

REPORT OF THE 12TH ANNUAL EAST AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE FORUM

Theme:

Nurturing Emerging Trends in Higher Education
through Quality Assurance

BUJUMBURA, BURUNDI

5th - 8th September 2023



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List Of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAU	Association of African Universities
AFRIQAN	African Quality Assurance Network
AI	Artificial intelligence
ALU	Africa Leadership University
AMAQ- ES	Mauritanian Higher Education Quality Assurance Authority
ANAQ	National Quality Assurance Agency
ANAQ –ESU	National Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
ANAQ-Guinée	The National Quality Assurance Agency in Guinea
ANEAQ	The National Agency for Evaluation and Quality Assurance of Higher Education and Scientific Research
ASG-QA	African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance
AU	African Union
BMAS	Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards
CUE	Commission for University Education
CNAQ	Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Mozambique
CNES	Commission Nationale de l'Enseignement Supérieur du Burundi
COREVIP	Conference for Rectors, Vice Chancellors, and Presidents of African Universities
DAAD	German Academic Exchange Services
DIES	Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies
DOAJ	Directory of Open Access Journals
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DVC	Deputy Vice Chancellor
EAC	East African Community
EAQAN	East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network
EAQFHE	East African Qualification Framework for Higher Education
ECOWAS RQF	Economic Community of West African States Regional Qualifications Framework
EQA	External Quality Assurance
FOBAQ	"Forum Burundais d'Assurance Qualité"

HAQAA	Harmonization of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Africa
HEC	Higher Education Council
HEI(s)	Higher Education Institution(s)
HRK	German Rectors Conference
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IF	Impact Factor
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
IUCEA	Inter-University Council for East Africa
KuQAN	Kenya Universities Quality Assurance Network
LMD	License- Master- Doctorat
MOOCS	Massive Open Online Courses
NACVET	National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
NAQAA	National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority
NCHE	National Council for Higher Education
NRA	National Regulatory Agencies
PAQAA	Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation
QA	Quality Assurance
RAFANAQ	« Le Réseau Africain Francophone des Agences Nationales d'Assurance Qualité »
RGB	Rwanda Governance Board
RWAQAN	Rwanda Higher Education Quality Assurance Network
SADC-QR	Southern African Development Community Qualifications Recognition Manual
TCU	Tanzania Commission for Universities
TUQAF	Tanzania Universities Quality Assurance Forum
SADC-QR	Southern African Development Community Qualifications Recognition Manual
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UUQAF	Ugandan Universities' Quality Assurance Forum
VC	Vice Chancellor

Acknowledgement



This report of the 12th East African Higher Education Quality Assurance (EAQAN) Forum, held from 5th to 8th September 2023 in Bujumbura- Burundi, is the result of a collaboration with a number of partners and experts. First and foremost, IUCEA would like to express special gratitude to the President of EAQAN, Dr. Abdallah Baguma, for the overall leadership in the whole process of organizing this forum. Sincere

thanks are extended to the "Commission Nationale de l'Enseignement Supérieur (CNES) of Burundi" under the leadership of Professor Leonidas Ndayizeye, for hosting the Forum and providing technical support on the preparation and organization of the Forum jointly with IUCEA and the EAQAN Executive Committee, both in terms of logistics and its content.

We are much obliged to the Forum speakers, presenters and participants including Government officials, National Councils & Commissions for Higher Education in the EAC Partner States, continental quality assurance initiatives, Higher Learning Institutions leaders and individual members, higher education funding organisations, regional quality assurance networks, quality assurance practitioners, country chapters and students' representatives. This report is based on presentations and insights shared by participants.

A heartfelt appreciation goes to our development partners OBREAL Global and DAAD and to all the East African Quality Assurance Agencies (Commissions and Councils) and all University Managers who attended the Forum. Great appreciation to all invited Quality Assurance Agencies from different part of Africa such as RAFANAQ (ably represented by Dr. Abdou Lahate Cisse) for honouring our invitation to be part of this Forum.

We thank all the members of EAQAN and members of the Quality Assurance Country Chapters from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. Special thanks to the participants from the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of South Sudan for being able to join the regional family of quality assurance practitioners. Lastly, we thank all individuals who attended the 12th EAQAN Forum.



Prof. Gaspard Banyankimbona

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Executive Summary

The 12th EAQAN Forum was held at King's Conference centre in Bujumbura, Burundi from 5th to 8th September 2023. Some participants attended virtually.

The overall objective of the Forum was to identify and reflect on the emerging trends in Higher Education and share experiences on how to nurture them through quality Assurance systems. The Forum comprised a two-day conference that was guided by presentations on the theme and sub-themes, a General Assembly of the Network and a high-level dialogue.

The Conference focused on the role of QA in nurturing the emerging trends such as:

- **Emergence of technologies (including AI):** quality assurance systems require innovative pedagogy and method of assessment to be student-centred, personalized, practical, technology driven. They also require curriculum reforms, stronger professionals and adequate infrastructure that address the digital literacy gaps.
- **Internationalization and globalization:** quality assurance practitioners need to strengthen networks and collaboration with regional, continental and international platforms in the implementation of higher education reforms in the areas of academic qualifications, harmonization, programme accreditation, policies, etc.
- **Education reforms:** Competence- Based Curricula should be developed in collaboration with the private sector and government employers to prepare graduates for the job market. These should be reviewed with reference to the existing regional programme benchmarks (to foster harmonization).
- **Global declining funding:** HEIs need to enhance collaboration amongst themselves and share human and physical resources. They need to adopt new funding models.

- **Liberal education:** HEIs need to adopt curricula which provide students a broad exposure to multiple disciplines and allow them to augment their degrees
- **Global declining student numbers** especially in the Western universities: quality assurance stakeholders need to focus on integrating quality in all HLIs systems, i.e. for both academic and non-academic roles to be able to retain local students.
- **Africa youth bulge** versus aging population in the West: teaching should be skills-centred so that graduates are more life-long learners, critical thinkers, programme-solvers, good communicators, etc. and are adequately prepared for jobs in the West.

Focus was also put on the available opportunities for quality assurance practitioners as well as the progress in the domestication of the continental standards and guidelines for harmonization, accreditation and quality assurance.

During the General Assembly on the third day, the main activities included the presentation and discussion on the report of activities and financial report of the Executive Committee and the election of a new Committee.

