures.[16] The EAC Treaty further underlines the importance of regional cooperation in the development of science and technology.[17] Similarly, the Treaty establishing the Common Market for Southern and Eastern Africa (COMESA) underlines 'the fundamental importance of science in socioeconomic and cultural development and technological progress' and enjoins its Members to establish and support joint scientific and technological research and development institutions.[18] It also calls upon Members to 'promote the exchange of expertise and research results and technical information sharing within the Common Market on science and technology' and 'collaborate in the training of personnel in the various scientific and technological disciplines'.[19] The Treaty establishing the Southern African Development Community (SADC) does not contain detailed rules on education but identifies 'science and technology' as one of the critical areas of cooperation.[20] The SADC Assembly adopted the SADC Protocol on Education and Training in accordance with this provision (see section 5.2).

Most of these continental and regional legal instruments of integration conceive higher education integration as a tool rather than as a goal in itself. The provisions on regional cooperation in the fields of education, science and technology are often directly linked to the provisions that set out the objectives of the instrument in question (e.g. EAC Treaty and Abuja Treaty). Some of these instruments provide for the establishment of new legislations (e.g. SADC Treaty), while others provide for the establishment of institutional arrangements (e.g. AU Constitutive Act) to coordinate the harmonization of national policies and programs.

It is clear from the foregoing analysis that higher education integration has a strong foundation within the legal instruments of continental and regional integration in Africa. The next point of enquiry is the motivation behind the quest for regional higher education integration.

15. Treaty Establishing the East African Community (signed 30 November 1999, entered into force 7 July 2000).

16. Art 102(2), ibid.

17. Art 103, ibid.

18. Art 127, Treaty Establishing a Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (signed 5 November 1993, entered into force 8 December 1994) (COMESA Treaty).

19. Art 128(d)&(h), ibid.

20. Art 21(3[e], Treaty of the Southern African Development Community (signed 17 August 1992, entered into force 5 October 1993).

3. Rationales for Regional Higher Education integration in Africa

The recognition of education as a critical field of cooperation in the major legal instruments of continental and regional integration and the number of initiatives (see sections 4 and 5) illustrate the importance African countries attach to the integration of their higher education systems. This section considers the overarching objectives behind their pursuit of regional higher education integration. The identification and systemic evaluation of the key rationales is of paramount importance to contextualize the various higher education integration initiatives both at the continental (section 4) and regional (section 5) levels. What are the fundamental reasons behind the different initiatives of higher education integration in Africa?

This chapter answers this question by taking an analytical look at the historical and legal underpinnings of African higher education integration.

One rationale for higher education integration in Africa is strengthening the capacity and competitiveness of African higher education institutions. African countries emerged out of colonization with an extremely limited number of universities – making university education essentially a postcolonial phenomenon.[21] African countries embarked upon the creation of new universities in the aftermath of independence as part of their postcolonial nation building projects, but most of these universities faced and face significant challenges (e.g. lack of funding, infrastructural deficiencies, etc.) that undermine their quality and competitiveness. Integration is part of their effort to overcome these challenges and create strong higher education institutions. Regional and continental higher education integration allows not only for the pooling of the necessary resources but also for the consolidation of African higher education systems against continentally and regionally agreed benchmarks of excellence. This capacity-building rationale is particularly reflected in the quality assurance and improvement initiatives that are common both to the continental and regional levels (see sections 4 and 5). It is also apparent from the numerous commitments and initiatives towards the establishment of common higher education and training institutions such as the Pan African University (PAU). Underlying the desire to improve the quality of higher education is the consideration of education as a catalyst for modernization and development.[22] As already noted in section 2 of this chapter, the legal instruments of regional integration frequently underline the role of regional cooperation in education, science, and technology in the achievement of national and continental development.

Another rationale for regional higher education integration in Africa rests on the desire to facilitate the mobility of students and academic staff across the continent. This objective underlines the various regionalization initiatives such as standardization of credits, credit transferability, mutual recognition of academic qualifications and free movement of persons (see sections 4 and 5). It also features in most legal instruments of African continental and regional integration (see section 2). The Agenda 2063 document envisages that the establishment of an African Educational Accreditation Agency and a common educational qualification system by 2023 will afford the African youth 'the choice to study in any university and work anywhere outside his or her country on the continent'.[23] Similar continental and regional efforts to streamline university curricula and grading system are geared towards facilitating student mobility across the continent. However, one of the major obstacles to the mobility of students and academic staff remains the absence of a strong regime for the free movement of persons. While RECs such as ECOWAS and EAC have made some progress in this area, a continent-wide free movement regime remains elusive. The AU Assembly adopted the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons in 2018 to overcome these obstacles and ensure the free movement of people across national borders within the continent. Article 13 of the Protocol specifically provides for the 'free movement of students and researchers'.[24] It enjoins Parties to the Protocol to permit nationals of other States to take up education and research in their territory and facilitate the exchange of students and researchers

21. See Akilagpa Sawyerr, 'Challenges Facing African Universities: Selected Issues' (2004) 47 African Studies Review 1.

22. See Damtew Teferra and Philip G Altbachl, 'African Higher Education: Challenges for the 21st Century' (2004) 47 Higher Education 21.

23. AUC, 'Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want: A Shared Strategic Framework for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development: First Ten-Years Implementation Plan 2014-2023' (AUC 2015), at 43.

24. Art 13, Protocol; to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (adopted 29 January 2018, has not entered into force).

among the Member States.[25] The Protocol has been adopted by 34 States but only four of the signatories have ratified the Protocol at the time of writing. In contrast, all African countries except Eritrea have signed the AfCFTA Agreement, while 38 of the signatories have ratified the Agreement as of November 2021. And this is despite the fact that both legal instruments were adopted almost at the same time. The reluctance of African countries to ratify the free movement Protocol stems from concerns over security and other socioeconomic implications of free movement.[26] Overcoming these concerns and expediting the implementation of the Protocol is of paramount importance to the student and staff mobility goal of the African higher education integration process.

Fostering continental solidarity and overcoming the colonial legacy of higher education is another key rationale for higher education integration in Africa. In similar fashion to their economic integration endeavour, African countries' quest for higher education integration is driven by their desire to overcome the adverse consequences of their fragmentation across colonially-imposed national boundaries. This rationale was particularly pronounced in higher education-related initiatives and statements from the early independence years. African leaders recognized not only the emancipatory power of higher education but also its role in fostering Pan Africanism. Speaking at the inaugural OAU meeting held in May 1963, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, for example, remarked that '[a] massive effort must be launched in the educational and cultural field which will not only raise the level of literacy and provide the cadres of skilled and trained technician's requisite to our growth and development but, as well, acquaints one with another'.[27] He then went onto call for 'the establishment of an African University, sponsored by all African States, where future leaders of Africa will be trained in an atmosphere of continental brotherhood'.[28] This view was widely shared by other African leaders in attendance. African universities established in the aftermath of independence were tasked with the promotion of African unity and cultural identity.29 The Abuja Treaty also called upon African countries to 'revise' their 'education systems in order to better educational, scientific and technical training to the specific developmental needs of the African environment'.[30] Underlying this call was the recognition of the colonial history and influence in African higher education.[31] Regionalization is part of the broader movement towards the Africanization of higher education in the continent. This rationale and movement remain active, but some of the latest initiatives of higher education integration exhibit some contradiction to this traditional aspiration. This is particularly the case for initiatives such as the Tuning program that serve to maintain the external influence in the African higher education landscape.[32] International institutions such as the World Bank have also continued to play a critical role in shaping (and reshaping) the nature and direction of the African higher education integration process.[33] The Bank gained a significant influence on African higher education policies especially in the 1980s and 1990s through loan conditionality.

4. Continental Higher Education integration initiatives

As already said, the process of higher education integration in Africa takes place simultaneously both at the continental and regional levels. One of the defining features of the process is the multiplicity of initiatives at both levels. This section examines the nature and scope of some of the major continental initiatives for the regionalization of higher education in Africa.

25. See Art 13(1)&(3), ibid.

26. See Alan Hirsch, 'A Strategic Consideration of the African Union Free Movement of Persons Protocol and Other Initiatives towards the Freer Movement of People in Africa' South African Institute of International Affairs.

27. See AUC, Celebrating Success: Africa's Voice over 50 Years 1963-2013 (African Union Commission 2013), at 4.

28. ibid.

29. Hocine Khelfaoui, 'Introduction: The Bologna Process in Africa: Globalization or Return to "Colonial Situation"?' (2009) 7 Journal of Higher Education in Africa 21.

30. Art 51(2)(h), Abuja Treaty.

31. Teferra and Altbachl (n 22), at 23.

32. For a critical assessment of the introduction of the Bologna Process in the African higher education landscape, see Khelfaoui (n 29).

33. See N'Dri Thérèse Assié-Lumumba, Higher Education in Africa: Crises, Reforms, and Transformation (Codesria 2006).

4.1. The Arusha Convention/Addis Convention

The Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States ('Arusha Convention') is one of the earliest and most prominent continental initiatives for the regionalization of higher education in Africa.[34] The Convention was adopted in December 1981 as a legal framework for the mutual recognition of higher education diplomas and certificates. It was initiated by and negotiated within the aegis of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as part of its project to promote academic mobility through regional cooperation and integration.

The Convention seeks to promote close cooperation in the field of recognition of academic qualifications in higher education. Through the system of mutual recognition, the Convention aims to strengthen continental unity and solidarity, overcome the colonial legacy of higher education in the continent, and promote and strengthen cultural identity of the continent.[35] It also intends to serve as a 'starting point for concerted dynamic action for the regionalization of higher education in the continent through national, bilateral, subregional and regional bodies.[36]

The Convention has been ratified by 20 African States, but it has never entered into force. The scholarship on higher education integration in Africa attributes the non-implementation of the Convention to a wide range of factors. One strand of the scholarship associates the non-implementation of the Convention to the lack of sense of ownership and its heavy reliance on external sources for funding. As noted above, the Convention was initiated and funded by UNESCO without a meaningful participation of African higher education institutions.[37] This has contributed to the lack of the political will necessary for its implementation. Another strand of the African higher education integration scholarship associates the non-implementation of the Convention to its technical and structural problems.[38] The technical problems primarily concern its failure to consider the quality of the academic certificates and diplomas. The argument is that the considerable differences in credit transfer systems and admission requirements across higher education institutions and countries in the continent makes the implementation of the recognition regime of the Convention difficult.[39] The structural problems of the Convention stem from its envisaged institutional framework and procedure for cooperation and exchange of information.[40] The lack of strong national educational regulatory agencies and the ineffectiveness of the regional committees established under the Convention to facilitate its operationalization undermined the implementation of the Convention. The Convention has been revised several times over the last three decades to address these and other shortcomings, but its entry into force remain elusive. The latest of

34. Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States (adopted 5 December 1981) ('Arusha Convention').

35. See the preamble and Art 2.1, ibid.

36. ibid.

37. Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis, Petronella Jonck and Anne Goujon, 'Regional Higher Education Reform Initiatives in Africa: A Comparative Analysis with Bologna Process' (2015) 4 International Journal of Higher Education p241, at 246.

38. See Jane Knight, 'Towards African Higher Education Regionalization and Harmonization: Functional, Organizational and Political Approaches', The Development of Higher Education in Africa: Prospects and Challenges, vol 21 (Emerald Group Publishing Limited 2014), at 366.{\\i{} The Development of Higher Education in Africa: Prospects and Challenges}, vol 21 (Emerald Group Publishing Limited 2014

39. ibid.the speed and intensity with which regional level connections are expanding in all areas of the world has been remarkable. Higher education in Africa is no exception. This chapter focuses on African policies and programme initiatives to further higher education regionalization. Regionalization is defined as the process of 'building closer collaboration and alignment among higher education actors and systems in a designated area or framework, commonly called a region'. An analytical framework, consisting of functional, organizational and political approaches, is applied to the evolution of higher education regionalization at the continental level in Africa through a close examination of the progress related to the implementation of the "African Union Strategy for the Harmonization of Higher Education Programmes." Special emphasis is given to the harmonization of degree structures and the recognition of qualifications through sub-regional qualification frameworks. Key issues and challenges such as rationales, governance, benefits and risks, unintended consequences, language, engagement for all and innovation are raised at the end of the chapter to stimulate further reflection and exploration of the complex process of higher education regionalization.","collection-title":"International Perspectives on Education and Society","container-title":"The Development of Higher Education in Africa: Prospects and Challenges","ISBN":"978-1-78190-699-6","note":"DOI: 10.1108/S1479-3679(2013

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these revisions is the Revised Convention on the Recognition of Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States (Addis Convention) adopted in December 2014.[41] Article V.2 of the Addis Convention provides that the Convention 'shall enter into force one month after the date when ten Member States of UNESCO belonging to the Africa Region [...] have expressed their consent to be bound by the Convention'.[42] Following the deposit of signature by Benin on 15 November 2019, the Addis Convention entered into force on 15 December 2019 for the ten signatories within the meaning of Article V.2 of the Convention. The Addis Convention enjoins the ten signatories to apply its provisions in their mutual relations and the provisions of the Arusha Convention in their relationship with other parties to the that Convention.[43] The majority of African countries remain reluctant to sign and ratify the Convention. Despite its lack of widespread acceptance, however, the Arusha Convention has served as a basis for subsequent higher education regionalization initiatives (see below and section 5).

4.2. The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA)

The Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) is the latest, comprehensive, and most ambitious integration initiative for African education at all levels. The AU Assembly adopted CESA at its 26th ordinary session held in January 2016 as the successor to the first (1997-2006) and second (2007-2015) decades of education for Africa. CESA serves as an overarching policy framework for regional cooperation on educational matters between 2016 and 2025. Underlying this continental strategy is the desire to set up 'a qualitative system of education and training' that provides the continent with 'efficient human resources [...] capable of achieving the vision and ambitions of the African Union'.[44] It also seeks to 'to bring coherence and integration in the development of the various sub-sectors into a holistic system that addresses the needs of imparting knowledge, skills and values required for systematic response to the socioeconomic demands for development in the 21st Century'.[45]

CESA forms an important part of the broader regional integration agenda of the continent articulated in the AU Agenda 2063. Its implementation is guided by a set of strategic objectives, pillars and core principles including the notion that 'harmonized education and training systems are essential for the realization of intra-Africa mobility and academic integration through regional cooperation.46 On higher education, CESA seeks to 'revitalize and expand tertiary education, research and innovation to address continental challenges and promote global competitiveness' (S09).47 It recognizes the role of higher education for science, technology and innovation and the importance of placing higher education at the heart of the development agenda of any nation that aspires to realize any meaningful sustainable economic growth. It calls upon AU Members to achieve S09, among others, by creating conducive environment for research and innovation, consolidating and expanding centres of excellence, and enhancing institutional linkages in the continent.48 The overall strategy is to improve the access, quality and relevance of higher education through national, regional and continental measures. CESA recognizes that 'continental and subregional integration schemes combined with private sector involvement hold a key to expanding access and promoting relevance and advancing quality'.49 The AU Assembly has established a Committee of Education and Science and Technology to oversee the implementation of the strategy at the continental level.50 At the regional level, CESA enjoins the education ministers of the different RECs to coordinate and cooperate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the strategy. Ministers of education and training as well as all other public and private stakeholders are charged with the responsibility of facilitating the implementation of the strategy at the national level.

41. See Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States (signed 12 December 2014, 15 December 2019 9(Article V.2))).
42. See ibid.
43. Art V.3(1), ibid.
44. AU, 'Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025' (African Union Commission) CESA 16-25, at 7.
45. ibid, at 13.
46. ibid.
47. ibid.
48. ibid, at 25.
49. ibid, at 19.
50. ibid, at 28.

4.3. African Continental Qualification Framework

The African Continental Qualification Framework (ACQF) is an AU-led initiative launched in September 2019 to establish an overarching qualifications framework for Africa. It seeks to introduce a framework for mutual recognition of academic qualifications with the view to ensure the mobility of students and academic staff across the continent. The plan is for ACQF to eventually integrate the existing national and regional frameworks for comparability and equivalencies of qualifications into a continental framework. Through the recognition of academic qualifications, ACQF aspires to facilitate youth empowerment and employability across the continent – and thereby help the continent harness its demographic dividends. The African Union Commission (AUC) is currently coordinating the design of the framework) (in partnership with the European Union) to submit for the approval of the AU Assembly by the end of 2022. What is not clear at this stage is the relationship between ACQF and the Arusha Convention (in its revised form). Both initiatives strive to establish a framework for the recognition of academic qualifications in Africa. The eventual establishment of ACQF could even effectively put the final nail into the coffin of the Arusha Convention.

4.4. Other Continental Initiatives

Besides the above initiatives, numerous other continental initiatives have been launched over the last decade or so to promote continental higher education integration in Africa. Some of these initiatives are still at the proposal stage, while others have been implemented (e.g. PAU). These initiatives target various areas and objectives of regional higher education integration. Most of these initiatives are launched in partnership with the EU and other external partners with the ultimate objective of ensuring the mobility of students and academic staff.

Table 1: Continental Higher Education Regionalization Initiatives (other than those in sections 3.a to 3.c)

Initiatives	Institution in Charge of the Initiative	Objective(s)
Pan African University (PAU)	AUC	Mobility of students and academics regional centres of excellence
Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF)	AUC (in partnership with the EU)	Quality assurance
African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASG-QA)	AUC (in partnership with the EU)	Quality assurance student mobility
Mwalimu Nyerere Scholarship	AUC	Student mobility
Continental Accreditation Agency for Higher Education		Quality assurance
Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA)	AUC	-
The African Credit Transfer System	AUC	Student mobility

Source: compiled by the authors

5. African Regional Economic Communities and cooperation in higher education

One of the key characteristics of the African higher education integration process is its fragmentation across the various regions of the continent. Besides the continental initiatives, much of the higher education integration process takes places at the regional level with the auspices and within the frameworks of Regional Economic Communities (RECs). We have shown in section 2 that most of the constitutive legal instruments of African RECs recognize higher education as one of the key areas of cooperation and mandate the respective institution to promote higher education within their respective subregions. Focusing on the eight officially recognized RECs, this section examines regional higher education integration initiatives taken to fill this mandate.

5.1. The East African Community (EAC)

The EAC traces its roots from a 1967 treaty between Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, all former British colonies, who envisioned establishing a common market after gaining their independence. This effort faced a setback of the late 1970's due to the conflict between Tanzania and Uganda. The vision was latter restored two decades later when the three original parties signed the treaty establishing the East African Community in 1999, which came in to force in July 2000.(51) The trio was later joined by Burundi and Rwanda in 2007, followed by South Sudan in 2016.(52)

EAC members signed an agreement to establish a Customs Union in 2005, and an enhanced protocol that aimed to establish a common market in 2010. The EAC scopes a broad area of cooperation. Among others, member states pledge under The Common Market Protocol to liberalize seven service sectors and to facilitate the easy mobility of service providers, labor, students and a coordinated effort to human resource development across the common market.

The enhancement of cooperation in the area of higher education is thus derived from the expanded scope of the EAC. The EAC treaty states that members states aim to "harmonize curricula, examination, certification and accreditation of education and training institutions in the Partner States through the joint action of their relevant national bodies charged with the preparation of such curricula"(53) The signing of the protocol for the common market in 2010 included a target of establishing a common higher education space by 2015, thus providing a platform for free movement of labor and students across the region.(54)

The EAC treaty delegated the day-to-day implementation of the EAC's 'harmonization project' to the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA).(55) The latter traces its background to the former EAC (1967-1977) and the post-independence cooperation created among universities and university colleagues of the region that were formerly part of the University of East Africa during the early post-independence period.(56) IUCEA was put in place in 1980 as a cooperation framework among the three now independent universities - i.e. University of Makerere, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. The IUCEA was thus recognized as a surviving institution of the former EAC. While the IUCEA was an independent institution throughout the 1980's and 90's, in 2009 an official act of the East African Legislative Assembly formalized the standing of the IUCEA and integrated it to the EAC structure.(57)

The IUCEA functions as a membership-based organization with more than 115 universities across EAC member countries. While it initially focused on coordinating a shared development of higher education training and research in the region, with a broader mandate given to it by the EAC Common Market Protocol, its

51. The Treaty for the Establishment of the current East African Community (The Treaty) was signed on 30 November 1999 and entered into force on 7 July 2000 following its ratification by the original three Partner States, namely Republic of Kenya, Republic of Uganda, and United Republic of Tanzania.

52. 'Republic of South Sudan' <https://www.eac.int/eac-partner-states/south-sudan> accessed 15 November 2021.

53. Education and Training, Article 102 (2,e)

54. East African Business Council, EABC, 2013

55. East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), IUCEA Act 2009

56. Bheki R. Mngomezulu, A Political History of Higher Education in East Africa: The Rise and Fall of the University of East Africa, 1937--1970 |.

57. IUCEA Protocol 2002 and the IUCEA Act 2009.

objectives were focused towards two programs, a regional quality assurance system and a regional qualifications framework. The Regional Quality Assurance Framework (2015) produced four set of tools; a regional policy framework, regional quality assurance guidelines, benchmarks for academic programs and network of higher education institutions. [58] The Regional Qualification Framework aimed to facilitate harmonization of programs across the region with the aim to facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications as envisioned under the Common Market Protocol of the EAC.[59]

In line with the developments championed by IUCEA, on May 2017, Heads of the States and Governments of the EAC declared their intention to establish an EAC 'Common Higher Education Area' (CHEA) with the aim to "harmonize and enhance the quality of education in the region"[60] where the higher education frameworks of members will be guided to operate in line with a common regional framework. The latter will address certification, academic and professional qualifications, and the quality of the educational and training output.[61] The Assembly of Heads of States entrusted the Council of Ministers to lead the operationalization of the CHEA.[62] Accordingly, the CHEA is expected to build on the foundations laid by successive years of wok of the IUCEA. In doing so, CHEA uses a mix of political and legislative instruments through the actions of the EAC, as well as and bottom-up technical level cooperation through the instrumentality of the IUCEA.

Meanwhile, the IUCEA does not have a legal mandate to enforce its quality assurance regulations and principles. The latter is basically handled by national institutions of member states. Therefore, in terms of implementation of the framework, which pre-dates the establishment of the CHEA, the EAC relies on a soft structure of consensus based 'academic regulations' and not of 'political commitment'. [63] This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that each member state of the EAC continues to have its own national instruments of qualification and quality assurance frameworks and standards. Potential conflict of these two regimes, and passive resistance of national regulatory bodies, lack of political and financial commitment is likely to challenge the objective of the CHEA.[64]

5.2. The Southern African Development Community (SADC)

SADC traces its origins to mid-1970 and 80's where the newly independent states of Southern Africa established the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) through the Lusaka Declaration of the April 1, 1980.[65] SADCC was later transferred into SADC in 1992 after adoption by members of SADCC and newly added members as more countries become independent.[66] Today SADC has 16 members, with its secretariat in Gaborone, Botswana.[67]

Among its various socio-economic objectives, education had a prominent role in the transformation of SADC. [68] In 1997 the SADC Assembly adopted a Protocol on Education and Training, which became operational in 2000.[69] Among others the Protocol provides that members will cooperate in the area of education policy, basic, intermediate and higher education, research and development etc. In the area of higher education, the

58. Principles and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in East Africa;

59. the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (2015) http://repository.eac.int/bitstream/handle/11671/2047/Harmonization%20of%20Higher%20Education%20in%20East%20Africa%20Status%20Update.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

60. 'Joint Communiqué: 18th Ordinary Summit Of Heads Of State Of The East African Community' <https://www.eac.int/communique/847-joint-communiqu%C3%A9-18th-ordinary-summit-of-heads-of-state-of-the-east-african-community> accessed 24 July 2021. Declaration by heads of state of the east African community partner states on the transformation of the east African community into a common higher education area – Inter-University Council of East Africa, available at https://www.iucea.org/declaration-chea/ (last visited 21 July 2021).

61. 'Declaration by Heads of State of the East African Community Partner States on The Transformation of the East African Community into A Common Higher Education Area – Inter-University Council of East Africa'.

62. Ibid

63. Ibrahim Oanda Ogachi, 'The East African Higher Education Area: A Global or Regional Higher Education Space?', FIRE: Forum for International Research in Education (2018).

64. The PIE News, 'Hurdles Ahead for East Africa's Common Higher Education Area' <https://thepienews.com/news/hurdles-ahead-east-african-community-common-higher-education-area/> accessed 24 July 2021.

65.SADC, 'Southern African Development Community : History and Treaty' <https://www.sadc.int/about-sadc/overview/history-and-treaty/> accessed 20 November 2021.

66. ibid.

67. Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Madagascar,8 Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe

68. "The SADC Treaty, Article 5 (SADC, 1992)

69. 'Southern African Development Community: Education & Skills Development' <https://www.sadc.int/themes/social-human-development/education-skills-development/> accessed 20 November 2021.

protocol provides the commitment of member states to implement a set of quality management standards for higher education in their economy, harmonize admission requirements, credit transfer system, and facilitate the movement of students and academics.

To implement the commitments contained under it, the protocol establishes various Technical Committees including a Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA) which consists of representatives from member States. The TCCA developed a regional qualifications framework, Southern African Development Community Qualifications Framework (SADCQF), which was adopted by SADC ministers of Education in September 2011 and which became operational in 2017. The SADCQF sets up a formal regional framework for effective "comparability and recognition of full qualifications, credit transfer, creation of regional standards and facilitation of QA." [70] It brings together QA bodies and national standards and guidelines for QA that are established and adopted by member countries.

The SADCQF functions as a reference framework, with a sort of self-governing principle. QA agencies of member states are expected to align their standards and procedures with that of the SADCQF. Compliance is expected to be met based on mutual trust and week regional audit and conformity recognition. The only exception seems to be the case of the SADC Qualifications Verification Network (SADCQVN) that was established to oversee the information that is shared by SADC members meets certain qualities of credibility and reliability. Through the TCCA, and milestones established to encourage compliance in the area of development and alignment, quality assurance, verification and communication, close to half of the member countries run pilot programs to align their internal QA standards and procedures to that of SADCQF. [71] Indeed, members aspire to implement enhanced monitoring mechanisms and assistance to members so a to control and support them comply with the SADC QA guidelines.[72] The SADC TCCA works and cooperates with Southern African Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN), South African Qualifications Association (SAQA) Southern Africa Regional University Association (SARUA).

Just like other African RECs, SADC's Project for cooperation in higher education is challenged by political commitment, budgetary and overlapping membership. Not only SADC member countries belong to other RECs, but also such RECs have or are in the process of implementing their own QA initiatives. This includes the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES) and the East African Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN) that is being led by the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA). [73] Similarly, SADC's intergovernmental project competes with a parallel non-governmental initiative that is led by higher education institutions of the region - Higher Education Quality Management Initiative for Southern Africa (HEQMISA).

5.3. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established in 1975 under the Lagos Treaty, with the aim to promote socio economic integration and "collective self-sufficiency" of its members. The Lagos Treaty was revised with a broader mandate signed in Cotonou in July 1992.[74] The ECOWAS embraces 15 member states with more than 400 million population. ECOWAS also encompasses two sub regional blocks, the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), established in 1994, and the West African Monetary Zone, established in 2000.[75]

In addition to the treaty provisions contained under Article 27 (2,h), whic calls for members to "harmonize the educational systems" in the region,[76] the key objective of ECOWAS's cooperation framework in Higher Education is provided under the 2002 Protocol on Education and Training and the General Convention Equivalen-

70. Sarah Hoosen et al, State of play: regional quality assurance in southern Africa – SADC, DIES/DAAD (2018) https://static.daad.de/media/daad_de/pdfs_nicht_barrierefrei/infos-services-fuer-hochschulen/projektsteckbriefe/sadc_state_of_play_report.pdf

71. Coleen Jaftha and Joe Samuels, SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) Building trust for better movement (2017) https://www.saqa.org.za/docs/webcontent/2017/Article%20about%20the%20SADCQF.pdf

72. Ibid

73. Sarah Hoosen et al, note 71

74. ECOWAS, Revised Treaty, ECOWAS Commission (1993) Ehttps://www.ecowas.int/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Revised-treaty.pdf

75. UEMOA members include Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte D'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. WAMZ was established by Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Liberia (Liberia was not a founding member and only who joined the group on 16 February 2010.)

76. ECOWAS, Revised Treaty, Article 27 Science and Technology

ce of Certificates which forms one part of the Protocol.[77] The two instruments aim to implement a regional recognition and qualification framework to enhance human resource development and facilitate enhance of skills and resources. [78]

In line with the broad aim of the protocols an ECOWAS wide Education Sector Strategy/Program was adopted in 2003. [79] Among others the Program casts eye on the full exploitation of regional resources and potential with the aim of enhancing access to quality education and training opportunities in the region. It also aims to harmonize education and training systems and admissions criteria for higher learning institutions in line with regional benchmarks for the establishment of certificate of equivalences and aims to enhance 'harmonization' of education systems.[80] In doing so, the harmonization and mutual recognition of higher education certificates and qualifications becomes a central objective, but other priorities include programs aimed at building centers of excellence; education management information systems; and e-learning. ECOWAS two subsequent visions for the future of the regional block set out in Vision 2020 and subsequently Vision 2050 underscore the aims and programs contained in the Protocol and Convention.[81]

The follow-up on the implementation of the visions and of the day-to-day programs of the ECOWAS cooperation in higher education is led by the ECOWAS Commission. At the political level, ECOWAS has held over the years a conference of ministers in charge of general education since 2002, while a specific conference on Ministers in charge of Higher Education and Scientific Research has been organized since 2014.[82] The Commission has prioritized various programs through its Division of Education including professional and curriculum development, quality improvement and establishment of equivalence of certificates.[83] Since 2005, an ad hoc committee undertook various activities vis a vis the development of regional benchmarks for the establishment of certificate equivalences.[84] However institutional capacity and coordination among member states and peer agencies remains a key challenge. In line with this, ECOWAS members are considering establishment of a Regional Education Agency tasked, among others, with undertaking a leadership role over Regional Accreditation and Quality Assurance.[85] The incorporation of cooperation in the area of higher education into the ECOWAS Vision 2020 which was adopted in 2008 has given the agenda additional steam. In the Strategic Plan, higher education is regarded as an "important tool to produce the labor force".[86]

Despite its lofty ambition cooperation in the area of higher education, ECOWAS faces many challenges. First, both the convention and protocol that are expected to lay the legal basis for the regional cooperation have only entered in to force only in a provisional manner. [87] Second, progress in the area of recognition and equivalence of qualifications within the ECOWAS space faces linguistic barriers and the existence of different education systems between Member States. Thirdly, overlapping, and multiple regional membership remains a key challenge. For instance, all Francophone member states of the ECOWAS are also members of the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES). [88] While CAMES is handling the cooperation initia-

77. ECOWAS. ECOWAS regional convention on the recognition and equivalence of degrees, diplomas, certificates and other qualifications in member states, ECW/DHD/ED/II/4 REV. 2 (2003).

78. ECOWAS. (2013). Résolution pour l'approbation et l'adoption du curriculum harmonisé de formation en médecine générale dans l'espace CEDEAO. Retrieved from http://www.wahooas.org/IMG/pdf/1_Resolution_Curriculum_H_F_M_G.pdf
"The basic principle of the Convention is that a qualification recognized (accredited) in one of the Member States should also be recognized by the others." https://www.adeanet.org/sites/default/files/ahers_summary_report.pdf

79. "On the same level, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) also established its Education Sector strategy in 2003 to facilitate harmonization of academic programmes and recognition of qualifications before the continent-wide initiative (Hoosen et al., 2009)."

80. 'Division of Education | Economic Community of West African States(ECOWAS)' <https://www.esc.comm.ecowas.int/all-about-esc/division-of-education/> accessed 24 July 2021.

81. ECOWAS Vision 2020: Towards a Democracy and Prosperous Society, June 2010, (http://araa.org/sites/default/files/media/ECOWAS-VISION-2020_0.pdf, Karola Hahn and Damtew Teferra, 'Tuning as Instrument of Systematic Higher Education Reform and Quality Enhancement: The African Experience' (Tuning Journal for Higher Education, 30 January 2014) <https://tuningjournal.org/article/download/23/149?inline=1> accessed 5 November 2021.

82. 'Division of Education | Economic Community of West African States(ECOWAS)' (n 81).

83. Ibid

84. Ibid

85. 'Key Recommendations towards a Harmonised Framework on the Recognition of Degrees in ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)' <https://www.ecowas.int/30118/> accessed 5 November 2021.

86. Hahn and Teferra (n 82).

87. ECOWAS Protocol A/P3/1/03 is not still formally ratified by its members and its operational only on provisional basis. The protocol stated that the protocol will be operational upon signature pending its full application after ratification by seven members.

88. CAMES is an intergovernmental organization made up of 19 sub-Saharan francophone countries (and Madagascar) and several higher education institutions and organizations located in these countries.

tives vis a vis the francophone countries within ECOWAS, no counterpart to the CAMES exists for Anglophone and Lusophone countries, thereby leaving cooperation for Anglophone and Lusophone countries subject to separate internal or subregional mechanisms. The same element of Competition for agenda also comes from WAEMU. Indeed, the differences between Francophone States using a multi-degree system as opposed to the three-tier system prevailing in Anglophone Member States has been one of the barriers affecting the recognition and equivalence of qualifications within the ECOWAS space. The LMD reform could facilitate the establishment of a credit transfer system supporting mobility.

Most importantly, lack of political commitment to deliver on regional decisions and programs regime remains a key challenge.

5.4. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)

COMESA is a regional economic community embracing 21 African countries that was established in 1993 as a successor to the Eastern and Southern Africa Preferential Free Trade Area (PTA). COMESA established its Free Trade Area (FTA) in 2000 as well as a Customs Union that came in to begin in 2009.[89] Majority of COMESA members are party to the FTA, around 16 at the time of writing,[90] eliminating tariffs on goods coming from FTA members, and only a handful of countries are outside the full FTA regime with partial or no preferential trade regime vis a vis the remaining members.[91]

In the area of Higher Education, while the COMESA treaty gives the COMESA Commission mandate to enhance regional cooperation in Higher Education,[92] COMESA does not have to date a major program in this area. The COMESA Social Charter provides that "member states shall strive to provide quality education through formal, nonformal, informal distance learning and lifelong learning to meet the diverse needs of the individual"[93] and that "The Member State shall endeavor to provide adequate and proper technical and vocational training including quality educational programs for the youth".[94] While COMESA also has adopted a Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, Labor, Services, Right of Establishment and Residence (2001), it has yet to enter in to force.

Ongoing activities suggest that the Commission is interested in pursuing an initiative in the area of establishing centers of excellence, mutual recognition and harmonization of certificates and qualifications.[95] There is however limited activity and available information on the results of such effort. In addition, COMESA seems to be active in enhancing cooperation in the education sector vis a vis programs and qualifications for skills recognition and development on specific industries, such as leather.[96]

5.5. The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) is a regional block comprising six central African states established in 1983.[97] ECCAS itself was an expansion of two predecessor economic groups, the Central African Customs and Economic Union (UDEAC) established in 1964, with six members,[98] and the

89. COMESA, COMESA in Brief, Growing Together, for Prosperity (2018) https://www.comesa.int/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/COMESA-in-brief-FINAL-_web.pdf

90. Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Libya, Kenya, Egypt, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic Congo

91. 'Countries Participating in the COMESA FTA Set to Increase – Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)' <https://www.comesa.int/countries-participating-in-the-comesa-fta-set-to-increase/> accessed 16 October 2021.

92. Article 156 of the Treaty

93. COMESA Social Charter, Article XII Education, Training and Skills Development

94. Ibid, Article V Employment and Working Conditions

95. MME on the Move, A Stocktaking of Migration, Mobility, Employment and Higher Education in Six African Regional Economic Communities, International Centre for Migration Policy Development, 2013

96. AU, Programs and qualifications for skills recognition and development in the leather sector in Africa comes under spotlight (September 3, 2021) https://au.int/sites/default/files/pressreleases/40788-pr-PR-Programs_and_qualifications_for_skills_recognition_and_development_in_the_leather_sector_in_Africa_comes_under_spotlight.pdf

97. Treaty Establishing the Economic Community of Central African States https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/treaties/en/eccas/trt_eccas.pdf that is revised by the Revised Treaty in 2019

98. Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, and Gabon and Equatorial Guinea (joined in 1983)

Economic Community of Great Lakes States (CEPGL) a much smaller block established by Burundi, DR Congo and Rwanda, having Angola as an observer (which later became a full member).[99]

Despite coming to operation since 1985, ECCAS remained largely passive for the next decade as a result of various political (as a result of continued conflict in the region), institutional and financial challenges. Its activity was revived in the early 2000s after its designation as one of the eight RECs recognized by the AU, signing the Protocol on Relations between the African Economic Community (AEC) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in 1999 and subsequent meetings by ECCAS heads of States that among others expanded the role of ECCAS in the area of regional security.

As other RECs, ECCAS has broad political, social and economic objectives. Among others it aims to progressively eliminate trader barriers in the region, promote the free movement of persons and the harmonization of national policies including those dealing with industry, communications, agriculture, currency, human resources and education.

In the area of education, ECCAS's strategic priorities are outlined by its treaty provision that mandates members to "prepare a common educational policy" as well as "harmonization of national policies"[100], a Protocol on Cooperation in the Fields of Human Resources Development, Education, Training and Culture between ECCAS Member States that is annexed to the Treaty as well as Program on Education, adopted in 2009.

The protocol provides the basis for education policy harmonization and coordination in the development of joint projects and programs. It also calls up on members to ensure access to education and training institutions to students from all member countries in a non-discriminatory manner. Members committed to recognize tertiary certificates, diplomas and degrees awarded by other members and conclude a multilateral agreement relating to their equivalence etc.

The Program defines two strategic priorities concerning Centers of Excellence and Education Management Information Systems. As part of these programs, an Institute of Governance, Humanities and Social Science is established based in the in University of Yaoundé since 2010, which also forms part of the Pan African University, while a Centre for Training, and Teacher Development in Science, Mathematics and Technology based in Gabon has been operational since 2009. [101]

Today, ESSAC's key objectives and priorities defined in its Protocol are not fully functional. As it is the case with many of its peer RECs, it is hunted by the 'usual' challenges. In particular, "Weak community vision",[102] a result of decades long internal and external conflict in the region, hampered the active participation of the members as well as the financial contributions able to sustain the secretariat as well as the full implementation of the community's programs in many areas including Education.

Multiplicity of membership also affected the full effectiveness of cooperation in the region. ECCAS's six member countries that were hitherto members of the UDEAC, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. formed CEMAC (1994) which is a customs and monitory union, while it has not yet operationalized its own customs union. Similarly, Burundi and Rwanda are active in the East African Community; Angola and DRC are also members of the Southern African Development Community; and Burundi, DRC, and Rwanda are members of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa. This was among others highlighted by Rwanda's initial exit from the organization in 2007 to address overlapping membership vis a vis EAC and COMESA, yet to return back to membership in 2016.[103]

99. Today its members include Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic, Republic Of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of Congo, Sao Tomé And Principe, Angola (which become full member 1999) and Rwanda which was a founding member initially exited but returned back (-2007, 2016-)

100. Article 4, Aims of the Community

101. Summary Report of the MME Support Project RECs Stock Takings Background paper for the MME technical meeting on Enhancing Migration, Mobility, Employment and Higher Education in the RECs https://africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/summary-report-mme-support-project.pdf

102. AFDB, Economic Community Of Central African States (Eccas) Regional Integration Assistance Strategy Paper (RIASP) For Central Africa https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/ADB-BD-WP-2005-84-EN-ECCAS-RIASP-2005-09.PDF

103. Wolfe Braude,'SADC, COMESA and the EAC: Conflicting Regional and Trade Agendas', (2008) Institute for Global Dialogue. October' Ivan R. Mugisha, 'Rwanda back to Central Africa bloc, 10 years on'(2016) Trade Law Centre (TRALAC).

5.6. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) was established in 1996 with the objective of tackling the shared concerns of the members in the area of including food security and environmental disasters, peace and security, health and social development; economic cooperation and integration, desertification and enhancing regional economic cooperation. Its membership is largely concentrated in the Horn of Africa, comprising Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

Cooperation in Higher Education has not been in the primary portfolio of IGAD's initiatives. IGAD's venture towards work in Higher Education came in the context of enhancing regional cooperation in ensuring access to education for refugees, returns, IDPs and members of host communities in IGAD region. A matter that is considered by IGAD members as a "cross-border issue".[104] Indeed the region hosts more than 7.5 million 'forcibly displaced people', more than 3million of them being refugees. -[105] For instance, Ethiopia hosts thousands of refugees from its neighbour countries, in particular Eritrea, who are enrolled in various public and private higher education institutions.[106]

In December 2017 Ministers in Charge of Education of IGAD Members States adopted "The Djibouti Declaration on Regional Conference on Refugee Education in IGAD Members States" and its annexed action plan "Djibouti Plan of Action on Refugee Education in IGAD Member States".[107] The declaration sought the recognition of qualifications of refugees and returnees across all levels of education, called up on its members to ratify and domesticate the Convention on Recognition of Studies, certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualification in Higher Education in African States as a basis for the recognition of refugees and returnee qualifications, and tasked the IGAD secretariat to work with member countries to follow-up the development of "minimum standards" of educational standards. [108]

The Djibouti declaration paved the way for the development of a "Regional Education Policy Framework" (REPF). In terms of Higher Education, the REPF put in place the aspiration of the members to 'Harmonize requirements to enter higher education, establish IFAD Council of Higher Education, (ICHE), Implement IGAD Regional Education Qualifications Framework (RQF)", etc.

During the 2nd Ministerial Conference on Education for Refugees, held in Addis Ababa in 2018, "The Regional Education Policy Framework" was endorsed by member states (para 28). In addition, the members encouraged "the framework for consultation on recognition of regional qualifications and call for a clear road map that results in the agreement and delivery of a functional regional qualifications Mechanism" (para 18).[109]

In line with the Djibouti Declaration and the REPF, IGAD members not only put in place national policies and legal rules that are important to the implementation of the regional programs but also translated the same in terms of achieving measurable results in granting refuges and returnees to access to education and training programs. However, IGAD's broad ambitions in terms of promotion of regional cooperation and higher education seems to be challenged by its own historical mandates. Primary concern of members vis a vis educational cooperation seems to be attached to alleviating the challenges faced by refugees and returnees in the recognition of prior qualifications, access to education and work. Despite REPFs big ambition's, IGAD's ability to showcase itself as a regional convening body for deeper cooperation in higher education is yet to be seen.

104. Ahmed Sed, 'IGAD - IGAD Education Ministers Step up Commitment to Refugee Education' <https://igad.int/divisions/health-and-social-development/2011-igad-education-ministers-step-up-commitment-to-refugee-education> accessed 27 July 2021.

105. Kebede Kassa Tsegaye 'Access to Higher Education of Refugees, and Returnees in the IGAD Region: The Djibouti Declaration and Its Ramifications for Higher Education and Sustainable Development (2017) Proceedings of the 16th International Conference on Private Higher Education in Africa.,

106. ibid.

107. Djibouti Declaration on Regional Conference on Refugee Education in IGAD member States: " Regional Quality Education Standards and Inclusion into National System for refugee children in line with CRRF, SDG 4 and Agenda 2063 on Education, December 2017, https://igad.int/attachments/article/1725/Djibouti%20Declaration%20on%20Refugee%20Education.pdf , Also see Annex; Djibouti Plan of Action on Refugee Education in IGAD Member States https://globalcompactrefugees.org/sites/default/files/2019-12/IGAD%20Djibouti%20Plan%20of%20Action%20on%20Education%20(2017).pdf

108. 'Implementing the Djibouti Declaration: Education for Refugees, Returnees & Host Communities' (The Global Compact on Refugees | Digital platform) <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/article/implementing-djibouti-declaration-education-refugees-returnees-host-communities> accessed 27 July 2021.

109. Addis Ababa Call for Action on the Implementation of the Djibouti Declaration on Education for Refugees, Returnees, IDPs and Host Communities , Addis Ababa, 6th December 2018, https://igad.int/attachments/article/2011/Signed%20Addis%20Ababa%20Call%20for%20Action%20-%202nd%20Ministerial%20Conference%20on%20Education%20for%20Refugee%20-%20Englis%20Version.pdf

5.7. The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD)

Established with six founding members, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger, Libya and Sudan, in Feb 1998, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States has now grown its membership to 29.[110] CEN-SAD aims to complement development programs of its member states in various fields including industry, energy, social services among others through adoption of measures that will ensure the free movement of goods, services and factors of production. Most importantly CEN-SAD's priorities seem to be highly attached to tackling challenges posed by the common environmental and ecological condition of its members – drought and aridity.

While CEN-SAD's long term ambition was to establish a common market, and in doing so a draft instrument was prepared to establish a CEN-SAD Free Trade area, it remained largely passive throughout the decade following its establishment. The Conference of Heads of State and Government held in N'Djamena, Chad, in Feb 2013 endorsed various proposals that were aimed at the restructuring and revival of the community. The Conference among others adopted a revised treaty for the community with enhanced mandates in the area of regional security and sustainable development.[111] The revised treaty itself is yet to become operational as only the 13 ratifications, out of the 15 expected, are adopted as of Sept 2021. [112] CEN-SAD maintains a HQ that was originally located in Tripoli, sizable staff that was largely financially supported by Libya[113] until it was moved to N'Djamena – Chad since 2019.

In the area of cooperation in Education sector, it aims the "harmonization of educational, pedagogical and cultural systems the various cycles of education" among its member states." [114]

Progress in realizing these objectives however has been limited. Most members of CEN-SAD are also members to the Association of Arab Universities (AArU). The AArU among others aimed to establish an Arab Space for Higher Education. To achieve these objectives the AArU has "established a council for quality Assurance and Accreditation in Arab countries – which has established an Arab Network of Quality Assurance Agencies (ANQAHE)". The Association of Arab Universities is an organization that functions under the regional and institutional structure of the Arab League.[115]

Therefore, similar to other African REC's, cooperation in the area of higher education within CEN-SAD is faced with multiplicity of membership as well as a difficult alignment of strategies and priorities. All member countries of CEN-SAD are participating in one or more other regional economic communities, including COMESA, ECCAS and ECOWAS. This has made the implementation of the envisioned CEN-SAD Free Trade area very difficult to achieve. This challenge translates itself in the area of Higher education in the form of conflicting strategies to, for example, align academic qualification structures among countries that followed the French/Bologna model and other that don't.[116]

110. The member States of CEN-SAD include : Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan, Togo and Tunisia.

111. 'CEN-SAD - The Community of Sahel-Saharan States | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa' <https://archive.uneca.org/oria/pages/cen-sad-community-sahel-saharan-states> accessed 8 November 2021.

112. Ibid

113. 'Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD) – Mapping African Regional Cooperation – European Council on Foreign Relations' (ECFR, 1 July 2020) <https://ecfr.eu/special/african-cooperation/censad/> accessed 15 November 2021.

114. 'CEN SAD | African Union' <https://au.int/en/recs/censad> accessed 8 November 2021. , Alexander W Wiseman and CC Wolhuter, The Development of Higher Education in Africa: Prospects and Challenges (Emerald Group Publishing Ltd 2013).especially issues of development, expansion, internationalization, equity, and divergence.","event-place":"Bingley","ISBN":"978-1-78190-698-9","language":"English","note":"OCLC: 828884724","publisher":"Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.","publisher-place":"Bingley","source":"Open WorldCat","title":"The development of higher education in Africa: prospects and challenges","title-short":"The development of higher education in Africa","author":[{"family":"Wiseman","given":"Alexander W"},{"family":"Wolhuter","given":"C. C"}],"issued":{"date-parts":[["2013"]]}}],"schema":"https://github.com/citation-style-language/schema/raw/master/csl-citation.json"}

115. AU (2014), 'AU Outlook on Education Report: Arab Maghreb Union (AMU)' (2014) Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), at 29.

116. Wiseman and Wolhuter (n 115) 365.especially issues of development, expansion, internationalization, equity, and divergence.","event-place":"Bingley","ISBN":"978-1-78190-698-9","language":"English","note":"OCLC: 828884724","publisher":"Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.","publisher-place":"Bingley","source":"Open WorldCat","title":"The development of higher education in Africa: prospects and challenges","title-short":"The development of higher education in Africa","author":[{"family":"Wiseman","given":"Alexander W"},{"family":"Wolhuter","given":"C. C"}],"issued":{"date-parts":[["2013"]]},"locator":"365"}],"schema":"https://github.com/citation-style-language/schema/raw/master/csl-citation.json"}

5.8. The Arab Maghreb Union

The Arab Maghreb Union is a trade and economic cooperation arraignment between Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. Established in 1989, the Union is a recent creation compared to other RECs in the Continent. Among others the Union aims to achieve diplomatic, trade, and cultural objectives of its members. In the area of regional diplomatic relations it aims to strengthen peaceful settlement of disputes in the region and strong diplomatic and relations among its members; and in the area of trade and economic relations it aims to "achieve industrial, agricultural, commercial and social developments in member countries" including establishing a customs union by 1995 and a common market by 2020.

It also aims to promote shared cultural objectives of the region including through cooperation in Higher Education, where it aims to 'promote education on various levels' while maintaining Arabic and Islamic principles and 'exchanging teachers and students and creating joint university and cultural institutions as well as joint institutions specialized in research."[117] Despite its overarching treaty framework, member countries of the Union chose to have a multifaceted approach to treaty making whereby more than 30 multilateral agreements have been signed by one or more of the members often having a simple bilateral nature. Among these, only 5 agreements dealing with trade and tariff, trade in agriculture, SPS, investment guarantees, and double taxation agreements have been ratified by all members.

While the Union had ambitious treaty language and planed programs it did not hold any major high-level meeting since July 2008. Part of the reason for its dormancy has been its failure to find solutions or play a convening role to the major diplomatic disagreements and escalation of security measures between Morocco and Algeria vis a vis the recognition of Western Sahara/ Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

There is little published information on AMU's activities in the area of higher education while available secondary information shows that the activities are actually very limited. Like CEN-SAD, AMU's activities in the area of higher education overlap with regional association of universities – mainly the Association of Arab Universities. All AMU members have universities which are members of the latter.

6. Key features of regional Higher Education integration in Africa

6.1. Multiplicity of Membership, Institutions and Competition for Agenda

Despite significant achievements made by both continental and regional frameworks to strengthen and deepen cooperation in higher education in Africa, the process is tangled with a web of multiple political and institutional frameworks and agendas. Multiplicity of membership to one or more REC is the primary sources of the concern. Most African countries are members to more than one REC. Among the 55 African Countries, only 6 were members to only a single REC. The remaining belonged to at least two REC, whereas at least four countries are members to four REC. Such overlap is visible throughout the continent, where, for example, members of ECOWAS and CEMAC belong also to ECCAS and vice versa. It is also possible to see members of SADC, IGAD or EAC as members of COMESA and vice versa. The response to this development has been both of criticism and 'tolerance'.

On one hand, this development has been criticized, at least from a trade integration point of view, for it has created unnecessary number of RECs and the resulting duplication of membership, institutional and implementation costs (such as multiplicity of rules of origin), duplication of agendas, and competition for resources and agenda. A key area of concern is the challenge it imposes on areas where harmonization of policies is sought after.[118] According to the Economic Commission for Africa, "The overlap among regional economic communities also tends to dissipate collective efforts towards the common goal of the African Union. Moreo-

117. The Agreement, in article 3,https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/treaties/en/amu/trt_amu.pdf Antoni E Stevadeordal, and Philippe De Lombaerde. Governing Regional Integration for Development: Monitoring Experiences, Methods and Prospects. Routledge, 2008.

118. Muhabie Mekonnen Mengistu, 'Multiplicity of African Regional Economic Communities and Overlapping Memberships: A Challenge for African Integration' (2015) 3 International Journal of Economics, Finance and Management Sciences 417.

ver, it tends to muddy the goals of integration and leads to counterproductive competition among countries and institutions."[119]

On the other hand, the fragmentation of African RECs has been recognized as a result of intentional creation in that African RECs are "trade-plus regimes that reflect a broad set of goals and are not simply trade treaties".[120] African countries are said to passively recognize and take opportunity of multiplicity of membership to pursue one or more trade and non-trade agendas within one of more REC which they recognize as a "framework for cooperation, but not necessarily as treaties creating binding obligations".[121] The Abuja Treaty recognizes African REC's as building blocks for continental integration and the eventual creation of the AEC. Despite such lofty aspirations, both trade and other political, social and economic objectives of RECs are not harmonized enough to ensure their eventual consolidation into a continental instrument.

Various continental initiatives were thus introduced to address this challenge. Among others, the moratorium on the recognition of RECs, adopted in 2006, suspended recognition of new RECs other than the eight that were operational at the time.[122] An effort to consolidate various RECs under a broader regional umbrella, such as the establishment of a Tripartite Free Trade Area, TFTA, was also championed. Such initiative is born out of the aim to harmonize and address certain challenges such as overlapping membership among the three major RECs in Southern and Eastern Africa: COMESA, EAC, and SADC.[123] While the effort to establish the TFTA could be traced back as far as early 2000's, it was formally launched in 2008 during the first Tripartite Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the three RECs.[124] During subsequent meetings, the TFTA's road map and other draft documents were fledged out by the secretariats of the FTAs. So far, 10 countries in the COMESA, EAC and SADC regional blocs have ratified the TFTA with four more needed to attain the ratification threshold of 14 States.[125] A similar but ultimately a more successful initiative is the development of a continental trade regime under the African Continental Free Trade Area. The AfCFTA is one of the most ambitious integration projects in Africa to date: a continental free trade area covering the entire Africa.[126] It aims to create a continental single market, address challenges of overlapping membership and enhance intra-Africa trade through trade liberalization and facilitation efforts. It is also different from a typical/classical free trade area as it comprehensively covers several areas of trade and economic integration.[127] Several studies conducted to date have put forward ambitious projections on its role in boosting both intra-Africa trade as well as African exports to the rest of the world.[128]

119. Bruce Clifford Ross-Larson, United Nations., and Economic Commission for Africa., Assessing Regional Integration in Africa [I]: Assessing Regional Integration in Africa / [Ed. by Bruce Ross-Larson ... et al.]. [I] : Assessing Regional Integration in Africa / [Ed. by Bruce Ross-Larson ... et Al.]. (Economic Commission for Africa 2004) 41.

120. James Thuo Gathii, African Regional Trade Agreements as Legal Regimes (Cambridge University Press 2011) 72.

121. ibid.

122. African Union, 'Decision on the Moratorium on the Recognition of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) DOC. EX.CL/278 (IX)' <https://archives.au.int/handle/123456789/935> accessed 25 September 2021.These were i) Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); ii) Common Market of East and Southern Africa (COMESA); iii) Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); iv) Southern African Development Community (SADC); v) Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD); vi) Arab Maghreb Union (AMU); vii) Economic Community of Sahelo-Saharian States (CENSAD); and viii) East African Community (EAC);

123. Musibau Adetunji Babatunde and Gbadebo Odularu, 'Understanding Bilateral Trade Flows and Negotiating South-South RTAs: Lessons and Policy Directions for the Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement (TFTA)' in Gbadebo Odularu and Bamidele Adekunle (eds), Negotiating South-South Regional Trade Agreements: Economic Opportunities and Policy Directions for Africa (Springer International Publishing 2017) <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-45569-3_8> accessed 18 October 2021; Martha Belete Hailu, 'Regional Economic Integration in Africa: Challenges and Prospects' (2014) 8 Mizan Law Review 299.\\uc0\\u8216{}Regional Economic Integration in Africa: Challenges and Prospects\\uc0\\u8217{} (2014

124. Gathii (n 121) 180.

125. 'New Deadline Set for Ratification of Tripartite Free Trade Area – Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)' <https://www.comesa.int/new-deadline-set-for-ratification-of-tripartite-free-trade-area/> accessed 23 September 2021; 'South Africa Deposits the Instrument of Ratification of the Agreement Establishing the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA)' Ventures Africa (Abuja, 2018).

126. 'Analysis | Africa's Big New Free Trade Agreement, Explained' Washington Post <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/03/29/the-countdown-to-the-african-continental-free-trade-area-starts-now/> accessed 16 October 2021; Landry Signé, 'How Africa Is Bucking the Isolationist Trend' <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/2018-05-23/how-africa-bucking-isolationist-trend> accessed 16 October 2021.

127. Chidebe Matthew Nwankwo and Collins Chikodili Ajibo, "Liberalizing Regional Trade Regimes Through AfCFTA: Challenges and Opportunities," Journal of African Law, 2020, 1–22.

128. See, 'An Empirical Assessment of AfCFTA Modalities on Goods | United Nations Economic Commission for Africa' <https://archive.uneca.org/publications/empirical-assessment-afcfta-modalities-goods> accessed 18 October 2021. IMF, STAFF DISCUSSION NOTE The African Continental Free Trade Area: Potential Economic Impact and Challenges (May 2020, SDN/20/04), Saygili, M., R. Peters and C. Knebel (2018), 'African Continental Free Trade Area: Challenges and Opportunities of Tariff Reductions', UNCTAD Research Papers, Vol. 1, No. 15,

According to the World Bank, by 2035 intra-African trade would increase by more than 81 percent while total African exports would see a rise by about 19 percent.[129] In providing the underlying principles for cooperation among members under the agreement, it indicates that the AfCFTA will be driven by members states, sees RECs as building blocks for further integration, preserves the acquis of existing regimes, underscores the varying level of economic integration in the continent and therefore the need to use variable geometry, substantial liberalization, reciprocity, special and differential treatment etc.[130]

The other source of competition/multiplicity comes from "the myriad of organizations, institutions, networks, governmental and non-governmental bodies included in various aspects of regionalization".[131] The relationship between African RECs, formal political and institutional arrangements vis-à-vis less formal establishments, such as University Associations, provides a unique perspective. University associations are well placed to play a key role in promoting cooperation in higher education among REC member states or beyond. Not only they are the directly responsible or beneficiary bodies to higher education reform but also carry ample expertise and power to influence state policy in the field of higher education or broader economic, social and political objectives. Most importantly, they provide an alternative to the conventional political process by providing a bottom-up approach. There are currently several associations well established in the different RECs, the most prominent ones being: Southern African Regional University Association (SARUA), Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA), the Association of Arab Universities (AARU), the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES), and the Organization of the Francophone Universities (AUF).The main challenge seems to be articulating them in an adequate manner with the continental association: the Association of African Universities (AAU).

However, initiatives in the area of promoting cooperation in higher education among members by such associations can complicate and compete with similar REC level initiatives. Just like RECs, fragmentation and multiplicity of membership, duplication of mandates, limited resources etc. are a vivid reality of African University associations.[132] Such challenge brings a mix of both formal/institutional and informal/ad hoc initiatives, as well as bottom-up or top-down approaches. Several examples of such competing platforms can be mentioned in this regard. A pertinent example is the relationship between ECOWAS and African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES), which is an intergovernmental organization made up of 19 sub-Saharan francophone countries (and Madagascar) and several higher education institutions and organizations located in these countries.[133] When established in 1968, its primary goals were to promote standardization of emerging universities in the region through recognition and equivalence programs, qualifications frameworks and generally establishing academic and cultural cooperation among its members. In 1972 members adopted a Convention on Mutual Recognition of qualifications in the CAMES members States. The legal texts were updated between 1998 and 1999.[134]

The program put in place a framework where a small secretariat of the CAMES would receive and undertake evaluation of applications for recognitions that will be further evaluated and approved by sub-regional workshops of higher education experts.[135] Assessment and evaluation of academic institutions and their programs is implemented through three commissions established under it; one each for programs in arts and humanities, sciences and medicine and law, economics and management. Through a predefined input criterion such as entry requirement, curriculum, load, qualification of professionals etc. CAMES as to date recognized more than 500 degrees and certificates provided throughout its members.[136] All Francophone member states of the ECOWAS are also members to the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES).

129. World Bank, The African Continental Free Trade Area: Economic and Distributional Effects (World Bank 2020) <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/34139> accessed 11 October 2021.

130. AfCFTA, Article 5

131. Jane Knight and Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis (eds), Regionalization of African Higher Education: Progress and Prospects (Sense Publishers 2017) 24 <https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9789463009560> accessed 21 July 2021.

132. Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis, Regionalization of Higher Education in Africa: The Operationalization of the African Union Higher Education Harmonization Strategy (LIT Verlag Münster 2017) 220.

133. Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central Africa, Congo, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Democratic Republic of Congo (Drc), Togo.

134. History of CAMES, https://www.lecames.org/historique/ https://campusen.sn/index.php/le-cames , See revised agreements : - https://www.lecames.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/AccordCCI.pdf

135. Goolam Mohamedbhai, 'Towards an African Higher Education and Research Space (AHERS)–A Summary Report' [2013] Association for the Development of Education in Africa. https://www.adeanet.org/sites/default/files/ahers_summary_report.pdf

136. ibid.

While CAMES is handling the cooperation initiatives vis-a-vis the francophone countries within ECOWAS, no counterpart to the CAMES exists for Anglophone and Lusophone countries thereby leaving cooperation for Anglophone and Lusophone countries subject to separate internal or regional mechanisms. This has not only created a vacuum for cooperation in higher education within ECOWAS but also sets a tone for potentially contradictory objectives and instruments among members.

Another similar example is the relationship between the Association of Arab Universities (AArU) with CEN-SAD and the Arab Maghrib Union. Not only the AArU encompasses countries and regions outside CEN-SAD and AMU, but it is also an organization that functions under the regional and institutional structure of the Arab League.[137] The AArU has among others established a council for quality Assurance and Accreditation in Arab countries – which has established an Arab Network of Quality Assurance Agencies (ANQAHE). Hence not only the AArU conflates the activities of the CEN-SAD and AMU with the broader Arab League; it also faces its own internal dilemma vis-à-vis Francophone countries, such as Algeria, Mauritania, Tunisia and Morocco, which "share a common background in the structure and development of their Higher Education and are also linked to other countries through their membership of the AUF (Association of Francophone Universities)."[138] Such multiplicity of objectives and membership risks not only detaching the relationship with formal political organizations, such as the RECs, but also lead to duplication of membership and loyalty.

A more constructive relationship exists between the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) and EAC. As indicated above, while the IUCEA was an independent institution throughout the 1980's and 90's, in 2009 an official act of the East African Legislative Assembly formalized the standing of the IUCEA and integrated it to EAC structure.[139] Until 2016, the IUCEA implemented various EAC wide programs in the area of quality assurance, development of qualification framework, enhancing student and teacher mobility, capacity building etc. which in May 2017 led Heads of States of the East African Community to establish a "Common Higher Education Area"[140] IUCEA continued to play a technical role, under the supervision of the Council of Ministers. EAC's Vision 2050 provides that "IUCEA will be enhanced to encourage educational institutions to adopt good practices in the management of higher learning to respond to the needs of the development agenda of the region".[141]

Similarly, the SADC TCCA works and cooperates with Southern African Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN), South African Qualifications Association (SAQA) and Southern Africa Regional University Association (SARUA). SAQAN, established in 2015 is a voluntary membership-based organization that is open to all higher education regulatory agencies, university associations, higher education institutions including academic and student associations from all Southern African Countries. SARUA, established in 2005, is membership-based organization primarily of public universities in the SADC region.

It can be said that the development of inter and intra-regional networks of universities, regulatory and professional associations, have significantly supported the overall progress towards enhancing cooperation in higher education as well as improving the overall quality of higher education in the continent. However, these organizations are faced with a number of challenges. While there is no 'one way' to effective collaboration and articulation of actors, political organizations versus formal/institutional and informal/ad hoc structures which includes university and professional associations, as well as to the balance between 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' approaches, it is imperative that at least a minimal form of collaboration, in the form of either recognition, cooperation or, if possible, delegation of mandates is warranted. Any other approach to the contrary is likely to lead to "chaos, competition, and conflict".[142] Most successful approaches create a bridge between political process and formal or informal institutional structures. The latter can be used as instruments for con-

137. Arab Maghreb Union, An Outlook on Education Report, (2014), 9 https://www.adeanet.org/sites/default/files/au_outlook_report_amu_english_version_2014_web.pdf

138. Tuning Africa, Feasibility Study Into The Relevance Of A Tuning Approach For Higher Education In Africa, Final Report (2011) http://tuningacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Final_report_EDITADO_VERSION_FINAL_30062011.pdf

139. Inter-University Council for East Africa Act 2009

140. "Declaration by Heads Of State Of The East African Community Partner States On The Transformation Of The East African Community Into A Common Higher Education Area – Inter-University Council of East Africa."

141. Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) Strategic Plan 2016-2021, https://iucea.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/iucea-strategic-plan.pdf

142. Knight and Woldegiorgis (n 132) 24.

sultation, exchange of information, as well as implementers of the policies, strategies and recommendations of political level decisions.

Table 2: Overlapping Memberships in African RECs

	EAC	ECCAS	ECOWAS	IGAD	SADC	CEN-SAD	COMESA	UMA
Algeria								*
Angola		*			*			
Benin			*			*		
Botswana					*			
Burkina Faso			*					
Burundi	*	*					*	
Cameroon		*						
Cape Verde			*					
Central African Republic		*				*		
Chad		*				*		
Comoros					*	*	*	
Republic of Congo		*						
Côte d'Ivoire			*				*	
Democratic Republic of the Congo		*			*		*	
Djibouti				*		*	*	
Egypt						*	*	
Equatorial Guinea		*						
Eritrea				*		*	*	
Eswatini					*		*	
Ethiopia				*			*	
Gabon		*						
Gambia			*			*		
Ghana			*			*		
Guinea			*					
Guinea-Bissau			*			*		
Kenya	*				*		*	
Lesotho					*			
Liberia			*					
Libya						*	*	*
Madagascar					*		*	
Malawi					*		*	

Mali			*			*		
Mauritania						*		*
Mauritius					*		*	
Mayotte								
Morocco						*		*
Mozambique					*			
Namibia					*			
Niger			*			*		
Nigeria			*			*		
Rwanda	*	*					*	
Sao Tome and Principe		*						
Senegal			*			*		
Sierra Leone			*			*		
Somalia				*		*		
South Africa					*			
Sudan [a]				*		*	*	
Swaziland								
Togo			*			*		
Tunisia						*		
Uganda	*			*			*	
Tanzania	*				*			
Western Sahara								
Zambia					*		*	
Zimbabwe					*		*	

Source: compiled by the authors

6.2. Cooperation in Higher Education is Tied to the Level of Integration in Other Policy Areas

The experience of various RECs seems to show that the enhanced cooperation in the field of higher education may be tagged with the level and healthy nature of cooperation in other areas. As members are less enthusiastic to liberalize their goods and labour markets despite fully operational agreements to the contrary, progress in the area of higher education is going to land at the bottom of many other sensitive priorities. Even in the case of the EAC, with its IUCEA, it is important that members give effect to the EAC Customs Union, which has the planed year of 2018 but has been postponed indefinitely. No doubt the various sensitivities in the trade front are the reflection of the internal political interests, diverging economic competitiveness among the members and issues concerning revenue-sharing mechanisms. These issues will likely continue to drag the full implementation of the customs union.

In doing so, the same set of “setbacks” are likely to challenge cooperation in the area of higher education, where the level of integration is the least advanced. A very important example is that “fiscal issues like the agreed-upon equal treatment of students from all member countries in terms of tuition fees face resistance

from underfunded universities", [143]. It is easy to understand that the cost of financing the actual reforms in the area of curriculum and structures, the competition for market /students among higher education institutions which are located in different member countries as a result of transferability of qualifications as well as the institutional interests of relevant agencies which are worry of delegating national autonomy to regional/inter-governmental/supra-national entity are likely to slow the process of the full realization of cooperation in this space.

6.3. Reliance on a Mixture of Binding and Non-Binding Legal Instruments

The discussion in sections 2-5 have shown that the African regional higher education integration process relies on a combination of hard and soft law instruments. The most prominent legal instruments of regional higher education integration at the continental level are the AU Constitutive Act, the Abuja Treaty, the Arusha Convention (and the Addis Convention), CESA and the AfCFTA Agreement. All but one (i.e. CESA) of these legal instruments are legally binding.[144] However, this does not mean that they set out clear and legally enforceable obligations. For example, the AU Constitutive Act establishes a Technical Committee to facilitate regional cooperation in education with no obligation whatsoever for the AU Member States. Similarly, the Abuja Treaty contains detailed provisions on regional cooperation on education but without imposing any obligation on the State Parties. Instead, it mandates the yet to be established 'Community' to ensure the harmonization of national policies in education, culture, science and technology.[145] The AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Services also calls upon the mutual recognition of educational qualifications, but without imposing any concrete obligation on the State Parties. The only obligation AfCFTA Members have under the Protocol is to ensure that they afford equal opportunity to interested AfCFTA Members to negotiate a mutual recognition agreement/arrangement and refrain from applying unilateral recognitions in a manner that constitutes a means of discrimination between AfCFTA Members.[146] The non-discrimination obligation is relevant to the promotion of intra-regional trade in services, but the Protocol falls short of establishing a comprehensive legal framework for the mutual recognition or harmonization of academic qualifications. AfCFTA Members are under no obligation to achieve mutual recognition or harmonization of qualifications.

In contrast, the Arusha and Addis Conventions impose specific obligations on their State Parties. For example, the Addis Convention enjoins its State Parties to accord recognition to qualifications issued by accredited higher education institutions of other State Parties for the purpose of employment and access to its higher education institutions – subject to the fulfilment of all the qualification's requirements.[147] It also requires State Parties to define the criteria and procedures for the evaluation of qualifications and ensure due process.[148] But the implementation of the Convention rests on a patchwork of national, bilateral, regional and continental bodies that the State Parties have agreed to establish/strengthen and finance.[149] The national implementation structures bear much of the responsibility to ensure the implementation of the Convention.[150] The task of assisting and monitoring the implementation of the Convention is assigned to the Convention Committee, which is composed of a representative of each Party and meets biennially.[151] However, the Convention is devoid of any enforcement mechanism. It mandates the Convention Committee to monitor implementation, provide guidance on best practices and make recommendations on the implementation of the Convention,[152] but sets out no formal procedure for individual or state complaints against non-complying parties.

The lack of legally enforceable obligations in most of these legal instruments of regionalization coupled with the lack of enforcement mechanism for the enforceable obligations adds to the various other technical, financial and political factors that undermine the implementation of regional higher education integration commit-

143. News (n 65).

144. Note that the Arusha Convention has not yet entered into force, but it is drafted as a legally binding instrument. The Addis Convention has entered into force for the 20 State Parties that have signed the Convention.

145. Art 4.2(e), Abuja Treaty.

146. See Art 10(2-3), of the Protocol on Trade in Services, AfCFTA Agreement.

147. Art III, Revised Arusha Convention.

148. Arts III-IV, ibid.

149. Art IV.7-13, ibid.

150. Art IV.8, ibid.

151. Art IV.9, ibid.

152. Art IV.9, ibid.

ments. Implementation challenges are neither new nor unique to the regionalization of higher education. Although some scholars consider the African regional integration initiatives as flexible legal regimes that do not entail strict compliance, many others identify the lack of implementation of regional integration commitments as one of the major challenges of regional integration in the continent.[153] The implementation deficit is even more pronounced in the realm of higher education where African countries showed considerable reluctance not only to implement but also undertake enforceable legal obligations and ratify binding legal instruments of regionalization. The only continental legal instruments of higher education integration with enforceable legal obligations (i.e. Arusha and Addis Conventions) are yet to attract more than 20 signatories – even though both lack meaningful enforcement mechanisms. Most higher education regionalization initiatives remain on paper without effective implementation.[154] Part of the reason for the reluctance to undertake binding commitments stems from the top-down nature of most of the regionalization initiatives. For example, one of the key criticisms against the Arusha Convention has been its failure to consult academic and non-academic stakeholders at the national level and the attendant lack of sense of ownership of the initiative.[155] Addressing this shortcoming requires a concerted effort to make the regionalization process inclusive and participatory at all levels. The creation of platforms that brings together formal and informal actors and facilitate policy dialogue and experience sharing is equally crucial. The other factor undermining implementation is the presence of overlapping initiatives and contradictory commitments (see section 6.1). Coordination among the various institutions/initiatives at the continental and subregional levels will help address such problems. The African regional higher education integration process would also benefit from an overarching framework that oversees the regionalization process both at the continental and subregional levels.

7. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the legal and institutional frameworks for continental and regional higher education integration in Africa. African countries have been pursuing the regionalization of their higher education systems for a broad array of reasons, from strengthening the capacity and competitiveness of their higher education institutions to facilitating the mobility of students and staff across the continent and thereby fostering continental solidarity and socioeconomic development. The aspiration to effective integration is now firmly embedded within the legal and policy instruments of regional integration both at the continental and subregional levels. Virtually all regional integration institutions in the continent have the necessary legal mandate to advance the regionalization of higher education within their respective jurisdictions.

Efforts towards the realization of this vision over the last few decades have led to the emergence of multiple and uncoordinated higher education regionalization initiatives. Such initiatives address different instruments and dimensions of regional higher education integration from quality assurance and accreditation to mobility and credit transfer systems. The review of integration both at the continental and regional levels (sections 4 and 5) shows that such initiatives often operate in isolation from each other with a limited geographical of thematic focus. This indicates the lack of a holistic approach to higher education regionalization in Africa despite the general nature of the mandate for higher education integration.

An even more concerning aspect of the African regional higher education integration process is its fragmentation. The regionalization process occurs simultaneously both at the continental and (mainly) at the regional level within the frameworks of RECs. The multiplicity of institutions and regionalization initiatives is not necessarily detrimental to the integration process. It is also in line with the fragmented nature of the overall African integration process. However, the lack of coordination has turned higher education from one of the fertile grounds of regional cooperation into that of needless competition and contradiction. Coupled with the traditional barriers to regional integration (e.g. diverse national interests, etc.), the lack of coordination among the various integration institutions and their higher education integration initiatives has not only led

153. See Paul Kagame, 'The Imperative to Strengthen Our Union: Report on the Proposed Recommendations for the Institutional Reform of the African Union' (2017).

154. See Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis, 'Historical and Political Perspectives: On Regionalization of African Higher Education' in Jane Knight and Emnet Tadesse Woldegiorgis (eds), Regionalization of African higher education: progress and prospects (Springer 2017), at 44.

155. See Woldegiorgis, Jonck and Goujon (n 37); Sushita Gokool-Ramdoo, 'Harmonization of Higher Education in Africa or Why We Need to Hang in There Together' (Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) 2015) Policy Brief.

to the duplication of efforts but also undermined the implementation of higher education integration commitments. Overcoming the current fragmentation in the regionalization of higher education calls for an effective coordination and collaboration among the various formal and informal institutions both in the planning and implementation of regionalization initiatives. Vertical coordination among continental, regional and national institutions responsible for higher education integration and horizontal coordination among the various initiatives both at the continental and regional levels are of paramount importance to the emergence of an integrated higher education space in Africa. Absent such coordination, the regionalization process runs the risk not so much of moving in different directions at different speeds (which would somehow be an acceptable risk) but of generating contradictions and movements of resistance that hinder and slow down all the processes.

Summary of the chapter in a few question

In all likelihood, you will not be able to give a full and detailed answer to the following questions, but you should be able to understand their meaning and you have the obligation, at least as a participant in HAQAA training activities, to think about them.

1. African countries have been pursuing regional higher education integration ever since the early days of independence. What are the key rationales behind their pursuit of regional higher education integration?
2. One of the defining characteristics of higher education integration in Africa is the multiplicity of institutions and the attendant vertical and horizontal overlaps. To which regional integration processes does your own country participate? Do you consider this problematic? Why or why not?
3. Higher education integration features prominently in the legal and policy instruments of both continental and subregional integration. Please identify at least three legal instruments and explain how they advance regional cooperation on higher education.
4. Almost all Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have higher education initiatives. In your opinion, which REC has taken significant steps to advance regional higher education integration within its respective region and what are the steps it has taken?
5. African countries use a combination of binding and non-binding legal instruments to foster cooperation in the field of higher education. Identify at least three binding and non-binding legal instruments and discuss their key components. Which binding or non-binding instruments do you consider adequate to further enhance the regionalization of higher education in the continent?
6. The Arusha Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States (and its successor the Addis Convention) remains, at least allegedly, the principal legal instrument of higher education integration in the continent but African countries remain reluctant to ratify it. What explains their reluctance? Is their reluctance justified in your opinion?

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Chapter 4

Integration of Higher Education in Africa: An Overview

J. Shabani

Presentation

This chapter intends to give an overview of the state of development of the African integration process in the area of Higher Education (HE), both at the regional and continental levels.

As its object is so vast, it necessarily simplifies matters. However, this simplification might serve useful political and pedagogical purposes as it obliges, or at least allows, the reader to reflect on whether the simplification addresses the issues that are more relevant or, on the contrary, it leaves aside areas in which integration has advanced or should advance.

Three issues are considered: a) Recognition; b) Harmonization/Homogenization/Convergence, with particular emphasis in the area of Quality Assurance; c) Networking and Common Infrastructures.

And the analysis of these three issues is guided by a hypothesis that is later on confirmed: the need to adequately articulate the continental level of integration with the different regional ones. Here again, the reader is asked to reflect on his/her own in order to agree or disagree with the argument and, if there is agreement, on the best way to advance in this articulation.

Contents of the chapter

1. Introduction
2. The legal framework of mutual recognition of qualifications
3. Processes for harmonisation, homogenisation and convergence
4. Integration and Networking of Academic and Research Institutions and Infrastructure
5. Conclusion
6. References

1. Introduction

The integration of higher education in the world has been going on for at least seven decades. As early as 1947, a UNESCO General Conference devoted a working session on higher education to analyse the possibility of developing a world convention for mutual recognition of qualifications in order to promote international students' mobility.

