



Perspectives on Education in Africa

**QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN EASTERN
AND SOUTHERN AFRICA**

REGIONAL AND CONTINENTAL PERSPECTIVES

Edited by
Peter Neema-Abooki



‘Using the classical definition of “quality” as “fitness for purpose” to assess the outcomes of Higher Education in 21st-century Africa throws up more questions than answers. Against the backdrop of universal basic education and the subsequent massification of Higher Education on the African continent and worldwide, this seminal collection of scholarly reports on quality in African Higher Education is pivotal in the ongoing discourse on the role of Higher Education in societal transformation. The future of Higher Education on the African continent greatly hinges on the direction this debate takes and the consequent investment decisions Africa makes.’

Dr Samuel N. Siminyu

Managing Editor, Makerere University Press

‘This book stresses the need to be more focused on the research which will assist educators to put more emphasis on providing knowledge which will develop Africa in accordance with its needs. Cognisant of the fact that we live in a global village, Africa must concentrate on developing its potential endowment in a manner that will enable it to grow to a level at which it can stand and play its role as an equal partner with other nations.’

Professor Peter Neema-Abooki has ably contributed to this research and has thoroughly pointed out that Quality Assurance in Higher Education must treat Africa in its natural setting (*sitz im leben*) while considering its diversities and complexities. He has juxtaposed the imbalance of scholars from the Global North writing about education in the Global South. Though the book takes a wide scope on Africa, it has not lost sight of an international focus. The above approach makes this book a handy reference source for researchers in the academic world, and it is also very useful for planners and administrators, especially in governments and religious institutions. The book is an ancillary and a *vade mecum*, not only for those involved in matters of Higher Education, but also for all those with a progressive and inquisitive mind. The thematic style of the editor will make the subject easy to grasp, even for scholars who tend to be too busy. Professor Neema-Abooki has edited this book with all the appetite drawn from the experience he has gained from having been Professor of Higher Educational Management and Administration, Human Resource Management in Education, Educational Policy and Planning, Educational Foundations and Curriculum Studies, Religious and Ethical Studies, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Business and Management – all imbued with his Ecclesiastical training and international exposure.

The Very Rev Msgr Thomas Kisembo Apuuli

Commissioner for Amnesty Commission – Uganda; Former Regent (seven years), Toro Kingdom; Former Vicar General, Fort Portal Diocese

‘This book has a great theme and it is an anthology of success.’

His Eminence Emmanuel Cardinal Dr Wamala

Archbishop Emeritus of Kampala Archdiocese
First Bishop of Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese
Former Chaplain of Makerere University



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Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Eastern and Southern Africa

This book examines the critical aspect of quality assurance maintenance in competitive standards in African higher education. It explores both the micro- and macro-levels of continental African higher education regulatory authorities, and analyses different institutional, regional and national practices for moving towards continental quality assurance approaches.

Contributed to by scholars from across Eastern and Southern Africa, the book considers conceptual, practical, epistemological and policy dimensions of quality and quality assurance, especially in relation to higher education in Africa. It therefore draws on research and local expertise to open up debate about how to assure and enhance the quality of higher education, provides a comprehensive review of eight countries and considers societal challenges. It aims to satisfy the need for more thoughtful and critical works on African education as produced by African educators. The uniqueness of this book lies in integrating both the theoretical and practical dimensions of quality to devise appropriate strategies for ensuring quality and standards in higher education in continental Africa and beyond.

This authoritative book advocates for a timely discussion around the provision of good quality higher education and research in African universities, and will be of great interest to academics, policy makers, researchers and postgraduate students in the fields of higher education, comparative education and African studies.

Peter Neema-Abooki is Professor of Higher Educational Management and Administration at Makerere University, Uganda. His academic credentials include: Doctor of Philosophy and Masters degrees both in Higher Education, Divinity, Theological and Pastoral Studies, Philosophy and Religious Studies, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). He was a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa and has rendered service as External Quality Assurance Expert for Programme Review at the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in Namibia.