The fourth day was focused on a high-level engagement with heads of National Commissions and Councils for Higher Education, Vice Chancellors, other higher education managers, development partners and other invited experts. Their reflections focused on the role of HEIs governance and higher education regulatory bodies with regards to the emerging trends as well as accreditation in the digital era Management and innovative pedagogy.

Background

Established in 2012 by the Inter- University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) in partnership with German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Germany Rectors' Conference (HRK) and DIES as a strategic network of quality assurance practitioners in the East African Community Partner States (EAC), the East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN) is very instrumental in providing its members a platform to share experiences on key issues of quality assurance. In addition, the Network provides its members opportunities for capacity building and collaboration with other QA practitioners in the region and beyond.

On annual basis, EAQAN conducts forums in the East Africa Community Partner States on rotational basis to discuss emerging issues in quality assurance. This 12th Forum was guided by the theme "Nurturing Emerging Trends in Higher Education through Quality Assurance". It was held at King's Conference Centre in Bujumbura, Burundi from 5th to 8th September 2023. The Forum was also attended virtually by some participants.

The objective of the Forum was to identify and reflect on the emerging trends in Higher Education and share experiences on how to nurture them through quality Assurance systems.

During the Forum, keynote addresses were presented, together with papers that were solicited through a call for papers. The presentations were structured around the theme and sub-themes of the Forum, with specific sessions addressing key topics. The Network also held its Annual General Assembly as stipulated in the Constitution. The Assembly involved all Quality Assurance Practitioners from country chapters and other invited participants. The Forum was concluded by a high-level dialogue, which included panels of heads of HLIs, heads of National Commissions and Councils for Higher Education and a mixed panel of quality assurance practitioner, postgraduate student and head of a doctoral school.

12TH EAQAN FORUM AT A GLANCE



Conference (5-6 September 2023)

The first three- days of the conference involved IUCEA, Government officials, National Councils & Commissions for Higher Education in the EAC Partner States, continental quality assurance initiatives, Higher Learning Institutions leaders and individual members, higher education funding organisations, African continental initiatives for harmonization of quality assurance & accreditation systems, regional quality assurance networks, quality assurance practitioners, country chapters and students representatives. It focused on the role of QA in nurturing emerging trends in Higher Education.

DAY ONE- Tuesday 5Th September 2023

Registration of Participants

On Tuesday September 5, 2023 began the meetings of the East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network Forum (EAQAN) at King's Conference Center, in Bujumbura; under the theme "Nurturing Emerging Trends in Higher Education through Quality Assurance". Activities always begun by a physical registration of participants (see lists in Annex 1) and personalized badges were distributed. After settling in, participants could follow the day's activities which also saw the virtual participation of several quality assurance practitioners. The following paragraphs outline the progress of the activities of the Forum which lasted 4 days, from September 5th to 8th, 2023

PARTICIPANTS KEY STATISTICS

68 QA PRACTITIONERS	5 HEADS OF NCHE	17 VCs	9 IUCEA
6 GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS	2 DAAD	2 O'BREAL GLOBAL	1 AAU
1 RAFANAQ	1 NAQAAE	1 STUDENT	19 ONLINE PARTICIPANTS

Session 1: The official opening



Officials during the opening ceremonies:

From left to right: Dr. Baguma Abdallah, President of EAQAN; Dr. Apio Okwiri, OBREAL Global; HAAQA initiatives -OBREAL; Prof. Bangirinama Frederic, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of National Education in Burundi; Prof. Gaspard Bangirinama, the ES IUCEA; Prof. Leonidas Ndayizeye, the Executive Permanent Secretary, National Commission for Higher Education in Burundi; Dr. Leonie Schoelen, Senior Desk Officer, Higher Education Management Development

1.1 Introductory Remarks

The opening ceremonies were **facilitated by Professor Michael Mawa, Chief Principal Quality Assurance & Qualifications Framework at Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), and Dr. Joseph Cosam, Coordinator of the EASTRIP Project at IUCEA** as Masters of Ceremonies. The session was opened with the singing of the national anthem of Burundi, the anthem of the EAC as well as an introductory prayer which was read by Ms. Jane Mugo the Kenya Country Chapter representative. The moderator, Dr. Cosam, first appreciated the Government and the people of Burundi for hosting the 12th EAQAN Forum. He also thanked all the participants for finding time to come and grace the official opening as the majority were coming to Burundi for the 1st time. Chief Guest Host was the Representative of the Minister of Higher Education in Burundi, HE Frédéric Bangirinama.

1.2 Welcome Remarks, by Permanent Executive Secretary of the Commission for Higher Education in Burundi (CNES)

The welcome remarks were made by **Permanent Executive Secretary of the Commission for Higher Education in Burundi (CNES), Professor Leonidas Ndayizeye**. He expressed his warm and heartfelt welcome to Burundi as the 12th EAQAN Forum constitutes a great opportunity to strategize and in order to uphold excellence in higher education. His appreciation went to all the participants who could make it to King's Conference Center, Bujumbura, but also to the present dignitaries such as the Executive Secretary of IUCEA, the Executive Secretary of National commissions/Councils of Higher Education, the Vice-chancellors and Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Directors, etc. Indeed, as Professor Ndayizeye stated, education plays a pivotal role in shaping the destinies of our nations by empowering the next generation of leaders, researchers, and change-makers, who will collectively shape the course of our shared future.

The CNES Permanent Executive Secretary concluded his welcome remarks by inviting the participants to seize the full potential of the 12th EAQAN Forum, engage ardently, learn earnestly, and establish connections that will pave the way for an even brighter educational landscape across East Africa.

1.3 Statement by Development Partners: Goodwill & Support Message

Development partners, namely O'BREAL Global and DAAD, also made remarks during the opening ceremonies. The first remarks were made by **Ms. Opio Okwiri** representing the President of **O'BREAL Global** & Coordinator of the HAQAA Initiative. Okwiri appreciated being there and highlighted the role of participants through different projects on the continent such as harmonization of higher education. Commented on the need to build hence, there is a need to build a quality culture in education and that will be possible through collaboration and networking with professors from universities and practitioners from other agencies.