In Africa, the process of integration of higher education dates back at least to 1903 with the establishment of the Ecole Normale William Ponty in Saint Louis, Senegal, to train human resources needed for the French-speaking West Africa. This school has trained graduates some of whom later became heads of state in several French-speaking West African countries. Joint higher education institutions were also created before the independence of African countries, in French Equatorial Africa and East Africa.

After independence, French-speaking countries created several inter-state higher education institutions. Some of these institutions, such as the Inter-state School of Science and Veterinary Medicine in Dakar, still exist and receive financial support from several African countries and international partners.

On the other hand, Regional Economic Communities have signed protocols on the free movement of persons and services. Higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies have played and continue to play a major role in the operationalisation and implementation of these protocols, mainly through the mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications.

Several strategies have been used to support the integration of higher education which is expected contribute to the construction of the African higher education and research space. The legal framework underpinning these integration processes is provided by the Continental and Regional Conventions for the recognition of academic qualifications and the Mutual Recognition Agreements for professional recognition of qualifications.

In addition to the mutual recognition of qualifications, the process of integrating higher education in Africa includes the harmonisation of higher education systems and programmes and quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms; the development and use of qualifications frameworks; and the integration and networking of higher education institutions and facilities.

All these efforts are mainly aimed at developing an African higher education and research space that will support the operationalisation and implementation of the protocols for the free movement of people and services at regional and continental levels.

The methodology being used to build the African Higher Education and Research Space is different from that used in Europe which was based on the Bologna Process of creating a European Higher Education Area by 2010. The construction of the African higher education space will rely on regional spaces that are being developed and will be linked at the continental level through an integration process that includes harmonisation of systems; curricula, and quality assurance mechanisms; harmonisation of credit transfer and accumulation systems; and alignment of national, regional and continental qualifications frameworks.

One of the main challenges facing African countries in the process of integrating higher education is the recognition of professional qualifications. Within regional economic communities or economic and monetary unions, several countries have signed protocols on the free movement of services known as mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) on professional qualifications in some professional fields to enable professionals from one member country to practice a profession in another. The implementation of these protocols and MRAs faces several challenges, including the incompatibility of MRAs with national policies and practices which make the agreements difficult or impossible to implement.

This report is part of a study on comparative regional integration in higher education that aims to better frame the definition and implementation of a continental/regional African higher education policy. This report should provide a synthesis of the process of regional integration of higher education in Africa, tracing the history and actors, the policy choices that have been made at different levels, the push and pull forces and the understanding of 'harmonisation' in an African context.

The report provides an analytical presentation of the strategies used at regional and continental levels in the process of integrating higher education in Africa. It is composed of three parts: (a) The legal framework for mutual recognition of qualifications; (b) Harmonisation, homogenisation and convergence processes; and (c) Integration and networking of academic and research institutions and infrastructure.

2. The Legal Framework of Mutual Recognition of Qualifications

2.1. Mutual Recognition of Academic Qualifications

1. Origins and Implementation of the Arusha Convention on Mutual Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education in Africa

The issue of recognition of qualifications has been at the heart of higher education for over seven decades. In 1947, this issue was addressed at a UNESCO General Conference. As a follow-up to this conference, UNESCO and its member countries tried to develop a Global Convention on the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications to facilitate international academic mobility. At that time, discussions within UNESCO and feasibility studies carried out did not lead to an agreement on the need to consider such a Global Convention.

Finally, it was only in November 2019 that this global convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education was adopted by the 40th General Conference of UNESCO (UNESCO, 2019). As of October 2021, only Norway had ratified it, while it requires 20 ratifications before it enters into force. Meanwhile, UNESCO supported its member countries during the 1970s and 1980s to develop five regional conventions on mutual recognition of qualifications and an interregional convention for countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea.

The implementation of this convention has faced several challenges, mainly caused by (a) the diversity of higher education systems and languages of instruction inherited from colonisation, (b) the deterioration of quality of higher education from the 1980s onwards, and (c) the ineffectiveness of the regional committee for the implementation of the convention. These challenges partly explain why, by 2001, only 21 countries and the Holy See had ratified the Arusha Convention (Shabani & Okebukola, 2017).

2. The revision of the Arusha Convention and the adoption of the Addis Ababa Convention

The above challenges prompted the Regional Implementation Committee to propose a revision of the Arusha Convention in order to (a) improve mutual recognition of qualifications, (b) promote mobility of students, academic staff and researchers and (c) contribute to the construction of an African higher education and research space. The revision of this convention, which started in 2002 and lasted 12 years, was carried out in two stages.

The first stage of the revision of the Arusha Convention: 2002-2007

This stage began in 2002 in Cape Town, South Africa, with a meeting of experts jointly organized by UNESCO and the Commonwealth of Learning. The conclusions and recommendations of this meeting were reviewed and enriched through two meetings of the Regional Implementation Committee of the Convention to which several regional higher education institutions in Africa were invited. These meetings took place in Dakar, Senegal in 2003 and 2006 respectively.

The second stage of the revision of the Arusha Convention: 2007-2014

This stage was conducted jointly by UNESCO and the African Union Commission, mainly through expert meetings and assessments of the various drafts by the legal services of UNESCO and the African Union. One of the weaknesses of the revision of the Arusha Convention is that despite the fact that the process focused on issues of mutual recognition of qualifications, which are built in part on issues of curriculum development, pedagogy and quality assurance, higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies were not adequately involved in the revision of the Arusha Convention. This situation may partly explain why the process of revising the Arusha Convention has taken so long.

During the period 2007-2014, higher education stakeholders in Africa have carried out several major activities in the areas of harmonization of higher education systems and programmes and quality assurance, in particular through the implementation of the Licence -Master-Doctorate (LMD) reform and the African Union Strategy on Harmonization of Higher Education.

There is no evidence that these activities have been designed in relation to the revision of the Arusha Convention. However, given the close relationship between harmonization, quality assurance and recognition of qualifications, these activities are complementary to the revision process of the Arusha Convention. They have greatly influenced the content of the revised Arusha Convention, in particular by explicitly including the following objectives in the revised Convention: (a) to define and establish effective quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms at national, regional and continental levels, (b) to pursue the development of joint high-level training and research programmes between higher education institutions and to promote the award of joint degrees and (c) to contribute to the Harmonization of Higher Education Qualifications, taking into account current global trends and urging countries to use national and regional qualifications frameworks, where they exist, in the recognition process. (UNESCO, 2014).

The implementation of the revised convention should therefore no longer be assessed only in terms of the number of ratifications by African countries but also in terms of the results achieved in the implementation of the objectives relating to quality assurance, harmonization, development of joint programmes and the development and use of qualifications frameworks in mutual recognition of qualifications mechanisms.

The revised Arusha convention on the mutual recognition of qualifications in Africa was adopted on 12 December 2014 at the international conference of states held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and signed by 16 countries. This Convention, now known as the Addis Ababa Convention, entered into force on 15 December 2019 after ratification by 13 member countries in accordance with Article V.2 of the Convention. It is agreed that African countries could more easily ratify the Addis Ababa Convention if they were adequately informed on the benefits they could derive from this convention in relation to the new objectives of quality assurance, joint programmes and qualifications frameworks.

3. Implementing the Addis Ababa Convention: The UNESCO-Shenzhen Funds-In-Trust (FIT) Project

The overall objective of the project is to assist African higher education systems to strengthen their quality assurance mechanisms and to develop quality assessment tools that may be used to facilitate harmonization of programmes and mutual recognition of qualifications. The project is implemented by UNESCO from 2017 with a financial support from the Shenzhen Municipal Government in China. It includes the following three components that contribute to the implementation of the Addis Ababa Convention on Mutual Recognition of Qualifications:

a. Support the establishment of new quality assurance agencies in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Togo;

b. Strengthen the institutional capacity of newly established quality assurance agencies in Egypt, Gambia, Senegal, Malawi, Zambia, and Namibia; and

c. Consolidate existing quality assurance networks in Africa and develop tools for mutual recognition of qualifications.The project has contributed to the creation of quality assurance agencies in Mali and Niger, strengthening quality assurance units in some higher education institutions, building human capacity in quality assurance, including through the training of external evaluators (Tortian, 2021).

4. The Convention on the Mutual Recognition of Qualifications in the African and Malagasy Council on Higher Education Member States

The African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (in its French acronym CAMES) was created in 1968 in Niamey, Niger, to harmonize and coordinate higher education policies and programmes in its member states. Currently, CAMES is made up of the following 19 countries listed in alphabetical order: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, and Togo (CAMES; 2021a).

Before the adoption of the Arusha Continental Convention on Mutual Recognition of Qualifications in 1981, the French-speaking countries grouped within the CAMES adopted in 1972 in Lomé, Togo, a regional convention on mutual recognition of qualifications within these countries.

The ratification of this Convention led to the establishment of the Programme for the recognition and equivalence of degrees (PRED). The implementation of this Programme was carried out through regional colloquia of experts from CAMES Member States and partner organizations. These colloquia were held every two years to analyze the applications for recognition of qualifications.

In 2006, a resolution of the CAMES Council of Ministers entrusted PRED with the responsibility of conducting accreditation and quality assurance of programmes in the CAMES member states in addition to the initial responsibility of recognition of qualifications. (CAMES 2006). Since 2009, the colloquia on recognition of qualifications have been organized annually. As of September 2013, PRED had held 27 colloquia and recognized 918 qualifications out of 1,242 applications received, which is a success rate of 73.91%. (CAMES, 2013). Applications for recognition of study periods were left to the discretion of the host universities. In 2009 the CAMES Council of Ministers meeting in its 26th session held in Dakar, Senegal entrusted CAMES with the responsibility of also accrediting research programmes.

Since 2013, recognition of qualifications is linked to the accreditation of the programmes that led to these qualifications. CAMES implements Programme accreditation according to the following stages (CAMES,2021b): Call for applications;

a. Organization by CAMES of two (2) online training sessions for higher education institutions on the accreditation processes;
b. Submission to CAMES of the Programme self-evaluation reports;
c. Analysis of applications by external evaluators through annual conferences;
d. Field visits;
e. External evaluators' recommendations;
f. Approval of the recommendations by the Council of Rectors/Presidents of Universities and the CAMES the Council of Ministers.

The accreditation process takes an average of 17 months from the date of submission of the application to the announcement of the accreditations' decision. It should be recalled that public and private institutions of higher education from member states and beyond are eligible for CAMES accreditation if they have been previously accredited at the national level and have already graduated at least one class.

5. Mutual recognition of qualifications in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

The ECOWAS was established in 1975 to promote the economic integration of its member countries, particularly through the creation of a common market among its 15 member states, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

In 1979, Member States adopted the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment, in accordance with Article 2 of the ECOWAS Treaty, calling on Member States to progressively remove obstacles to the free movement of persons, goods and services

In January 2003, the Heads of State and Government signed the "ECOWAS Regional Convention on Recognition and Equivalence of Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and other Qualifications in Member States" in Dakar, Senegal, to promote regional cooperation in the recognition of qualifications, strengthen collaboration in the use of human resources and facilitate the exchange of skills and the pursuit of studies.

The commitments made by Member States through this Convention should have make it possible to ensure the comparability and compatibility of higher education systems and programmes and to promote the mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications, in particular with a view to strengthening the implementation of the Protocol on the free movement of persons and the right of residence and establishment. The implementation of this convention has encountered several challenges, particularly those related to the disparity of systems inherited from colonization and the difference in teaching languages.

2.2. Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications

In Europe, the mutual recognition of qualifications is governed by Directive 2005/36/EC of the European Parliament and the EU Council of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications, successively amended (last consolidated version, December 2021: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02005L0036-20211210).

In Africa, each regional economic community and the African Union have adopted Protocols containing commitments on the free movement of persons and services. To operationalize these protocols, countries have agreed to mutually recognize qualifications acquired in another member country to enable the holders of these qualifications to work in the host country in a limited number of professional fields. However, as we will see in the examples below, the implementation of these Protocols is faced with several challenges that sometimes make their application impossible.

1. The East African Community (EAC)

Among the four pillars of EAC regional integration is the common market. The EAC Common Market Protocol (CMP) came into force in 2010 after ratification by the States Parties. It provides for five basic freedoms of movement, including the free movement of goods, persons, labour, services, and capital. It also provides for the rights of residence and establishment. The overall objective of the EAC Common Market is to broaden and deepen cooperation between the Partner States in the economic and social fields for the benefit of these States (EAC, 2009). In accordance with Article 11 of the Protocol, the States Parties undertook to harmonise their curricula and accreditation procedures, in particular with a view to promoting mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications to facilitate the free movement of persons and services. In this regard, by 2016, the four Mutual Recognition Agreements had been signed i.e the MRA for Accountants, Architects, Engineers and Veterinarians (EAC, 2017). Table 1 below provides details of the Partner States that have signed the Agreements. The EAC Common Market Protocol is the regional trade agreement that is most inspired by the experience of the European Union (Hook, 2014).

Table 1: Status of signing of MRAs by EAC Partner States

ARM	Date of signature	Burundi	Kenya	Kenya	Tanzania	Uganda
MRA for Architects	July 30, 2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
MRA for Accountants	Sept. 14, 2011	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
MRA for Engineers	Dec. 7, 2012	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
MRA for veterinarians	March 9, 2016	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Source: MRA Coordination Committee Report, Nairobi 25 May 2017

As shown in the table above, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda have signed all four MRAs. Burundi has not yet signed the MRAs for engineers and that for veterinarians. Tanzania has not yet signed the MRAs for architects and that for veterinarians. Negotiations for the MRAs for surveyors and lawyers were concluded in 2016 but the agreements are not yet signed. Negotiations for the MRA of pharmacists are under discussion. It should be noted that the Republic of South Sudan is not yet included in these MRAs.

It was hoped that the signing of these MRAs would lead to an increase in the number of professionals moving within the EAC Partner States to practice in the fields included in the signed MRAs. However, studies conducted by the EAC with the support of GIZ in 2012 and 2017 show that this number is limited as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Number of Registered Engineers under the MRA for Engineers

Country	No of Professional Engineers	No of Engineers Registered under MRA	% Engineers registered under MRA
Uganda	1000	3	0.30
Tanzania	5100	12	0.24
Rwanda	787	11	1.40
Kenya	2111	4	0.19
Total	8998	30	0.33

Source: MRA Coordination Committee Report, Nairobi 25 May 2017

This situation is partly explained by the challenges encountered in the implementation of these MRAs, including incompatibilities with national policies in the given areas and uneven political will for integration among the different member states. There is also the challenge of capturing and coordination of data on the mobility of these professionals. It has also been noted that some professionals who move within the Partner States do so not within the provisions of the MRAs.

Article 16 of the Protocol for the Establishment of the East African Community Common Market sets out the conditions for the free movement of services. In this article, the States Parties undertake to ensure the free movement of services provided by nationals of the Partner States within the Community. They also undertake to progressively remove existing restrictions and not to introduce new restrictions on the provision of services in the partner States by nationals of other partner States.

However, the policies of the partner states make it difficult or impossible to operationalize some MRAs. A 2014 World Bank study of EAC country legislation identified 63 measures that are inconsistent with liberalization of trade in services within the EAC member countries (World Bank,2014). The engineering profession contains the most restrictions on the movement and establishment of professionals.

According to the MRA Coordination Committee Report (EAC 2017), apart from Burundi and South Sudan, all other EAC Partner States have signed the MRA for Engineers. The Republic of Burundi did not have the competent authority for Engineering profession by the time the MRA was signed while the Republic of South Sudan had not joined the EAC by 2012 when the MRA for Engineers was signed. The MRA allows an Engineering professional licensed and registered in one of the Partner States to move and, practice as an Engineer in another Partner State within the provision of the MRA. . It also has provisions for recognition of Professional qualifications attained from outside the EAC (foreign qualifications). These must first be recognized by the Competent Authority in the home country of the person bearing the qualification. For instance, a Burundian with an Engineering Qualification attained out of the EAC, must first have the qualification recognized by the Competent Authority in Burundi, before they can use the qualification to practice in another EAC Partner State. In Kenya, registration of foreign professionals is subject to proof that such expertise skills are not available in the country. In Uganda registration of foreign engineers is allowed for residents who stayed in the country for 6 months of each year for the last 5 years.

Such restrictions also apply to other MRAs signed in other fields. In Uganda, an accountant must have several years of experience and be a member of one of fifteen international associations of accountants in order to obtain a work permit. In Kenya, foreigners cannot practice law-related professions without the supervision of a local lawyer. In Uganda, applicants to the legal profession must be resident in that country and have five years' experience in an approved country. Furthermore, even if they meet these requirements, applicants to

the profession must have resided in Uganda for one year before applying. Such restrictions also exist in the profession of architecture, particularly in Uganda, where these professionals are required to practice on a temporary and supervised basis (World Bank, 2014). The EAC has embarked in the process of addressing the identified barriers impeding the implementation of the MRAs. In tandem with this awareness creation and capacity building of the Competent Authorities is being undertaken. Annex VII of the Common Market Protocol providing the legal framework for the implementation of the MRA has also been finalized and is awaiting approval.

While it is notable that quite some time has gone by since the Study on the Implementation of the MRAs was undertaken in 2018, it should be noted that some progresses have been made. The outcomes of the study were adopted by the Council which directed the Secretariat to implement them. These key outcomes included: establishment of inter-profession technical working group on MRAs; establishment of databases for information sharing; establishment of internship programs within the signed MRAs; fast tracking establishment of regulatory frameworks and institutions where they do not exist and to urge Partner States that have not signed some of the MRAs to consider doing so.

The Council thus directed the Secretariat to implement these recommendations and develop roadmaps for the implementation of the signed MRAs. In 2019, meetings of the Competent Authorities and key stakeholders of the signed MRAs were held in all the EAC Partner States (except RSS) to develop the roadmaps for implementation of the signed MRAs. The roadmaps identified the barriers impeding the implementation of the MRAs and proposed solutions to address them. Partner States were urged to amend some of their national legislations to allow for the implementation of the MRAs. On implementation of the recommendation on internship programs, a pilot project was undertaken within the MRA for Veterinarians through which several young professionals got internship opportunities in other Partner States. One of the major impediments to the implementation of the MRA has been the finalization and adoption of the Annex VII of the Common Market Protocol. When the Annex was presented to the Sectoral Council responsible for legal and judicial affairs, some inconsistencies were identified which occasioned the need for redrafting the Annex. In June 2019, meetings of the Legislative Draftspersons and the Competent Authorities of the signed MRAs were held in Kampala, Uganda and the inconsistencies in the Annex addressed. The Annex has once again been re-submitted to the sectoral council on legal affairs for consideration.

It should be noted that while these processes have been going on through the coordination of the EAC Secretariat, there have been activities going on within the ambits of the Competent Authorities and respective professional associations. There has been more vibrancy within the MRA for Accountants and that for Engineers. In 2021, the EAC has commenced the process of reviewing the implementation of the roadmaps and also working with the Competent Authorities on how the impending barriers could be addressed. Work on this has commenced on the MRA for Engineers and will then proceed to that of the Accountants. In November 2021 the EAC secured funding of 3.4 million US dollars to facilitate cross-border movement of professionals through utilization of digital technologies. The *Digitalization of East African Trade and Integration (DIGEAT)* project will, among others, strengthen the capacities of the Regulatory Authorities; strengthen capacities for utilization of digital technologies for data gathering and exchange; developing of digital instruments and frameworks to facilitate the mobility of professionals. Along this, priority has been put on the finalization of Annex VII as it provides for the legal basis for the implementation of the MRAs. The MRAs have also got more push from the requirements for the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which is a high priority area at the EAC (Otieno Jowi, 2021).

2. The West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA)

The Treaty establishing the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) was signed in 1994 to create a common market between member states based mainly on the free movement of people, goods, services, capital, and the right of establishment of persons.

To achieve these provisions, member states have signed several directives, including directives for the free movement of medical doctors, architects, accountants, lawyers, dental surgeons, pharmacists, and veterinarians within the WAEMU member countries.

The implementation of these directives faces several challenges that constitute major obstacles to the free movement and establishment of professionals in other WAEMU member states. These challenges include: (a) doctors and pharmacists cannot belong to two professional orders at the same time (UEMOA, 2005) (b) for medical doctors, architects, accountants, pharmacists, and dental surgeons the exercise of the profession in another country is allowed on a temporary basis (UEMOA, 2005a; 2005b; 2006)

3. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)

The recognition of professional qualifications in COMESA member countries is provided for in Article 15 of the Treaty on Trade in Services within the Community. In this article, Member States undertake to mutually recognize qualifications, experience and skills acquired in another Member State for the purpose of granting a license or authorization to practice a profession.

COMESA is composed of the following 19 Member States: Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Decisions on the recognition of professional qualifications are based on recommendations from professional bodies and Qualification Authorities or regulators in their respective territories and a mechanism established by the Committee on Trade in Services (CTS). As soon as this mechanism is approved by the Council of Ministers, then Member States shall accordingly mutually recognise each other's qualifications for the purpose of licensing or certification of service suppliers' body for the authorization, licensing, operation, and certification of service suppliers and in particular professional services.

The Member States also agreed to cooperate in providing necessary technical assistance and capacity building to the States in need to support the implementation of this article. The results already achieved in the operationalization of this article are not well documented. However, given the fact that COMESA includes EAC countries that face major challenges in implementing the Protocol on the Movement of Persons and Services, one can easily conclude that efforts are still needed to fully implement mutual recognition of professional qualifications within COMESA.

4. The Southern African Development Community (SADC)

The Protocol on Trade in Services was signed by Heads of State during in August 2012 in Maputo, Mozambique. The objective of the protocol is the liberalization of trade in services in the SADC region in a mutually beneficial manner. The Protocol is modelled closely on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)

The Protocol sets out general obligations for all States parties regarding the treatment of services and service suppliers from other States parties. It does not contain liberalization obligations but provides a mandate to negotiate progressively the removal of barriers to the free movement of services.

In 2012, the States Parties undertook negotiations to liberalize six priority sectors namely communication services, construction services, energy-related services, financial services, tourism services and transport services. These negotiations were expected to be completed in 2015 and open up access to professionals from different countries to this trade in services. Unfortunately, this deadline was not met. In June 2019, the Committee of Trade Ministers adopted the Schedule of Commitments in Construction and Energy Services and in July 2021, it adopted the Guidelines for the Second Round Negotiations, which is to prioritize services related to the SADC Industrialization Strategy (SISR) 2015-2063. There is no information that shows the outcome of these negotiations.

5. African Union Commission

The African Union adopted in 2018 a protocol to the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community on the free movement of persons, right of residence and right of establishment. In Article 18 of this protocol, African countries have committed to mutually recognize academic and professional qualifications and to develop a continental qualifications framework with a view to promoting the free movement of persons among member states.

The Protocol must be ratified by 15 Member States in order to enter into force. As of November 2021, only four countries - Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe - had ratified it. However, as indicated in Section 7 below, the African continental qualifications framework is being developed.

3. Processes for Harmonisation, Homogenisation and Convergence

3.1. Scope and Limits of the "Licence-Master-Doctorate" (LMD) Reform

1. The Origins of the LMD Reform

The "Licence-Master-Doctorat" (LMD) reform, with "L" referring to the old French 3-year Licence degree, stems from the adoption of the Bologna Declaration in 1999 by 29 European Ministers of Education to launch the Bologna process for the construction of a European Higher Education Area by 2010. (Bologna, 1999). The Bologna conference adopted six commitments known as the Bologna Process Goals. These objectives have been revisited, enriched, and extended to other areas during the seven conferences of Ministers organized to follow up on the implementation of the Bologna Declaration.

The LMD system is characterized by the following elements

a. a system based on three-degree levels: bachelor, master and doctorate;

b. an organization of courses into semesters and teaching units;

c. the implementation of the European Credits Transfer System (ECTS): Bachelor's degree (180 credits), Master's degree (120 credits) and Doctorate (180 credits) and;

d. an automatic delivery of a descriptive annex to the diploma.

The implementation of the LMD reform in Europe took place over several years and the degrees of the old higher education systems were maintained for several years. The integration of the old national degrees into the LMD system required the establishment of national qualifications frameworks.

The main objective of the LMD reform is to harmonise higher education systems, training programmes and quality assurance mechanisms in order to promote student mobility, mutual recognition of qualifications, lifelong learning and to improve employability and self-employment of young people in order to address the challenge of the mismatch between training and employment in a sustainable way.

2. Implementation of the LMD Reform in Africa

Many African countries adopted the LMD reform from 2003 in order to maintain their historical university cooperation linkages with Europe, in particular with France, and to allow the graduates of their respective countries to fully benefit from the opportunities offered by this reform, in particular the mobility of credits and the international recognition of their qualifications. Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria adopted the LMD reform in 2003, 2004 and 2005 respectively. In sub-Saharan Africa, the reform was first adopted by economic and monetary communities and the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education between 2005 and 2007, before being adopted by French-speaking, Portuguese-speaking, and Spanish-speaking countries from 2010.

The Communities are (a) the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) in 2005, composed of six countries: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Chad (CEMAC, 2005), (b) the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education in 2006, composed of 19 countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal and Togo. (CAMES, 2006). and (c) the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) in 2007, composed of 8 countries Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. (UEOMA 2007).

The implementation of the LMD reform has required the revision of existing training programmes or the development of new ones according to learning outcomes curricula development and their alignment with the needs of the world of work or self-employment. This reform has also introduced the need for accreditation of programmes on the basis of appropriate minimum standard in order to facilitate the mobility and mutual recognition of qualifications.

To this end, the CAMES Council of Ministers decided in 2006 to entrust CAMES with the mandate of conducting accreditation and quality assurance of higher education institutions and programs in its member countries. This mandate is implemented through the Programme for the Recognition and Equivalence of Degrees (PRED).

To achieve this mandate, CAMES has developed accreditation standards and self-assessment guidelines for higher education institutions and programmes (CAMES, 2018). The accreditation of programmes is conducted annually according to the procedure already described in Section I.1.4.

For various reasons, several higher education institutions have encountered major challenges in implementing this reform and these challenges have sometimes led to tensions between the various stakeholders including students, academic staff, university management and trade unions (Shabani, Okebukola and Oyewole, 2014).These tensions have now subsided and all countries are making efforts to improve the implementation of this reform taking into account good practices and lessons learned from other countries in Africa and beyond.

It is recognized that some countries, such as Senegal, are more effective in achieving the expected results of the LMD reform. Among the success factors of this reform in Senegal, the following ones are mentioned

a. Each university has a strategic plan that is in line with the strategic plan of the Ministry of Higher Education and Research;

b. Each public university has signed a performance contract with the Ministry of Higher Education in order to contribute to the implementation of the LMD reform at the national level.

c. Through these performance contracts, the Government and donors have provided universities with adequate financial resources to support the implementation of the LMD reform. This support is partly motivated by the fact that, in its national development plan, Senegal gives high priority to higher education and research.

d. Senegal also has a national policy on higher education and research to achieve its vision of an emerging country by 2030;

e. Creation of a Presidential Council for Higher Education and Research, chaired by the Head of State;

f. Expansion and strengthening of the university education in almost in all the geographical regions in order to promote access to university education and diversify and professionalize training opportunities. This new configuration has been achieved through the construction of new universities, establishment of new university campuses of existing universities in the provinces and establishment of two-year higher institutes of professional education in each province of the country;

g. Implementation of a program called “1 laptop per student” in all public universities.

The LMD reform reinforces the process of integration of education in CAMES member countries, which are moving confidently towards the creation of a CAMES higher education area. In addition to the program of mutual recognition of qualifications set up in 1972, CAMES has also developed a major component of the integration of higher education which is unique in the world: the program of promotion of academic staff and researchers which is organized for several member countries on the basis of harmonized evaluation criteria.

However, while one of the objectives of the LMD reform is to promote employability of young people, in several African countries, graduates of Bachelor’s degree programmes are unable to find a job due to a mismatch between the training acquired in higher education institutions and the needs of the job market. For example, in the CAMES area, the unemployment rate of young people is estimated at 68% and in Senegal, each year, nearly 200,000 young graduates of bachelor’s degree programs are unable to find a job because they do not have the skills required by the world of work (Diop, 2017)

In Senegal, the Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation has instructed universities to revise their Bachelor's degree programmes to better align them with the needs of the world of work, in particular by creating new purely professional Bachelor's degree programmes, and/or by creating a structure within their universities that would prepare students for employment.

In Morocco, more than 25 per cent of graduates from Bachelor's programmes are unemployed, and 47.2 per cent of students drop out without any degree. To address this challenge and improve the match between training and employment, the Government of Morocco has decided to replace the 180-credit Bachelor's degree programs with 240-credit programs. These new programmes were implemented by 12 universities on a pilot basis from September 2021.

It is necessary to address the mismatch between undergraduate education and employment in order to further promote student mobility within countries implementing the LMD reform. Steps forward are certainly occurring. According to the September 23, 2021 edition of the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Graduate Employability Rankings 2022, which measures the performance of universities in terms of graduate employability, six South African universities (the University of Cape Town, the University of the Witwatersrand, the University of Pretoria, Stellenbosch University, the University of Johannesburg and the University of KwaZulu-Natal), two universities in Egypt (the American University in Cairo and Ain Shams University), and the University of Nairobi in Kenya were ranked among 550 institutions worldwide for their performance in producing graduates with the skills and knowledge required by the world of work. It is strongly recommended that curriculum reforms that are envisaged by Senegal and Morocco consider the experience of these nine African universities.

Unfortunately, even though the LMD system is often called "Bachelor-Master-Doctorate" (BMD) in reference to the Anglo-Saxon system, there are two major differences between the two systems that make credit mobility difficult to implement between the French-speaking countries implementing the LMD reform and the English-speaking countries. These are the concepts of credits as shown in the table 3 below and, as we will see later, the Programme accreditation procedure.

Table 3. Minimum Credits for Graduation

Typical qualifications	Countries implementing the LMD reform	Countries implementing the European Credits Transfer System	EAC region	SADC Countries
Bachelor degree	180	180	160	360 480 - For the Professional Bachelor degrees
Master's degree	120	120	180	240
Doctorate degree	180	180	540	360

Source: LMD Reform documents, East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (2015) and Tuaundu, 2021)

In order to promote programme comparability and compatibility between the Francophone and Anglophone systems and thus to facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications awarded in both systems, it is necessary to (a) harmonize the credit transfer and accumulation systems through the Tuning Africa Project by aligning them as closely as possible to the system of countries implementing the LMD system and (b) harmonize accreditation and quality assurance procedures and practices by aligning them as closely as possible to the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) in Higher Education.

3.2. Quality Assurance and Accreditation Pathways

1. The Harmonisation of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in African Higher Education (HAQAA 2)

HAQAA 2 is a joint initiative of the African Union and the European Union designed in the context of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and funded by the European Commission to consolidate and strengthen the results achieved during the first phase of the project (HAQAA 1). The first phase of this initiative was carried out between 2016 and 2018 and implemented by a consortium of organisations consisting of the University of Barcelona (Lead), the Association of African Universities (AAU), the European University Association (EUA), the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD); in the second, the association OBREAL Global replaces the U. Barcelona as leader of the consotium. The first phase of the project contributed to the implementation of the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF) and the African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM) and the development of the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) in Higher Education.

In December 2018 the ASG-QA were used to conduct a pilot assessment of quality assurance agencies in Senegal, Egypt, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. The second phase of this project will be implemented before the end of 2022. It will focus on the following activities: (a) promoting the culture of quality in higher education institutions through online awareness campaigns through the AQRM, (b) strengthening the capacity of quality assurance agencies to implement the ASG-QA, (c) strengthening the capacity of the African Union to implement PAQAF and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA), and (d) coordinating the feasibility study for the establishment of the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency.

2. The Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF)

The PAQAF is a major conceptual framework for the harmonization of quality assurance and accreditation of higher education in Africa that was adopted by the African Union in 2016. It comprises several tools and activities that are at different levels of design and implementation. Some tools are currently being implemented, some are under development, and some are in project form. The PAQAF consists of the following six tools: (a) African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA), (b) Continental Qualifications Framework, (c) African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM), (d) Addis Ababa Regional Convention for Mutual Recognition for Qualifications, (e) African Credit Accumulation and Transfer System, (f) Continental Register for Quality Assurance Agencies and Quality Assured Higher Education Institutions - We briefly outline the status of development of each of these tools.

2.a. The African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) in Higher Education

The ASG-QA were developed between 2017 and 2018 by the HAQAA 1 initiative under the Africa-EU strategic partnership to contribute to the harmonization of accreditation and quality assurance in Africa by providing quality assurance institutions and agencies with comparable and internationally compatible accreditation and quality assurance benchmarks.

The ASG-QA are composed of three parts: Part A, which covers internal quality assurance (IQA) of higher education institutions; Part B, which covers external quality assurance (EQA) of higher education institutions; and Part C, which focuses on quality assurance of quality assurance agencies (QAAs). The three parts of the ASG-QA should be seen as an integrated and coherent set of standards that constitute a framework for quality assurance in Africa.

In December 2018, the ASG-QA were tested through pilot assessments of four national quality assurance agencies and four advisory visits to newly established agencies or ministries preparing to establish an agency.

The objective of these assessments was both to evaluate the relevance of the tools developed in Part C of the ASG-QA and to determine the extent to which the activities of these agencies and their frameworks are in line with the African Higher Education Quality Assurance Standards and Guidelines.

2.b. African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM)

AQRM was adopted by the African Union in 2007 to establish a system for assessing the quality of higher education institutions and comparing their performance on the basis of a set of pre-established common criteria. This mechanism also aims to support and encourage higher education institutions to undertake self-assessment exercises to promote development of quality cultures in their respective institutions (AU, 2013).

The AQRM is therefore essentially a tool for institutional and Programme self-assessment that consists of three parts: (a) the survey questionnaire, (b) the quality benchmarks at institutional level, and (c) the quality benchmarks at Programme level. It should be noted that the AQRM is not an instrument for ranking institutions, even if it can allow institutions to be grouped in the same quality clusters, providing a basis for promoting harmonization of programmes and mutual recognition of qualifications. AQRM can therefore facilitate the implementation of ASG-QA through self-assessments and harmonisation of programmes of institutions belonging to the same quality cluster.

A pilot evaluation of the AQRM was conducted in 2010 in 32 higher education institutions located in 11 countries. The results of this evaluation led to the development of a revised version of the AQRM survey questionnaire and scoring instrument. In 2017, fifteen universities from the five regions of Africa were selected to implement AQRM in their respective institutions. (AQRM, 2018; HAQAA, 2019). These universities were supported to conduct the self-assessment surveys. They benefited from site visits conducted by teams of African and European experts. The AQRM tool is currently available on the Association of African Universities website.

2.c. The Addis Ababa Convention for Mutual Recognition of Qualifications

As noted in Section I.1.2 the Addis Ababa Convention was adopted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in December 2014 to support the mutual recognition of qualifications. It entered into force in December 2019 after ratification by 13 countries. The Convention was designed to address the challenges faced in the implementation of the Arusha Convention but also to introduce new objectives and provisions that will accelerate the construction of the African Higher Education and Research Area. Among the innovations introduced in this convention, it is worth mentioning the objectives relating to quality assurance; joint programmes and qualifications frameworks.

Thus, the effectiveness of the Addis Ababa Convention should no longer be measured only in terms of the number of ratifications but also in terms of the results achieved in relation to the new objectives assigned to the Convention. On the other hand, according to Article IV.7, the Addis Ababa Convention should be implemented through National Implementation Structures, the Convention Committee, African Network of National Implementation Structures and Bilateral and regional bodies. These structures should be used appropriately to effectively achieve the expected results of the Convention, including their use as awareness building structures to encourage African countries to ratify and implement the Convention.

The UNESCO-Shenzhen FIT project mentioned in Section I.1.3 will contribute to the implementation of the Addis Ababa Convention through several strategies that will help to build internal and external quality assurance capacity, including the capacity of quality assurance agencies. This project is therefore closely linked to the ASG-QA.

2.d. African credit accumulation and transfer system

Credit transfer and accumulation systems play a major role in the process of harmonization of programmes and mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications. Unfortunately, as just shown in Table 3, the credit concepts used in the different regions of Africa are different and this situation constitutes a major challenge for mutual recognition of qualifications between these regions. There is therefore a need to harmonize this credit concept, preferably by aligning it with the transfer system used in the countries implementing the LMD system in Africa which is itself already harmonized with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The development of an African credit transfer and accumulation system was one of the expected outcomes of phase 3 of the Tuning Project. However, this third phase could not take off and some of its expected activities have been brought within the scope of HAQAA-2.

2.e. The Continental Register for Quality Assurance Agencies and Higher Education Accredited Institutions

As in the case of the European Tertiary Education Register, PAQAF will support the development of a register or database of credible quality assurance agencies, The register will also contain higher education institutions accredited by these agencies. The database will be accessible to all higher education stakeholders to enable them to make decisions based on credible information.

As part of the strategies used to operationalize the East African Community (EAC) Common Higher Education Area, the Inter University Council for East Africa has started to develop a higher education register that will provide all the required information on accredited institutions and programmes in the EAC.

3.3. The Qualifications Frameworks Route

According to Tuck (2007), a qualifications framework is an instrument for the development, classification and recognition of skills, knowledge, and competencies along a continuum of agreed levels (Tuck, 2007). The qualifications framework is built on qualifications that are recognized in a country or region and are characterized in terms of levels of education and descriptors concerning knowledge, skills and competences.

The main purpose of a qualifications framework is (Shabani & Okebukola 2017): (a) to ensure the comparability of different qualifications and to make different pathways through the education system more visible; and (b) to improve international comparison with the aim of facilitating credit transfer, mobility, and recognition of foreign qualifications. Qualification's frameworks may cover the entire education system or be limited to a sub-sector such as higher education.

Over the past decades, several countries and regions of the world have developed national, regional, or continental qualifications frameworks to promote mutual recognition of qualifications, including through the referencing of different qualifications frameworks. These include the European Qualifications Framework, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Qualifications Framework, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Qualifications Framework and the East African Community (EAC) Higher Education Qualifications Framework.

In this study, we briefly present the cases of SADC and EAC and compare them with the European Qualifications Framework and ASEAN Qualifications Framework.

1. The SADC

SADC was established on 17 August 1992 to promote socio-economic, political and security cooperation among its member states and to foster regional integration in order to achieve peace, stability, and wealth. It is made up of the following 16 countries: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The Regional Qualifications Framework (RQF) was adopted in 2011 and implemented from 2017, in response to Article 2 of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training, inter alia to promote mutual recognition of qualifications within SADC and beyond and thereby contribute to the implementation of the protocols on the free movement of persons. It is a ten-level framework, which covers all levels and categories of education and has level descriptors built on learning outcomes with three learning domains: knowledge, skills and autonomy and responsibility.

SADC recognises that academic and professional mobility of human resources is a major pillar of regional integration. To promote regional mobility, it has adopted several legal instruments, some of which explicitly support the implementation of qualification frameworks and accreditation and quality assurance systems. These include the Protocol on Education and Training 1997-2020; the Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons (2005); the Protocol on Trade in Services (Article 7) 2012, updated in March 2017, which calls explicitly for the mutual recognition of qualifications for professional services, and the Action Plan on Labour Migration (2020-2025). The operationalization of these protocols requires the establishment of mechanisms for the mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications. The RQF is therefore at least partly a response to this concern.

The implementation of the RQF involves the following structures: The SADC Council of Ministers, Ministers responsible for education and training, the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation (TCCA), the TCCA Executive Committee (TCCA EXCO) and an Implementation Unit (IU) based at the SADC Secretariat.

Unfortunately, this Unit is not yet operational. Its role in particular in the implementation of the 6 programmes of the RQF is provisionally ensured by the Member States on a voluntary basis according to the following distribution of responsibilities and with technical support from the SADC Secretariat and the TCCA:

a. Programme 1: Alignment of NQFs to SADC-RQF - South Africa;
b. Programme 2: Quality Assurance – Botswana;
c. Program 3: Verification - Kingdom of Eswatini;
d. Programme 4: Articulation, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) – Namibia;
e. Programme 5: Advocacy and Communication – Zambia;
f. Programme 6: Governance - TCCA and SADC Secretariat.

The RQF has developed guidelines and criteria necessary for NQFs to align to the Regional Framework. To date, two countries, South Africa and Seychelles have completed the process of aligning their NQFs to the RQF and Mauritius has submitted its alignment report to the SADC Secretariat for validation. The SADC has the most advanced regional qualifications framework in Africa. The SADC Development Strategy 2030 provides for relevant measures that will strengthen and consolidate the implementation of the SADC-RQF. It is therefore anticipated that in the coming years, several countries will be able to align their NQFs to the RQF which will enhance mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications within the region and beyond.

A comparative study conducted in three continents in May 2021 by the Capacity development Programme (CDP, 2021) of the African Continental Qualifications Framework, showed that the alignment criteria used by the SADC Qualifications Framework (Africa) are similar to those of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Qualifications Framework and the European Qualifications Framework. The main elements of this comparative study extended to the East African Community Regional qualifications framework are given in Table 4.

2. The EAC

The EAC Common Market came into force in July 2010 to promote economic growth and development and to ensure the free movement of persons and services and the right of residence and establishment in a partner state. To ensure these freedoms of movement and establishment, state parties have committed themselves through Article 11 of this protocol to mutually recognise academic and professional qualifications obtained in a partner state of the community.

The East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE) was approved by the Council of Ministers in April 2015 to contribute to the operationalization of Article 11 of the EAC Common Market Protocol. Mutual recognition of academic qualifications will then be determined through the referencing or alignment of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs) to this regional framework. The EAQFHE is composed of 4 levels (5 to 8) and has defined minimum credits for graduation. The development of EAQFHE will benefit fully from the experience and good practices of the SADC region and other regions of the world including ASEAN and Europe and the experience of Tanzania, an EAC country which also belongs to SADC.

The SADC and EAC regions and the Francophone countries could constitute a first block of the African higher education and research space through the following actions: (a) aligning the EAQFHE with that of SADC- RQF, (b) harmonizing programmes within the three regions, (c) harmonizing credit transfer and accumulation systems by aligning them as much as possible with those of countries implementing the LMD reform which are already aligned with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and (d) harmonizing accreditation and quality assurance procedures and practices by aligning them with ASG-QA

Table 4: Overview of Regional Qualifications Frameworks in the SADC (Africa), ASEAN (Southeast Asia) and Europe

Feature	SADC-RQF	ASEAN-RQF	EQF	EAQFHE
Region/Community	Southern African Development Community - 16 countries	ASEAN 10 countries	European Union and other countries with specific status of cooperation - 38 countries	East African Communiy
Establishment	Established in 2011; Operations: from 2017	Endorsed 2014 by Ministers Economy, Education and Labour	Council Communication: 2008; Revised in 2017	Approved by Council Ministers in 2015
Referencing Criteria and Procedures	10 criteria	11 criteria	10 criteria	Information not available
Countries that referenced/aligned NQFs to RQF and qualifications documents	2 (South Africa, Seychelles); 1 submitted report for adjudication (Mauritius)	The RQF Referencing Reports of ASEAN Member States: Malaysia Philippines Thailand Indonesia	36 countries referenced	None
RQF Scope and levels	Comprehensive; Inclusive all sub-sectors 10 levels Descriptors: knowledge, skills, autonomy and responsibility	Comprehensive; Inclusive all sub-sectors 8 levels Descriptors: knowledge and skills; application and responsibility	Comprehensive; Inclusive all sub-sectors 8 levels Descriptors: knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy	Comprehensive; Inclusive all sub-sectors 8 levels Descriptors: knowledge, skills, responsibility

Source: Capacity Development Programme (CDP, 2021) of the Continental Qualifications Framework

3. The African Continental Qualifications Framework

In 2018, the African Union adopted the Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community on the Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence, and the Right of Establishment. In Article 18 of this Protocol, African countries have committed to mutually recognize academic and professional qualifications and to develop a continental qualifications framework.

The process of developing an African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) was launched in July 2019 by the African Union in collaboration with the European Union, the German agency GIZ and the European Training Foundation (ETF) to achieve the following outcomes by 2023: (a) Enhance the skills and qualifications of African people and support the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and support the development of the African Higher Education and Research Space.

3.4. Scope and Limits of Curriculum Convergence Processes

1. Continental approach

The African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Regional Economic Communities have taken initiatives to harmonize higher education programmes and mechanisms used to accredit them and ensure their quality in order to contribute to the construction of the African higher education and research space. Since 2007, the AUC has been committed to harmonizing programmes, and accreditation and quality assurance systems and developing a Continental African qualifications framework through the implementation of its Continental Strategy for Harmonization of Higher Education

1.a. The African Union Harmonization Strategy

The harmonization of programs at the continental level is carried out mainly through the implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Higher Education in Africa. This strategy was adopted in 2007 to achieve the following results by 2015 (AU, 2007):

- **a.** Establishment and maintenance of a continental political commitment to the harmonization process;
- **b.** Establishment of minimum standards in targeted programmes;
- **c.** Establishment of joint study programmes and student mobility programmes;
- **d.** Development and maintenance of a continental qualifications' framework for higher education.

Harmonization of programmes is defined as Programme comparability within the region or the continent based on agreed benchmarks, where the benchmarks are points of reference against which something may be measured. These are subject statements describing what gives a discipline its coherence and identity and define what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the abilities and skills needed to develop understanding or competence in the subject.

In this context, a Programme is defined as a set of coherent educational components, based on learning outcomes that are recognized for the award of a specific qualification through the accumulation of a specified number of credits and development of specified competencies. Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which are defined in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitude.

The 2015 deadline for the expected results of the Harmonization Strategy in Africa has been extended to at least 2022 through the implementation of the Tuning Project (which came to an end in 2018) and the Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) Initiative in the context of the African Union-European Union Partnership on Higher Education

Outcome (a) relating to the establishment and maintenance of a continental political commitment to the harmonization process is now largely achieved. Since 2007, African countries have been strongly committed to the process of harmonization of higher education systems, programmes and accreditation and quality assurance mechanisms. This commitment has been implemented through several actions undertaken at continental, regional and national levels, including the adoption and implementation of the LMD reform in Francophone, Lusophone and Spanish-speaking countries; the development of regional qualifications frameworks in SADC countries, the development of a regional quality assurance system and harmonization of programs in the East African Community, the revision of the Arusha Convention on Mutual Recognition of qualifications, and the implementation of the African quality rating mechanism.

As indicated in the study on the development of the Pan African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework- PAQAF- (Okebukola and Fonteyne, 2014), quality assurance is closely linked to harmonization and mutual recognition of qualifications. Harmonization facilitates transparency, recognition facilitates mobility and the development of cooperation, and quality assurance creates trust.

The African Union chose to implement its Continental Harmonization Strategy through the following project and initiatives

a. For the harmonisation of programmes and the establishment of joint programmes through the Tuning Africa Project, in collaboration with the European Union in the context of the Africa-EU strategic partnership,

b. For the harmonization of quality assurance and accreditation through the Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) initiative and the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF),

c. For the development and maintenance of a continental qualifications framework, through the development of the African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF) in collaboration with the German agency GIZ and the European Training Foundation (ETF).

As already mentioned, some of the ground to be covered by phase 3 of Tuning has had to be introduced in HAQAA-2.

It is recognized that achieving the expected outcomes of the Continental Harmonization Strategy in an integrated manner will enhance the comparability and compatibility of higher education programmes and qualifications in Africa, facilitate the mutual recognition of qualifications, promote student, and staff mobility, and contribute to the creation of an African higher education and research space.

In order to achieve these objectives, it seems necessary that the strategy for the harmonization of programs and accreditation and quality assurance mechanisms of the African Union comprises (a) the definition of a harmonized African credits accumulation and transfer system which should be compatible with the system used in the countries implementing the LMD reform; (b) the harmonization of the procedures and practices of accreditation and quality assurance in particular by aligning them with the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) in Higher Education (HAQAA, 2018) and (c) ensuring the comparability of regional and national qualifications frameworks.

We present below the Tuning Africa Project which intended to implement harmonization of programmes in the context of the African Union's Higher Education Harmonization Strategy through the learning outcomes curriculum development methodology.

1.b. The Tuning Africa Project

The Tuning Africa Project was adopted in 2011 in the context of the African Union-EU Strategic Partnership, to contribute to the implementation of the Strategy for the Harmonization of Higher Education in Africa. It aims at promoting comparability of programmes, mobility of students and staff between regions, promotion of international competitiveness of graduates and improvement of employability and self-employment of young people, to sustainably address the challenge of mismatch between training and the world of work.

The Tuning Africa Project was implemented through a collaborative and consultative process that involved all stakeholders in the development of specific programmes based on the learning outcomes. It focused on generic and specific competencies required, credit transfer and accumulation systems, appropriate pedagogical methods, and quality assessment and improvement.

The first phase of this project implemented between 2011 and 2013 mobilized the participation of 57 universities from 35 countries in all regions of Africa and several major stakeholders in higher education, including academic staff, students, the professional communities, and potential employers of graduates of these programmes. The project focused on harmonization and development of programmes in the following five areas: agriculture, civil engineering, mechanical engineering, medicine, and teacher education.

Table 5. Overview of the participation and scope of the first phase of the Tuning Africa Project

Subject Area	Lead Managing Country of the SAG (Subject area group)	Number of African countries participating in the pilot group
Agriculture	Nigeria	12
Civil Engineering	Ethiopia	10
Mechanical Engineering	Cameroon	12
Medicine	Egypt	10
Teacher Education	South Africa	13
Total		57

A detailed analysis of the experience of the first phase of the Tuning Africa project was published by Hahn and Teferra (2013) and specific analyses by area were published in Onana and al (2014).

The second phase of the project, implemented between 2015 and 2018, increased the number of programmes from 5 to 8 and the number of universities participating in the project from 57 to 107 universities located in 42 countries. The new programmes cover the fields of economics and applied geology and a cross-cutting theme: higher education management.

The first two phases of the project achieved the following results:

About 100 experts trained on curriculum development based on the learning outcomes methodology in eight fields of knowledge; training programmes developed; partnerships developed between universities that participated in the project; employability of graduates and self-employment of young people improved.

The failed third phase of the project, planned to be implemented during the period 2019-2022, should have aimed at achieving the following outcomes: Strengthen the capacity of universities and their partners in the identification of generic and specific competences; establish a network of African experts in the Tuning methodology; develop and adopt an African credit transfer and accumulation system.

2. Regional approach

2.a. The East African Community (EAC)

The EAC is a regional organization made up of six partner states: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. Its headquarters are located in Arusha, Tanzania. Its vision for regional integration includes the following steps: creation of a customs union, a common market, a monetary union, and a political federation. The conceptual framework for harmonization of programmes in the EAC was developed by the Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) in collaboration with all higher education stakeholders, including universities, and National Commissions for Higher Education which are responsible for accreditation and quality assurance in the EAC partner states The harmonization of higher education in the East African community is closely related to the implementation of the Protocol establishing the Common market.

The harmonization of programmes in the EAC is based on two major pillars, namely a regional quality assurance system and the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education- EAQFHE (IUCEA, 2015)

The regional quality assurance system is built on four operational tools (EAC 2015): (i) A policy framework, entitled “The regional quality assurance policy framework - Principles and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in East Africa” (IUCEA, 2014), (ii) Regional quality assurance instruments presented in a Handbook for Quality Assurance in Higher Education entitled: “Road Map to Quality”, published in four volumes covering internal and external quality assurance (IUCEA, 2016a) , (iii) Benchmarks for academic programmes; and (iv) the East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network.

As of November 2021, IUCEA had harmonized programs in the following eight areas: Business Studies; Computer Science and Information Technology; Education; Medicine and Dentistry; Engineering; Mathematics; Sports Education Programs; and Agriculture.

The harmonization of higher education systems and programmes led to the adoption by the Heads of States of the EAC Partner States in May 2016 in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, of a Declaration on the Transformation of the East African Community into a Common Higher Education Area (IUCEA, 2016b). It is recognized that this common area will promote student and staff mobility and the free movement of people and services in accordance with the Treaty establishing the East African Community signed in 1999 and the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Community Common Market ratified in 2010.

2.b. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

As mentioned in Section I.1.5 ECOWAS has tried to harmonize academic programs in member countries using the "ECOWAS Regional Convention on Recognition and Equivalence of Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and other Qualifications in Member States". Unfortunately, the implementation of this Convention has been faced with several challenges. However, despite these challenges, ECOWAS countries have successfully harmonized their health sciences and pharmacy programmes under the coordination of the West African Health Organization (WAHO), a specialized ECOWAS institution in charge of health issues established in 1987 in Bobo Dioulasso in Burkina Faso.

WAHO has harmonized virtually all health sciences and pharmacy curricula in ECOWAS countries, including curricula for undergraduate medical education; nursing and midwifery education; basic pharmacy, environmental health, and community health education; and specialized pharmacy education. These programmes have been accredited by the Regional Council for Health Professional Education in partnership with the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES) and professional associations.

4. Integration and Networking of Academic and Research Institutions and Infrastructure

In the French-speaking countries of Africa, the process of integration of higher education goes back at least to 1903 with the creation of the "École normale William-Ponty" to serve all the former French colonies grouped in French West Africa, which was composed of the following countries: Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Burkina Faso, Togo and Benin.

This school trained several graduates who later became Heads of State of French-speaking West African countries. Other common institutions of higher learning were established in this region, including the "Ecole de Médecine de l'Afrique occidentale française" (Medical School of French West Africa) in 1918 and the University of Dakar in 1957. The Medical School was established to train medical personnel, pharmacists and women's interns needed to run the medical and pharmaceutical facilities in the former French colonies.

Joint higher education institutions were also established in the French Equatorial Africa, which included Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville, Chad and the Central African Republic; and in other parts of Africa. Prior to the independence of African countries, Makerere University College in Uganda admitted, for several years, students from Tanganyika and Zanzibar in East Africa, Rhodesia and Nyasaland in Southern Africa, which are now known as Zambia, Zimbabwe and Malawi. In 1963, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania decided to establish the University of East Africa consisting of three constituent colleges, namely, Makerere, Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. When the East African University was dissolved in 1970, the three countries each decided to establish a national university which in turn decided to set up an inter-university committee to coordinate their collaboration. This committee later evolved into the Inter University Council for East Africa.

4.1. Case study of the inter-state school of science and veterinary medicine of Dakar in Senegal

This school was established in 1968 as a veterinary school located in Dakar, Senegal. It was elevated to the level of an Inter-State School in 1971 by a decision of the Heads of State and Government of the Common African and Malagasy organization (in its French acronym OCAM). Currently, it is supported by 15 African countries which contribute to its operational budget. These countries are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Republic of Congo, Gabon, Mauritania, Niger, Central African Republic, Rwanda, Senegal, Chad, Togo and Mali.

This school implements the "Licence-Master-Doctorate" (LMD) system. It offers Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes and has a doctoral school.

4.2. The Pan African University.

The Pan-African University was created to respond to the needs of the African continent for a critical mass of high-level human resources in priority areas of development and researchers capable of generating new knowledge required for development.

The operating model of the Pan-African University is based on capitalising on the experience and expertise of the best African universities and research centres to create regional knowledge hubs.

The Pan-African University aims to (a) promote science and technology and strengthen the quality of higher education and research institutions, (b) strengthen partnerships between African universities and research centres on one hand, and with industry on the other, mainly using regional and international networks, (c) increase and strengthen systematic intra-African mobility of researchers and students and (d) produce an adequate supply of highly qualified Africans able to innovate in order to address the challenges facing the development of the African continent; (Okebukola, 2016).

The Pan-African University is composed of five regional institutes, each located in one of the five geographical regions of Africa and covering the following knowledge areas: Space Science in South Africa, Water and Energy including Climate Change in Algeria, Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation in Kenya, Life and Earth Sciences in Nigeria, and Governance, Humanities and Social Sciences in Cameroon. Each of the five regional institutes will be networked with other institutions in their respective fields of scholarship, creating a network of networks.

4.3. The Centres of Excellence.

Centres of excellence have been used in Africa for several decades as a strategy for pooling the human, financial and infrastructural resources needed to implement teaching and research programmes at higher education institutions. Several centres of excellence are currently available and operational in Africa. They have been established with the support of various partners and cover several fields of knowledge. Wherever possible, centres of excellence are networked to enable them to have a greater impact on human resource development.

The development of centres of excellence in Africa has taken a major step forward since the implementation of the NEPAD Africa's Science and Technology Plan of Action (NEPAD, 2005). More recently the development of centres of excellence in Africa has been supported by the African Centres of Excellence project initiated by the World Bank; the Centres of excellence in biomedical sciences in the East African Community and the centres of excellence established by NEPAD since it became an African Union development agency (AUDA). It is worth noting that the Pan-African University presented above is conceived as a network of centres of excellence in the various thematic areas that it covers.

In this section, we briefly present the contributions of AUDA-NEPAD, the World Bank and the EAC to the development of centres of excellence in Africa.

1. The AUDA-NEPAD Networks of Centres of Excellence

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) identified the establishment of regional networks of centres of excellence as one of the viable strategies for implementing the Africa's Science and Technology Plan of Action. To this end, networks of centres of excellence were set up in several areas, including water, where two regional networks of centres of excellence were established in 2009. These networks consisted of 9 universities in Southern Africa coordinated by Stellenbosch University in South Africa and 5 universities in Western Africa coordinated by the Cheikh Anta Diop University of Dakar in Senegal. The network has since been extended to Central and East African regions.

In 2019, the AUDA-NEP AD Heads of State and Government approved the establishment of 5 centres of excellence and entrusted the coordination of these centres to the countries indicated in brackets. These centres of excellence cover the following areas: Rural Resources and Systems (Senegal); Science, Technology and Innovation (South Africa); Human Capital and Institutional Development (Kenya); Climate Resilience (Egypt); Supply Chain and Logistics (Central Africa); The designation of the country that will host the Centre of Excellence in Central Africa is not yet complete. (AUDA- NEPAD 2019; 2020).

2. The African Centres of Excellence in Higher Education (ACE) Project

The ACE Project was initiated by the World Bank in partnership with African countries to support higher education institutions to develop their capacity in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), environment, agriculture, applied social sciences, education and health.

The first phase of this project (ACE I), which was launched in 2014 in Central and West Africa, selected 22 centres. The second phase (ACE II) of the project, earmarked for Eastern and Southern African countries was launched in 2016 and selected 24 Centres. The ACE I and ACE II are coordinated by the Association of African Universities and the Inter University Council for East Africa respectively.

The quality and importance of the results obtained by these centres motivated the World Bank and the French Development Agency, in partnership with African countries, to launch the ACE for Impact on Development project in 2018 to support postgraduate training and applied research in already existing areas of the ACE project and in new areas deemed relevant for Africa's development. The project has selected 43 centres, including 18 existing ACE centres. In addition to these 43 centres, the project selected 5 emerging centres; 1 'top-up' centre in social risk management; and 5 colleges and schools of engineering. The new areas include sustainable cities; sustainable power and energy; social sciences and education; transport; population health and policy; herbal medicine development and regulatory sciences; public health; applied informatics and communication; and pastoral production.

3. Centres of Excellence in the East African Community (EAC)

States Parties have committed themselves through Article 118 of the EAC Treaty to cooperate in the field of health. One of the strategies used to implement this commitment has been to establish, with the support of the African Development Bank, a network of centres of excellence for capacity building and higher education in biomedical sciences. These centres cover the following areas: Nephrology and Urology (Kenya); Cardiovascular Health Sciences (Tanzania); Oncology (Uganda); Biomedical Engineering, eHealth and health rehabilitation (Rwanda); vaccines, Immunization and Health Supply Chain Management (Rwanda); and Nutritional Sciences (Burundi).

In addition to the centres of excellence in biomedical sciences and the ACE II project, the East African community has several other centres of excellence that are coordinated by the Inter University Council for East Africa. These include the centre of excellence for ICT in East Africa and the East African Centre for Mathematical research.

Conclusion

As African countries increasingly engage in the search for appropriate strategies to build an African higher education and research space that will promote mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications and student mobility, it becomes important and urgent to conduct necessary studies to suggest effective policies to achieve this outcome.

This report has identified and analysed all the strategies currently being implemented to support the integration of higher education in Africa.

Current trends show that African countries are progressing relatively well towards the construction of the higher education and research space, except for mutual recognition of professional qualifications, where the implementation of mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) is facing major challenges, mainly due to the incompatibility between MRAs and the national policies of member states.

The analyses carried out in this report show that the different regional economic communities and the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education will collaborate effectively in the creation of an African higher education and research space through (a) harmonisation of their curricula by aligning them with the curriculum harmonisation methodology of the Tuning Africa Project; (b) harmonization of quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms by aligning them to the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASG-QA); (c) harmonization of their credit transfer and accumulation systems with those of the African countries implementing the LMD reform. The latter system is compatible with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS); and (d) alignment of national and regional qualifications frameworks with the African Continental Qualifications Framework.

On the other hand, African countries need to make significant and sustained efforts to implement the protocols on the free movement of services and mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) for professional qualifications in order to enable African professionals to practice a profession in another country.

Summary of the chapter in a few questions

In all likelihood, you will not be able to give a full and detailed answer to the following questions, but you should be able to understand their meaning and you have the obligation, at least as a participant in HAQAA training activities, to think about them.

1. Do you understand the different nature of the processes of recognition of academic qualifications, on one side, and of professional qualifications, on the other? Do you think that they can, or must, be pursued using the same instruments ('instruments' in the sense of the Analytical Framework discussed previously in Chapter 2 of these Materials)?
2. Can you compare the present state of curricular reform in your country with that in other regions in Africa?
3. Do you understand the role of Qualifications Frameworks in order to organize Education in all its different levels and allow for comparisons between countries and favour mobility? Which is the state of affairs on this issue in your country?
4. What is your opinion on the role to be played by common HE and Research infrastructures in the process of regional and continental integration? Do you think they constitute an alternative path to that of student and staff mobility?
5. Would you add or delete some issue to and from those studied by the author in an overview of the present and the future of African HE integration?

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Part 3

Elements of comparison with other regions/continents

Chapter 5. ASEAN Regional Integration in Higher Education — National Higher Education Research Institute, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Chapter 6. 30 years of regional academic integration in MERCOSUR. Insights from a region of the South for a Dialogue with Africa — Marina Larrea

Chapter 7. EU Integration in the Area of Higher Education — R. Torrent

Chapter 5

ASEAN Regional Integration in Higher Education

National Higher Education Research Institute, Universiti Sains Malaysia

Presentation

South East Asia is a region of the world certainly very different from the African Continent and its regions. However, there is no doubt that important similarities exist between them, from the importance of the colonial past to the divergences in population numbers between their respective member states and the coexistence of different languages. Therefore, the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) experience in the area of Higher Education integration can be of interest in order to reflect and discuss on HE integration in Africa.

The chapter is very specifically focused on the activities developed at the regional level, and references to the different national levels are kept to a minimum. The three editions of the ASEAN Work Plan for Education are given particular attention. And four “key themes” are defined and explained in order to contribute to the discussion of whether regional HE policy must be concentrated on a short list of themes or should be enlarged to the whole very complex set of aspects of HE.

The chapter also emphasizes that the ASEAN regional integration project and the regionalization of ASEAN higher education should be seen from a historical comprehensive approach with political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions. This should include understanding the establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and key developments relevant to economic and socio-cultural integration and in particular the establishment of an ASEAN Community

Contents of the Chapter

1. Introduction
2. ASEAN: An Overview
3. Regionalization of ASEAN Higher Education
4. Key Themes
5. Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

1. Introduction

Community building is brought about by the process of regionalization which leads to enhanced integration, and this process of integration also involves higher education (Hettne & Soderbaum 2000; Knight 2012). Regionalization is often seen in terms of a project driven by actors within and beyond a shared community through a process of dealing with its internal dynamics, geopolitical and economic factors. The regionalization process and the building of a common community, such as the ASEAN Community, is therefore socially constructed by the interests and identities of its actors taking into consideration the interaction process and their subjective understandings (Chao 2014b).

Community building is driven by endogenous (focused on the nation-state and other actors' desires and needs) and exogenous (usual reactions to globalization and other regional developments and initiatives) factors. Endogenous factors include common challenges by ASEAN member countries and ensuring competitiveness in the ASEAN region, while exogenous factors include the acceptance of the knowledge-based economy discourse, higher education's role in sustainable economic development, the growing global higher education market, the influence of regional higher education initiatives such as the European Higher Education Area, and ASEAN's need to engage in inter-regional collaboration including for higher education. However, tensions between universal ideals and norms, and aspirations for regional cultural, managerial and ideational autonomy exists with the process of adoption, adaption and 'indigenisation' of ideas and norms advanced by Acharya (2012) as the only solution to address these tensions.

The ASEAN regional integration project and the regionalization of ASEAN higher education should be seen from a historical comprehensive approach with political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions. This should include understanding the establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and key developments relevant to economic and socio-cultural integration and in particular the establishment of an ASEAN Community. Understanding the regionalization of ASEAN higher education also needs to trace key initiatives including the development of an ASEAN higher education common space or area and the various thematic issues including quality assurance, recognition, mobility and credit transfer systems. Furthermore, the influence of the development within the European Higher Education Area, international organisations and ASEAN partners particularly within the ASEAN-plus-three framework also need to be considered.

2. ASEAN: An Overview

The establishment of ASEAN on the 8th of August 1967 by its founding member countries namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines was initially an effort to promote regional security during an era characterized by the cold war ideological divide and a need for regional security collaboration. Brunei Darussalam joined ASEAN in 1984 and together with the five founding member countries are commonly called the ASEAN6.

The end of the cold war shifted ASEAN's focus to regional economic cooperation (particularly with the rise of China and India in the late 1980s) which spearheaded the establishment of the ASEAN Free Trade Area, and adoption of the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Services (which includes education) in 1992 and 1995 respectively. This led to the expansion of ASEAN membership to include the CLMV (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam) countries. However, the accession of the CLMV countries to ASEAN in the mid and late 1990s increased political, socio-economic and cultural diversity, and increased complexity of the 'ASEAN Way' of regional policymaking. The ASEAN Vision 2020 and the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II adopted in 1997 and 2003 proposed the establishment of the ASEAN Community by 2020 (later advanced to 2015) which is anchored on three pillars: the ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC); the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC); and the ASEAN Socio-Economic Community (ASCC). The creation of these three communities were initiatives to develop an ASEAN Community, which is envisioned to facilitate the free movement of goods, services, investment and skilled labour, and freer flow of capital within the ASEAN region (Chao 2016) which are seen in the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 (see table 1). Important to note, while ASEAN

Secretariat is mandated as a regional intergovernmental organisation, the primary purpose is to serve ASEAN member states in discussion and consensus-building, and not meant to be a supra-national government.

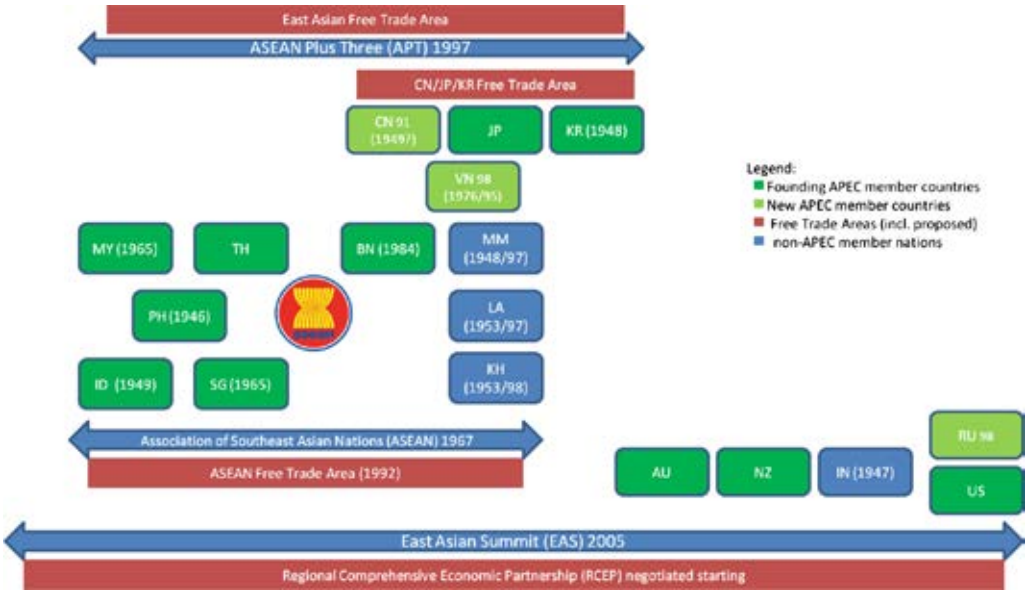
Table 1: ASEAN Community Vision 2025 (Kuala Lumpur Declaration)

	ASEAN Community Vision 2025 (Kuala Lumpur Declaration)	
Consolidate	**Envision**	**Complement**
Rules-based, People-oriented & People-centered	Peaceful, Stable & Resilient	UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda
	Three Pillars of ASEAN Community	
Political-Security	**Economic**	**Socio-Cultural**
Implement ASEAN agreements	Highly integrated & cohesive regional economy (resolution of non-trade barriers) (movement-invesment, skilled labor, business persons & capital)	Commited, participative & socially-responsive (accountable/inclusive mechanisms)
Promote/protect human rights	Competitive, Innovative & Dynamic	Inclusive (promote/protects human rights)
Promote/Strengthen Peace-oriented values	Enhanced connectivity & sectoral cooperation (regional frameworks)	Dynamic & harmonious (Identity, culture & heritage)
Strengthen ASEAN unity, cohesiveness & centrality		Innovate & contribute to Global community

(Source: Chao, 2017)

ASEAN also expanded its cooperation with non-member countries through the ASEAN Plus 3 (APT) with the inclusion of China, Japan and South Korea, and the East Asian Summit (EAS) Frameworks, which adds Australia, India, New Zealand and eventually the United States of America and Russia to APT participating countries in 1997 and 2005 respectively. This expanded partnership enhanced ASEAN cooperation in initially economic but eventually to socio-cultural (including education) sectors which led to several ASEAN linked free trade agreements, the establishment of an East Asian Free Trade Area, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership which was signed by all EAS (with the exclusion of India) in November 2020. Figure 1 presents a graphic presentation of ASEAN regionalism with East Asian regionalism.

Figure 1: East Asian Regionalism



(Source: Chao, 2014a)

The above historical development of ASEAN and its various ASEAN-linked frameworks should also be seen in terms of political and economic interdependencies. Aside from the influence brought about by neoliberalism, the cold war, technological advances, the increasing economic globalization, post-colonial Southeast Asia, which suddenly saw a large number of recently independent nation-states, turned to regionalism as an instrument of ensuring regional peace and security during a time of nation-building and the ideological divide predominant during the cold war era. ASEAN's central role in Asian (particularly East Asian) regionalism was driven by the fear of neo-colonialism and the fear of a hegemonic force overshadowing Asian regionalism (Acharya 2012). East Asian economic interdependency also increased with the formation of the East Asian regional production networks, and the establishment of various regional and bi-lateral agreements among the region's (including Southeast Asia) nation-states (Kimura & Obashi 2011; Chao 2014, 2016).

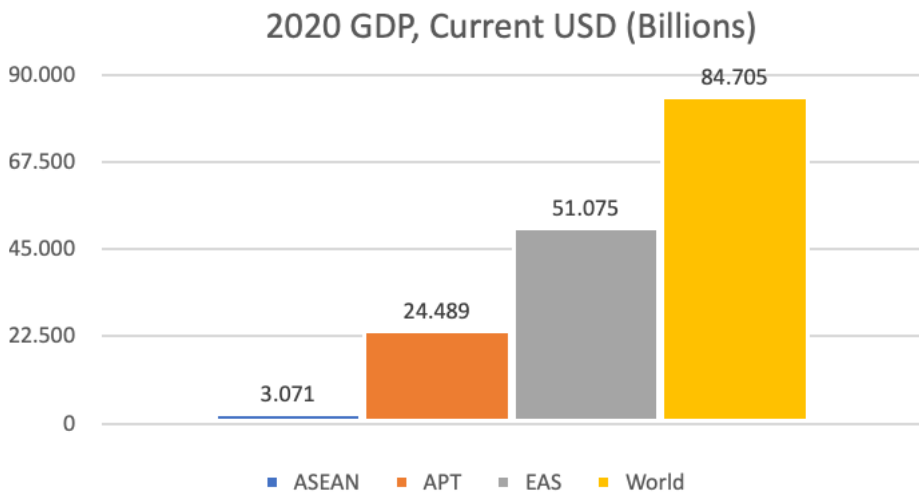
Aside from having a population of 655,916 and a growth rate of 1.1% (as of 2019), ASEAN has a relatively young population with 50.8% and 33.3% in the 20-54 and 19 and below age brackets respectively (ASEAN Statistical yearbook 2020). However, ASEAN also needs to be considered within its APT and EAS frameworks which has a total population of 2.252 billion and 4.112 billion (see table 2) respectively representing roughly 29% and 53% of the 7.794 billion world population as of 2020. Furthermore, in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), ASEAN, APT and EAS represent roughly 3.63%, 29%, and 60% of the world's GDP (see figure 2). The size of the population and economies of ASEAN, particularly concerning ASEAN-linked frameworks (APT & EAS) highlights the importance of ASEAN regionalism including its related initiatives, particularly in higher education.

Table 2: ASEAN & ASEAN-linked Frameworks 2020 Population (in Millions)

	ASEAN countries	ASEAN Plus Three	East Asian Summit
Australia			25.7
Brunei Darussalam	0.454		
Cambodia	16.2		
China		1,412	
India			1,355
Indonesia	270		
Japan		125.8	
Korea, Republic of		51.8	
Lao PDR	7.0		
Malaysia	32.66		
Myanmar	54.8		
New Zealand			5.1
Philippines	109		
Russian*			144.1
Singapore	5.7		
Thailand	69.51		
United States of America*			329.48
Vietnam	97.58		
Sub-total		1,589.6	1,859.38
Total	662.904	2,252.504	4,111.884

(Source: compiled by authors from ADB data & statistics website; * - data from APEC database)

Figure 2: ASEAN, APT & EAS GDP, Current USD (2020, Billions)



(Source: calculated by authors from World Bank data: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?view=chart)

The above-mentioned historical development of ASEAN is instrumental and serves as the foundation of the regionalization of ASEAN higher education. However, the ongoing regionalization of European higher education especially the Bologna Process and the various initiatives linked with the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) should be seen as a major driving force for the regionalization of ASEAN higher education. Furthermore, partner countries within the APT and EAS frameworks, and eventually the European Union influences the regionalization of ASEAN higher education through their economic and political relationships and project funding provided (Chao 2016).

3. Regionalization of ASEAN Higher Education

3.1. Overview

The foundation for the regionalization of ASEAN higher education was established in the 1980s with the establishment of various ASEAN-based higher education networks and organizations (e.g. SEAMEO-RIHED, ASEAN University Network (AUN)). However, the focus on the regionalization of ASEAN higher education started with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization – Regional Center for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO-RIHED) which proposed and explored the development of an ASEAN Higher Education Common Space or Area in 2007.

Table 3 presents a snapshot of various regionalization of higher education initiatives in Southeast and East Asia utilizing Jane Knight's Functional, Operational and Political Approaches (FOPA) taking into consideration the ASEAN centrality within the Asian region and the relationship of ASEAN within its APT and EAS frameworks. As seen in the table, these initiatives focused on developing frameworks (e.g. ASEAN Qualification Reference Framework, Quality Assurance guidelines), regional credit transfer systems, recognition agreements (including the various Mutual Recognition Agreements on key professions since 2005), and student and researcher mobility schemes. These initiatives started in the late 2000s as the ASEAN advocated for the establishment of the ASEAN Community.

From the administrative approach, the key players include SEAMEO-RIHED, AUN, AUN-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA), and ASEAN Quality Assurance Network. Both SEAMEO-RIHED and AUN have been active in developing credit transfer systems, student mobility (through ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) program and AUN student mobility initiative respectively), and quality assurance (through AQAN and AUN-QA

respectively). Furthermore, AUN-Quality Assurance has not only developed guidelines and manuals for quality assurance but has actively been undertaking the program and institutional assessments for AUN member universities. Several non-AUN member universities in the ASEAN region have adopted AUN-QA standards and practices in their respective quality assurance processes.

The ASEAN Secretariat has significantly contributed to the harmonization of ASEAN higher education in the areas of developing the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework. Since the mid-2010s, ASEAN has been working closely with the European funded EU-SHARE project in the areas: qualifications framework, quality assurance, credit transfers and intra-ASEAN and ASEAN-EU student mobility. The EU-SHARE project just published its study on enhancing intra-ASEAN university student mobility, which is a scoping study on key issues relevant to intra-ASEAN student mobility including visa, administrative processes, and even establishing a single-branded ASEAN scholarship scheme. In mid-2021, the Working Group on ASEAN Higher Education Mobility was also established under the EU-SHARE project in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat.