Perspectives on Education in Africa

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The African continent is at a crucial moment in its history. Conflicts, political disappointments, developmental difficulties and poverty issues are well disseminated by the international media, but it also has a promising demography and hopeful economic growth. Education is at the heart of the challenges facing the continent, and research into Africa's 21st century potential is of increasing interest to international scholars and policymakers alike.

This series aims to examine institutions regarded as fundamental in helping African countries face major challenges across the Continent. It seeks to offer tools for analysing, understanding and decision-making concerning contemporary issues of education in Africa. Believing that perspectives should not be observed, analysed and strategized from outside, the series draws on local knowledge and experience, promoting interaction between African and non-African scholars in order to explore the implications for the future, and the ways in which education in Africa can be enhanced, influenced and developed.

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Regional and Continental Perspectives

Edited by Peter Neema-Abooki

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This book is dedicated with filial affection to

The Rt Rev Robert Kasaija Dr Muhiirwa Akiiki, Bishop of Fort Portal Catholic Diocese in Western Uganda, whose paternal benevolence granted me a singular opportunity to serve in institutions of higher learning



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Foreword

Higher education in Africa, save for the few ancient universities of Sankore Timbuktu in present day Mali and Al-Azhar in Cairo in Egypt, like other forms of formal lower education, is a vestige of colonialism. At the time of independence, most sub-Saharan African countries had but one university or none at all. The majority had some form of tertiary institutions. For example, for many years Makerere College in Uganda was the only institution of higher learning in the British East and Central African colonies and mandated territories. Students from Kenya, Tanganyika (now Tanzania, which was a mandated territory), and the islands of Zanzibar, Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia (present day Malawi and Zambia respectively) used to trek to Makerere where they would join their Ugandan counterparts for their higher education. In spite of its colonial orientation, the quality of instruction was very good. In fact, the quality was comparable to what higher education institutions in the colonial metropolis offered. For that reason, Makerere College and later Makerere University was metaphorically dubbed the Harvard of Africa.

During the period immediately after independence, most African countries started opening universities where they did not exist. Hence in 1970, Makerere University College gave way to the Universities of Nairobi in Kenya and the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. At this time university education, which then was considered a public good, was firmly a part of the national governments; and since it was a public good, it was free to those that qualified. In the absence of formalised quality assurance agencies, the invitation of prominent academics as external examiners, the majority of them drawn from Europe, served its purpose. Civil services and government parastatals were staffed by the graduates coming out of these universities. Some governments even regulated the number of graduates coming out of these institutions. As such governments and a few private organisations like banks enjoyed a high quality of human resources. Few employers, if any, complained about the quality of their employees trained at local universities.

In the 1960s through the early 1970s, there were hardly any private universities in most African countries. However, as the military started overthrowing civilian-led governments and governments became cash strapped, higher education started to take a nose-dive. As salaries lost value, Africa started losing its best professors to the more developed countries of the north through brain drain. Africa also started

experiencing a population explosion. Universities were forced to admit more students amid dwindling financial resources and a lack of adequately qualified academic staff (faculty) to teach them. Universities could not stock libraries with new books and the latest journals for research. Laboratories suffered too as universities could not afford to buy newer equipment. Students were not spared either as they could not access new textbooks and were crammed into small lecture theatres. This was the beginning of the negative effects of under-funding and massification! Inevitably the quality of teaching and research deteriorated. The entry of private universities, several of them of dubious quality and driven by a profit motive, if anything, made the already difficult situation worse.

Against this background, employers started voicing concern about the quality of the graduates coming out of universities. Governments and universities started taking serious steps to address this deteriorating quality. For example, the governments of Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda to name a few set up higher education agencies which were supposed to ensure that universities and other tertiary institutions maintained at least a minimum of quality assurance standards. Some universities responded by setting up directorates of quality assurance and, on the continental scene, higher education associations such as the Association of African Universities based in Accra, Ghana, set up a continent-wide quality assurance network dubbed AfriQuan. Likewise, the Inter University Council of East Africa (IUCEA) spearheaded the issue of quality assurance and also set up an East African network, purposely and explicitly to ensure quality assurance in East Africa member universities. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) established the Southern African Quality Assurance Network (SAQAN) and the SADC Regional Qualifications Framework (SADCQF) which have yielded monumental results.