Another development partner who made opening remarks was **Dr. Leonie Schoelen, Senior Desk Officer, Higher Education Management Development Cooperation: Partnership Programmes, Alumni Projects and Higher Education Management, DAAD Bonn**. After expressing her delight for being invited to take part to the 12th EAQAN Forum, she affirmed that

the event should be used as platform for long and successful history of collaboration with IUCEA. Members were informed that on the eve of the 60th anniversary of DAAD in Africa, the forum will allow the partners to take higher education to the next level through expanding training, supervision, establishing new initiatives, and facilitating exchange with CAMES. Dr. Leonie expected great input from the various presentations during the forum and wished reinforcement of the ongoing initiatives. Dr. Schoelen informed participants about the different training and capacity building opportunities available for teaching and administrative staff. These include;

- a. International Deans Course (IDC): This mainly targeted managers, deans, deputy deans in (Africa, South East Asia and Latin America). The content includes; strategic planning, quality management, research management, soft skills, individual change projects.
- b. UNILEAD: The target group is management staff from central university departments and junior advisors to university leadership (Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, and South East Asia). The content focused on management and human resource management.
- c. Train IQA: The target group is usually quality assurance officers from HEIs in Anglophone, Francophone Africa and South East Asia. These are often trained in internal quality assurance, designing effective learning, linkages to external quality assurance, individual reform projects (PAP).
- d. Management of Internationalization (Moi): The target group is Directors of international offices in Africa, Latin America, Middle East and Southeast Asia). The content is knowledge and competencies of internationalization.
- e. National Multiplication Trainings to support the alumni and foster the sustainability and multiplication of knowledge. The target group were mainly DIES alumni who wished to multiply their knowledge. These are supported by training committees comprised of 50% DIES Alumni.

1.4 Welcome remarks by President, EAQAN – Dr. Abdallah BAGUMA

In his welcome remarks, the outgoing **President of EAQAN, Dr. Abdallah Baguma** welcomed participants to the 12th regional quality assurance conference hosted by IUCEA, CNES & EAQAN and appreciated their support. Based on the theme of the conference Dr. Baguma asserted that the objective of the Forum was to enhance quality, collaboration and networking among quality assurance practitioners through the sharing of information and best practices. Dr. BAGUMA called upon the participants to think about the implementation of the role of the EAQAN members as higher education continuously diversifies and comes with emerging trends and challenges. There was need to evaluate how new trends were impacting on quality in higher learning institutions.

The EAQAN President stressed that the 12th EAQAN Forum was structured in a manner that promises great outcomes because of the various packages responding to the dialogue such as presentations, panel sessions, benchmarking activities, high level dialogue with heads of learning institutions and regulatory bodies.

Dr. BAGUMA acknowledged the different partners of the EAQAN such as the collaboration with the RAFANAC, the EAQAN secretariat, IUCEA Executive Secretariat, CNES Permanent Secretary and development partners, namely O'BREAL Global and DAAD.

1.5 Opening Speech by the IUCEA Executive Secretary, Prof Gaspard Banyankimbona

Delivering his speech, the **IUCEA Executive Secretary, Professor Gaspard Banyankimbona**, warmly welcomed the participants to the 12th East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN) Forum. As the network is forging the way to improving quality education in East African Community and building a more resilient and competitive EAC higher education, in a special way, he welcomed delegates from the Republic of South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo who were attending the EAQAN forum for the very first time. As a reminder, Professor Banyankimbona, stated that the IUCEA is one of the strategic institutions of the EAC with a mandate to advise the East African Community (EAC) Partner States on higher education

matters and to contribute to the strategic development of higher education and research in the region. In this regard, EAQAN was formally established in 2012 by IUCEA as a vital platform where quality assurance practitioners could annually meet to share development in higher education quality assurance and discuss on standards and benchmarks to facilitate delivery of quality education in the region.

Professor Banyankimbona envisions the 12th EAQAN as special because its establishment comes at a time of transformation in the education sector, new trends were emerging, ranging from pedagogical approaches, virtual learning and artificial intelligence. That is why, the IUCEA, through the EAQAN, needs to transform its policies as provider in terms of outlook, purpose, and relevance in education. The IUCEA Executive Secretary added that new trends evolve and that there is no choice rather that dealing with them so as to ensure there was no abuse. All this will be possible thanks to the EAQAN as a platform for sharing good practices and experiences and initiating necessary actions to enhance quality higher education at both regional and continental level. While concluding his speech, Professor Banyankimbona expressed his appreciation towards the organizing committee of the forum and development partners such as the Government of Germany through DAAD and to the European Union through O'BREAL.

1.6 Official opening by the Chief Guest, Representative of the Minister of Higher Education in Burundi, Professor Frédéric Bangirinama

The Chief Guest of the Opening Ceremonies of the 12th EAQAN Forum was **Professor Frédéric Bangirinama, Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Higher Education in Burundi; representing the Minister who could not make it to the Forum due to his loaded agenda. Welcoming the EAQAN participants to Bujumbura**, Professor Bangirinama proceeded with reminding participants about the theme of the forum and urging participants that everyone should be aware of new trends in education so as to assure quality training in higher education. To achieve such a tremendous goal, all the stakeholders were argued to use the EAQAN Forum as an opportunity to strategize and develop strong recommendations to improve higher education in the region and beyond.

Professor Bangirinama highlighted that the conference was timely when there is great discussion on the quality of education in developing countries and the EAC region must ensure quality of education is assured at all times. The chief guest argued that East African citizens should be aware of the many changes in higher education ranging from a paradigm shift in the teaching approach to focus much more on transformative education. A transformative education would prompt the contribution of graduates to address societal problems throughout their dissertations.

In the context of emerging trends in education, the Chief Guest was delighted that there were various presentations on quality assurance and other related topics to be made by renown experts in the field from our own region and from outside. There was no doubt that the presentations would suggest indigenous solutions in the East African way to resolve issues and come up with relevant solutions to the challenges faced by higher education institutions. He recommended that it was essential that all universities join the network in order to improve quality in higher education as the EAQAN gives room for experience sharing and good practices.

Session 2- Keynote presentations

During this session, two keynote presentations were made by Elizabeth Colucci and Professor Mike KURIA. Both presentations were delivered virtually and the session was moderated by **Professor Michael Mawa**.

2.1 Keynote presentation 1: Inter- regional higher education cooperation for development: the example of comparative quality assurance and regional integration



Elizabeth Colucci, Director of O'BREAL Global & Coordinator- HAAQA Initiative making her presentation.

The first keynote presentation was made by Elizabeth Colucci on quality assurance and regional integration under the topic "Inter-regional higher education cooperation for development: The example of comparative quality assurance and regional integration".