Table 3: ASEAN Higher Education Initiatives

	1990s	2000s	2010s	2020s
Organizational				
Administrative	SEAMEO-RIHED (1993*) AUN (1995) AUN-QA (1998)	QAN (2008)		
Functional				
Mobility	UMAP (1993)	AIMS (2009)	AUN Student Mobility initiatives (2010) CAMPUS Asia (2010) EU-SHARE Intra-ASEAN Student Mobility (2015-2022)	Study on Enhancing Intra-ASEAN University Student Mobility (2020) Working Group on ASEAN Higher Education Mobility (2021)
Credit Transfer		SEAMEO-RIHED Harmonizing Credit Transfer in GMS & Beyond (2009)	AUN-ACTS (2010) Harmonizing CTS in GMS and beyond (2012) Academic Credit Transfer Framework for Asia (2013) EU-SHARE (2015-2022)	
Quality Assurance		AUN-QA Guidelines (2004) AUN-QA Manual (2006) Chiba Principles for QA in HE in Asia Pacific (2008)	Guide to AUN-QA Assessment at Program Level (2011) ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework for HE (2011) EU-SHARE (2015-2022)	
Qualifications Framework			ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (2010) EU-SHARE (2015-2022)	
Mutual Recognition			Revised UNESCO Recognition Convention in Asia & Pacific (2011 Tokyo Convention)	
Political				

Regional Integration	AFTA (1992) AFAS (1995) ASEAN Vision 2020 (1997)	East Asian Vision Group (2001) East Asian Study Group (2002)	East Asian Vision Group II (2012)	
HE Regional Integration		Brisbane Communiqué (2006) SEAMEO-RIHED Harmonization of HE (2008 & 2009)	APT Plan of Action on Education (2010-2017) ASEAN Work Plan on Education (2016-2020)	ASEAN Work Plan on Education (2021-2025)

(Source: adapted and updated from Chao 2014a; 2016; 2018; 2020)

3.2. ASEAN Work Plan for Education

There have been three editions of the ASEAN Work Plan for Education: 2011-2015, 2016-2020 and 2021-2025. The higher education goals set within these work plans highlight the focus areas on the role of higher education in developing the ASEAN identity and ASEAN Studies, quality assurance and university-industry partnerships (including intra-ASEAN student mobility), enhancing the capacity of ASEAN higher education institutions to address lifelong learning (also as a response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic) and strengthening harmonization of ASEAN higher education as seen in table 4. In terms of harmonization of ASEAN higher education, the ASEAN Work Plan 2021-2025 focuses on intra-ASEAN mobility (including virtual mobility), support for qualifications framework and quality assurance initiatives and tools, designing and institutionalizing an ASEAN digital credit transfer system, establishing an ASEAN-branded scholarship scheme, and capacity building of ASEAN higher education institutions management, teaching, research and cross-border higher education. The focus on harmonization of ASEAN higher education is clearly articulated in the ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2021-2025 outcome 3 “enhanced regional capacity in higher education as part of lifelong learning provision, including the harmonization of ASEAN higher education” and, in particular, output 3.2 “sustained and strengthened ASEAN capacity in higher education harmonization through strategies, mechanisms and scholarship provision (ASEAN 2021).

The ASEAN partnership with the EU-SHARE project and the higher education goals of the ASEAN Work Plans on Education (2016-2020 & 2021-2025) highlights the increasing focus on regionalization of ASEAN higher education within the ASEAN Community building project and as a response to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the ASEAN Secretariat established the ASEAN Working Group on Higher Education Mobility in July 2021 which is tasked to take ownership, develop a cohesive roadmap, and facilitate the transfer of EU-SHARE program outcomes which include initiatives focused on the implementation of national qualifications frameworks and the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework; implementing digital modalities of internationalization; digital credit transfer system and credential recognition; and the design, ownership and implementation of an ASEAN-branded scholarship to boost intra-ASEAN student mobility (McDermott 2021).

Despite the significant guidance and support by the European funded EU-SHARE program, the development and implementation of the various program components can be considered influenced and directed through the ASEAN Way of dialogue and consensus-building contributing to the localization of European higher education practices, tools and methodologies to the ASEAN higher education needs and contexts. To date, the implementation and monitoring and evaluation framework for the 2021-2025 work plan have yet to be announced.

Table 4: Higher Education in ASEAN Work Plans

ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2011-2015	**Priority 1** Promoting ASEAN Awareness Supporting ASEAN Studies programmes for undergraduate and graduate education	**Priority 3** Cross-border mobility and internationalisation of education Share knowledge of regional resources and interconnectedness of ASEAN Member States Strengthen activities that support student exchanges and scholarships at all levels. Develop a regional action plan to internationalise higher education with a focus on regional strategies	
ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2016-2020	**Sub-Goal 1** Promote ASEAN awareness through strengthening of Southeast Asian history and indigenous knowledge Advancing ASEAN Studies programme and courses at higher education level through online and cross-border mobility	**Sub-Goal 6** Strengthen the higher education sector through the implementation of robust quality assurance mechanisms Develop harmonized quality assurance mechanisms within the context of ASEAN Supporting institutional capacity in developing harmonized quality assurance mechanisms within the context of ASEAN	**Sub-Goal 7** Foster the role of higher education in the area of socio-economic development through University-Industry Partnership Developing stronger linkages between universities, industries & communities Increasing the number of intra-ASEAN international students
ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2021-2025	**Outcome 3** Enhanced regional capacity in higher education as part of lifelong learning provision including the harmonization of higher education Strengthened role of HEIs in lifelong learning through the provision of flexible, innovative, multi-disciplinary, cross-border education & research collaboration Sustained & strengthened ASEAN capacity in higher education harmonization through strategies, mechanisms & scholarship provision		

(Source: ASEAN 2012, 2016, 2021)

4. Key Themes

Overview

As we explore the regionalisation of higher education in ASEAN beyond the overarching efforts towards the ASEAN Community and specific ASEAN Work Plan, four key themes also emerged. Mobility, quality assurance, and recognition of qualifications and credit transfer, on the one hand, have been the active key initiatives that are happening in the higher education sector of the region. These three themes are also inter-connected but championed and supported by different entities in the region. However, on the other hand, there is also a key theme illuminating the highly active participation of non-ASEAN actors in the higher education sector of ASEAN, yet concurrently a relatively low level of participation and engagement solely among ASEAN members. The fourth key theme is rather unique and worthwhile to consider more carefully the underlying drivers and motivations of regionalisation in higher education as well as determinants of the success and benefits to ASEAN and each member state.

4.1. Key Theme 1: Mobility

Globally, as of 2015, there were about 715 million people aged 18-23 and this age bracket is synonymous with "college-age" students. Of which, slightly over 200 million students were enrolled at higher education institutions, globally (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018). Student and academic mobility in the ASEAN region underpin the region's globalisation and internationalisation of higher education efforts. There are nearly 20 million higher education students and over 7000 universities (British Council, 2018) in the ASEAN region and student mobility can support the development of regional ASEAN identity. As such, student mobility is driven by the varied motives of stakeholders. For governments, it is driven by socio-economic gains as well as political agendas. For higher learning institutions, student mobility is promoted to gain revenue via student fees as well as to develop students' employability and personal skills. For students, they want to gain international social and cultural experiences as well as enhance their career aspirations.

According to a study titled 'The Shape of Global Higher Education: Understanding the ASEAN region (British Council, 2018), released at the British Council's Going Global conference in Malaysia in 2018, notes that nine out of 10 countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN (except Myanmar) scored highly or very high on transnational openness, which indicates national-level support for inbound and outbound mobility of students and academics, the openness of academic programmes and collaborative research activities. In the report, Malaysia and Thailand scored 'very high' on the openness of the higher education system, particularly supporting student and academic mobility. The report also mentioned that Malaysia and Singapore are in the top 20 countries globally that welcome incoming international students, with students entering from within and also outside ASEAN. Although countries such as Brunei, Cambodia and Vietnam have relatively low numbers of international students, constant efforts are being taken to develop clarity in the admission criteria for international students. Much concerted efforts are being considered at the respective higher education institutions (i.e., revision of policies, recruitment strategies, scholarships offering, etc.) but not at the sector-wide level.

The most comprehensive data on student mobility is provided by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics based on information collected from Ministries of Education in ASEAN member states. Table 5 shows the overall number of inbound/outbound students and the Member States.

Based on the UNESCO data, it is noticed that the vast majority of all outbound students' study outside the ASEAN region, while most inbound students come from non-ASEAN countries. According to Chao (2017) "although ASEAN student mobility has been increasing over the past two decades, intra-ASEAN student mobility is quite low" (p. 109), particularly as compared with the growth of ASEAN outbound international students. Chao (2020) further argued that there is a correlation between a country's economic status and its corresponding economic development on the growth of outbound international student mobility. For example, between 1998 and 20917, lower-income ASEAN countries such as Cambodia, Lao, Myanmar Vietnam (based on the categorization used by the Asian Development Bank) showed the most increase in outbound international students, while the low middle (i.e., Indonesia and Philippines) and upper-middle countries such as Malaysia and Thailand appear to be alike (Chao, 2020). In addition, high-income ASEAN countries' such as Brunei and Singapore only showed little increase in the outbound international students' growth (Chao, 2020).

Table 5: International Student Mobility in ASEAN region

Type of mobility	No of ASEAN students	Member States with largestnumber of students
Outbound (Students who go to study in another country from their country of origin)	302,000	Vietnam Malaysia Indonesia
Inbound (Students who are studying in a particular country who have come from another country)	235,000	Malaysia Singapore Thailand

Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics)

There are several issues and challenges identified with mobility in the ASEAN region. For instance:

- The data on student mobility is not comprehensive as it is not covering all ASEAN Member States, and it also does not include data looking at the level of study, duration of mobility and socio-demographic background of participants (Chao, 2020; SHARE, 2020).
- Visa information is varied (i.e., cost, information, length etc) between ASEAN member countries.
- Financial support such as the provision of scholarships for international students studying in ASEAN countries is less prevalent (British Council, 2018).
- Lack of intra-ASEAN international student mobility initiative as all ASEAN Member States are at different phases regarding the internationalisation of higher education coupled with attractiveness of destinations outside of ASEAN such as the UK, US and Australia which are appealing to students (SHARE, 2020).

4.2. Key Theme 2: Quality Assurance

It is imperative to understand the historical context of quality assurance (QA) in ASEAN, before drawing particular lessons on developing a regional QA framework.

The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization-Regional Institute of Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO-RIHED) initiated region-wide awareness and advocacy on harmonisation of higher education for Southeast Asia in the mid-2007.

It proposed a roadmap in creating a common higher education space comprising, among others: a regional quality assurance framework, capacity building of all stakeholders through cooperation; student mobility; a regional credit system; and promotion of benefits of quality assurance.

This roadmap was submitted during the 30th SEAMEO-RIHED High Officials Meeting and was finally endorsed by the Ministers of Education during the SEAMEO Council Meeting in March 2008.

The Inaugural ASEAN Quality Assurance Agencies Roundtable Meeting was held in Kuala Lumpur from 6 to 8 July 2008. It was co-organized by SEAMEO-RIHED and the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) and attended by heads of Quality Assurance Agencies and representatives of ministries responsible for quality assurance for higher education from all ASEAN countries.

This inaugural meeting marked the start of networking and collaboration among ASEAN QA agencies. By the end of the meeting, delegates agreed to the establishment of an ASEAN QA network, called the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN).

AQAN is a network of 10 national quality assurance authorities and ministries responsible for higher education among the ASEAN member countries, namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR,

Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. It is currently based at the MQA and was recognised as an entity associated with ASEAN on 1 August 2016.

In October 2011, the AQAN Roundtable Meeting in Bandar Seri Begawan decided to embark on a project to develop an ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education (AQAFHE) for Southeast Asia.

The purpose of AQAFHE is to develop a quality assurance framework specific for ASEAN member countries, where they could benchmark and align their higher education systems with one another. It will also facilitate regional recognition of degrees and qualifications as they strive towards harmonization amidst the diversity of higher education systems, cultures, and traditions within the region.

A task force was established to work on the project, with representation from SEAMEO-RIHED, MQA, ASEAN Universities Network (AUN), the Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council (BDNAC), the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities (PAASCU), the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) Thailand, and the General Department of Education Testing and Accreditation (GDETA) Vietnam.

The draft AQAFHE was endorsed two years later during the 2013 AQAN Round Table Meeting in Hanoi. By 2014, AQAFHE was rebranded as ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) and remained as a commonly used acronym within the ASEAN higher education community until today.

In retrospect, within the context of Southeast Asia,

- The development of a regional QA framework requires intensive engagement with multiple stakeholders, which will take a long time to achieve
- Political will and commitment from governments are required to sustain interest and implementation of a regional QA framework

The AQAF is a common reference point for quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions of ASEAN member states in supporting the harmonisation of higher education for Southeast Asia.

AQAF is instrumental to accelerate the harmonisation of higher education within ASEAN and addressing the ASEAN integration agenda. It aspires to be a device to enable comparisons of qualifications across ASEAN member states. It consists of four sets of interrelated principles:

- External Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAA)
- External Quality Assurance (EQA) Standards and Processes
- Institutional Quality Assurance (IQA)
- National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

AQAF recognises the uniqueness of each higher education system. It is built on generic principles and statements of good practice, without compromising a country's basic values and traditions. It aims at promoting good practices for internal and external QA, and to develop consistency of QA practices within and across member states. The long-term vision of AQAF is as follows:

- To enhance the quality of education in Southeast Asia
- To support the mobility of students, workers and professionals, both within and outside the region
- To develop mutual trust and understanding among institutions and quality assurance agencies

For a full statement of AQAF, see: https://www.share-asean.eu/sites/default/files/AQAF.pdf

4.3. Key Theme 3: Recognition of Qualifications and Credit Transfer

Among the four areas in review for this case study, recognition of qualifications and credit transfer is the most well-established area, both in reporting and empirical review. A commissioned report by the EU Support Group to Higher Education in ASEAN Region (EU-SHARE) team in 2016, as well as a recent work by Chao (2020), have aptly summarised developments in this area, so a brief overview will be presented in this section.

The first scheme that attempted to promote recognition of qualification across borders was the UMAP Credit Transfer System (UCTS), established in 1991 by the University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP), a voluntary association of representatives from the higher education system. The UCTS provided member universities with a credit conversion scale for grade equivalence between different higher education systems, particularly for exchanges between one to two semesters.

Four years later in 1995, the ASEAN University Network (AUN) was established. Members of AUN comprised top universities from each ASEAN member state; to date, it has about 30 member universities. AUN's activities are centred around five areas: youth mobility, academic collaboration, standards, mechanisms, systems and policies of higher education collaboration, course and programme development, as well as regional and global policy platforms. The ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTS) is the credit transfer system used for student exchanges between one to two semesters, which is based on learning outcomes achievement to accommodate differences of grading conversion system among member universities. For more information about AUN, see: https://www.aunsec.org/

In 2009, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organisation-Regional Institute of Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO-RIHED) introduced a pilot on student exchange called the Malaysia-Indonesia-Thailand (MIT) programme. The pilot was so successful that it morphed into ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS), involving 69 universities and over 3,400 students in 2018. AIMS has also expanded collaboration to countries beyond Southeast Asia, involving Japan and South Korea. The AIMS credit transfer system focused on semester-based exchanges based on 10 programmes of study among member universities. Through collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), SEAMEO-RIHED has also expanded into a credit transfer system for the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), as intra-mobility of students in GMS is less prevalent, and the GMS required specific assistance in various aspects, such as foreign language learning and privatisation of higher education, among others.

Today, the UCTS, ACTS, and AIMS are still being used among member universities of respective organisations. The landscape has since been diversified and deepened with the inclusion of a new credit transfer system called the ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTS) in 2016, led by NUFFIC within the EU-SHARE project. Campus France and EP-Nuffic observed that ASEAN had to be cognizant of risks associated with the implantation of divergent credit transfer systems within the region, and the need to develop inclusive, equitable, and accessible scholarship schemes to stimulate greater intra-region student mobility.

For more information on ACTS, see https://www.share-asean.eu/activities/credit-transfer-system.

4.4. Key Theme 4: Non-ASEAN Actors

ASEAN is not only a diverse region with ten countries, the higher education in the region also attracted many foreign parties who are involved directly and indirectly in the development of higher education. Similar to the ASEAN setup, there is the ASEAN +3 that includes Japan, South Korea and China, as well as the East Asian Summit group that also included additional countries like Australia, New Zealand, India, Russia and the United States of America.

Likewise in the context of higher education, there is a vibrant collaboration and participation of non-ASEAN countries with the higher education systems and universities in the region. Among the notable foreign collaborators in ASEAN higher education includes:

I. The SHARE programme that brought together four European entities under the banner of the European Union (EU). The EU-Share programme is implemented by the British Council, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Nuffic (Dutch organisation for internationalization in education) and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), with the overarching

objective to strengthen regional cooperation, enhance the quality, competitiveness and internationalization of ASEAN higher education institutions and students, contributing to an ASEAN Community.

II. A major part of the ASEAN University Network (AUN) is the ASEAN+3 UNet, which significantly expanded the collaboration of universities in ASEAN with institutions in Japan, South Korea and China.

III. The ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) that bring the Agencies of Quality Assurance in the region together with significant technical and financial support by EU-Share

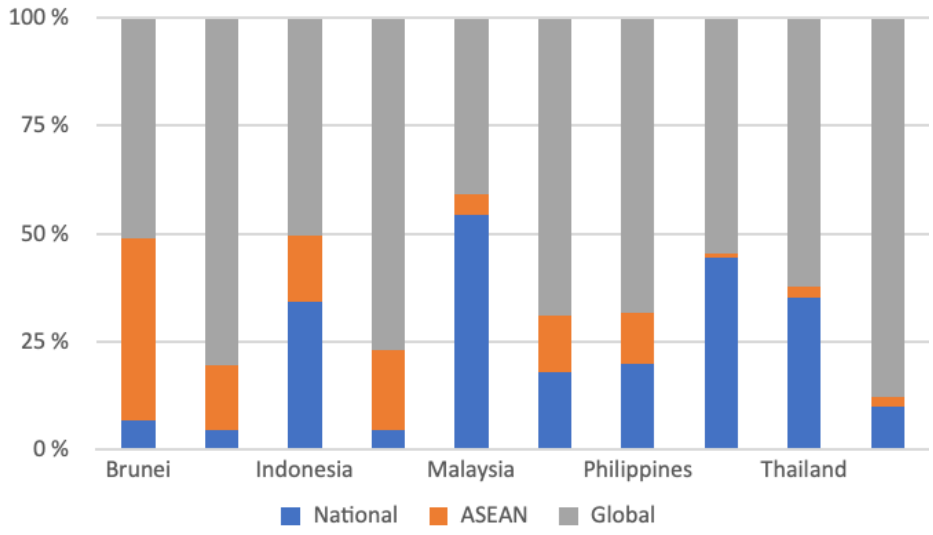
IV. The ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) that was developed and endorsed by ASEAN Economic Ministers, ASEAN Education Ministers and ASEAN Labour Ministers, was developed with the cooperation and support by Australia and New Zealand under the Agreement Establishing the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) Economic Cooperation Support Programme (AECSP).

The above initiatives at the policy and system levels of ASEAN higher education underlined significant involvement, participation and financial support from foreign entities. Interestingly, a similar pattern can also be observed at the institutional level across higher education institutions in ASEAN.

First, by exploring the pattern of collaborations among 13 major public universities in ASEAN, Morshidi (2017) found that intra-ASEAN collaboration was significantly lower than collaboration with universities in other parts of the world. Intra-ASEAN collaboration ranged between 7.0% and 30.8% with most of the institutions hovering around 10% to 20%. Conversely, collaboration with East Asia and European universities made up most of the collaborations and cooperation between institutions.

Second, taking a bibliometric approach in analysing 149,992 publications of 30 universities across 10 ASEAN countries between 2009 and 2013, a global collaboration made up the majority of collaboration in publication across all ASEAN countries, except Malaysia (see Figure 3). The second most common form of collaboration is a national collaboration with universities and institutions within the same country. Interestingly, the intra-ASEAN collaboration was the smallest proportion, whereby except for Brunei at 42%, the others can be divided into two categories that hovered between 10-15% ad below 5%. Laos (18.6%), Indonesia (15.4%), Cambodia (15%), Myanmar (13.1%) and the Philippines (11.8%) were among those in the former category, while Malaysia (4.8%), Thailand (2.6%), Vietnam (2.2%) and Singapore (1.1%) made up of the latter group that has very limited intra-ASEAN collaboration. In addition, the four ASEAN countries with very little intra-region collaboration are among the more developed higher education systems, and the fact that global and national collaborations far outweigh working with their neighbours underlined a concerning thought about intra-ASEAN collaboration towards an ASEAN community.

Figure 3: Types of Collaboration in Publications across 30 ASEAN universities in 10 ASEAN countries, 2009-2013



(Source: IPPTN, 2017)

Thus, ASEAN higher education is diverse not only due to having 10 higher education systems with seemingly different backgrounds and historical influences, but also have significant foreign actors that influenced the direction and dictated the agenda of higher education with financial and technical support. Equally important to recognize that foreign influence is similarly prevalent as the significant mode, model and destination of collaboration and cooperation for ASEAN universities, outweighing intra-ASEAN influence, collaboration, and cooperation.

One of the consequences, therefore, resulting in multiple and overlapped initiatives in the region Most importantly, there may be a lack of genuine sense of ASEAN determining the future direction of development in this region by ASEAN for ASEAN toward the ASEAN community.

5. Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

ASEAN is a 10-member state organisation that was established on principles of collegiality, consensus, and trust. Its member states celebrate diversity and follow “prosper-thy-neighbour” as a guiding principle. Such unique trait is also reflected in the way that the common space for higher education in the Southeast Asian region is formed and developed. There is no imposition of regional interests on higher education systems. Rather, member states work collectively towards consensus through dialogues and discussions, while respecting national interests and sovereignty.

As a region, ASEAN benefits from the generosity of its partners within the +3 (China, South Korea, Japan) and EAS structures, among other intergovernmental networks. However, it must be capable of determining its agenda for intra-regional development in higher education. There should be a departure away from having non-ASEAN actors influence various agendas through external funding, technical and expert support.

The region should also strengthen the intra-regional collaboration among its higher education community. Intra-ASEAN exchange of students and scholars is the starting point in the co-creation of a conducive ecosystem for knowledge creation, dissemination, and research. Scholarships to all students with a diverse backgrounds to enhance student mobility in the region can further encourage inclusive mobility. This can be followed by creating opportunities for long term post-study employment is encouraged to facilitate student mobility at a greater scheme. Additionally, a student-friendly, more transparent as well as non-complicated visa process to strengthen student mobility within the region.

Future policy developments on mobility must be highly data-driven as they will provide a coherent and overview of the developments in this space. In this respect, ASEAN may take heed of recommendations provided by the SHARE team (2020), such as establishing a dedicated research centre for student mobility, and a one-stop online student visa information point enfolding arrangements in all ASEAN Member States. Additionally, ASEAN should also consider introducing a regional student pass scheme to expedite student mobility, as opposed to student visa/pass issued by individual member states, which is the current practice.

Finally, ASEAN should also look inwards to overcome multiple and overlapped roles and the involvement of multiple entities in higher education development. To date, the three focus areas are student mobility, quality assurance, and credit transfer, with many programmes and initiatives championed by both intra- and inter-ASEAN actors. There should be streamlined and brought together under one ASEAN entity to facilitate and support the development of higher education holistically within the region, based on regional principles.

Summary of the chapter in a few questions

In all likelihood, you will not be able to give a full and detailed answer to the following questions, but you should be able to understand their meaning and you have the obligation, at least as a participant in HAQAA training activities, to think about them.

1. Are you able to compare the developments in ASEAN in the three first Key Themes defined in the Chapter with those in Continental Africa or in the region to which your country belongs?
2. When analyzing its Key Theme 4, the chapter gives a good account of the cooperation with non-ASEAN Actors but concludes raising some concerns. What is your assessment of this issue for the African Continent and its regions?

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Chapter 6

30 years of regional academic integration in MERCOSUR Insights from a region of the South for a Dialogue with Africa

M. Larrea

Presentation

MERCOSUR integration in higher education is somewhat paradoxical. Some would argue that, born as a secondary aspect of the regional integration process, it has become more successful than integration in other areas much closer to the initial objectives. In any case, it is undoubtedly useful as an element of reflection and comparison with the processes in Continental Africa and in its different regions.

The chapter emphasizes that regional integration at a continental or subcontinental level is not a simple process: there exist power disputes to be neutralized, structural asymmetries to be addressed, legal and regulatory differences, resource and capacity gaps to deal with and different speeds of national progress towards integration that need to be considered to achieve superior objectives. It also emphasizes that academic integration, especially at the higher education level, is not only important in itself. It also has an enormous impact on soft power agendas and an incredible potential to achieve integration goals that have proved to be more challenging when approached only from a commercial or economic point of view.

The specific issues tackled by the chapter are all of them some of the main concerns of the African continental and regional processes: Quality assurance, Mobility and, above all, Recognition. Therefore, the chapter's contribution to the HAQAA Materials, and to the courses based on them, should be very valuable.

Contents of the chapter

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. The MERCOSUR strategy for the integration of higher education
4. The post pandemic agenda
5. Lessons learnt and final thoughts
6. References
7. ANNEX 1 – Agreement on the creation and implementation of a system of accreditation of university degrees for the regional recognition of their academic quality in MERCOSUR and Associated States
8. ANNEX 2 – Agreement on the Recognition of Higher Education Degrees in MERCOSUR
9. ANNEX 3 – List of degree programs accredited under the ARCUSUR System

1. Introduction

Regional integration at a continental or subcontinental level is not a simple process: there exist power disputes to be neutralized, structural asymmetries to be addressed, legal and regulatory differences, resource and capacity gaps to deal with and different speeds of national progress towards integration that need to be considered to achieve superior objectives.

Academic integration, especially at the higher education level, is not only important in itself. It also has an enormous impact on soft power agendas and an incredible potential to achieve integration goals that have proved to be more challenging when approached only from a commercial or economic point of view.

This article provides insights from a region from the South regarding a specific economic and political integration process carried out in South America that has had -and continues to have- educational sectors, universities and higher education systems as leading players and main characters of this alliance.

2. Background

On 2021 the MERCOSUR region celebrated its 30th anniversary; it formally came into being on March 26, 1991, with the signing of the Treaty of Asunción[1] by the presidents of the four South American founding countries: Argentine Republic, Federative Republic of Brazil, Republic of Paraguay and Oriental Republic of Uruguay with the objective of establishing a common market in the region, the Common Market of the South (in Spanish, *Mercado Común del Sur* or MERCOSUR). The strength of the integration process would lie mainly in the building of a free trade area that should be the basis for a Customs Union in which the free circulation of all productive factors would progressively take place.

What very few know is that the MERCOSUR Educational Sector (SEM) was officially created on December of that same year when the Common Market Council (CMC), through its Decision 07/91[2], created the MERCOSUR Meeting of Ministers of Education (RME), stating that integral training of human resources by raising the levels of education is an essential factor for strengthening the integration process and achieving prosperity, progress and well-being with social justice for the inhabitants of the subregion.

Although social -and especially educational- issues are not explicitly mentioned in the Treaty of Asunción, from the moment MERCOSUR was created the member countries agreed to address these issues together with other collateral issues such as justice[3].

Nonetheless, what started as a subsidiary strategy to the economic and trade integration process, now has an intrinsic potential, unique in its methodology and completely independent of the progress of the customs union and the common market.

Over time, the Meeting of Ministers created other instances to support the Sector. In 2001, through CMC Decision 15/01[4], the "Organizational Structure of the MERCOSUR Education Sector" was approved, creating the Regional Coordination Committee, the Regional Area Coordinating Commissions (Basic, Technical and Higher Education) and the Information and Communication System Management Committee. In 2005, the Advisory Committee of the MERCOSUR Educational Fund was created. In 2006, the Network of National Accreditation Agencies was created, and in 2011 the Regional Coordinating Commission for Teacher Training was created. In addition to these, there are other temporary and permanent bodies that manage specific actions.

The SEM has turned into a space for coordinating educational policies that brings together South America as a whole: the MERCOSUR Party States[5] -Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay- and Associated States -Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Perú and Surinam. Through the negotiation of public policies and

1. https://www.mre.gov.py/tratados/public_web/DetallesTratado.aspx?id=0GXnoF+V0qWCz+EoiVAdUg%3d%3d
2. https://normas.mercosur.int/public/normativas/7
3. As early as 1991, the Common Market Council created only two Meetings of Ministers: Education and Justice.
4. https://normas.mercosur.int/public/normativas/820
5. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has been suspended from all rights and obligations inherent to its condition of State Party to MERCOSUR.

the development and execution of joint programs and projects, the SEM seeks the integration and development of education throughout the MERCOSUR region and associated countries.

After 30 years of intense and uninterrupted technical work carried out by the teams at the Ministries of Education and at the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of member States –and despite the many political fluctuations and instabilities, the discontinuous support, the economic and political crisis, the occasional participation and the sporadic commitment and engagement of some countries with the whole process-, the SEM is one of the most solid and successful sectors of the common market. Many of its flagship programs (such as Roads of MERCOSUR, MERCOSUR Youth Parliament, MARCA Program and ARCUSUR System) are by now recognized as real state policies at the regional level with enormous impact over the local educational systems and policies for all levels of education.

3. The MERCOSUR Strategy for the Integration of Higher Education

The SEM establishes its political priorities, strategies, objectives, programs, projects, goals and indicators through strategic plans[6].

The first one, in force between 1992 and 1998, is a very simple one-page document[7] that indicates the great political vision of the fathers of MERCOSUR at the early stages of the creation of the common market and the relevance given to education as a vehicle for social and economic development -and, consequently, for regional integration.

Every plan adopted afterwards by the Meeting of Ministries of Education and approved by the Common Market Council has become increasingly sophisticated[8] but the spirit underlying this original plan remains intact.

The original plan states 3 main objectives for the region:

1. raising of citizen awareness in favor of the integration process
    - promoting knowledge of the benefits of integration at all levels of education
    - implementing the teaching and learning of the official languages[9] at all levels and modalities of the educational systems
2. training of human resources to contribute to development
    - promoting educational development strategies for basic, secondary, technical-professional and university education
3. compatibility and harmonization of educational systems
    - establishing legal, administrative and academic mechanisms to facilitate the compatibility of education systems
    - establishing a common information system to obtain relevant educational data from the member States.

In this framework, during the first decade of existence of the SEM, the Higher Education Commission devoted itself to the signature of a series of protocols[10] to facilitate academic activities, higher education student and teacher mobility and academic recognition, such as:

6. Originally, they were triennial and currently they are quinquennial.

7. CMC Decision N° 7/92 https://normas.mercosur.int/public/normativas/1934

8. The current mission of the SEM as stated originally in the 2001-2005 Plan is: "(...)to constitute a common educational space through the coordination of policies that articulate education with the MERCOSUR integration process, stimulating mobility, exchange and the creation of a regional identity and citizenship, with the objective of achieving quality education for all, with special attention to the most vulnerable sectors in a process of development with social justice and respect for the cultural diversity of the peoples of the region". CMC Decision 15/01 https://normas.mercosur.int/public/normativas/820

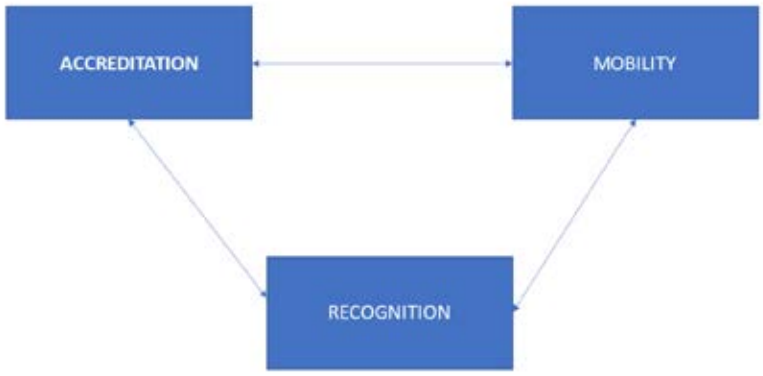
9. At the time, Spanish and Portuguese. Guarani was adopted as MERCOSUR official language in 2006 after Paraguay adopted it in its turn as another official state language.

10. In MERCOSUR, protocols are international treaties that create regional rights and obligations among Member State. Once the rules have

- Protocol of educational integration on the recognition of university degrees for the pursuit of post-graduate studies in the universities of the MERCOSUR countries[11]
- Protocol of educational integration for the pursuit of postgraduate studies in the universities of the MERCOSUR member states[12]
- Protocol on educational integration for the training of human resources at the postgraduate level among the MERCOSUR member states[13]
- Protocol for the admission of university degrees and diplomas for the exercise of academic activities in the MERCOSUR member states[14]
- Nonetheless, soon it became quite evident that the signature of protocols was in effect a facilitator but did not have a real impact in transforming the practices of academic national communities and debunking historical prejudices.

Trust had to be built amongst them.

This is how the current MERCOSUR strategy for higher education came gradually into being, based upon the triad composed by the following three elements that interact reciprocally:



3.1. Regional quality assurance

Regarding accreditation and quality assurance, this was the first element developed in the framework of this strategy: as early as 1998 the Meeting of Ministries of Education approved an Experimental Accreditation Mechanism for the Recognition of University Degrees in MERCOSUR countries called **MEXA**.

MEXA was the product of the consensus reached after the application of a pre-test that constituted the first phase of the experimental mechanism and which allowed the consolidation of common quality criteria for each degree, the definition of minimum quality standards and the assessment of the progress of the joint work of the National Accreditation Agencies overcoming asymmetries.

In June 2008 the "Memorandum of Understanding on the creation and implementation of a system of accreditation of university degrees for the regional recognition of their academic quality in MERCOSUR and associated States" was signed in the city of Tucumán[15]. In its Minutes, the Meeting of Ministers of Education stated that "(t)he processes of accreditation of studies, while favoring the improvement of the quality of education,

been negotiated, approved and adopted by the decision-making bodies, they are binding and, when necessary, must be incorporated into the national legal systems through the procedures provided for in each country's legislation.

11. CMC Decision N° 4/95 https://normas.mercosur.int/public/normativas/1903
12. CMC Decision N° 8/96 https://normas.mercosur.int/public/normativas/2052
13. CMC Decision N° 9/96 https://normas.mercosur.int/public/normativas/2054
14. CMC Decision N° 3/97 https://normas.mercosur.int/public/normativas/1687
15. Minute 1/1998 XIV Meeting of Ministers of Education of MERCOSUR https://documentos.mercosur.int/public/reuniones/doc/2547

facilitate the movement of people in the region, which is the objective of the Treaty of Asunción." This political statement demonstrated that the academic integration process required gradual action to be undertaken.

This MoU guaranteed respect for the national legislation of each country and for the academic and institutional autonomy of universities, the agreement upon and respect for common quality parameters for each degree program endorsed by the Ministers of Education and, as a requirement for its accreditation, the individual presentation of an institutional and evaluative report for each degree program. The schedule designed in the first stage covered professional degrees in the fields of Agronomy, Engineering and Medicine.

It was decided that no supranational or regional agency was to be created to pursue the objectives of MEXA: the process was conducted by the National Accreditation Agencies, such as CONEAU of Argentina, in the respective countries. In some countries where there was no national accreditation agency this implied the creation of such an institution, as in the case of Paraguay with the creation of the National Agency for Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation (ANEAES). In other cases, special and ad hoc commissions came into being in order to carry out the accreditation processes (without this implying the creation of a national accreditation institution, although it was a precedent for the future) as happened in Uruguay; in the case of Bolivia the process was conducted by the Argentine agency.

After almost one decade of implementing this experimental mechanism, MEXA was thoroughly evaluated in an unprecedented regional technical and political work and it constituted the legal precedent and regulatory framework for the future design and implementation of the permanent accreditation system of MERCOSUR called **ARCUSUR**[16] (Regional Accreditation of University Degrees of the South).

This permanent system was established by CMC Decision N° 17/08 through an "Agreement on the creation and implementation of a system of accreditation of university degrees for the regional recognition of their academic quality in MERCOSUR and Associated States"[17] containing the general principles and basic rules for the operation of the system, which have not been modified over the years. Some of the main elements are stated below[18]:

Accreditation is the result of the evaluation process through which the academic quality of undergraduate professional programs and degrees is certified, establishing that they meet the graduate profile and the quality criteria previously approved at the regional level for each degree program.

- ARCUSUR will respect the legislations of each country and the autonomy of universities. The system will only consider those degree programs with official recognition and graduates.
- ARCUSUR will cover degrees determined by the Ministers of Education of the region. considering particularly those that require a degree as a condition for professional practice.
- ARCUSUR will provide a public guarantee in the region of the academic and scientific level of the courses, which will be defined according to criteria and profiles as demanding as or more demanding than those applied by the countries in their analogous national instances.
- ARCUSUR will gradually incorporate university degrees in accordance with the objectives of the regional accreditation system.
- The regional quality criteria will be agreed upon by Advisory Commissions by degree, under the coordination of the Network of National Accreditation Agencies.
- The accreditation process will be continuous, with periodic calls.
- Participation in the calls will be voluntary and may only be requested by institutions officially recognized in the country of origin and authorized to grant the respective degrees, in accordance with the legal regulations of each country.
- The accreditation process includes the consideration of the graduate profile and regional quality criteria in a self-evaluation, an external evaluation by peer committees and an accreditation resolution under the responsibility of the National Accreditation Agency.

16. http://arcusur.org/arcusur_v2/index.php
17. https://normas.mercosur.int/public/normativas/128
18. http://arcusur.org/arcusur_v2/index.php/Institucional/principios

- The accreditation will be valid for a period of six years and will be recognized by the States Parties of MERCOSUR and the Associates that adhere to the Agreement.

ARCUSUR defined a schedule for its first cycle of accreditation processes covering professional degrees in the fields of Nursing, Veterinary Medicine, Architecture and Dentistry, while taking up those previously accredited by MEXA: Medicine, Engineering and Agronomy. Nowadays, the second cycle has included the accreditation processes of professional degrees in Geology, Pharmacy, and Economics.

As a result of this historical development, almost 500[19] professional degrees have been accredited in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela.

3.2. Regional academic mobility

The second element developed in the framework of the MERCOSUR strategy for the integration of higher education systems was mobility, for its contribution to the construction of regional citizenship.

The strategic objective N° 4 of the Action Plan 2006-2010 intended "to promote and strengthen mobility programs for students, trainees, teachers, researchers, administrative staff, authorities and professionals". Thus, in 2006, and in connection with the regional accreditation process implemented through the MEXA, which had completed its first cycle, a pilot academic mobility program for undergraduate students was designed and came into being under the name of Regional Academic Mobility Program in Accredited Degree Programs (**MARCA**). The first pilot program was carried out with the technical assistance of the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI) and was tested only with Agronomy degrees. Subsequently, starting in 2008, regular calls for applications were implemented for all degree programs regionally accredited by ARCUSUR. To date, the MARCA Program is still in force and has been one of the programs with the greatest continuity within the SEM. Although at the beginning it only included student mobility, it has progressively included other elements such as teacher. coordination and staff mobility. It also started out as a program engaged mainly with traditional mobilities of students of a semester's duration and that focused mainly on the management of the mobility itself (in order to build capacity among universities). Through the years, it has evolved to be managed through a more collaborative scheme in terms of institutional relations through the creation of academic networks. This new mechanism allows to connect degree programs around a collaborative academic regional project, within which student mobilities are framed as one element of the network, but not the only one. Teachers and researchers mobilities are also included as well as research projects, professional practices, virtual learning, collaborative online projects, etc.

MARCA grew along with the accreditation process implemented through ARCUSUR: it was not only strengthened by the addition of new degree programs but also because it was sustained by a progressively more consolidated accreditation process. The reciprocal interrelation between these two strategic elements became, and still is, a success.

Being developed based on accreditation results, MARCA allowed universities to have a very solid bond of trust since they all shared a common and undeniable ground of quality. This element favored the exchange between institutions and degree programs in the region, many of which were interacting for the first time in a collaborative way at the initiative of the MERCOSUR governments. In addition, it helped generating MERCOSUR academic communities on key thematic areas for the region to discuss other issues related to professional training and exercise as well as degree recognition. On the other hand, the SEM has developed a continuous follow-up of the Program, with the implementation of regular evaluations looking for uninterrupted improvements and working on the difficulties that arise at different levels.

From the SEM point of view, this is a program that has been extremely relevant as a pillar of the mobility actions that were subsequently implemented, such as the Undergraduate Teacher Mobility Program, the European Union Support Project for the MERCOSUR Mobility Program in Higher Education, the academic association programs for postgraduate studies and the Undergraduate Academic Exchange Program in Spanish and Portuguese. Finally, it is worth mentioning the Research Networks of the Center of Studies and Research

19. The complete list of degree programs accredited under the ARCUSUR System is available in Annex 1.

on Higher Education of MERCOSUR (NEIES), which have allowed the exchange of researchers in the region within the framework of research projects on specific topics of Higher Education.

The wide variety of regional academic mobility initiatives developed by the SEM revealed the need to provide more conceptual coherence, to generate greater articulation among them and to create mechanisms in order to facilitate their operational management. In this sense, the Action Plan approved for the period 2011-2015, with the objective of strengthening the mobility strategy of the SEM, set out among its goals "to organize an integrated system of mobility articulating the different existing programs with a real appropriation by higher education institutions with a focus on cooperation and internationalization".[20] Finally, an Integrated Mobility System (**SIMERCOSUR**) was created by the Common Market Council in 2012[21].

SIMERCOSUR is currently in a development phase which includes, on the one hand, the creation of new management and financing mechanisms that will allow it to take a qualitative and quantitative leap, and on the other hand, the inclusion of already existing mobility programs into the system to strengthen them and increase their impact. That is to say, the SIMERCOSUR aims at coherently incorporating different dimensions and components of the mobility strategy and, from an operational point of view, to generate the tools to meet the needs and requirements for their successful management and implementation. Since MERCOSUR is an intergovernmental initiative, these programs depend heavily on the budgetary and institutional circumstances of each of the member states. SIMERCOSUR thus emerges to provide greater regional institutionalization to the mobility strategy, generating the tools that will allow for greater sustainability of the programs and a more homogeneous approach to address issues related to resource and capacity asymmetries.

In spite of all these achievements regarding the mobility strategy, it is necessary to say that SEM has had an extremely traditional approach to academic mobility in particular and internationalization in general. Although it has integrated horizontal cooperation mechanisms under the format of academic networks, as mentioned above, there is still a long way to go in terms of the levels of cooperation achieved and the innovative nature of formats under use. On the one hand, traditional undergraduate student mobility has been favored to the detriment of other, less explored and implemented models such as professional practices and internships -among others. Also, until 2020, there had not been great progress in the use of virtual or hybrid formats nor in the generation of innovative, non-traditional, academic proposals designed collaboratively in order to meet training demands in priority areas at the regional level. As for the levels of academic cooperation, there has been no further progress in the creation of double degrees, internationalization of the curriculum frameworks or inter-institutional degree recognition agreements. Neither exists a systematic and official credit transfer system at the national or regional level.

These issues require deeper, more sophisticated, levels of institutional cooperation. The SEM still lacks the appropriate management structures and funding options to support them.

3.3. Recognition for academic purposes and for the professional practice

As early as 2003 the Higher Education Commission included in its meetings the discussion over an agreement on the recognition of university degrees and diplomas for the exercise of professional activities among MERCOSUR member and associated countries.[22]

But it was not until 2010, 4 years after the MARCA Program had seen light and 3 years after the implementation of the ARCUSUR System, that a specific Working Group was created to address this issue thoroughly.

The main question that this group was seeking to explicitly answer was: what are the palpable benefits of having an accredited degree program besides being eligible to participate in the MARCA undergraduate mobility Program and providing public assurance in the region of the academic and scientific level of the courses?

Four years earlier, during the debates that led to the writing of the text of the Agreement that created the ARCUSUR system, representatives of the countries and decision makers had a heated argument around the extent to which the results of the regional accreditation process would have immediate or direct effects over

20. https://normas.mercosur.int/public/normativas/2461

21. https://normas.mercosur.int/public/normativas/2706

22. Minute 1/2003 Higher Education Regional Coordinating Committee https://documentos.mercosur.int/public/reuniones/8941

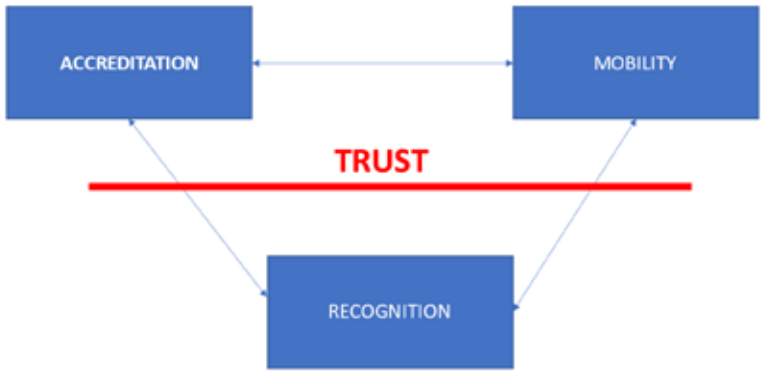
the full recognition of professional degrees among the different countries. As a result of this discussion, the formula agreed upon stated that "(a)ccreditation in the ARCUSUR system will be promoted by the States Parties of MERCOSUR and Associated States as a common criterion to facilitate the mutual recognition of university degrees or diplomas for professional practice in conventions, or bilateral, multilateral, regional or sub-regional treaties or agreements (...)."

Having this in mind, the Working Group on Recognition elaborated during nine intense years of negotiation an Agreement on the Recognition of Higher Education Degrees in MERCOSUR which was finally signed in December 2018[23].

This Agreement constitutes the main contribution of the SEM and the educational systems of all member countries to the regional integration process and the common market that originated at the Treaty of Asunción establishing the free circulation of all productive factors, including "people". As one of the experts of this Working Group from Uruguay stated: "In formal terms, without recognition of studies or degrees, foreigners have no education, and knowledge acquired in other countries has no value. For this reason, the recognition of studies and university degrees is one of the pillars of the mobility of people at the regional or international level and it makes no sense to speak of common spaces without including recognition mechanism"[24].

The Agreement will provide for better access to the job market in the region, for better use of the complementarities among training systems in different countries for the same professions and for increased rights for MERCOSUR citizens.

The basis of trust had been built, implemented and proven to be successful. But this process required almost 30 years of uninterrupted political dialogue and technical efforts, academic exchange of individuals and knowledge as well as the development of mutual understanding mechanisms.



The Agreement on Recognition is the product of those 30 years of trust building; its main premises are:

- The recognition is based on the results of the quality accreditation processes implemented by the ARCUSUR system. This in turn strengthens quality assurance processes and revalues regional accreditation.
- The accreditation provides sufficient basis for recognition since it certifies similar levels of quality among accredited programs. No additional academic elements are required. Recognition will operate as an agile mechanism based on administrative verification of documents.
- Recognition is not limited to academic aspects: it facilitates professional practice in countries other than the country where the degree was issued.
- National treatment guaranteed.
- It does not imply homogenizing recognition processes at the national level. It establishes equality of

23. CMC Decision 7/2018 https://normas.mercosur.int/public/normativas/3635
24. https://www.academia.edu/10246817/Reconocimiento_de_titulos_y_grados_academicos_de_Educacion_Superior

criteria and conditions that each country must then adapt to its internal legal system.It provides for the progressive and gradual inclusion of degree programs accredited by ARCUSUR: each country has the prerogative to define with which degree programs it enters the recognition mechanism. For instance, if two countries define that their accredited Medicine programs are to enter the mechanism, then they can recognize each other's medical diplomas without further bilateral agreements to be signed. If a country decides that its Medicine diplomas will not be part of the mechanism, this will mean that it will not recognize medical degrees from other countries, but neither can it expect other countries to recognize its medical degrees.

To date, the agreement has been ratified by Uruguay and is still undergoing ratification processes in the parliaments of the other three member states. It will be in force as soon as two countries complete the formal procedure.

Decision makers in the region expect, once the treaty is in force, to experience a huge pressure over the regional accreditation system and the national quality assurance agencies that enforce the process, since being accredited under the ARCUSUR standards will allow a program degree to offer its graduates the possibility to, eventually, develop their professional activities in all countries in South America, since the agreement is open to adoption by all associate countries.

This will in turn increase the number of degree programs eligible to be included in the MARCA mobility mechanism.

It is expected that the funding and management structures of the SEM will be stretched and challenged as never before.

Growing has a cost; the SEM is willing to face it.

4. The Post Pandemic Agenda

As has been mentioned, during the last decades the SEM has designed and financed the development of a series of international academic cooperation programs based mainly, but not exclusively, on the academic mobility of students, faculty, researchers and staff within the framework of institutional, inter-university, academic and scientific networks, thus contributing to building a paradigm of university internationalization oriented to regional academic integration based on reciprocal exchange of people and knowledge. Stakeholders have been periodically convened by the SEM in order to reflect together leading to the development of academic improvements and innovations within the framework of the international policy of each institution and each mobility program as a whole. The results of the National and Regional Workshops of Coordinators of the MARCA Program[25] and the NEIES research networks[26] bear witness to this action.

And although for many years we have been verifying the limits of a university internationalization strategy of these characteristics and its potential for exclusion, it was not until the outbreak of the pandemic that a new agenda of university internationalization began to emerge as feasible and necessary.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences led to the following diagnosis, which is not intended to be exhaustive but rather to describe the current circumstances in which international activities are being implemented in universities:

- The indefinite suspension of mobilities and the consequent crisis of this paradigm of university internationalization strategies based mainly on exchanges.
- The global recession that puts into crisis the funding mechanisms of university systems around the world in general, of university internationalization strategies in particular, and especially of the physical mobility activities of students, faculty, researchers and staff.

25 http://programamarca.siu.edu.ar/programa_marca/actividades_talleres.html
26 http://nemercosur.siu.edu.ar/webnucleo/pag_nucleo_iniciativas_seminarios.html

- The rapid response of university systems around the world to immediately set in motion remote emergency education mechanisms, a finding that we have reflected in the article "Higher Education Policies in the pandemic: repertoires for the contingency"[27].
- The digitalization of universities' academic offer, which did not translate into innovation or modernization of teaching and learning practices; rather traditional practices were exported to virtual environments.
- The rigid curricula lacking adequate updating and dynamism, too inflexible for the challenges posed by both internationalization and digitalization.

The current challenge faced by the Higher Education Commission of the SEM is to adjust the regional academic integration initiatives to this new scenario, contributing to the public debate on some of the issues of the new higher education internationalization agenda in order to orient and accompany national developments as well.

The aim is not to replace physical mobility but to offer other options that might democratize access to international opportunities for all university communities.

With this is mind, the SEM has carried out a series of actions to start designing the future of higher education integration and cooperation at the regional level, such as:

- 2020 MARCA & SEGIB Prize for Higher Education Innovation through Virtual Exchange [28]
- 2020 National Workshops for MARCA administrators[29], sharing good practices on virtual exchange as a valuable tool to foster academic cooperation in the current situation.
- Technical Workshop for Ministries of Education on Comprehensive Internationalization (June 11th, 2021)[30]
- Evaluation of mobility programs to assess their evolution, strengths and weaknesses, aiming at including new mechanism that take into account innovations around the internationalization of curricula, virtual exchange and digitalization of academic offer.

Regarding regional accreditation, training activities for ARCUSUR evaluators have been implemented on a virtual format and will continue to be so; this has an obvious impact on reducing national budgets and opening access to continuous professional development.

Furthermore, the SEM is undergoing a debate on evaluating and including distance learning courses among eligible degree programs to be accredited at the regional level, thus contributing to the development of a new higher education virtual exchange agenda.

Regarding recognition, future activities will be oriented towards the rapid ratification of the Agreement on one side, and the establishment of guidelines for virtual exchange academic recognition on the other.

In sum, the future agenda of higher education integration at the MERCOSUR region will be characterized by the strategic combination of three elements that will interact and reshape the historical triad:

- the internationalization of curricula
- the digitization of academic offer
- academic recognition

27. https://revistas.unc.edu.ar/index.php/integracionyconocimiento/article/view/29556/30354
28. http://programamarca.siu.edu.ar/programa_marca/noticia_premio.html
29. http://programamarca.siu.edu.ar/programa_marca/noticia_talleres_nacionales_de_coordinadores.html
30. https://documentos.mercosur.int/simfiles/docreunionanexos/85165_RME-CAES_2021_ACTA02_ANE08_ES_TallerInternacionalizIntegral.pdf

5. Lessons learnt and final thoughts

After 30 years of putting academic integration into action, the many stakeholders that shape the landscape of higher education in South America – regional bodies (Secretary of MERCOSUR and the regional bureaucracy), national government bodies (Ministries of Education, Higher Education Secretariats, Vice ministries or Departments, Ministries of Foreign Affairs), national accreditation agencies, rector's conferences, universities' authorities, students, faculty, researchers and staff- have undoubtedly many valuable lessons and learnings ready to be shared with other countries and regions seeking to undertake a political project of academic integration.

First of all, at the regional level, respect for national specificities and local legislation has been a key political element. The fact that all decisions in MERCOSUR are taken by consensus and not majority transforms every country into a veto player, thus keeping asymmetries among them very low. The evolution of the integration process has shown that consensus has not been an obstacle at all to achieve integrations goals. Specifically, for the higher education sector, **gradualism** has been the greatest asset: the progressive adoption of the triad mentioned above allowed for steady adjustment of national laws and institutional arrangements and this explains largely the slow and small-scale but blunt success. Additionally, the urge for establishing a regional scheme for funding and managing the SEM Action Plans has been assessed and some measures have been taken although they are not yet fully in force, specially under the framework of SIMERCOSUR.

Secondly, at the national level, the creation of synergies has been the main element. A constant, honest dialogue between technical teams at the ministries of education or equivalent institutions has proven to be a central factor specially in a region where high level political dialogue among executive offices has not been easy or usual. These technical teams have been mainly responsible for regional policy coordination constituting a genuine epistemic community, a community of practice and a community of learners. Moreover, since quite a few representatives have been in their positions for many years, it could be said that they have become champions or *sherpas* of regional academic integration at the higher education sector in South America.

Thirdly, at the institutional and individual level, progressive but compelling implementation of the academic integration strategy has been key to debunking myths and prejudices and creating a regional educational citizenship among universities and their academic and scientific communities.

Finally, for South American societies in general, the SEM has proven to be a relevant instrument for advancing regional citizenship and educational rights:

- the MERCOSUR Strategic Plan for Social Action (PEAS), adopted by the MERCOSUR Chiefs of State and approved by the CMC in 2010[31] promotes solidarity and horizontal cooperation and exchange for the improvement of educational systems, as well as the promotion and strengthening of exchange programs for students, practitioners, researchers, managers, directors and professionals.
- CMC Decision Nº 64/10[32] on the Action Plan for the creation of the MERCOSUR Citizenship Statute advocates for the deepening of the social and civic dimensions of the integration process to achieve sustainable development, with justice and social inclusion for the benefit of the citizens of the MERCOSUR countries through the proposed implementation of a policy of free circulation of people in the region: equal civil, social, cultural and economic rights and liberties and equal access to work, health and education opportunities.

This article has tried to show that a solid academic integration project is feasible in specific regions of thel South. The academic and scientific integration of higher education systems brings along the creation of a dense network among young students, graduates, teachers and researchers that will translate into more and better opportunities for our countries and within our region and will shape the main characteristics of our future leadership in the political, economic, social, cultural, commercial, academic, professional and scientific sectors.at the national and regional level, thus increasing our chances of achieving better development indicators and wellbeing for our people.

31. CMC Decision N° 67/10 https://normas.mercosur.int/public/normativas/2366
32. https://normas.mercosur.int/public/normativas/2370

Summary of the chapter in a few questions

In all likelihood, you will not be able to give a full and detailed answer to the following questions, but you should be able to understand their meaning and you have the obligation, at least as a participant in HAQAA training activities, to think about them.

1. What do you think about MERCOSUR's overall strategy of articulating three main areas around the concept of trust?
2. What do you think of MERCOSUR's strategy of NOT building supranational/regional institutions and working on the basis of already existing national agencies? Do you think it is or it is not advisable for continental Africa and its regions? Why?

References

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MARCA Program: http://programamarca.siu.edu.ar

MERCOSUR Citizenship Statute: https://www.mercosur.int/estatuto-ciudadania-mercosur/

MERCOSUR Strategic Plan for Social Action (PEAS): https://www.mercosur.int/temas/asuntos-sociales/

MERCOSUR treaties, protocols and agreements: https://www.mercosur.int/documentos-y-normativa/tratados/

MERCOSUR legal instruments: https://www.mercosur.int/documentos-y-normativa/normativa/

MERCOSUR minutes: https://documentos.mercosur.int/

Educational Sector of MERCOSUR (SEM) - https://www.mercosur.int/temas/educacion/

Center of Studies and Research on Higher Education Research of MERCOSUR (NEIES): http://nemercosur.siu.edu.ar

ANNEX 1 – Agreement on the creation and implementation of a system of accreditation of university degrees for the regional recognition of their academic quality in MERCOSUR and Associated States (in Spanish)

Acuerdo sobre la creación e implementación de un sistema de acreditación de carreras universitarias para el reconocimiento regional de la calidad académica de las respectivas titulaciones en el mercosur y estados asociados

La República Argentina, la República Federativa del Brasil, la República del Paraguay y la República Oriental del Uruguay, en calidad de Estados Partes del MERCOSUR, y la República de Bolivia y la República de Chile, son partes del presente Acuerdo.

Considerando:

Que la XXX Reunión de Ministros de Educación, realizada el 2 de junio de 2006, en Buenos Aires "encomendó a la Comisión Regional Coordinadora de Educación Superior (CRC-ES) la presentación en la próxima Reunión de Ministros de Educación, de un plan que permita la adopción de un mecanismo de acreditación definitivo de cursos de graduación universitaria del MERCOSUR, con base en las experiencias del Mecanismo Experimental de Acreditación, MEXA";

Que la XXXI Reunión de Ministros de Educación, realizada el 24 de noviembre de 2006, en Belo Horizonte, Brasil, evaluó el Mecanismo Experimental de Acreditación, MEXA, aplicado en carreras o cursos de Agronomía, Ingeniería y Medicina, encontrando que fue acertada la experiencia realizada por el Sector Educativo del MERCOSUR, en el sentido de que un proceso de acreditación de la calidad de la formación de grado será un elemento para la mejora sustancial de la calidad de la Educación Superior y el consecuente avance del proceso de integración regional;

Que un sistema de acreditación de la calidad académica de las carreras o cursos universitarios facilitará la movilidad de personas entre los países de la región y servirá de apoyo a mecanismos regionales de reconocimiento de títulos o diplomas universitarios;

Que su pertinencia y relevancia permitirán asegurar el conocimiento recíproco, la movilidad y la cooperación solidaria entre las respectivas comunidades académico-profesionales de los países, elaborando criterios comunes de calidad en el ámbito del MERCOSUR para favorecer los procesos de formación en términos de calidad académica y, a la vez, el desarrollo de la cultura de la evaluación como factor propulsor de la calidad de la Educación Superior en la región;

Que permitirá la ejecución coordinada y solidaria de un programa de integración regional, utilizando y fortaleciendo competencias técnicas en las Agencias Nacionales de evaluación de la calidad y los diversos ámbitos de los sistemas de Educación Superior de los Estados Partes del MERCOSUR y Asociados.

Que este sistema se destaca como una necesaria política de Estado a ser adoptada por los Estados Partes del MERCOSUR y Estados Asociados, con vistas a la mejora permanente de la formación de Recursos Humanos, con criterios de calidad requeridos para la promoción del desarrollo económico, social, político y cultural de los países de la región.

Acuerdan:

Adoptar el presente "ACUERDO", sustentado en las siguientes bases:

I. Principios generales

1. La acreditación es el resultado del proceso de evaluación mediante el cual se certifica la calidad académica de las carreras de grado, estableciendo que satisfacen el perfil del egresado y los criterios de calidad previamente aprobados a nivel regional para cada titulación.
2. El Sistema de Acreditación Regional de Carreras Universitarias del/los Estados Partes del MERCOSUR y Estados Asociados, cuya denominación en adelante se acuerda como "Sistema ARCU-SUR", se gestionará en el ámbito del Sector Educativo del MERCOSUR, respetará las legislaciones de cada país y la autonomía de las instituciones universitarias. El sistema considerará aquellas carreras de grado que cuenten con reconocimiento oficial y que tengan egresados.
3. El Sistema ARCU-SUR alcanzará a las titulaciones determinadas por los Ministros de Educación de los Estados Partes del MERCOSUR y de Estados Asociados , en consulta con la Red de Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación (RANA) y las instancias pertinentes del Sector Educativo del MERCOSUR (SEM), considerando particularmente aquellas que requieran grado como condición para el ejercicio profesional.
4. El Sistema ARCU-SUR dará garantía pública en la región del nivel académico y científico de los cursos, que se definirá según criterios y perfiles tanto o más exigentes que los aplicados por los países en sus instancias nacionales análogas.
5. Este Sistema incorporará gradualmente carreras universitarias en conformidad con los objetivos del sistema de acreditación regional.
6. La acreditación en este Sistema se realizará de acuerdo al perfil del egresado y los criterios regionales de calidad, que serán elaborados por Comisiones Consultivas por titulación, con la coordinación de la Red de Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación y aprobación por la Comisión Regional Coordinadora de Educación Superior, CRC ES.
7. Las Comisiones Consultivas por titulación serán propuestas por la Red de Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación y designadas por la Comisión Regional Coordinadora de Educación Superior, CRC-ES. La Red de Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación será responsable de su convocatoria y funcionamiento.
8. El proceso de acreditación será continuo, con convocatorias periódicas, coordinadas por la Red de Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación, la que establecerá las condiciones para la participación.
9. La participación en las convocatorias será voluntaria y podrán solicitarla únicamente instituciones oficialmente reconocidas en el país de origen y habilitadas para otorgar los respectivos títulos, de acuerdo con la normativa legal de cada país.
10. El proceso de acreditación comprende la consideración del perfil del egresado y de los criterios regionales de calidad en una autoevaluación, una evaluación externa por comités de pares y una resolución de acreditación de responsabilidad de la Agencia Nacional de Acreditación.
11. La acreditación tendrá vigencia por un plazo de seis años y será reconocida por los Estados Partes del MERCOSUR y los Asociados que adhieran a este Acuerdo.

II. Administración del sistema ARCU-SUR

1. A los fines del presente Acuerdo se denominan Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación a las entidades específicas responsables de los procesos de evaluación y acreditación de la educación superior, designadas por el Estado Parte o Asociado ante la Reunión de Ministros de Educación.
2. Las Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación deben reunir los siguientes atributos:

    c. Ser una institución de derecho público reconocida de conformidad con las disposiciones legales y constitucionales vigentes en su país de origen.

    d. Ser dirigida por un órgano colegiado.

    e. Dar garantía de su autonomía e imparcialidad, estar integrada por miembros y personal idóneos, y contar con procedimientos adecuados a las buenas prácticas internacionales.

3. Las Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación, órganos ejecutivos del Sistema ARCU-SUR, quedarán organizadas como una Red, que se dará sus propias reglas de funcionamiento y adoptará decisiones por consenso.

III. Pautas operacionales para la acreditación

1. La solicitud de acreditación para una carrera determinada será presentada por la institución universitaria a la que pertenece ante la Agencia Nacional de Acreditación, de acuerdo a los principios generales establecidos en este documento.
2. La evaluación para la acreditación comprenderá a la carrera integralmente (sus procesos y resultados), contemplando para todas las titulaciones cuanto menos las siguientes dimensiones: contexto institucional, proyecto académico, recursos humanos e infraestructura.
3. La acreditación requerirá un proceso de autoevaluación participativo, de recopilación de información, construcción comunitaria de juicios y conclusiones acerca de la satisfacción del perfil del egresado y de los criterios de calidad, todo lo cual será presentado en un informe de autoevaluación, que servirá de base a la evaluación externa y seguirá procedimientos establecidos por la Red de Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación.
4. En el proceso de acreditación deberá requerirse el dictamen de un Comité de Pares, el que deberá fundamentarse en el perfil del egresado y los criterios de calidad fijados.
5. Los Comités serán designados por la correspondiente Agencia Nacional de Acreditación. El comité de pares debe incluir al menos dos representantes de distintos Estados Partes o Asociados al MERCOSUR, diferentes del país al que pertenece la carrera. Debe estar constituido al menos por tres personas, a partir de un banco único de expertos, administrado por la Red de Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación.
6. Cada Agencia Nacional de Acreditación otorgará o denegará la acreditación en base a los documentos del perfil del egresado y los criterios regionales de calidad, el informe de autoevaluación, el dictamen del Comité de Pares y el procedimiento de la propia Agencia, pudiendo considerar los antecedentes de otros procesos de acreditación de la carrera evaluada. Sobre la base de esos elementos, considerados en profundidad, la Agencia deberá emitir un dictamen, fundamentando explícitamente sus decisiones.
7. La resolución que deniegue la acreditación a una carrera no será recurrible en el nivel regional.
8. La resolución que otorgue la acreditación podrá ser impugnada, por manifiesto incumplimiento de los procedimientos o en la consideración del perfil del egresado o de los criterios de calidad establecidos, por quien tenga interés legítimo, correspondiendo a los Ministros de Educación de los Estados Partes del MERCOSUR y de los Estados Asociados participantes resolver la cuestión sobre la base de dictamen emitido por una Comisión de Expertos convocada al efecto.
9. La Reunión Conjunta de la Red de Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación y CRC-ES tendrá al menos dos reuniones por año en forma ordinaria y las veces que sean necesarias para la adecuada gestión del Sistema ARCU-SUR.
10. La acreditación será registrada por la Red de Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación y publicada por la CRC-ES. La información y publicidad de las resoluciones deberán referirse solamente a las carreras acreditadas.
11. Cuando se otorgue la acreditación, ésta producirá efectos desde el año académico en el que se de a publicación la resolución por parte de la instancia pertinente del SEM. Tales efectos, por regla general, alcanzarán a los títulos obtenidos teniendo la carrera el carácter de acreditada.
12. La información acerca de las carreras acreditadas estará a cargo de un registro regional del Sistema ARCU-SUR, que deje constancia efectiva de su vigencia, alcances y graduados beneficiarios.
13. El Sistema de Información y Comunicación del MERCOSUR Educativo suministrará información sobre las Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación, los criterios de acreditación y las carreras acreditadas.
14. Las convocatorias para la acreditación de las Carreras en el Sistema por parte de las Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación deberán ser realizadas en forma periódica, no excediendo el plazo máximo de seis años para cada titulación.

15. En el Sistema, se entenderá que la acreditación concedida anteriormente a la carrera, continúa vigente hasta una nueva resolución, siempre que la institución haya acudido a la convocatoria correspondiente. En caso de que la institución no se presente a dicha convocatoria, la Red de Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación hará constar la caducidad en el registro y en el Sistema de Información y Comunicación del MERCOSUR.
16. La Red de Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación será la instancia responsable de la implementación, seguimiento y evaluación del Sistema, elevando informes periódicos a la CRC-ES con iniciativa de propuesta para los ajustes al mismo.
17. El SEM arbitrará los recursos necesarios para el funcionamiento del Sistema, en aspectos como financiamiento de los procesos de acreditación regional, el relacionamiento con otros programas afines, regionales e interregionales.

IV. Alcances y efectos de la acreditación

1. Los Estados Partes del MERCOSUR y Estados Asociados, a través de sus organismos competentes, reconocen mutuamente la calidad académica de los títulos o diplomas de grado otorgados por Instituciones Universitarias, cuyas carreras hayan sido acreditadas conforme a este Sistema, durante el plazo de vigencia de la respectiva resolución de acreditación.
2. El reconocimiento de la calidad académica de los títulos o diplomas de grado universitario que se otorgue en virtud de lo aquí establecido, no confiere de por sí, derecho al ejercicio de la profesión en los demás países.
3. La acreditación en el Sistema ARCU-SUR será impulsada por los Estados Partes del MERCOSUR y Estados Asociados, como criterio común para facilitar el reconocimiento mutuo de títulos o diplomas de grado universitario para el ejercicio profesional en convenios, o tratados o acuerdos bilaterales, multilaterales, regionales o subregionales que se celebren al respecto.
4. La acreditación de las carreras otorgada por el Sistema ARCU-SUR será tomada en cuenta por los Estados Partes y Asociados, a través de sus organismos competentes, como criterio común para articular con programas regionales de cooperación como vinculación, fomento, subsidio, movilidad entre otras, que beneficien a los sistemas de educación superior en su conjunto.
5. Las acreditaciones otorgadas por el “Mecanismo Experimental de Evaluación y Acreditación de Carreras para el Reconocimiento de Títulos de Grado Universitario, en los países del MERCOSUR, Bolivia y Chile”, MEXA, reconfirman su plena validez, a los efectos del Sistema ARCU-SUR,
6. Los programas regionales de acreditación que la Red de Agencias Nacionales de Acreditación (RANA) establezca contemplarán su articulación con el MEXA, reconociendo a aquellas carreras acreditadas en el MEXA oportunidades de acreditación continua a través de próximas convocatorias.

V.- Disposiciones generales

1. Las controversias que surjan sobre la interpretación, la aplicación, o el incumplimiento de las disposiciones contenidas en el presente instrumento entre los Estados Partes del MERCOSUR se resolverán por el sistema de solución de controversias vigente en el MERCOSUR.

   Las controversias que surjan por la interpretación, aplicación, o incumplimiento de las disposiciones contenidas en el presente. Acuerdo entre uno o más Estados Partes del MERCOSUR y uno o más Estados Asociados se resolverán por el mecanismo que se encuentre vigente al momento de presentarse la controversia y que hubiera sido consensuado entre las partes.

   Las controversias que surjan por la interpretación, aplicación, o incumplimiento de las disposiciones contenidas en el presente Acuerdo entre dos o más Estados Asociados se resolverán por el mecanismo que se encuentre vigente al momento de presentarse la controversia y que hubiera sido consensuado entre las partes.

2. El presente Acuerdo entrará en vigor treinta (30) días después del depósito del instrumento de ratificación por el cuarto Estado Parte del MERCOSUR. En la misma fecha entrará en vigor para los Estados Asociados que lo hubieran ratificado anteriormente. Para los Estados Asociados que no lo hubieran ratificado con anterioridad a esa fecha entrará en vigor el mismo día en que se deposite el respectivo instrumento de ratificación.
3. Los derechos y obligaciones derivados del Acuerdo, solamente se aplican a los Estados que lo hayan ratificado".
4. La República del Paraguay será depositaria del presente Acuerdo y de los respectivos instrumentos de ratificación, debiendo notificar a las partes la fecha de los depósitos de esos instrumentos y de la entrada en vigor del Acuerdo, así como enviarles copia debidamente autenticada del mismo.
5. El presente documento sustituye al que fuera firmado en la ciudad de Buenos Aires a los catorce días del mes de junio de dos mil dos, en ocasión de la XXII Reunión de Ministros de Educación.

ANNEX 2 – Agreement on the Recognition of undergraduate Higher Education Degrees in MERCOSUR (in Spanish)

Acuerdo sobre reconocimiento de títulos de grado de educación superior en el MERCOSUR

La República Argentina, la República Federativa del Brasil, la República del Paraguay y la República Oriental del Uruguay en calidad de Estados Parte del MERCOSUR, en adelante denominados las Partes.

Considerando

El Acuerdo de Admisión de Títulos y Grados Universitarios para el Ejercicio de Actividades Académicas en los Estados Parte del MERCOSUR, firmado en la Ciudad de Asunción, República de Paraguay, el 14 de junio del año 1999.

El Acuerdo sobre la Creación e Implementación de un Sistema de Acreditación de Carreras Universitarias para el Reconocimiento Regional de la Calidad Académica de las respectivas titulaciones en el MERCOSUR y Estados Asociados, firmado en San Miguel de Tucumán, República Argentina, el 30 de junio de 2008.

Que es el deseo de los Estados Parte del MERCOSUR fortalecer y profundizar el proceso de integración, así como los fraternales vínculos existentes entre ellos.

Que la cooperación en materia educativa favorece el desarrollo educativo, cultural y científico - tecnológico de los Estados Parte del MERCOSUR.

Que es intención de los Estados Parte del MERCOSUR establecer un mecanismo de reconocimiento de títulos universitarios que facilite la movilidad académica y profesional en la región.

Acuerdan

Artículo I - objeto y ámbito de aplicación

El objeto del presente Acuerdo es el reconocimiento entre las Partes de los títulos de grado que tengan validez oficial en el sistema educativo de la Parte donde fueron obtenidos, conforme a su ordenamiento legal vigente de la Educación Superior, y que cumplan con los requisitos estipulados en el artículo III del presente Acuerdo.

Para los efectos de este Acuerdo, se entenderá por reconocimiento la validez oficial otorgada por las instituciones competentes de una de las Partes a los títulos de grado de otra de las Partes, expedidos por instituciones de Educación Superior, instituciones de Educación Superior Universitaria o sus instituciones equivalentes de dichas Partes.

El Anexo del presente Acuerdo contiene las denominaciones legales vigentes que adquiere el reconocimiento en el ordenamiento jurídico nacional de cada una de las Partes.

Artículo II - órganos de aplicación del acuerdo

Las agencias o instituciones encargadas del reconocimiento de títulos de grado son aquellas que el ordenamiento legal de cada Parte establece como responsable para el reconocimiento de los títulos.

Los órganos de aplicación del presente Acuerdo son el Ministerio de Educación, Cultura, Ciencia y Tecnología de la República Argentina, las Universidades Públicas de la República Federativa de Brasil, el Ministerio de Educación y Ciencias de la República del Paraguay y la Universidad de la República Oriental del Uruguay.

En el caso que un Estado Asociado del MERCOSUR adhiera al presente Acuerdo de conformidad con lo establecido en el artículo XI, deberá comunicar dentro de los treinta (30) días del depósito del respectivo instrumento de ratificación, el órgano de aplicación del presente Acuerdo al depositario que dará conocimiento de esta información a las demás Partes.

Cualquier modificación en la designación del órgano de aplicación por cualquiera de las Partes deberá ser comunicada inmediatamente al depositario del presente Acuerdo, para que dé conocimiento a las demás Partes de la sustitución efectuada.

Artículo III - reconocimiento de títulos de grado de educación superior

Cada Parte reconocerá los títulos de grado que cuenten con acreditación vigente al momento de su emisión, bajo el Sistema de Acreditación de carreras universitarias para el reconocimiento regional de la calidad académica de las respectivas titulaciones en el MERCOSUR y Estados Asociados (Sistema ARCU-SUR).

La vigencia de la acreditación será entendida en los términos que establece el "Acuerdo sobre la Creación e Implementación de un Sistema de Acreditación de Carreras Universitarias para el Reconocimiento Regional de la Calidad Académica de las respectivas titulaciones en el MERCOSUR y Estados Asociados", firmado en San Miguel de Tucumán, República Argentina, el 30 de junio del año 2008.

Para este reconocimiento se implementará un procedimiento simplificado que consistirá exclusivamente en la verificación documental, prescindiendo de análisis específicos de evaluación académica. No podrán exigirse requisitos académicos adicionales para el reconocimiento.

Bajo el criterio de reciprocidad, las Partes podrán aplicar el reconocimiento de manera gradual, estableciendo de manera progresiva a qué carreras del Sistema ARCU-SUR se aplicará el reconocimiento determinado en el presente artículo. Cada Parte notificará, a través de las Actas de la Reunión de Ministros de Educación, las carreras acreditadas por el Sistema ARCU-SUR a las cuales se aplicará el reconocimiento previsto en el presente Acuerdo.

Las Partes tenderán a aplicar el reconocimiento establecido en el presente artículo a todas las carreras acreditadas por el Sistema ARCU-SUR.

Para el caso de los títulos relativos a carreras que no cuenten con la acreditación a que se hace referencia en el presente artículo, será de aplicación la legislación vigente en el territorio de cada Parte.

Artículo IV - efectos del reconocimiento

El reconocimiento de títulos de grado, en virtud del presente Acuerdo, producirá los efectos que cada Parte confiera a sus propios títulos oficiales.

Para aquellos títulos vinculados al ejercicio de profesiones reguladas será necesario cumplir con los requisitos no académicos que cada Parte exige, de acuerdo con las normas legales vigentes para cada profesión.

No obstante, para asegurar un trato no discriminatorio, en ningún caso podrán exigir dichas normas, requisitos adicionales que supongan una distinción por razón de la nacionalidad o del país de expedición del título.

Artículo V - actualización o rectificación de información

Cada Parte notificará a las otras, por vía diplomática, las modificaciones o cambios producidos en su sistema de educación superior y en su normativa, que tengan relevancia a efectos de la aplicación del presente Acuerdo.

Las Partes se comprometen a informar, a través de los sitios web de los respectivos órganos de aplicación del Acuerdo, el listado completo de carreras acreditadas, fecha de entrada en vigor de la acreditación y toda rectificación y/o actualización de información, así como el procedimiento vigente para solicitar el reconocimiento.

Artículo VI - aplicación del acuerdo

En el caso de que se encuentren vigentes entre las Partes acuerdos sobre la materia, se aplicará el más beneficioso.

Las Partes adoptarán las medidas nacionales correspondientes para garantizar el cumplimiento del presente Acuerdo.

Artículo VII - seguimiento del acuerdo

A los efectos del seguimiento de la implementación del presente Acuerdo y de tratar todas las cuestiones suscitadas por la aplicación del mismo, se constituirá un ámbito en el marco de la Reunión de Ministros de Educación.

Artículo VIII - solución de controversias

Las controversias que surjan sobre la interpretación, la aplicación, o el incumplimiento de las disposiciones contenidas en el presente Acuerdo entre los Estados Parte del MERCOSUR se resolverán por el sistema de solución de controversias vigente en el MERCOSUR.

En el caso que un Estado Asociado del MERCOSUR adhiera al presente Acuerdo de conformidad con lo establecido en el artículo XI, las controversias que surjan por la interpretación, aplicación, o incumplimiento de las disposiciones contenidas en el presente Acuerdo entre uno o más Estados Parte del MERCOSUR y uno o más Estados Asociados se resolverán por el sistema de solución de controversias vigente entre las partes involucradas en la controversia.

Artículo IX - enmienda

El presente Acuerdo podrá ser enmendado de común acuerdo a propuesta de una de las Partes.

Artículo X - entrada en vigor y depósito

El presente Acuerdo, celebrado en el marco del Tratado de Asunción, entrará en vigor 30 (treinta) días después de la fecha del depósito del segundo instrumento de ratificación.