Professor Neema-Abooki presents a book which is an excellent resource providing, inter alia, the necessary quality assurance tools for the practitioner. As one schooled in both ecclesial and purely academic disciplines and as one who actuates both realms in an equitably balanced manner, the priest-cum-academician and Professor of Higher Education offers an antidote for and also a catalyst towards an existential perspective with the imperative: 'quality in every single task' (QUEST).

The issue of quality in African universities and tertiary institutions, amid commercialisation, massification, the off-shore campuses of universities in the north, among other challenges, is now more critically important than ever before if the higher education sector is to remain the engine that drives development in Africa.

Professor John Ssebuwufu

Chancellor of Kyambogo University

Vice Chancellor of University of Kisubi

Former Vice Chancellor of Makerere University

Former Director Research and Programmes, AAU

Series editor's introduction

The African continent is at a crucial moment in its history. If conflicts, political disappointments, developmental difficulties and poverty issues of Africa are well disseminated by the international media, it should not gloss over the fact that Africa is also a very dynamic continent, with a promising demography and hopeful economic growth.

Education could be viewed as at the heart of the challenges facing Africa. Schools could offer the promise of achieving the goals of development, both in the social aspects as well as the economic and political. Since the independences in the 1960s, the number of school children has multiplied by 40 in sub-Saharan Africa. Many states in Africa, from North to South, are faced with the emergency of mass-schooling while many problems remain: the shortage of basic facilities, infrastructure, lack of teaching and learning materials, shortage of qualified teachers, distance between home and schools in rural areas, hunger and poor nutrition, difficulties for schooling in areas affected by conflicts, and schooling for girls. Development and improvement in higher education and vocational training are also key challenges for African countries, many of which are witnessing massive student mobility (with its crucial problematics of 'brain drain' but also of 'brain gain'). Some countries stress the need to privatize education to try to achieve international targets. Many of them rely on international support to reach their goals. All these challenges, however, should not obscure the dynamism of African students, the growth of the quality of education in some African countries, such as Morocco, and other visible examples across the continent.

In focusing on education, the purpose of this series is to examine an institution that is regarded as fundamental in helping African countries face major challenges across the continent. 'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world' said Nelson Mandela. This series seeks to offer tools for analysing, for understanding and for decision-making concerning contemporary issues of education in Africa.

A basic assumption of the series is that the perspectives on education in Africa should not be observed, analysed and strategised from outside the continent. The series will primarily draw on local knowledge and experience within Africa, with the potential to decolonise African education and provide insights by which indigenous knowledge can be promoted and developed. This does not rule out

considering perspectives from outside the continent, especially in the context of globalisation; but these will not dominate. This series, however, will also promote interaction between African and non-African scholars in order to explore the implications for education in Africa. Yet the focus will always be on education in and for African people, the way such education can be enhanced, the factors that influence it and future directions in which it can develop.

The present book on quality assurance (QA) in higher education in Eastern and Southern Africa explores issues concerned with theory, policy and practice. As the authors argue, quality assurance is now an international phenomenon that is necessary both to ensure high standards and guarantee equity for students. Yet there are also some distinctly African issues identified, highlighting the importance of QA not just from a standard neo-liberal perspective but also from a broad cultural perspective. This book is a very welcome addition to the series.

Kerry J. Kennedy

Series Editor

Joseph Divala, Juliet Perumal and Elizabeth Henning

Co-Series Editors

Preface

Quality Assurance (QA) is a *conditio sine qua non* tenet in Higher Education (HE) as in any other societal organisation. It is a mouthpiece for the imperative of, and at once the epic striving for, QUEST (quality in every single task). In the domain of HE it advocates for the urgency of innovation in the core functions of university-level institutions: translated as teaching and learning, research and knowledge transfer partnerships, and community engagement and development.

This book is premised on QA in HE within the perspectives of education in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA), an area which is part of sub-Saharan Africa. As defined by UNICEF, ESA is a 'geographically diverse region that stretches from the Red Sea in the north to the Cape of Good Hope in the south'. The focus of the book zeroes in on the representativeness of eight countries that include Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania in the Eastern Region; and Malawi, Namibia, Botswana and South Africa in the Southern region, without in the least negating the contribution from Eswatini. The views advanced in this book are without prejudice to continental African HE regulatory authorities and are of course in agreement with global trends.