The presenter informed participants that O'BREAL's vision was to facilitate and achieve sustainable South-South-North cooperation based on reciprocity, mutual knowledge transfer and commitment to common global challenges. O'BREAL as a development partner promotes dialogue and synergies between the governmental, academic and social sectors in a way that takes into account the diversity of the world regions and strengthens inter-regional cooperation through collaborative projects, knowledge production and policy dialogue.

Elizabeth described how traditional higher education and research cooperation programmes and partnerships prioritized areas of inter-regional action in the fields of higher education in transformation giving examples of internationalization and digitalization of learning for the sustainability of higher learning institutions in local development.

The presentation focused much on the current pressures that the higher education sector is facing in the context where Artificial Intelligence advancing at a high rate for example ChatGPT and the like. In this context, higher education institutions are expected to harness digitalization through an innovative transformation of learning and teaching. HEIs being agents in the innovation ecosystem would drive employability through the production of employable graduates in a fast-evolving labor market in order to respond to national development needs aligning with the SDGs. However, for HEIs to meet national, regional and international quality standards there were still some obstacles and limitations such as increased student enrolment, insufficient investment and public funding, infrastructure and connectivity, limited staff development opportunities; and less flexibility in the regulatory systems.

According to Ms. Colucci, there was a strong need to establish quality standards fit into a landscape where ultimately an 'international' accreditation is seen to have more value. This would be achieved through harmonization of higher education and training systems in the East African Community (EAC) by establishing a common frame of reference to facilitate comparability, compatibility and mutual recognition. At the continental level, there must be revitalization and expansion of tertiary education, research and innovation to address continental challenges and promote global competitiveness and platforms like the PAQAF (Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework) would serve to that end.

Ms. Colucci concluded her presentation with the following food for thought as take home for the participants:

- a. What does thinking 'outside the box' mean to you as a QA professional?
- b. What do you gain from cooperation and exchange in the regional space?
Can the regional space nurture this?

- c. What could you gain from broader cooperation and exchange? From a broader African perspective? From an inter-regional S-S perspective?
- d. How can elements and practices of 'quality' relate to how we conceive higher education as a motor for development and a sustainable future?

2.2 Keynote presentation 2: Nurturing Emerging Trends in Higher Education through Quality Assurance By Professor Mike Kuria, Chief Executive Officer, Commission for University Education, Kenya



Professor Mike Kuria, Chief Executive Officer, Commission for University Education, Kenya making his presentation

The second keynote presentation was delivered by **Professor Mike Kuria** on the main theme of the Forum, that is "Nurturing emerging trends in higher education through quality assurance".

The presentation addressed the emerging trends and the challenges that higher education is currently facing such as limited funding, the demographic dynamics across the world, the future of jobs, the emerging technologies, internationalization/globalization and education reforms. Professor Kuria introduced his presentation by asking questions revolving around the idea

if it is time for higher education in East Africa to set its own pace, if the 12th meeting of EAQAN could be time for quality assurance practitioners in East Africa to pause and reflect, and if it is now time for Africa to innovate and change the world or if we can play catch up forever.

In reference to challenges encountered, the presenter argued that The higher education institutions is faced by several emerging trends and challenges such as; funding challenges, demographic dynamics across the world, the future of work, emerging technologies, internationalization and globalization and education reforms.

The presenter also invited participants to the forum to reflect about the demographic dynamics being a problem or an opportunity. Hence, in Europe, the population is aging and wonder where future labor will come from. The young population in African and other developing countries should consider this an opportunity but this as an opportunity when the youth is skilled and employed while it is a time bomb when the youth have acquired wrong skills and hence are unemployed. Statistics show that, in Africa, 25% of the youth are unemployed. Relatedly, there are more youth rates on unemployment than twice that of adults and the mismatch between the number of educated young people seeking jobs and the availability of formal, high-quality jobs adding to the constraint of young people being inadequately prepared for such roles in the context of emerging technologies and the threats of AI.

Expressing concern that while there are more job seekers than the jobs, technology has made the jobs more defunct and artificial intelligence is more creative than the human brain. Technological adaptation is taking a shorter time to be adapted by the final consumer. This calls for the need to train and retrain students to avoid the useless class. Graduates need to be instilled with certain skills to help them survive. It is the role of the universities in changing times to understand and interpret the process of change. By harnessing change for general benefits, educating and training higher quality specialist worker whose skills are necessary to address change. The key note speaker challenged the quality assurance practitioners to show how they would respond to these challenges by providing curricular reforms for the fifth job.

In spite of the forces of internationalization and regionalization the Bologna process uniting Europe, the declaration of the EAC as a common higher education area, the UNESCO Qualifications Passport (refugees), the Addis Convention (13 countries ratified), Harmonization Of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA), African continental accreditation framework, the rise and demand for international accreditation (IUCEA lead EAC Programme Accreditation).

The speaker acknowledged local innovations such as the world's oldest university Al-Qarawiyyin, was established in Egypt by a Muslim Woman in 859 AD and local innovations such as Safaricom established in 2007 currently reaching 42 million customers in Kenya. The speaker questioned whether there could be an opportunity for local innovations in the context of Higher Education and advancement in Technologies?

He also questioned whether it was about time that universities took control of their own quality assurance systems by strengthening the Internal Quality Assurance Systems? Was it time that HEIs implemented Volume 4 of the Quality Assurance –Road Map to Quality?

In concluding the presentation, Professor Mike Kuria invited the participants and higher education practitioners in general to consider curriculum review for needed innovative flexibility, customize degree programmes and adapt teaching methods to the changing world so as for them to be much more student-centered for an active learning where teachers will act as facilitators. For this to happen, the region will need stronger QA offices able to handle and monitor the growth and nurture a culture of quality focusing on markets beyond "our borders both for import and export". In EAC, this would be achieved through networking and collaboration rather than competition.

Session 3: Transforming Teaching and Learning

This session was **chaired by Professor Masoud Muruke**, the Former EAQAN President, from the University of Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania. It focused on the model of higher education how institutions of higher learning should innovate their teaching methods and quality assurance systems to respond to the emerging trends in higher education.

3.1. Innovative pedagogies and Technologies: by Dr. Nhlanhla Thwala, The Vice- Chancellor and Provost, African Leadership University of Rwanda



Dr. Nhlanhla Thwala, the Vice-Chancellor and Provost of the African Leadership University in Rwanda making his presentation

Dr. Nhlanhla Thwala, the Vice-Chancellor and Provost of the African Leadership University in Rwanda, commenced his presentation with thought-provoking insights regarding the roles of universities and the state of quality assurance systems. He initially highlighted Africa's burgeoning and youthful population, emphasizing that the tertiary sector in Africa should be more extensive compared to other global regions. However, this is not the case, as Africa currently exhibits the lowest enrollment rates in higher education.