Para los Estados Parte y Estados Asociados que lo ratifiquen posteriormente, el presente Acuerdo entrará en vigor 30 (treinta) días después de la fecha en que cada uno de ellos deposite su respectivo instrumento de ratificación.

El presente Acuerdo y sus instrumentos de ratificación serán depositados ante la República del Paraguay, el cual, en su calidad de Depositario, deberá notificar a los Estados Parte de la fecha de los depósitos de estos instrumentos y de la entrada en vigor del Acuerdo y enviará copia autenticada del mismo a los demás Estados Partes.

Artículo XI - adhesión

El presente Acuerdo estará abierto a la adhesión de los Estados Asociados del MERCOSUR que previamente hayan firmado y ratificado el “Acuerdo sobre la Creación e Implementación de un Sistema de Acreditación de Carreras Universitarias para el Reconocimiento Regional de la Calidad Académica de las respectivas titulaciones en el MERCOSUR y Estados Asociados”, firmado en San Miguel de Tucumán, República Argentina, el 30 de junio del 2008.

Artículo XII - duración y denuncia

El presente Acuerdo tendrá una duración indefinida. Sin perjuicio de esto, el presente Acuerdo podrá ser denunciado en cualquier momento por cualquiera de las Partes mediante comunicación escrita dirigida al depositario. La denuncia producirá sus efectos seis (6) meses después de la fecha de dicha notificación.

La denuncia de este Acuerdo no afectará la conclusión de los planes y programas acordados durante su vigencia, a menos que las Partes convengan lo contrario.

ANNEX 3 – List of degree programs accredited under the ARCUSUR System

(Website last access on October 29th, 2021 http://arcusur.org/arcusur_v2/index.php/carreras-acreditadas)

#	Country	Area	Institution	Degree Program	From	To
2	Paraguay	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Asunción	Agricultural Engineering	1/10/2018	1/10/2024
3	Paraguay	Architecture	Universidad Nacional de Asunción	Architecture, Design and Art	3/10/2017	3/10/2023
5	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad Católica de Córdoba	Architecture	27/7/2017	27/7/2023
7	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad de Belgrano	Architecture	27/7/2017	27/7/2023
8	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad de Buenos Aires	Architecture	7/11/2017	7/11/2023
9	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad de Morón	Architecture	27/7/2017	27/7/2023
10	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad Nacional de Córdoba	Architecture	27/7/2017	27/7/2023
11	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad Nacional de La Plata	Architecture	27/7/2017	27/7/2023
13	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad Nacional de Rosario	Architecture	27/7/2017	27/7/2023
14	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad Nacional de Tucumán	Architecture	27/7/2017	27/7/2023
17	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad Nacional de San Juan	Architecture and Urban Panning	26/7/2017	26/7/2023
18	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad Nacional del Litoral	Architecture and Urban Panning	27/7/2017	27/7/2023
19	Argentina	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Nacional de La Plata	Veterinary Medicine	5/10/2016	5/10/2022
21	Argentina	Nursing	Universidad Nacional de Tucumán	Nursing	10/10/2019	10/10/2025
22	Argentina	Nursing	Universidad Nacional de Lanús	Nursing	27/11/2018	27/11/2024
24	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de San Luis	Electronic Engineering	13/12/2015	13/12/2021
25	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Católica de Córdoba	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
26	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad de Concepción del Uruguay	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
28	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Cuyo	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
29	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Entre Ríos	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
30	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de La Pampa	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
31	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de La Plata	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
32	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Lomas de Zamora	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
33	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Luján	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
34	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
35	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
37	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Salta	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
38	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de San Luis	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
39	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional del Centro de la Provincia de Buenos Aires	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
40	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional del Litoral	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
41	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional del Nordeste	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
42	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional del Sur	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
53	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Tecnológica Nacional (Santa Fe)	Industrial Engineering	17/11/2014	17/11/2020
59	Argentina	Nursing	Universidad Austral	Nursing	27/9/2018	27/9/2024
60	Argentina	Nursing	Universidad Católica de Cuyo	Nursing	10/10/2018	10/10/2024
64	Argentina	Nursing	Universidad Nacional de Rosario	Nursing	27/9/2018	27/9/2024
66	Argentina	Nursing	Universidad Nacional del Nordeste	Nursing	27/9/2018	27/9/2024
71	Argentina	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Nacional de La Pampa	Veterinary Medicine	5/10/2016	5/10/2022
72	Argentina	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto	Veterinary Medicine	5/10/2016	5/10/2022
73	Argentina	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Nacional de Rosario	Veterinary Medicine	5/10/2016	5/10/2022
74	Argentina	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Nacional del Centro de la Provincia de Buenos Aires	Veterinary Medicine	5/10/2016	5/10/2022
75	Argentina	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Nacional del Litoral	Veterinary Medicine	5/10/2016	5/10/2022
76	Argentina	Dentistry	Universidad de Buenos Aires	Dentistry	22/5/2018	22/5/2024
77	Argentina	Dentistry	Universidad Maimónides	Dentistry	7/5/2018	7/5/2024
78	Argentina	Dentistry	Universidad Nacional de Córdoba	Dentistry	18/12/2017	18/12/2023
79	Argentina	Dentistry	Universidad Nacional de La Plata	Dentistry	18/12/2017	18/12/2023
80	Argentina	Dentistry	Universidad Nacional de Rosario	Dentistry	18/12/2017	18/12/2023

81	Argentina	Dentistry	Universidad Nacional de Tucumán	Dentistry	18/12/2017	18/12/2023
82	Argentina	Dentistry	Universidad Nacional del Nordeste	Dentistry	18/12/2017	18/12/2023
83	Argentina	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad de Buenos Aires	Veterinary Medicine	5/10/2016	5/10/2022
84	Argentina	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Nacional del Nordeste	Veterinary Medicine	30/10/2017	30/10/2023
85	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Técnica De Oruro	Agronomy	11/12/2017	11/12/2023
86	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Evangélica Boliviana	Agronomy	11/12/2017	11/12/2023
87	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Aquino de Bolivia	Agronomy	14/3/2018	14/3/2024
88	Bolivia	Architecture	Universidad Mayor de San Simón	Architecture	10/3/2018	10/3/2024
89	Bolivia	Architecture	Universidad Mayor de San Andrés	Architecture	14/3/2018	14/3/2024
90	Bolivia	Architecture	Universidad Privada del Valle (Cochabamba)	Architecture	14/3/2018	14/3/2024
91	Bolivia	Architecture	Universidad Privada De Santa Cruz De La Sierra	Architecture	14/3/2018	14/3/2024
92	Bolivia	Architecture	Universidad Mayor Real Pontificia De San Francisco Javier De Chuquisaca	Architecture	14/3/2018	14/3/2024
93	Bolivia	Architecture	Universidad Técnica De Oruro	Architecture	14/3/2018	14/3/2024
94	Bolivia	Architecture	Universidad Privada Boliviana	Architecture	14/3/2018	14/3/2024
96	Bolivia	Nursing	Universidad Amazónica de Pando	Nursing	16/11/2018	16/11/2024
97	Bolivia	Nursing	Universidad Autónoma Gabriel René Moreno	Nursing	16/11/2018	16/11/2024
98	Bolivia	Nursing	Universidad Mayor Real Pontificia De San Francisco Javier De Chuquisaca	Nursing	16/11/2018	16/11/2024
99	Bolivia	Nursing	Universidad Técnica De Oruro	Nursing	14/8/2018	14/8/2024
100	Bolivia	Nursing	Universidad Católica Boliviana	Nursing	14/8/2018	14/8/2024
101	Bolivia	Nursing	Universidad Mayor De San Andrés	Nursing	16/11/2018	16/11/2024
102	Bolivia	Nursing	Universidad Autónoma Tomás Frias	Nursing	16/11/2018	16/11/2024
104	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Autónoma Juan Misael Saracho	Agricultural Engineering	11/12/2017	11/12/2023
105	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Mayor de San Simón	Agricultural Engineering	11/12/2017	11/12/2023
106	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Mayor Real Pontificia De San Francisco Javier De Chuquisaca	Agricultural Engineering	11/12/2017	11/12/2023
107	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Autónoma Gabriel René Moreno	Agricultural Engineering	12/8/2011	12/8/2017
108	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Mayor de San Andrés	Agricultural Engineering (campus 1)	11/12/2017	11/12/2023
110	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Técnica de Oruro	Civil Engineering	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
111	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Mayor de San Andrés	Civil Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
112	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Mayor de San Simón	Civil Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
113	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Privada de Bolivia (Cochabamba)	Civil Engineering	21/3/2006	21/3/2012
114	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Privada del Valle (La Paz)	Civil Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
115	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Autónoma Tomás Frias	Civil Engineering	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
116	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Privada Boliviana (Cochabamba)	Production Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
117	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Mayor de San Simón	Electrical Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
118	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Técnica de Oruro	Electrical Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
119	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Evangélica Boliviana	Electronic Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
120	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Técnica de Oruro	Electronic Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
121	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Privada del Valle (Cochabamba)	Electronic Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
122	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Mayor De San Andrés	Electronic Engineering	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
124	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Tecnológica Privada de Santa Cruz	Electronic and Systems Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
125	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Autónoma Gabriel René Moreno	Industrial Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
126	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Católica Boliviana	Industrial Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
127	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Mayor de San Simón	Industrial Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
128	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Técnica De Oruro	Industrial Engineering	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
129	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Amazónica de Pando	Industrial Engineering	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
130	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Tecnológica Privada de Santa Cruz	Industrial and Commercial Engineering	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
132	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Mayor De San Andrés	Mechanical Engineering	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
133	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Técnica De Oruro	Mechanical Engineering	14/5/2019	14/5/2025

134	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Tecnológica Privada De Santa Cruz	Mechanical Automotive Agro-industrial Engineering	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
135	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Privada del Valle (Cochabamba)	Mechanical and Industrial Automation Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
136	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Autónoma Gabriel René Moreno	Chemical Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
137	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Técnica de Oruro	Chemical Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
138	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Mayor de San Simón	Chemical Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
139	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Mayor Real Pontificia De San Francisco Javier De Chuquisaca	Chemical Engineering	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
140	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Autónoma Juan Misael Saracho	Chemical Engineering	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
141	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Aquino de Bolivia (Cochabamba)	Medicine	20/7/2012	20/7/2018
142	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Cristiana de Bolivia	Medicine	20/7/2012	20/7/2018
143	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Privada del Valle (Cochabamba)	Medicine	20/7/2012	20/7/2018
144	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Técnica Privada Cosmos	Medicine	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
145	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Mayor de San Simón	Medicine	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
146	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Privada del Valle (La Paz)	Medicine	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
147	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Católica Boliviana	Medicine	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
148	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Mayor De San Andrés	Medicine	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
149	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Mayor Real Pontificia De San Francisco Javier De Chuquisaca	Medicine	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
150	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Autónoma Gabriel René Moreno	Medicine	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
152	Bolivia	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Autónoma Gabriel René Moreno	Veterinary Medicine y Zootechnics	26/6/2018	26/6/2024
153	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Aquino de Bolivia (La Paz)	Dentistry	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
154	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Aquino de Bolivia (Cochabamba)	Dentistry	20/7/2012	20/7/2018
155	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Aquino de Bolivia (Santa Cruz de la Sierra)	Dentistry	20/7/2012	20/7/2018
158	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Mayor De San Andrés	Dentistry	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
159	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Autónoma Juan Misael Saracho	Dentistry	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
160	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Cristiana de Bolivia	Dentistry	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
161	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Nuestra Señora De La Paz	Dentistry	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
162	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Privada Abierta Latinoamericana	Dentistry	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
163	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Católica Boliviana	Dentistry	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
164	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Nacional Ecológica	Dentistry	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
165	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Privada Franz Tamayo	Dentistry (campus 1)	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
166	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Privada Franz Tamayo	Dentistry (campus 2)	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
167	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade de Brasília	Agronomy	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
168	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade de Passo Fundo	Agronomy	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
169	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade Estadual de Maringá	Agronomy	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
170	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade Estadual de Montes Claros	Agronomy	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
171	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa	Agronomy	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
172	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade Estadual do Oeste do Paraná	Agronomy	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
173	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (Ilha Solteira)	Agronomy	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
174	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (Jaboticabal)	Agronomy	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
175	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade Federal da Grande Dourados	Agronomy	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
176	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade Federal de Goiás	Agronomy	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
177	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade Federal de Lavras	Agronomy	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
178	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade Federal de Santa Maria	Agronomy	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
179	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade Federal de Uberlândia	Agronomy	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
180	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade Federal de Viçosa	Agronomy	19/11/2004	27/3/2019
181	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade Federal do Paraná	Agronomy	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
182	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul	Agronomy	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
183	Brazil	Agronomy	Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná	Agronomy	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
184	Brazil	Architecture	Centro Universitário Ritter dos Reis	Architecture	27/3/2013	27/3/2019

185	Brazil	Architecture	Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná	Architecture	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
186	Brazil	Architecture	Universidade de Passo Fundo	Architecture	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
187	Brazil	Architecture	Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos	Architecture	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
188	Brazil	Architecture	Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais	Architecture	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
189	Brazil	Architecture	Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte	Architecture	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
190	Brazil	Architecture	Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul	Architecture	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
191	Brazil	Architecture	Universidade FUMEC	Architecture	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
192	Brazil	Nursing	Faculdade de Medicine de Marília	Nursing	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
193	Brazil	Nursing	Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo	Nursing	20/11/2013	20/11/2019
194	Brazil	Nursing	Universidade de Brasília	Nursing	25/10/2013	25/10/2019
195	Brazil	Nursing	Universidade Estadual de Londrina	Nursing	19/11/2013	19/11/2019
196	Brazil	Nursing	Universidade Estadual de Maringá	Nursing	17/3/2015	17/3/2021
197	Brazil	Nursing	Universidade Estadual do Oeste do Paraná	Nursing	11/11/2013	11/11/2019
198	Brazil	Nursing	Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso	Nursing	17/3/2015	17/3/2021
199	Brazil	Nursing	Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina	Nursing	31/10/2013	31/10/2019
200	Brazil	Nursing	Universidade Federal de Santa Maria	Nursing	18/11/2014	18/11/2020
201	Brazil	Nursing	Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo	Nursing	18/8/2014	18/8/2020
202	Brazil	Nursing	Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro	Nursing	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
203	Brazil	Nursing	Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul	Nursing	19/11/2013	19/11/2019
204	Brazil	Engineering	Centro Universitário Instituto Mauá de Tecnologia	Civil Engineering	3/6/2014	3/6/2020
205	Brazil	Engineering	Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro	Civil Engineering	17/3/2015	17/3/2021
206	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade de Passo Fundo	Civil Engineering	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
207	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Estadual de Maringá	Civil Engineering	20/11/2013	20/11/2019
208	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa	Civil Engineering	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
209	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Federal de Goiás	Civil Engineering	17/3/2015	17/3/2021
210	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Federal de Pernambuco	Civil Engineering	5/2/2014	5/2/2020
211	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Federal de Viçosa	Civil Engineering	17/3/2015	17/3/2021
212	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul	Civil Engineering	11/11/2013	11/11/2019
213	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade de Passo Fundo	Food Engineering	5/2/2014	5/2/2020
214	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Estadual de Maringá	Food Engineering	17/3/2015	17/3/2021
215	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Federal de Viçosa	Food Engineering	11/11/2013	11/11/2019
216	Brazil	Engineering	Centro Universitário Instituto Mauá de Tecnologia	Control and Automation Engineering	17/3/2015	17/3/2021
217	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Estadual de Ponta Grossa	Materials Engineering	20/11/2013	20/11/2019
218	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul	Materials Engineering	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
219	Brazil	Engineering	Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro	Production Engineering	3/2/2014	3/2/2020
220	Brazil	Engineering	Centro Universitário Instituto Mauá de Tecnologia	Mechanical Production Engineering	20/11/2013	20/11/2019
221	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio de Mesquita Filho (Ilha Solteira)	Electrical Engineering	17/3/2015	17/3/2021
222	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais	Electrical Engineering	20/11/2013	20/11/2019
223	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul	Electrical Engineering	10/10/2013	10/10/2019
224	Brazil	Engineering	Centro Universitário da Fundação Educacional Inaciana Pe Sabóia de Medeiros	Electrical and Telecommunications Engineering	17/3/2015	17/3/2021
225	Brazil	Engineering	Centro Universitário da Fundação Educacional Inaciana Pe Sabóia de Medeiros	Mechanical Engineering	5/2/2014	5/2/2020
226	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade de Passo Fundo	Mechanical Engineering	17/3/2015	17/3/2021
227	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Federal de Uberlândia	Mechanical Engineering	31/10/2013	31/10/2019
228	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul	Mechanical Engineering	11/11/2013	11/11/2019
229	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais	Metallurgical Engineering	5/2/2014	5/2/2020
230	Brazil	Engineering	Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro	Chemical Engineering	2/6/2006	31/10/2019
231	Brazil	Engineering	Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais	Chemical Engineering	18/11/2014	18/11/2020

232	Brazil	Engineering	Centro Universitário da Fundação Educacional Inaciana Pe Sabóia de Medeiros	Textile Engineering	5/2/2014	5/2/2020
233	Brazil	Medicine	Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul	Medicine	18/11/2014	18/11/2020
234	Brazil	Medicine	Universidade Positivo (UP)	Medicine	11/3/2016	11/3/2022
235	Brazil	Medicine	Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso	Medicine	24/5/2016	24/5/2022
236	Brazil	Veterinary Medicine	Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais	Veterinary Medicine	11/11/2013	11/11/2019
237	Brazil	Veterinary Medicine	Universidade de Brasília	Veterinary Medicine	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
238	Brazil	Veterinary Medicine	Universidade Estadual de Londrina	Veterinary Medicine	20/11/2013	20/11/2019
239	Brazil	Veterinary Medicine	Universidade Federal de Campina Grande	Veterinary Medicine	17/3/2015	17/3/2021
240	Brazil	Veterinary Medicine	Universidade Federal de Goiás	Veterinary Medicine	18/11/2014	18/11/2020
241	Brazil	Veterinary Medicine	Universidade Federal de Lavras	Veterinary Medicine	18/11/2014	18/11/2020
242	Brazil	Veterinary Medicine	Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais	Veterinary Medicine	17/3/2015	17/3/2021
243	Brazil	Veterinary Medicine	Universidade Federal de Viçosa	Veterinary Medicine	18/11/2014	18/11/2020
244	Brazil	Veterinary Medicine	Universidade Federal do Paraná	Veterinary Medicine	20/11/2013	20/11/2019
245	Brazil	Veterinary Medicine	Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul	Veterinary Medicine	5/2/2014	5/2/2020
246	Brazil	Veterinary Medicine	Universidade Federal Fluminense	Veterinary Medicine	27/3/2013	27/3/2019
247	Brazil	Dentistry	Universidade Federal de Goiás	Dentistry	11/3/2016	11/3/2022
248	Brazil	Dentistry	Universidade Positivo (UP)	Dentistry	11/3/2016	11/3/2022
249	Brazil	Dentistry	Universidade Estadual De Londrina	Dentistry	24/10/2019	24/10/2025
250	Brazil	Dentistry	Universidade Estadual De Campinas	Dentistry (Piracicaba)	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
251	Brazil	Dentistry	Universidade Estadual Paulista Júlio De Mesquita Filho	Dentistry (São José Dos Campos)	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
252	Brazil	Dentistry	Universidade Federal de Santa Maria	Dentistry	24/10/2019	24/10/2025
253	Brazil	Dentistry	Universidade Do Vale Do Itajaí	Dentistry	24/10/2019	24/10/2025
254	Brazil	Dentistry	Universidade Federal De Sergipe	Dentistry	24/10/2019	24/10/2025
255	Brazil	Medicine	PONTIFÍCIA UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA DE SÃO PAULO	Medicine (Sorocaba)	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
256	Brazil	Medicine	Fundação Universidade Federal De Ciências Da Saúde De Porto Alegre	Medicine	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
257	Chile	Agronomy	Universidad Austral de Chile	Agronomy	6/9/2017	6/9/2023
261	Chile	Agronomy	Universidad Mayor	Agronomy	6/9/2017	6/9/2026
263	Chile	Nursing	Universidad Austral de Chile	Nursing	9/5/2019	9/5/2025
264	Chile	Nursing	Universidad Mayor	Nursing	2/5/2012	2/5/2018
265	Chile	Nursing	Universidad de Chile	Nursing	22/8/2018	22/8/2024
266	Chile	Nursing	Universidad de la Frontera	Nursing	5/9/2018	5/9/2024
267	Chile	Nursing	Universidad de Valparaiso	Nursing	27/3/2019	27/3/2025
268	Chile	Medicine	Universidad Católica de la Santíssima Concepción	Medicine	1/8/2012	1/8/2018
269	Chile	Medicine	Universidad de Chile	Medicine	1/8/2012	1/8/2018
270	Chile	Medicine	Universidad Austral de Chile	Medicine	26/9/2012	26/9/2018
271	Chile	Medicine	Universidad de Valparaiso	Medicine	27/3/2019	27/3/2025
272	Chile	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Austral de Chile	Veterinary Medicine	17/12/2018	17/12/2024
273	Chile	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad de Chile	Veterinary Medicine	5/9/2018	5/9/2024
274	Chile	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Católica de Temuco	Veterinary Medicine	9/5/2012	9/5/2018
275	Chile	Dentistry	Universidad Mayor	Dentistry	3/10/2012	3/10/2018
276	Chile	Dentistry	Universidad de Chile	Dentistry	3/10/2012	3/10/2018
277	Chile	Dentistry	Universidad San Sebastián	Dentistry	13/3/2019	13/3/2025
278	Chile	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad de Concepción	Veterinary Medicine	10/10/2018	10/10/2024
279	Colombia	Architecture	Universidad Santo Tomás	Architecture	27/7/2017	27/7/2023
280	Colombia	Nursing	Universidad de Cartagena	Nursing	30/6/2017	30/6/2023
281	Colombia	Nursing	Universidad de Ciencias Aplicadas y Ambientales UDCA	Nursing	23/2/2017	23/2/2023
282	Colombia	Nursing	Universidad de Santander	Nursing	27/7/2017	27/7/2023
283	Colombia	Nursing	Universidad del Tolima	Nursing	27/7/2017	27/7/2023
284	Colombia	Nursing	Universidad Libre de Colombia	Nursing	27/7/2017	27/7/2023
285	Colombia	Agronomy	Universidad del Tolima	Agricultural Engineering	24/7/2014	24/7/2020

286	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad de Córdoba	Agricultural Engineering	20/9/2018	20/9/2024
287	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Colombia (Palmira)	Environmental Engineering	20/9/2018	20/9/2024
288	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Colombia (Medellín)	Biological Engineering	20/9/2018	20/9/2024
289	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad EIA	Biomedical Engineering	20/9/2018	20/9/2024
290	Colombia	Engineering	"Escuela Colombiana de Ingeniería ""Julio Garavito"""	Civil Engineering	24/2/2011	24/2/2017
291	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad de Caldas	Food Engineering	20/9/2018	20/9/2024
292	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad de Córdoba	Food Engineering	20/9/2018	20/9/2024
293	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad del Valle	Systems Engineering	20/9/2018	20/9/2024
294	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad Pontifícia Bolivariana	Systems and Computer Engineering	20/9/2018	20/9/2024
295	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad del Valle	Electric Engineering	20/9/2018	20/9/2024
297	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad del Norte (Barranquilla)	Industrial Engineering	30/9/2011	30/9/2017
298	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira UTP	Mechanical Engineering	20/9/2018	20/9/2024
299	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad Industrial de Santander	Chemical Engineering	20/9/2018	20/9/2024
300	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Colombia (Bogotá)	Chemical Engineering	25/3/2011	25/3/2017
301	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Colombia (Manizales)	Chemical Engineering	25/3/2011	25/3/2017
302	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Colombia (Medellín)	Chemical Engineering	25/3/2011	25/3/2017
303	Colombia	Medicine	Universidad de Santander	Medicine	21/8/2014	21/8/2020
304	Colombia	Medicine	Universidad CES	Medicine	26/10/2014	26/10/2020
305	Colombia	Medicine	Universidad El Bosque	Medicine	20/9/2018	20/9/2024
306	Colombia	Medicine	Universidad Libre de Colombia	Medicine	20/9/2018	20/9/2024
307	Colombia	Dentistry	Universidad El Bosque	Dentistry	20/9/2018	20/9/2024
309	Paraguay	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Nacional de Asunción	Veterinary Medicine	11/12/2018	11/12/2024
310	Paraguay	Nursing	Universidad Católica Nuestra Señora de la Asunción	Nursing	6/11/2017	6/11/2023
311	Paraguay	Nursing	Universidad Centro Médico Bautista	Nursing	1/12/2017	1/12/2023
313	Paraguay	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Asunción	Civil Engineering	11/12/2018	11/12/2024
314	Paraguay	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Asunción	Electromechanical Engineering	18/12/2018	18/12/2024
315	Paraguay	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Asunción	Electronic Engineering	19/11/2018	19/11/2024
317	Paraguay	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Asunción(Facultad Politécnica)	Electricity Engineering	26/3/2018	26/3/2024
320	Paraguay	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Asunción	Mechanical Engineering	15/10/2018	15/10/2024
321	Paraguay	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Asunción	Mechatronics Engineering	5/11/2018	5/11/2024
322	Paraguay	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Asunción	Chemical Engineering	22/12/2017	22/12/2023
324	Paraguay	Medicine	Universidad Nacional de Itapúa	Medicine	19/11/2018	19/11/2024
325	Paraguay	Medicine	Universidad Nacional de Asunción	Medicine	15/10/2018	15/10/2024
326	Paraguay	Dentistry	Universidad Nacional de Asunción	Dentistry	1/10/2018	1/10/2024
328	Uruguay	Agronomy	Universidad de la República	Agronomy	12/12/2016	12/12/2022
329	Uruguay	Architecture	Universidad de la República	Architecture	11/12/2016	11/12/2022
330	Uruguay	Architecture	Universidad ORT	Architecture	12/12/2016	12/12/2022
331	Uruguay	Nursing	Universidad de la República	Nursing	2/5/2018	2/5/2024
332	Uruguay	Engineering	Universidad de la República	Civil Engineering	11/2/2019	11/2/2025
333	Uruguay	Engineering	Universidad de la República	Electric Engineering	25/2/2019	25/2/2025
334	Uruguay	Engineering	Universidad ORT	Electronic Engineering	18/3/2019	18/3/2025
335	Uruguay	Engineering	Universidad Católica del Uruguay	Electronic Engineering	27/5/2019	27/5/2025
336	Uruguay	Engineering	Universidad Católica del Uruguay	Telecommunications Engineering	27/5/2019	27/5/2025
337	Uruguay	Engineering	Universidad ORT	Telecommunications Engineering	18/3/2019	18/3/2025
338	Uruguay	Engineering	Universidad de la República	Industrial and Mechanical Engineering	25/2/2019	25/2/2025
339	Uruguay	Engineering	Universidad de la República	Chemical Engineering	18/3/2019	18/3/2025
341	Uruguay	Dentistry	Universidad de la República	Dentistry	17/12/2018	17/12/2024
342	Uruguay	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad de la República	Veterinary Medicine	4/12/2017	4/12/2023
343	Venezuela	Architecture	Universidad Central de Venezuela	Architecture	14/12/2011	14/12/2017
344	Venezuela	Architecture	Universidad del Zulia	Architecture	14/12/2011	14/12/2017

345	Venezuela	Architecture	Universidad Nacional Experimental del Táchira	Architecture	14/12/2011	14/12/2017
346	Venezuela	Architecture	Universidad Simón Bolívar	Architecture	21/12/2011	21/12/2017
347	Venezuela	Veterinary Medicine	“Universidad Centroccidental “”Lisandro Alvarado”””	Veterinary Medicine	14/12/2011	14/12/2017
348	Venezuela	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad del Zulia	Veterinary Medicine	14/12/2011	14/12/2017
349	Venezuela	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Nacional Experimental Francisco de Miranda	Veterinary Medicine	14/12/2011	14/12/2017
350	Venezuela	Agronomy	Universidad Central de Venezuela	Agricultural Engineering	11/5/2010	11/5/2016
351	Venezuela	Agronomy	“Universidad Centroccidental “”Lisandro Alvarado”””	Agricultural Engineering	11/5/2010	11/5/2016
352	Venezuela	Agronomy	Universidad de Oriente	Agricultural Engineering	11/5/2010	11/5/2016
353	Venezuela	Agronomy	Universidad del Zulia	Agricultural Engineering	11/5/2010	11/5/2016
354	Venezuela	Agronomy	“Universidad Nacional Experimental de los Llanos Occidentales “”Ezequiel Zamora”””	Agricultural Engineering	14/12/2011	14/12/2017
355	Venezuela	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional Experimental del Táchira	Agricultural Engineering	11/5/2010	11/5/2016
356	Venezuela	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional Experimental Francisco de Miranda	Agricultural Engineering	14/12/2011	14/12/2017
357	Venezuela	Agronomy	“Universidad Nacional Experimental de los Llanos Centrales “”Rómulo Gallegos”””	Agricultural Engineering in Plant Production	11/5/2010	11/5/2016
358	Venezuela	Agronomy	“Universidad Nacional Experimental Sur del Lago “”Jesús María Semprún”””	Agricultural Production Engineering	11/5/2010	11/5/2016
359	Argentina	Nursing	Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto	Nursing	10/9/2019	10/9/2025
360	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Mayor Real Pontificia De San Francisco Javier De Chuquisaca	Dentistry	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
364	Paraguay	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Asunción	Industrial Engineering	20/4/2020	20/4/2026
365	Paraguay	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Asunción	Geographical and Environmental Engineering	20/4/2020	20/4/2026
367	Paraguay	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Asunción(Facultad Politécnica)	Electronic Engineering	22/12/2017	22/12/2023
368	Paraguay	Medicine	Universidad Nacional del Este	Medicine	17/9/2018	17/9/2024
370	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Córdoba	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
371	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires	Agricultural Engineering	2/1/2017	2/1/2023
372	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Autónoma Gabriel René Moreno	Agronomy	14/3/2018	14/3/2024
373	Bolivia	Nursing	Universidad Técnica Privada Cosmos	Nursing	14/8/2018	14/8/2024
374	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad de Concepción del Uruguay	Architecture	27/7/2017	27/7/2023
375	Argentina	Engineering	Instituto Tecnológico de Buenos Aires	Industrial Engineering	28/7/2014	28/7/2020
376	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Cuyo	Industrial Engineering	30/6/2014	30/6/2020
377	Uruguay	Engineering	Universidad Católica del Uruguay	Industrial Engineering	27/5/2019	27/5/2025
378	Uruguay	Dentistry	Universidad Católica de Uruguay	Dentistry	3/6/2019	3/6/2025
379	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad del Valle	Electric Engineering	27/5/2011	27/5/2017
380	Colombia	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad de Ciencias Aplicadas y Ambientales - UDCA	Veterinary Medicine	30/6/2017	30/6/2023
381	Colombia	Engineering	Universidad Santo Tomás	Electronic Engineering	20/9/2018	20/9/2024
382	Chile	Medicine	Universidad Austral de Chile	Medicine	10/5/2019	10/5/2025
383	Chile	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Austral de Chile	Veterinary Medicine	5/9/2012	5/9/2018
384	Chile	Nursing	Universidad Austral de Chile	Nursing	2/5/2012	2/5/2018
385	Chile	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad de Chile	Veterinary Medicine	9/5/2012	9/5/2018
386	Chile	Dentistry	Universidad de Chile	Dentistry	11/7/2019	11/7/2025
387	Chile	Nursing	Universidad Andrés Bello	Nursing	17/4/2019	17/4/2025
388	Chile	Dentistry	Universidad de Valparaíso	Dentistry	31/7/2019	31/7/2025
389	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Aquino de Bolivia(La Paz)	Medicine	9/9/2020	9/9/2025
390	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Mayor De San Andrés	Industrial Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
391	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Tecnológica Privada de Santa Cruz	Industrial and Systems Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
392	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Privada Franz Tamayo(Cochabamba)	Medicine	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
393	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Cristiana de Bolivia	Medicine	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
394	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Privada Domingo Savio	Industrial Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
395	Bolivia	Engineering	Escuela Militar de Ingeniería “MARISCAL ANTONIO JOSE DE SUCRE”	Industrial Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025

396	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Católica de Bolivia “SAN PABLO”	Industrial Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
397	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Católica de Bolivia “SAN PABLO”(Santa cruz de la Sierra)	Industrial Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
398	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Autónoma Gabriel René Moreno	Civil Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
399	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Privada de Santa Cruz	Civil Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
400	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Autónoma Juan Misael Saracho	Civil Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
401	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Técnica de Oruro	Electric Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
402	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Mayor de San Simón	Electric Engineering	16/8/2019	16/8/2025
403	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Privada del Valle (Cochabamba)	Electronic Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
404	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Tecnológica Privada de Santa Cruz	Electronic and Systems Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
405	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Privada Boliviana	Electronic and Telecommunications Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
406	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Técnica de Oruro	Electronic Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
407	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Mayor de San Simón	Mechanical Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
408	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Privada del Valle (Cochabamba)	Mechanical Engineering and Industrial Automatization	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
409	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Aquino de Bolivia (Cochabamba)	Dentistry	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
410	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Privada Franz Tamayo	Dentistry (La Paz)	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
411	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Aquino de Bolivia (La Paz)	Dentistry	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
412	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Privada del Valle (La Paz)	Dentistry	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
413	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Privada del Valle (Cochabamba)	Dentistry	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
414	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Autónoma Gabriel René Moreno	Chemical Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
415	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Técnica de Oruro	Chemical Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
416	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Mayor de San Simón	Chemical Engineering	5/9/2019	5/9/2025
417	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Privada Franz Tamayo(La Paz)	Medicine	14/5/2019	14/5/2025
418	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Mayor de San Andrés	Civil Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
419	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Mayor de San Simón	Mechanical Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
420	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Mayor de San Simón	Industrial Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
421	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Privada Boliviana	Civil Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
422	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Tecnológica Privada de Santa Cruz	Industrial Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
423	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Técnica de Oruro	Civil Engineering	15/3/2012	15/3/2018
424	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Mayor Real y Pontificia de San Francisco Xavier de Chuquisaca(Sucre)	Medicine	20/7/2012	20/7/2018
425	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Mayor de San Simón(Cochabamba)	Medicine	20/7/2012	20/7/2018
426	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Privada del Valle(La Paz)	Medicine	20/7/2012	20/7/2018
427	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Técnica Privada Cosmos(Cochabamba)	Medicine	20/7/2012	20/7/2018
428	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Mayor Real y Pontificia de San Francisco Javier de Chuquisaca(Sucre)	Dentistry	20/7/2012	20/7/2018
429	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Privada del Valle(Cochabamba)	Dentistry	20/7/2012	20/7/2018
430	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Privada del Valle(La Paz)	Dentistry	20/7/2012	20/7/2018
431	Bolivia	Dentistry	Universidad Aquino de Bolivia (La Paz)	Dentistry	20/7/2012	20/7/2018
432	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Mayor de San Andrés(La Paz)	Agricultural Engineering	17/6/2011	17/6/2017
433	Bolivia	Architecture	Universidad Mayor de San Simón(Cochabamba)	Architecture	17/6/2011	17/6/2017
434	Bolivia	Architecture	Universidad Mayor Real Pontificia De San Francisco Javier De Chuquisaca	Architecture	17/6/2011	17/6/2017
435	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Mayor de San Simón(Cochabamba)	Agricultural Engineering	17/6/2011	17/6/2017
436	Bolivia	Architecture	Universidad Privada De Santa Cruz De La Sierra	Architecture	17/6/2011	17/6/2017
437	Bolivia	Architecture	Universidad Privada del Valle (Cochabamba)	Architecture	11/6/2011	11/6/2017
438	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Autónoma Juan Misael Saracho	Agricultural Engineering	17/6/2011	17/6/2017
439	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Mayor Real Pontificia De San Francisco Javier De Chuquisaca	Agricultural Engineering	17/6/2011	17/6/2017

441	Bolivia	Architecture	Universidad Mayor de San Andrés(La Paz)	Architecture	12/8/2011	12/8/2017
442	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Autónoma Juan Misael Saracho(Tarija)	Agronomy	6/7/2004	6/7/2010
443	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Mayor de San Simón	Agronomy	6/7/2004	6/7/2010
444	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Mayor de San Andrés(La Paz)	Agronomy	6/7/2004	6/7/2010
445	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Privada De Santa Cruz de Sierra	Industrial Engineering	21/3/2006	21/3/2012
446	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Autónoma Juan Misael Saracho(Tarija)	Civil Engineering	21/3/2006	21/3/2012
447	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Mayor de San Simón(Cochabamba)	Industrial Engineering	21/3/2006	21/3/2012
448	Bolivia	Agronomy	Universidad Autónoma Gabriel René Moreno(Santa Cruz)	Agronomy	22/3/2006	22/3/2012
449	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Nuestra Señora de La Paz	Medicine	6/12/2006	6/12/2012
450	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad Mayor De San Andrés(La Paz)	Medicine	6/12/2006	6/12/2012
451	Bolivia	Medicine	Universidad del Valle (Cochabamba)	Medicine	6/12/2006	6/12/2012
452	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Privada del Valle (Cochabamba)	Civil Engineering	22/5/2007	22/5/2013
453	Bolivia	Engineering	Universidad Técnica De Oruro	Mechanical Engineering	22/5/2007	22/5/2013
454	Uruguay	Engineering	Universidad de la República	Civil Engineering	16/6/2011	16/6/2017
455	Uruguay	Engineering	Universidad de la República	Electric Engineering	3/3/2011	3/3/2017
456	Uruguay	Engineering	Universidad Católica del Uruguay	Electronic Engineering	3/3/2011	3/3/2017
457	Uruguay	Engineering	Universidad ORT	Electronic Engineering	3/3/2011	3/3/2017
458	Uruguay	Engineering	Universidad de la República	Chemical Engineering	11/3/2011	11/3/2017
459	Uruguay	Engineering	Universidad Católica del Uruguay	Telecommunications Engineering	11/3/2011	11/3/2017
460	Uruguay	Engineering	Universidad ORT	Telecommunications Engineering	3/3/2011	11/3/2017
461	Uruguay	Medicine	Universidad de la República	Medicine	19/11/2012	19/11/2018
462	Uruguay	Dentistry	Universidad de la República	Dentistry	22/11/2011	22/11/2017
463	Uruguay	Agronomy	Universidad de la República	Agronomy	9/11/2009	9/11/2015
464	Uruguay	Architecture	Universidad ORT	Architecture	11/12/2009	11/12/2015
465	Uruguay	Architecture	Universidad de la República	Architecture	6/11/2009	6/11/2015
466	Uruguay	Nursing	Universidad Católica de Uruguay	Nursing	2/9/2010	2/9/2016
467	Uruguay	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad de la República	Veterinary Medicine	13/8/2010	13/8/2016
468	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires	Agronomy	14/12/2009	14/12/2015
469	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Cuyo	Agronomy	8/3/2010	8/3/2016
470	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de La Plata	Agronomy	8/3/2010	8/3/2016
471	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata	Agricultural Engineering	8/3/2010	8/3/2016
472	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Rosario	Agricultural Engineering	8/3/2010	8/3/2016
473	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Tucumán	Agricultural Engineering	14/12/2009	14/12/2015
474	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional del Nordeste	Agricultural Engineering	14/12/2009	14/12/2015
475	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional del Sur	Agricultural Engineering	14/12/2009	14/12/2015
476	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires	Agronomy	1/6/2002	1/6/2008
477	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Cuyo	Agronomy	19/11/2004	19/11/2010
478	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de La Plata	Agricultural Engineering	10/11/2005	10/11/2011
479	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional de Tucumán	Agricultural Engineering	19/11/2004	19/11/2010
480	Argentina	Agronomy	Universidad Nacional del Nordeste	Agricultural Engineering	19/11/2004	19/11/2010
481	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad Católica de Santa Fé	Architecture	30/11/2009	30/11/2015
482	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad Nacional de Córdoba	Architecture	30/11/2009	30/11/2015
483	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad Nacional de La Plata	Architecture	30/11/2009	30/11/2015
484	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad Nacional de Mar de Plata	Architecture	30/11/2009	30/11/2015
485	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad Nacional de Rosario	Architecture	30/11/2009	30/11/2015
486	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad Nacional de San Juan	Architecture and Urban Panning	30/11/2009	30/11/2015
487	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad Nacional de Tucumán	Architecture	30/11/2009	30/11/2015
488	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad Nacional del Litoral	Architecture and Urban Panning	30/11/2009	30/11/2015
489	Argentina	Architecture	Universidad Nacional del Nordeste	Architecture	22/2/2010	22/2/2016
490	Argentina	Nursing	Universidad Nacional de Lanús	Nursing	13/12/2010	13/12/2016
491	Argentina	Nursing	Universidad Nacional de Misiones	Nursing	13/12/2010	13/12/2016
492	Argentina	Nursing	Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto	Nursing	13/12/2010	13/12/2016
493	Argentina	Nursing	Universidad Nacional de Tucumán	Nursing	13/12/2010	13/12/2016

494	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Córdoba	Electronic Engineering	8/4/2013	8/4/2019
495	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de la Plata	Electronic Engineering	17/12/2012	17/12/2018
496	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Misiones	Industrial Engineering	13/11/2013	13/11/2019
497	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto	Electric Engineering	13/12/2010	13/12/2016
498	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto	Chemical Engineering	3/6/2013	3/6/2019
499	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Rosario	Civil Engineering	29/7/2013	29/7/2019
500	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Rosario	Mechanical Engineering	29/7/2013	29/7/2019
501	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Salta	Chemical Engineering	18/11/2013	18/11/2019
502	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Nacional del Litoral	Chemical Engineering	8/4/2013	8/4/2019
503	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Nacional del Sur	Electronic Engineering	17/12/2012	17/12/2018
504	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Nacional del Sur	Chemical Engineering	17/12/2012	17/12/2018
505	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Tecnológica Nacional (Concepción del Uruguay)	Civil Engineering	18/11/2013	18/11/2019
506	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Tecnológica Nacional (Córdoba)	Electronic Engineering	1/7/2013	1/7/2019
507	Argentina	Engineering	Instituto Tecnológico de Buenos Aires	Industrial Engineering	2/6/2006	2/6/2011
508	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de Cuyo	Industrial Engineering	2/6/2006	2/6/2011
509	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Nacional de la Plata	Electronic Engineering	2/6/2006	2/6/2011
510	Argentina	Engineering	Universidad Tecnológica Nacional (Córdoba)	Electronic Engineering	2/6/2006	2/6/2011
511	Argentina	Medicine	Instituto Universitario CEMIC	Medicine	2/6/2006	2/6/2011
512	Argentina	Medicine	Universidad Nacional de Cuyo	Medicine	2/6/2006	2/6/2011
513	Argentina	Medicine	Universidad Nacional Tucuman	Medicine	2/6/2006	2/6/2011
514	Argentina	Medicine	Instituto Universitario CEMIC	Medicine	29/11/2011	29/11/2017
515	Argentina	Medicine	Universidad Católica de Córdoba	Medicine	29/11/2011	29/11/2017
516	Argentina	Medicine	Universidad Nacional de Cuyo	Medicine	29/11/2011	29/11/2017
517	Argentina	Medicine	Universidad Nacional de Tucumán	Medicine	29/11/2011	29/11/2017
518	Argentina	Dentistry	Universidad Nacional de La Plata	Dentistry	29/11/2011	29/11/2017
519	Argentina	Dentistry	Universidad Nacional de Rosario	Dentistry	29/11/2011	29/11/2017
520	Argentina	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad de Buenos Aires	Veterinary Medicine	20/12/2010	20/12/2016
521	Argentina	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Nacional de la Pampa	Veterinary Medicine	13/12/2011	13/12/2017
522	Argentina	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Nacional de La Plata	Veterinary Medicine	13/12/2010	13/12/2016
523	Argentina	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto	Veterinary Medicine	13/12/2010	13/12/2016
524	Argentina	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Nacional de Rosario	Veterinary Medicine	13/12/2010	13/12/2016
525	Argentina	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Nacional del Centro de la Provincia de Buenos Aires	Veterinary Medicine	13/12/2011	13/12/2017
526	Argentina	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Nacional del Litoral	Veterinary Medicine	13/12/2010	13/12/2016
527	Argentina	Veterinary Medicine	Universidad Nacional del Nordeste	Veterinary Medicine	11/7/2011	11/7/2017

Chapter 7

EU Integration in the Area of Higher Education

R. Torrent

Presentation

This chapter pursues a twofold purpose.

The first is that of clarifying the essential nature of the integration process launched in the 1950s around the setting up of the European Economic Community, finally transformed in 2009 in the European Union[1]. Indeed, bad explanations and bad (and very often willingly misleading) interpretations of the EU process (in general, as an integration process, and specifically in the area of HE), have mudded so much the discussion that what characterizes the general knowledge about it is not so much ignorance or insufficiency but something much worst: confusion dressed as expertise.

The second purpose, once the waters have been cleared, is that of offering elements to think ABOUT AFRICA, and NOT, as so often covertly or explicitly proposed, TO COPY EUROPE. In this sense, the chapter applies, in the specific area of Higher Education, the approach that was also followed in chapter one of these Materials.

The chapter analyzes the different "ways to integration" followed in Europe in the HE area, emphasizing the fact that the Bologna Process is NOT an EU process, as well as the very different legal and policy instruments used by the EC/EU in its specific action in the area. It ends up with some ideas for further reflection, using as guiding thread three distinctions on the meaning of "recognition" and their respective policy contexts, the first two of which will be analyzed in depth in the next chapter by Howard Davies, specifically dedicated to the issue of Recognition.

Contents of the Chapter

1. Clarifying the foundations of EC/EU integration: three ways or approaches to ec/eu integration
2. Some history on EC/EU integration in Higher Education: the too often misunderstood maastricht paradox
3. The third way and the launching of the bologna process
4. Some distinctions to guide the reflection: different issues, different perspectives, different policy and legal frameworks
5. ANNEX I – Articles on Education in the treaty on the functioning ot the European Union

1. The European Economic Community, as set up by the Treaty of Rome in 1956-57, was transformed in the European Community (EC, without 'Economic') by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992-93, which also created the European Union (EU). Finally, the Treaty of Lisbon, entered into force in November 2009, merged the EC and the EU, giving to the merged entity this last name: European Union. Therefore, it can become very cumbersome to refer accurately to these entities from a historical perspective. The reader must always take into account the context. And the expression 'EC/EU' can also help.

Furthermore, I have always criticized the use of the terms 'European integration' to refer to this process. It was not conceived as 'European' but as 'Western European'. It was then enlarged to countries in the South and Central (put a child in front of a map of Europe and ask him or her to point to the center of Europe: he/she will point to Prague), Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. But it remains NOT 'European', as the tragic war between two European countries not members of the European Union has certainly illustrated in 2022.

1. Clarifying the foundations of EC/EU integration: three ways or approaches to EC/EU integration

1.1. Three different - even if interrelated – aspects/ways/approaches of the integration process

One of the main criticisms to be addressed to most analysis of the EC/EU integration process is the lack of differentiation between its three aspects, or ways, or approaches, which, even if they are interrelated, follow different legal and political rationales and cover very different spheres. These three aspects are already present in the first stage of the process and remain present in the second one:

- The first is the imposition of obligations on States (in many cases very similar to those existing in the typical Free Trade Agreements promoted by the United States since the 1990s and then signed in many other regions of the world: as a consequence, one could put forward that the European Community Treaty -ECT- "encompasses such a Free Trade Agreement").
- The second is the creation of a mechanism for creating new law (the European Economic Community) which is autonomous from Member States even if, obviously, they do participate in its administration (the approach that differentiated the ECT from the typical Free Trade Agreements, for instance, from the very beginning).
- The third is the creation of a framework of collaboration between Member States that allows them, without having to transfer any competence or be subjected to specific legal obligations, to coordinate their policies and activities -, an aspect or approach that the European process has developed successfully but which is not specific to it.

The two first aspects have already been dealt with in chapter one within the section concerning the techniques for law production and under the perspective of distinguishing between primary and secondary law. However, it is useful to refer again to them with some fundamental examples in order to emphasize that:

- Both aspects or techniques can cover different subject matters:
  - Thus, the elimination of restrictions in trade in goods between Member States was accomplished according to the first technique (primary law) , whereas the definition and management of the external regime of the Customs Union was and is made according to the second one (that is, it is carried out by the European Community enacting secondary law); and
  - The national treatment obligation in indirect taxation (but also in education) is imposed according to the first technique (primary law), whereas the harmonization of the Value Added Tax structure (or a very partial system of recognition of professional qualifications) use the second one – secondary law- (and is carried out by the European Community).
- And both have different scopes:
  - For example, in the area of education, the scope of the second technique – secondary law- is very limited because the harmonization of educational legislation is explicitly excluded from the competences of the Community/Union;
  - but that of the first technique – primary law- is very large because the National Treatment obligation imposed by the ECT has always applied to education as well as to other areas.

The third aspect or approach is developed without any legal rule that specifically creates it: the creation of a collaboration framework between states. The first two and still the most relevant examples are the following:

- Until 2020 (the situation has changed since 2021), the financial support to African, Caribbean and Pacific states in the framework of the ACP Agreement (which rested with the Member States and was not included in the EU budget), and more in general, the participation of all Member States in Agreements and Treaties signed by the Community in areas where they are still competent;

- Accession negotiations of new Member States, which, even if they fall under national competence and their results are finally ratified by national Parliaments, are developed within EU institutions.

This is the approach that, in the Treaty of Maastricht (1992-93), led, in order to favour its development, to the creation of the European Union as an institutional framework in which joint Member States actions could be undertaken without conferring competences to the Community.

1.2. The first two ways are connected (but without an exact correlation) to the distinction between three types of rules, already discussed in chapter 1

Indeed, the first two ways are connected (but without an exact correlation) to the distinction between three types of rules, already discussed in chapter 1 and which it is convenient to revisit here.

The analysis of rules as instruments must be related to the three main approaches of international rules promoting integration.

- The first is to impose obligations on liberalization and access to markets.
- The second is to impose certain obligations of non-discrimination on the legal framework applicable to transactions and operations covered by the agreements such as MFN status ('Most Favoured Nation', or, in simpler terms, Non-discrimination among foreigners) or National Treatment obligations.
- The third is to create uniform legislation establishing a common legal framework for transactions and operations covered by the agreement.

These three approaches differ legally and in terms of their political and economic implications. The obligations that accompany liberalization are strictly limited in scope to international transactions. Obligations with regards to treatment (in particular if they apply to treatment of foreign firms and professionals after their establishment in the host country), as well as uniform or harmonized rules, apply essentially to internal transactions (the only exception being that of the obligation to apply MFN treatment in the access to the market). They are much more intrusive politically (and, as a consequence, much more difficult to tackle) than the former, but experience seems to prove that integration cannot rely solely on liberalization obligations in order to make sense and become well-balanced. The best example remains that of European integration: The very ambitious liberalization rules included in the founding EEC Treaty were unable to foster integration on their own: Extensive harmonization (our third type of rules) was necessary to achieve it (the best reference remains the White Book of the European Commission on the legislative programme needed to achieve the internal market in 1992).

The two latter types of rules pose a challenging political dilemma.

- Uniform rules serve integration goals extremely well, but are very difficult to establish for at least three reasons. First, they are technically difficult to agree on because of different legal traditions and contexts of parties, making it difficult to agree even on terminology and definitions. Second, they are intrusive in relation to the internal political process in so far as they are locked-in by international law, which precludes policy changes in internal regulation that may follow a switch of domestic governments and political majorities. And third, they threaten the adaptability of the international scheme because they are more difficult to change than domestic rules since they require a consensus (or a qualified majority) among all parties.
- Obligations regarding treatment drastically reduce these difficulties by allowing much greater discretionary power when it comes to domestic legislation, provided its content is non-discriminatory. But such obligations also pose new difficulties. Uniform rules follow the same logic and have the same scope at international and domestic levels. This is not the case with international obligations on treatment (in particular on treatment of enterprises). These obligations have a sort of double universality: they apply to all sectors and they cover all aspects of the legal framework applicable to enterprises. On the domestic front, however, there is not a single rule or set of rules that has this double universality. Different rules apply to different sectors (energy or air transport, for example) and to different aspects of the legal framework (from company law to taxation, through labour conditions or expropriation, for

example). With the sole exception of the European Community, experience shows that far-reaching obligations of treatment of enterprises can be accepted only if they are accompanied by a list of exceptions. But this list of exceptions tends to expand geometrically as the number of parties to the agreement increases. In the end, the list of exceptions may overwhelm MFN and national treatment.

The three types of rules are connected to the two ways we have just discussed concerning the production of integration law. Introducing rules of uniform law as primary law in the founding Treaty of the integration process is not impossible: NAFTA did it, and the WTO TRIPs Agreement also contains such rules. But the limits to the use of this approach are obvious: it risks making the Treaty so long and complicated that it would be impossible to simply negotiate and write it. The EC/EU experience proves that a wide-ranging set of rules of uniform law can only be produced, patiently and over a long period of time, through a well-lubricated mechanism of production of secondary law.

1.3. Remarks on the second law-production technique

1.3.1. The distinction between primary and secondary law is not merely a legal subtlety without any practical reach. It is instead an essential analytical tool, necessary to adequately conceive, and then implement, the legal framework of Regional Integration and, in particular, of regional economic integration. In fact, such distinction is related to the different dimensions of regional integration (a topic also studied in chapter 1 of these Materials). It is natural (especially from a political perspective) to address the challenges of regional integration at two different levels:

1. The primary law level, which establishes basic obligations that shape the process and ensure its continuity and stability across time; and
2. The secondary law level that deals with the details and issues likely to be modified, and which is aimed at facilitating the adaptation of the process under changing circumstances.

From this perspective, the distinction between primary and secondary law constitutes a useful, even absolutely necessary, tool to assess the integration processes and their legal and political articulation. The absence or existence of an autonomous law-producing mechanism predetermines, in actual fact, the range of issues that are to be covered by an integration initiative.

And the distinction between primary and secondary law has to do as well with the credibility of the integration process. As the quite rich GATT and WTO experience with waivers shows, a secondary law-production mechanism capable of enacting ad hoc exemptions might be more efficient than overloading primary law instruments with a multiplicity of exceptions or even excluding any possibility of exemptions at all. Indeed, in the absence of secondary law able to authorize exceptions, the only available alternative may be the systematic violation of primary law, which results in the loss of credibility of the whole integration process.

1.3.2. It is worth recalling at this point that the core of this discussion refers to the creation of new International Law, binding upon the parties. With this in mind, the policy choice is between the creation of an autonomous mechanism for the production of secondary law or the implementation of a primary law system in which every new provision must go through the classical procedure for the adoption of international treaties (negotiation, consent, ratification). The impact that any of these methods may have at the domestic level for each one of the member states, and their legal effects, from the individuals‘ perspective, is a completely different matter.

The second technique must have a very well-defined scope of application. Without such a strict definition, the international mechanism would become a blank check and could eventually end up depriving its creators (the states) from any content. *Accordingly, one of the cornerstones of the European integration process is the principle of conferral – or attribution - of specific competences. The Community (now the Union) is not entitled to determine its own competences. Rather, the EC (now EU) competences are determined by the treaties. Therefore, each piece of legislation enacted by the Community (now by the Union) must start with the identification of the specific provision in the treaties that confers to the EU the specific competence in the area or field covered by that piece of legislation*. Article 5 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community, and at present the corresponding provision of the EU Treaty established unambiguously this principle: *The*

Community shall act within the limits of the powers conferred upon it by this Treaty and of the objectives assigned to it therein.

The second law-production technique is extremely useful but it also implicates significant risks. It spans the distance between the law and the citizens and reinforces the powers of governments (which are represented in international bodies or institutions that create secondary law) while reducing those of the legislatures (which, concerning primary law, at least hold the power of ratification of new international instruments). For these reasons, secondary law must be used with precaution. An 'instrumental' approach is, again, to be recommended: there are two different law production techniques for regional or continental integration that must be used adequately and effectively.

1.3.3. The second law-production technique and the so-called "constitutional impossibilities".

It is common in a number of countries, particularly some in Latin America, but probably also some in Africa, to argue that one of the challenges faced by integration processes is a constitutional ban on secondary-law-creation mechanisms, such as the one that was addressed in earlier paragraphs (with the argument that the State cannot accept being bound by new international commitments without the prior ratification by Parliament).

It has however to be remembered that all WTO Members have consented without any objection to the existence of an autonomous mechanism for the creation of secondary law. The following example (additional to that of the approval of waivers, which also entre in to force without any ratification by WTO members) will illustrate this point: It would be fair to argue that most drafters of a hypothetical new regional integration agreement would take it for granted that the accession of new members must follow the first technique, i.e. signature and ratification of a new international treaty. This reasoning would most probably be justified on several grounds, notably one referred to as a constitutional impossibility to deprive legislatures of their power to authorize the ratification of international treaties. WTO Membership demonstrates that this argument is not sound. Indeed, all WTO Members have consented to the second technique for the accession of new countries to the WTO and therefore, in this context, their legislatures will not need to ratify new international rules that create obligations for their respective states. Consequently, the accession of China to the WTO, one of the most significant events in the realm of international economic relations during the last few decades, was accepted without any participation whatsoever of WTO Members' national parliaments.

Another example is that of membership of the United Nations. By becoming a UN member, a State accepts the existence of a mechanism of secondary law production (the Security Council acting in the framework of Chapter VII of the UN Charter), in which most countries do not even participate. Therefore, no "constitutional impossibilities" seem to exist for the production of secondary law if a State is a UN member.

1.3.4. Two distinct issues: the existence of an autonomous law-creation mechanism; and the composition and voting rules of the law-making institution

The existence of secondary or derived law results not only from a treaty (primary law) that allows for it, but also from the establishment of an institution that has the power to create it. Such an institution is integrated by its members, who are representatives or are appointed by Member States governments. This fact has been obscured by two frequent misinterpretations of the European integration process, presenting it as the classic – and only - example of 'supranationalism'. It is worth presenting them briefly at this point.

- The confusion results from misinformation, and refers to the institution entitled to produce secondary law within the framework of the European Union. Contrary to common belief, it is not the European Commission, but rather the Council of the European Union. It is worth recalling that the latter institution is integrated by representatives of Member States governments (without prejudice that its decisions are always adopted upon the initiative of the Commission, and with different degrees of participation of the European Parliament, which have been increased by the successive reforms of the Founding Treaties).
- The second aspect of confusion is due to a misinterpretation of the adjective 'intergovernmental', generally used when referring to the EU Council. This misinterpretation generates a very pernicious confusion among, on one hand, the composition of the Council, certainly formed by representatives of the governments (so, 'intergovernmental' if you still want to use this misleading word); and, on the other

hand, its absolutely 'supranational' (another misleading word) nature. In fact, the Council has always been the only EC/EU body capable of autonomously creating new law. Therefore, it has always embodied the greatest amount of supranationality of all EU institutions. In somehow paradoxical words: It has always been the 'intergovernmental' institution, in its composition, that embodies the 'supranational nature' of the European Community (now the European Union).

The nature of the second technique of law production and the norms enacted in accordance with this technique are not affected by the voting rules applied when decisions are taken. The Council of the European Union has always taken its decisions under a wide range of voting rules (which has encompassed in history very different categories of majorities and, in some cases, unanimity). These different voting rules have no effect on the Council's nature and the nature of the laws created by it.

The following reasoning further clarifies this point: What is relevant with respect to Member States' legal and political constitutional foundation is whether an autonomous international law-production mechanism is in place (because this new secondary law will not require for its entry into force the formal requirements required in the case of the approval of international primary law, notably the intervention of Parliaments). Voting rules within this autonomous mechanism have nothing to do with the first matter. The difference on voting rules is, essentially, a political question: Whenever a certain decision that requires a minimum level of support by members is to be adopted, what should be the most relevant consideration: (a) keeping 'for us' the possibility of blocking this decision, in the case that it does not meet 'our' interests; or (b) ensuring that nobody will be capable of blocking this decision in 'our' detriment, in the case that the decision does meet 'our' interests? If we prefer the first position, then we will advocate for the unanimity rule (which provides us with "veto power"). If we are more interested in the second possibility, then we will be in favour of a majority rule, which will exclude the potential formation of small vetoing coalitions.

Summing up: The existence or not of an autonomous law-creation mechanism can be discussed in terms of 'sovereignty' (or, more accurately, in terms of the allocation of competences among the state and international organizations). Voting rules have nothing to do with this matter. Rather, these rules are merely a political issue, always linked to the balance of power within the international context.

A good illustration of this point can be found in the case of secondary-law creation within the context of Mercosur. The Treaty of Asunción and its main additional instrument, the Protocol of Ouro Preto, clearly establish the existence of bodies entitled to create law. These bodies, formed by government representatives of the Member States (it must be always kept in mind that this is also the case of the Council of the European Union), take all decisions by consensus. What is the main issue that Mercosur's derived or secondary law faces? Is it substituting the consensus voting rule for a majority voting rule? This is not the issue, precisely because of the enormous differences in size among its Members, that rules out the possibility of systematically outvoting the big one, i.e. Brazil (To be sure, in some cases the adoption of a majority rule may make a difference. That would be the case, for instance, with the authorization of transitory safeguard measures. In this sense, it is noteworthy that all Mercosur members have accepted without any objection this possibility of waivers at the WTO level). Talking in general, the real problem rests on the fact that Mercosur's secondary-law creation mechanism is not autonomous, because the norms it produces cannot enter into force until they have been 'internalized' (transformed into domestic law). And this is the case even if such laws are adopted by consensus amongst the respective institutions, which are composed by the parties' government representatives. Therefore, if the challenges of secondary-law creation in the context of Mercosur are to be addressed, the key aspect to be taken into account is neither the composition of the bodies that produce it, nor the voting rules that govern their decision-making process. The solution lies instead in implementing a system in which new derived or secondary law enters into force right after its approval (as in the case of the waivers or the accession of new members in the WTO) without going through the 'internalization'. The reader of these Materials must think whether this is not also the situation in Africa at the Continental and Regional levels.

1.3.5. The 'second way' to integration embraces not only the production of legal rules. It also covers the adoption and implementation of common activities as the 'EU programmes'

Indeed, if there is an autonomous mechanism of secondary law production, this mechanism can be endowed with the powers to put into place, and if needed implement, 'common activities' (the second of the four Instruments discussed in the Analytical Framework discussed in Chapter 1 of these Materials – legal rules being

the first one). The EC/EU has made ample use of this possibility, in particular in areas as agriculture, development cooperation, research … and education. Of course, these programmes will have to be set up in legal instruments (based, as always, in a specific article of the EC treaty – now the TFEU).

2. Some history on EC/EU integration in Higher Education: the too often misunderstood Maastricht paradox

2.1. The twofold use of the second way/approach to EC/EU integration in the area of Higher Education

2.1.1. Legal Rules: The EC/EU directives on Recognition of professional qualifications

The founding EEC Treaty, the Treaty of Rome, did not confer any competence to the EEC on Higher Education (and only a very limited competence on what at the time was named 'occupational' training – 'formation professionnelle' in French – now rebaptized as 'vocational'), But article 57.1 on Right of Estabishment (whose scope was extended to service by article 66) established that *"In order to facilitate the engagement in and exercise of non-wage-earning activities, the Council, on a proposal of the Commission and after the Assembly has been consulted, shall, in the course of the first stage by means of a unanimous vote and subsequently by means of a qualified majority vote, act by issuing directives regarding mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other qualifications."*

On the basis of this provision, the EEC began to enact secondary law harmonizing curricula that led to diplomas granting professional qualifications. The first directive was Directive 77/452 on diplomas qualifying for the exercise of the profession of nurse responsible for professional care. It was followed in a 16-years period by eleven additional directives for diplomas for dental practitioner, veterinary surgeon, midwife, architect, pharmacist and doctor. And, much later on. all these directives were brought together in a general Directive, extremely long, but still only very partial, on recognition of professional qualifications (Directive 2005/36). Chapter 8 of these Materials discusses this issue very aptly and in great detail (see also, inter alia, https://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/single-market-services/free-movement-professionals/recognition-professional-qualifications-practice_en)

2.1.2. Common activities in the area of Higher Education: EC/EU funded programmes

Quite late, in the middle of the 1980s, the EEC initiated a new road to integration in the area of Higher Education using also the second way to integration: Setting-up (and funding!) programmes. In the area of education, and mainly Higher Education, the earliest of these programmes, Comett (European Community Action Programme in Education and Training for Technology) was launched in 1986. Comett was joined in 1987 by Erasmus (European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students), and shortly afterwards by Petra (European Community Action Programme for the Vocational Training of Young People and Their Preparation for Adult and Working Life), Eurotecnet (European Technology Network for Training), Lingua (Programme for the Promotion of Foreign Language Knowledge in the European Community), and Iris (European Community Network of Training Programmes for Women). Thus, a whole new spectrum of programmes developed gradually covering all educational sectors with the exception of compulsory schooling (see Ertl. H. 2003[(2)]). Eventually, ERASMUS + absorbed all of them.

It must be emphasized, however, that this initiative was not conceived in the framework of a (non-existent) EC policy of higher education, but in that of a "citizens-and-youth policy" oriented to bring the integration process closer to citizens and, in particular, to youth. Indeed, the initiative in the area of Higher Education and Universities was simply one of the initiatives recommended by the Adonnino Report of March 1985 (https://ec.europa.eu/dorie/fileDownload.do;jsessionid=jg62PJXBBhnrmZGRLcpQX3zDz1vHwp9n0zyR63mC2qCyvK1BG51C!-572674064?docId=186651&cardId=186651), very significantly entitled as *Report* (to the European Council) *from the ad hoc Committee on a People's Europe.*

2. https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:bf5c88a0-7fcc-4995-95fd-68571aeca181/download_file?safe_filename=European%2BUnion%2Bprogrammes%2Bfor%2Beducation%2Band%2Bvocational%2Btraining%253A%2Bdevelopment%2Band%2Bimpact&file_format=application%2Fpdf&type_of_work=Research+paper

2.2. The first approach to EC/EU integration in the area of Higher Education. The National Treatment principle/rule

But EC integration in Higher Education did not proceed only (nor even mainly) on the basis of the enactment of secondary law. The Court of Justice of the European Communities 'discovered' (it was indeed an unexpected discovery for many) that the first way to integration, and in particular the principle/rule on National Treatment proclaimed in article 7 of the EEC Treaty, also applied to Higher Education. The 1983 Gravier judgment (preceded by the Forcheri judgment the year before) established this. It is so important (and so pedagogical as far as the role to be played by the National Treatment principle in integration processes) that it deserves a long quotation (emphasis added):

Judgment of the Court of 13 February 1985. - Françoise Gravier v City of Liège. - Reference for a preliminary ruling: Tribunal de première instance de Liège - Belgium. - Non-discrimination - Access to vocational training. - Case 293/83.

(The Court considers that...)

19. *The first remark which must be made in that regard is that although educational organization and policy are not as such included in the spheres which the Treaty has entrusted to the Community institutions, access to and participation in courses of instruction and apprenticeship , in particular vocational training , are not unconnected with Community law .*

20. *Article 7 of Regulation no 1612/68 of the Council of 15 october 1968 on freedom of movement for workers within the Community (Official Journal, English special edition 1968 (ii), p . 475) provides that a worker who is a national of a Member State and who is employed in another Member State is to have access to training in vocational schools and retraining centres in that country by virtue of the same right and under the same conditions as national workers . Article 12 of the Regulation provides that the children of such workers are to be admitted to that state ' s general educational apprenticeship and vocational training courses under the same conditions as the nationals of that state.*

21. *With regard more particularly to vocational training, article 128 of the Treaty provides that the Council is to lay down general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy capable of contributing to the harmonious development both of the national economies and of the common market. The first principle established in Council Decision no 63/266/EEC of 2 April 1963 laying down those general principles (Official Journal, English special edition 1963-1964 , p. 25) states that 'the general principles must enable every person to receive adequate training , with due regard for freedom of choice of occupation , place of training and place of work ' .*

22. *The particular attention which the Community institutions have given to problems of access to vocational training and its improvement throughout the Community may be seen, moreover, in the 'General Guidelines ' which the Council laid down in 1971 for drawing up a Community programme on vocational training (Official Journal, English special edition, second series ix , p . 50), in the Resolution of the Council and of the Ministers for Education meeting within the Council of 13 december 1976 concerning measures to be taken to improve the preparation of young people for work and to facilitate their transition from education to working life (Official Journal C 308 , p. 1) and the Council Resolution of 11 July 1983 concerning vocational training policies in the European Community in the 1980s (Official Journal C 193 , p . 2).*

23. *The common vocational training policy referred to in article 128 of the Treaty is thus gradually being established. It constitutes , moreover , an indispensable element of the activities of the Community, whose objectives include inter alia the free movement of persons, the mobility of labour and the improvement of the living standards of workers.*

24. *Access to vocational training is in particular likely to promote free movement of persons throughout the community , by enabling them to obtain a qualification in the Member State where they intend to work and by enabling them to complete their training and develop their particular talents in the member state whose vocational training programmes include the special subject desired.*

25. *It follows from all the foregoing that the conditions of access to vocational training fall within the scope of the Treaty .*

(Therefore, the Court rules that)

(1) the imposition on students who are nationals of other member states of a charge, a registration fee or the so-called 'minerval' as a condition of access to vocational training, where the same fee is not imposed on students who are nationals of the host member state, constitutes discrimination on grounds of nationality contrary to article 7 of the treaty .

The reader must understand that, when the Court says that conditions of access "fall within the scope of the Treaty", it does not say that it falls within the scope of the competences conferred to the Community to enact secondary legislation (our second way to integration). It says that they fall within the scope of the obligations imposed by primary law (our first way to integration).

And the reader must also understand that the National Treatment principle does not eliminate the barriers to mobility that are created by the regulatory divergences between Member States: if they exist, barriers remain unless harmonization of regulations is undertaken effectively.

2.3. The "excessive use" of the second way leading to the Maastricht paradox

The combined effect of a) the discovery that the National Treatment principle applies also to education, and b) the expansion of secondary law to such a sensitive area was welcomed by many as great steps forward towards a "Citizens – or People's- Europe" but it also raised very serious concerns as it was interpreted by many as creating the risk that an unbridled integration process would end up invading extremely sensitive areas of policy that, furthermore, sub-central levels of Government (the German Länder in the very first place) cherished as "their own".

The concerns were exacerbated by a practice that was gaining ground (also in the area of education): the use (rather abuse) of article 235 of the Treaty as the legal basis for Community action. Article 235 had a quite awkward drafting as it seemed to create an exception to the fundamental constitutional principle that the Community can only act on the basis of the specific competences attributed ot it by specific articles of the Treaty3. It seemed that its meaning and effect was that of allowing the Community to do … whatever (if justified in purely political considerations). It established that

> *If any action by the Community appears necessary to achieve, in the functioning of the Common Market, one of the aims of the Community in cases where this Treaty has not provided for the requisite powers of action, the Council, acting by means of a unanimous vote on a proposal of the Commission and after the Assembly has been consulted, shall enact the appropriate provisions.*

Constitutional Courts, and in particular the German one, begun to threaten with the use of the true "atomic bomb" in their hands. If article 235 continued to be interpreted and applied as allowing the Community "to do whatever", they would have to rule that, by setting up a sort of Frankenstein with unlimited powers, something that is prohibited by the Constitution, the internal law ratifying the EC Treaty was unconstitutional.

All these concerns led to the introduction in the 1992-93 Maastricht Treaty that modified the EC Treaties of specific articles on Education, Culture and Health (typical areas in which the German Länder are competent). This introduction is interpreted often as an "enlargement" of Community competences to these areas. The right interpretation is rather the opposite: the specific articles in these areas were introduced to guarantee that there will not be an immoderate recourse to article 235 for action in these areas; therefore, to explicitly restrict the scope of Community action. Indeed, the essential provision of the articles are not the paragraphs in which they allow for "support measures" but the last one in which it is unambiguously established that the

3. This explains why, the Treaty of Lisbon (entered into force in 2009) intends to give to it a "less risky" drafting:
Article 352 (ex Article 308 TEC)
1. If action by the Union should prove necessary, within the framework of the policies defined in the Treaties, to attain one of the objectives set out in the Treaties, and the Treaties have not provided the necessary powers, the Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament, shall adopt the appropriate measures. Where the measures in question are adopted by the Council in accordance with a special legislative procedure, it shall also act unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament.
2. Using the procedure for monitoring the subsidiarity principle referred to in Article 5(3) of the Treaty on European Union, the Commission shall draw national Parliaments' attention to proposals based on this Article.
3. Measures based on this Article shall not entail harmonisation of Member States' laws or regulations in cases where the Treaties exclude such harmonisation.
4. This Article cannot serve as a basis for attaining objectives pertaining to the common foreign and security policy and any acts adopted pursuant to this Article shall respect the limits set out in Article 40, second paragraph, of the Treaty on European Union.

Community can "**adopt incentive measures, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States".**

Annex I reproduces the text of the articles on Education and vocational training.

3. The third way and the launching of the Bologna process

These developments are the necessary background to understand why and how the Bologna Process was launched

- by Member States Ministers
  - those of the 4 'big ones' – France, Germany, the UK and Italy – who signed the Sorbonne Declaration in 1998 (http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/1998_Sorbonne/61/2/1998_Sorbonne_Declaration_English_552612.pdf
  - and those of the 25 additional ones who signed the Bologna Declaration in 1999[4]
- outside the EU framework, as a political framework of cooperation
- without a single legal provision (either of EC/EU or of international law).

This can be certainly interpreted as another example of the third way to EU integration. But it is not a 'pure' example because it has ended up in a 'European' process that includes many countries that are not EU members.

These all-European processes and institutional set-ups are not new at all. Some of them precede, in fact, the setting up of the European Economic Community in 1956-57 (and even that of the European Community of Coal and Steel – CECA- in 1952). Two of high importance are

- the Council of Europe, an international organization created in 1949 (https://www.coe.int/en/web/yerevan/the-coe/about-coe/overview) where, besides its focus on Human Rights, many European instruments on education and culture have been negotiated and are managed. The Lisbon Convention on Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region is a joint endeavour of the Council of Europe and UNESCO, not an EC/EU instrument.
- And, in the economic area, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE: https://unece.org/mission), which has always been the forum in which issues of such overriding importance as technical regulations for motor vehicles (https://unece.org/transport/vehicle-regulations) or transport agreements (https://unece.org/transport) have been negotiated and agreed.

These processes tend to follow a variable geography (it seems better to use the term 'geography' than the usual 'geometry') and it is usual for them to involve non-EU Member States (the paradigmatic example being, of course, NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the area of defense, that has included Turkey since 1952, does not include some EU Member States and whose founding Treaty was signed in Washington, with the United States as founding member, in 1949).

The Bologna Process, intended to lead to a European Higher Education Area (EHEA), will be presented and discussed in detail in chapter 8 of these Materials. In the present chapter, we must simply understand its position as an 'impure' third way to EU integration. This has become possible because, even it if was born outside the EU framework, the EC/EU, and in particular one of its institutions, the European Commission, managed to achieve a relatively relevant role as a participant. It participates in the periodical Ministerial Conferences alongside its 49 member countries (http://ehea.info/page-full_members) and it is also a very active member of the Bologna Follo-up Group that oversees the process between the Ministerial meetings (http://www.ehea.info/page-the-bologna-follow-up-group); and one of the main instruments of the process, the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) was brought to life, following the already mentioned 1985 Adonnino report, by the European Community.

4. Some distinctions to guide the reflection: different issues, different perspectives, different policy and legal frameworks

As repeatedly said, the purpose of this chapter, and of the whole Materials, is NOT to explain in detail how EU integration in the area of Higher education is proceeding, and even less to suggest that it constitutes a 'model' for Africa. The purpose is that of offering elements to think from Africa about Africa. Therefore, I'll conclude the chapter with some considerations to guide the reflection, very simplistically presented, that emphasize the existence of different issues, different approaches, and different policy and legal frameworks. The simplicity is consciously exaggerated in order to incentivize discussion and reflection.

First. Only a very reduced number of issues have been tackled at the regional level.

- This is very clear in the case of action by the EC/EU.
  - *Secondary legal rules* have only been produced on the issue of recognition of diplomas (full-fledged 'diplomas', not 'credits')
  - *Common activities* have been numerous and well-funded. But their overall purpose has been that of promoting
    - Mobility and
    - Networking (among individuals and institutions)

    with the main purpose of bringing the integration process closer to citizens (and not so much that of enhancing quality in HE).
- In the framework of the Bologna procees, many more issues have certainly been discussed. However, it must never be forgotten that these discussions, when they are conclusive, and even if they are proclaimed in Ministerial Declarations, never become legally binding. Therefore, all in all, the Bologna Process must be considered as an example of 'diplomatic instruments' in the terms of the Analytical Frameworks discussed in the first two chapters of these Materials.