The content of this book is informed by the phenomenon that, in an educational setting, and specifically in regard to advancing and innovating HE and professional development, the processes of knowledge production, dissemination and storage can only be certified as universally acceptable when there exists a functional framework for monitoring, auditing and reviewing the content of what is offered. For, in consonance with the assertion of Haruna Yakubu that knowledge itself is not sufficient until it is translated into a form of benefit or reward for the society, the perennial question remains thus: Who determines what should be perceived as universally acceptable; and, who sets the standards? More so, is there any ideal that can be applied globally and equally in both degree and essence?

This book aims at examining the critical aspect of the QA maintenance of competitive standards, approaches and relevance of content, offered in relation to, and within, the micro- and macro-levels of HE in ESA. It is envisaged to be a resource and, accordingly, provides references for thinking in diverse ways about how to establish and ensure quality in HE in the region. It is therefore a reference tool for policy makers in government, academic staff and students, HE institutions, the Church - *Mater et Magistra*, as well as practitioners and researchers in the twin-field of QA and HE.

Peter Neema-Abooki
Editor

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Peter Neema-Abooki

Editor

Abbreviations

AAU	Association of African Universities
ACET	Adult and Community Education and Training
ACP	Caribbean and the Pacific regions
AfriQuan	African Quality Assurance Network
AHERS	African Higher Education and Research Space
AKEPT	Higher Education Leadership Academy
ANQAHE	Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
APQN	Asia Pacific Quality Network
AQRM	African Quality Rating Mechanism
ARISE	Africa Regional International Staff/Student Exchange
ASC	Art for social change
ASG-QA	African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
AUC	African Union Commission
AVU	African Virtual University
BCN	Bachelor of Clinical Nutrition
BIFA	Bachelor of Industrial and Fine Arts
BIUST	Botswana University of Science and Technology
CAMES	African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education
CANQATE	Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education
CEDAT	College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology
CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
CHE	Council on Higher Education
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
CSC	Cambridge School Certificate
CTEF	Commonwealth Tertiary Education Facility
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Service
DICTS	Directorate of Information and Communication Technologies
EAC	East African Community
EAQAN	East African Quality Assurance Network
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
ENQA	European National Quality Assurance Agency

EPA	Extension Planning Area
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
ETSSP	Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan
ETU	Eckernforde Tanga University
EUA	European University Association
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross enrolment ratio
GIQAC	Quality Assurance Capacity
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
HAQAA	The Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Initiative
HAQAAI	Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Initiative
HE	Higher education
HEAC	Higher Education Accreditation Council
HEIs	Higher educational institutions
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HEQMIS	Higher Education Quality Management Initiatives for Southern Africa
HESLB	Higher Education Students' Loans Board
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HKMU	Hubert Kairuki Memorial University
HRBA	Human rights-based approach
HRENs	National Research and Education Networks
IAD	Institute for African Development
ICQAHEA	International Conference and Workshops on Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa
ICT	Information and communications technology
IK	Indigenous knowledge
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IPA	Institute of Public Administration
IUC	Inter-University Council
IUCEA	Inter University Council of East Africa
KCN	Kamuzu College of Nursing
KIST	Kigali Institute of Science and Technology
KIUT	Kampala International University in Tanzania
KUHES	Kamuzu University of Health Sciences
KyU	Kyambogo University
LMD	Licence-Master-Doctorate
LMS	Learning management systems
LUANAR	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
MAFA	Master of Fine Arts
Mak	Makerere University

MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MESA	Mainstreaming Environment and Sustainability into African Universities
MKOs	More knowledgeable others
MoE&S	Ministry of Education and Sports
MTSIFA	Makerere University's Margaret Trowel School of Industrial and Fine Art
MUBAS	Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences
MUST	Malawi University of Science and Technology
Mzuni	Mzuzu University
NAFORI	National Forestry Research Institute
NAFRI	National Fisheries Research Institute
NAPP	New Academic Practitioners Programme
NARO	National Agriculture Research Organisation
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NEMA	National Environment Management Authority of Uganda
NESP	National Education Policy
NFE	Non-formal education
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPM	New Public Management
NUR	National University of Rwanda
ODE	Open and Distance Education
ODEL	Open distance e-learning
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OLPC	One Laptop Per Child
PAQAF	Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework
PCK	Pedagogical content knowledge
PDD	Planning and Development Department
PMS	Performance management system
PPP	Public-private sector partnership
QA	Quality assurance
QAHEL	Quality Assurance for Higher Education Leaders
QEP	Quality Enhancement Project
QM	Quality Management
QS	Quest for Synergy
QUEST	Quality in Every single Task
RDG	Rwanda Development Gateway Group
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
RSA	Republic of South Africa
RUFORUM	Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture
Rwednet	Rwanda Education and Research Network
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADC-CATS	SADC Credit Accumulation and Transfer System
SADCQF	SADC Regional Qualifications Framework

SA-Hi-pvt	High-ranked private university in South Africa
SA-Low-pvt	Low-ranked private university in South Africa
SA-Mid-pvt	Mid-ranked private university in South Africa
SAQAN	Southern African Quality Assurance Network
SARUA	Southern Africa Universities Association
SD	Sustainable Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSAUF	Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework
TCU	Tanzania Commission for Universities
TEA	Tanzania Education Authority
TQM	Total quality management
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UB	University of Botswana
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDSM	University of Dar es Salaam
UEA	Federal University of East Africa
UK-NARIC	United Kingdom National Recognition Information Centre
UMI	Uganda Management Institute
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNCST	Uganda National Council for Science and Technology
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEMG	United Nations Environment Management Group
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund originally known as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
Unik	University of Kisubi
UNIMA	University of Malawi
UoB	University of Bagamoyo
UON	University of Nairobi
UOTIA	Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act
UPE	Universal Primary Education
UR-CE	University of Rwanda College of Education
USAID	United Nations Agency for International Development
USE	Universal Secondary Education
UUQAF	Ugandan Universities Quality Assurance Forum
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
WCCES	World Council of Comparative Education Societies
WIL	Work-integrated learning
WOUGNET	Women of Uganda Network

Introduction

Quality education in Eastern and Southern Africa – retrospectives and perspectives

Peter Neema-Abooki

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Justification

Defined from the higher education context, the basic understanding of the concept of ‘quality’ is dependent on a set of perspectives based on the understandings of various interests of different constituencies or stakeholders in higher education (HE), its references, the attributes or characteristics of the academic world, and the historical period in the development of HE (Zabaadi, 2013), among others. While ‘quality’ is an aspect often designed to embrace effectiveness, efficiency and accountability (Kihwelo, 2013), quality assurance (QA) is a combination of planned and systematic activities implemented in an education system so that the quality requirement for education is fulfilled when compared with some acceptable standard (Kihwelo, 2013; Sanga & Ahn, 2014). It is also a systematic measurement, a comparison with a standard, the monitoring of processes and an associated feedback loop that confers error prevention (Kihwelo, 2013). All in all, QA is quotidian.

While ‘quality education’ is considered as one of the major elements that guarantee sustainable economic and social development at the national and regional levels of a given economy, Sanga and Ahn (2014) propose that ‘quality of education’ is relative and varies from one education system to another and is subjective, varying with time and societal expectation.

Over the past two decades, QA processes in HE have become increasingly a common phenomenon. Factors that have contributed to this development include advocacy by the government and industry for a well-educated workforce, which per se is essential for increased productivity and to maintain a competitive edge in the global knowledge economy (Nicholson, 2011). Accordingly, with globalisation in the twenty-first century, higher education institutions (HEIs) are presented with a number of challenges and opportunities which include how to assure quality in HE and to enhance global competitiveness (Hou, 2014). Today, with the rapid expansion of HEIs and the increasing market-based orientation, stakeholders have much greater interest in the actual academic quality of universities and colleges (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Thus, several mechanisms of assessing quality in HE have developed recently based on processes and purpose including QA (Carrasco, 2013).