Additionally, Dr. Thwala noted that despite having a relatively smaller higher education sector, a considerable number of graduates struggle to secure employment. Moreover, among those who are employed, many find themselves overqualified for the positions they hold. This situation underscores the existing deficiency in quality assurance mechanisms aimed at producing individuals equipped with the necessary skills for the workforce.

The third observation underscored the inadequacy in the production of Ph.D. holders by universities. Despite their pivotal role in managing higher education institutions, there remains a shortage of these highly qualified individuals within the academic landscape.

In light of these challenges, Dr. Thwala proposed four key elements essential for a model of higher education that Africa requires. He emphasized that Africa's higher education model should be tailored to the continent's context while retaining a global perspective. To achieve this, he outlined two fundamental steps: firstly, integrating the inherited colonial model into local contexts to generate a meaningful social impact within communities; secondly, comprehending the unique challenges and circumstances faced by universities in their respective locations.

Dr. Thwala further advocated for a balanced approach within universities, suggesting that they should not exclusively focus on preparing students for the labor market. Instead, he emphasized the importance of imparting both professional skills and cultivating a sense of grounded citizenship aligned with societal values. To fulfill this objective, he recommended the training of active learners and critical thinkers capable of not only pursuing a profession but also actively engaging and contributing to their local and national communities. The presenter additionally advocated for looking at a university from the Frugal innovation approach. This approach involves developing high-quality yet affordable solutions within resource-constrained environments, catering to low-income consumers. He highlighted the prevailing reality that education is conceived to serve the elite segments of society, neglecting the needs of the broader population. He emphasized that it is crucial to include and uplift the marginalized sections of society, as they are vital for overall societal development.

The third attribute highlighted in the model of higher education essential for Africa pertained to the necessity for universities to adopt intelligent innovation strategies, considering the prolonged government funding procedures prevalent in the region.

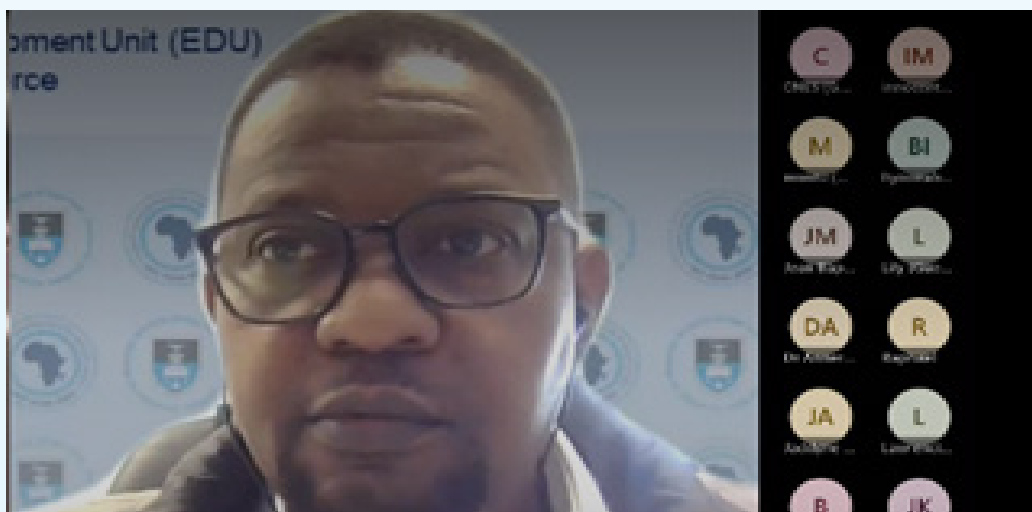
Lastly, Dr. Thwala stressed the significance of integrating a comprehensive approach into Africa's higher education systems. He emphasized that quality assurance mechanisms should ensure that students, as human beings, are holistically developed and equipped to navigate all facets of their lives

effectively.

In the context of those emerging trends, Dr. Thwala shared ALU responses that include the implementation of mission-based learning, enabling students to actively contribute to the community. They focus on instilling leadership skills, driving technological advancements, fostering interdisciplinary approaches within their curriculum, and emphasizing teamwork to underscore the importance of collaborative success rather than individual achievement. ALU also offers specialized programmes and cultivates an entrepreneurial mindset characterized by solution-oriented, adaptable, and antifragile approaches among its students.

To effectively tackle these emerging trends, he highlighted the necessity for a strong support system in term of faculty, student-life support, technology assistance, financial aid, and various other elements. He emphasized the importance of innovating new methods for quality assurance. Specifically, he suggested that quality assurance should adopt the principles of the Frugal innovation approach by adjusting existing standards to suit Africa's specific challenges. Moreover, he stressed the significance of placing greater emphasis on the community's perception of the impact made by students as the genuine measure of the university's success.

3.2. Innovative pedagogies and Technologies: by Dr Daniel Munene, Educational Development Unit of the University of Cape Town,



Dr Daniel Munene, Educational Development Unit of the University of Cape Town, South Africa making his presentation online

Dr. Munene informed members that the Educational Development Unit was established in 1929 and was primarily intended to promote quality and access of education for the elite and the white community. However, after 1994, it was opened for all students including those from marginalized community groups.

As the presenter underscored, this Development Unit has several development activities. During the admission, orientation and induction processes, students are provided with administrative support. Among other activities, there is teaching, learning and curriculum support to enable teachers in their work to give the best to the students. Beyond the classroom environment, each student is equipped with best skills through an innovations and skills set which allows them to open up. This is made possible through compulsory course in accounting and the familiarization with the use of card system.

The philosophy behind the creation of this Unit was to foster transformation for access and success to equally treat disadvantaged students and promote quality education for all. Another dimension to reach the goal is the mentorship program which allow students to ask questions and get assistance from teachers from Unit. So, if a student does not feel comfortable in this environment, there are alternatives such as self-worth, pride, confidence, ideas and reflection. The Unit's activities help students follow curricula that allow them extend their degree by its extra support. Applying the IKIGAI principal, students are organized in small groups and trained to working with the community in order to leave socially aware and in a responsible way.