Second. Higher Education issues can be, and have been, tackled from different perspectives and in different policy contexts. One of the best examples of this is how the issue of recognition has been dealt with:

- *The context for the recognition of professional qualifications* is mainly that of the building of a Common Market. This is why it has been dealt with by the EC/EU through the enactment of legal rules, as a condition to make effective the free circulation of workers/professionals between Member States and the exercise of the right of establishment in another Member States.
- *The context for the recognition of academic qualifications (diplomas)* for access to postgraduate studies is mainly that of research and higher education policy. The EU has promoted it with the setting-up, and funding, of programmes, but the main onus remains in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) themselves, which in many countries in the world, including EU Member States, have never had any difficult, in the exercise of their autonomy, to accept graduates from other countries in their postgraduate programmes. Therefore, the question might be raised as to whether University autonomy (plus public and private funding) is enough to deal with this issue. Has an international agreement as the UNESCO/Council of Europe Convention really modified the situation in terms of facilitating access to postgraduate studies?
- *The context for mobility of students at undergraduate level (and, as a necessary or convenient requirement, the recognition of parts/components of a curriculum)* has been, in the EC/EU case, that of youth and general integration policy, with the objective of (or as a good available means of) bringing regional integration down to citizens (at least to some categories of citizens) and promoting their internationalization. This has been the underlying logic of the Erasmus undergraduate mobility programme, since its inception in the 1985 Adonnino Report. The use of the European Credit Transfer System may help. However, the legal foundation that allows for this mobility is not EU law but the autonomy of Universi-

ties (in the framework of national rules), which interact, usually, in the framework of bi- or pluri-lateral agreements (and not in application of general rules). This is something on which most literature and official texts remain silent.

Third. In the case of the EC/EU, National Treatment is a basic principle

Indeed. Beyond, and behind, specific legal rules and common activities, what has really underlined EC/EU integration in the area of Higher Education has been the acceptance (legally and, in particular, politically) that the general principle of National Treatment (treating citizens and companies from other Member States as the ones from your own country) "is there and means something". It can be argued that this is what has created the adequate frame of mind favouring EC/EU intra-mobility and recognition of qualifications.

Summary of the chapter in a few questions

In all likelihood, you will not be able to give a full and detailed answer to the following questions, but you should be able to understand their meaning and you have the obligation, at least as a participant in HAQAA training activities, to think about them.

1. Have you understood the difference between primary and secondary EC/EU law, in general as well as in the specific area of higher education? Have you understood the nature of the Bologna Process?
2. Do you understand, in the context of movements between Member States, the difference between a) direct prohibitions or restrictions in access, and b) indirect barriers resulting from divergences in regulatory frameworks? Do you understand the role of the National Treatment principle?
3. Have you understood the different policy contexts in which issues of higher education have been dealt with in the EC/EU and its Member States? Have you understood the three different meanings and contexts of the so-called "Recognition of qualifications"?

ANNEX I – Articles on Education in the treaty on the functioning ot the European Union (entered into force in november 2009) -emphasis added-

Title XII

Education, vocational training, youth and sport

article 165

(ex Article 149 TEC)

1. *The Union shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity.*

   The Union shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues, while taking account of the specific nature of sport, its structures based on voluntary activity and its social and educational function.

2. *Union action shall be aimed at:*

   - *developing the European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States,*
   - *encouraging mobility of students and teachers, by encouraging inter alia, the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study,*
   - *promoting cooperation between educational establishments,*
   - *developing exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the education systems of the Member States,*
   - *encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors, and encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe,*
   - *encouraging the development of distance education,*
   - *developing the European dimension in sport, by promoting fairness and openness in sporting competitions and cooperation between bodies responsible for sports, and by protecting the physical and moral integrity of sportsmen and sportswomen, especially the youngest sportsmen and sportswomen.*

3. *The Union and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the field of education and sport, in particular the Council of Europe.*

4. *In order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article:*

   - *The European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, after consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, shall* **adopt incentive measures, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States,**
   - **The Council, on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt recommendations.**

Article 166

(ex Article 150 TEC)

1. *The Union shall implement a vocational training policy which shall support and supplement the action of the Member States, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content and organisation of vocational training.*
2. *Union action shall aim to:*
   - *facilitate adaptation to industrial changes, in particular through vocational training and retraining,*
   - *improve initial and continuing vocational training in order to facilitate vocational integration and reintegration into the labour market,*
   - *facilitate access to vocational training and encourage mobility of instructors and trainees and particularly young people,*
   - *stimulate cooperation on training between educational or training establishments and firms,*
   - *develop exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the training systems of the Member States.*
3. *The Union and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of vocational training.*
4. *The European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, shall* **adopt measures to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States, and the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt recommendations.**

Part 4

Issues of substance

Chapter 8. Recognition of credits and academic qualification. The EU experience

A) The two tracks: academic and professional qualifications — H. Davies

B) Recognition of credits. The ECTS — H. Davies

Chapter 9. Curriculum. Learning and Teaching — Charmaine B. Villet

Chapter 10. Quality and Quality Assurance — J. Mukora

Chapter 11. Research and innovation: Learning and Innovation strategies for sub-Saharan Africa — M. Dosso

Chapter 12. Recent developments in Internationalization in Africa — J. O. Jowi

Chapter 8

Recognition of credits and academic qualification. The EU experience

H. Davies

Chapter 8A

The two tracks: academic and professional qualifications

H. Davies

Presentation

This chapter focuses on Europe's complex landscape of recognition: the Bologna Process (academic) and the European Union (professional). It first sets out their respective scopes and remits, going on to examine how far they have moved closer together since the end of the twentieth century. It is a case study of how – and in response to what pressures – the rationale and practice of recognition have evolved. It draws no parallels with other regions in the world, but implicitly invites the African reader to consider how context-dependent (culturally, economically, politically) is the recognition of qualifications, despite its aspiration to universality.

The European context is complex. Not only is there the deceptively simple distinction between the academic and the professional, but there is also the fact that recognition operates differently within Europe and in Europe's relations with the rest of the world. Moreover, the concept of Europe itself is problematic. The easy shorthand covers a range of co-existing legal Europes; variable geo-political structures super-impose one on the other.

Even so, the observable tendency of recognition practice is towards greater integration. What is interesting is the gradual co-option of long-standing traditions of liberal humanist higher education with the imperatives of the contemporary labour market. Here, Europe offers an object lesson. At each significant moment of recent history, step changes in higher education policy have chimed with global or regional financial crises and the political responses to them.

The European Union's successive attempts to complete the construction of its internal market are the markers of this process. From the decision in 2000 that its vocation was to become a high-wage economy dependent on imported materials and outsourced labour, through the sub-prime mortgage crisis of 2008, to the re-launch of the Single Market and the upgrading of professional and academic recognition systems, the resounding watchword has been the mutual 'readability' of qualifications – no longer a distant prospect, thanks to the impetus brought by digitalisation.

While national higher education systems cherish their diversity, the various strands of policy in Europe nevertheless testify to this over-arching tendency to integration: student mobility, credit accumulation and transfer, lifelong learning, the definition of competences, quality assurance, the regulation of professional activities, and the recognition of the qualifications of refugees.

The chapter ends by reviewing the range of recognition instruments now available to higher education institutions and by pointing to the developments which are likely to concern academics, administrators, employers and policy makers in the short- and medium-terms.

Contents of the Chapter

1. Introduction to the Europe(s) of recognition
2. Recognition in Europe of academic qualifications obtained outside Europe
3. Recognition in Europe of professional qualifications obtained outside Europe
4. Recognition in Europe of academic qualifications obtained within Europe
5. Recognition in Europe of professional qualifications obtained within Europe
6. Brief overview of the history and partial convergence of Europe's academic and professional recognition regimes
7. The Bologna Process and the Lisbon Strategy, 1999-2000
8. The launch of the EHEA and the re-launch of the EU's Single Market, 2008-2010
9. Calls for enhanced mutual and automatic recognition
10. Contemporary recognition instruments
11. Conclusion

1. Introduction to the Europe(s) of recognition

1. **Europe** has many configurations. So many, that its citizens cannot be relied upon to define it accurately. Where is its eastern geo-physical border? In the Bosphorus? In the Ural Mountains? Geo-politically, its contours are equally unfamiliar; few Europeans are aware that Brazil has a land frontier with the European Union. The politics of identity and the multiplicity of diaspora mean that most citizens inhabit a space that is informed by psycho-geography as much as by legal jurisdiction. For over two thousand years historians have offered competing definitions of Europe and its boundaries. Sixth-century Greeks considered that there were three continents – Libya, Asia and Europe. Today, supra-national bodies abound, but it is their abundance and mutability that puzzle the average European. To name only a few – the Council of Europe, the European Union, the European Economic Area, the European Free Trade Association; all of these are disparate assemblages of countries grouped together for different purposes.
2. It is evident that, where cross-border recognition is concerned, definition is **context-dependent.** And the European context is complex. Asking who recognises, who seeks recognition, for what purpose, across which border – these are questions for which there is no simple answer. Broadly speaking, it is useful to distinguish four spheres of recognition:
    - Recognition in Europe of academic qualifications obtained *outside* Europe
    - Recognition in Europe of professional qualifications obtained *outside* Europe
    - Recognition in Europe of academic qualifications obtained *within* Europe
    - Recognition in Europe of professional qualifications obtained *within* Europe
3. The **distinction between academic and professional** is crucial, but it is much less clear-cut than it seems. After all, many higher education qualifications can be located in both categories. A medical doctor, for example, requires an appropriate qualification to be able to practise medicine – a regulated profession in Europe – but the same qualification may function as the basis for engaging in other professional activities, say medical journalism, which is not regulated, or as the academic pre-requisite for pursuing a career researching the history of medicine at doctoral and post-doc levels. The categories overlap, are historically fluid, and are significantly context-dependent.

Apparent anomalies are common, particularly in higher education systems organised on a binary principle. To take the same example: in systems consisting of 'academic' institutions (normally the universities) and 'professional' institutions (typically, polytechnics which tend now to be known as 'universities of applied sciences'), medicine is generally taught in the university sub-sector. This is where it has been located – along with law and philosophy – since the birth of European universities six centuries ago. Medical doctors are trained in 'academic' institutions, while nurses are typically (but not always) trained in 'professional' institutions. This is an anomaly rooted in history and sanctioned by status-conscious societies. So much so, that the nursing profession has met considerable resistance in its attempts to establish nursing as a legitimate academic pathway which can culminate in post-doctoral research.

4. Despite its blurred edges, the academic/professional boundary underpins what is effectively Europe's **twin-track recognition policy**. Academic recognition is overseen by the Bologna Process, while professional recognition falls mainly within the remit of the European Union's internal market. The two jurisdictions are not geo-politically congruent; nor do they have equal regulatory force. Their principal features – contrasting rather than shared – are set out in the box below:

	EUROPE(S)	
	Academic recognition	**Professional recognition**
Legislator at international level	Council of Europe, in conjunction with UNESCO, and with endorsement by ministerial meetings of the Bologna Process. The Council of Europe has 47 Member States and five Observer States, all of which (with the exception of the Holy See) are outside Europe. EU primary law imposes also some obligations without any need for implementing secondary legislation.	European Union of 27 Member States: co-decision by Council and Parliament on a proposal by the European Commission
Administrator	Bologna Follow-Up Group and national/regional governments of signatory countries	European Commission Directorate-General GROW (Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs)
Legal instrument	Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) and its subsidiary texts. The LRC is a legally binding international treaty. It has been ratified by 49 countries; of the European countries with significant higher education systems, only Greece has neither signed nor ratified.	A Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications (consolidated version, April 2020) B Directive 2006/43/EC on statutory audits of annual accounts and consolidated accounts (consolidated version, June 2014) C Directive 77/249/EEC to facilitate the effective exercise by lawyers of freedom to provide services (consolidated version, May 2013) and Directive 98/5/EC to facilitate practice of the profession of lawyer on a permanent basis in a Member State other than that in which the qualification was obtained (consolidated version, July 2013)
Country coverage	The European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It consists of 49 countries. All 27 EU Member States belong to the EHEA, with the Flemish and French Communities of Belgium enjoying individual memberships. The European Commission is also a member.	A The twenty-seven EU Member States. In addition, a substantial volume of EU secondary law is 're-enacted' as European Economic Area (EEA) legislation applicable in Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. B As above, 27 Member States + EEA C As above, 27 Member States + EEA

Enforcement	Compliance with the LRC is monitored regularly by the European Commission's Eurydice network. Eurydice produces a periodical Bologna Process Implementation Report which it presents to each ministerial summit meeting. The Report derives from self-reporting by signatory countries; ultimately, it is the national governments which have the power to enforce compliance by the higher education institutions.	The European Commission has the power to initiate infringement proceedings against non-compliant Member States. At national and regional levels, Member States designate Competent Authorities as enforcement bodies.
Sanction	There are no sanctions for non-compliance with the LRC. The EHEA relies on peer pressure to secure compliance. This is soft law, based on consensus, trust and goodwill.	Infringement proceedings may result in judgments (and, in a second separate phase, penalties) by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). Here, countries in breach are faced with the force of hard law.

2. Recognition in Europe of academic qualifications obtained outside Europe

5. The boxed information is far from exhaustive. There are many more instruments, agencies, mechanisms and practices which shape the recognition environment in Europe and this overview will turn its attention to them in due course. First, let us look at the **recognition of qualifications gained in countries outside Europe**. In the case of academic qualifications, the situation is relatively uncomplicated. The Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) is a treaty binding on its European signatories, but designed to handle the recognition of all higher education qualifications, whatever their country of origin. European universities routinely deal with applications from all over the world; all have recognition implications. The complexity lies in the huge variety of foreign higher education systems and their tendency to evolve over time. Maintaining an accurate and up-to-date map of the world's qualifications demands constant vigilance. Hopefully, the rapidly changing landscape will become more stable with the full implementation of regional recognition conventions by other continents, backed by UNESCO's Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, adopted in 2019.

3. Recognition in Europe of professional qualifications obtained outside Europe

6. As for **non-EU/EEA 'third country'**[1] **professional qualifications**, the main burden is borne by Directive 2005/36/EC. Article 2.2 permits Member States to recognise third country professional qualifications obtained by their own citizens. Article 3.3 goes further, allowing qualification-holders, who are third-country nationals and whose qualifications have been recognised by a given Member State, to work in all other Member States, once they have completed three years of successful practice in the first Member State.

1. I.e., all countries beyond the 27 Member States of the EU and the three members of the European Economic Area (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway).

7. In this case, the first Member State is likely to have recognised the qualification in the framework of a **bilateral agreement** with a third country or one of its regions or provinces. A long-standing example is the Entente France-Québec. The EU has also a bilateral agreement with Switzerland.

8. In addition, the EU has recently begun incorporating into its trade deals a facility for securing **Mutual Recognition Agreements** (MRAs) with its trade partners. This possibility is underwritten by Article VII of the World Trade Organisation's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). MRAs are designed to serve specified professions. The EU's first MRA, understood to be nearing implementation, is in the field of architecture and will sit within the EU's Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with Canada. The MRA facility also exists in its agreements with Japan, South Korea and the UK. The professions most frequently cited in respect of potential MRAs are accounting, architecture, engineering and law. This is a recent development and the agreements with the four countries referred to here are dubbed 'new generation' trade deals. The numerous agreements concluded with countries and regional groupings in previous periods are listed on the DG Trade website. However, it is doubtful that any of them contain specific provision for the recognition of professional qualifications.

4. Recognition in Europe of academic qualifications obtained within Europe

9. As indicated above, the LRC is the foundation on which all academic recognition practice is built. Its implementation is the responsibility of its 49 signatory countries. Implementation is overseen by the Council of Europe[2] and monitored by the 51 members of the European Higher Education Area via the medium of the Bologna Process. The **near-congruence of the LRC and the EHEA** requires a brief explanation. Monaco is a signatory of the LRC but not a member of the EHEA: it has no higher education system. The position of Greece is the reverse: it has a higher education system, belongs within the EHEA, but for constitutional reasons has not signed the LRC. The EHEA contains two countries which each have two HE regimes: Belgium (the Flemish and French Communities) and the UK (in which Scotland is separate from England/Wales/Northern Ireland). It also has one country which is almost wholly in Asia (Kazakhstan). The Holy See (the Vatican) has an anomalous position: it is a full member of the EHEA but has only observer status in the LRC. Finally, the European Commission participates in the EHEA, but is not a signatory to the LRC; the Commission has 'powers' but no legal 'competence', since it is the EU itself, rather than its constituent institutions (Commission, Council, Parliament), which has legal personality.

10. The complexities of academic recognition are revealed to the general public and to HE stakeholders by **two networks of information centres:** the European Network of Information Centres in the European Region (supported by the Council of Europe) and the National Academic Recognition Centres in the European Union. These work together under the umbrella title of ENIC-NARIC centres. The fact that the network members are 55 in number also requires explanation: it is because government-supported centres also exist in Australia, Canada, Israel, New Zealand and the US. It is important to note that the umbrella ENIC-NARIC name does not indicate a uniform status or a standard mandate. Some centres are located within ministries, others are non-governmental, yet others have a semi-commercial profile. Some have the monopoly of academic recognition in their countries and can make binding decisions; others act in an advisory capacity. Some serve the HE community exclusively; others also provide services to employers. Yet whatever their internal differences, the twin networks enjoy a high profile and a high level of credibility.

11. The fact that some ENIC-NARIC centres are empowered to make binding recognition decisions impinges on the **autonomy of the higher education institutions** in their country. It undoubtedly acts as a restraint on institutions which might otherwise recruit injudiciously and admit students who are unlikely to complete their courses successfully. It also ensures consistency of practice across the national higher education sector. On the other hand, institutions enjoying academic autonomy are able to integrate the processes of recognition and admission, thereby accelerating them and ensuring that they address more immediately the needs of individual students applying for particular courses. Their

2. It is important to note that the Council of Europe is an international organisation completely separate from the European Union. It pre-dates (1953) the Treaty of Rome which created the European Community (1956-57) and subsequently became the European Union (in the Treaty of Lisbon) on December 1st 2009.

quality assurance systems ensure that they proceed consistently and fairly, taking due note of the information and guidance emanating from their ENIC-NARIC centres. The strong feeling in Europe is that this is the optimal arrangement. Not all European institutions, however, enjoy the necessary degree of autonomy. The Autonomy Scorecard maintained by the European University Association (EUA) distinguishes academic autonomy from autonomy in organisational, financial and human resource matters, publishing scores and rankings on a country-by-country basis.

12. The ENIC-NARIC Networks have been instrumental in disseminating **documents supplementary to the LRC** which have been adopted by the LRC Committee since the drafting of the original Convention. They mostly cover aspects of recognition which have come to the fore as HE systems have expanded and as global mobility has increased. Indeed, system change has accelerated substantially in recent decades, resulting in the need to revise and update the documentation. The full list demonstrates this evolution. It also indicates which documents are available in languages other than English. Of particular relevance are:

    - Recommendation on Criteria and Procedures for the Assessment of Foreign Qualifications (revised 2010)
      Accompanied by an explanatory memorandum, the Recommendation sets out the rights of citizens to submit qualifications for assessment, with a view to obtaining recognition. These include the right to access a procedure which is fair, transparent and applied in a consistent and timely manner and which may result in full, partial, alternative or non-recognition. The Recommendation stresses the importance of user-friendliness where fees and translation expenses are concerned. For the benefit of the recognition agencies, it lays down the principles governing the tasks of verifying the authenticity of qualifications, dealing with legacy qualifications, and identifying substantial differences between a qualification held by an applicant and the comparable qualification delivered in the country in which recognition is sought.
    - Recommendation on the Use of Qualifications Frameworks in the Recognition of Foreign Qualifications (2013)
      This Recommendation features the EHEA's qualifications framework (QF-EHEA) of short-cycle3/ Bachelor/Master/Doctorate and the EU's European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF-LLL) [see section 30 below], which establishes a system of levels from the end of compulsory secondary education onwards. It asserts their usefulness to evaluators when considering the level, learning outcomes, quality and workload of a given qualification.
    - Recommendation on the Recognition of Joint Degrees (2016)
      The recognition of Joint Degrees follows the principles embodied in the LRC and in earlier subsidiary documents. The Recommendation outlines the salient characteristics of Joint Degrees and indicates how dependent recognition is on cross-border quality assurance provision.
    - Recommendation on the Recognition of Qualifications held by Refugees, Displaced Persons and Persons in a Refugee-like Situation (2017)
      The text recommends ways of establishing and verifying the academic background of persons whose documentation may be incomplete or missing. It also gives examples of good recognition practice and cites the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees (EQPR).

3. Short-cycle courses are pre-undergraduate. Their role in bridging secondary and higher education, as well as accessing the labour market, was recognised by Bologna Ministers in 2018. See Appendix III to the Ministerial Communiqué at http://www.ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/EHEAParis2018_Communique_AppendixIII_952778.pdf

5. Recognition in Europe of professional qualifications obtained within Europe

13. The dominant recognition regime, operating in the 27 EU Member States and the three European Economic Area countries, is the EU Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications (consolidated version, April 2020). At its core are three groups of professions, each subject to a different recognition methodology. The first consists of seven so-called **'sectoral' professions:** medical doctor, dentist, general care nurse, midwife, veterinary surgeon, pharmacist, and architect. For each of these, the Directive specifies a set of elements which constitute a volume of basic training agreed at the level of the Union by the EU Council (the EU Council is composed by representatives of all EU Member State governments). The elements vary from profession to profession. Typically, they concern the minimum course duration, a number of named skills and competences, a list of sub-disciplinary areas, and the quantitative ratio of theoretical to practical and clinical training. They assume the possible entry to HE courses immediately following the end of compulsory secondary education, which historically has not always been of the same length in all the countries concerned. Nonetheless, once basic training has been successfully completed, the qualified person is automatically recognised as such throughout the EU+EEA and permitted to practise.

14. The Directive also identifies a second group of **craft professions**, for which the length of professional experience is the only criterion of recognition, there being no necessary formal qualification. These professions have no significant relevance for higher education.

15. The remainder (i.e. the third group containing hundreds of professions) fall into the scope of a **General System**. They cover the full range of regulated professional activity, including professions which might at first glance be assumed to be 'sectoral': paediatric and geriatric nurses, for example, appear in the General System. Here the competent authorities in the receiving country – governments or regulatory bodies – compare the qualification required with the qualification obtained by the would-be incoming professional in her/his country of training. If they discover substantial differences, they can impose compensatory measures, such as an aptitude test or an adaptation period.

16. Why were the sectoral professions separated from those in the General System? It was not because of a decision to place the healthcare professions in a separate category. The reasons are historical and have to do with the **profusion of regulatory frameworks**. The distinctive character of the British, French (Napoleonic) and German (Humboldtian) higher education systems is one factor. The variety of centuries-old national systems of apprenticeships and guilds is another. Together, they had, by the middle of the twentieth century, given rise to a multiplicity of regulatory bodies, some national, some regional, some enjoying sole control of a particular profession, others in competition with peer organisations. Profusion does not necessarily yield confusion; it certainly guarantees complexity. At each successive twentieth-century enlargement of what is now the EU, not to mention the reunification of Germany, the regulatory map became more labyrinthine. The enlargement of 2004 and the accession of the Baltic States and former Soviet Bloc countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) added massively to the detail of the landscape. Recently, bemoaning the existence of 72 varieties of civil engineer, the EU put in place Directive 2018/958 on a proportionality test before adoption of new regulation of professions, in an attempt to oblige Member States to rationalise their regulatory regimes and facilitate the cross-border mobility of professionals. Back in the 1970s, the European Commission and Member States had laboured hard and long to agree the basic training conditions of the seven sectoral professions. Confronted by the challenge of embarking on the eighth – engineering – they gave up the struggle and fell back on the catch-all General System. This is why the automatic recognition of the seven sectoral qualifications remains a circumscribed area within the wider recognition regime of the EU's internal market.

6. Brief overview of the history and partial convergence of Europe's academic and professional recognition regimes

17. The historical origins of the two regimes stand in marked contrast. Student and staff mobility, and therefore recognition, have existed in Europe from the first generation of universities onwards. Over half a millennium ago, ancient institutions such as Bologna, Leuven, Oxford, Salamanca and the Sorbonne were peopled by scholars with no necessarily fixed abode. **Academic recognition was recognition of erudition rather than of qualifications**. Mobility was underwritten by networks transcending national borders and by the shared Latin language. Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus is (for obvious reasons) the oft-cited exemplar of the mobile scholar. The formalisation of academic recognition in Europe was not firmly established until the Council of Europe produced its European convention on the equivalence of diplomas leading to admission to universities in 1953.

18. The recognition of professional qualifications, on the other hand, can be dated precisely. **Article 57 of the EU's founding Treaty** – the Treaty of Rome of 1957 – is the measure from which all subsequent developments derive. Its first clause reads:

    > *In order to facilitate the engagement in and exercise of non-wage-earning activities [i.e. professionals who are either self-employed and fee-charging], the Council, on a proposal of the Commission and after the Assembly [now the European Parliament] has been consulted, shall, in the course of the first stage by means of a unanimous vote and subsequently by means of a qualified majority vote, act by issuing directives regarding mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other qualifications.*

19. It was always intended that the nascent economic Community would feature the **freedom of movement of professionals** across its internal borders. Recognition became a challenge, a policy issue and a potential instrument from the very outset. Article 57.3 states that *'In the case of the medical, para-medical and pharmaceutical professions, the progressive removal of restrictions shall be subject to the co-ordination of conditions for their exercise in the various Member States.'* Clearly, this would require the design of a set of recognition principles, consultation with the relevant professional and regulatory bodies operating at national level, and legislation at Community level. The Treaty therefore required work to begin in the first phase of the twelve-year transition period, with a view to issuing Directives at the earliest possible date.

20. Work did indeed begin, but it would be twenty years before the **first major legislation** on professional recognition came into force. From 1977, a string of Directives appeared over a period of sixteen years: Directives 77/452/EEC and 77/453/EEC (general care nurse); 78/686/EEC and 78/687/EEC (dental practitioner); 78/1026/EEC and 78/1027/EEC (veterinary surgeon); 80/154/EEC and 80/155/EEC (midwife): 85/384/EEC (architect); 85/432/EEC and 85/433/EEC (pharmacist); 93/16/EEC (medical doctors). The order in which these sectoral professions were successfully addressed by professional and legislators reflected the difficulty of reaching agreement. As mentioned above, the Commission and the legislators baulked at the prospect of dealing with the intended next-in-line, engineering. Instead, de facto recognition was accorded to the Eur.Ing., a qualification overseen and regulated by FEANI (the *Fédération Internationale d'Associations Nationales d'Ingénieurs*). During this period, there were also Directives on the General System (89/48/EEC and 92/51/EEC); these gathered and absorbed a number of discrete measures in place since the 1960s, concerning activities requiring the lower levels of qualification possessed by – for example – persons in the food and beverage, coal, and insurance trades.

21. All of the above instruments were rationalised and taken under the umbrella of **Directive 2005/36/EC** which, following amendment in 2013, remains in force today. It is intended to achieve – and to manage any necessary change in – the alignment of professional recognition with cross-border service delivery. It also promotes the integration of the European professional labour market, the maintenance of high levels of service provision, the protection of patients and other consumers, social cohesion and, needless to say, accelerated economic growth.

22. For all the emphasis placed on qualifications, it is important to note that the bundle of legacy measures now incorporated in Directive 2005/36/EC made no claim to embody elements of a higher education policy. They had a quite different, socio-economic, focus.

    The European Commission nevertheless regarded education as a legitimate policy issue, particularly after the accession of Denmark, Ireland and the UK in 1973. It found a legal basis for it in Article 128, which states:

    > *The Council shall, on a proposal of the Commission and after the Economic and Social Committee has been consulted, establish general principles for the implementation of a common policy of occupational training capable of contributing to the harmonious development both of national economies and of the Common Market.*

So, at precisely the time when the multiple Directives cited in section 20 above were being drafted, the Commission was working, using Article 128 as the legal basis, on a Joint Study Programme (JSP) which, between 1976 and 1982, approved 269 joint programmes of study involving 420 higher education institutions. Relatively small networks of HEIs were funded to engage in joint curriculum development, student and staff exchanges, as well as collaborative research. The JSP was effectively the precursor of the **E**uropean **A**ction **S**cheme for the **M**obility of **U**niversity **S**tudents. (It is often forgotten that ERASMUS, as well as being a tribute to its learned namesake, is also an acronym.) The passage of ERASMUS through the legislative process in 1987 was, similarly, via the provision on occupational training set down in Article 128. The process was contentious. Challenged by the Member States in Council, the matter went to the Court of Justice which ruled that Article 128 accommodated all the strands of the JSP with the exception of research. The European Commission intended to enlarge the scope of possible action in the area of education by recourse to Article 235 of the Treaty, an article that was sometimes interpreted as a "cover-all" provision. This added to the legal and institutional conflict. Denmark and Germany objected, arguing that the Treaty's Article 235 did not allow the creation of new general competences. Germany in particular was anxious to protect the legal competences of its regions (the Länder). The end result was the inclusion in the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) of specific articles on education, culture and health, which, while conferring on the European Community the competence to engage in such activities as 'contributing', 'encouraging' and 'promoting', excluded any legislative 'hard measure' to harmonise educational systems. A new Article 126 was introduced to replace Articles 126, 127, and 128 of the Treaty of Rome:

1. The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity.
2. Community action shall be aimed at:
   - developing the European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States;
   - encouraging mobility of students and teachers, inter alia by encouraging the **academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study** [author's emphasis];
   - promoting cooperation between educational establishments;
   - developing exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the education systems of the Member States;
   - encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors;
   - encouraging the development of distance education.
3. The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the field of education, in particular the Council of Europe.
4. In order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article, the Council:

- acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 189b, after consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, shall adopt incentive measures, **excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States** [author's emphasis];
- acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt recommendations.

23. By the end of the 1980s Europe's academics had grown increasingly enthusiastic about ERASMUS. However, the programme required adequate funding and there was dismay when it was realised that its budget amounted to the equivalent of less than one day in the annual expenditure of the Common Agricultural Policy. Two conditions at least had to be met before budget increases could be guaranteed. First, demand had to rise. In 1985 there had been only 300 mobile students in the JSP – out of a total student population of six million. (By comparison, in the period 2014-20, three and a half million students participated in Erasmus+.) The Commission considered that, among other factors, it was desirable to secure wider and more effective recognition of school leaving certificates and university entrance qualifications. The second factor was **employability**, although the term did not yet have the currency that it enjoys today. It was reasonable to suppose that cross-border student mobility (with its accumulated capital of foreign language competence and heightened cultural awareness) would, in the course of time, inflate the volume of cross-border employment and professional service delivery. If ERASMUS could be shown to play a positive role in the integration of the European labour market, its political priority would rise – and so would its budget. While numbers were small, it was difficult to make the case, but eventually the Commission decided to fund the University of Kassel in Germany to conduct a study of 'the professional value of ERASMUS mobility'. The study's conclusions were not as decisive as some had hoped, but at least it was able to state that ERASMUS is 'not the entrance to a high-flying career but rather a successful "door-opener" into the labour market'.

24. Difficulties with recognition persisted, however, despite the raft of legislation outlined in section 20 above. In 1995, the Commissioner for Research, former French Prime Minister Edith Cresson, convened a multi-stakeholder study group on education and training which was to prove influential. Its 1997 report, Accomplishing Europe through Education and Training, is somewhat disregarded today, doubtless obscured by the corruption scandal – due in large part to the activities of Cresson herself – which brought down the European Commission led by Jacques Santer. Its recommendations reflect the study group's conviction that labour market needs are best satisfied by **competence-based education delivered in a lifelong learning framework**. To a limited extent it addressed higher education, calling for 'speeding up the process for modular recognition between similar courses in European universities' (para.109), while focusing in the main on vocational training. The report's central assertion is nevertheless a broad one. It informs its views on all stages of the learner's life cycle and is amply illustrated by the following quotation:

> *The slow progress made in the mutual recognition of qualifications is a perfect illustration of how difficult it is to increase intra-European mobility of people without a yardstick, even an approximate one, for measuring the content on which [these] skills are based. It is today anachronistic not to move ahead more swiftly in this direction.* [para.106]

It is possible to see here, in germ, the items which will come to populate the policy agenda in education and training in the first decades of the twenty-first century: learning outcomes; competence-based curricula; taxonomies of skills; qualifications frameworks; an acceleration in the evolution of recognition instruments.

25. Indeed, from this point onwards it becomes much easier to track the lines of development and rapprochement of academic and professional recognition. There are **three moments of visible symbiosis** which are worth considering in detail: first, in 1999-2000, the birth of the Bologna Process and the presentation by the Commission of its Lisbon Strategy; secondly, in 2008-2010, the launch of the EHEA and the re-launch of the EU's Single Market; thirdly, in 2012, calls for enhanced mutual and automatic recognition made by France and Germany in the Council of Ministers and by the Bologna ministers in Bucharest.

7. The Bologna Process and the Lisbon Strategy, 1999-2000

26. In the event, it was four EU Member State governments which took the initiative. In 1998, the Ministers of France, Germany, Italy and the UK issued the Sorbonne Declaration. Pointing out that economic reform was not of itself sufficient, they urged the creation of a '**Europe of knowledge**' – a phrase which was to become the short-hand and the justification of all that followed. The Europe of knowledge required, in the view of the four ministers, the mutual readability of discrete higher education systems. Compatibility, in other words, that would not threaten diversity; nor would it constitute harmonisation. This suggested a shared qualification framework, the semesterisation of the academic calendar and the credit rating of course units, all contributing to 'a common frame of reference, aimed at improving external recognition and facilitating student mobility as well as employability'. From a political and institutional perspective, it should be emphasised that the 'Europe of knowledge' was envisaged as a process to be conducted outside the framework of the European Union and carrying no founding or underlying legal obligations. Only political declarations would frame the process, leaving any enacting legislation to participant States.

27. In the following year, 1999, the Bologna Declaration further energised the dynamic, by bringing on board 26 more countries and by widening the focus to include quality assurance and the international competitiveness of European higher education. It also confirmed that the **Bachelor degree** would be the recognised qualification giving access to the European professional labour market. The Bologna Process was born.

28. For its part, the European Council (i.e. heads of Member State governments, plus the President of the European Commission, plus the elected President of the European Council) launched its Lisbon Strategy in 2000. It set a **new strategic goal** for the next decade: '*to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world*'. However, in full compatibility with the Sorbonne and Bologna Declarations, it sought to galvanise the skilled labour market by raising educational attainment rates and, by simultaneously combatting social exclusion, swelling the numbers of highly trained citizens. Its objective was to deliver growth through high-waged and innovative industries refining the raw materials produced by low-waged workers in third countries. This strategic ambition, infused with the likely provision of funding, understandably rang loudly through the corridors of Europe's universities and research institutes.

29. What this meant in practice soon became apparent. By 2003, the European Commission had noted that 20% of young Europeans lacked **key lifelong competences**. Urgent action was required and by 2006 an appropriate Recommendation was in place. It asked Member States to ensure that, by the end of compulsory education, their citizens had achieved an acceptable standard in:

- communication in the mother tongue
- communication in foreign languages
- competences in maths, science and technology
- digital competence
- learning to learn
- interpersonal, intercultural and social competences, and civic competence
- entrepreneurship
- cultural expression

30. Competence, however, is a moving target. The Recommendation defined it as a 'combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context', which left many questions unanswered. The acquisition of competence – if it is to be recognised – demands calibration. A further Recommendation was thus required. It came in 2008 – the Recommendation on the Establishment of the European Qualifi-

cations Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF). The **EQF** proved to be an extremely powerful recognition instrument. It tabulated descriptors of knowledge, skills and competence into eight levels, running upwards from the end of compulsory secondary education to the highest accredited level achievable. It is all-embracing, accommodating vocational, adult and higher education. Its levels 5, 6, 7 and 8 correspond to the short cycle, Bachelor, Master and Doctorate enshrined in Bologna's Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA). It preserves diversity and promotes compatibility by asking that all national qualifications frameworks be systematically referenced to it.

31. These were significant steps forward, but they fell short of bringing the EHEA and Directive 2005/36/EC into full alignment. In 2002, in its first reading of the draft Directive, the European Parliament had recommended that a set of credit points be introduced into the General System in order to clarify at least some of the uncertainties involved in the identification of substantial difference. This was an opportunity to bring the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) into the core workings of the Directive; but the Commission decided otherwise and the opportunity was missed. **EU policies on education and training, on the one hand, and its internal market, on the other, were still out of step**. The disconnect was palpable. The Lisbon Strategy had dramatically impelled the Commission's Directorate-General Education and Culture (DG EAC) from the policy periphery to centre-stage. Why then, in 2005, would Commissioner Figel' omit DG Internal Market, when listing the DGs with which DG EAC would closely collaborate (DG Employment, DG Research, DG Economic and Financial Affairs, and DG Regions)?

32. The best answer is that **DG Internal Market's agenda** in the first five years of the new century was simply too heavy. Its work on professional recognition consisted of two complex tasks. First, it was drafting what was to become Directive 2005/36/EC, giving priority to streamlining, and bringing under one umbrella, the majority of discrete measures already in place. Simultaneously, and in a deliberately coordinated operation, it was drafting and steering through the legislative process a new Directive on Services 2006/123/EC in the Internal Market. While trade in goods proceeded relatively unhampered, the cross-border trade in services fell a long way short of what the European Commission deemed desirable. Language problems, protectionism, regulatory divergence, and difficulties in assuring professional recognition had never been sufficiently resolved. Hence the inter-linkage of the two Directives and the wish to push them through the Council and the Parliament in one concerted effort. Hence, therefore, DG EAC's apparent view that it would get little in the way of close collaboration out of DG Internal Market.

33. Both Directives were complex. The Services Directive, moreover, was controversial, prompting outrage in some sections of the wider public. Principally, this was related to the fear of privatisation and cross-border provision of healthcare services; and indeed, after protracted debates in Parliament, healthcare services were excluded from the scope of the Directive. The same concerns, however, albeit with much lower levels of public anxiety, surrounded education. **Did higher education fall within the scope of the Services Directive?** When the author of this overview inquired, he received a range of answers: DG Competition said that if education was a tradable service in one Member State, then it was potentially a tradable service in all; DG Internal Market said that it had not considered the matter, but that it supposed that indeed higher education was tradable; DG Education and Culture said that it was unaware of the issue. All of which suggests that the Commission was content with the EU's subsidiary competence for higher education and happy with its own, and the Member States', collaboration in the Bologna Process. In the event, higher education was allowed to remain a grey area, neither explicitly excluded nor explicitly included in the scope of the Services Directive. It was many years before the Commission cited the Services Directive as the legal base for triggering infringements of Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications.

8. The launch of the EHEA and the re-launch of the EU's Single Market, 2008-2010

34. Policy alignment becomes much more likely when the search for synergy is urgent: this was certainly the case with the **global financial crisis of 2008**. The crisis originated in the US, where financial institutions had transformed into tradable financial assets the substantial loans made to prospective house-buyers with insufficient funds to repay them. The so-called 'sub-prime mortgage' scandal resulted in mass bankruptcies and a loss of confidence in capital markets which infected all the major economies. Once again, Europe was forced to consider how it might regenerate economic growth. Once again, the strategy featured the strengthening of the EU's internal market and the cultivation of high levels of skills and competences.

35. From the worlds of academic and professional recognition came **two initiatives, both with a target date of 2010**. They helped to narrow the gap between the two regimes. They helped, too, in addressing a factor which had simmered beneath the surface debate until it was made explicit by a report commissioned by the European Parliament: 'if the MSs [Member States] could **trust** [author's emphasis] each other's education systems and believe that a child nurse is well educated in the EU, regardless of the formal degree he or she has obtained, there might be fewer problems with recognition of professional qualifications'. In fact, the level of trust was being raised by a number of developments. In the Bologna Process, work continued on the consolidation of the three-cycle system, mobility, employability, and the recognition of prior learning – all formalised in the launch of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in 2010. In the words of the Bologna ministers meeting in Budapest and Vienna, the EHEA would be 'based on trust, cooperation and respect for the diversity of cultures, languages, and higher education systems'. Meanwhile, the re-launch of the Single [i.e. internal] Market, also set for 2010, included a number of steps: the development of the Internal Market Information system (IMI), an online communication facility which allowed regulatory authorities to communicate instantaneously on recognition issues, and the design of a smart professional card to be used by mobile professionals.

36. A common point of interest in both academic and professional recognition in this period was **quality assurance**. In 2005, under the auspices of the Bologna Process and funded by the European Commission, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) had produced the first edition of the influential Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (subsequently re-packaged as a third edition in 2009). Meanwhile, academics and regulators operating in the sectoral professions realised that the Directive, while specifying certain pre-requisite skills, did nothing to ascertain the level of competence of professionals post-qualification. In the healthcare professions in particular, the issue of cross-border trust was at a premium: how could patient safety be assured if professional recognition did not also cover the competence of the practitioner? The community of interested parties assembled under the umbrella of Healthcare Professions Crossing Borders (HPCB) made a raft of recommendations in its Portugal Agreement of 2007, putting its finger on the crux of the matter:

> *As they move between jurisdictions in Europe, the only assurance member states have that healthcare professionals are up to date and fit to practise their profession is their formal qualifications. Competent authorities must rely on the fact that a professional has previously obtained a particular qualification, as set out in Directive 2005/36/EC, and is not currently the subject of disciplinary proceedings. This situation does not enable regulators to be alerted to instances of poor or impaired performance.*

The Portugal Agreement helped trigger or reinforce a number of initiatives undertaken to design **competence-based curricula**, notably the well-known Tuning Project and no less significant disciplinary projects such as Dent.Ed (dentistry), EHNSA (architecture), Pharmine (pharmacy) and Medine (medicine).

37. All of these various developments rendered the gap between the academic and professional recognition regimes ever more glaring. From 2007 onwards, the European University Association (EUA) lobbied hard to determine how and whether the gap might be closed. It brought together representatives of professional, regulatory and student bodies, academics, and key figures from DG Internal Market and Parliament's Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO). In general, stakeholders endorsed the view that the regimes could be better aligned. However, IMCO was

sceptical, while DG Internal Market was opposed. **DG Internal Market's objections** were essentially threefold. First, it resisted the incorporation of competence-based curricula into the Directive, on the grounds that its provisions on the content of the sectoral basic training programmes were strictly defined in terms of input; output criteria, including quality assurance, were foreign to the Directive's logic. Secondly, it regarded the use of ECTS credits as irrelevant and disruptive: the Directive defined course duration in terms of contact hours, while ECTS covered self-study time as well as contact, with the result that there could be no easy convertibility of hours to credits. Finally, the Bologna qualifications framework – QF-EHEA – was incompatible with the Directive, inasmuch as the sectoral professional qualifications were typically long integrated courses which could not be split into Bachelor and Master components; moreover, the Commission's own EQF was likewise inappropriate, as it was useful only for non-regulated professions.

38. **These positions were defensive and in the process of being eroded** by the extent to which higher education was adapting to the employability imperative. Both quality assurance and competence-based curricula were, as we have seen, gaining momentum and accorded high priority. Both were heavily output-oriented: how could they not be? The view unwisely voiced by DG Internal Market that learning outcomes could not be assessed was met by academics with disbelief. ECTS, for its part, had proved its efficiency by stimulating mutual trust and tolerance between higher education institutions located in systems built on different organisational principles. As for the long integrated Master programmes typical of medicine, dentistry et al, the Bologna seminar in Helsinki in 2003 had committed to their survival in the three-cycle framework.

39. In 2010, Mario Monti – a former Internal Market Commissioner, the then current President of Bocconi University in Milan, and shortly to become Prime Minister of Italy – chaired a report which affirmed that 'there is a greater awareness that despite the Bologna process training contents across Member States are not converging to a degree that makes further action superfluous'. Sure enough, EUA – in dialogue with DG Internal Market – detected a willingness on the part of the Commission to **re-engineer the Directive**. The opportunity presented itself in 2012, the year in which the Directive was due for quinquennial review. By 2013, the Directive had been amended, with a limited number of features bringing it nearer closer to the EHEA:

    - A new provision allowed the development of Common Training Frameworks (CTFs). These would permit a group of at least one third of Member States to design curricula based on 'common sets of knowledge, skills and competences' and aligned with the EQF, to which other MSs might then opt in. (The amended Directive did not, however, merge the General System with the EQF.)
    - Furthermore and henceforth, ECTS could be used as an additional way of expressing course duration.
    - The shift to recognising output factors was visible in new provisions affecting the General System. No longer could course duration be regarded as a substantial difference. Instead, substantial difference had now to be calibrated in terms of content, knowledge, skills and competences. Moreover, before demanding aptitude tests, MSs were now obliged to ascertain that applicants had not already compensated for the substantial difference by virtue of formally validated lifelong learning.
    - Finally, the amended Directive conceded in principle the recognition of prior learning as a component of basic training, but limited it to general care nurses.

9. Calls for enhanced mutual and automatic recognition

40. These were important adjustments, still in place today, but they did not provide the seamless recognition fabric to which an increasing number of academics, professionals and policy-makers had begun to aspire. The **desire for automaticity** swelled. Formally, automatic recognition existed only in the Directive and only in respect of the seven sectoral professions; successful completion of the prescribed basic training programme in Member State A was automatically recognised by the remaining 27 Member States. In 2011, the weekly newspaper *European Voice* reported that Chancellor Merkel of Germany and President Sarkozy of France had put to the European Council a proposal to 'introduce mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications'. It was not clear what this meant in practice, but it is safe to assume that at least in part it echoed the sentiments of the Monti Report of the year before. Anticipating the EU's current Green Deal initiative by ten years, Monti had asserted that:

> *'To make recognition of professional qualifications easier, the acquis in this area should be modernised. The scope for automatic recognition of qualifications to new professions should be expanded to new sectors in addition to the seven professions today, targeting in particular new professions required for green and digital industries to facilitate the mobility of highly skilled workers.'*

Extending the number of sectoral professions was an obvious recourse – and the amended Directive's provisions on Common Training Frameworks was a move in this direction.

41. Predictably, movement in the political and legislative spheres of the EU was then shadowed by the Bologna Ministers at their meeting in Bucharest in 2012. They, too, became preoccupied with automatic recognition. It is worth stressing here that, however unclear its meaning, **what 'automatic' recognition did not mean was quite evident. Concerning academic qualifications, it could not mean automatic admission to a course of study. It could only mean the *right* to be considered for admission**. Even today, not all stakeholders are aware of this crucial distinction. Concerning professional qualifications, it did indeed mean the right in general for liberal professionals to establish and practise in the EU/EEA, but not the right to be selected and hired by an employer, the more common way of accessing the labour market for many other professions (nursing, for example).

42. In Bucharest, the Bologna Ministers decided to 'support the work of a **pathfinder group of countries** [author's emphasis] exploring ways to achieve the automatic recognition of comparable degrees'. The group was large: Belgium (Flemish and French Communities), Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden. In 2015, the Pathfinder Report duly appeared. Its core conclusion established the principle that – paraphrasing Gertrude Stein – 'a Bachelor is a Bachelor is a Bachelor' and should be recognised as such on a cross-border basis. Its core definition was clear and precise:

> *Automatic recognition of a degree leads to the automatic right of an applicant holding a qualification of a certain level to be considered for entry to a programme of further study in the next level in any other EHEA-country (access).*

The report called on EHEA countries to ensure that their national legislation was in line with the LRC and commended regional groupings of countries (such as AdReN in the Adriatic region, Benelux, the Baltic/Nordic collaboration, and the RECIPIT accord linking the Holy See, Italy and San Marino) for piloting systems of automatic recognition. It also stimulated the refinement of the various recognition instruments mentioned in the sections below. It set the scene for the developments which have taken place between 2012 and 2021; in short, it was a milestone.

43. That such principles had to be set down suggested that they were far from self-evident in a number of EHEA countries, even if they were enshrined in practice in others. What, then, had been the **impediments**? Significantly, the Bologna Ministers evoked the automatic recognition of comparable degrees. It nevertheless was the case that certain EHEA countries traditionally only recognised identical degrees. By insisting on methods of *homologisation* or *nostrification*, they looked in the foreign curriculum for elements which were present in their own domestic curriculum; if they could not find them, they refused to recognise. Comparability, by contrast, requires the identification of common learning outcomes rather than of parcels of content; it is output-based and referenced to a shared qualifications framework, rather than input-based. While today comparability has become the keystone of recognition policy, it is still not possible to assert that it is uniformly and universally practised.

10. Contemporary recognition instruments

44. Today, the push for automatic recognition of academic qualifications remains strong. The following sections indicate the state of the debate and the extent to which the toolkit has been enlarged and refined. Despite the progress made, EU Member States envisage the culmination of their efforts only in 2025. This is the **target date** set for the full implementation of the European Council's Recommendation on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education and training qualifications and the outcomes of learning periods abroad. The 2018 Recommendation was revealing, in the sense that most of its content addressed the backsliders – those Member States that still had not fully put in place the Bologna three-cycle framework or referenced their national qualifications frameworks to the EQF.

45. Meanwhile in 2020, the wider group of Bologna Ministers was explicitly more forward-looking. As we shall see in section 52 below, it placed its faith in country-to-country peer support and review. **The Rome Communiqué** was clear in its intentions:

> *We will strengthen the implementation of the **Council of Europe/UNESCO Lisbon Recognition Convention** [emphasis in the original] and apply its principles to qualifications and periods of study outside the EHEA, using common assessment criteria and reports, in collaboration with the Lisbon Recognition Convention Committee and the ENIC and NARIC Networks.*
>
> *We will ensure **automatic recognition of academic qualifications and periods of study within the EHEA** [emphasis in the original] so that students, staff and graduates are able to move freely to study, teach and do research. We will make the necessary legislative changes to guarantee automatic recognition at system level for qualifications delivered in EHEA countries where quality assurance operates in compliance with the ESG and where a fully operational national qualifications framework has been established. We also encourage the application of agreed and secure systems of digital certification and communication such as blockchain, as well as the further development of the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR) to facilitate automatic recognition.*

46. What are the ***implications of automatic recognition for higher education institutions***? In order to avoid complications and to identify clear action lines, consensus has crystalised around a simple formula which goes beyond the formal bilateral or multilateral agreements on the mutuality of recognition. It is ably set out in The Triangle of Recognition, published by Nuffic, the Dutch NARIC, in 2020. Automatic recognition operates if…

- Institutions are located within an LRC signatory country,
- The country has referenced its national qualifications framework to the EQF or the QF-EHEA,
- Its national quality assurance agency is compliant with the most recent edition of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

47. This conditionality bears on higher education systems. If a system falls short and if its institutions wish to benefit from automatic recognition, their only recourse is to lobby their ministries. This, however, is only the beginning of their responsibilities. As higher education institutions, they should also themselves comply with ESG 2015 and the **conditions set on internal quality assurance**:

> **ESG Standard 1.4:**
>
> *Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification*
>
> **Guideline**
>
> *[…] Fair recognition of higher education qualifications, periods of study and prior learning, including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, are essential components for ensuring the students' progress in their studies, while promoting mobility. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on -institutional practice for recognition being in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention; - cooperation with other institutions, quality assurance agencies and the national ENIC/NARIC centre with a view to ensuring coherent recognition across the country*

Note that this guidance presupposes the existence of a recognition competence well embedded in the institution's administration (admissions, quality assurance, communications), in its relevant policy-ma-

king bodies, as well as in those members of the academic staff involved in admissions and student exchange, whether at central, Faculty or Departmental level. Hence the proliferation of recognition instruments and tools mentioned in the sections that follow.

48. The most relevant **support for staff development** is the European Recognition Manual for Higher Education Institutions (EAR-HEI), revised in 2020. Step-by-step, it introduces the basic concepts of recognition in a manner appropriate to the practitioner. It covers the principles (transparency, fairness, the recognition/admission distinction, the component elements of a qualification), together with guidance on, for example, how to consider substantial difference, how to identify fraud, and how to manage the recognition process (information provision, turn-around times, appeals procedures). Endorsed by the Bologna Ministers and disseminated by the ENIC-NARIC networks, it is also backed by a tailored online training programme called STREAM. For staff new to recognition work, the EAR-HEI constitutes the essential baseline from which all subsequent learning and experience can develop.

49. **Student mobility in Europe** exists in two main modes: cross-border enrolments in complete programmes (Bachelor, Master or Doctorate) and mobility for short study or training periods. Some institutions receive thousands of applications each year. For each of the modes, they are assisted by the ongoing development of the EQF and by the ERASMUS+ Programme. The work of referencing National Qualifications Frameworks to the EQF is proceeding at a settled pace. The EQF website gives access to the detail of each NQF, as well as to a country-country comparison tool. The immediate challenge facing the EQF and NQFs is how to evaluate, calibrate and eventually recognise micro-credentials. For study periods, meanwhile, the key document is the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE), which must be held by all Erasmus+ participant institutions located in Programme Countries (27 EU Member States, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Turkey) and fully respected by those in Partner Countries. Institutions must make a number of commitments, inter alia, to 'ensure full automatic recognition of all credits (based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – ECTS) gained for learning outcomes satisfactorily achieved during a period of study/training abroad, including during blended mobility.' The ECHE has effectively become the template for short-term mobility conducted outside the Erasmus+ Programme.

50. Both the Bologna Rome Communiqué and the EU's strategy for post-pandemic recovery highlight the **impact and the potential of digitisation**. Late last century, the European Commission, the Council of Europe and UNESCO together designed the Diploma Supplement (DS) – a way of certifying the achievements of students completing courses in higher education. In the words of the Commission's formal proposal in 2003, the DS:

> *[…] describes the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed by the individual who holds the original diploma to which the DS is attached. It is therefore a personal document, referring to its specific holder. […] The DS does not replace the original diploma and does not give any entitlement to formal recognition of the original diploma by academic authorities of other countries. On the other hand, it facilitates a sound appreciation of the original diploma, so that it can be helpful to obtain recognition by the competent authorities or by admission staff.*

In other words, the DS was precisely what it claimed to be: a supplementary document, issued free of charge to the student, giving more detail than was contained in the degree certificate and setting it in the context of the national higher education system. Gradually it became established, but full implementation proved problematic: institutions found it to be labour-intensive and costly; employers felt that it did not fully satisfy their needs. Even though originally available in electronic form, it essentially remained paper-based. In due course, therefore, the question arose of whether and how it might be fully digitised – reducing costs, minimising the possibility of fraud, and integrating it into a Europe-wide information system. A study commissioned by DG EAC explored the various technical options.

51. This modernisation work continues, but is merely a precursor to more **cutting-edge developments**. The Italian NARIC, CIMEA, is a good example. Using 'private permissioned blockchain technology', CIMEA has designed Diplome [sic]. This allows students to file their qualifications in a secure smart wallet, which is also accessible to higher education institutions; the wallet is intended to contain a transparent and incorruptible archive of all the certified elements of an individual's student life cycle. Recognition is facilitated accordingly. In another development, NAWA, the Polish NARIC, has put in place a bilingual (Polish-English) online database of qualifications, Kwalifikator, which generates downloadable recognition statements and is therefore more than merely a reference tool. Its initial focus is on Polish users, but plans exist to broaden its scope.

52. Earlier, we mentioned that the LRC is equipped with no formal sanctions and that the EHEA therefore relies on **peer pressure** as a mode of soft enforcement. Since 2018, a majority of the member countries have been engaged in a Thematic Peer Group on the LRC (TPG-B). Its areas of concern are:

    - *establishing the legal framework to allow the implementation of the LRC*
    - *establishing the distribution of work and responsibilities among the competent institutions that have the right knowledge and capacity to carry out recognition procedures*
    - *achieving automatic recognition*
    - *recognition of alternative pathways*
    - *qualifications held by refugees*
    - *optimising the potential of digital technology for the recognition agenda and the Diploma Supplement*

53. The TPG-B website gives access to a full account of its meetings and agendas – ample evidence that it represents a serious attempt to create consensus on policy, conformity in implementation and a focus on significant forward movement. Its work also includes publication of brochures for wider sectoral and public consumption: two examples cover substantial difference (by CIMEA) and information provision by institutions for students (by CIMEA and EUA).

11. Conclusion

54. How far – in 2021 – have the two recognition regimes, the academic and the professional, converged? Not completely, but a **slow process of approximation** is under way. Two ventures in particular point in this direction. The first is the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR). Set up by EQAR, the EHEA's official register of quality assurance agencies with a cross-border remit, DEQAR provides access to over 60,000 quality assurance reports. All of these give greater scope to recognition practitioners as they seek to verify the status of qualification-awarding bodies. Agencies volunteer to place their reports online, so the coverage is not total; nonetheless, it is worth indicating that participating agencies include some with clearly defined professional relevance – for example:

    - Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences (AHPGS)
    - (Armenian) National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance (ANQA)
    - *Akkreditierungsagentur für Studiengänge der Ingenieurwissenschaften, der Informatik, der Naturwissenschaften und der Mathematik* (ASIIN)
    - Engineering Degree Commission (CTI)
    - European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE)
    - Foundation for International Business Administration (FIBAA)

55. In the European Commission, it is perhaps significant that that the officials concerned with academic qualifications have moved from DG EAC to the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL). It brings them closer to one of DG EMPL's flagship, and most ambitious, ventures – **ESCO**. The database of **E**uropean **S**kills/**C**ompetences, qualifications and **O**ccupations [sic] aims to codify the EU labour market by listing all its component occupations. The resulting taxonomy is a supranational multilingual distillation of national labour forces, each referenced to national qualifications frameworks and therefore also to the EQF. Its legacy content will grow and its horizon is infinite. In an apparent challenge to the law of entropy, ESCO has recently mobilised Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques to refine its definitions of occupations: algorithms are being deployed to analyse the mass of learning outcomes published in course outlines and to identify the lexical items which designate each occupation's core competences.

56. None of ESCO's work has yet impacted the agenda of the Commission's **Directorate-General for the Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs** (now known as **DG GROW**) – at least as far as can be determined from policy documents in the public domain. DG GROW's strategic plan for the period 2020-24 is focused mainly on boosting economic growth in the framework of the Commission's

post-pandemic digital and green deals. This involves attention to supply chains and the online trade in goods and services. Insofar as it touches on skills, the strategy concentrates on building the capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises to 'become proficient in such areas as AI, cybersecurity or blockchain' and 'to create and manage an IP [intellectual property] portfolio'. The proposed work on Directive 2005/36/EC is limited: DG GROW has been obliged to legislate (by delegated act) on the UK's departure from the EU, which effectively removes it from the scope of automatic recognition of qualifications. The DG will also have to grapple with the implications of a recent judgment (case C-940/19) by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) on partial access to the sectoral professions.

57. What does the future hold? What are the **growth areas of recognition**? Even if, in the world of trade, the dynamics of globalisation weaken as major trading nations retrench, re-shore, and become in general more defensive, the cross-border delivery of services seems bound to increase in volume in regional economic frameworks such as the EU, ASEAN, Mercosur and others. In the EU itself, it is unlikely that the regimes of academic and professional recognition will ever formally merge, such is the legal and political discontinuity between its competence for the Internal Market and for higher education. Even so, it is not difficult to identify a range of areas which will present an ongoing challenge to higher education institutions, employers, and policy makers:

    - The proliferation of powerful multi-functional databases and the questions posed by their potential inter-operability (feasibility, desirability, privacy, open access to researchers, etc)
    - The question of how these resources will interface with the pedagogy of blended learning
    - The growth of micro-credentials at all levels of EQF and QF-EHEA, as well as in continuing professional development (CPD) – their accreditation and context-dependent recognition
    - The emergence of the new digital and green professions presaged by Mario Monti in 2010 and their cross-border accreditation
    - The expansion of the STEM cluster of priority disciplines (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) to include arts and the creative industries, thus converting STEM to STEAM
    - The persistent misconceptions surrounding the employability of Humanities graduates, the funding of their programmes and the recognition by the labour market of their skills and competences

    How these areas will mutate in the post-pandemic knowledge society remains to be seen...

Summary of the chapter in a few questions

In all likelihood, you will not be able to give a full and detailed answer to the following questions, but you should be able to understand their meaning and you have the obligation, at least as a participant in HAQAA training activities, to think about them.

1. Is it the case that, in continental Africa overall and/or in your Regional Economic Community, higher education has risen rapidly up the policy agenda and that the recognition of qualifications has loomed large this process? If yes, how has this come about? If it is not the case, can you speculate why?
2. Do you understand the difference between 'academic' and 'professional' qualifications, in terms of recognition? Would you be able to differentiate the policy contexts that are most relevant for each type of recognition? Which is the context that seems to you the more relevant for African Continental and Regional integration?
3. What do you understand by 'automatic recognition'? Would you say that such an automatic recognition exists in Europe? If your answer is affirmative, which is its legal basis; or is it simply a practice? Are European practices readily transferable to African contexts? What role would you envisage for quality assurance?
4. How tenable in Africa is the view, sometimes expressed in Europe, that digitalisation is the royal road to fully operational cross-border recognition of qualifications?

Chapter 8B

Recognition of credits. The ECTS

H. Davies

Presentation

It is well known that ERASMUS is the EU's flagship programme in the field of higher education. References to it recur frequently in the rhetoric of EU and Member State officials when speaking of the success of the EU's integration process. At the heart of ERASMUS is the instrument which regulates cross-border student mobility: the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

Nominally built into the ERASMUS Programme, ECTS has been effectively extended, either directly or by emulation, to cover virtually all movements of on-course students across European borders. It is intended to allow credits to be transferred from a host institution to a home institution following a study period abroad. Formal recognition of students' attainment is thus required at both the beginning and the end of the mobility period.

The premise is uncomplicated. However, transfer presupposes prior accumulation. And accumulation presupposes the prior allocation of credits to a discrete parcel of learning (typically known as a module) in which the student may succeed or fail.

In turn, these preconditions assume the existence of a wide-ranging policy consensus among participating countries and institutions. Europe has found that the consensus could not remain informal; declarations of trust were fine in principle but did not necessarily hold good in practice. Re-structuring integrated curricula into credit-bearing modules might at first have seemed a mechanical task, but what was their real value in terms of student and teacher workload, level of attainment, and permutability as pre- or post-requisites or electives in specific programmes of study?

These questions, insistent at the birth of ECTS in the 1980s, have resounded through the decades, inspiring level-based qualifications frameworks, the framing of modular attainment in terms of learning outcomes, the design of methods of grade conversion, the elaboration of lifelong learning trajectories built on the recognition of prior as well as current learning.

So far so good, but it is important to recall that ECTS – innovative in the European context – was also disruptive. It heralded the rise of competence-based curricula set in a rationale of student-centred learning. It undermined the prevailing ethos of what was sometimes idiosyncratic teacher-based curriculum design and of courses taught by intensely research-active academics in relative isolation from each other. It generated centralised management information systems and, while thriving in institutions with high levels of academic autonomy, it met resistance from those who felt their individual academic autonomy to be constrained.

Broadly regarded nonetheless as a success (despite some scepticism, particularly on the part of students), ECTS still encounters problems of implementation: the assignment of similar modules to disparate levels in different systems, and the persistence of recognition habits based on the homology of modules rather than their comparability. Meanwhile, the pervasive and combined force of digitalisation and blended learning signals a need to update the guidelines on credit transfer for student mobility.

Contents of the Chapter

1. Introduction
2. What is ECTS?
3. How well is ECTS working now?
4. Problems of implementation
5. The future of ECTS
6. Conclusion

1. Introduction

1. This overview focuses on the **use of credits by curriculum designers to facilitate mobility at undergraduate (Bachelor) level**. Credits are also deployed at Master level, but student numbers are lower and courses are of shorter full-time duration, reducing the scope for in-course mobility. It is important to note that although the majority of mobile students in European higher education are now registered at Master level, these are 'degree-mobile' rather than 'credit-mobile', i.e. they move from a Bachelor in one country to a Master in another, without necessarily engaging in cross-border mobility within the Master programme itself. Credit-mobile students at Bachelor level, on the other hand, typically spend a minimum of three months (or accumulate at least 15 ECTS points) in a host institution before returning home to complete. In doctoral programmes, meanwhile, credits either play a minor role or are absent altogether. For a clearer view of the link between mobility and the award of credit in Europe, it is preferable to focus on studies at Bachelor level, where the volume of mobility is greater, history is longer, and procedures are more elaborated.
2. Moreover, in Europe the **Bachelor qualification** has a strategic value. In 1999, the sixteen European ministers of education who signed the Bologna Declaration determined that the Bachelor would be, not only a respectable academic qualification, but also – and here they were treading new ground – the gateway to the professional labour market. The implication was that the benefits of student mobility went beyond the broadening of personal and inter-cultural experience and the acquisition of foreign language competence; more important, at least for those policy-makers charged with energising Europe's internal market, was the enhanced cross-border employability of graduates. All the more reason to ensure that the outcomes of mobility could be accurately measured, assessed and recognised.
3. To this end, the Bologna ministers declared themselves ready to coordinate their efforts to achieve, *inter alia*, the '[E]stablishment of a **system of credits** - such as in the ECTS system – as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility. Credits could also be acquired in non-higher education contexts, including lifelong learning, provided they are recognised by receiving Universities concerned.'
4. Credit transfer thus came into the bundle of instruments that eventually secured the readability and recognition of academic higher education qualifications across Europe. It combined with qualifications frameworks, quality assurance and the panoply of measures (monitoring of implementation, peer review, and targeted project work) with which ministers progressively backed up their periodic Communiqués. Together, these instruments powered the **paradigm shift** which the Bologna Process was designed to achieve: from teacher-centred pedagogy to student-centred learning and teaching; from input-based to output-based recognition criteria.[1]
5. As the ministers acknowledged, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (**ECTS**) already existed, but in 1999 it was unambiguously a European Union initiative, linked to the Erasmus programme. They intended it also to cover the non-EU Bologna-signatory countries. This duly and gradually came about as the EU settled into the Bologna Process beside the national governments and became a major player.
6. The **history of ECTS** goes back thirty-six years – to a 1985 report from an ad hoc Committee on a People's Europe, acting in an advisory capacity to the European Council. The committee was chaired by Pietro Adonnino, a former member of the European Parliament. Its brief was essentially to recommend ways of accelerating European integration and fostering a sense of European identity. In this context, it regarded student mobility as crucial and advised the European Council to request that relevant national authorities:

1. For a more detailed discussion of these developments, see Recognition of qualifications in Europe: an overview in the HAQAA 2 resource bank.

a. implement, on the basis of the experience acquired, a comprehensive European inter-university programme of exchanges, aimed at giving this opportunity to a significant section of the Community's student population, and

b. examine the possibility of introducing a European system of academic credits transferable throughout the Community (European Academic Transfer System). This system[2] would be implemented by means of bilateral agreements or on a voluntary basis by universities and higher-education establishments which, by arrangement with one another, would determine the procedures for academic recognition of such credits.

7. It is not the intention of this overview to provide a detailed history of ECTS. Readers are referred to the full account given by Robert Wagenaar, a Dutch historian who was one its pioneers and subsequently a co-founder of the Tuning Project. Wagenaar's history, which covers the period up to 2018 and comes with an extended bibliography, is that of an activist, necessarily centred on his own experience and trajectory, and is essential reading. Suffice it to note here that, from an initial pilot programme in 1989, ECTS went through a number of developmental phases, each phase refining its procedures and expanding its scope. Its Users' Guide accordingly evolved through several iterations, initially internally, but eventually appearing in published and widely disseminated versions in 2005, 2009 and 2015.

2. What is ECTS?

8. The 2015 edition of the *Users' Guide* is the source of authoritative information on the instruments and procedures of ECTS. Funded and published in 2017 by the European Commission, it was compiled by an *ad hoc* working group of 21 persons representing thirteen Bologna countries and four of the Bologna Process consultative members (ENQA – the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education; ESU – the European Students' Union; EUA – the European University Association [in the person of the author of this overview]; and EURASHE – the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education.

9. The *Users' Guide* contains a glossary, recommendations for further reading, and copious examples. It, too, is essential reading. Its core material is set out in seven sections as follows:

ECTS key features	This section explains that credits are
	A. **allocated** to programmes and placements, on the basis of 60 points per full-time equivalent academic year, and according to the estimated overall workload (reckoned at 25-30 hours per week) required to attain specified learning outcomes;
	B. **awarded** to individual students who achieve the learning outcomes, either on-course or through recognised prior learning which has exempted them from parts of the programme;
	C. **accumulated** by individual students as they move from one credit-rated learning experience to the next;
	D. **transferred**, if desired and appropriate, between programmes and between institutions.

2. Under this system, which has proved its worth in the United States, each course followed in a higher-education establishment as part of the normal curriculum entitles the student to a credit which can be taken into account in other establishments at a similar level or re-assessed with other credits to entitle him [sic] to a diploma or certificate corresponding to the whole of the studies thus undertaken.

ECTS and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)	A very brief indication of the role played by ECTS in supporting mobility, student-centred and lifelong learning. ECTS is presented as a force for the modernisation of national higher education systems and a powerful tool for increasing their transparency.
ECTS for programme design, delivery and monitoring	This section discusses how the application of ECTS to an academic programme requires: **A.** a national qualifications framework which uses ECTS or is capable of accommodating it via an ECTS-compatible credit system – and which is itself compatible with the two European qualifications frameworks (QF-EHEA and EQF); **B.** a curriculum composed of components which may include: taught classes; self- and library-based study; practical, laboratory and clinical work; relevant extra-curricular activity; duly recognised prior learning, whether formal, non-formal or informal; **C.** due consideration (initial and ongoing) given by curriculum designers to a feasible relation between workload and intended learning outcomes; **D.** a flexible programme structure with built-in 'mobility windows' which allow students to pursue their studies in partner institutions.
ECTS for mobility and credit recognition	Here the focus is on credit mobility, i.e. on-course mobility dependent on a) the recognition by a host institution of the credits already acquired in the home institution, b) the provision by the host of credit-bearing course components, and c) the recognition by the home institution of all credits awarded to the mobile student by the host. The *Guide* gives advice on what should be agreed by all parties prior to a mobility period and on which procedures should be followed afterwards. It considers what arrangements are best made when home and host institutions use different grading systems and how grades may be converted from one system to another.
ECTS and lifelong learning	Rapid change in the labour market implies a need for regular re- or up-skilling of the workforce. Higher education institutions have a role to play: providing programmes with intermediate entry and exit points, offering free-standing modules for continuing professional development (CPD), and recognising prior or concurrent learning activities which can carry exemption from certain full programme requirements.
ECTS and quality assurance	The *Guide* stresses the importance of annual course monitoring and the participation of students in the monitoring exercises. In general, this section reinforces points made elsewhere in the *Guide*; specifically, it refers readers to Standards 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.
ECTS and supporting documents	An important section which gives practical information regarding the documentation supporting student mobility: **A.** the Course Catalogue, from which incoming students can select appropriate course components; **B.** the Learning Agreement (for academic study or for work placement) to which the student and the home and host institutions commit in advance of the mobility; **C.** the Transcript of Records lodged with the home institution at the end of the mobility period.

10. The summary above is very schematic. Further comment is necessary. First, a glance at the challenge posed by ECTS. As it grew more established in the 1990s, borne along by the momentum of the Erasmus programme, it brought many European universities face-to-face with radical change in educational culture. Up to that point, they had featured curricula largely determined, in content and in structure, by the research profiles of professors and senior Faculty staff. They were now obliged, sometimes with displays of great reluctance, to re-structure their programmes in terms of a plurality of entry points, pathways tailored to student choice, discrete course components which could be aggregated in different ways, and an evaluation of each component's co-efficient of workload. Most challenging of all, academics were forced to consider practically how their own teaching activities related to those of their colleagues. Erudite individualists found themselves suddenly obliged to work as a team. The scope for wounded vanity can well be imagined.

11. In practice, this meant that a given academic's course of lectures might be central to some of the pathways through a degree programme. But in other pathways it might be merely optional, with the level of demand for it depending largely on word-of-mouth judgements circulating in the student body. In either case, it might be pre-requisited or co-requisited by the contribution of a colleague and have to be tailored accordingly. So it was that in many institutions, curriculum design relocated to a new and strange environment, that of modularisation. Programmes were re-structured into discrete, permutable elements, each with delivery and assessment methods consistent with the logic of an over-arching institutional system. Such a reform often implied the semesterisation of the academic year and the abandonment of an academic calendar based solely on end-of-year examinations.

12. Modularisation also impelled a greater concentration of decision-making power at rectorate and senate levels, particularly when the push for wider inter-disciplinary study opened up study pathways which crossed Faculty boundaries. All this called for visionary and effective change management on the part of the institution's leadership. Rectors and senates faced a long and complex agenda: the re-set of the curriculum to a student-centred mission; the retrofit of the administrative infrastructure; the review of internal resource allocation and of the contractual position of personnel; the drafting of appropriate internationalisation and quality assurance strategies; staff development undertaken sufficiently effectively to create a sense of ownership and bottom-up motivation. These challenges should not be under-estimated.

13. It is clear that the possibilities of student mobility opened up by Erasmus and ECTS in the 1990s contributed to the sudden demand for change. But change itself has proceeded at different speeds in different countries… and everywhere, as we shall see, it continues. The *Users' Guide* was and is of great assistance to academics and institutions navigating the shift in paradigm. Course components (modules) were no longer to be measured by what teachers put into them, but by what students verifiably got out of them – by what they knew, understood, and were able to do. The *Guide* gives detailed advice on how to specify **learning outcomes** for modules and for programmes. It also stresses the importance of calibrating the modules and learning outcomes at levels which align with the level descriptors set into the architecture of the national and European qualifications frameworks. This is because the achievements of students who are mobile across borders can be recognised only if course design respects the basic principles supported by a continental consensus.

14. The cultural shift of which ECTS was a contributing factor coincided in many countries with a widening participation agenda. This was driven by the development of the need for more highly skilled labour, but also by considerations of social cohesion and citizenship. In this context, the **recognition of prior learning** emerged as a powerful instrument of inclusion. Clearly, if prior learning of whatever degree of formality could be attested as authentic and relevant to purpose, it could also be awarded credits points to be offset against the points required by a particular undergraduate programme. Here, too, the *Guide* is generous in its advice.

15. Furthermore, for students aiming to qualify for post-graduate studies and future funding, as well as those at the threshold of a competitive labour market, the classification of their Bachelor degree (*avec mention, cum laude, with Honours*, etc.) was and is of prime importance. Their performance in a foreign host institution makes a critical contribution to their overall assessment. How then to ensure that the **grades achieved abroad** are transferred to the home institution in a form which allows them to be integrated into the mobile student's full profile? How can grades gained in one system be converted to grades in system based on other traditions and methodologies?

16. Over the years, **grade conversion** has tended to be problematic. The 2015 edition of the *Users' Guide* settled on a system of correlating grade distribution patterns. Partner institutions in different countries would map the distribution of successful students as percentages of each passing grade; the two tabulations would then be compared and inferences drawn regarding grade equivalences. Annex 2 of the *Guide* gives helpful examples. However, in 2012, the Commission had awarded funding to a consortium led by the University of Ghent in Belgium. The consortium developed Egracons, the **E**uropean **GRA**de **CON**version **S**ystem, an online tool capable of converting all incoming grades to the grading table of the home institution. It maintains an annually updated bank of data sorted by institution, country and disciplinary field. Egracons is up and running and its website features detailed explanatory material, demonstration videos and FAQs. It merits an unhurried visit.

17. As suggested already, ECTS was part of a process of disruptive innovation at a time when the EU was struggling to accelerate its integration and its productivity. While the move to student-centred learning and the expansion of student mobility were generally welcomed in principle by European academia, other aspects of the changing landscape induced feelings of ambivalence. There were, notably, **implications for the funding of public institutions**. Modularisation, insofar as it involved the fragmentation of previously wholly integrated degree programmes, also opened the door to the possibility of using ECTS credit values as the basis of academic staff contracts, funding to institutions, and tuition fees. It certainly facilitated the casualisation of the academic career structure by governments wishing to take that route. In the UK, one of the foremost proponents of the marketisation of higher education, governments have contemplated using funding and fee structures as a way of encouraging students to switch from one service provider (i.e. institution) to another at module end-points, much as citizens are encouraged to switch providers in the energy market. The intention is to drive competition and thereby to raise quality; it is boldly, perhaps rashly, assumed that the two processes will reinforce each other.

18. So far this section has dealt with the use of ECTS within the EHEA. It is worth concluding with an indication of how ECTS may also operate in **credit mobility between EHEA and non-EHEA countries**. There is no hard and fast rule concerning this, nor even widespread standard practice. Best practice is probably the publication by institutions of the credit equivalences that they have agreed with their partners. A good example is the tabulation by Trinity College Dublin (Ireland) of its use of ECTS in its links with Australia, Canada, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, UK and USA.

3. How well is ECTS working now?

19. What do two of the Bologna Process consultative bodies (EUA and ESU), and its official Implementation Report, say of the operation of ECTS? We will look at the three testimonies, in chronological order of publication. When EUA canvassed the views of universities in its most recent *Trends* survey, in 2018, it investigated the extent to which learning outcomes had been adopted as the basis of curriculum design, as well as of credit transfer. It found that

> Sixteen percent [of respondent institutions] still indicate having them for only some courses – compared to 21% in 2015, and 32% in 2010. The overall percentage of institutions that have not developed learning outcomes at all is under 5%, and therefore relatively low. However, it is comparatively high in Spain (24%) and Italy (14%) – though most institutions indicate that they intend to develop learning outcomes. [p.35]

Trends also looked at the role of credits in the so-called short-cycle programmes which precede the Bachelor. These programmes are set at level 5 in the European qualifications frameworks, while the Bachelor occupies level 6. By way of example, UK universities normally deem the first (freshman) year of US undergraduate programmes to be at a lower level than the first year of British Bachelor courses. They are therefore likely to require the successful completion of a level-5 short-cycle foundation programme as a pre-condition of entry to the Bachelor.

Trends was interested in whether, in principle, level-5 credits gained could be carried forward to gain exemptions in Bachelor programmes. The responses were mixed, as they were bound to be, since the answer had to be case-by-case, depending on the relevance, content and learning outcomes of the pre-Bachelor course modules and the extent to which all or some of them were compulsory pre-requisites. In general, however, *Trends* found that over half of the institutions surveyed had made provision for flexible learning pathways, while nearly three-quarters said that it was possible for students to move between full- and part-time status. Tolerance of variation in degree completion time was common, suggesting that the rules governing credit accumulation were in general liberal rather than restrictive.