Student development is also enhanced via mentoring and academic advising mechanisms where student-supervisor engagement has an impact on the whole process. Hence there is a likelihood for student making progress in their theses writing if they engaged supervisor more. Throughout the engagement collaboration between students and their supervisors, a study that was conducted revealed that 65.5% of the students preferred blended mode of engaging their supervisors while 20.5% preferred online model and 13.7% preferred face to face mode. The study showed that email was the most preferred digital tool by students.

3.3. Utilization of digital technologies for postgraduate supervision – implication for quality assurance: by Professor Raphael Nyonje, Coordinator- School of continuing and distance education programmes, Kisumu campus,



Professor Raphael Nyonje, Coordinator- School of continuing and distance education programmes, Kisumu campus, University of Nairobi, Kenya

The speaker reminded participants that the use of ICT in higher education intensified during the Covid period. However, the presenter acknowledged that these technologies have not been fully adapted in the supervision of postgraduate students. The presenter stressed that student-supervisor engagement has a significant impact on the thesis progress and that it should be taken seriously for quality outcomes. Participants were thus reminded that there are three ways of engagements while supervising PhD students namely face to face meetings, online meetings and the blended way. Professor Nyonje also mentioned that the engagement level of a student using technology depended on their attitude and willingness to use the available platforms such as email, skype, Facebook, YouTube, etc.

The Professor revealed some factors influencing progress on the postgraduate supervision journey above which are socio-economic challenges and digital skills. The findings of the study revealed that gender

was found having much has an impact on the work progress with female spending more time on their these with female students spending 10% longer time than their male counterparts. In relation to the frequency of supervisor engagement and thesis progression, majority of the students preferred a blended way of PhD supervisor engagement because the students possessed digital skills. However, on the other hand, the level of capacity as supervisors on the utilization of ICT tools was low on collaborative tools (google docs), social media (Facebook, tweeter etc), low on data collection (software) and low on data analysis (SPSS). The speaker urged the participants that they should go find the students where they are to smoothen the supervision process as many of them preferred blended mode of engagement.

During the discussion period, one of the participants raised that there was confusion about gender because they talked about sex rather than gender. So, it would be much appropriate to look into characteristics of the investigated female students who are said to be slow in their work. Maybe it might be good to look at the background variables and investigate other variables that can influence results, i.e., the age, the financial situation and professional experience because some PhD students are sometimes working and those who have been supervising other students may understand more. One of the suggestions was that the same study should be done after the completion of the program for the same students and consider the background for the female students and their social responsibilities which may hinder their progress. A big recommendation to this end was that PhD supervisors should do some training so as to serve their students properly since sometimes IT illiteracy hinder the supervision pace for example when some supervisors take time to respond to emails or request hard copies.

Discussions

Questions on this presentation were raised and responses were provided as follows:

Questions	Responses
How do you apply this innovation to larger groups of students?	Find tools that are fit for purpose, for example use online platforms such as chat rooms, chat box, Find what works for them.

Session 4: Quality Assurance and Ethics in Online Teaching and Learning

4.1. Utilization of digital technologies for postgraduate supervision – implication for quality assurance:

This session was chaired by Professor Justin Urasa, EAQAN Country Representative, United Republic of Tanzania and President TUQAF.

by Dr. Abbes Sebihi, Senior Curriculum Advisor, United Nations, Jordan

Dr. Sebihi informed participants that advancement in technology has changed the trend of higher education. Electronic devices have revolutionized communication in the modern times. While the number of persons using social media keeps growing, the role of education in the digital era, critical thinking, problem solving are now changing the approach of education.

Indeed the illiterate of the 21st Century according to the presenter are not those who cannot read and write, it is those who learn, relearn or unlearn. While the Bologna process has transformed higher education in Europe, develop MOOCS, blended learning, virtual programmes. These are processes African continents could consider for our systems and strategies.

The presenter provided reasons why we need to reflect on distance learning in the future. This is because it flexible, there is increasing users and providers, with Africa having 3 million users and 5 million courses. This calls for the reason for accreditation of distance education to enhance students' confidence, to march global competitiveness.

The presenter argued that quality and standards are ensured through having learning objectives by engaging content qualified instructors, using friendly technology, updating assessment strategies. These standards need to be sent with clear objectives, need to be two way with vertical and horizontal content, with regular students interaction forums, constructing knowledge chat rooms and wikies, the programmes should be accessible.

In the concluding remarks, the presenter argued participants to promote collaborations.

4.2 Ethical Adherence through Quality Assurance in e-learning at Higher Education:



Dr. Kassile Telemu, Director of Accreditation, Tanzania Commission for Universities and Dr. Julius Tweve, Secretary General, EAQAN, making their presentation.

Dr. Kassile Telemu and Dr. Julius Tweve's presentation centered on the connection between Quality Assurance and ethics in Online Teaching and Learning within the context of ICT developments. They highlighted the pivotal role of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in shaping societal norms and emphasized the pressing need to acknowledge the ethical dimensions of employing ICTs within academic settings. The presentation underscored the necessity for HEIs to engage in dedicated research targeting the ethical facets of ICT utilization, especially in the digital age.

Quality assurance was highlighted as an instrumental tool essential for fortifying the quality of education and facilitating the assimilation of emerging technologies into pedagogical practices. Within this context, it stressed the paramount importance of upholding ethical standards among stakeholders, advocating for the common good, safeguarding privacy, intellectual property rights, and personal data.

The paper stressed the global significance of adhering to ethical practices in higher education to enhance the delivery of educational services. It spotlighted the adherence of QA practitioners worldwide to institutional policies and guidelines.

The advancement of ICTs was recognized for its diverse ethical implications on institutions and Quality Assurance practitioners. Consequently, the awareness and adherence of higher education stakeholders to ethical standards through Quality Assurance were considered crucial in augmenting the quality of educational provision.

Discussions

Questions on this presentation were raised and responses were provided as follows:

Questions	Responses
Do we have a guideline about publishing work of the students we supervise without their consent?	Some countries have guidelines (e.g. in Tanzania the supervisor cannot publish or else it is considered plagiarism).

DAY TWO- Wednesday 6th September 2023

The day entailed several presentations and engagements. However, some presentations in session 5 were not presented.