20. The *Bologna Process Implementation Report*, compiled for the ministerial meeting in Rome in 2020, is essential reading for those wishing to learn the current state of ECTS. It offers a detailed overview and analysis, too detailed to be reproduced here. Suffice it to say, in summary, that:

- In the European higher education landscape, ECTS is 'ubiquitous' [p.43];
- In the majority of higher education systems, quality assurance procedures monitor the extent to which the ECTS Users' Guide is correctly implemented [pp.54-56];
- Only 12% of Bologna countries have nationally established and regularly monitored procedures for the recognition of prior learning [pp.117-119];
- Although funded credit mobility is supposed to be reciprocal, an approximate balance of mobility flows between EHEA countries has never been achieved [pp.128-129];
- Mobility periods are still not universally recognised as integral to a degree programme [p.129];
- Beyond the credit mobility funded by the Erasmus+ programme, most Bologna countries make funding available for credit mobility, either as grants or loans, although subject to a variety of conditions; only 25% of EHEA countries, mostly in Eastern Europe, offer no portable funding at all [pp.146-150].

21. The EUA's *Trends* series is not the only periodic survey conducted by a consultative member of the Bologna Process. *Bologna with Student Eyes 2020*, published by ESU, also regularly turns its attention to credit mobility. It found that in 2020, while 57% of mobile students had no difficulty getting their credits recognised, 'there are still problems arising when it comes to matching the credits of a study programme at home and host universities during the mobility' [p.49]. ESU also had strong views when it came to consideration of the use of ECTS in programme design. National student unions representing one quarter of its membership reported that the allocation of ECTS points was rarely or never based on learning outcomes and workload. As for the recognition of prior learning, ESU's conclusions were bleak, pointing out that students' trust in governments and stakeholders to introduce and promote it had declined significantly since a previous survey in 2018. ESU's principal concern, however, was with the lack of funding for internationalisation and mobility, and with the inequitable distribution of whatever funding did exist. It also pointed to 'students facing discrimination or exclusion while on mobility' [p.68]. In its view, the Bologna Process was still a long way from reaching its target of mobility for 20% of the European student body, given the 'significant gap between the internationalisation ambitions of governments and the concrete actions they take to make it happen in reality' [p.62].

22. Today, the **Erasmus+** programme remains the official guardian of the integrity of ECTS. The Programme Guide for 2022 continues to make commitment to the Erasmus Charter a mandatory condition of participation. (The Charter comes with a helpful set of Guidelines.) By way of conclusion to this section, it is worth reproducing the clauses of the Charter which relate specifically to credit mobility. Readers are recommended to take these as the constituent elements of good practice. Institutions are obliged to:

Before mobility

- Ensure that selection procedures for mobility activities are fair, transparent, coherent and documented.

- Publish and regularly update the course catalogue on the website well in advance of the mobility periods, so as to be transparent to all parties and allow mobile students to make well-informed choices about the courses they will follow.
- Publish and regularly update information on the grading system used and grade distribution tables for all study programmes. Ensure that students receive clear and transparent information on recognition and grade conversion procedures.
- Carry out mobility for the purpose of studying and teaching only within the framework of prior agreements between institutions which establish the respective roles and responsibilities of the parties, as well as their commitment to shared quality criteria in the selection, preparation, reception, support and integration of mobile participants.
- Ensure that outgoing mobile participants are well prepared for their activities abroad, including blended mobility, by undertaking activities to achieve the necessary level of linguistic proficiency and develop their intercultural competences.
- Ensure that student and staff mobility is based on a learning agreement for students and a mobility agreement for staff, validated in advance between the sending and receiving institutions or enterprises and the mobile participants.
- Provide active support to incoming mobile participants throughout the process of finding accommodation.
- Provide assistance related to obtaining visas, when required, for incoming and outgoing mobile participants.
- Provide assistance related to obtaining insurance, when required, for incoming and outgoing mobile participants.
- Ensure that students are aware of their rights and obligations as defined in the Erasmus Student Charter

During mobility

- Ensure equal academic treatment and the quality of services for incoming students.
- Promote measures that ensure the safety of outgoing and incoming mobile participants.
- Integrate incoming mobile participants into the wider student community and in the Institution's everyday life. Encourage them to act as ambassadors of the Erasmus+ Programme and share their mobility experience.
- Provide appropriate mentoring and support arrangements for mobile participants, including for those pursuing blended mobility.
- Provide appropriate language support to incoming mobile participants

After mobility

- Provide incoming mobile students and their sending institutions with transcripts of records containing a full, accurate and timely record of their achievements at the end of the mobility period.
- Ensure that all ECTS credits gained for learning outcomes satisfactorily achieved during a period of study/training abroad, including during blended mobility, are fully and automatically recognised as agreed in the learning agreement and confirmed by the transcript of records/ traineeship certificate; transfer those credits without delay into the student's records, count them towards the student's degree without any additional work or assessment of the student and make them traceable in the student's transcript of records and the Diploma Supplement.
- Ensure the inclusion of satisfactorily completed study and/or traineeship mobility activities in the final record of student achievements (the Diploma Supplement).

- Encourage and support mobile participants upon return to act as ambassadors of the Erasmus+ Programme, promote the benefits of mobility and actively engage in building alumni communities.

4. Problems of implementation

23. The Communiqués delivered periodically by the Bologna Process ministers are in general positive. So, too, are the EU's policy statements. They are forward-looking, ambitious even, but certainly not euphoric. Problems of implementation remain, as the three testimonies above clearly show. Recent anxiety has crystalised around the related issues of **learning outcomes and competences**. If these were left unaddressed, it would be a serious matter: both factors are central to the outcome-based rationale on which labour-market access is deemed to depend.

24. Let us look at one particular **symptomatic manifestation of anxiety**. In 2019, the Council of European Dentists (CED) and the Federation of European Dental Competent Authorities and Regulators (FEDCAR) issued a joint appeal to the European Commission, calling on it to 'recognise the need for an accreditation system to ensure a minimum common standard in the quality of dental education for a proper implementation of Directive 2005/36/EC.' Specifically, the two organisations demanded EU legislation compelling Member States to set up independent accreditation procedures; these would guarantee the quality of basic dentistry qualifications, not only nationally but across the EU. Currently, the Directive furnishes no means of controlling programme quality. It merely lays down quantitative specifications of course duration and a catalogue of disciplines to be studied. It fails to list the professional competences required of dentists. All of which, say CED and FEDCAR, effectively tolerates wide variation in the standard of training, putting at risk the cross-border movement of practitioners and patients.

25. In a separate development, the European Commission is supporting the Horizontal Comparison Project. Now in its second phase, the project is investigating the extent to which equivalent learning outcomes may be assigned, misleadingly, to different levels in different national qualifications frameworks, and is exploring possible remedies. It's currently focusing on ICT professions at EQF levels 4, 5 and 6 – that is to say, from the top end of VET up to the Bachelor qualification. This gives it the potential to satisfy various objectives. It can allay anxieties about the **inconsistent pinning of learning outcomes to different levels**. It can better align Member States' post-secondary education systems. It can ease the transition from VET to HE. And it can lead to greater coherence in ICT training while maintaining diversity of provision. But despite the urgency of the EU's push into digitalisation, the timeframe is long; it will take at least ten years, for example, for the rollout of 5G technology to be completed. We await the project's conclusions promised by its coordinator, the Polish Educational Research Institute (IBE).

26. The erratic calibration of learning outcomes and competences is serious as far as professional qualifications are concerned. But what of **undergraduate programmes less directly related to the labour market**? One thinks of the physicists with Bachelor degrees who become accountants, of historians who move into human resource management… In these cases too, it could be argued, there is no effective regulatory, overarching monitoring of the comparability of learning outcomes between HE systems and between HEIs. *Pace* the European-level efforts of ENQA, in other words, divergent national quality assurance measures prevail.

27. Does this matter? Here we come back to the question of credit accumulation and transfer in the context of undergraduate mobility. When the misalignment of learning outcomes impairs the recognition of credits, and consequently of qualifications, there is **cause for concern**. Yet, despite the observations of ESU cited above (para.21) there has been no widespread and sustained cry of complaint in the three decades of ECTS operation. This is likely to be because Erasmus+ Learning Agreements are modifiable. In practice, a student on foreign placement can switch from one module to another – if the module originally chosen is 'too easy', 'too hard', repeats earlier learning unnecessarily, if a more appropriate module is available, and if host and home universities agree. It is also because stakeholders expect, understandably, that the principles set out in the *Users' Guide* will be respected. This, in turn relies on mutual trust, and it is hard to deny that trust is buoyant at institutional and

individual levels. If the degree of trust is relative to the level of demand, which is also consistently high, then it must be assumed that the problems of implementation are not such as will threaten the whole edifice.

5. The future of ECTS

28. Beyond these difficulties, the context in which ECTS operates is evolving rapidly. The Erasmus Charter, for example, mentions blended mobility. Here the hand of the pandemic is clearly visible: COVID-19 dramatically accelerated changes that were already in train prior to 2019. Elsewhere, in clauses not reproduced in the box at para.22 above, the Charter urges the implementation of 'digital mobility management'. This is new, and sufficiently striking to suggest that the Commission's thoughts are likely to turn to a **further revision of the** *Users' Guide*. What will it be bound to cover if and when it appears?

29. It has been a long-standing requirement that the Transcript of Records certifying the outcomes of the mobility period be incorporated into the student's Diploma Supplement (DS). The DS complements any given qualification with enough contextual detail to render it intelligible in every higher education system. Even though an electronic version has been available since 2006, it has mainly been produced and used in hard copy. Recently, however, the Commission mounted a **drive to re-launch the digitised DS**, along with the Europass Mobility document on which the student can list and evaluate all the skills gained during the foreign placement. This e-portfolio is accessible on a new Europass platform. The portal houses a Qualifications Database Register (QDR) and, as the blockchain functionality is refined and the database expands, students will be able to file all their Europass Digital Credentials for Learning (EDCL) in their personal digital wallets.

30. Needless to say, an innovation as radical as EDCL has implications for other strands of higher education policy and practice. Here are three current examples:

- ESU is a partner in the ESC-tension project, currently working on a fully interoperable **European Student Card**. The card will prove very useful in the context of credit mobility, giving easy access to the range of student services available in the host institution, as well as automating the delivery of learning agreements and the transfer of credits and grades.
- In the field of **quality assurance**, the contents of the Database of External Quality Assurance Results (DEQAR) can henceforth be uploaded into the Europass QDR, thus supplying confirmation that a particular qualification has been awarded by an accredited authority.
- The Commission's database of **E**uropean **S**kills/**C**ompetences, qualifications and **O**ccupations [sic] (ESCO) is progressively codifying all the professional occupations active in the labour market. This Sisyphean task involves the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques to analyse the mass of **learning outcomes** published in course outlines and to identify the lexical items which designate each occupation's core competences. However, this work could yet be compromised by the erratic assignment of learning outcomes to qualifications framework levels (see para.25 above).
- **Micro-credentials** are now firmly established in the higher education universe, as packets of learning which can precede, accompany, follow, or be absorbed into, full academic programmes, assuming that they satisfy the relevant conditions of recognition. They can also be accumulated and legitimately aggregated, as in continuing professional development, outside the Bologna qualifications framework of Bachelor, Master and Doctorate. EUA's Microbol Report reviews the landscape and asks pertinent questions about definition, level, size, quality and portability.

31. Many of these initiatives fall within the ambit of **electronic identity and its regulation**. The EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force in 2018, but the Commission now sees the need to supplement it with a revision of Regulation 910/2014, which put in place a 'framework for European digital identity'. Its 2021 Proposal aims 'to provide an EU-wide framework for public electronic identities which ensures that any citizen or residents can have access to a secure European e-identity, which can be used anywhere in the EU to identify and authenticate for access to services in the public and private sectors, allowing citizens to control what data is communicated and

how it is used.' An individual's digital identity will be inscribed in an electronic wallet and installed on a mobile device. Certified identity can then be activated in all walks of life – from financial services to electoral processes. Also mentioned *en passant* in the text of the Proposal are the recognition of academic and professional qualifications, and registration in foreign universities. It's clear that, in the EU at least, some effort will be required in the near future to accommodate the digitalisation of higher education within overarching technical and policy parameters.

32. The combined effects of COVID-19 and digitalisation have moved things along extremely quickly, to the point at which credit mobility finds itself in a new environment. Blended mobility, within Erasmus+ and wider, may prove to be the new norm. And even for the least physically mobile of working citizens, credit will increasingly be accumulated, transferred and used as currency in volatile labour markets. The Microbol Report posts specific items on the agenda of a putative **future edition of the ECTS Users' Guide**:

- 'What would be the limitations for applying ECTS to micro-credentials, if any? How can they be addressed?
- Should the ECTS Users' Guide provide more detailed guidelines regarding micro-credentials? If yes, what kind? Could these be included in an annex or explanatory note?
- Should the stackability[(3)] aspect of micro-credentials be addressed in the ECTS Users' Guide? If yes, how could it be addressed?
- Should the ECTS Users' Guide provide a set of recommendations for the micro-credential providers regarding the information they should make available to facilitate recognition? If yes, what should these recommendations include?' [p.32]

33. The portfolio of digital tools is also something that the *Guide* should address. Policy-makers are well aware of all these issues. The **Bologna Process Peer Group A on Qualification Frameworks** was due to consider the full implementation of the *Users' Guide* in its schedule of meetings between 2018 and 2020. The minutes of its June 2021 meeting, however, confess that the matter was not adequately addressed and commit to deeper discussion in the near future. It proposes to put on its agenda: ECTS experts, presumably working in national frameworks to raise the standard of implementation; and a reinforcement of the links between qualifications frameworks, quality assurance, and ECTS. It notes, too, suggestively and somewhat unclearly, that 'there is no reference of the ECTS User Guide with respect to legislation, which should be established to better formulate topics of program design, provide indication on learning and teaching and focus on recognition of prior learning.' Future minutes will no doubt clarify.

6. Conclusion

34. ECTS in essence is a successfully functioning system. It is therefore for innovative educational, social and economic practice to adapt to ECTS, as well as vice versa. The authors of the future Guide cannot be required to legislate ab nihilo on issues such as stackability or the optimal applications of digital technology. Their guidance has to take full account of the new consensus emerging from policy-makers and stakeholder consultations. This consensus, while paying due respect to personal development and academic freedom, is likely to be heavily influenced by labour market needs. ECTS seems bound to become, much more explicitly, 'lifelong ECTS'. This will be very welcome. Its core operations will nevertheless remain the same: the attribution of credits on the basis of workload and learning outcomes, and their subsequent accumulation, transfer and maturation as qualifications. An **update of the Users' Guide** is therefore to be expected, in readiness for the next Bologna ministerial summit in Tirana (Albania) in 2024.

3. Micro-credentials can be accumulated without due consideration of coherence and progression, or even – in a worst case scenario – at random; what are the criteria that would allow a 'stack' worth ECTS 180 to translate into a Bachelor qualification

Summary of the chapter in a few questions

In all likelihood, you will not be able to give a full and detailed answer to the following questions, but you should be able to understand their meaning and you have the obligation, at least as a participant in HAQAA training activities, to think about them.

1. In your view, is it feasible to conceive of a comprehensive programme of on-course student mobility, with reliable credit transfer, within and between the Regional Economic Communities in Africa? What would be the benefits and the impediments – educational, cultural, financial, political?
2. National qualification frameworks have been found to be essential in Europe. Is the same true of Africa? If not, why not? If the same is true, how amenable are Africa's existing and yet-to-be-constructed NQFs to be brought together under an over-arching continental framework? What measures would be required to reach this point?
3. When mobile students study abroad before returning to their home university, they opt for modules which fit with their chosen programme. Their choices have to be confirmed by the home and host institutions. However, in Europe there is sometimes tension between authorities who will accept only identical provision and those who have a more liberal view of what is comparable. Is similar tension to be found in Africa? If so, what are its sources and how might it be managed to the benefit of the student?

Chapter 9

Curriculum, Learning and Teaching

C.B. Villet

Presentation

Higher education (HE) is perceived to be crucial and strategic to the comprehensive development of nation states globally. This is also the case for African countries, where the sector has seen exceptional growth over the last two decades, although enrolment rates on the continent continue to lag behind global rates.

There are, however, deep concerns over the quality and relevance of the education most African students receive. The African Union Commission (AUC) together with the Association of African Universities (AAU) embraced a number of initiatives through its Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA) Agenda 2063, aiming to address the issues of quality and relevance in African Higher Education Institutions (AHEIs).

The curricula of most African universities continue to follow the traditional approach of accumulation of separate courses and credits, leading to a fragmented curriculum at the expense of a holistic, coherent programme. This curriculum approach is no longer able to meet the current demands of society which requires graduates to solve complex problems, using creative, innovative and ethical thought and practices.

As teaching and learning excellence become more and more equated with the pursuance of credits that are devoid of meaningful effect, one has to wonder what the impact of all of this is on the attainment of learning competencies that will lead to higher education transformation and the transformation of African society and economies.

This chapter argues for embracing a Transformation approach to curriculum thought and practice to attain the “Africa we want”. The question “Who will lead Africa into a bright future?” requires universities to reflect on the challenges facing the continent, and to define what kind of citizens will be able to handle the challenges most effectively. Afterall, in the words of Barnett (2017), the task of an adequate philosophy (approach) of higher education is not merely to understand the university or even to defend it but to change it. The chapter therefore, proposes a transformation paradigm to effective qualitative change in African higher education that can lead to the sustainable transformation of this sector.

Contents of the Chapter

1. The role of African Higher Education Institutions (AHEIs) in Africa’s development agenda
2. How should we approach the curriculum?
3. Curriculum transformation in AHEIs
4. Transformative Learning in AHEIs
5. Transformative teaching in AHEIs: In defence of important values
6. Summary of the chapter in a few questions
7. References

1. The role of African Higher Education Institutions (AHEIs) in Africa's development agenda

There is no doubt that higher education across the globe is perceived to be crucial and strategic to the comprehensive development of nation states globally. This is also the case for African countries. In line with this view, many African countries initiated policies and models to help build their higher education sectors in order to develop their human capital to positively respond to the global challenges of the 21st century (Daniel, D., Osei-Bonsu, R & Amponsah, S.) (2020). The authors further contend that despite these efforts, there continues to be a huge gap between higher education and socio-economic development of most African countries.

As many African graduates enter the labour market, the majority struggle to find employment. On top of that, research studies abound with findings about the mismatch between graduate skills and the job markets.

> *While graduates of many African higher educational institutions go unemployed, substantial shortages of skilled labour persist. The challenge is to increase both the quantity and the quality of graduates through investments in laboratories and human resources … improve the link with employers to raise relevance and foster strong international collaboration to raise quality…* (James, F., 2021, p.1).

Researchers and academics across the continent remain concerned about the increased numbers in enrolments at the cost of quality teaching, learning and research, limited infrastructure expansion and the inadequate opportunities for industry attachment due to Africa's low levels of industrialization. As much as the Covid-19 pandemic opened up huge opportunities for innovation in teaching, learning and research, the continuing poverty afflicting large numbers of African student populations across the continent has seen access to educational opportunity diminish due to persistent social ills like limited access to the Internet, high cost of data, no access to electricity or personal electronic devices such as laptop computers or smart phones. In fact, the pandemic just shed new light on the social and economic ills that plague the majority of African students and their communities.

One other severe constraint for higher education in Africa is the attainment of a critical mass of quality academic staff members. It is reported that the average percentage of staff with a Ph.D. in public higher education institutions in Africa is estimated to be less than 20% (Soucat et al. 2013 cited in Mba, J. 2017). The authors state that many departments in African HEIs do not have more than 1 or 2 senior professors, of whom many are close to retirement. This situation prevents departments and universities from being able to provide relevant higher education training to develop their own staff members, and to establish energetic research environments. On top of this, many full professors do not stay in African universities due to low salaries, limited research funding and equipment, limited autonomy, all of which act as disincentives for professors to stick around as reported by Mba (2017).

The last five to ten years has seen a recognition by African national governments and international development agencies of the important role higher education can play in the socio-economic and other national development issues. This has led to a resurgence of interest in African higher education institutions across the continent. The Association of African Universities (AAU) continues to play an activist role in the revitalization of HE and has designed a series of interventions to improve the difficult situation that higher education institutions are facing.

It is clear that higher education can play a pivotal role in the social and economic development and transformation of African countries. However, the countries which made this transition successfully, indicate that there should be clear policies, and deliberate strategies and actions in place to connect higher education to social and economic transformation in Africa. As the curriculum is an important instrument in the attainment of higher education goals, it is necessary to interrogate its role in social and economic change.

2. How should we approach the curriculum?

Historically, the Africanization of universities was part of a broad decolonisation movement at the beginning of the post-independence era in the 1960's in Africa. Throughout the following decades, the concept of "Africanization" in higher education became tied to the notion of the regionalization of African higher education. The context for this webbing was embedded in the debates among internal and external players like UNESCO, OAU/AU, AAU, Regional Economic Communities, African Development Bank, the EU and African countries on the role of HEIs as agents of economic development, hopes for African Renaissance, instruments of Africanization, and bases for Pan-African movements. Academics and others during that time expressed that African universities should mirror African societies and cultures through increasing qualified African academic staff and Africanizing university curricula. The decades that followed saw increasing numbers of African academics taking on teaching and research roles in their national universities. However, the transformation of African higher education institutions to reflect African society and culture in curricula, teaching and learning did not really materialize. There are many reasons proffered such as the role of neo-colonialism and the strong desire of African nation state universities to be acceptable in the eyes of former colonial rulers and the larger global higher education community. Some say that many of the proponents of the Africanization project who were linked to the African political independence movements were toppled in military coups. Much turmoil befell these African countries during the 70s and 80s, and many still continue to go through major political and economic instability. South Africa has recently seen its fair share of students' violent demands for universities to better reflect African culture, societal norms and values in all aspects of university education and training.

Many scholars ascribe the African higher education sector's continued inability to effectively contribute to the socio-economic development agenda of their countries, to the inability of its curriculum, teaching and learning approaches to reflect African issues, perspectives and content:

> *The development of any society is essentially an internal process and culture is at its core. It is therefore practically impossible for the developmental university to analyse Africa's developmental problems and needs without intimate knowledge and understanding of the nature of African culture* (Fredua-Kwarteng, E. & Ofosu, S., 2018).

The common conceptualization of Africanization remains elusive in AHE, but its philosophy continues to drive the regionalization of AHE. This philosophical discourse now focuses on the socio-economic development needs of African nations and tying it together with promoting intra-African collaboration among HEIs. The AAU and sub-regional bodies like the Inter University Council of East Africa (IUCEA), Southern Africa Regional Universities Association (SARUA) and African and Malagasy Council of Higher Education (CAMES) are seen to play a pivotal role as instruments of co-operation and exchange of information among HEIs in Africa and the sub-regions. This section will not delve into the details on how this came about, but is simply meant to link the discourse on Africanization to the historical and current events that are driving the efforts. Regionalization is therefore seen as the most appropriate initiative currently *"to facilitate the easy and fast exchange of information among neighbouring countries"* and reaffirm that regional collaboration at sub-regional levels in higher education has importance for the development of the HE sector (Knight, J. & Woldegiorgis, E.T., Eds., 2017, p. 36).

As much of the Africanization debate now centres around the socio-economic and cultural development agendas of nation states, there are those who believe that African universities will be better served by focussing on their national, sub-regional and regional development needs and problems rather than to be stuck with an Africanization project. These scholars are of the opinion that Africanization is silent on the pertinent issue of transformative pedagogy that could effectively deliver courses that will develop the skills, knowledge and dispositions that African youth need for personal growth and social, political and economic development. They opine that a developmental approach will encourage students to analyse African development challenges and needs, and push them to formulate action-oriented solutions to issues through inquiry, case studies, peer collaboration, research and complex problem solving and problem learning. It will also encourage and establish deep connections and relationships with local economies and communities through internships, externships, community events, onsite visits, consultations, research projects and public forums dedicated

to innovations and inventions. Proponents of the development university find the Africanization of knowledge problematic: Is it indigenous knowledge? Is it an oppositional narrative to Western knowledge? Is it an alternative perspective to viewing the world? Should it be any knowledge that has relevance to African development through adaptation or direct application? These scholars had the following to say:

> *Proponents of the Africanised university are over-consumed with the politics of decolonization…. Deep-seated corruption in government, human rights abuses, tribalism, stagnant technology, low agricultural productivity, the subjugation of women and incompetent leadership are equally important development challenges plaguing the African continent. Attempts to blame these issues on colonialism absolve Africans from any responsibilities for their own actions and inaction* (Fredua-Kwarteng, E. & Ofosu, S., 2018, p. 3).

As the regionalization process continues to shape universities across Africa, the question remains whether these practices have sufficient potential to enhance the quality of higher education on the continent. There is a view that the impact of the system has been the invasion of a market ideology which emphasises competition, economic efficiency and consumption. Some view this as a neo-colonization of the African higher education system by foreign players seeking to make higher education into a marketable product bought and sold by standard units:

> *The system of business principles and statistical accountancy has resulted in an obsessive concern with the periodic and quantitative assessment of every facet of university functioning. An enormous amount of faculty time and energy are expended in the fulfilment of administrative demands for ongoing assessment and reviews of programmes and in the compilation of extensive files demonstrating, preferably in statistical terms, their productivity – the number of publications, the number of refereed conference papers presented, the number of committees served on, the number of courses taught, the number of students processed in those courses, quantitative measures of teaching excellence… excellence itself has been reduced to statistical accountancy… we have to change this if we want to break the cycle that tends to turn students into customers and consumers… the free pursuit of knowledge has become the free pursuit of credits* (Mbembe, A., 2015, p. 7).

Despite this view, scholars believe that there is merit in the regionalization and intra-African collaboration in higher education efforts. There is evidence in some countries and regions that national higher education systems became interconnected entities that are resonating with one another. National boundaries have started to blur in the provision and consumption of higher education services. The process has also seen more cultural integration in teaching, learning and research activities of individual universities. As universities are forced to extend beyond the local in terms of curricular restructuring, so is their benchmarking and standards. However, what is still not clear is the impacts these changes have on the development agendas of the region, and if the way its current measurement instruments/tools are designed, is possible to effectively capture positive gains that speak to the CESA-2063 strategic goals.

3. Curriculum transformation in AHEIs

3.1. Conceiving curricula

Curriculum is one of the key forces that drive teaching and learning in higher education. Through the curriculum, the academic plan for the learning and teaching experiences of higher education students is operationalised and actioned. Over the decades many scholars have offered various conceptualizations of curriculum in higher education depending on the philosophical systems and ideologies that shaped their educational thought and practices. As the curriculum is the focus and the vital centre of a university's educational efforts, it often becomes the locus of the sharpest controversies as it deals with questions such as: What knowledge is of the most worth? What knowledge should be introduced to the learner? What is it that is valuable to the learner as a person and as a member of the community/society? Given our global interdependence on issues around climate change, environmental sustainability, global pandemics and growing social and economic inequalities and injustices, higher education is now all the more confronted with how it is responding to these matters.

The term *curriculum* traditionally is broadly defined as the course of study that includes goals for student learning (skills, knowledge and attitudes); content (the subject-matter in which learning experiences are embedded); sequence (the order in which concepts are presented); instructional methods and activities; instructional resources (materials and settings); evaluation (methods used to assess student learning as a result of these experiences); and adjustments to teaching and learning processes based on experience and evaluation. For those coming from a more traditionalist philosophical orientation, the preferred curriculum design focuses more on subject matter and skill transfer, where the transmission and preservation of subject disciplines are believed to transmit tested truth and value to the younger generations. As methods of teaching/instruction closely follow philosophical orientations, the teacher is often seen as the one who possesses a disciplined body of knowledge and skills which they seek to impart to the students through deliberate instruction. Teachers are the ones who research and plan instruction and imparts knowledge through verbal process, carefully selecting the appropriate words and phrases to illustrate the principles or demonstrate the skill that the student is to acquire. The teacher is often seen as an exemplar of intellectualism and a model worthy of imitation by their students. This picture looks and sounds familiar to many current day African university lecturers who were trained in this tradition, and whose research and teaching practices continue to resemble the above descriptions in many ways.

Critics of the traditional educational orientation argue that this way of educating younger generations leads to the upholding of the status quo/conforming to hegemony, and leaves little room for the cultivation of innate ability, self-discovery and the ability to explore and grow (mentally, morally, spiritually) through active interaction with their natural and social environments. It often leads to an inability to reflect and self-correct, to apply education for the purpose of solving human problems, and to improve the quality of life for all humankind. As African universities struggle to transform in order to stay relevant and have an impact on their countries' development agendas, there is a need to make clear what values, beliefs and practices will guide their transformation given their contexts and goals for change.

The proponents of the transformative approach to curriculum planning, development, implementation and evaluation posit that the most profound learning takes place when learners are actively involved in their own learning through experiential activities, projects and problem-solving. This way of learning encourages them to discover knowledge, co-create new knowledge/s, rather than simply absorb knowledge given to them by a teacher. It encourages exploration, self-discovery, learning by doing and leads to innovation that can bring about the social and economic betterment of society. As African universities are called to play a more impactful role in their countries' social and economic struggles, there is a need to create graduates with the skills and attributes who can carry out the social and economic agendas. African higher education is thus in need to explicitly pronounce itself on which philosophical and ideological orientation will drive their transformation processes, and to give clear direction for their vision and mission implementation.

3.2. Curricula Reform: An African necessity

Since its earliest years African Universities have been struggling with ensuring the relevance, applicability and integrity of its academic programmes. Scholars over the decades since the 1950s and 60s have called for the designing of an education that is of Africa for Africa. Much of the thinking and the debates revolved around an education that should liberate Africans from the yoke of colonialism, be embedded in African beliefs and values, should use African knowledge systems and practices as vehicles for learning and teaching, and should bring about transformation and betterment of African society. Proponents of the Africanization of higher education were concerned that the westernized higher education programmes at the time alienated Africans from their local communities and produced graduates who were unable to relate to the African conditionality and to solve local problems. However, the operationalization of the concept of Africanization of higher education curriculum and study programmes has remained elusive. Even though African universities over time have become more Africanized in the sense that more African academics occupied management and teaching positions, the concrete efforts to ensure curricula in AHEIs reflect African values, beliefs, ways of knowing and knowledge construction, learning, teaching and research practices, remain vague and incoherent.

A look into the AUC documents on higher education quality gives an indication of what the Commission sees is the objective of higher education in Africa during the 21st century: to increase access and ensure quality education provision, ensuring that higher education is responsive to Africa's priorities and relevant to the labour market. This includes:

> *inculcating entrepreneurial and innovative mind frames and African values in order to contribute to social economic development, job creation and employability... Higher education development should take place in the context of African continental, regional and national needs, and be based on African epistemologies and content.* (p. 8, African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education –ASG-QA, 2018).

It is clear from the rhetoric emanating from the AUC on the role of higher education that it sees higher education as a progressive force that plays a crucial role in the transformation of African society and economies. It, therefore, calls on HEIs to adopt African approaches to the education development agendas of their institutes. The AUC also calls for the promotion of student-centred learning, and outcomes-based study programmes that are aligned with the needs of stakeholders. It promotes Arts, Culture and Heritage as levers for building the "Africa we want". Its focus on science and technology to accelerate the continent's transition to an innovation-led, knowledge-based economy suggests that higher education is seen by the AUC as a deliberate power to be used to create the "Africa we want". Combined with a focus on women and girls' education and empowerment, community programmes in Agriculture development and innovation, and the protection of rights to access information among others, it appears that the Commission is making the right moves, in the right direction. What is not so clear is the basic curricular principles and practices that should drive the transformation of the higher education curriculum that will deliver the "Africa we want".

A quick glance at many university classrooms across many AHEIs, continue to resemble those of the 50s, 60s and 70s. Academics continue to lecture to students, who passively receive knowledge that is treated as absolute, eternal and unchanging, emanating from a curriculum that is cumulative (subject content attained at one level, is added to the next higher level), steeped in academic disciplines, with disciplines such as natural science and ICTs regarded as superior knowledge. Of course, there are exceptions, and most African academics are in agreement that the role of higher education is changing given the complex problems that are confronting African and global society daily. However, the pace at which African university curriculum and instruction are transforming is often left wanting. Community and industry leaders continue to decry the inadequate skills of graduates who are unable to problem-solve, communicate through writing and speaking, engage in ethical decision-making, work in teams, learn/re-learn and unlearn, and who are disengaged from community and civic life. The mandate to implement transformation across most universities is clear, but what is not so clear is the curriculum transformation framework that could guide higher education through the transformation process. It is therefore, becoming evident that there is a need to conceptualize what kind of curriculum (including philosophical and ideological orientation) will best support the "Africa we want", and to develop a guiding framework that can assist AHEI systems to move closer to that goal.

3.3. Transforming African HE curricula

Scholars acknowledge the great strides that research on effective university learning and teaching has made over the past decades. This has created a shift in the emphasis on *subject/discipline knowledge* and what *teachers do*, to a focus on what *students* are *learning*. Many of the curricular innovations and reforms over the last decade has shifted the emphasis from:

- Learning goals that focus on mastery of content and content coverage, to demonstration of broad competencies and relevant learning outcomes, i.e. creativity, communication, critical and analytical thinking, inquiry, cross-curricular/inter-disciplinary thinking, complex problem-solving, local and global competences, diversity, learning to learn, among others.
- Learning in distinct disciplines, to integrative learning across the curriculum (wicked problem solving);
- Changes in subject matter as the main means to improve learning, to innovations in instructional and assessment methods (integrating ICTs).

Employers rate the attainment of these above competencies highly and often consider them more important than the subject content areas from which students are graduating. However, they do not feel that graduates attain these key competencies/skills, leaving a gap between the education received and the competencies and skills needed.

As indicated earlier, many African countries initiated policies and frameworks that will help them build their higher education sectors in order to develop human capital that will positively respond to the local and global challenges of the 21st century. As many young Africans have become better educated, and enrolment rates across AHEIs increased dramatically, African scholars are arguing for the rethinking of higher education's Africanization project. These scholars argue that the focus on Africanization is distracting from higher education's role in the socio-cultural and economic development of nation states. It also leaves the increasing impact of regional and global inter-dependence on the peripheral, making the attempts to link higher education to developmental issues more difficult. To this purpose, these scholars argue that African higher education is in need of a transformative pedagogy that will deliver programmes and courses that will develop knowledge, skills and dispositions that African youth need for personal growth and social, political and economic development. A transformative philosophy and approach to curriculum planning, development and implementation in higher education will encourage students to analyse African development challenges and needs, pushing them to come up with action-oriented solutions to development issues through inquiry, case studies, peer collaboration, research and complex problem solving and problem learning. Through this approach, students will establish deep connections and relationships with local communities and economies. This they argue, if well implemented, could ensure a transformation in learning, teaching and assessment approaches in higher education, and ensure greater connectedness with local and regional communities and industries. It could also have a transformative impact on universities' community engagement missions, bringing more clarity of purpose and definition to the concept of "community engagement" that will be in line with transformation goals. In a sense, these teaching and learning approaches will embed students in their local communities through research and problem-solving, thereby ensuring a more Africanised learning experience. However, a transformational approach to African higher education is not negating UNESCO's call for reaffirming a humanistic approach to education:

1. *A humanistic approach takes the debate on education beyond its utilitarian role in economic development. It has a central concern for inclusiveness and for an education that does not exclude and marginalize. It serves as a guide to dealing with the transformation of the global learning landscape, one in which the role of teachers and other educators continues as central to facilitating learning for sustainable development of all* (UNESCO: Rethinking Education: Towards a global common good? 2015, p. 37).

A transformative approach to higher education curriculum, teaching and learning encourages students to view and interrogate issues and problems from several perspectives, including a deep consideration of diversity (of thought and practice) as a basic premise, and to integrate indigenous knowledge and alternative worldviews to complex problem solving. It also encourages the acquisition of values of respect for all forms of life and human dignity that is required for social harmony in a diverse world.

Transforming university curriculum to respond to local and global challenges also require an intense look into the structural adjustments universities need to make to support curriculum practices and processes for transformation of higher education. The AU's call for the harmonization and strengthening of the quality of higher education provides important guiding principles and frameworks for HEIs to use in their quest to deliver good quality and relevant education programmes to their students, both local and international. The key is to not only change the way things look but to also focus extensively on the way things work. In order to truly practice transformation in the higher education arena, a transformative learning mind-set is equally needed. The main premise of transformative mindset is the idea that "learners" who are obtaining new knowledge/information evaluate their past ideas and understanding, and through critical reflection and discourse shift their worldviews and perceptions to support their new learning and meaning-making. To illustrate this, read the following quote from a lecturer in East Africa:

> *I am a human and applied ecologist, at the intersection of various disciplines. Traditionally, most research is and can be dedicated to a single discipline. An entomologist may look at an entomology problem, without psychologists or sociologists. My focus is really to advance interdisciplinary research to achieve real, meaningful impact for the livelihood transformations at the community level, and to do this I draw from multiple lenses to formulate a comprehensive solution to the problems I study. I would not say this is hindering progress, but our universities have to mature… there is still a traditional notion of time and its passage. The senior people were in universities in their heyday – when the world was very slow. And so the slow pace of doing things sometimes creates a bit of frustration for me and my students in particular. There are processes that make a student stay in the system unnecessarily longer because colleagues do not understand inter-disciplinary research, or research grants require a single disciplinary focus, or structures are not flexible and agile to respond quickly to innovative ways of doing things. Should form not follow function?* (Anonymous).

As concepts like regionalization, harmonization and quality assurance all seek to improve the provisioning and relevance of higher education on the continent, thousands of graduates of the higher education systems across the continent continue to find themselves largely unemployed or unemployable. For those who are employed, the stories about the mismatch of skills to the job market abound. There are questions on the capability of the current quality assurance practices on the continent to ensure teaching excellence and relevance of programme outcomes and impacts. Many academics on the continent argue that teaching excellence has become equated to the pursuance of credits devoid of meaningful effect, numbers of publications, number of committees served on, without a real focus on what the impact of all of this is on the attainment of learning competencies that will lead to higher education transformation and the transformation of African society and economies. Many question the ability of African higher education quality assurance bodies to create meaningful tools that can measure the effect/impact of higher education on social and economic development agendas. The question that remains foremost in our minds is how can quality assurance bodies support the structural and curricular transformation that will produce the change-agents needed to address the 21st century challenges?

A transformative approach to higher education in African countries can develop a consciousness of the social forces that are influencing the status quo and bring a more fundamental change to the education system. This approach does not repudiate the basic tenets of the Africanization of curricula, but supports it and provides concrete guiding principles to operationalize transformation in teaching, learning, research and community engagement. Its main purpose is the empowerment of students to see the world differently so that they can challenge the status quo as leading agents of change. This is particularly pertinent to the education, climate, health and economic challenges on the African continent currently. To this purpose the transformation curriculum encourages collaborative complex problem-solving by using different forms of knowledge/s and practices, including indigenous knowledge/practices, and practically engaging students in action-oriented inquiry to find solutions to enduring problems. The curriculum is organized around significant local and global problems and issues that are collaboratively identified without regard for subject area boundaries, to encourage cross-curricular application of subject discipline knowledge that come to bear on the identified problem. It encourages lifelong learning and the building of learning communities. It integrates reflection, action, theory and practice as well as social and personal realities in its methodology. It ensures that African knowledge systems, cultural traditions and values, language systems are used together with scientific knowledge and practices for the improvement and development of individuals, communities and nation states.

A transformation curriculum in higher education recognizes that the traditional curriculum focused on subject content, and organised in distinct disciplines, is no longer able to meet the demands of an emerging world society that requires graduates to solve complex problems using creative, innovative and ethical thought and practices. The curriculum has to answer to the questions of what graduate competences and skills/outcomes are of the most worth in modern day local and global society, how best can the university facilitate the development of these competences/skills in their graduates, what knowledge/s, learning and assessment experiences are needed, what structural and procedural changes should universities make to achieve the goals, and what role should staff and the community play to ensure the goals are achieved.

There exists limited research evidence of AHEIs accepting a transformative epistemology and methodology to its transformation processes. Reports suggest that many former advantaged universities stopped short of

effecting a truly critical stance on their transformation process. If higher education is to transform from its traditional (some would say elitist) focus on the transmission and preservation of subject discipline knowledge, to a focus on the technical and economic roles of students in a rapidly changing social and technological world, it requires a university cultural revolution. Afterall, in the words of Barnett (2017), the task of an adequate philosophy of Higher Education is not merely to understand the university or even to defend it but to change it. As stakeholders engage in this process of change and deliberate with one another, the process itself also becomes a form of emancipation that serves both individual intellectual development as well as social progression.

Steeping higher education change in the transformation epistemology and methodology helps institutions to reclaim its functional role in African society. It ensures that African knowledge systems, cultural traditions and values, and language systems are used together with scientific knowledge and practices for the improvement and development of individuals, communities and nation states. However, this can only happen if those responsible for higher education transformation, truly and fully commit to the transformation agenda both in its philosophy, processes, and outcomes.

4. Transformative Learning in AHEIs

Who will lead Africa into a bright future? This question requires the academy to deeply reflect on the challenges facing the continent and nation states, and to define what kind of citizens will be able to handle the challenges most effectively. How should we educate our students to live responsible, creative and productive lives? Afterall, students are the ultimate recipients of curriculum transformation efforts, and their acquisition of new knowledge to changes in their perceptions, attitudes and values are the ultimate goals of higher education.

The traditional model of university teaching excellence recognizes universities for their comprehensive array of course disciplines, the research funding they obtain and the publications that arise from such sponsored work, its technology transfer and community engagement programmes supported by dedicated staff and infrastructure. The excellence of the institution in sum is mostly based on the scholarly efforts of its academic staff combined with evidence of its community outreach. Although this institutional achievement model will continue to be part of the academic culture, there is an increasing shift to a new pattern of achievement that is based on collaborative use and production of knowledge based on the characteristics of the communities and regions the university serves. In this scenario, students play a more active role in knowledge co-creation and are becoming the dynamic forces in the generation of new knowledge and innovation that can address societal challenges.

Universities will therefore be forced to change to this new notion of what it means to be excellent, by creating learning environments that are more innovative, technology-based with experiential and applied learning methods that support students to engage in collaborations that address local and global problems. For African students to succeed in this new learning environment where key competencies replace the focus on subject content mastery, and where inter-disciplinarity is seen as a more effective strategy to solving complex problems, the institutional mission, culture and capacity should reflect that.

One of the key issues to focus on will be curriculum coherence where many isolated courses and pieces of information lead to a fragmented experience for students. Clarifying, tightening and sequencing the curriculum requirements and experiences can provide better coherence.

Secondly, the strategy should focus on the developmental learning needs of students to provide an educational experience that will not only ease the transition from high school to university, but will help to develop learning activities/experiences that will teach skills and attitudes to succeed in university, improve retention rates and support students at risk of dropping out. As students progress through their university education, a major focus should also be on their transitioning from university to the world of work by intentionally integrating what they are learning to other disciplinary perspectives, community challenges and the world of work.

Thirdly, the university should actively advocate for the building of learning communities to maximize opportunities for students to collaborate on experiential learning activities and promote inter-disciplinary study and integration.

Finally, academic staff should be exposed to innovative instructional methods that are integral to the curriculum transformation efforts. Staff should be well versed in the research on how students learn, instructional innovations based on active and experiential learning (learning by doing), inquiry, discovery, problem and project-based learning, collaborative and cooperative learning in groups, writing to learn, research, community-based learning, and integration of instructional technology. Although lectures and small group discussions will continue to be present in the university classroom, active, collaborative and interdisciplinary learning should become more common-place in university classrooms in AHEIs than what is currently the case.

Guthrie (2019) describes the changing information and media environment as very challenging to higher education's most essential purposes. He states that:

> *This next powerful wave of change emanates from the trillions of sensors capturing data of every imaginable kind, the rapidly accelerating and exponential increases in computing power to process those data, and the potential for artificial intelligence and machine learning to operate in ways that fundamentally change many of the ways we work, learn and interact; in short, the way we live our lives* (p. 2).

The author states that these new forms of learning that often rely on machines as tutors, using data to track students' progress and improve the quality of knowledge and assistance provided to students, demand that the roles of students and academic staff in the learning process change in fundamental ways. A university's curriculum therefore has to balance the need for new technological learning with humanistic values and ethics needed to deal with the social challenges faced by the poor and marginalised among us.

As university learning becomes more surrounded by "Big Data" that are not under the control of universities themselves but are held by big corporations such as Google, Facebook, and Amazon, access to raw data for creating new knowledge might become more challenging. AHEIs will have to take this into account as they might have to increasingly compete with industry to recruit and retain top research talent, making collaboration with other universities and industry more important for cutting edge research and discovery.

However, in spite of all this, universities should guard to exclusively respond to the market needs, but to also be motivated by their values and missions at a time when a deep understanding of the social sciences is arguably more important than ever. As our intellectual work is increasingly being replaced by technology, the ethical and philosophical issues that will be raised can only be addressed by an understanding of the Humanities and our African human conditionalities.

5. Transformative teaching in AHEIs: In defence of important values

In addition to the nurturing of multiple points of views, universities have stood for timeless values such as the pursuit of learning free from special interests, freedom to conduct research on important questions of every kind, and the importance of enlightened reasoning. In the world of Big Data, the academe's ability to protect these values is more and more becoming imperilled. The role of those who teach in higher education is increasingly becoming more complex and multifaceted, as universities are looked upon to provide answers to the continuing social, environmental and economic crises.

As academics, it is understood that teaching is a primary mission of the university and it has as its primary goal the facilitation of relevant and transformative learning. The local and global changes surrounding the university landscape have placed an incredible amount of pressure on academics who are affected by limited resources for teaching and learning, requirements for income generation, improving in flexible modes of delivery and study, transforming the curriculum, and continuing scrutiny in relation to quality and standards. A further challenge brought on by the pandemic is that academics have to work with students remotely while at the same time preparing them more carefully for a local and global world dominated by forces out of their

control. To top it all, a teacher's physical presence in the classroom is no longer a requirement for teaching. This may be a welcome reprieve from the ever escalating cost of traditional instructional methods, but the cost of investment in computerised teaching systems and on-line learning courseware may be hard to come by in most AHEIs. This situation could perpetuate the many inequalities witnessed across the higher education landscape on the continent, leading to an ever widening social, political, cultural and economic gap.

It is clear that higher education is operating under a very fluid and unpredictable environment and therefore approaches that are informed by adaptability and flexibility have become crucial in the survival of these institutions. Under a transformation approach, the teaching context is viewed as fluid and constantly changing, and education is an interactive and dynamic process that is amenable to constant transformation.

The "Banking Education" approach cannot deliver on the transformation of the African social and economic realities. In the words of Paolo Freire, what is needed is a pedagogical approach that " demythologize" and unveils reality by promoting dialogue between teachers and students to create critical thinkers, who are engaged in inquiry in order to create a new social reality which is constantly changing (Freire 1970, 2009). This is the process of problem-posing education, which aligns its meaning with the intrinsic view that education is ultimately aimed at human development to be able to better serve the general community/society, not only the labour market. This does not imply that the market and monetary value of education should be neglected, especially in the African context, as it can help people escape the vicious cycle of poverty and provide the children of poor families the opportunity to increase their social and economic upward mobility. This in itself has the potential to improve health levels and decrease fertility and mortality rates, which in turn can create more responsible and participative citizens, boosting democracy and social justice.

Implementing a transformative learning and teaching approach to higher education will not be easy as it requires a deepened understanding of the forces that aid the social and economic injustices seen across the African landscape. However, it is a necessary vehicle towards cultural realization and social transformation that should emanate from a liberating higher education experience. In the words of Guthrie "a shift towards a model where knowledge is not subdued to economic reasoning, can inform a new societal paradigm of a genuine knowledge-based economy, where economy would become a means rather than an ultimate goal for human development and social progress" (p. 13).

As academics prepare students to be able to use knowledge to address social and economic development challenges, interrogating the ways in which that knowledge is created, accessed, acquired, validated, used and integrated with alternative knowledge systems becomes a fundamental tenet of a teaching and learning approach in higher education. It therefore becomes necessary to interrogate how quality assurance systems will account for such a re-visioning of higher education in this fluid and changing context. The instruments against which African higher education quality in teaching and learning are benchmarked should therefore reflect the changing African social reality as well as recognize the local and global forces that shape it. As higher education involves different stakeholders with different social roles, it stands to reason that their interests can be conflicting, and that they will view higher education from different perspectives. With the current harmonization and quality assurance processes and practices, there is the fear that they can encourage homogenization of what is to be taught, how it will be taught and how it will be assessed. This could make

teaching and learning less responsive to local contexts, and could move AHEIs away from its unique social and economic development agendas. Inclusivity in standard setting and quality assurance, guided by a clear set of values and beliefs steeped in an African transformation philosophy, have the potential to influence positively the" Africa we want".

Summary of the chapter in a few questions

In all likelihood, you will not be able to give a full and detailed answer to the following questions, but you should be able to understand their meaning and you have the obligation, at least as a participant in HAQAA training activities, to think about them.

1. The Africa HE sector has seen unprecedented growth over the last two decades. However, this progress has taken place in a very traditional canvas. There is little evidence that higher education has impacted on the challenges of employability, or significantly contributed to the overall social and economic development of African society, reduced inequalities and made contributions to the solutions of global problems. How can this be addressed by the curricula in African higher education?
2. A transformation approach to curriculum reform and change in AHEIs, can become an instrument/lens to support policy revision and development. As universities try to tackle the ever-growing social inequalities of modern day African society, there is need for a radical shift towards policies that are informed by transformative learning theory where the problematizing of social challenges provide the insights, contexts and vehicle towards economic liberation, cultural realization and social transformation. Do you agree with this statement? Why/why not?
3. The call for a transformation approach to curriculum design, and implementation in African higher education has been advocated by a number of African scholars. For these scholars the transformation approach is meant to offer a lens or framework to view and address the many development challenges besieging the African higher education landscape. Do you agree/disagree with this approach and why?
4. The widening social and economic inequalities across the continent and globally raise ethical and philosophical questions about the quality and relevance of higher education offered in AHEIs. How should a transformation approach address these issues?
5. In a transformational university curriculum, what will be teaching excellence?
6. What would be some of the most pertinent challenges your institutions of higher learning will face when implementing a transformation approach to curriculum design and implementation? How can this be overcome?
7. What kind of structural adjustments and procedural changes would Universities have to make to support the process of transformational teaching and learning?
8. In what ways can local and regional quality assurance structures support higher education in the implementation of a transformation philosophy/approach to bring qualitative change to the sector?

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Chapter 10

Quality and Quality Assurance

J. Mukora

Presentation

Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 are taken from the Chapter on Africa of Part III of the Special Issue of the GUNi (Global University Network for innovation) biennial Report on Higher Education in the World (New Visions for Higher Education towards 2030) prepared as a contribution to UNESCO's World Higher Education Conference (Barcelona 18 – 20 May 2022). That Chapter on Africa was coordinated (as all these Materials) by HAQAA-2.

They are shorter (around 4.000 words) than the rest of the chapters, but this makes them also very appropriate for the Materials because it allows to tackle issues more specific that complement those analyzed by those other, longer, chapters.

Chapter 10 deals with Quality Assurance. Its author was one of the main members of the commission that drafted the African Standard and Guidelines and is drafting the User's Guide for them. Quality Assurance has featured prominently in African integration in Higher Education and many international donors have included it as a priority area in their funding.

Contents of the Chapter

1. The concepts of Quality and Quality Assurance in Higher Education
2. Harmonization of Higher Education in Africa
3. ASG-GA: one of the tools for PAQAF
4. Taking the ASG-QA forward under HAQAA 2. The User Guide
5. Concluding remarks and the way forward

1. The concepts of quality and quality assurance in Higher Education

1.1. The origin and definitions of the two concepts

Quality is a much-debated concept in higher education due to the significant number of players in the field (Mishra 2007). Quality in higher education means different things to different stakeholders.

Ball (1985) defined quality as "fitness for purpose"; from this perspective, the quality is achieved if the product or service fits its predetermined purpose (Harvey and Green, 1993). In the 1990s, five interrelated conceptualisations of quality were given by Harvey and Green (1993), namely, quality as exceptional; transformational; perfection; fitness for purpose and value for money.

Quality as exceptional: this refers to the achievement of high academic standards which are (still) something distinctive, elite and exclusive for most higher education institutions. This definition is frequently used synonymously with the concept of excellence which applies to "an outstanding high level of quality that distinguishes the best universities from the rest" (Bleiklie, 2011, p. 21).

Quality as transformational: this symbolises the unique process that leads to changes through the enhancement and empowerment of students, who "are not products, customers, consumers, service users or clients – they are participants. Education is [thus] not a service for a consumer [...] but an ongoing process of transformation of the participant" (Harvey and Knight, 1996, p. 7

Quality as perfection: this refers to consistent and flawless results, but this definition has a rather limited value in the context of (higher) education where flawless results are quite difficult to reach (Harvey and Green, 1993; Harvey, 2004-2019).

Quality as fitness for purpose: this is one of the most widely accepted definitions of quality (Ball, 1985; Harvey and Green, 1993), but at the same time, it puts emphasis on the achievement of minimum standards and the use of numerical indicators which are often determined by external stakeholders (Westerheijden, 1999).

Quality as value for money: this refers to the return on the investment through the achievement of the same (or better) results with lower (or equal) costs and, as such, concentrates on the relationship between the quality of output (product and services) and the financial costs needed.

1.2. Quality Assurance

In the context of quality assurance in higher education, it is argued that during the 1980s, the notion of "quality" was transformed into "quality assurance" because of the growing importance attached to the "fitness for purpose" definition of quality (Westerheijden, 1999; Harvey, 2004-2019).

Quality assurance in higher education in Africa does not have a single purpose, a single method or a single operational definition. It can, and does, mean many different things in different contexts.

For Vroeijenstijn (1995), quality assurance is "systematic, structured and continuous attention to quality in terms of quality maintenance and quality improvement" (p. xviii), while for Woodhouse (1999), it refers to "policies, attitudes, actions and procedures necessary to ensure that quality is being maintained and enhanced" (p. 30). From this definition, internal quality assurance (IQA) and external quality assurance (EQA) can be distinguished. IQA refers to the policies, attitudes, actions and mechanisms implemented within an institution or programme to ensure that standards of quality are met. EQA, on the other hand, refers to the policies, attitudes, actions and mechanisms of an external body which assess the operations of an institution or programme in order to determine whether it is meeting the agreed standards.

The term 'quality assurance' also signals a diversity of purposes, such as accountability, control, improvement/ enhancement, public information, public reassurance/ confidence, resource allocation. It also has different scopes, such as; programme evaluation, programme accreditation, programme review, institutional

evaluation, institutional audit, institutional review and institutional accreditation. Finally, it also applies to a diversity of methods such as peer reviews, inspection, compliance models, excellence models as well as a diversity of outcomes; public and private information reports, recommendations, approvals, accreditation decisions.

1.3. Quality vs. Quality Assurance

Torrent (2016, 2022) introduces a distinction between Quality as one of the dimensions of HE policy and Quality Assurance as one of the instruments of this policy (only one of the instruments, but not the only nor the more important one) used to make progress in the Quality dimension. This distinction is not considered in this contribution but should be applied in further work on the topic.

2. Harmonization of Higher Education in Africa

harmonisation and revitalisation of higher education have become 'buzzwords' in the education strategic frameworks of the African Union. The most documented effort in continental higher education harmonisation is the adoption of the Second Decade of Education Africa Action Plan (2006-2015) by AU member states. Principles and goals that recognize the need for and importance of harmonisation are clearly outlined in this document.

At the end of the decade, a landmark strategic document "Harmonization of Higher Education Programmes in Africa: A Strategy for the African Union" (CESA) (2016-2025) was issued which provided general direction for improving capacity and quality in higher education at continental level. As stated in one of its guiding principles, 'harmonized education and training systems are essential for the realization of intra-African mobility and academic integration through regional cooperation' page 11.

As a means to pursue its continental objectives for higher education, the AU has set up a Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF), as an overriding framework for quality assurance and harmonisation of higher education at continental level. It consists of the following instruments, some of which are already being implemented and others still need to be developed:

- African Standards and Guidelines for Quality assurance (ASG-QA)
- African Continental Qualifications Framework (ACQF)
- African Quality Rating Mechanisms (AQRM)- developed by the AAU.
- Addis Convention for Recognition- developed under UNESCO
- African Credit Accumulation and Transfer System, partially developed in the EU-funded TUNING-Africa project.
- Continental Register for QA agencies and quality assured higher education institutions- to be developed.

And, in the framework of the Africa – EU Strategic Partnership, the EU has funded two ambitious projects; ACQF (concerning the second of these instruments) and HAQAA (HAQAA-1, 2016 -2018, and HAQAA-2, 2020-2022), which covers the first (ASG-QA). ASG-QA delineate minimum standards for higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies with regards to how they evaluate and ensure quality-an instrument which provides a common language for quality standards.

In this contribution, we document and analyse the development and implementation of the ASG-GA which has gone through the drafting process (2016-2017), the pilot phase (2019) and the ongoing development of the User's Guide (2021-2022).

3. ASG-QA: one of the tools for PAQAF

The African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA), developed in the context of the Africa-EU Partnership, were published at the end of 2018. They are part of a larger process in Africa that aims to ensure the implementation of the Pan-African Quality Assurance Framework (PAQAF), and, as just mentioned, were developed under the Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Initiative (HAQAA Initiative), funded by the European Commission.

The HAQAA Initiative was meant to:

- Simultaneously reinforce national quality assurance agencies/bodies and higher education institutional quality culture
- Plant the seeds for aligning different existing regional quality assurance initiatives with PAQAF, and help to prop up new regional initiatives and quality assurance networks and
- Give all regions (Northern, Western, Central, Eastern and Southern Africa) and countries common tools with which to both relate and build their quality assurance systems, while respecting diverse needs and contexts.

The drafting of the ASG-QA started with the establishment of a Technical Working Group, with membership representing the five regions of the Continent, with skills in the four AU languages- English, French, Arabic and Portuguese. This was followed by the mapping study of the standards and guidelines for higher education already in use in African countries. E-mail questionnaires to national QAAs and desk research were employed.

The ASG-QA was developed taking into account the diversity of purposes, models, methods and outcomes of quality assurance in Africa. A lot of consultation with regional quality assurance networks, the HAQAA Advisory Board and the AUC, Vice/Chancellors of HEIs, student organisations, ministries and governing bodies of higher education was carried. The online consultation received about 310 respondents from 40 countries. And the ASG-QA were benchmarked with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) and other international standards and guidelines.

The ASG-QA are based on the principle of autonomy, identity and integrity of higher education institutions.

3.1. Objectives of the ASG-QA

The broad objectives of the ASG-QA are to support higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies in Africa in implementing good practices for quality assurance; developing adequate IQA mechanisms; and assisting higher education institutions in assessing their own quality through self-assessment. Specifically, they are intended to:

I. Provide a common framework and understanding of quality assurance among stakeholders;

II. Develop mutual trust and hence facilitate recognition and mobility of students and human resources across borders;

III. Ensure quality improvement/ enhancement through self-assessment, external review and continuous monitoring and evaluation;

IV. Promote transparency and accountability by providing appropriate information to the public;

V. Promote a sustainable quality culture in HEIs, alongside the AQRM

VI. Support the production of relevant teaching and learning resources as well as students' assessment instruments;

VII. Promote international competitiveness of Africa's higher education system.

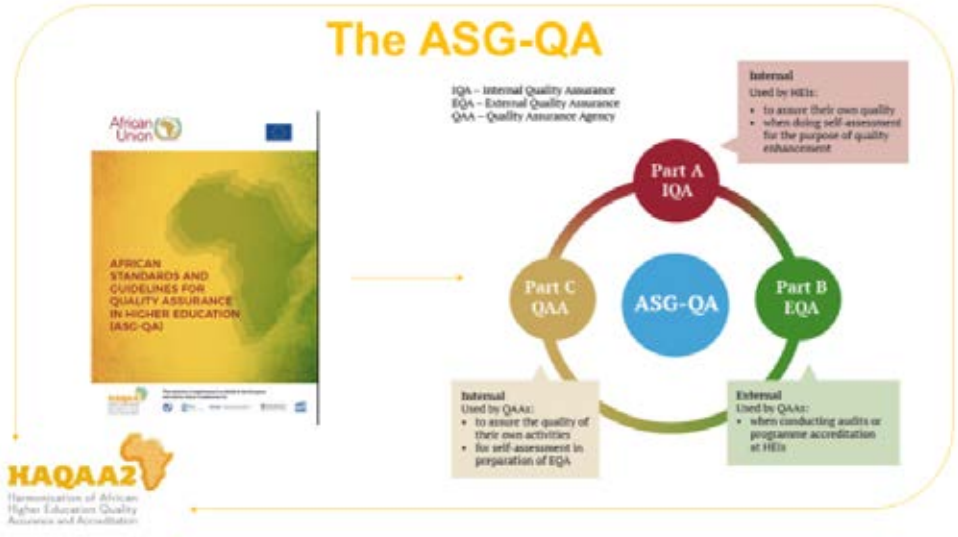
The intention is that the ASG-QA will advance quality improvement and assurance in higher education in Africa, support mutual trust in order to facilitate mobility and recognition across borders, and offer information on quality assurance in African higher education.

3.2. Content

The ASG-QA are presented in 3 parts:

1. **Part A:** Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) of higher education institutions including standards and guidelines for open and distance learning (ODL).
2. **Part B:** External Quality Assurance (EQA)
3. **Part C:** Internal Quality Assurance for Quality Assurance Agencies (QAA)

The 3 parts are interconnected and together form the basis of the quality assurance framework for higher education in Africa. The 3 parts should not be seen as separate entities, but should be read as a whole as



illustrated in **Fig 1**.

The ASG-QA has clusters of standards and guidelines for each part. The standards set out minimum agreed and accepted levels of practice for quality assurance in higher education and should, therefore, be taken account of and adhered to by those concerned, in all types of higher education provision. The guidelines explain why the standard is important and describe how standards might be met and implemented.

The ASG-QA are framed as minimum standards or requirements that must be complied with, but the individual institutions can complement them with additional standards reflecting their own context. The ASG-QA were defined and proposed as a set of generic principles in QA, i.e. describing the areas which should be covered by QA arrangements but not establishing the ways these were to be implemented. In fact, there was no intention that standards and guidelines should dictate practice or be interpreted as prescriptive or unchangeable. Nevertheless, they were designed to be applicable to all African HEIs and quality assurance agencies, irrespective of their structure, function and size and the national system in which they are located.

Part A: Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

Part A has clusters of 13 standards and 97 guidelines. These are shown in table 1

Table1: Part A Standards

Standards	№ of guidelines
Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives	4
Governance and Administration	12
Human Resources	10
Design, Approval and Monitoring of Programmes	14
Teaching, Active Learning and Assessment	14
Infraestructure and Facilities	3
Student Recruitment, Admission, Certification and Support Services	10
Research and Innovation	6
Community Engagement	6
Information Engagement	6
Public Communication	2
Cooperation, Staff and Student Mobility	5
Financial Recource Management	5

Part B: External Quality Assurance (EQA)

Part B describes the methodologies (or standards) used by QAAs for external quality assurance of higher education programmes and institutions. Part B is meant to ensure that the internal work undertaken by institutions is directly relevant to any external quality assurance that they undergo. Part B has a cluster of 7 standards and 32 guidelines as shown in table 2

Table 2: Part B Standards

Standards	№ of guidelines
Objectives of EQA and Consideration for IQA	8
Designing External Quality Assurance mechanisms Fit-for Purpose	2
Implementation Processes of EQA	5
Independence of Evaluation	4
Decision and Reporting of WQA Outcomes	6

Periodic Review of Institutions and Programmes	3
Complains and Appeals	4

Part C: Internal Quality Assurance for Quality Assurance Agencies.

Internal Quality Assurance for Quality Assurance Agencies is done through self-assessment of their respective policies, practices, procedures and activities and through external review by another relevant body or peer organisation. This part addresses the question, 'who guards the guard'?

Part C has a cluster of 8 standards and 34 guidelines as shown in in table 3

Table 3: IQA for Quality Assurance Agencies

Standards	№ of guidelines
Policies, Processes and Activities	10
Legal Status	1
Vision and Mission Statement	4
Financial and Human Resources	4
Independence of QQA	3
Internal Quality Assurance Criteria and Processes	4
Benchmarking, Networking and Collaboration	5
Periodic Review of QQAs	3

The ASG-QA are now available in four AU languages: English, French, Arabic and Portuguese.

3.3. The 2018 Pilot Exercise

A pilot exercise was run in 2018 in order to test the soundness or fitness-for-purpose of the methodology for the external review of quality assurance agencies in Africa using the standards of parts B and C of the ASG-QA.

The methodology consisted of a self-assessment report by the agency, a site visit by a panel of three experts who interviewed key internal and external stakeholders, and a review report written by the expert panel. The methodology was tested through four pilot reviews of established agencies (ANAQ-Sup Senegal, CNAQ- Mozambique, NAQAAE- Egypt and ZIMCHE- Zimbabwe). In addition, the methodology was used in part for four consultancy visits to newly established agencies or ministries preparing to establish an agency (AMAQ-Sup Mali, Togo, Cameroon and Morocco).

For the consultancy visits, ministries were requested to select certain standards to focus on, rather than being evaluated against all standards of parts B and C of the ASG-QA.

4. Taking the ASG-QA forward under HAQAA2. The user guide

The HAQAA Initiative was established to support the development of a harmonised quality assurance and accreditation system at institutional, national, regional and Pan-African Continental level. HAQAA2 (2020-2022) is financed under the EU's Pan-African Programme and builds upon, upscales and promotes the results of HAQAA1.

The general objective of HAQAA2 is to improve the quality and harmonisation of African higher education and support students' employability and mobility across the continent. Concerning QA, its specific objectives are to:

- Further enhance the quality assurance culture in higher education institutions;
- Strengthen the capacities of quality assurance agencies to implement African Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance and enhance cross-regional coordination.
- Strengthen capacities of the AU in implementing the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF).

In order to reach them, HAQAA2's workplan includes training and capacity building for IQA and EQA, and the promotion of the ASG-QA as a tool for building internal and external QA systems.

In this context, a Task Force has been established to take the ASG-QA forward under HAQAA2. Its main functions are to:

- Assess the review methodology and its impact on the 8 countries that applied it/tested it in 2018 (Mar – July 2020).
- Interview agencies and experts that participated and come up with recommendations for improvements and adjustments in the next round of agency reviews that will take place under HAQAA2.
- Debate the pending questions relevant to the agency reviews.
- Develop the User's Guide and Tool Kit for the implementation of the ASG-QA in QA agencies and in universities, upon debating the appropriate for such a tool, which would respective the diversity of ways in which the ASG-QA can be applied.

The Task Force members represent key organisations, have hands-on experience in applying regional QA related principles and guidelines and in agency reviews, have knowledge of continental harmonisation processes in Africa, and possess technical knowledge regarding both IQA and EQA. Many of the members were involved in the drafting of the ASG-QA or in the implementation of other activities of HAQAA1 in 2015-18.

In September 2020, the Task Force held three online focus groups to explore the experiences from the external reviews of quality assurance agencies and consultancy visits to ministries of higher education, which took place in 2018 under HAQAA1. The reviews and consultancy visits served to support the implementation of the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) in African external quality assurance frameworks.

Two of the focus groups (one in English, one in French) were aimed at representatives of the participating agencies and ministries (14 participants from 7 different countries) and one was aimed at the experts that conducted the reviews (8 participants from 8 different African and European countries).

The participants discussed how the methodology of the agency reviews could be improved, the challenges in using the ASG-QA, and the outcomes of the reviews. All participating agencies and ministries commented that the review process had been useful to validate existing arrangements and to provide external advice and recommendations for further development. Several participants provided examples of concrete changes that had come as a result of the exercise.

In terms of possible improvements to the methodology, the main topics discussed included the need for additional training for agencies and experts, clarification of some aspects of the ASG-QA, better support for the experts to understand the local context, and support for agencies and ministries to follow up on the outcomes of the reviews and consultancy visits.

The outcomes of the focus groups are being combined with the results of surveys to the agencies, ministries and experts, and an analysis of the review reports, which were also conducted by the Task Force in summer 2020. This information is being used to refine the methodology for the next round of agency reviews taking place in 2022 and to develop training for agencies, ministries, and experts. So far, eight agencies and ministries from across Africa have registered for a review or consultancy visit. Applications are still being accepted.

The focus groups also served as an opportunity for African agencies and ministries to exchange information and experiences on recent developments and current challenges in external quality assurance in their respective countries, including financial sustainability and dealing with the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The same Task Force is also preparing a Users' Guide for the ASG-QA. The publication will include additional guidance on each of the standards of the ASG-QA, including case examples of how the standards can be implemented in various national and educational contexts. Furthermore, the Users' Guide will clarify how the ASG-QA relate to existing national and regional standards that are already established across Africa. It is hoped that the Guide will provide practical support to higher education institutions, quality assurance agencies and national authorities in developing their quality assurance frameworks in line with the continental standards.

The major challenges

The implementation of the ASG-QA confronts some challenges both at the institutional level (HEI) and at the Quality Assurance Agencies (QAA) level. At the Institutional level, there are at least three challenges: (a) lack of public awareness of the ASG-QA, its process and benefits to higher education institutions in improving/ enhancing quality, (b) inadequate human capacity, and (c) underdeveloped quality cultures within higher education institutions. At QAA level, three major challenges can be identified: (a) the internationalization and professionalization of expert panels, (b) the use of students in review panel, and (c) the independence of QAAs. These challenges are briefly analyzed in what follows.

Lack of public awareness of the ASG-QA, its process and benefits to higher education institutions in improving/ enhancing quality.

Even though the ASG-QA have been translated into the 4 AU languages, published on the Internet and recommended for implementation, and their main ideas disseminated at conferences, seminars and workshops, most higher education internal stakeholders (teachers, students and technical and administrative staff) are not fully aware of the existence of them. This is worsened by the shortage of studies specifically aimed at examining how HEIs are implementing Part A of the ASG-QA. The few representatives of higher education institutions that attend conferences, seminars and workshops do not take the task to disseminate the knowledge within their institutions.

Inadequate human and financial capacity

Quality assurance systems of higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies in Africa are still at an early stage of development and thus confronted by challenges of costs and human capacity development. Operating a quality assurance framework at HEI and at the QAA requires a substantial budget and well trained and experienced staff. As noted by Shabani, 2013, at least 60% of the quality assurance agencies lack the human and institutional capacity to implement their mandates effectively. A lot of concerted effort is needed to build capacity in HEI and QAA.

Underdeveloped quality cultures within higher education institutions.

Most higher education institutions in the continent do not have well developed internal quality assurance frameworks. Quality assurance is taken seriously (on paper) when preparing for accreditation, but, when

this is achieved, risks being shelved, while what matters is it becoming a continuous process. Developing and promoting a sustainable quality culture is important to ensure that: a) Everyone in the institution has a collective and individual responsibility for maintaining and enhancing quality; and b) Everyone understands the structural elements in place and this is supported by a well caring leadership through trust, a good communication strategy and the involvement of all the stakeholders. To achieve a successful implementation, quality assurance practices and processes should be embedded within the strategic plan of higher education institution, but most higher education institutions in remote areas do not even have strategic plans.

The internationalization and professionalization of expert panels

The involvement of international experts is considered a good practice in EQA, but many quality assurance agencies in Africa lack the financial capacity to hire international experts to be part of review panels because of the relatively high costs of travel, accommodation and daily allowances.

The other challenge has to do with the professionalization of experts. Most of the panel members are academic staff who have their own teaching load and are not trained experts in quality assurance, although they participate in capacity development programmes in order to prepare them for the evaluations.

The involvement of students in panels of external experts/ peer reviewers

The concept of student involvement in external quality assurance is well stated in Part B, standard 4 of the ASG-QA, where it is expected that peer reviewers are drawn from different stakeholders, including students. Whilst students' contribution to teaching and learning is unquestionable, their involvement as members of external experts in external quality assurance processes in the African Higher Education Space has not been fully researched and tested.

The independence of QAAs.

Most quality assurance agencies in Africa fully depend on government funding to function effectively. However, standard 5 of Part C of the ASG-QA states that 'the QAA shall be independent and autonomous in its operations, outcomes, judgements and decisions'. In some cases, organisational independence is compromised by the fact that the nomination of CEO/ Chairperson/ President of the QAA is done by the government and at times it is difficult not to take orders from the appointing officer. In other cases, the appointment of divisional directors is done by the Minister responsible for higher education and not by the Council Board.

5. Concluding remarks and the way forward

this contribution reviewed how the ASG-QA were developed under HAQAA1 and how it is being taken forward under HAQAA2. As no discussion of policy or practice concerning quality assurance can be carried out without an explicit and clear contextual definition of the use of the word 'quality', the contribution started with defining what quality and quality assurance are and then gave a context in which the ASG-QA were developed including what the ASG-QA offer and what they do not.

In light of the challenges highlighted in this contribution, some steps can be recommended in order to facilitate the implementation of the ASG-QA in both higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies in Africa:

Higher education reform initiatives are complex, and require time, adequate resources, strong political will and academic cooperation and perseverance to work successfully. It seems impossible to carry them out by decree. **Stakeholders involvement is an absolute necessity. Therefore, for the ASG-QA to succeed, both external and internal stakeholders should be involved and be part of the process and their capacity in the area of quality assurance, both in higher education institutions and in QAA, needs to be strengthened.** The efforts being done by HAQAA2 Initiative in building capacity for both IQA and EQA should be multiplied in terms of numbers in order for the implementation of the ASG-QA to be successful.

In parallel, HEIs should be challenged to come up with learning programmes that deal with quality assurance in order to improve institutional capacity in developing quality assurance units and running quality assurance agencies.

The dissemination projects should be accelerated and implemented so that the ASG-QA reach every corner where teaching and learning takes place. Quality can only be assured by those responsible for providing higher education.

I strongly believe that these steps will facilitate the implantation of the ASG-QA within the African higher education space and establish a strong foundation for future development.

Summary of the chapter in a few questions

In all likelihood, you will not be able to give a full and detailed answer to the following questions, but you should be able to understand their meaning and you have the obligation, at least as a participant in HAQAA training activities, to think about them.

1. Would you be able to write a short one-page note for the attention of the Minister of Education in your country summarizing the different meanings given to the term 'Quality' when referring it to Higher Education as well as the different parts or levels of the ASG-QA.
2. Would you be able to distinguish Quality as a dimension of Higher Education and Quality Assurance as an instrument?

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Chapter 11

Research and innovation: Learning and Innovation strategies for sub-Saharan Africa

M. Dosso

Presentation

Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 are taken from the Chapter on Africa of Part III of the Special Issue of the GUNi (Global University Network for innovation) biennial Report on Higher Education in the World (New Visions for Higher Education towards 2030) prepared as a contribution to UNESCO's World Higher Education Conference (Barcelona 18 – 20 May 2022). That Chapter on Africa was coordinated (as all these Materials) by HAQAA-2.

They are shorter (around 4.000 words) than the rest of the chapters, but this makes them also very appropriate for the Materials because it allows to tackle issues more specific that complement those analyzed by those other, longer, chapters.

Chapter 11 deals with an issue that many would consider as falling outside the field of Higher Education but that is extremely inter-related with it: Innovation. As the author emphasizes, the importance given to Innovation in political declarations does not seem matched by the actual embeddedness of Innovation in specific policies and in the eco-systems that should promote it. And, as discussed in depth in chapter 9 of these Materials, one can have doubts about the adequacy of standard academic practices, and conception of curricula, to really promote and foster innovation.

Contents of the Chapter

1. Introduction
2. Research and Innovation, a decade of progresses and the challenges of sustainability
3. Some directions for the future of research and innovation (R&I) for sustainable transformations in Sub-Saharan Africa

1. Introduction

Research and Innovation (R&I) are already transforming sub-Saharan African economies and communities, albeit at very unequal paces across places. In the two last decades, novel actors, narratives, and resources have contributed to reshape the regional and local research and innovation systems. Yet, the R&I transformational potential remains largely unexploited owing to a narrowly diffused innovation culture, to the lack of appropriate resources and of effective policy instruments and capabilities to scale up R&I activities for transformative change.

The high-level policy commitment for R&I is clearly visible in the development agendas at the global, continental, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and national levels (UN 2015, AUC 2014, AU 2019, and countries' National Development Plans). **However, for prosperity to occur through innovation, policy commitment is not enough. The uptake of transformative R&I activities in sub-Saharan Africa faces many ecosystem-specific barriers and shared regional challenges that are preventing innovation to flourish in all its forms.** In addition of common global challenges such as climate change and the ongoing pandemic, sub-Saharan African countries are still struggling on several fronts: To cite only a few, the implementation of the AfCFTA (UA 2018, CNUCED 2019), the consequences of the regional 'spaghetti bowl' of agreements (Byiers et al 2019), the multi-facets capability gaps, rising multiform inequalities as well as the existence of acute policy implementation bottlenecks at all levels.

Harnessing the emerging technological and innovation potentials and opportunities to the benefit of local communities would thus require novel place-based and people-centred policymaking approaches. These place-based, 'no-one-size-fits-all', policies, should help creating, capturing and redistributing more value locally through upgrading the learning and innovation capabilities of local actors. In the perspective of fostering local innovation ecosystems, each stakeholder of the quadruple helix – academia, civil society, industry, and government – has a role that, in most countries, would require place-based capabilities to be enhanced or constructed for achieving prosperity for all and everywhere.

2. Research and innovation, a decade of progresses and the challenges of sustainability

2.1. Research and innovation institutions are gradually being constructed for addressing sustainability challenges

The recognition of the role of research and innovation for solving developmental challenges has prompted the elaboration of related strategies or instruments in many countries of the sub-Saharan African region. In addition to the publication of the African Union (AU)'s science, technology, and innovation (STI) and education strategies (respectively STISA 2024 and CESA 16-25), the decade has been marked by an increased commitment of some RECs in STI strategy making and integration. In the last decade, the Southern African Development Community, SADC, has further strengthened its STI policy cooperation, building upon the protocol signed in 2008. The Western African Community, ECOWAS, has adopted a dedicated STI protocol in 2012, while the East Africa Community, EAC, has recently operationalized the East African S&T Commission. Nevertheless, advances at the policy elaboration and operationalization levels remain very heterogeneous across RECs, which are also expected to fulfil multiple thematic institutional roles beyond the R&I domain. In the regional communities where some common R&I framework exist, tracking the progress constitutes another challenging task for both them and Member States.

Besides the ongoing adoption of thematic or sectoral agendas and conventions, the construction of African R&I systems relies on the creation of continental institutions and organisations, some of them being related directly or indirectly to STISA. Among the ones directly relating to STISA, there are the African Scientific, Research and Innovation Council (ASRIC), a technical advisory body, the African Observatory for Science, Te-

chnology, and Innovation (AOSTI) and the Pan African Intellectual Property Organization (PAIPO) established by African Union statute in 2016. The same year marked the adoption of the revised statute of the Pan-African University (PAU), which is a network of five thematic institutes covering Earth and Life sciences in Nigeria, Water and Energy in Algeria, Governance, Humanities, and Social Sciences in Cameroon, basic STI in Kenya and Space Sciences in South Africa. In 2019, the Pan-African Virtual and E-University has been officially launched. While these initiatives can be acclaimed, their sustainability is still much at stake owing to the lack of funding, of managerial and academic staff and of complete institutional and operational processes. Recent reviews suggest **that many pieces are missing in the regional STI policy puzzle, including understanding, capabilities and instruments, action plans, monitoring and evaluation practices as well as traceable financial support** (See AUC 2014; the progress report AU 2019a; AU 2019b).

At national level, favourable policy responses were also diversely implemented, and some remained at the announcement stage. Several countries in the region have now adopted STI policies (UNESCO 2021). The picture varies depending on the geographical sub-regions. In West Africa, countries such as Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Liberia, Sierra Leone do not yet have an explicit STI policy. Nevertheless, as the other countries, they reinforced their STI institutions through different instruments (thematic ministries, directorates, commissions, sectorial policies, etc.).

In Central and Eastern Africa, some countries such as Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda have elaborated explicit STI policies; Kenya and Rwanda have already engaged into revision phases. These improvements suggest that **R&I policy learning is taking place in sub-Saharan African economies, but it may be too slow amid the global socio-economic and technological trends and the African trade integration.**

2.2. Combined efforts of the public and private for-profit and non-for-profit sectors can help advancing faster together towards the 1% target of GDP invested in R&D

Slight increases in research and development (R&D) funding, human capital and outcomes have been observed over the last decade. This trend is also marked by an important participation (and orientation) of international donors and partners. In sub-Saharan Africa, the highest ratio is 0.83% of the GDP invested in R&D in South Africa (2018 UNESCO data), while most countries are not even half-way, except for countries such as Senegal and Rwanda. **More collective efforts from both the public and the private – for-profit and non-for-profit – sectors would help advancing faster and smartly together towards the 1% target of GDP invested in R&D. While funding remains a major issue at stake, the collection of R&D** and innovation data is still not anchored into the habits of national statistical institutes, research centres and universities. To address these issues, the African Observatory of Science, Technology, and Innovation (AOSTI) and UNU-MERIT have organised throughout the decade a series of capacity building programmes in the Design and Evaluation of Innovation Policy in Africa. The regional training series have targeted African policy makers, government's officials and other stakeholders involved in STI activities. The series has covered countries from Eastern and Southern Africa and two Regional Economic Communities (SADC and COMESA) as well as Western African countries and ECOWAS. (Iizuka et al 2018; 2015)

Table I. Sub-Saharan African Countries participating in the African Innovation Outlooks

AIO 2010	AIO 2014	AIO 2019
Burkina Faso	Angola	Angola
Cameroun	Burkina Faso	Botswana
Ethiopia	Cabo Verde	Burkina Faso
Gabon	Ethiopia	Burundi
Ghana	Gabon	Cabo Verde
Kenya	Ghana	D.R. Congo
Lesotho	Kenya	Eswatini
Malawi	Lesotho	Ethiopia
Mali	Malawi	Gabon
Mozambique	Mali	Ghana
Nigeria	Mozambique	Lesotho
Senegal	Namibia	Mali
South Africa	Nigeria	Mozambique
Tanzania	Senegal	Namibia
Uganda	South Africa,	Niger
Zambia	Tanzania	Rwanda
	Togo	Senegal
	Uganda	Seychelles
	Zambia	South Africa
	Zimbabwe	Tanzania
		Togo
		Uganda

Source. African Innovation Outlook 2019 (AUDA-NEPAD, 2019)

Notes. The survey covers research and experimental development (R&D) or innovation in products, processes, organisational and marketing methods. Some countries only provided one category of data.

A key issue is illustrated by the African Innovation Outlook 2019, where only 23 African countries provided R&D survey data (see Table I), the figures being even less accessible concerning innovation data, despite the pro-innovation policy discourse. In addition of the absence of more than half of the countries, **R&D expenditures data by institutional sector are incomplete and refer in general only to spending by governments and higher education sectors.** Another challenge for the countries covered concerns the overestimations due to the inclusion of support staff as R&D professionals, thus limiting the reliability of comparative analyses. In the field of data collection and interpretation, the support of the African Observatory for STI and RECs can play a key role. Relevant experiences are for instance the African STI Indicators initiative (ASTII) and the capability-building initiatives led by the AOSTI. They enable practices sharing and learning-by-interacting that are key to improving the measurement and monitoring of R&D&I activities on the continent. (AUDA-NEPAD, 2019)

2.3. Local initiatives for science excellence and integration are taking off (too slowly) in sub-Saharan Africa

In the area of scientific excellence and integration, sub-Saharan Africa is a flourishing ground for international initiatives through the setting up of regional Centres of Excellence, networks building and thematic capacity-building programs for HEIs and research organisations. Launched by the World Bank and participating governments, the program Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence (ACE) has allowed to support more than 40 thematic centers in West and Central Africa (phase 1) - Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, and Togo – and East and Southern Africa - Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia – (phase 2). Target fields include science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), environment, agriculture, applied social sciences, education and health. The program provides financial and technical support to HEIs and research centres to enhance the quality of higher education and the market and industry relevance of postgraduate students.

The success of the project has stimulated further extensions towards other international development partners and within African networks. For instance, a memorandum of understanding has been signed between the Inter-University Council for East Africa, IUCEA, and the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture, RUFORUM. The MoU will be the framework for the Eastern and Southern Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence Additional Financing (ACEII-AF) project for the period 2021-2026. The new ACEs focus novel (sub-)thematic such as sustainable cities; sustainable power and energy; social sciences and education; transport; population health and policy; herbal medicine development and regulatory sciences; public health; applied informatics and communication; and pastoral production. (See at https://ace.aau.org/about-ace-impact/, accessed in January 2022).

In 2019, with the operational leadership of the African Union Development Agency, AUDA-NEPAD, five continental Centres of Excellence (CoEs) have been endorsed by the African Heads of State and Government. The CoEs, one for each geographical region of Africa – Central, East, North, South and West –, should support the implementation of National Development Plans of Member States, of RECs' strategies and other continental thematic programs and frameworks: Rural Resources and Food Systems (Senegal, West Africa), Climate Resilience (Egypt, Northern Africa), Human Capital and Institutions Development (Kenya, East Africa), Science, Technology and Innovation – STI- (South Africa, Southern Africa), Supply Chain and Logistics (Central Africa, Country TBC). . Details on the CoE STI's launching can be found at https://www.nepad.org/news/launch-of-auda-nepad-centre-of-excellence-science-technology-and-innovation

Institut Pasteur de Côte d'Ivoire (IPCI), a long-standing commitment to excellence in health science in West Africa

IPCI is a state-owned industrial and commercial establishment (EPIC) under Côte d'Ivoire's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Its missions include research, training, diagnostic and epidemiological surveillance. **Institut Pasteur de Côte d'Ivoire hosts the CeReB, the first regional biobank conforming to international standards in francophone sub-Saharan Africa (inaugurated in 2019), and, since 2021, a high-throughput genome sequencing laboratory, a key infrastructure for Western Africa's fight against the pandemic.** www.pasteur.ci

Source: IPCI (provided in January 2022)

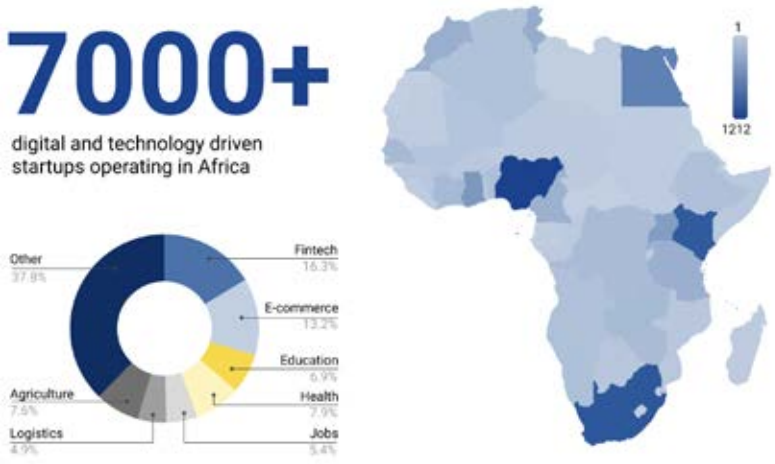
Regional and international collaboration enable the improvements of local absorptive and learning capabilities. R&I collaboration is instrumental for sharing best practices, physical and faculty resources and for creating synergies on common developmental priorities. Thematic scientific networks and alliances have also been reinforced or created such as the Alliance for Accelerating Excellence in Science in Africa (AESA) since 2015. Endorsed by a summit resolution of the AU Heads of Government, AESA was set up through a partnership of the African Academy of Sciences (AAS), the AUDA-NEPAD and founding and funding global partners. In parallel, several national science academies have been revived or established in countries such as Botswana, Rwanda or the youngest one in Malawi (see an updated list at https://africanscientists.africa/academies-of-science/, accessed January 2022). In the field of STI studies, the African Network for Economics of Learning, Innovation, and Competence Building Systems or Africalics, was founded in 2012 in Tanzania. It is a regional chapter of the Globelics network that brings together thousands of scholars, researchers, practitioners, and policy analysts worldwide (see the impacts at https://www.africalics.org/impacts/, accessed January 2022).

The trends have coincided with the unprecedented surge in the digital presence of traditional African universities and the development or the creation of national virtual universities. Differently from anglophone countries, which have been pioneering in online education and learning, the phenomenon is relatively more recent in many francophone countries, for instance in Burkina Faso (UV-BF was established in 2018), Côte d'Ivoire (UVCI in 2015) or Senegal (UVS in 2013). These new higher education modes are helping against the saturation of physical higher education systems in sub-Saharan Africa. Their sustainability depends much on how well countries can alleviate the related technological, socio-economic, digital literacy and political constraints.

2.4. The emerging youth-led technological boom brings more "games" in African towns and innovation ecosystems

Africa technology revolution is on its way, as suggested by the exceptional growth of urban technology ecosystems, digital start-ups and start-ups networks in the last decade. Several factors are at play such as globalisation, the rapid diffusion of ICTs, the rise in venture, corporate and development funds and the spread of collective innovation and learning spaces and technology hubs. At the end of the year 2021, Briter Bridges records at least 1031 innovation hubs, usually concentrated in capital or main cities, spanning across 53 African countries and more than 7000 startups. 53% of these innovation hubs are co-working spaces and communities, while more than 45% run support programs. These hubs provide services such as capacity building, incubation and acceleration programs, co-working spaces and support structures for African entrepreneurs at different stages of the innovation value chain, from the ideation to the market (Briter Bridges and Afrilabs 2021; Dosso, Braoulé Méïté et al 2021).

Figure I. More than 7000+ digital and tech startups in Africa



Source. Briter Bridges https://briterbridges.com**; Graphs provided in Jan. 2022.**

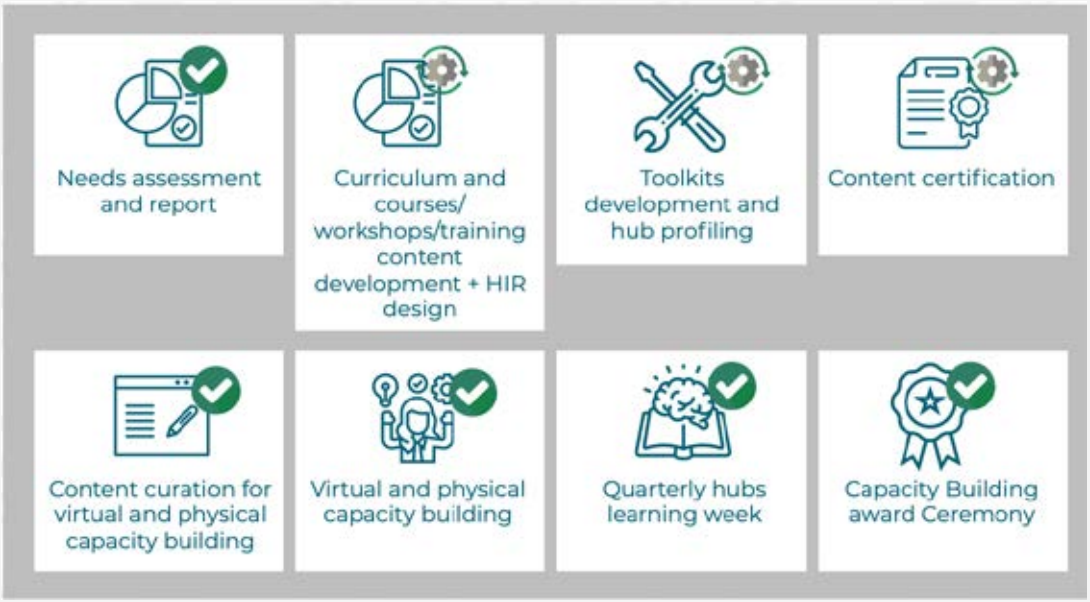
New hubs involve a growing variety of corporate, non-for-profit, university and development actors and target very diverse sectors, for instance creative industries (art, fashion, entertainment), such as the 360 Creative Innovation Hub in Lagos (Nigeria) or women-focused tech-entrepreneurship such as the Ghana-based Woman's Haven Hub or Femmes360 in Lubumbashi (Democratic Republic of Congo). Overall, fintech companies from the traditional quadrangle – Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt, and Kenya – attract the biggest share of African start-ups funding. Nevertheless, more countries, tech-sectors (for instance, agriculture and agri-tech, ed-tech, clean-tech, gov-tech, legal-tech, logistics, health-tech or space technologies, among other sectors) and companies are coming in, and francophone Africa is recording increasing numbers of hubs, start-ups, deals and financing inflows. These changes have undoubtedly been accelerated by the social distancing and lockdown restrictions amid the pandemic. (Briter Bridges 2021, UNDP 2020).

Start-ups' networks and organisations and networks of innovation hubs are importantly contributing to interconnect start-ups, hubs, and local innovation systems. They also shed light on local innovative solutions, challenges, and ecosystems' needs. Nigeria-headquartered AfriLabs is such a network spanning over the whole continent. In addition of the capacity-building, certification and networking programs, **African innovation networks have amplified the voices and signals from young digital entrepreneurs, especially next to international and African private sector and policy making circles.**

AfriLabs, the Pan-African voice of hundreds of innovations hubs and communities

Created in 2011, AfriLabs is the largest innovation hubs network. As of January 2022, it connects 320 innovation hubs across more than 50 African countries and the diaspora. AfriLabs offers financial mentorship, networking opportunities, and capacity-building resources. https://afrilabs.com (Accessed in January 2022)

AfriLabs' Capacity Building Program for Enterprise Support Organisations



Source: A Resilient Africa 2020 – An annual report of AfriLabs impact, see at https://www.afrilabs.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2020_-A-Resilient-Africa.pdf

A number of foundations, forums and prizes have been established on the continent to encourage and support young innovators, scientists and digital entrepreneurs and start-ups. The Next Einstein Forum (NEF) is a platform launched in 2016 with the aim to connect science, society, and policy (https://nef.org). NEF has four major programs including the global gathering, the policy institute, a public engagement online platform and a community of scientists including the best young African S&T champions. The annual TREMPLIN STARTUP UEMOA awards promote digital start-ups' solutions in agriculture and agro-industry and their Enterprise Support Organisations (ESOs). Participating countries belong to the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU, UEMOA in French): Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. The rise of African prizes and forums and the faster adoption of national digital plans signal a broader policy commitment to ICT-enabled innovative solutions and to local tech-entrepreneurial ecosystems. But critical gaps persist for instance, in terms of sustainable funding, basic and advanced infrastructure, technology literacy and legal instruments and frameworks. Indeed, very few states have national cybersecurity and data protection laws, and most countries have not ratified the 2014 Malabo Convention on cybersecurity and personal data protection. In terms of start-ups legal frameworks, Senegal has already passed a Start-up Act, while other countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda have launched the drafting or related consultations. (See at https://i4policy.org, accessed in January 2022, and Dosso et al 2021).

3. Some directions for the future of research and innovation (R&I) for sustainable transformations in Sub-Saharan Africa

3.1. Diffusing the innovation culture beyond the core of R&I systems

Recent evidence, media premieres and successful stories have put the spotlight on the potentials and challenges of Sub-Saharan Africa's researchers and innovators. The last decade has witnessed the gradual construction and strengthening of R&I institutions and the rise of innovation hubs, R&I networks, communities, alliances, and science centres of excellence. Some impacts of these changes are already visible, even if they may take time to be captured through commonly used R&D&I measures. Meanwhile, their sustainability depends much on how well we can keep them alive, bring them together and scale them up towards addressing the challenges of local communities and economies. In the perspective of achieving sustainable transformations, our collective efforts should thus go towards improving the diffusion of innovation, entrepreneurial and learning cultures, well beyond our science and nascent urban technology ecosystems. In other words, it is also about nurturing an innovation culture – creativity, innovative thinking, mindset for change, learning from successes and failures, etc. – across schools, colleges, craftsmen federations, traditional, emerging, and creative industries, chambers of commerce and industry, SMEs federations, the civil society organisations as well as within the local and central administrations, among other stakeholders.

The ongoing EU-funded ACP project for the Promotion of Research, Innovation and Digital Culture in Central Africa (PRICNAC) supports for instance innovative projects proposed by multi-stakeholders and multi-countries consortia involving high schools and HEIs. Inspired by the smart specialisation initiative, PRICNAC is implemented in 8 countries – Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sao Tome-and-Principe, and Chad – for the period 2021-2024. PRICNAC aims to foster the digital culture, the market relevance of R&I capabilities, the synergies in the R&I system as well as the promotion of local know-how and knowledge (https://pricnac.org, accessed in January 2022).

The experience of successful interregional collaboration under the EU's Technical Assistance Facility for Industrial Modernisation and Investment (TAF) can also be noted as worth extending to Africa. TAF has supported 19 projects emerging from 14 partnerships from the EU Smart Specialisation Platform for Industrial Modernisation. TAF brought together more than 50 European regions providing support such as market validation, investment plan review, business model definition, costs and revenues definition or revision and marketing and sales channels definition or validation (https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/taf, accessed in January 2022). Importantly, and even in different contexts, such projects underline the relevance to embrace a broader innovation culture across our economies, industries, and communities in view of identifying (and "market testing") sustainable options and pathways to address our specific local challenges and common developmental goals. (See Dosso et al 2020 for a reflection on smart specialisation in sub-Saharan Africa)

3.2. Novel sources and updated instruments for challenges-oriented R&I funding

The unprecedented funding inflows for technology start-ups and R&I-oriented development projects have greatly supported the emergence of local R&I dynamics in sub-Saharan Africa. Although some improvements can be observed in the funding of African research capabilities and science institutions, they mostly still bear on international donors and governments-related sources. While the interconnection with the global innovation system can be much appraised, the sustainability of local research and innovation systems may be at stake owing to potential misalignments with local actors' priorities and long-term development plans. In addition to the setting up or strengthening of national funding sources, novel instruments and models should be identified to support challenges-oriented R&I projects. Hence, additional efforts should be undertaken to involve the private sector, enabling innovative funding instruments, and to better leverage emerging innovation networks, successful start-ups founders or private philanthropic funding.

Improving the funding for R&I is not enough. The directionality and prioritisation of R&I is even more important for impactful investments. This means that shared visions for transformations through R&I should be constructed and that R&I projects should be matched, jointly, with the vision, the underlying objectives, and the available and accessible resources. Revisions of priorities are of course possible, even encouraged, but they will often require monitoring and evaluation capabilities and routine-like practices. In a dual evidence-informed and place-based perspective, dedicated mappings of R&I stakeholders, of science, economic and entrepreneurial potentials, and innovation challenges in the formal and informal sectors are essential for the elaboration of sound R&I roadmaps and actions plans. (UN IATT and European Commission 2021; Foray et al 2021; Dosso 2019).

3.3. Strengthen the capability of stakeholders to make R&I participatory approaches become a reality

Broadening and spreading innovation and learning cultures is a long-term and collective undertaking. **The dynamics observed in sub-Saharan Africa economic, R&I and technology landscape still carry optimism and hopes, which some have hailed under the "Africa Rising" narrative. However, the impacts of these changes risk to remain much uneven and unevenly distributed for the times to come.**

In the region, several initiatives have been deployed to foster participatory R&I dialogues targeting for instance the HEIs-industry links. But they are often under-financed, under-staffed and discontinued. Besides these resources gaps and the absence of long-term commitment, awareness and adequate capabilities are missing across the quadruple helix actors to establish sustainable participatory R&I dialogues and decision-making models. Inspirational cases of collective discovery processes and multi-stakeholders' dialogues exist in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere, within and outside the R&I domain. Although they can hardly be copied, the learnings and experiences can relevantly inform place-based strategies in view of achieving sustainable transformations through research and innovation in sub-Saharan Africa.

Summary of the chapter in a few questions

In all likelihood, you will not be able to give a full and detailed answer to the following questions, but you should be able to understand their meaning and you have the obligation, at least as a participant in HAQAA training activities, to think about them.

1. Are you able to make a synthesis of the content of this chapter and that of chapter 9 on Curricula, Teaching and Learning?
2. Which are the six or seven statements that, in your opinion, summarize best the content of the chapter?

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Chapter 12

Recent developments in Internationalization in Africa

J. O. Jowi

Presentation

Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 are taken from the Chapter on Africa of Part III of the Special Issue of the GUNi (Global University Network for innovation) biennial Report on Higher Education in the World (New Visions for Higher Education towards 2030) prepared as a contribution to UNESCO's World Higher Education Conference (Barcelona 18 – 20 May 2022). That Chapter on Africa was coordinated (as all these Materials) by HAQAA-2.

They are shorter (around 4.000 words) than the rest of the chapters, but this makes them also very appropriate for the Materials because it allows to tackle issues more specific that complement those analyzed by those other, longer, chapters.

Chapter 12 tackles an issue that seems to appear in all current discussions of Higher Education policy: Internationalization. Very often, it is treated as an issue brought to the forefront by the turn the globalization process has taken in the last four decades. This view forgets the high intensity internationalization that characterized colonialism. This explains and justifies the ambivalence of the discussion in the African framework. The chapter contextualizes divergences and convergences and emphasizes the priority to be given to intra-African cooperation.

Contents of the Chapter

1. Africa and internationalization: Introduction and Context
2. Recent developments in internationalization in Africa
3. Making internationalization work for African universities: challenges and opportunities
4. Conclusion

1. Africa and Internationalization: introduction and context

Internationalization has become one of the central issues in higher education in recent years and is a major driver of change in higher education globally (Knight, 2008; Zeleza, 2012), including in Africa where the higher education sector is comparatively recent and perhaps the most marginalized in the world (Jowi, 2012). While there have been various conceptualizations of internationalization and even calls for a rethinking of these conceptualizations (de Wit, 2013, Deardoff, 2012), what is not in doubt is the centrality and manifestation of internationalization as a major agent of transformations in higher education globally (Maringe, 2010). This is also fueled by the attendant forces of globalization and interconnectedness mainly driven by the ICT revolution.

While internationalization is not a new phenomenon in Africa, there is credence that African universities face internationalization from a weaker position compared to universities in other world regions (Teferra, 2008). As such, while universities in developed world regions view internationalization positively as an important opportunity, African universities tend to view internationalization as bringing forth several risks and challenges (Jowi, 2009). The main rationale from African universities to engage in internationalization has mainly been to strengthen their institutional infrastructures and capacities for teaching and research. The negative experiences of African universities with internationalization have partly been due to the several challenges that have confronted the sector and to the fact that higher education in Africa is comparatively recent compared to other world regions.

It has been claimed that internationalization of Africa's higher education is not new but is as old as history of higher education in Africa (Teferra, 2011; Jowi, 2009). Pioneer African universities were set up with links to the parent universities mainly in Europe (Teferra, 2011) and were offering the programs and certification from these parent universities. **The foundations for the development of the higher education sector in Africa was thus adopted mainly from the former colonizers and in some ways have remained in the system.** This resonates with the recent calls for decolonization of the African university (Nyamnjoh, 2019). At the same time, majority of the pioneer African scholars were trained within these same frameworks (Oyewole, 2010).

Internationalization has therefore been part of the developments in Africa's higher education sector in major and varied ways leading to some scholars such as Teferra (2008) to consider Africa's higher education as the most internationalized globally. This is more discernible in the curriculum and reading lists of most courses offered in African universities which have almost entirely western contents and epistemologies.

The past two decades have been viewed as the period of revitalization of Africa's higher education and saw African universities grapple with the serious challenges that bedeviled the sector since the 1990s. The key areas of transformations include the exponential growth in number of institutions and students, growth in private higher education in most African countries, diversification of academic programs and some progress in governance and quality reforms. These transformations have been a consequence of national, regional and international developments. The sector has continued to face perennial challenges including funding constraints, poor infrastructure, overcrowding, poor quality and governance challenges among others. These developments have implications on African universities can engage with internationalization and other global developments.

Before delving into the next sections, it is important to point out from the outset that Africa is a vast continent composed of 54 countries with several peculiarities, several regions and economic communities and with rich linguistic and cultural diversities. Generalizing is therefore very difficult and could be misleading. This paper takes this into consideration and will thus generally focus on some common aspects and present some specific highlights from certain African countries and regions.

2. Recent developments in internationalization in Africa

Over the past few years, a number of developments have taken place in Africa's higher education terrain which have significant implications on the future of internationalization in Africa. Some are themselves outcomes of the growing impacts of internationalization. Over the same period, internationalization has continued to gain prominence in Africa's higher education than ever before. The section below summarises some of the key developments in internationalization in Africa.

2.1. Growth in intra-Africa collaborations

An important recent development is the growth in partnerships and collaborations between African universities themselves. This has in a way created a new trajectory from the historical trend that mainly focused on partnerships with universities in other world regions especially Europe and North America. This development opens up a new phenomenon opening up a new dimension for internationalization in Africa (Jowi and Mbwette, 2017) which is now shaping and promoting academic exchanges and engagements between African universities in ways that had not been witnessed before. They demonstrate one of the potential areas of growth of internationalization in Africa. Jowi and Mbwette (2017) further noted that intra-Africa collaborations were mainly taking a regional trend possibly influenced by the developments in the regional economic communities and regional university associations. Intra-Africa collaborations could also be an outcome of the South-South higher education relations that is continuing to emerge. A number of thematically based university networks and consortia have come up creating useful platforms for local engagements and for stronger international partnerships. Some examples include the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) and the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building on Agriculture (RUFORUM) in addition to several other interesting initiatives.

2.2. Emergence of regional centres of excellence

The growing intra-Africa university collaborations have in recent years been further strengthened by the emergence of African Centres of Excellence located in some leading African universities. These centres have promoted a number of internationalization activities, especially students and staff exchanges, joint researchers postgraduate training and the resulting improvement of academic quality in the participating institutions or programs. Most of these centres are supported by international development partners, with a positive effect on the development of capacities of African universities and the strengthening of quality local training, but with the risk of becoming a new way of stemming brain drain. Several such centres have been established in different African universities through initiatives such as the Pan African University, African Higher Education Centres of Excellence (ACEs) supported by the World Bank and some by the German Government, among others. In the East African region, under the auspices of the Inter-University Council for East Africa, several Centres of Excellence have been established including those targeting skills development. They have provided important opportunity for the regional universities to develop consortia for more strategic collaborations with partners in the North.

2.3. Regional academic mobility

The past few years have also witnessed growth in mobility of students and academics within African universities largely through regional and continental policy instruments and frameworks. Under the provisions of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) protocol, the Southern African region has made significant steps in facilitating mobility of students within the SADC region, with a majority of the mobile students flowing into South Africa. The protocol allows students from the universities in the SADC region to pay the same fees as home students when seeking studies in another SADC state.

This is also the case in the East African Community (EAC) where the East African Common Higher Education Area was established in 2016 by the heads of state of the regional economic community, providing more possibilities for higher education collaborations in the region. The EAC has a long history of regional cooperation in higher education that has in recent years been facilitated by the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), an institution of the East African Community (EAC) that facilitates regional university cooperation through the development of regional policies and frameworks. These developments have been coupled with the commitment of the governments of African countries to support the development of the higher education sector including strengthening collaborations in research and innovations.

2.4. Attempts at harmonization

Regional and continental collaborations in higher education have led to attempts towards harmonization of higher education systems and development of frameworks for mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications to facilitate mobility of both academics and professionals. The East African region has made significant steps in harmonization of the education systems of the six countries in the EAC region and has commenced on the development of mutual recognition of academic and professional qualifications through initiatives including development of regional qualifications frameworks. The implementation of the recently inaugurated African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) could play an important role in furthering harmonization and mutual recognition of qualifications in Africa.

2.5. Mindset change

Recent years have also witnessed some indications of change in mindset amongst students towards academic exchanges and even pursuit of full degree training in other African universities. Previously, students have focused mostly on going to universities in the North and other developed regions. This is slowly changing with the growth in the numbers of students opting to take their studies in some universities in the region. This can be seen in the numbers of applications for the study opportunities in the regional centres of excellence and through other mobility arrangements. A recent study by Sehoole, Olaide and Lee (2022) documents the growing trends in African students taking their trainings in other African countries.

2.6. Growth in ICTs and digitalization

The phenomenal growth in ICTs and digitalization, as will be discussed in the next section, presents Africa with several opportunities to foster internationalization and strengthen its higher education sector. ICTs are beginning to enable African universities break some of the historical and systemic barriers, especially the digital divide which excluded African scholars and universities from actively participating in the growing knowledge society. As is discussed later, the consequences of the COVID 19 pandemic demonstrates an important step towards the deployment of ICTs and digitalization for teaching, learning and research in African universities.

2.7. Africa's Youth Boom

It has been noted that enrolments in African universities is rising. This however composes only about 9% of the cohort that should be in the universities. Africa is the most youthful continent in the world today, with close to 60% of the population composed of youth. This is an important opportunity for the Africa's higher education sector and internationalization. The universities have to take advantage of Africa's youth boom to enhance access and participation in higher education. This growth in participation pushes Africa to be an important region and key frontier for student mobility.

2.8. Impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic

The COVID 19 pandemic is unprecedented and has led to equally unprecedented consequences to Africa's higher education and internationalization. African universities were caught flat footed by the pandemic with

inadequate capacities to respond to its consequences. Universities in most African countries were thus closed for several months leading to lasting consequences. The effect of the pandemic has led to a shift to online learning and digitalization, with several implications for the future of African universities and for internationalization. If utilized strategically and effectively, this could enable African universities to respond to some of the challenges holding back progress of the higher education sector in Africa and its internationalization.

The investments on, and utilization of, ICTs and digital technologies is already beginning to enhance access, curriculum reforms, changes in ways of teaching and learning, efficiency and cost cutting in several areas, improvement of quality and even enhanced collaborations which are essential for internationalization. Several universities in Africa have unprecedentedly held their graduations online, offering courses and examining students online, without much complaints from key stakeholders. These developments could significantly impact on the future of African student mobility. This could even be more so at postgraduate level since supervision can now be effectively undertaken through digital platforms. This shift could also reduce the cost of internationalization activities, especially those associated with travel as many activities can now be done online. It also has the potential to enable scholars to participate in various academic and research communities and thus strengthen the weak research capacities of African universities.

African scholars and researchers can now easily participate in international conferences and other forums which were hitherto cumbersome due to the associated costs of travel and visa issues. However, a lot still needs to be done for this to meaningfully benefit African universities, including the need for significant investments not only on ICT infrastructures, equipment and software but also on the required human resource capacities including for students and staff.

2.9. Commitment by African governments and international partners

Another key development is the renewed commitment of African governments and international development partners towards supporting Africa's higher education. Several international development partners have increased their support to the strengthening and renewing of higher education and research in Africa. The recent European Union-African Union Summit held in February 2022 underscored the essence of scientific cooperation in research and innovation and identified universities in the two regions as key in undertaking this. The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation held in Dakar, Senegal in 2021 also committed to deepen China-Africa relations with further commitment to support education, research and skills development. Africa-India collaborations have in the same vein focused on higher education and skills development. The World Bank has in recent years spent most of its funding on higher education in Africa (Word Bank 2021) compared to other regions. Other funders such as the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) have reformulated their scholarship funding to mainly support trainings tenable in African universities, especially in the centres of excellence. In general, higher education occupies at present a much more central place in the cooperation between Africa and other world regions.

At the continental level, through the African Union Commission (AUC) and through the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), there is also a growing recognition of higher education collaborations as crucial for attaining the aspirations of the continent including unlocking its potentials. Part of this has been highlighted in the initial section of this paper.

3. Making internationalization work for african universities: challenges and opportunities

The developments discussed above present African universities with a number of opportunities. Amid these opportunities, there are also challenges and at times risks. The next section summarises these opportunities and challenges.

3.1. Opportunities

Internationalization presents several opportunities, some of which have not been fully utilized by African universities in order to respond to some of the persistent challenges they have been facing.

For instance, African universities have been deficient in research capacities compared to their counterparts in the other world regions. Despite calls to enhance funding for research, African governments spend just about 0.3% of their gross national product on research. This cannot turn around the weak research and innovation capacities of African universities. In this context, African institutions see internationalization as one of the ways of enhancing research productivity in Africa Universities (Jowi, 2021). While it could be debatable whether this has been a deliberate or strategic development, it is notable that there has been a sustained and progressive growth in the international engagements of African universities in the area of research. **Through internationalization, some universities have been able to develop high quality academics and researchers, improve their research infrastructures, develop viable research centres and are now able to participate and contribute in knowledge production.** It has been noted that research outputs from African universities have tremendously increased in the past few years, partly due to these efforts.

Though brain drain has been viewed as one of the serious challenges posed by internationalization, the African academic diaspora can be turned into a great opportunity of 'brain gain' for Africa through various programs such as the Carnegie Africa Diaspora Fellowship Program (Zeleza, 2019), which connects top African academic diaspora back to African universities for a stay of a couple of months. These are just but tit bits of the opportunities offered by internationalization to African Universities. With responsive strategies and support mechanisms, African universities could draw even much more benefits from internationalization.

3.2. Challenges

There are several studies that have documented the challenges that internationalization presents to African universities (Zeleza 2021, Mohamedbhai, 2016). Compared to other world regions, Africa universities face monumental challenges in their quest for internationalization. Due to this, there have been claims that internationalization has not worked well for African universities (Zeleza, 2021; Jowi and Sehoole, 2017). This can explain why it has not received the same level of priority and support in some African countries and institutions.

One of the challenges has been **the historical and growing knowledge divide between the developed regions (the North) and Africa, with some of the developments in internationalization perpetuating it**. This, in addition to the view of Africa largely as an object of study, continues to raise discomfort amongst scholars and impairs the development of an internationalized Africa's knowledge project.

Brain drain is the other key challenge and risk that Africa associates with internationalization, and which has played a significant role in weakening the capacities of African universities. It is estimated that one third of the best African researchers and scientists have been held in universities in the developed countries after high level trainings that would have allowed them to make significant contributions to Africa (Tettey, 2009). In addition, despite some fragmented efforts, Africa has not been able to tap into its vast academic diaspora spread in different parts of the world. This further erodes the weak research capacities of African universities.

Another big challenge has been experienced in curriculum reforms as a result of internationalization activities leading to knowledge epistemologies and content from other world regions dominating the curricula of most African universities (Sall and Oanda, 2014; Zeleza,2012). The reading lists of most programs in African universities are also dominated with content from authors from other world regions without adequate and relevant content from Africa. This was one of the bases for the call for decolonization of the curriculum which has been most widespread in South Africa. Even with the growth in internationalization, knowledge and research produced and developed in and for Africa have not received the attention they deserve.

Leadership strengthening is also beginning to attract attention as important for institutional development and for internationalization. Leadership and commitment are key to take advantage of internationalization. **It has been argued in some quarters that internationalization has not worked well for African universities partly due to leadership challenges. It must be accepted that, in addition to weak capacities for research,**

teaching, innovation, supervision, etc., African universities also have weak capacities for management of internationalization. Universities in most African countries do not have offices to coordinate internationalization activities, neither do these offices -where they exist- have capacities to implement their mandates. Internationalization opportunities - in particular access to international research funds or collaborative projects- seem to be concentrated on few universities- the usual suspects-. Therefore, **even if, at world level, funds for research and academic partnerships to and with Africa could be increasing, they seem to be concentrated on few countries and institutions thus continuing to aggravate not only the extra-regional but also the intra-regional divide.**

4. Conclusion

Internationalization is growing in importance in Africa's higher education and will remain a major factor influencing the sector in the coming years. While it portends several challenges and risks to African universities, it at the same time presents several opportunities that, if adequately utilized, could strengthen Africa's higher education and even minimize some of the challenges. The rapid developments in ICTs, digitalization, and online learning, especially as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic, present opportunities to strengthen Africa's higher education and its participation in the global knowledge society. Several universities have embraced online learning and digitalization, which could open up opportunities for enhancement of access, quality, research, postgraduate training and partnerships and collaborations between institutions, among others.

The growing intra-Africa collaboration is another very important evolution, which is already fostering academic mobility, promoting research partnerships and favouring the development of various consortia, bringing a new and more meaningful flavor of interactions between African universities. This evolution, if adequately managed, and research and knowledge generation capacities are enhanced, could make internationalization a decisive contribution to Africa's development. As Mohamedbhai (2017) advised, African universities need to focus on what works for them and not wholesomely responding or aping developments that could be more relevant to other world regions, at least momentarily. Africa has to establish its role, agenda and contribution to internationalization and develop supportive strategies and policies towards this rather than the ad hoc approach to these important issues.

But to grasp the opportunities and to minimize the risks, It is imperative to put more efforts in continuous capacity building for African universities and in the development of systems for better management of internationalization. Support for continuous research and training on internationalization in Africa needs further emphasis. These are areas where African organizations such as the African Network for Internationalization of Education (ANIE) could play a key role and thus need the support from other collaborative partners to further them in Africa.

Internationalization seems to be also a necessary framework in order to manage, from an African perspective, a series of challenges that African higher education systems necessarily face: First, the impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic and the emerging shift that it has brought to Africa's higher education; second, dealing with climate change and other emergent issues; third, benefitting from Africa's youth boom, promoting student mobility on its basis and using it in order to create an important reservoir for developing the much-needed cohort of young talents to turn around Africa's development; fourth, the harmonization of education systems, the development of mutual recognition agreements, and an enhanced mobility and university cooperation, especially in the different regions of Africa; fifth, to create the basis for the right implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) if it successfully consolidates.

Of course, the traditional collaborations with Europe and North America, which have contributed immensely to the growth and internationalization of Africa's higher education, still need further strengthening, in addition to the emerging role of initiatives from countries like China and India and all South-South initiatives. But this strengthening would be optimal if matched by, and developed within, intra-African cooperation.

Summary of the chapter in a few questions

In all likelihood, you will not be able to give a full and detailed answer to the following questions, but you should be able to understand their meaning and you have the obligation, at least as a participant in HAQAA training activities, to think about them.

1. Are you able to make a synthesis of the content of this chapter and that of chapter 9 on Curricula, Teaching and Learning?
2. Which instruments (in the meaning of chapter 2 of these materials) do you consider mots adequate to advance in intra-African cooperation? Are they the same that allow to promote international cooperation with non-African countries and regions?

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Part 5

Viewing integration from the perspective of specific African regions or countries

Chapter 13. Identifying Issues: Challenges and Perspectives of North African Universities: A Window on African Higher Education — W. Benjelloun

Chapter 14. A regional perspective: Higher Education in the East African Community — M. Kuria and G. Banyankimbona

Chapter 15. Ethiopian Higher Education Reform and Regionalization of Higher Education in Africa — K.M. Haile

Chapter 13

Identifying Issues: Challenges and Perspectives of North African Universities: A Window on African Higher Education

W. Benjelloun

Presentation

Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 are taken from the Chapter on Africa of Part III of the Special Issue of the GUNi (Global University Network for innovation) biennial Report on Higher Education in the World (New Visions for Higher Education towards 2030) prepared as a contribution to UNESCO's World Higher Education Conference (Barcelona 18 – 20 May 2022). That Chapter on Africa was coordinated (as all these Materials) by HAQAA-2.

They are shorter (around 4.000 words) than the rest of the chapters, but this makes them also very appropriate for the Materials because it allows to tackle issues more specific that complement those analyzed by those other, longer, chapters.

Chapter 13 intends to identify priority issues (rather: problems that are prominent for both Governments and HE institutions) within the very complex area of Higher Education policy. It assumes that, even if the HE situation is very different in the different African countries and subregions, a view from North Africa is not very dissimilar to those from other African regions.

Contents of the Chapter

1. Introduction
2. Historical perspective
3. Massification
4. Reform of Organizational Structure
5. Quality Assurance
6. Employability

1. Introduction

Looking to Higher Education (HE) in the African Continent from North Africa (NA) can be of interest because the similarities in terms of historical references, missions, objectives, and challenges do not seem limited to the region but also embrace most nations of the continent.

All HE systems in North Africa stem from deeply rooted traditions in the history of the region and reflect the high value placed on education and training in NA societies. In many cases they serve as social equity mechanisms, permitting transitions from relatively deprived to empowered status. They also frequently serve as national think tanks and as sources of social commentary. The future of NA universities will depend on their ability to successfully face the major challenges confronting them as they seek to harness the potential represented by the youth of the region in order to meet its development needs.

2. Historical perspective

The countries of North Africa share a deep-rooted tradition in education, having established some of the world's oldest schools, universities and HE institutes. Al Qarawiyine in Morocco (859), Ez Zaytouna in Tunisia (864) and Al Azhar in Egypt (972) are all renowned *Universitates Magistrorum et Scholarium* founded in the ninth and tenth centuries. Enrolled in these universities were students from a series of equally famous *medersas* (secondary) and *msids* or *kuttab* (primary) in all the major urban centers, which taught Arabic and Islamic theology. During the colonial period, the occupying powers established schools to serve their administrative needs, which taught principally in French or Spanish. In Morocco, under "the Berber Dahir" promulgated by the French in an attempt to separate Arab and Amazigh populations, a series of "Berber schools" were launched, which later instead became hotbeds of nationalist sentiment. A limited number of "Schools for the Sons of the Elite" were also established, with French instruction. In Algeria, the Khaldunia and the Tachfiniya (Tlemcen) *medersas* were destroyed by the French colonial power in 1873 and replaced by three colonial medersas in Constantine, Médéa and Tlemcen founded to train secondary-level students in religion, law and education [1], to facilitate the territory's administration. In Egypt, the *Mansouryas* (religious schools) coexisted side by side with the *madrasas* (modern schools). Napoleon I founded the *Institut Français* in Cairo in 1798. Early in the 19th century, Mohammed Al Pasha sent the Egyptian Missions to France to perfect mastery of the French language.

In the Maghreb, a series of higher education institutes were established which catered principally to French nationals and provided research on the natural and cultural wealth of the occupied countries. In the period leading up to Moroccan independence, nationalist figures and organizations started what were known as the free school movement, with modern curricula, teaching in both Arabic and French. In Egypt, Egyptology studies were founded. Overall, educational opportunities for the local populations remained extremely limited. For example, in Algeria at independence in 1962, the adult illiteracy rate was 87% [2]

With independence, North African (and especially the Maghreb) countries quickly realized that the construction of viable sovereign administrations depended on the development and generalization of education. In Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, the main principles governing the national educational system were the nationalization of teaching cadres, the unification of curricula, the Arabization of all teaching programs, and equity in access to education (primary through university). Given the limited budgetary and/or available human resources at the time, the costs of these commitments were to prove onerous. Educational institutions of all levels were placed under close government scrutiny to ensure adherence to those principles. The historical national universities of the region were led by Cairo University, founded in 1908. The University of Benghazi (Libya) followed in 1955, Mohammed V University was launched in Rabat in 1957, the Tunisian University was created by Law n° 60-2 of 31 March 1960 and the University of Algiers, which had been created by the French in 1910 and essentially catered to colonists' needs, was transformed in order to meet national requirements in 1962. The University of Nouakchott was established in 1981.

In general, **HE in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia includes Universities under Ministry of HE supervision, as well as a series of prestigious and highly selective Institutes of Higher Studies (IHS), access to which is generally much less open, that are either solely attached to the Ministry of HE or jointly supervised with another Ministry in their area of specialty. This has led to a two-speed system [3,4,5] with different levels of quality**. These data should be considered in light of unemployment statistics [12] showing that in the 15 to 24-year age group in all three Maghreb countries, unemployment surpasses 20%, of which nearly half hold university degrees. This is perhaps an indication that in addition to appropriate economic decisions that may need to be made, university programs must be reevaluated as to quality and appropriateness for the job market.

A quick scan of the current situation in NA HE points to some significant challenges which fall under four intertwined categories: massification, reform of organizational structure, quality and employability.

3. Massification

University-age student numbers continue to increase significantly in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt, to a lesser degree in Mauritania and Libya because of their demographics. Massification has required additional funding for the construction of new facilities and the acquisition of additional equipment. It has resulted in increased class size, decreasing faculty to student ratios, and generally challenged the quality of higher education. Massification has also been a contributing factor in the increasing numbers of student drop-outs from university, given the difficulties in ensuring appropriate student support and orientation. All NA HE systems have had to develop new strategies to face these challenges. The following brief national summaries reflect the current demographic pressures in the region:

There are 17 public universities in Egypt, 16 private universities, 89 private higher education institutions and 51 public non-university facilities. In 2018-19 the Egyptian HE system included 3.1 million students, a 4% increase relative to the 2.99 million reported in 2017-18.

Libya has 14 (10 accredited) public and 19 private universities, of which 7 are accredited by the National Center for Quality Assurance and Accreditation. In 2020-2021 there were 400,000 students in Libyan universities, in a system under reconstruction after being severely affected by the anti-Gadhafi uprising and the continuing political and financial turmoil.

Tunisia has 13 public universities with 203 schools and 24 Higher Institutes, a relatively stable situation since 2014-2015. These were complemented by 26 private institutions in 2018-2019. Total enrollment in 2018-2019 was 350.000 students, up from 339.619 in 2014-15. The private sector consisted of 63 institutions in 2016, serving some 30.000 students – roughly 8% of the student population.

There were 1.7 million students in Algerian HE in 2018, with over 2 million expected for 2021-2022. The Algerian university network is composed of 50 universities, plus 13 academic centers and 31 Higher Institutes, for a total of 107 HE faculties or institutes. An embryonic private sector with a dozen institutes now hosts 1% of the HE student population. The drop in oil revenues has impacted the budget of a system where students pay no tuition, room or board fees.

Morocco has 14 public universities, 73 HE public institutes not affiliated to universities, 5 PPP (public-private partnership) universities, 5 private universities and 150 private HE institutes not affiliated to universities. In 2021-2022, 1.2 million students are enrolled in the Moroccan HE system, after having been 100.000 at the end of the 1980's and 420.000 in 2011. Currently, public university programs account for 95 percent of student registrations, whereas private and PPP universities and institutions receive no more than 5% of the total HE student population.

Mauritania has a relatively small HE environment, largely based in Nouakchott. In recent years, five private universities were established alongside branches of some international universities. There were 19.371 HE students in 2017 after having been 19.243 in 2013.

4. Reform of organizational structure

The NA educational systems have known a series of reforms, resulting not only in pedagogical, but also in organizational modifications as they moved to align with international standards. **While all North African countries mention university autonomy in the laws currently governing public higher education, such autonomy remains limited in view of public universities' nearly complete reliance on government funds for their annual budgets, which they can spend only under stringent control of government financial authorities**. Their ability to spend, invest, generate funds or generally engage in economic activities remains under close supervision and their status is in fact closer to that of an administrative entity. Teaching staff are civil servant employees of the HE ministry, and hiring and firing are subject to civil service process. Finally, leadership positions are closely monitored and, no matter the procedure for nomination/election, it is consecrated by a high-level executive decree. In spite of these obstacles which seem to be linked to the historical development of higher education in the region, significant progress seems possible given the interest that all university players and all segments of society accord to HE and the pressures they currently exercise to influence HE policy. Health and Education are considered by NA societies at large as the principal factors influencing development at this stage and their management is closely followed by a wide spectrum of stakeholders in all five countries, ranging from students to parents to regional councils.

5. Quality assurance

Another major challenge to NA HE is that of quality and quality assurance (QA) mechanisms. The lack of quality and the inappropriate design of curricula and programs are frequently accused of leading to inappropriate training and consequent graduate unemployment. NA countries established their quality assurance agencies rather late, starting in the second decade of the 21st century, no doubt influenced by European partners and their adoption of the LMD (Bachelor-Master-Doctorate) within the framework of the Bologna process. These agencies are as yet not fully operational, even if some countries have made more progress than others.

The situation in Tunisia is particularly relevant. Tunisian QA framework was established with the objectives of encouraging a culture of quality within higher education institutions, implementing a national quality enhancement program, and fostering the expertise necessary for higher education evaluation and quality [6]. This decree constituted a legal framework providing for the establishment of an active National Authority for Evaluation, QA and Accreditation by 2011. A complementary decree [7] designated the agency as a contractual partner for universities with two functional roles : a quality enhancement responsibility and an evaluation, accreditation and standardization function. It operates under the supervision of the ministry in charge of higher education. The Tunisian National strategy in HE additionally laid down a number of qualitative objectives aimed at reaching the standards of OECD countries. Quality in HE thus became a principal concern of national policy.

In confirmation of the anchoring of North African HE to international standards, the Tunisian QA program sets its own quantitiative references, and the Tunisian National strategy for HE has adopted qualitative objectives aimed at attaining the standards of OECD countries. Quality has thus become a principal focus in Tunisian higher education, scientific research and technology policy [8].

Tunisian universities were encouraged to establish committees to monitor the quality of academic programs at Bachelor, Master and Doctoral levels and to improve teaching methodology, curricula, infrastructure and equipment, as well as to render financial and administrative management more efficient. Competitive access to financial encouragement was made available to support this initiative. These committees are in charge of elaborating internal evaluation reports, monitoring the established programs in particular those related to quality, and formulating proposals regarding quality enhancement. Until September 2009, the national higher education system included 162 committees within institutions, with 1200 members, of which 300 were representatives of socio-economic partners. QA activities were centralized in each university under the supervision of a QA committee. The participation of socio-economic partners was meant to facilitate university

relevance and to improve employment prospects of graduates through the setting up of business incubators and business hubs.

The financial sustainability of the Tunisian quality enhancement program in higher education remains highly dependent on the competitive funds managed by the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technology, which apportions funding to universities on the basis of a contractual process. This contract-based approach was meant to bolster decision-making autonomy and to reinforce universities' capacity to negotiate objectives, and to closely monitor outcomes through the use of well-defined indicators.

The early years of the quality enhancement activities of the Tunisian agency focused on management capacity enhancement, institutional accountability, better use of public funds and reinforcing competitiveness for employability. Under its evaluation mandate, the agency has sponsored the training of 120 experts through its own programs and through cooperation with European partners.

Thus the apparent contradiction between « decisional autonomy » and « financial dependence », which generally characterizes university function in the NA countries, has now also been incorporated into the legal framework governing the Tunisian quality assurance agency. The decree of 2008 in fact allowed universities to switch their legal status from the general case of « public institutions » to the specific « public institutions of scientific and technological nature » if they complied with financial, budgetary and managerial requirements. This specific legal framework is similar to the French legislation and allows universities more administrative and financial flexibility and autonomy. Thus far, only the Virtual University of Tunis has met the stringent criteria established for such status.

The Moroccan situation is not very different. The Moroccan Agency was established by Royal decree n° 1-14-130 (31-7-2014), based on Law 80-12, as applied through decree n° 2.15.813 (28-9-2015 [9]. The National Agency for Evaluation and QA (ANEAQ) is placed under the authority of the government department in charge of HE and scientific research and is subject to the regulations and prerogatives of the Minister of Economy and Finance relative to the operation of public institutions.

The Agency is charged with evaluating the higher education and scientific research system, with the aim of guaranteeing quality. It thus evaluates both public and private universities and institutes, as well as research centers, with reference to their specific missions and scientific projects. It undertakes the assessment and accreditation of undergraduate and Master-level educational tracks as well as the evaluation of Doctoral Schools to determine the quality of training programs and research work undertaken under their supervision. The Agency also evaluates work undertaken at national research centers and programs conducted within the framework of national and international cooperative programs. In addition to its mission of quality enhancement in the higher education sphere, the Agency may be solicited to undertake specific missions for Universities or for other ministries that operate educational or research facilities or for departments such as the Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research and the Hassan II Academy for Scientific and Technical Research. These prerogatives give the Agency potentially interesting territorial reach within the national regionalization program [10]. The Agency may also be mandated to undertake quality enhancement evaluations for foreign organisations, within the framework of cooperation agreements with the government of Morocco.

ANEAQ is under the supervision of an Administrative Council presided by the Head of Government and composed of two representatives of the Ministry of Higher Education alongside 12 other members, including representatives of other government agencies, past presidents and presidents of public universities and an elected staff member of the Agency. The Administrative Council has wide powers in managing the Agency affairs including budget allocation, services and internal regulations. The Agency went into full gear during the 2017-2018 academic year, evaluating the curriculum accreditation and reaccreditation files of all public and private universities and institutes.

The sustainability of the Moroccan system has been assured through government salaries for ANEAQ employees and the payment of evaluation fees for each track submitted, with accreditation valid for 3 years for Bachelor-level tracks and for 2 years in the case of Master-level tracks. A select number of faculty serve as experts in these operations. Until the creation of ANEAQ there was no reliable mechanism to compensate faculty who served as accreditation experts. The special status of ANEAQ has now facilitated this process.

Algeria has taken a more gradual approach to QA. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research established a National Commission for the Implementation of QA in HE (CIAQES) on 31 May 2010, whose first phase approach seems more decentralized and more oriented towards internal evaluation within each university. The Commission has also sponsored QA campaigns that involve several universities organized as consortia. In much of its work the commission relies on and builds upon the work of university quality committees [11,12]. Thus, during its first phase, the CIAQES oversaw the launch of quality assurance cells in each university institute, and the nomination and training of directors for these units (RAQ : *responsable des cellules d'assurance qualité*). These structures and associated experts are responsible for the local internal evaluation processes, thus implanting the QA operations in the universities. The establishment of standards constituted one of the principal missions assigned to CIAQES, a charge executed in cooperation with the local RAQs, for whom it represented the culminating project of the training dispensed to them in 2012 and 2013.

The national Book of Standards includes all the usual norms and standards in the fields of training, research and governance, with attention also paid to three other fields of national importance: university life, university infrastructure, university-socioeconomic environment relations, and interuniversity cooperation and mobility. The document outlines the objectives to be attained for a desired state of function through 123 objectives and the measurement of 219 criteria to determine their attainment. The Standards were first presented in 2014 during an international seminar, and published in 2016.

After having successfully established quality assurance cells in universities and higher education institutes, supervised the training of quality assurance managers, and defined a national quality standards document, the final charge of CIAQES remains the creation of a national QA agency. The process has been rather slow and progress uneven. Not all universities have managed to set up functional quality assurance cells and this may be due to the fact that not all have developed at the same pace. In 2017, the Ministry of HE and Scientific Research launched an operation to generalize internal evaluation in all Algerian universities in preparation for the launch of a full-fledged quality assurance program.

In terms of financial and administrative sustainability, CIAQES has the status of a scientific society attached to the Secretary General of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, and is thus under ministry supervision and dependent on its funding.

In Egypt, a National QA and Accreditation Committee (NQAAC), worked for five years to spread quality assurance plans among higher education institutions, prepared the national law for accreditation and sought its endorsement by Egyptian parliament, and laid the groundwork for the independent body that became the National Authority for QA and Accreditation in Education (NAQAAE). The need for a quality assessment agency was one of the main recommendations of the 2000 Educational Reform Conference, and it was established in 2007 by Presidential Decree, as the accrediting body for all Egyptian educational institutions, NAQAAE produced the accreditation manuals, national academic reference standards, benchmarks for post-graduate programs, templates for evaluation and review processes, as well as reviewer kits. As stated in its objectives and core values, NAQAAE supports self -evaluation efforts and undertakes overall institutional evaluations [13]. It granted its first institutional accreditation to the Faculty of Medicine, Suez Canal University.

6. Employability

The limited progress made in terms of QA and curriculum development, coupled with a high demographic growth rate and economies that are growing without creating sufficient jobs have results in difficult situation in terms of unemployment, especially that of youth (15-24 years) and women, in all five NA countries. In addition, a Gallup survey in 2011 showed that more than half of the unemployed young people in Egypt and Tunisia were seeking government jobs.

In 2019, according to the ILO, the NA countries reported an average youth unemployment rate of 30.2%, compared with a world average of 13.6%. [14] In 2020, the CIA World Factbook placed Algeria among the ten countries worldwide with the highest youth unemployment figures, over 39%. In NA, only Libya reports a higher rate (49.54% at the end of 2019) and in Africa, only South Africa stands higher at 53% [15]. Such high rates of unemployment of course compromise the ability of the nation and of the entrepreneurial sector to

grow and to innovate. In Morocco, the higher the diploma, the less the opportunities for work. In the last trimester of 2021, youth without qualifications had an unemployment rate of 4.4%, those with a medium-level diploma stood at 14.7%, while that for those with higher-level diplomas was 25.7% [16].

Mauritania today has a youth unemployment rate of 44%, of which 271,000 diploma holders between 19 and 35 years of age. In spite of the country's natural resource opportunities, the economy cannot cope with the 50 to 60,000 new graduates each year. Efforts to remedy the situation involve professional training programs, the private sector, and university reform [17]

Tunisian unemployment is reported at 18.4% in 2021 for the general population (15.9% for men and 24.1% for women). For youth between 15 and 24 years, unemployment at the end of 2021 has reached 42.8% for men and 41.7% for women. As for HE diploma holders, at the end of 2020 unemployment was estimated at 30.1% (17.6% for men and 40.7% for women) [18]. Public sector employment constitutes a large share of total formal employment. More than 70 percent of non-agricultural employment in Egypt and Libya is public sector [19].

It is clear from the above numbers that the NA countries are losing more than a third of their human potential in spite of educational expansion, through inappropriate curricula and training and through an inability to incorporate youth into economies that are also growing. This seemingly paradoxical situation deserves a close analysis and the identification of solutions that avoid the resulting painful losses in terms of GDP and innovation, and consequent potential social upheavals. In order to remedy the situation, actions along the lines of economic diversification and the introduction of quality labor-intensive value-added economic initiatives should be facilitated, as should the encouragement of entrepreneurship and access to financing for job-creating investments.

Summary of the chapter in a few questions

In all likelihood, you will not be able to give a full and detailed answer to the following questions, but you should be able to understand their meaning and you have the obligation, at least as a participant in HAQAA training activities, to think about them.

Two questions can help you to "digest" the content of the chapter:

1. Do you agree that all the four issues identified by the author are "priority problems" both for Governments and for HE institutions?
2. If not, explain why and what would be your own list? If yes, do you think the list is exhaustive, or should it be completed with some other problems equally important and pressing? Which ones?

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Chapter 14

A regional perspective: Higher Education in the East African Community

M. Kuria and G. Banyankimbona

Presentation

Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 are taken from the Chapter on Africa of Part III of the Special Issue of the GUNi (Global University Network for innovation) biennial Report on Higher Education in the World (New Visions for Higher Education towards 2030) prepared as a contribution to UNESCO's World Higher Education Conference (Barcelona 18 – 20 May 2022). That Chapter on Africa was coordinated (as all these Materials) by HAQAA-2.

They are shorter (around 4.000 words) than the rest of the chapters, but this makes them also very appropriate for the Materials because it allows to tackle issues more specific that complement those analyzed by those other, longer, chapters.

Chapter 14 offers a perspective from the Regional Economic Community (the East African Community – EAC-) that is usually considered the more "advanced" in terms of integration ("advanced" in inverted commas because Chapter 2 of these Materials explains that there are at least four dimensions along which to measure "advance" and the advance does not need to - or can- take place uniformly in all of them; and there can be movements forward in some directions simultaneous with movements backwards in other). The chapter combines a description of the situation, both at regional and at state level, with a summary analysis of the challenges and some proposals on the way forward.

Contents of the Chapter

1. Overwiew
2. Higher Education in the different Partner States: Institutional Aspects
3. Challenges
4. Way forward

1. Overview

1.1. Introduction to the East African Community

The East African Community (EAC), first formed in 1967 by Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, now consists of six countries. The republics of Burundi, Rwanda, and South Sudan joined after the community was revitalized in 1999 after having collapsed in 1977. There is a possibility of continued enlargement of the community as the Treaty establishing the Community provides that a country may be admitted into the EAC as long as it complies with the membership regulations set out in Article 3 of the EAC Treaty (The East African Community, 2002, pp. 11-12) . **Growing membership comes with increased diversity.** Following the admission of French speaking countries like Rwanda and Burundi, and with the Democratic Republic of Congo at an advanced stage, the Summit of the Community has, for example, approved inclusion of French as an official language of the Community (The East African Community, 2021). This is an example of the growing need for deliberate efforts to integrate diverse stakeholders in the Community. **Higher education has great potential to play a key role in the EAC integration process and in sustaining the unity of the community. The survival of the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) which remained a uniting factor despite the collapse of the original EAC in 1977 is testament to this potential.** Collaboration between higher education institutions in the region was maintained by IUCEA, then known as the Inter-University Committee, until it was transformed into the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) in 1980. It was therefore not surprising that the revitalized EAC recognized IUCEA as one of its surviving institutions. This recognition also underlines the Community's awareness of the importance of higher education for regional integration.

1.2. Higher Education in the EAC

The first university in East Africa was known as the University of East Africa. It started as a constituent college of the University of London. It was only in 1970 that it gave birth to Makerere University in Uganda, University of Dar-es-Salaam in the United Republic of Tanzania, and the University of Nairobi in Kenya. Since then, the higher education in the EAC has grown in leaps and bounds. While the first three were public universities, there are now over 300 universities, both public and private, with a combined population of over 2 million students.

1.3. The Role of higher education in the EAC regional integration agenda

One of the four pillars of EAC regional integration is the Common Market. The other three are the Customs Union, the Monetary Union, and the Political Federation (The East African Community, 2022). The EAC Common Market Protocol (CMP) came into force in 2010 (The East African Community, 2022) after ratification by the EAC Partner States. It provides for five basic freedoms of movement. These are free movement of goods, persons, labour, services, and capital. It also provides for the rights of residence and establishment by citizens in any of the Partner States.

Article 102(1) states that "in order to promote the achievement of the objectives of the Community as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty, the Partner States agree to undertake concerted measures to foster co-operation in education and training within the Community" (The East African Community, 2002, p. 76). One of the key activities under this article is to "revive and enhance the activities of the Inter-University Council for East Africa". The title of the said article 5 of the Treaty is *Co-operation in the Development of Human Resources, Science and Technology.* Clearly and without going into details, education in general, and higher education (HE) in particular, has a significant role to play towards the implementation of all four pillars. Coordinated governance of HE in the region is imperative if the Community is to reap the full benefits of regional integration. It is however not without some challenges. The role of HE in the development and implementation of the visions of the individual Partner States varies slightly from Partner State to Partner State. There is, however, a common thread uniting all of them. In spite of the varying timelines of the various visions (Burundi National development plan 2018-2027; Kenya Vision 2030; Rwanda Vision 2050; South Sudan Vision 2040; Uganda Vision 2040; and United Republic of Tanzania Vision 2025), there is a common commitment to review the

education systems to ensure that they provide for quality education, enhance access, and specifically address paucity of skills in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and ICT subject areas. The Inter-University Council for East Africa's plays a role of coordination for a harmonized development and implementation of the EAC's higher education system.

1.4. The Inter-University Council for East Africa

IUCEA is one of the 8 institutions of the EAC. It was institutionalized in the EAC through an act of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) known as the IUCEA ACT 2009. Article 4(1) of the Act states that the purpose of IUCEA is to "advise Partner States on all matters related to higher education" (The East African Community, 2009, p. 5). IUCEA's purpose and function are limited to advising Partner States and coordinating and networking Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), but this has become a significant instrument to impact governance of higher education in the Community. Major stakeholders such as the vice-chancellors of member universities, directors of the National Commissions or Councils for Higher Education, and Permanent Secretaries in ministries responsible for higher education form part of the governance structures of IUCEA and are represented in the governing board of IUCEA to ensure that decisions made at regional level are implemented in the Partner States. In collaboration with these stakeholders, IUCEA developed policy documents, tools and instruments for harmonization of higher education upon whose consideration, and **after recommendation by IUCEA, the Heads of State of the EAC Partner States declared the EAC a Common Higher Education Area (EACHEA) in May 2017 (The East African Community, 2017).**

The declaration of the EACHEA means that the Community is working towards a harmonized education system that will facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications, comparable and compatible study programs that facilitate credit accumulation and transfer and ultimately free movement of labor. But before the EACHEA can be operational and its benefits fully realized, there is a lot of ground to be covered because governance of higher education remains diverse in terms of administrative and legal structures in the Partner States. Indeed, in some of the Partner States there are legal entities with conflicting mandates internal to the country even without reference to regional practice.

2. Higher Education in the different partner states: institutional aspects

2.1. Burundi

In Burundi, the HE sector has been alternatively under the Ministry of Education or under the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Today, it is under the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research.

The law n°1/07 of October 29th, 2020 stipulates that the organization, promotion, regulation and guidance of the HE sector (both public and private) is a Government responsibility. This is done in partnership with the academic and scientific communities and other stakeholders.

At the technical level, the National Commission for Higher Education (CNES, in the French acronym), set up by the presidential decree n°100/258 of November 14th, 2014, is the regulatory body charged with the elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of the higher education policy.

The functions of the Commission include, but are not limited to, accrediting universities and other Higher learning institutions, public and private, and their academic programmes at all levels of study; and monitoring of compliance of Universities to national, regional and international education standards.

To deliver on its mandate, the CNES has three sub-commissions:

1. Commission for equivalence of university degrees and diplomas tasked to equate qualifications earned at university level outside the country;
2. Commission of HE curriculum development charged with the regular monitoring of the relevance of the curriculum developed by universities before approval, and the benchmarking of best practices at regional and global level
3. Commission of validation ("entérinement", in French) of diplomas in charge of the final approval of the degrees awarded by Universities

The higher education regulations allow universities to exercise autonomy and self-governance through their own institutional governing boards, though private Universities are still under the tutorage of the Ministry in charge of higher education, to whom report through the Directorate of National Education, and public Universities report directly to the Cabinet under the coordination of the Ministry of National Education and Scientific research.

The law n°1/07 of October 29th, 2020 provides two very important directives to be emphasized here:

1. Access to university education in Burundi is open to East African citizens under the same conditions as Burundians;
2. Training in the working place is a must for students. All formal working places are by law considered to be training spaces to ease access of students to internship opportunities

2.2. Kenya

In Kenya, Higher Education is under the Ministry of Education. The Ministry is responsible for education whether at basic, vocational, or tertiary level. At a technical level, there are bodies tasked with the regulation of the different levels of education. The Commission for University Education (CUE) is the one responsible for university education. The Universities Act 2012 (Republic of Kenya, 2012) assigns CUE the function of accrediting universities, whether public or private, and their academic programmes at any level of study. There has been some conflict, sometimes ending in courts (Kenya Law, 2018), when some professional bodies, such as the Engineering Registration Board of Kenya (ERB) and the Legal Council of Kenya, have threatened not to recognize or register graduates from programmes they considered inadequate even though duly accredited by CUE.

In addition, CUE is given the mandate to equate qualifications earned at university level outside the country. However, the Kenya National Qualifications Agency (KNQA) is given the function of establishing "standards for harmonization and recognition of national and foreign qualifications" (Government of Kenya, 2014, p. 6). As much as this provides for an opportunity to build synergy, it also creates room for conflict, however subtle, in the discharge of duties by the two agencies and sometimes this has also ended up in court (Owino, 2022).

Universities are awarded charters that allow them autonomy and self-governance through their own institutions such as Councils, Senates, Management Boards and other committees. A university in Kenya may be able to operate for up to 8 years with a letter of interim authority meaning it can grant degrees before a charter is awarded. An interim authority is valid for four years with a possibility for renewal once. Not all the EAC countries have that provision as will become evident from the foregoing. There is no regional consensus on how universities with interim authorities, certificates of registration, or provisional licenses are treated in the region.

2.3. The Republic of Rwanda

As in Kenya, Higher Education is under the Ministry of Education in the Republic of Rwanda. The Ministry is also responsible for basic education as well as the vocational and technical education. HE regulation is the mandate of the Higher Education Council (HEC) which, unlike its counterpart in Kenya, is only responsible for accrediting private higher learning institutions and their programmes. There is only one public university in Rwanda established by an official gazette notice. However, HEC is responsible for developing standards and

also for monitoring their adherence in all higher learning institutions. In a departure from Kenya's practice, the Republic of Rwanda does not permit universities with provisional licenses or letters of interim authority to award degrees. Instead, higher education institutions with provisional licenses must apply to be allowed to award degrees after their first cohort of graduates has finished (Higher Education Council, 2007).

2.4. The Republic of South Sudan

South Sudan is the newest member of the EAC, having acceded to the treaty in April 2016. When it declared independence from Sudan in 2011, it had 9 public universities and 34 private largely unregulated universities (Akec, 2021). The Ministry responsible for higher education in South Sudan is the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology (MoHEST). There is a National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) that is tasked with "policy-making responsibility" (Akec, 2021, p. 16) including developing standards and accrediting programmes for universities. Unlike the rest of the EAC Partner States where the sister organizations are semi-autonomous, as of November 2021, NCHE in South Sudan is chaired by the MOEST minister and membership of the Council includes the Vice-Chancellors of both public and private universities (Bruno Dada, email communication).

2.5. The Republic of Uganda

There is a slightly different arrangement in Uganda from the rest of the EAC Partner States. Education falls under the Ministry of Education and Sports, with separate State Ministers responsible for the various levels of education. There is therefore a State Minister for Higher Education. The agency responsible for regulation of higher education is the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) which, like its sister organizations in the other Partner States, is responsible for institutional and programme accreditation for both public and private higher education institutions (Republic of Uganda, 2001). In Uganda, universities with letters of interim authority cannot admit students. Universities can be issued with a provisional license which allows them to admit and educate to graduation, but the provisional license is only valid for three years (National Councl for Higher Education, 2005). As in other Partner States, the day to day running of university is left to a hierarchy that involves university Councils, Management Boards, Senates, and other internal committees

2.6. United Republic of Tanzania

In the United Republic of Tanzania (URT), the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) is responsible for higher education. The Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) is the implementing agency of the policies and regulations touching on higher education in line with the Universities Act Cap. 346 of the Laws of Tanzania and its associated regulations, and the Universities (General) Regulations, 2013 (The Tanzania Commission for Universities, 2019). While TCU is responsible for setting standards, registering, and accrediting all higher education institutions, public or private, and their programmes, there is also another agency known as the National Council for Technical Education (NACTE) which has its own standards by which it accredits degree awarding institutions in the Technical and Vocational Education and Technology (TVET) sector. There are degree awarding institutions that are not established as universities, but which nevertheless offer degree programmes sometimes up to doctoral level. This sometimes creates differences of opinion especially when those graduating from technical and vocational education institutions want to pursue further studies in higher education institutions under the purview of TCU.

Universities in the United Republic of Tanzania are given powers to independently run their own academic and governance activities as long as they are in compliance with their respective charters, which are granted by the President of the Republic. The provisions in the university charters are aligned with those in the Universities Act Cap. 346 of the Laws of Tanzania. As is practiced elsewhere in the EAC Partner States, the charters provide for the independence of the Senate for all academic matters, the university Management Boards for the day-to-day administration of the university and the University Councils for both academic and governance matters at a higher level (The Tanzania Commission for Universities, 2019).

3. Challenges

Reforms in higher education In the EAC are not regionally coordinated. The Republic of Kenya has, for example, shifted from its previous 8.4.4 system, meaning 8 years of primary education, 4 years of high school and 4 fours years of university, to what is now referred to as the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC). In this system learners will now have a 2.6.3.3 system of education. This means 2 years of pre-primary, 3 years of lower, 3 years of upper primary, 3 years of lower secondary school, and 3 years at tertiary level. No other EAC country has adopted this system yet.

The republic of Burundi engaged a series of reforms of its education sector shifting from its previous 6.7.4 system, meaning 6 years of primary education, 7 years of high school and 4 fours years of university, into a 9.3.3 system. At university level, the implementation of the BMD (Bachelor Masters Doctorate) system inspired by the Bologna process started with the Academic year 2011/2012.

Other Partner States are also in the process of reviewing their education system. An Education Policy Review Commission was for example constituted under legal notice number 5 of 2021 in Uganda and is currently soliciting views from stakeholders with a view to reviewing the entire education system in the country. In previous years, the diverse education systems have complicated the process of harmonization given the different levels of education. While some of the countries such as URT and Uganda were using the A-Level system, Kenyan students could proceed to university without A-Level qualifications under the 8.4.4 system. Students in Kenya would have 8 years of primary education and four (4) years of secondary school before proceeding to the university for a further 4 years. The rest of the EAC Partner States were doing seven (7) of primary education, four (4) years of secondary education, and two (2) years at A-Level after which they would qualify to join university. This meant that in some cases Kenyan students were deemed unprepared for university studies in some of the other Partner States, yet they were eligible for university admission in Kenya and elsewhere outside East Africa. **These kinds of conflict have at times complicated movement of students transiting from secondary school to university level from one Partner State to another. To resolve the complications, IUCEA developed the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE) (The Inter-University Council for East Africa, 2015). This framework with 11 level descriptors can assist interpretation of skills gained by students at any of the levels irrespective of the time taken. But, as with other tools and instruments developed under the regional framework, its implementation is challenged by the lack of harmonized regional policy and regulatory mechanisms to ensure their implementation.**

Different regulations and practices in accreditation also make it difficult for mutual recognition of qualifications.

4. Way forward

The East African Community has made substantive progress in the regional governance and administration of higher education in its Partner States. IUCEA is the only institution in Africa, to our knowledge, that has an enabling multi-lateral legal framework to deal with higher education at a regional level. The governance structure of the Community with different ministerial Sectoral Councils provides an opportunity to influence regional higher education policy decisions. **It is in this context, for example, that a very important decision was adopted to the effect that students studying outside their home countries will be charged the same fees as the nationals of their host Partner State. This national treatment principle is now operational in the EAC Partner States despite a few teething problems.** IUCEA is for example facilitating the EAC Scholarship Programme funded by the German Development Bank (KFW) which requires students to study at a university in a Partner State outside their home countries. They are charged the same fees as the nationals of their host countries in compliance with this principle.

By involving permanent secretaries in the Ministries of Education and the directors of the National Councils and Commissions for Higher Education in the EAC Partner States, IUCEA's administrative structure ensures that regional standards and guidelines and/or policies can easily be domesticated and implemented at a national level. This arrangement has ensured that such tools such as the *Road Map to Quality: A Handbook for Quality Assurance in Higher Education,* developed regionally, has been domesticated by the National Commissions and Councils and the standards and guidelines therein are used in the development and review of academic programmes, and the accreditation of higher education institutions.

There remain challenges in the governance of higher education at a regional level in the EAC that will be dealt with in the framework of the implementation of the EAC Common Higher Education Area. As the coordinating entity, IUCEA will have to put in place a comprehensive implementation strategy and concrete plans including the development of necessary policy, legal, and regulatory frameworks at a regional level to actualize the Common Higher Education Area.

One of the steps taken recently in the right direction is the agreement to implement a voluntary regional quality-based programme accreditation. Universities participating in this exercise will become examples of good practice and will help pilot and eventually mainstream the regional quality assurance tools, standards and guidelines. This will ultimately enhance mutual trust between institutions and hence ease mutual recognition of qualifications, credit accumulation and transfer, mobility of students, and crucially, mobility of labour within the Community. This will be one of the key areas of focus by IUCEA in the coming years.

Summary of the chapter in a few questions

In all likelihood, you will not be able to give a full and detailed answer to the following questions, but you should be able to understand their meaning and you have the obligation, at least as a participant in HAQAA training activities, to think about them.

1. The chapter rightly emphasizes the legal fact that National Treatment is enshrined in the EAC's legal framework, even if it faces challenges in its effective full implementation. Two questions arise concerning this:
    a. If your country does not belong to the EAC, is this principle enshrined in the legal framework of the REC (or RECs) in which your country participates? And at Continental level?
    b. Combining the study of this chapter and that of chapters 1, 2, 7 and 8, can you differentiate (taking the example of movement of students and professionals) the problems that the full implementation of the National Treatment principle could suffice to solve from those it would not?
2. What is the combination of instruments of Regional Integration (discussed in chapter 1 of these Materials) that you consider more adequate to advance (and "advance" in which dimension) in the EAC's integration process as far as Higher Education is concerned?