Session 5: Digitalization of QA in Higher Education and QA of Non-Teaching in HEI official opening

5.1 Digital literacy gaps in promoting 21st century skills among students in higher education institutions in sub-Saharan Africa: Evidence from literature by Dr. Placidius Ndibalema, Senior Lecturer of digital media psychology and ICT pedagogical development, University of Dodoma, United Republic of Tanzania

Dr. Placidius Ndibalema found out from literature that digital literacy encompasses information literacy, media literacy, and ICT literacy, forming a critical foundation for navigating the modern information landscape. However, existing curricula often exhibit gaps in addressing these essential components, posing a significant challenge to fostering comprehensive digital competence.

During the COVID-19 era, it was discovered that in Sub-Saharan African universities, the shift to online teaching occurred at a significantly slower pace compared to other regions. In fact, some universities in this area faced complete closures due to their inadequate technological resources. Shockingly, approximately two-thirds of learners had never encountered online learning prior to this period. The challenges were multifaceted, including outdated technological infrastructure within the universities, a prevalent digital divide, unreliable internet access, and a lack of preparedness among lecturers to navigate online teaching methodologies, among other obstacles.

Moreover, inadequate support and a lack of sufficiently robust programmes further restrict our ability to harness the full potential of digital resources for education. To overcome these limitations, there is a clear imperative to fortify eLearning initiatives and institute comprehensive curriculum reforms that specifically target the existing gaps in digital literacy. Ensuring digital safety is also a pressing concern.

Furthermore, the presenter recommended universities to establish supportive structures that facilitate not only academic growth but also the spiritual and personal development of both students and staff, thus nurturing a holistic environment conducive to overall well-being and advancement.

5.1. Quality Assurance of Non-Teaching in Tanzania Higher Learning Institutions:



by Professor Justin Urasa, Deputy Rector of Planning, Finance & Administration at the Institute of Social Work in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania & Chairperson of the Tanzania Quality Assurance Forum (TUQAF) making his presentation

Prof. Justin Urasa observed that quality assurance (QA) plays a critical role in shaping the higher education landscape globally more so when done in a holistic manner. Holistic QA covers all the processes in a higher education institution, in order to serve the students and other stakeholders in expected quality standards. Nonetheless, success of any QA system depends on the support of the management.

Quality assurance has been diversely described based on four components; everyone in the enterprise has a responsibility for enhancing the quality of product or service; everyone in the enterprise has a responsibility for maintaining the quality of product or service; everyone in the enterprise understands, uses and feels ownership of the systems which are in place for maintaining and enhancing quality; and management regularly checks the validity of the system for checking quality NAAC and COL (2007) as cited by Kahveci et al. (2012:166)

The presenter informed how access and enrollment to higher education had increased through the years especially in the context of Tanzania from 0.17 % in 1970 (UNESCO (nd) as cited by The Global Economy.Com, 2023) to 8 % in 2020 (World Bank Group, 2023).

While academic quality assurance is emphasized, maintaining quality standards in non-teaching areas is also recognized as critical by TCU and universities. Many African universities face quality challenges in infrastructure, staffing, and program relevance thus the need for holistic quality assurance systems. Even then not all of the quality assurance studies conducted on HLIs in Tanzania have concentrated on academic issues (Machumu and Kisanga, 2014; Mgaiwa, 2018; Mwila et al., 2019; Njihia and Chilumika 2021; Mudaheranwa et al., 2022). Generally, the studies have concentrated on internal and external quality assurance/control and only mention non-teaching issues when it comes to staff hence, a lack of a good understanding on Tanzania's HLIs practice of holistic quality assurance that is critical for the performance of students and staff.

The objectives of the paper therefore sought to examine QA policies and procedures related to non-teaching activities in selected higher learning institutions (HLIs) in Tanzania. Determines Tanzania's higher education regulators (TCU and NACVET) guidelines on quality assurance of non-teaching roles. In this case, non-teaching functions include governance, administration, infrastructure, facilities, student services, staff welfare, and other support services.

The paper was based a systematic review quality assurance policy document from 12 Tanzanian accredited higher learning institutions (public and private). All the reviewed documents were accessed from the internet except the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM). Ten (10) policies were consulted one was a quality assurance manual, one a quality assurance good practices handbook and one the web contents of one of the Institution's quality assurance unit that showed its roles, and functions.

For data analysis Nvivo software (version 14) was used to analyze the above-mentioned quality assurance documents in order to identify content related to non-teaching quality assurance in areas of governance, administration, infrastructure, facilities, services, student experiences, and staff welfare. QA policies were analyzed using a project map in Nvivo to visually represent relationships between codes and themes Common themes were coded based on the frequency of occurrence. Using the Nvivo auto coding identified several codes that were grouped into various themes to fit the study's objectives.

In conclusion, majority of the policies put more emphasis on quality assurance of academic compared to the non-academic/teaching roles with quality assurance of the latter being superficially mentioned. It was evident that while academic quality assurance was emphasized, most policies acknowledged the enabling role of non-teaching activities. Lastly, it is concluded while TCU guidelines and regulations emphasize on quality assurance in non-teaching roles NACTVET is silent on the same.

The presenter provided the following recommendations: higher education regulators and HLIs need to come up with ways that will ensure quality assurance of non-teaching roles so as to improve the teaching and learning environment and ultimately quality of academic undertakings by students and academic staff. The study also recommended for a quantitative study to establish extent of compliance to holistic quality assurance in Tanzania's higher education as per existing regulatory bodies' regulations and guidelines.

The findings showed that generally, most of the HLIs QA documents are dominated with quality assurance of academic issues/activities i.e., teaching and research and that issues to do with QA in management/leadership, governance, administration; services, facilities, and infrastructure maintenance staff welfare matters such as housing incentives, professional development, and retention schemes got minimal attention. Despite the increasing policy focus on support services and infrastructure for students with disabilities the same was explicitly mentioned only in four of the QA documents (i.e., DUCE, OUT, MUHAS, & SUA). Observed also is that it is only the UDSM that specified monitoring of customer service quality.

Also observed is that TCU's 2019 'Handbook for Standards and Guidelines for University Education in Tanzania' to a great extent offer directives on quality assurance of non-teaching roles compared to the NACTVETS's 2001 Accreditation and Recognition Regulations (URT 2002). NACVET mentioned governance structures but does not provide information on quality assurance of non-academic services and facilities in the HLIs. Additionally, TCU guidelines in addition to providing guidelines on academic matters it offers clear directives on quality assurance of the following non-teaching roles:

Leadership, Governance Structures, Accounting and Payment Systems, Catering Services/Cafeteria and Canteen, Recreational and Sports Facilities, Students Accommodation and Staff housing Landscaping, Counseling Services, Career guidance and Spiritual Services

In summary, NACTVET's regulations and guidelines primarily focus on academic accreditation requirements related to teaching, learning, curriculum, assessments, resources, etc. Therefore, the regulations appear to be more concerned with educational standards and outcomes rather than secondary services and amenities. The emphasis is on technical pedagogy and recognized qualifications rather than peripheral aspects.