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Chapter 15

Ethiopian Higher Education Reform and Regionalization of Higher Education in Africa

K.M. Haile

Presentation

As of 2018, the Ethiopian Higher Education (HE) system is going through significant changes, introducing major changes in policies, laws and institutions of HE administration. Parallel to these national developments, continental and regional efforts towards integration of African HE system are taking place.

This chapter assesses the state of higher education administration and policy making in Ethiopia in light of regional and continental higher education initiatives in particular and the broader continental and regional integration process in general. As such, it provides a general overview of the history and reforms introduced in the HE sector; identifies institutions and instruments employed in the administration of the sector; asseses HE administration and policy making, and compare those with instruments and initiatives at the continental level. Therefore, the chapter particularly focuses on topics that are essential for the process of the integration and harmonization of higher education systems.

Policy making in Ethiopian higher education remains a largely domestic affair and there is little indicator that higher education integration and harmonization efforts at the continental and regional level are making a discernable influence in this process. This chapter examines legal and policy instruments adopted at the national level and attempts a comparison with those at the continental level.

In terms of policy instruments, the objectives set by Ethiopian HE Policy and Strategy as well as the country's Education Development Roadmap are compared with the Continental Education Strategy for Africa. The comparison is made on the basis of important dimensions of higher education, such as **access, equity, quality, relevance, efficiency, unity within diversity and financing of higher education.** As an important dimension of policy analysis, the availability and mechanism of policy data collection on higher education in Ethiopia is also covered in detail in the present chapter.

Data on important indicators like **Access; Equity; Quality and Relevance of HE; Research, Technology Innovation and Transfer; Community Service and Engagement; Internationalization** as well as **Governance and Leadership** in HE can be accessed from the annually released Higher Education and Training Statistical Abstract.

Regarding legal instruments, Ethiopia has not yet ratified the two major continental level treaties on recognition of foreign certificates and awards. However, there are domestic institutional and legal frameworks mandated with overseeing the recognition process.

The Ethiopian higher education system is mainly governed by three institutions at the national level and by the individual higher education institutions at the institutional level. The national level institutions are the Ministry of Education, the Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency and the Higher Education Strategic Center. This contribution identifies and examines the mandates and influences, or lack thereof, of these system level governance institutions in terms of their role and significance in the higher education regionalization process. **Institutional autonomy** of HEIs, their **internal structure, academic administration, financing,** and **student placement and admission** as well as quality assurance mechanisms are also covered in this chapter.

In Ethiopia, as is the case at the continental level, education, and particularly HE, is touted to be the irreplaceable driving force for the economic and social development as well as the regional and global competitiveness of the country and its people. Hence, this similarity of felt necessity, coupled with Ethiopia's ratification of the African Free Trade Agreement, has the potential to converge policies and strategies of HE administration in Ethiopia towards the continentally pursued regionalization/harmonization of HE. This chapter, therefore, aims to draw the reader's attention to the dynamic regional social and economic imperatives relevant for the higher education sector that are bound to arise from the RI process in Africa.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Historical Background of HE in Ethiopia
3. Current Higher Education Administration Structure
4. Regional and Continental Integration of HE in Africa and Policy reforms in Ethiopian HE
5. Concluding remarks

1. Introduction

Modern Higher Education in Ethiopia started in the 1950s with the establishment of Addis Ababa University College, which eventually became Haile Selassie I University. This same institution was later named, and remain so, as Addis Ababa University in 1975. Even though several specialized colleges/training institutions, particularly ones focusing on agriculture, health sciences, engineering and teachers' education were established subsequent to AAU's establishment, access to higher education has remained very limited until the late 1990s.[1] As of 1996, however, HE education in Ethiopia saw significant expansion both in terms of the number of HEIs as well as the number of students enrolling at such institutions. This is largely attributed to higher education sector reforms adopted by the government aimed at expanding access and improving equity in HE participation, and enhancing the supply of competent graduates that the economy required. However, despite these developments, the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) only rose to 0.8 by 2003, very much below the Sub-Saharan Africa GER of 4% for the same year.[2] According to latest Ministry of Education (MoE) data, the current GER is estimated to be around 14.5%[3] and the number of Public HEIs (PHEIs) has rose close to 50.

However, the expansion of HE in Ethiopia and the establishment of several new ones was a mere duplication of the preexisting HE tradition – i.e. there was no significant departure in terms of HE administration and management structure, curricula, academic programs, course contents as well as the teaching-learning practice. Furthermore, there was no significant departure from the previously set objectives of HEIs. This has resulted in a largely homogeneous HE system that isless likely to be responsive to the rapidly changing national and regional environment as well as the continually shifting needs arising from such changes. Glaringly, for all the expansion and reform that took place in the Ethiopian HE landscape over the last few decades, it is not certain to what extent regard is paid to regional/continental developments in the sector. Neither has the Regional Integration (RI) agenda formally attracted attention in the reform process. This might be a reflection of several factors ranging from the fact the new HEIs simply mimic the old and established ones; but also can be attributed to the selection of national jurisdictions whose experience was relied upon in the designing of the educational policies of the past as well as the present.[4]

The Ethiopian HE system is currently going through another phase of major reforms. As of 2018, the country has seen major shifts in several policy areas following the change in government. Since the new government came to power, reform in HE policy, like most other sectors in the country, is in the process of being designed and, at least partially, being implemented at the same time.

On the other end of the spectrum, Continental integration in Africa has been an agenda of the African Union (AU), and its predecessor- the Organization of African Unity (OAU), for several decades now. The integration effort is being made in several dimensions and at different levels. It is important to examine each dimension and level in order to come up with adequate policy making inputs to government bodies engaged in the integration decision making process. These dimensions vary from the signing of a continental free trade agreement to technical cooperation agreements at ministerial/agency level of the member states of the African

1. The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) was 0.2% until around 1990, which is among the lowest around the world at the time.
2. World Bank. (2003). Higher education for Ethiopia: pursuing the vision. Washington DC, P 7
3. MoSHE/HESC (2021). Higher Education and Training Statistics Abstract – Series 1. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. P 84
4. HE policies and reform efforts in Ethiopia have relied too much on the experience of HEIs and policies of various countries outside of the African continent. For example, the Educational Road Map introduced in 2018, on which the HE Policy and Strategy largely relied on, was almost exclusively based on experiences taken from Vietnam and Malaysia.

Union. The African Union Commission's (AUC) drive towardsharmonization of HE is, in part, born out of the belief that harmonization will contribute to 'the creation of systems that facilitate economic integration, cultural relevance and mobility across various regions of Africa.'[5]It is inevitable that RI would bring about issues relevant to HE quality and administration in the continent, in the least, requiring harmonization of the regional HE quality assurance standards as well as a framework for mutual recognition of qualifications.

In Ethiopia, as is the case at the continental level, education, and particularly HE, is touted to be the irreplaceable driving force for the economic and social development as well asthe regional and global competitiveness of the country and its people. Hence, this similarity of felt necessity, coupled with Ethiopia's ratification of the African Free Trade Agreement[6] has the **potential** to converge policies and strategies of HE administration in Ethiopia towards the continentally pursued regionalization/harmonization of HE. Otherwise, Ethiopian HE system will most likely fail to meet the dynamic regional economic imperatives that are bound to arise from RI in Africa. Furthermore, as a founding member and permanent seat of both the OAU and AU; home for second largest population number and one of the fastest growing economies in the continent as well asan early proponent of African Unity and Pan-Africanism, assessing Ethiopia's engagement in the RI process in general will be of a significant interest. Therefore, a close scrutiny of the current reform and, the institutions and instruments employed in the administration of HE in Ethiopiain light of the continental HE regionalization agenda can be informative for policy makers and other stakeholders.

The current reform process presents a unique opportunity in this regard to 1) meaningfully examine the changes that are being introduced and compare it with those of other countries; 2) assess if and/or to what extent the policies and strategies being introduced converge or diverge with the continental HE harmonization efforts and the broader issue of RI in Africa; and 3) shape or provide input on the implementation of the policy. Particularly, since the new policy and strategy adopted envisages a variety of implementation mechanisms (institutions and instruments), many of which require either establishment of new ones or revamping of those already in existence, such analysis will have an important role to play.

The first step in this effort has to be clearly establishing exactly what data is available; how much of it is relevant for current use, and where and from whom it can be accessed. Therefore, this work plans to undertake a comprehensive assessment of policy data sources related to higher education administration and reform in Ethiopia; identify the existing sources of HE policy data; assess what data is available. It will also identify relevant institutions engaged in administration of HE in Ethiopia, and Collect and categorize national policies, legislations, directives, plans and programs relevant to Ethiopian HE.The report will also undertake a schematic assessment of the overall reform process in light of internationalization efforts and continental integration in Africa. Particularly, it will closely examine the legal and diplomatic instruments adopted at the continental level and how these are reflected in the legislations and policies adopted and being adopted in Ethiopia. Secondly, it will focus on the "areas" the Ethiopian HE policy distinguishes as its priority and assess them in light of the Africaneducation strategy and efforts towards harmonization of the continental quality assurance mechanisms.

Hence, section two of the report will provide a brief historical background into the development of Ethiopian HE sector. Section three will highlight the current state of administration of HE in Ethiopia. It will particularly focus on institutions and instruments of higher education administration. It will elaborate who is authorized to do what and at which level in the administration of the HE system with a hope of identifying the different levels of policy decision makers in the system. Section four will provide an assessment of the Continental HE harmonization effort and tries to situate the Ethiopian HE policy in the continental efforts at regionalization and harmonization of the continental quality assurance mechanism. The final section concludes the report with a summary and concluding remark.

5. Goolam Mohamedbhai, TOWARDS AN AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH SPACE (AHERS): A Summary Report (2013). ADEA Working Group on Higher Education, P 9 https://www.adeanet.org/sites/default/files/ahers_summary_report.pdf last accessed on 30 Dec. 2021

6. Ethiopia ratified the AfCFTA on 23/03/2019https://afcfta.au.int/en/documents/2020-12-28/state-parties-ratification-status-list last accessed on 31 Dec. 2021

2. Historical Background of HE in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is said to be a country with century's old traditional education systems mainly rooted in or attached to religious and cultural institutions. However, modern secular higher education was introduced into the country only as recently as 1950 with the establishment of Addis Ababa University College (AAUC). Subsequent to Addis Ababa University College, other higher education and training institutions focusing on specialized fields of studies continued to open.[7]The AAUC was later re-named as Addis Abeba University (AAU) in 1975 – becoming the first Ethiopian university; and, gradually, the specialized training institutionstoo went on to evolve in to institutions of HE/Universities in their own right in the 1990s.Throughout these developments HE remained to be a public affair and it is only by the late 1990s that a private HEI was established.This is no coincidence and was mainly due to the command economy policy of the Dergue regime, which resorted to nationalizing most economic activities and largely stifled private enterprise in the economy – let alone allowing for private HEIs.

The Dergue regime collapsed in 1991 and the then new government introduced a mixed economy policy, ushering an era of opening up in several sectors of the economy for private enterprise. The change in government lead to a significant overhaul of the education sector and several reforms were introduced leading to the expansion of both public and private HEIs. As a result of significant increase in public funding for the HE sector, the number of Public HEIs rapidly grew since the early 1990s and has now reached 46 and there are at least 282 accredited Private HEIs.[8]The growth in the number of Private HEIs was made possible largely due to the adoption of the 1994Ethiopian Education and Training Policy, which, among other things, provided that, 'the government will create the necessary conditions to encourage and give support to private investors to …establish various educational and training institutions', ultimately facilitating the provision of HE training by the private sector. The policy also aimed at re-orienting the mission of HEIs in line with national development goals and poverty reduction strategies.[9] The expansion of HE in Ethiopia was also affected by external factors like globalization and the call in international forums like the 1988 UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education, which called up on member states to increase their commitment towards strengthening HE in their respective countries in order to enhance their national competitiveness in the globalized economy. As a result, the 1994 Education and Training Policy, which aimed to rectify preexisting 'complex problems of relevance, quality, accessibility and equity' in HE in Ethiopia, was, by and large, geared towards producing graduates that can domestically contribute to the social and economic development of their country but also ably function and compete in the global market.[10] Ever since its adoption, the 1994 Education Policy remained in effect until the introduction of a new National Educational Policy in 2018. Over the years, the Government has issued several strategies and plans to assist the implementation of the policy and enhanceinstitutional efficiency, governance, and leadership of HEIs.[11]

Up until 2003, the Ethiopian Higher Education sector was not regulated by any comprehensive legislation enacted for the sector. The first such comprehensive legislation was the Proclamation No. 351/2003.Until this law's adoption, which was later amended in 2009, the sector was by and large administered through policies and strategies as well as administrative decisions of the Government, mainly of the MoE. The Proclamation introduced several changes both in terms of the institutional structure of HEIs and also the national administration of the HE sector.

7. Jimma College of Agriculture (1952), Addis Ababa College of Engineering (1953), Addis Ababa Building Institute (1954), Alemaya College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts (1954), Gondar College of Public Health and Training Center (1954), Kotebe College of Teacher Education (1969), College of Urban Planning (1970), Bahir Dar Teachers College (1972),Awasa College of Agriculture (1976), Wondogenet College of Forestry (1977), Bahir Dar Polytechnique Institute (1978), Addis Ababa College of Commerce (1979), Jimma Institute of Health Sciences (1982), and Arba Minch Water Technology Institute (1986).

8. MoSHE/HESC, 2021 P 88

9. Challa Amdissa Jiru, Outcomes and Challenges of the 1994 Ethiopian Education and Training Policy Reform, in Bacha Kebede Debela et al. Ed. Public Administration in Ethiopia: Case Studies and Lessons for Sustainable Development. Leuven University Press. (2020)

10. Have a look at the overall and specific objectives of the 1994 Ethiopian Education and Training Policy http://www.africanchildforum.org/clr/policy%20per%20country/ethiopia/ethiopia_education_1994_en.pdf last accessed on 30 Dec. 2021

11. Good example of such plans can be the 'Education Sector Development Plans I-V'. These plans were designed and implemented for five years each and, have been the main modalities through which expansion of the sector has been administered. Accordingly, ESDP I-V have lasted from 1997/98 – 2001/02, 2002/03-2004/05, 2005/06-2009/10, 2010/11-2014/15 and 2015/16-2019/20 respectively.

All in all, the central character of HE administration in Ethiopia, especially in relation to policy level decision making and the structure and management of particularly Public HEIs has been a top down prescription of choices made at the national level. This has resulted in the homogeneity of the institutions in areas of curriculum, student intake, institutional structure, student and academic policies, as well as financial, property and human resource administrations. There are of course criticisms towards this level of harmonization/homogeneity mainly in that it hinders diversification of fields of studies and specializations.Another drawback worth mentioning can be the resultant lack of Institutional Autonomy (IA), which in turn could affectcompetitiveness of the HEIs at the national, regional and global stage.Currently, both the 1994 National Education Policy and the HE Proclamations enacted subsequent to it have been revised and replaced by the 2018 National Education and Training Policy and a new Proclamation – the 'Revised Higher Education Proclamation no.1152/2019' respectively.

Though the current reform has introduced several changes to the educationpolicy of the country, the significant institutions and instruments of HE administration that were in effect before its adoption remain in effect, in some cases with added or modified mandates. The following section will discuss the current state of HE administration in Ethiopia.

3. Current Higher Education Administration Structure

This section of the paper will highlight the current state of administration of HE in Ethiopia. In particular, the national/system level governance, focusing on instruments – i.e. policies and strategies, and laws; as well as institutions employed in the administration of HE. It will also indicate existing policy data sources and categorize the data accordingly. Furthermore, institutional administration and structure of HEIs will also be assessed along with issues of financing of HE in Ethiopia. This will help identify who does what in the administration of HE at the national level; and helps identify what type of policy data can be acquired from which potential policy data sources.

3.1. System Governance

For the purposes of this report, System Governance refers to both the national level regulatory institutions that are involvedin the administration of the HE sector as whole and individual HEIs. Ministry of Education (MoE), Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) and Higher Education Strategy Center (HESC) are the three most important HE regulatory institutions in Ethiopia. Each institution with itsrespective mandate has administrative powers and responsibilities pertaining to the HE system as a whole and on both public and private HEIs.Additionally, each individual HEI, to the extent that they can autonomously make policy decisions, also play a decisive role in the system. Therefore, the three national level regulatory institutions and the individual HEIs in Ethiopia are the most important policy data sources pertaining to the country's HE system and administration.

3.2. Ministry of Education

The ministry is the highest regulatory body for boththe General and HEsectors in Ethiopia. In 2018 a separate Ministry was set up for Science and HE - the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE).[12]The Government established MoSHEto be the nationally responsible organ for three inter-related sectors: Higher Education (i.e., Universities), Science (generation and application of knowledge and technology) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).However, following the national election in 2020 and the formation of the New Government in 2021, MoSHE was dissolved and HE administration returned back to the MoE.[13]As such, all powers and responsibilities that were assigned to MoSHE under previous laws, including those under the HE Proclamation,are also returned back to the MoE.[14]

12. FDRE. Definition of Powers and Duties of the Executive Organs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Proclamation No. 1097/2018, Art. 9(14)

13. FDRE. Definition of Powers and Duties of the Executive Organs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Proclamation 1263/2021 Art. 34

14. Ibid Art. 34(2)

- In general, in addition to its duties and responsibilities under the HE proclamation, MoE is authorized to:[15]
- Design NationalPolicies, Strategies, Laws and Programs forHE; synchronize higher education with the country's overall developmental policies and sectoral specific developments;
- Design strategies to augment higher education institutions' capacity in basic scientific studies and research; implement same; device opportunities for operationalization of scientific studies and research results;
- In cooperation with Ministry of Innovation and Technology, create conducive environment for research and technology development by facilitating linkages and coordinated working procedures between higher education institutions and the industry sector;
- Prepare national qualifications framework and implement same;
- Ensure expansion of **quality HE**; oversee the sector[16]
- Prepare higher education curricula framework;
- Set standards required for HEIs; overseethe quality and relevance of education offered by HEIs;
- Follow up the performance of state-owned higher education institutions; and
- Ensure that the implementation of student admissions and placements in higher education institutions are equitable.

3.3. Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency

The essential information to be gathered from this institution, for the purposes of comparison with the Continent wide practice, is its policy and principles for internal and external quality audits. It is also important to see if there are procedures in place for quality audit of the quality assurance agency itself. Unlike most Quality Agencies (QAs) in East Africa, and the wider continent17, Ethiopia is not yet a member of any regional or international mechanism from which standards and guidelines could be formally received. However, it is possible to assess and compare the principles and guidelines adopted by the agency in light of set of criteria to evaluate, in the interest of regionalization of HE and continental integration, whether or not they are in line with the practices in other countries and regions of the continent. Such comparison can be made on the basis ofthe authority the QA has over HEI; whether HEIs have the autonomy to use other Quality Assurance Mechanisms (QAM) – either in addition to or instead of the one provided by HERQA; how the assessment is made and what criteria it follows; what the role of the internal and external QAM is; whether, how and to what extent the internal quality control system is influenced by the external, and the likes.

The HE proclamation provides for the mechanisms that may be used to ensure quality in HEIs and the system as whole.The two main such mechanisms are accreditation and quality audit. The national institution mainly mandated to oversee these tasks is HERQA[18], which was initially established by the 2003 HE proclamation and now re-empowered by the 2019 Proclamation. Both internal and external quality audits are envisaged under the proclamation. In terms of accreditation, so far, only private HEIs are being subjected to HERQA's accreditation before starting their operation.[19] The main reason behind this can be that Public HEIs in Ethiopia are established by a regulation of the Council of Ministers[20], and as such, being the head of the executive-body, it would be absurd had such accreditation by a lowly regulatory organ was required. This, however, doesn't mean that the council's decision is unregulated. The HEP clearly stipulates requirements that need to be fulfilled in establishing a HEIand the council of ministers is required by the law to make sure the relevant

15. Ibid Art. 34(1)

16. Unlike MoSHE's mandate to 'ensure expansion of HE' the MoE is tasked with the 'expansion of quality HE'. In this regard, there seems to be a departure from previous policy directions which was mainly focused on expansion of HE.

17. HAQAA Initiative: Mapping of the existing standards and guidelines in quality assurance in African countries and a brief introduction to quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area, April 2018 Pp. 5

18. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), Higher Education Proclamation, Proclamation No. 1152/2019 Art. 87

19. Ibid Art. 72, also the whole of Part three of the proclamation is devoted to the establishment and accreditation of private HEIs.

20. Ibid Art. 5

requirements are fulfilled before establishing a HEI.[21]Once established as a public HEI, the university senate with the approval of the University Board and MoSHE is empowered to grant accreditation of programs to be launched at the institution. Practically though, there is little outside control on program launching and closing by public HEIs.However, both Public and Private HEIs are subjected to internal and external quality audit.

According to the HE proclamation, it is clear that the use of HERQA, as a QA mechanism, is mandatory for all HEIs in Ethiopia.[22] However, the law does not limit such option to HERQA alone. HEIs are, seemingly at least, allowed to resort to other quality assurance mechanisms in addition to HERQA. However, for the purposes of the HE Proclamation,ensuringHEI's compliance with the standards of relevance and quality of education set forth in the proclamation is HERQA's mandate, and hence, such compliance can only be attested to by HERQA and not by any other QA provider of an institution's choosing. Hence, HERQA is mandated with conducting external quality audit for Ethiopian HEIs.

For internal audit, the institutions are required to establish their own internal quality control units.However, it is clear that the law does not prohibit Universities from resorting to other QA mechanisms in addition to the one provided by HERQA. This might greatly assist Universities in their 'internationalization' efforts. It can also be explored in terms of the individual institution's ability to import into the domestic system QA standards and guidelines developed at the regional or continental level. Exploring the practice of Ethiopian HEIs in this regard can provide a significant insight for policy makers in HEIs.

3.4. Higher Education Strategy Center (HESC)

The Strategy Center is one of the most important institutional developments in modern HE administration in Ethiopia. It is the main strategic body that works on multiple issues of importance for the improvement of the quality and relevance of HE as well as the governance and administration of the sector.[23]Its coreduties and responsibilities range from those at the national level to activities at HEI level. The national level duties includepreparing long and short term national plans; developing and implementing strategies; conducting research and offeringrecommendations for policy reform; ensuring alignment between institution level plan and national macro level HE plan and strategy; advising the Ministry on improving HE governance, leadership and management; facilitate cooperation between national institutions and maintain contact with institutions responsible for HE maters in other countries. At the institutional level, first, the center closely works with each individual HEI in order to discharge its national level responsibilities. Secondly, it develops proposal for block budget grant to be allocated to each institution and follow up its implementation. It is also tasked with collecting analyzing, publishing and disseminating annual statistical data of HE institutions. Over the years, the center has been an indispensable actor in the formulation and reform of the Ethiopian HE sector.

Another important duty assigned to HESC, and a critical dimension for RI is 'internationalization' of HE. This dimension is among the least developed aspects of Ethiopian HE system.It seems in recognition of this fact that, the duty to 'ensure that higher education is in line with the overall socio-economic development needs of the country and *abreast global trends in orientation and approaches'* (emphasis added) was provided as one of the duties and responsibilities of HESC.[24]The need to orient the country's HE policy in line with global/international trends has been recognized in all HE proclamations adopted so far and remains to be one of the core responsibilities of the HESC.[25] However, whatever little efforts are made at internationalization by HEIs, comprehensive national policy is yet to be adopted to guide the process. According to HESC, as a result of lack of national policy and strategy, the internationalization process so far is mainly a 'fragmented and haphazard' attempt by individual HEIs and, is more or less, limited to 'collaborations, partnerships and holding joint/international conferences'.[26]

21. HE Proclamation No. 1152/2019, Art. 5(2)
22. Ibid Art. 87
23. Ibid Art. 89
24. HE Proclamation No. 1152/2019 Art. 88(8)
25. Ibid, FDRE, HE Proclamation No. 351/2003 Art. 87 & 89(8) and FDRE, HE Proclamation No. 650/2009 Art. 90(8)
26. HESC, (2019) Internationalization of the Ethiopian Higher Education: Towards Policy Framework, Research Report (Unpublished), Addis Abeba PP. 7,8

Therefore, given its central role in national HE policy making, HESC is one of the most important policy data sources in Ethiopia. Particularly, data on long term and short term plans and strategies;HE standards and guidelines, statistical dataand research out puts on internationalization, HE sector cooperation with other countries, IA,education qualification, quality, relevance and the likes can be accessed from the center.

3.5. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

The management structure at Ethiopian Universities is virtually similar and it is prescribed by the HE Proclamation.[27]At the apex of the structure, all Public Universities have Governing Boards. The Ministry selects and appoints the Chairperson and three additional members directly and the remaining three in consultation with the University.[28] These seven appointees constitute the voting members of the Board while the President of the University serves as a non-voting member and its secretary. Below the board sits a president, vice-president(s) and a senate. The number of vice-presidents, who would presumably head the different aspects of the HEI's activities, may vary from one HEI to the other. The Board is composed of membersselected from persons outside the University and its main function is supervising and monitoring the overall operation of the University.

The Board's role also includes nomination of the president of the university, pursuant to the HE Proclamation and a procedure set in a directive[29] enacted for this purpose, and submits three nominees to the Ministry for appointment.[30]The said directive allows for participation, as a committee memberof one representative eachfrom the board, senate, academic staff, and administrative staff and students' union of the University – a 'search and selection committee'. However, this participation does not go beyond assessing applicants and nominating five finalists. Therefore, given the fact that the Ministry has the final say on the appointment; combined with the fact that the 'search and selection' itself would be made based on the directive, which itself is prescribed by the Ministry, University President appointment in Ethiopian HEIs can safely be said to be a virtually external affair.Furthermore, as per the directive, the nominee can be either from within or outside the university and nor is he expected to hold an academic position. The merit and demerit of such a centralized appointment procedureaside, it is tenable to argue that it will significantly cast doubt on the IA of the HEIs. Hence, by implication, casting doubts to what extent Ethiopian HEIs can be seen as policy makers in the context of the regionalization of HE in Africa.

Though the proclamation seemingly gives universities the autonomy to determinetheir internal academic structure, this autonomy is significantly restricted because the law already prescribes the governing and advisory bodies that must be established in each university.[31] The directive also sets the criteria and manner of selection of heads of these advisory and governing bodies, including department heads.This also adds to the concern regarding the autonomy of the institutions.

However, despite being an external body, the powers bestowed upon Ethiopian HEI's Governing Boards indicate the institutions can be seen as potential sources of policy data that can be relevant in the context of regionalization and internationalization. For instance, the board has powers to determine policies regarding employment,[32] promotions, discipline, salary, allowance, payments related to education (including of international students), and other benefits, etc.[33] This autonomy, combined with public HEIs relative liberty to launch new programs at all levels and in all modalities, allows universities to enroll oversees students. Of course,this is only possible where there is the market and proper procedures for recognition of qualifications

27. The proclamation stipulates a slightly different institutional management structure for Private and Public HEIs. The source of finance and manner of establishment of the HEIs is the primary reason behind such difference. See Part three of the proclamation for public HEIs and Part four for private HEIs.

28. FDRE Revised HE Proclamation No. 1152/2019 Art. 46

29. MoSHE, (2018) Directive on Selection and Appointment of Leaders and Managers in Higher Education Institutions

30. If the HEI is one under one of the regional states, the procedure set for federally administered HEIs applies mutatis mutandis.

31. FDRE HE Proclamation No. 1152/2019 Art 43 and the following

32. However, it has to be noted that this power is restricted by directive when it comes to employment of masters and degree holders as university teachers. (MoE, Academic Staff Recruitment Directive, 2018.) But since the directive as such does not restrict employment of PhD holders or equivalent thereof, it is highly unlikely to affect at least in Ethiopian HEIs context, for example, cross border movement of professors - mainly because HEIs usually resort to the international market to hire those with PhD or its equivalent.

33. See FDRE HE Proclamation No. 1152/2019 Art 45

obtained in other jurisdictions. Hence, HEIs' practices and policies in these areas can serve as an input for policy analysis on a range of issues relevant in the HE regionalization process.

Another key feature in Ethiopian HE system is the medium of instruction. In most African countries, the legacy of colonialism seems to have influenced the choice of medium of instruction in schools – hence, for e.g. the Anglophone and Francophone dichotomy. The impact of colonialism and colonial legacy in Ethiopia is an elusive idea to deal with in the context of HE and the nation in general. The country has never been colonized. The brief period it has been under Italian occupation has not left much of a mark in shaping the Ethiopian society at large and the HE sector in particular. This is easily evinced in the curriculums adopted in the early days of modern HE and the mediums of instruction chosen to deliver tertiary education. This however doesn't mean the Ethiopian HE experience was immune from the external influence common to the era. Western powers and western educated elites, both foreign and native, have had a strong influence in shapingmodern HE learning in the country. Particularly, the Americanand British is still visible in the sector. Hence, though not as a direct colonial policy, the influence of the era has left its Eurocentric mark on Ethiopian HE like those of many African Countries. English is the medium of instruction in Ethiopian HE institutions and, to a varying extent and for different reasons, in secondary and primary educations. The choice of English as a medium of instruction in HEIs is madeas a matter of policy/law and not a result of colonial legacy. In fact, in a country made up of diverse and, sometimes historically competing, ethnic and linguistic groups, it was nearly inevitable that a foreign language would be adopted as a medium of instruction in Public/centrally/federally administered institutions of HE. As debatable as the domestic utility/merit of foreign language (English) as a medium of instruction is, it can be seen as an asset in the context of regionalization of HE at the continental level enabling ease of movement of both professors and students across different countries - an important dimension inRIprocess. However, with the exception of use of other languages in specific programs, it is clear from the proclamation thatuniversities are not at liberty to choose any other foreign language as a medium of instruction other than English.[34]

Student placement in Public HEIs in Ethiopia can be characterized as a centralized process. Graduates of preparatory schools who pass the university entrance examination and graduates of foreign country secondary school systems with equivalent level as determined by the Ministry can be admitted by HEIs for undergraduate studies. The university entrance examination itself is prepared by the Ministry and administered at the national level. The placement into Public HEIs for regular undergraduate studies is, however, done by the Ministry and, HEIs and individual students have minimal role in the process. Both the previous and current HE proclamations provide that such centralized student placement will continue until selection of students for admission by public HEIs becomes feasible and desirable.[35] Untill such time; however, the Ministry is required to consult Public HEIs in administering student placement.

The practice so far shows that the consultation is more or less limited to inquiring general information about HEIs' intake capacity, overall preparedness and the likes and, HEIs have no role in selection of the students. However, though the law seems to be silent about it, it has to be said, based off of the practice so far, that Public HEIs are at liberty to administer admission of graduate and doctoral students in all classifications and, fee paying undergraduate students in the non-regular classification. In a similar fashion, students eligible for placement in Public HEIs have limited say in the placement process. Upon completing the University entrance exam with a passing mark, prospective students will simply list their choice of HEIs in descending order and the Ministry will administer the placement in accordance with placement policy it adopts. In previous years, students used to be requested to list their choice of fields of studies in similar manner. However, this practice is now discontinued and students will select fields of studies once they have completed first year courses in the HEI they have been assigned. The main reason for this is the change in HE structure introduced in 2018. Under the new structure students enroll HEIs either in the Natural Science stream or the Social Stream. After completing first year programs, during which all students in one stream take common courses, students will compete to enroll into fields of studies of their choosing on the basis of their University entrance result, first year Grade Point Average (GPA) and entrance exams to be prepared by the College to which they apply.

34. The Education Road Map did propose differentiation of HEIs, among other things, based on language/medium of instruction. However, the HE policy and the Proclamation that were subsequently adopted didn't adopt the recommendation.

35. HE Proclamation No. 650/2009 Art 39(6), Revised HE Proclamation No. 1152/2019 Art. 40(7)

Public HEIs in Ethiopia are primarily reliant on public funding. Each federally/regionally administeredpublic institution is allocated an annual budget by the federal/relevant reginal government. This is not surprising considering the large majority of students assigned to those institutions are government sponsored. Even though the students share a small portion of the cost through a cost sharing scheme, the government, and not the institutions, collects portion of the cost covered by the students and, only so in installments after the students have graduated and joined the work force throughemployment.[36] Hence, because HEI is heavily subsidized and even the small portion of the cost that will be recovered will be collected in the long run, it is easy to understand its potential effect in straining public spending.As such, spending by HEIs of the budgetallocated to them is heavily regulated by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. In addition to the government budget, HEIs are authorized to generate their own income through various income generating activities. These activities may range from tuition fee from self-sponsoring students (both domestic and international) to soliciting projects and establishing business enterprises to raise internal revenue. Be that as it may, Public HEIs in Ethiopia, cannot be said to have financial autonomy that renders the required flexibility for an academic institution.

It seems in recognition of these issues of IA that there is a recent move by HESC, under the direction of the Ministry, to introduce 'Autonomous HEIs Framework' in Ethiopia. According to HESC documents, there is a plan to gradually graduate Ethiopian Public HEIs in to autonomous institutions.The autonomy being proposed covers administrative, financialadministration, academic freedom and human resource administration. Clearly, as is indicated in the frameworkand draft legislation presented at public discussion forums with various stakeholders,[37] not all institutions will necessarily become autonomous, and neither will anyone institution at once. Though still at a very early stage, it can be said to be a very remarkable departure from decades of highly centralized system of HE and, one that should attract closer policy scrutiny given its ramifications for both the national HE environment as well as regionally/continentally.It will also address most of the problems associated with lack of IA raised in the previous sections.

3.6. Instruments

Instruments relevant for the administration of HE in Ethiopia range from legal rules embodied in proclamation(s), regulations, directives, senate legislations and the likes to guidelines,standards and recommendations. The sources and application of these instruments vary hierarchically and horizontally. As such, a brief discussion of the sources and applicability of the main instruments, along with their core objectives will give a great insight into HE policy making in Ethiopia. For analytical purposes, the instruments will be categorized into legal instruments and policy documents. Legal instruments refer to instruments with in which specific legal rules are prescribed. It does not necessarily refer to their normativity alone. Policy instruments, on the other hand, refers to instruments ranging frompolicies, plans and strategies to standards, guidelines and recommendations adopted at different levels. Theseinstruments are further categorized into sub- categories between those which are in fact normative in nature - in that adherence to them is required but do not containspecific legal rules and thosethat set best practices that are recommended to be adopted by HEIs. Such categorization is adopted having in mind the analytical framework adopted for the study for RI and regionalization of HE in Africa.

36. FDRE Council of Ministers, Higher Education Cost-sharing Council of Ministers Regulation No. 91/2003

37. The author did not participate in these forums. However, the author has direct knowledge of the reform effort by being one of the two lawyers in the drafting committee of the draft 'Autonomous HEIs Legislation'

3.6.1. Policy Instruments

As has been pointed out in the previous discussions, the main actors in the Ethiopian HE sector are MoSHE, HESC, HERQA and individual HEIs. As such, the most important sources of HE policy instruments in Ethiopia are those same institutions.Hierarchically, Instruments issued by MoSHE sits at the apex and are usually broader in scope and application.HERQA and HESC also issue instruments within the purview of their mandate. But, in many cases, due to its mandate under the law, policy out comes from HESC enter into effect upon approval by MoSHE. As such, the following table summarizes currently available instruments issued by these institutions. The table lists and categorizes policy instruments in terms of their sources and type. However, it must be noted here that the list is not an exhaustive one. For instance, instruments peculiar to individual HEIs are not specifically included in the list.

Table 1: HE Policy Instruments in Ethiopia

S. No.	Instrument	Type	Source
1	Manual to Leadership Recruitment Selection and Appointment Manual Limited Use	manual	MoSHE
2	BSC Training Manual	manual	‘’
3	Biology Lab standards-Draft Report-EAS	standards	‘’
4	Chemistry Combined Laboratory standards final	standards	‘’
5	Civil Engineering Laboratory standards	standards	‘’
6	Standards for Services provided by the Higher Education Student Affairs Directorate	standards	‘’
7	Laboratory and Workshop Standard for Undergraduate Electrical Engineering Program	standards	‘’
8	Laboratory And Workshop StandardsforBsc Programs In Physics (Ethiopian Universities)	standards	‘’
9	Ethiopian Education and Research Network (EthERNet) System department Services Standard format	standards	‘’
10	Ministry of Science and Higher Education Research Ethics Directorate-Forms	forms	‘’
11	List of Programs Provided at Ethiopian Public Higher Education Institutions	forms	‘’
12	National ICT Policy for Higher Education and TVET	Policy	‘’
13	Institutional ICT Policy for Higher Education in Ethiopia	Policy	‘’
14	Higher Education Policy and Strategy	Policy	‘’
15	National Science Policy and Strategy	Policy	‘’
16	TVET Policy and Strategy	Policy	‘’

17	Digital Skills Country Action Plan (DSCAP) For Higher Education and TVET (2021-2030))	Strategic Plan	‘’
18	National ICT Strategic Plan for Higher Education and TVET (2021-2030)	Strategic Plan	‘’
19	HE Executive Leadership, Management and Governance – Training Curriculum	Training Curriculum	‘’
20	ENVIRONMENTAL and SOCIAL COMMITMENT PLAN (ESCP)	Other documents	‘’
21	Stakeholder Engagement Plan	Other documents	‘’
22	Registration Criteria for Individual Researchers	Other documents	‘’
23	Quality Assurance Policy	Policy	HERQA
24	Institutional Audit Procedure	Guideline	HERQA
25	National Education Road Map	Road Map	MoSHE
26	Institutional Policies and Strategies	Policy/strategy	HEIs
27	Universities’ Strategic Plan	Plans	HEIs
28	Guideline on Academic Publishing and Promotion.	Guideline	MoSHE
29	Preparing a Self Evaluation Document (for internal QA)	Guideline	HERQA

3.6.2. Legal Instruments

Under the Ethiopian constitution, the highest law making organ in the country is the House of Peoples Representative (HPR) – the legislature. As such, proclamations issued by the HPR are hierarchically above any other source of law other than the Constitution – primary legislations.[38] The HPR is also the body responsible for ratifying international agreements and only upon ratification are international agreements considered to be parts of the laws of the land. However, it is not clear whether domestication is needed or the international instruments directly apply once ratified. The practice so far shows that in ratifying a treaty or an international agreement, the parliament simply enacts a proclamation for ratification of the treaty. Such proclamations do not contain the contents of the ratified treaty. In any case, treaties so ratified also attain the same status as proclamations. It has to be stated here that Ethiopia is yet to ratify the regional conventions relevant to the higher education sector. Below proclamations are derivative legislations – regulations and directives. Regulations are implementing legislations enacted by the Council of Ministers.[39]These regulations are enacted pursuant to an enabling Proclamation. Further down the hierarchy are directives, issued by ministries (regulatory bodies) in accordance with pre-existing proclamations and regulations. In relation to Ethiopian HE sector, the main legal instruments currently in force are listed and categorized in table 2 below.

38. FDRE Constitution1994. Article 55

39. This does not include the Council’s authority to issue a state of emergency Decree pursuant to Art. 93 of the Constitution. It is not discussed here because it is outside the scope of the issue under discussion.

Table 2: Legal Instruments of Ethiopian HE

S. No.	Instrument	Type	Source
1	Directive for National Journals Evaluation and Accreditation	Directive	MoSHE
2	Higher Education leadership appointment	Directive	‘’
3	FDRE Ministry of Education Directive on Selection and Appointment of Leaders and Managers in Higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia	Directive	‘’
4	Higher Education Female faculty Directive	Directive	‘’
5	Directive on Selection and Appointment of Leaders and Managers on Higher Education Institution in Ethiopia Part One	Directive	‘’
6	Proclamation No. 1152/2019 Higher Education proclamation	Proclamation	(House of Peoples Representatives) HPR
7	University establishment regulations	Regulations	Council of Ministers
8	Guideline for Evaluation of Journals Published in Ethiopia	Guideline	‘’
9	The Revised LL.B Exit Exam Guideline	Guideline	MoE/MoSHE
10	University Senate Legislations	Legislations	HEIs/MoSHE
10	HE Cost Sharing Regulation	Regulation	Council of Ministers
11	A Proclamation to Provide for the Definition Of The Powers and Duties of The Executive Organs of The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2018)	Proclamation (mainly regarding the powers and functions of MoSHE)	HPR

A detailed analysis of the instruments in terms of their content is beyond the scope of this work. However, effort is made to highlight the major areas/issues of concern identified under some of the instruments - i.e. the Education Road Map, the HE Policy and Strategy and the National Quality Assurance Mechanism in light of those prioritized under the continental HE regionalization initiative. Section four below briefly highlights efforts being made in the regionalization process in Africa with a focus on instruments that were adopted to that end. It will then schematically assess the issues and areas identified by the regional instruments in comparison with those currently in force in Ethiopian HE system. However, researches and policy briefs conducted by HESC, some internal guidelines developed by HERQA, most directives issued by the Ministry on specific matters and instruments issued and implemented at HEIs level are difficult to access online and require approaching the institutions in person.

3.6.3. HE Data Availability in Ethiopia

The administration of the HE sector as a whole; the monitoring and evaluation of the various policies and strategies, as well as, informed decision making in the process of reforming the sector requirethe availability of relevant, timely and accurate data. So far, there is no one nationally established system for HE data collection, management and dissemination in Ethiopia. Each year's data is collected by regulatory bodies from HEIs via various data collection mechanisms and instruments.

The main source for education data in Ethiopia is the Education Statistics Annual Abstract(ESAA) released annually by the Ministry. Up until 2017, the Ministry's Education Management Information System (EMIS) and ICT Directorate used to prepare and release the ESAA containing analytical data on the three sub-sectors, i.e. General Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Higher Education.40However, after the establishment of MoSHE and transfer of HE administration to this new Ministry in 2018, the ESAA no longer included HE data.41This has created a gap in the availability of timely HE data until the Higher Education and Training Statistical Abstract (HETSA) was prepared and released by HESC under the auspices of MoSHE in 2021.42However, since yet another change is being introduced in the National Governance of the HE sector, it is not at this point clear if the trend of releasing HE data separately will continue or not.

The HETSA released in 2021 coversthe data collected for the three years from 2017/18 to2019/20 and includes data from49 Universities (45 Public and 4 private Universities) and 274 private HEIs. According to the Statistical Abstract, data gathering instrument formats were developed by experts recruited from relevant regulatory bodies and the data was collected by trained data collectors. The HETSA provides data on the following five dimensions of HE: access and equity; quality and relevance; research and technology transfer; community services; and leadership and governance. Particularly, the Abstract contains data on the following indicators listed in table 3 below.

Table 3: List of Indicators for which HE Data can be accessed from the HETSA

S.No.	HE Dimension	Indicators
1	Access and Equity in Higher Education	· Access to Higher Education · Enrolment in Higher Education · Institution Expansion · Modalities of Higher Education
2	Equity in Higher Education	· Students Gender Parity Index in Higher Education · Students with Disability · Students from Emerging Regions and Pastoral Area · Economic Support for Students · Gender Representation in Universities Leadership

40. The ESAAs released by the Ministry of education over the past several years can be accessed at https://www.moe.gov.et/EduStat last accessed on 3 January 2022.

41. The 2019/20 ESAA can be found at the following link https://www.moe.gov.et/storage/Books/Education%20Statistics%20Annual%20Abstract%20March%202019%20-%20September%202020.pdf last accessed 3 January 2022

42. MoSHE/HESC (2021)

3	Quality and Relevance	· Gross Academic Staff · Academic Staff by Education Levels and Ownership · Staff Mix by Education Levels · Students-Teacher Ratio · Technical staff (Public Universities) · Facility Accessibilities (Students to Text and References Ratio and Other Facilities Access (workshop/Lab/class-room/computer/library/Smart CR) · Professional Development (long term and short term) · Graduation by Levels (First Degree Graduates, Second Degree and Specialty Graduates, Ph.D. Graduates) · Students Exit Exam Results · Higher Education Graduate Employability
4	Research, Technology Innovation and Transfer	· Staff Research Engagement · Research Outputs · Technologies Innovation and Transfer · University- Industry Linkage
5	Community Service and Engagement	· Number and Type of Community Services Delivered
6	Internationalization	· Foreign Students' Enrollment · Expatriate Staff · External Research Grant
7	Governance and Leadership	· Resource Efficiency · Academic to Administrative Staff Ratio · Universities Budget against National Annual Budget and GDP · Recurrent Budget Source and Amount · Capital Budget Source and Amount

Another important source of HE data in Ethiopia is HERQA.Unlike most information/data pertaining to HE in Ethiopia, the list of HEIs and Programs accredited in Ethiopia can be easily accessed from the Agency's web-siteby any interested person.[43]

43. https://herqa.edu.et/hei last accessed on 3 January 2022

4. Regional and Continental Integration of HEin Africa and Policy reforms in Ethiopian HE

4.1. HE Regional and Continental Integration in Africa

Collaboration between African states over policy matters of mutual interest go as far back as the 1950s and 60s. Absence or weakness of institutions capable ofmanaging the internal administration of their respective populace as well as their stand at the global stage was a very common feature ofmost of the newly independent African states. This reality, which required close collaboration between African states on policy issues of all sorts, combined with the fact that there were some African states that were still under colonial ruleinvigorated African Nationalism and Pan-Africanism. This culminated in the establishment of the OAU in 1963with the aim of strengtheningunity and solidarity among African states, and promoting political and socio-economic cooperation among them.Education has always been one of the areas of focus of this regionalism and regional cooperation. Throughout the decades, several conferences of Ministers of Education of the member states were held leading up to the adoption of the Arusha Convention in 1981.[44]The convention provided for a legal framework for mutual recognition of degrees and qualifications in higher education, thereby making it the first concrete attempt at harmonization of HE in Africa.However, implementation of the convention remained difficult and the regional HE agenda itself lost traction over the decades following the adoption of the convention.[45]

By the early 2000s, the OAU was replaced by the AU, which was, under the Constitutive Act (CA), endowed with a wide ranging mandate covering diversesocio-economic issues.Changes in the regional and global economic environment meant knowledge was a key competitive advantage in a fast globalizing world and indispensable in any development endeavor. As a result, a renewed attention arose to the African HE sector in general and the need to harmonize regional HE policies in particular. This renewed attention gave way to the amendment of the Arusha Convention in 2002and later, its comprehensive revision and adoption as the Addis Conventionin 2014.[46]It also led to intergovernmental and non-governmental policy dialogues and adoption of policies and strategies both at the regional and sub-regional levels. As in the case of the RI process in Africa, harmonization of HE in the continent is also simultaneously taking place at different levels by different actors. There is a relatively active integration process being undertaken by the various Regional Economic Communities (RECs) at the sub regional level.[47]However, due to the scope of the current paper, only integration efforts at the continental level will be discussed from here on.

At the continental level, adoption of the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) by AU member states is one of the more recent developments by which the political willand intent towardsintegration of HE in Africa was signaled. The document enshrined as one of its goals, particularly in relation to HE, a 'complete revitalization of higher education in Africa' and calls for a 'systems approach' to be developed to this end.[48] This was followed by'Harmonization of Higher Education Programmes in Africa: A Strategy for the African Union'[49] in 2007–which is believed to be a significant strategic document in the regionalization process. In pursuit of implementation of the strategyand also pushing forward the regionalization process, the AU Commission (AUC), in collaboration with partners like UNESCO, the European Commission and Association of African Universities (AAU), has been working on legal and political initiatives. In terms of providing a legal basis for the regionalization process the AUC has facilitated the revision and signing of the Addis Convention on Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Edu-

44. Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States, adopted at Arusha on 5 December 1981

45. Many attribute two reasons for the difficulty. First, an external one. Mainly the World Bank's policy influence which forced many African countries not to focus on HE. And a second one, which is more internal to the convention itself in that that it lacked implementation mechanisms

46. UNESCO. Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States. Adopted on 12 December 2014, in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia

47. Sehoole, C., & de Wit, H. (2014). The Regionalization, Internationalization, and Globalization of African Higher Education. International Journal of African Higher Education, 1(1). https://doi.org/10.6017/ijahe.v1i1.5648 Pp. 223-226

48. AU, Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) Pp. 8-9

49. https://www.edu-au.org/programs/176-au-higher-education-program last accessed 30/07/2021

cation in African States. On the other hand, at the political level, the AUC adopted different initiatives towards integration. All in all, harmonization of HE in the continent focuses on issues of comparability of qualifications awarded across the continent and quality assurance measures, which will ultimately not only contribute to greaterquality of education in Africabut also to recognition of qualifications and mobility of students and professionals[50]

As a continuation to the Second Decade of Education for Africa, which came to an end in 2015, the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) was adopted by the African Union Heads of States and Governments at their Twenty-Sixth Ordinary Session on 31st January 2016 in Addis Ababa. CESA is meant to serve as the framework for transforming education and training systems in Africa. CESA recognizes, among other things, 'Harmonized education and training systems are essential for the realization of intra-Africa mobility and academic integration through regional cooperation'.Otherwise, a diverse HE system, absent mutual recognition of University degrees and qualifications, will be a hindrance to the continental integration process. One critical aspect of harmonization is the establishment of basic minimum standards for quality assurance applicable to all HEIs in the continent. In recognition of this, the AUC has initiated the development of a 'Pan African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework' (PAQAF). As an implementation mechanism for PAQAF, in the context of 'Harmonization of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Initiative' (HAQAA), the African Standards and Guidelines for QA (ASG-QA) were developed. The ASG-QA provides an overarching framework for quality assurance in HE and, even thoughstill awaits formal/political approval, it will continue to be an integral part of the harmonization process.[51]

4.2. Ethiopian and Regional HE instruments: An overview

4.2.1. Legal Regimes

Since Ethiopia is yet to sign or ratify either the Arusha Convention or the revised Addis Convention, any meaningful assessment/analysis of legal rules in the context of regionalization can't be made for the time being. However, this doesn't mean that Ethiopia has no (legal) regime for recognition of foreign awarded degrees and qualifications.The HEP mandates HERQA to 'develop guidelines on equivalence of HE qualifications, and determine the equivalence of qualifications issued by foreign institutions.'[52]The practice so far suggests that equivalence assessment is done in accordance with a guideline adopted by the agency which only sets general aspects of the foreign qualification over which information will then be gathered before equivalence was ascertained. These are[53]:

- The education system of the country where the applicant studied;
- Entry or graduation requirements graduates had to meet;
- The status of the institution which the applicant attended;
- The content of the programme of study; and
- The assessment modalities of the foreign institution.

The agency further provides requirements any application for equivalence must fulfil which, among other things and depending on the level of study, require authentication of the originality of documents by the foreign ministry of Country of origin, embassy of Ethiopia and/or the foreign ministry of Ethiopia.HERQA, therefore, needs to gather the required information for every equivalence application for qualifications issued all over the world.Given the diversity of the global HE systems, it is not untenable to suggest the task will prove challenging to a government agency without the required financial and human resources. Hence, in the face of such challenges, it will be insightful to examine why Ethiopia is not yet a signatory to the Addis Convention.

50. EmnetTadesseWoldegiorgis, Conceptualizing Harmonization of Higher Education Systems: The Application of Regional Integration Theories on Higher Education Studies, Higher Education Studies; Vol. 3, No. 2; 2013 ISSN 1925-4741 E-ISSN 1925-475X, Pp. 19

51. University World News - Africa Edition, Quality assurance guidelines await ministerial approval, 08 February 2019https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20190129080050321 last accessed 30 July 2021.

52. HEP Art. 87(13)

53. University World News, Foreign qualification and credential evaluationhttps://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20200609072715341 June 11 2020. Last accessed July 31, 2021

4.2.2. Policy Instruments

In relation to policy instruments, a general overview can be made of the policy objectives and priorities of the relevant documents. As such, the Education Road Map and the HE policy and strategy are assessed in light of the strategic objectives of CESA. Additionally, the Ethiopian QA mechanism is compared in terms of standards set for internal quality audit by the ASG-QA.

4.2.3. Ethiopia and the Continental Education Strategy

CESA identifies HE as a critical imperative for national development and global competitiveness strategic objectives. As such, the continental strategy identified 12 strategic objectives with a mission to re-orient education and training systems to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, innovation and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote sustainable development at the national, regional and continental levels. These strategic objectives are: (1) revitalize the teaching profession, (2) Build and rehabilitate infrastructure, (3) Harness the capacity of ICT,(4) Ensure acquisition of requisite knowledge and skills, (5) Accelerate processes leading to gender parity and equity, (6) Launch comprehensive and effective literacy campaigns, (7) Strengthen the science and math curricula, (8) Expand TVET opportunities, (9) Revitalize and expand tertiary education, (10) Promote peace education and conflict prevention and resolution, (11) Improve the management of education system as well as the statistic tool and, (12) Set up a coalition of all education stakeholders.[54] Particularly for HE, CESA aims for the revitalization and expansion of tertiary education, research and innovation to address continental challenges and promote global competitiveness.[55]CESA's strategic objectives were predicated on an assessment of the state of the education sub sectors with a focus on access, quality and equity; and challenges that need to be addressed.[56]

The Ethiopian Education Development Road Map (EDRM), adopted in 2018, identified major shortcomings and challenges of the Ethiopian education system as a whole and HE in particular. It also forwarded policy directions to be followed. The newly adopted HE Policy and Strategy was largely based on the findings of the EDRM and the recommendations therein. The EDRM focused on seven broad HE thematic dimensions: access, equity, quality, relevance, efficiency, unity with diversity, and financing of higher education. Therefore, the EDRM approach differs quite a lot from that of CESA.

With regards to access and equity in HE, the EDRM identifies as one of the challenges in the education system the existing gender gap in enrolment among male and female students. Shortage of supplies of text and reference books, laboratory and workshops equipment; and access to ICT facilities in most universities is also one of the hindrances to access to HE in Ethiopia. Furthermore, the EDRM states the fact that it is only an insignificant portion of the society thatis in the bottom income group has access to HE and the lack of adequate support system to disadvantaged groups highlights the inequity in the education system. To meet these challenges, the newly adopted Ethiopian HE Policy has made access and equity in HEone of its areas of focus. To this effect, the policy has adopted several strategies focusing onprovision of scholarships and affirmative actions to disadvantaged groups and minorities; increasing public spending and encouraging publicprivate partnership, internationalization and other modalities to attract involvement in the HE sector; introducing more flexibility and autonomy in the sector, as well as developing a system of lifelong education for various groups to address learning needs. In total, the policy lists 15 strategies that are believed to be key in ensuring access and equity to HEin the country.

Another dimension the EDRM identifies as needing attention is quality and relevance of Ethiopian HE. Over the years, measures such as harmonization of undergraduate curricula, introduction of modular teaching, continuous assessment, and peer learning, and the establishment and operation of quality assurance mechanisms have been taken to enhance and assure quality of HE. However, the Road Map acknowledges that, despite such measures, quality and relevance of education remain a big problem in Ethiopia at all levels and in all forms of delivery. To alleviate these challenges, the HE Policy sets targets to make curricula and academic programs responsive to social and national demands founded on development and labour market needs and aspirations of the country; to stablish, maintain and enhance quality of higher education; to make

54. AUC CESA (16-25)
55. UC CESA (16-25) 25
56. Ibid 13

the teaching-learning environment conducive to enhance quality education; to ensure that research in higher education institutions is both relevant and of high quality, and to develop a knowledge management system for research and education quality.

In order to realize each of these policy directions a host of specific strategies are also provided. One of the strategies to ensure quality and relevance is the establishment of an Institute that conducts needs assessment, research, evaluates and reviews higher education curricula and academic programs in order to ensure the quality and relevance of the curricula/academic program. Since, as has been said earlier, opening and closing of academic programs has so far been a largely the HEIs' affair – i.e. internal accreditation - in case of Ethiopian public HEIs, introduction of such an Institute will be an entirely new development. It will also be interesting to examine whether the Institute will co-exist with HERQA and HESC or if it will be an addition to the mandate of either one of them, mainly HERQA. There is also a strategy to design a mechanism through which higher education institutions avoid commercialization of the education enterprise.Such a mechanism will play a crucial role in the HE sector particularly in relation to private HEIs, but also public HEIs, once the reform towards autonomous universities holds root. The overwhelming perception isthat commercialization of HE is one of the main reasons behind the 'low quality' of education provided by private HEIs in Ethiopia.

The EDRM further identified challenges related to HE Efficiency; Research, technology transfer and community services; and Financing of HEIs inEthiopia. The challenges identified in these regards are more or less associated with the IA, education structure and human resource and other administrative challenges. The HE Policy tries to address these challenges by acknowledging and adopting policy directions for the following policy issues:Community Engagement and Science Culture Development; Institutional Capacity Development of Higher Education Institutions; Financing and Funding Higher Education; Higher Education Infrastructure Development and Facilities; Indigenous Knowledge; Vocational Guidance and Career Counselling; Higher Education Act (particularly to enhance IA); Medium of instruction; Cross-Cutting Issues, and Structure of Higher Education (mainly by developing a differentiated HE system and determining the study periods of different academic programs. The policy prescribes undergraduate programs to take 4 to 7 years based on the nature of the field, and regular second-degree programs to be completed in 2–3 years and doctoral programs in 4-6 years depending on the nature of the field).

Another policy dimension stated in the document is 'Internationalization and Partnerships'. Given its relevance to the current report, its worth looking at in a more detailed manner. The policy direction in relation to internationalization is to develop a system that synergizes internationalization and partnerships between and among national, continental and international institutions. To realise this, the policy document has listed ten strategies to be implemented by different stake holders. Of the ten, the following seven strategies are particularly relevant for internationalization of the HE sector:

- Encouraging higher education institutions to attract international students and staff.
- Establishing an International Students Office at all higher education institution hosting international students.
- Developing a system to carry out research/teaching collaborations and staff/student exchanges.
- Encouraging high performing higher education institutions in the country to set up cross border campuses in other countries.
- Developing legislative framework to facilitate the entry of foreign higher education institutions to Ethiopia to launch joint or independent academic programs and collaborative research undertakings.
- Establishing a system that facilitates collaborations among community-based organizations, industry, sectors organizations, foreign donor agencies, research institutes and other organizations through resource mobilization, research undertakings and program implementation.
- Developing a system that encourages and facilitates the engagement of foreign academic and research staff in various programs of higher education institutions.

Policy wise, this is a major improvement regarding internationalization in the Ethiopian HE sector. As has been stated earlier, except few provisions in the HE Proclamations of past and present, and ESDP V[57], the HE internationalization process in Ethiopia is not guided by a comprehensive national policy and strategy. Hence, adoption of these strategies in the current HE policy can be seen as a positive development in that direction.

Another dimension deemed important in the EDRM is promotion of unity-within.diversity. It is known that Ethiopia is home to above 80 nations, nationalities and peoples. Ethiopian universities host students coming from different ethnic and cultural background. Since student placement in Ethiopia is done by the Ministry, neither the students nor universities have any influence on the ethnic, cultural or any other background of the student body. As good as such diversity in a learning environment can be, the lack of policies and strategies in Ethiopian HEIs to accommodate such diversity has been seen a major gap. As such, the EDRM has several recommendations in this regard. One such recommendations was 'introducing multicultural course including Geography and Anthropology courses that focus on Ethiopia' to help students to focus on unity within diversity. However, the HE Policy and Strategy does not include any policy direction on this policy issue seemingly because the new HE curriculum already includes such courses among the courses to be offered to first year students. The courses are aimed at the same objective but at both the national and regional level.

4.2.4. Quality Assurance Mechanism

Quality assurance mechanisms generally function at two levels. On one hand there is internal quality assurance/audit, one that is to be administered by and within HEIs themselves. On the other hand, there is external quality audit, where a national/regional regulatory body will conduct quality audit of the HEIs. HAQAA's ASG-QA provide three sets of QA standards: Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance, Standards and Guidelines for External Quality Assurance and Internal Quality Assurance for Quality Assurance Agencies.In Ethiopia, as has been discussed elsewhere above, instruments and institutions of both for internal and external quality assurance mechanisms have already been established. The institution that is tasked with conducting external audit of HEIs in Ethiopia is HERQA. There are not internal quality assurance standards developed to audit for HERQA itself yet.With respect to the external quality assurance instrument, the existing standard in Ethiopia has already been mapped by the HAQAA Initiative in 2018[58]. Hence, this work will only provide an overview of the standards constituting the internal quality audit guideline in line with the ASG-QA.

The ASG-QA provides for 13 standards for internal QA while in Ethiopia, the Institutional Quality Audit guide issued by HERQA contains 10 standards. For comparison purposes, the standards set by the two documents is presented in table 4 below.

Table 4: Internal QA Standards in Ethiopia and under the ASG-QA

No	Ethiopian Standards	ASG-QA Standards
1	Vision, mission and educational goals	vision, mission, and strategic objectives
2	Governance and management system	governance and management
3	Infrastructure and learning resources	human resources
4	Academic and support staff	financial management
5	Student admission and support services	infrastructure and facilities
6	Program relevance and curriculum	Student recruitment, admission, certification, and support services

57. MoE, ESDP V, P 110
58. HAQAA 2018 Pp. 25-26

7	Teaching, learning and assessment	design, approval, monitoring, and evaluation of study programs
8	Student progression and graduate outcomes	teaching, learning and assessment
9	Research and outreach activities	Research and innovation
10	Internal quality assurance	community engagement
11		Information management system
12		Public Communication
13		Collaboration, staff, and student mobility

The purpose of HERQA's institutional audit standards is to guide HEIs in preparing their 'Self Evaluation Document' to be summited to HERQA. It provides for a brief description of each standard, reference points in assessing each standard and indicative sources of information in the process. It is worth pointing at this point that, despite being adopted more than a decade before the development of the African Standards and Guidelines, the institutional audit guideline in Ethiopia significantly corresponds with the areas of focus given primacy by the continental standards. A deeper analysis of the substantive contents of the two guidelines, which the scope of this work doesn't allow, can reveal the true extent of the convergence/divergence between the two guidelines. However, in the hope of contributing to such analysis, the table below re-states the description of standards provided in HERQA's Institutional audit guideline.

Table 5: HERQA Institutional Audit Standards Description

No.	Principle	Description
1	Vision, mission and educational goals	The institution's mission should define clearly its purpose within the higher education system, state the goals it intends to accomplish and make explicit the stakeholders it intends to serve and why. Every HEI must define clearly its vision, mission and educational goals and make them known to its stakeholders. The reference points in this regard will be: the clarity of the vision, mission, and goals of the institution and the extent of their communication; the relevance of the institutional vision, mission and goals to the needs of the nation and to the stakeholders it sets out to serve, and the realism of the vision, mission and goals and the strategic plan for their achievement.
2	Governance and management system	Every HEI must have in place strong governance and management systems. The governing body should have sufficient powers to assure institutional autonomy and integrity and the senior management team must have delegated responsibilities to enable actions consistent with the vision, mission and goals of the institution. The reference points in this regard will be: the appropriateness and effectiveness of the governance and organizational structure to facilitate the successful accomplishment of the vision, mission and goals of the institution; the clarity of descriptions of responsibilities and duties and the extent of their communication, and academic staff and student participation in decision-making; clarity and transparency of the decision making process.

3	Infrastructure and learning resources	HEIs should provide clear, accurate and adequate information on the capacity of the institution, its facilities and resources. Every HEI must have sufficient and appropriate physical facilities and learning resources and the financial capacity to ensure effective delivery of its programs.The facilities in HEIs should be suitable and adequate for the effective teaching and learning of the numbers of students admitted. Institutions should ensure that the resources available to support student learning are adequate and appropriate for each program offered. The reference points in this regard will be: sufficiency and adequacy of the institution's physical facilities (classrooms; offices; lecture halls; cafeteria; dormitories; clinic; sport fields; etc.); sufficiency and adequacy of the institution's learning resources (library; computer centers with appropriate software and hardware, audio-visual equipment; Internet access; laboratories; workshops; etc.); resource utilization and mechanisms for maintenance and updating, and the financial stability of the institution and the adequacy of its budget to run and sustain its programs.
4	Academic and support staff	The quality of an educational program depends strongly on the quality of the staff who provide teaching and student support. Institutions should ensure that their staff recruitment and appointment procedures include a means of making certain that all new staff have the necessary level of competence. Every HEI must have sufficient and appropriate staff to ensure effective implementation of its programs. The reference points in this regard will be: availability of adequate number of qualified academic staff to support programs and an appropriate staff-student ratio for each program; the suitability of the teaching staff in terms of the mix of qualifications, experience, full-time/part-time, local/expatriate; etc; the existence of suitable, clearly stated, well-established and effectively implemented policies for the appointment and promotion of staff; the operation of a transparent staff appraisal system that identifies the strengths and weaknesses of staff and which leads to action, and the provision of pedagogical and other training organized to support staff development.
5	Student admission and support services	Every HEI must have a transparent admissions policy and adequate student support services to ensure effective implementation of its programs. The reference points being: the clarity, transparency and accessibility of admissions policies; the appropriateness of mechanism for assessing the abilities of entering students and the provision of appropriate support; the suitability and adequacy of student support services and academic counseling; the extent of student representation in the affairs of the HEI; the effectiveness of a Students' Council.
6	Program relevance and curriculum	Every HEI is expected to justify the relevance of its programs and to have robust procedures for curriculum design, approval and review. The reference points in this regard are: descriptions of program approval, monitoring and review mechanisms; the extent of involvement of external professionals and employers in curriculum design, evaluation and review process; the extent to which curricular aims and objectives are made explicit and are known to students; the appropriateness of the balance of subject knowledge and transferable skills.

7	Teaching, learning and assessment	Every HEI must employ appropriate teaching, learning and assessment methods to ensure effective implementation of its programs. The reference points for this standard are: the appropriateness, variety and level of innovation of teaching methods; practice regarding academic advice and tutorial support; the balance of theory and practice; the extent of evaluation of approaches to teaching and learning and the consequent action; the extent to which the assessment policy and procedures and the criteria for marking ensure that students are graded fairly and that standards are appropriate and applied consistently; the extent of communication of the assessment policy and procedures; the appropriateness of mechanisms to ensure that assessment methods for each course in each program are balanced (e.g. between continuous and end of course, formative and summative, diagnostic and attainment), are matched to the learning outcomes and are applied appropriately; the adequacy of the student appeal procedures.
8	Student progression and graduate outcomes	Every HEI is expected to document student progression and graduate outcomes and to seek to improve student retention and achievement. The reference Points for the standard are: the level of student attrition, the reasons for student drop out and the actions taken to minimize this; the graduation rate, the employment of graduates in appropriate graduate level posts and the actions taken to maximize such employment; the extent of links between the institution and potential employers that facilitate graduate employment; the extent of contacts with graduates, the existence of an association of graduates and how these are used; the extent of contacts with employers to collect feedback on graduates and the actions taken on the information.
9	Research and outreach activities	Every HEI is expected to undertake research activities, conduct consultancy and engage in community service. Reference Points for the standard are: the proportion of staff in each faculty and department actively engaged in appropriate research and consultancy; the number and nature of research projects and consultancies undertaken; the number of research reports produced and research articles published; the number and nature of organizations benefiting from consultancy and community services, and the number and nature of national and international links with academics and industrialists.
10	Internal quality assurance	HEIs should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and relevance of their programs. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognizes the importance of relevance, quality and quality assurance in all their work. HEIs should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The ultimate goal of internal quality assurance is to have a culture of quality care which ensures that quality is a focus of all the activities of an institution at all levels and is incorporated into the everyday work of the whole institutional community. Every HEI must have an internal quality assurance system that seeks to continuously improve the quality of its provision. Reference Points for the standard are: the quality assurance policy; the quality assurance system and mechanisms; actions taken following program evaluations; the nature and appropriateness of responsibilities of quality assurance units, committees and individuals and the extent to which these are communicated clearly.

5. Concluding Remarks

The Ethiopian HE system, much like most countries in the continent, faces several challenges like financing, inadequate qualified staff and infrastructure, limited lecture rooms, computer laboratories, libraries, and limited institutional autonomy and the likes. These challenges remain causes of concern to the quality and relevance of the education being offered in EHIs. Furthermore, the limited number and quality of the research and innovation out puts of these institutions poses a significant challenge in achieving the stated goals of HE to elevate the socio-economic status of the country as well as its regional competitiveness. Despite these challenges, however, the HE sector in Ethiopia has been expanding both in numbers of HEIs as well as the GER. With the hope of addressing these challenges and meeting the growing demand for skilled man power capable of competing in a fast globalizing economy, the Ethiopian government is introducing several policy reforms to the HE sector.

One of the major changes introduced since 2018 was the establishment of a separate Ministry for HE - MoSHE. HE has been administered, until then, along with all levels of education by the Ministry of Education. The HE Policy that was in effect since 1994 was also revised to introduce new changes in the sector. Despite such changes institutions and instruments that were in effect before the reform have been re-introduced, sometimes with a revised mandate. The policy also envisages new institutions to be established mainly aimed at assuring the relevance and quality of HE programs in the country. The main institutions authorized to regulate quality and relevance of education and the overall improvement of HE administration remain HERQA and HESC. Hence, the national level policy decision makers in current Ethiopian HE administration are MoE, HERQA and HESC. Along with these national level institutions, HEIs themselves, to the extent they are authorized under the law, can have significant influence in shaping HE policy in the country. So far, for example HEIs have been the main driving forces behind HE internationalization efforts. In the absence of a national comprehensive policy to guide the process, the practice and strategies of HEIs are the main source of information in relation to internationalization of HE in Ethiopia. Despite there not being a formal reference to the continental HE harmonization efforts and the regionalization agenda, a brief comparison of the objectives of the current HE policy in Ethiopia and the strategies adopted to achieve these objectives significantly correlate the ones adopted at the continental level. This in large part could be due to the felt necessity of revamping HE as an instrument for economic development and global/regional competiveness both at the national and continental level.

HERQA is the main body for administration of quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications. HERQA has developed internal and external quality audit standards. Ethiopian HEIs are required to submit themselves to this quality audit mechanism. In relation to accreditation, HERQA is mainly tasked with accrediting private HEIs. Public HEIs are presumed accredited by virtue of their establishment by law. The Ethiopian framework for the recognition of foreign qualifications is one of the least regulated aspects of the HE system. Ethiopia has not signed either of the regional conventions adopted for the recognition of foreign qualifications in Africa. The process is currently guided by an internal guideline developed by HERQA. When it comes to quality assurance standards, despite developing almost a decade before the adoption of the African Standards and Guidelines for QA (ASG-QA), the institutional audit guidelines used by HERQA since 2006 considerably resemble the one adopted under the ASG-QA.

Generally, in the current administration of HE in Ethiopia, MoE, HERQA, HESC and individual HEIs are the main institutions and hence, the main policy data sources in the country. The potential data that can be gathered from these institutions varies from laws, regulations, directives, policies, strategies, and plans to researches, policy briefs, guidelines and standards as well as statistical data. Most nationally relevant policy data can be accessed online via the institutions' websites. However, equally important institutional policies and guidelines issued by HEIs and regulatory agencies like HERQA can only be accessed from the institutions.

Availability and wide accessibility of HE data remains a challenge in the sector. The data collection and administration currently being practiced lacks organizational and systemic quality. There is no nationally systematized data reporting mechanism. For each reporting year, the Ministry develops data collection instruments; trains data collectors and, dispatches data collectors to the various HEIs to collect the data. Systematizing this process and creating a mechanism whereby HEIs timely transmit HE data to a national body based on

indicators developed in line with the relevant HE policies and strategies will be critical to address the HE data problem in the country. Meanwhile, the publication of the Higher Education and Training Statistical Abstract by the Ministry is an important trend towards addressing the demand for a relevant, timely and accurate data on the performance of the HE sector.

Summary of the chapter in a few questions

in all likelihood, you will not be able to give a full and detailed answer to the following questions, but you should be able to understand their meaning and you have the obligation, at least as a participant in HAQAA training activities, to think about them.

1. Utilising as a basis of comparison the analysis offered for Ethiopia, how would you assess the influence of processes of regional and continental integration on your country's higher education policy making and administration? How do you assess the importance of higher education as an important element of the regional integration process in which your country participates?
2. Utilising as a basis of comparison the analysis offered for Ethiopia, and using the analytical frameworks of regional integration processes and of higher education policy presented under chapters one and two of these materials, are you able to briefly state the higher education dimensions that are prioritized in your country?
3. How do you view the similarities/convergences and differences/divergences in policy objectives between the Ethiopian higher education strategy, that in your own country and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa? Is there a significant convergence between nationally set policies and those set at continental or regional economic community levels? If so, what significance does it have in your opinion?
4. Are you able to briefly summarise the process for recognition of foreign awards and qualification in the Ethiopian higher education system and in your own country? How do you assess its role in facilitating the regional and continental integration processes?
5. Utilising as a basis of comparison the analysis offered for Ethiopia, how do you assess the data collection and dissemination practice in your own country? In what ways, do you believe, policy data can be instrumental in promoting higher education regionalization?
6. How do you assess the institutional autonomy (IA) of higher education institutions in your country? How do you see the role of legal and policy instruments in enhancing or hampering IA of higher education institutions? What other factors can you state that affect the IA of higher education institutions? Can you briefly state how institutional autonomy can be instrumental in regional and continental integration in higher education?
7. Utilising once again as a basis of comparison the analysis offered for Ethiopia, are you able to state the Internal QA Standards in your country? How do you assess them in comparison with those of the continental standards and guidelines for QA (ASG-QA)?

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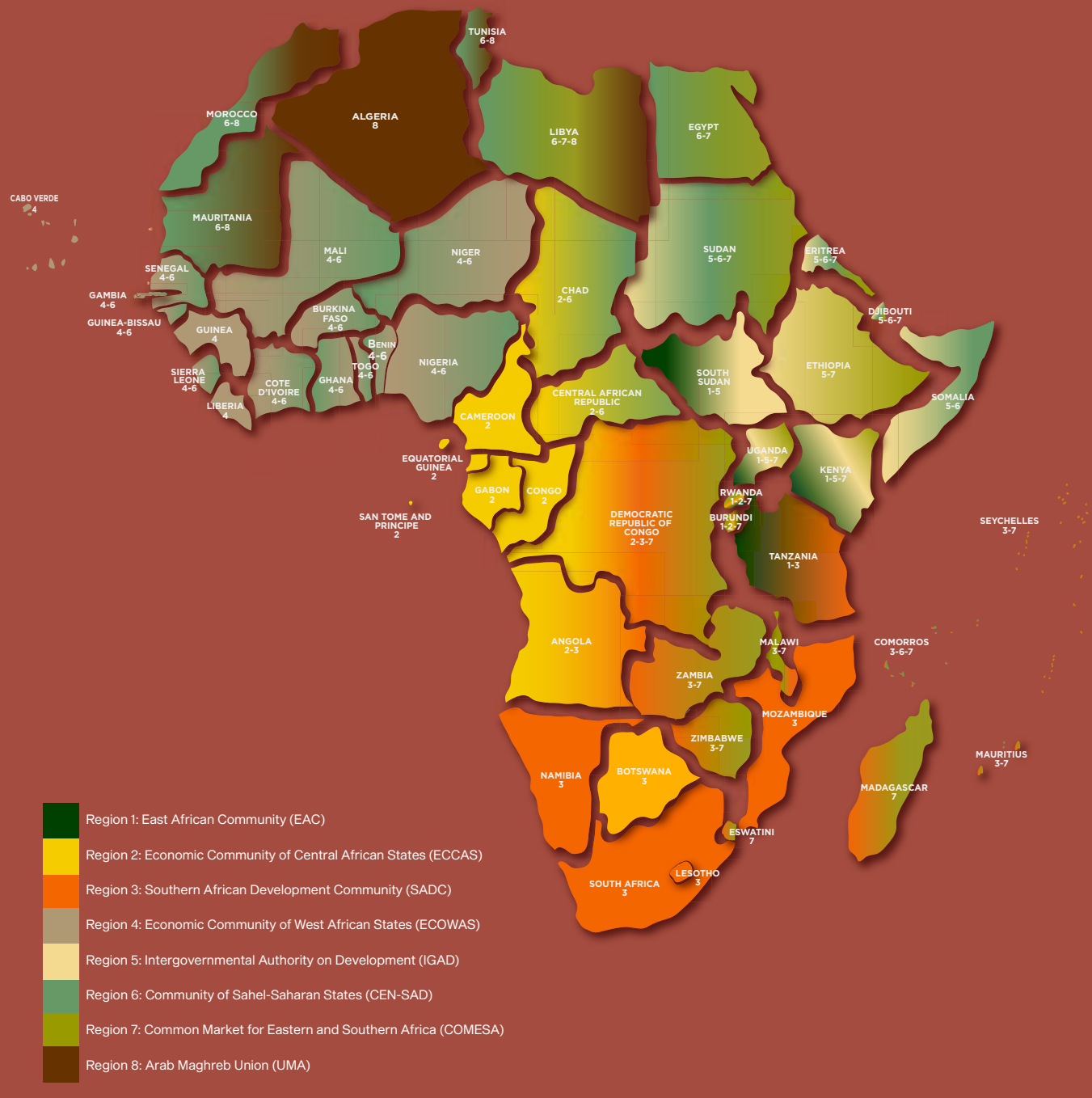

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- Region 2: Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
- Region 3: Southern African Development Community (SADC)
- Region 4: Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- Region 5: Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)
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- Region 7: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
- Region 8: Arab Maghreb Union (UMA)

The map has been jointly designed by Henok B. Asmelash and Nicole Font, developing an idea launched by Prof. Goolam Mohamedbhai and relayed by R. Torrent. It is, as all the Materials, "work in progress": comments welcome. The usual disclaimer applies.

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