General discussions

Members agreed that for effective integration of non-teaching services, meticulous planning and budgeting are imperative. Additionally, involving external parties to evaluate the quality of these services is essential. However, garnering support from both academic and non-academic staff is crucial; it's essential to gain their commitment and involvement in the process. In essence, it's vital to unify and include everyone to ensure a comprehensive and collaborative approach.

Session 6: Role of Quality Assurance in Promoting Research and Innovation

6.1 Role of QA in Promoting Research and Innovation in higher education



by Professor Patrício V. Langa, Associate professor of Higher Education at the Institute for Post-School Studies, University of the Western Cape & Distinguished Professor, Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Mozambique making his presentation online

Professor Langa pointed out that the field of Quality Assurance (QA) faces challenges due to the scarcity of publications and a knowledge base addressing QA issues comprehensively. In terms of promoting Research and Innovation (R&I), there are pivotal roles that QA can undertake:

Firstly, it is essential to begin by acknowledging and understanding the existing design frameworks within our systems. Secondly, a crucial step involves implementing integrative QA practices across all facets of our systems. This integration aims to harmonize and synchronize quality assurance methodologies throughout the organization.

Moreover, a departure from the traditional QA approach of mere control to a more innovative QA model is imperative. This change emphasizes fostering innovation within the QA processes themselves, thereby driving continual improvement and advancement.

Establishing dedicated QA centers emerges as a solution to address these challenges and implement the aforementioned strategies effectively. These QA centers serve as focal points for developing, refining, and disseminating best practices in QA methodologies, thus enhancing overall quality standards and promoting a culture of innovation and improvement.

Discussions

Questions on this presentation were raised and responses were provided as follows:

Questions	Responses
How do we innovate in the context of large classes?	Quality Assurance practitioners need to embrace Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) as one of the emerging innovations that can help deal with the issue of large classes whereby, we are not matching the ratio of students and staff
Who among the academia and the inventors of the emerging technologies (e.g. AI) is in the right position to judge the other?	The scholarly culture that produces new knowledge needs to merge with the knowledge that is coming from those implementing these models (have experiential knowledge/ know by doing). No one should be judging others, we need to collaborate to come up with new ways of doing things.
How can we address the challenges of conditionalities for research?	Research will always come with conditionalities of funding but researchers should be smart enough to meet deliverables of the funders but also be in apposition to negotiate so that they can have access to that data and use it to get publications. Researchers have to outsmart those conditionalities.

Questions	Responses
Integrating research centres and the question about the missing design	<p>There is need to change the paradigm from a system that was designed mainly to address teaching and learning inadequacies in terms of classroom infrastructures, ratio of students and lecturers, etc. due to the status of most African countries as low/ middle income economies. Unless we change the mindset, we will always see these as major challenges that we can never overcome.</p> <p>In reality we have not yet come up with those models because of those conditionalities and so much conservatism in our HLLs. that's why innovation is not given, you have to conquer it.</p>
What can our institutions do in line with the emergence of nontraditional students?	<p>This is another challenge that touches on many of the traditional issues and also the new trends. For example how do our systems of QA deal with the increasing number of students with all kinds of disabilities in our universities (psycho motor, mental, ...)? There is need to incentivize institutions to also include services that will address the issue of mental health for instance; these kinds of indicators do not feature in our current QA mechanism tools and manuals.</p>

6.2 Identifying quality journals for greater impact by Victoria Babbit, Director of Researcher Development and Outreach, Taylor & Francis, Sweden



by Victoria Babbit, Director of Researcher Development and Outreach, Taylor & Francis, Sweden making here presentation online

Victoria Babbit specifically focused on publications especially in quality assurance in higher education. Ms. Babbit highlighted that, one of the main reasons why publications are rejected is that they could have been submitted to the wrong journal.

She provided publisher websites with quality journals. These include Scopus, Clarivate Web of Science, DOAJ.

When assessing the quality of a journal, the presenter provided the following prerequisites: publisher websites, published articles, editorial board, society affiliations, indexing, IFAS Editorial Policies, Web of Science, IF and Ranking.

Ms. Babbit in her presentation provided a spectrum of predatory journals. Characteristic of predatory journal is that they charge authors a fee for publication with no intention of providing the expected services—such as editorial or peer review.

Before sending an article for publication, the presenters argued participants to consider the following: Check the journal website, see if the journal is indexed in respective indexes and archives, review the published articles for quality, make sure they have clear and robust editorial policies, consult with colleagues and the library, use the ThinkCheckSubmit toolkit.

The presenter provided a list of resources, including Taylor and Francis indexing overview, Web of Science Master List, Journal Citation Report, Scopus, ThinkCheck Submit.

Discussions

Questions on this presentation were raised and responses were provided as follows:

Questions	Responses
<p>Can you please walk me through the rule for engaging a journal listed on the web of science? We are interested in establishing a journal on the web of science</p>	<p>When you are trying to establish a journal, the first thing to do is to get a good editorial board to establish good editorial practices, people from different institutions with diverse backgrounds within the main area of the journal. Secondly, think of special collaboration with people and participating in conferences to raise awareness for the journal and build a community around that journal, which will increase its citation rate (the emerging citation index shows a lot of activities) because those are some of the indicators researchers consider for publishing their findings.</p>
<p>Apart from the web of science, where else could we be able to establish the credibility of a journal?</p>	<p>There are other different citation indexes such as DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), Scopus, etc.</p> <p>Web of science, DOAJ & Scopus all have extensive information on the website on how to go about applying to get index there.</p> <p>Indexes are also classified in terms of subject (e.g. medicine), geographical area, ... because there are specific databases for particular subject areas. One just needs to do some search.</p>

6.3 Challenges faced by Research and Implementation of findings in Private Higher Education Institutions. Case of Selected Ugandan Private Higher Education Institutions:



Sarah Kizza-Nkambwe, Director of Quality Assurance, Uganda Christian University, making her presentation

by

Sarah Kizza-Nkambwe,

Director of Quality Assurance,
Uganda Christian University

Male Henry K,

Computer scientist,
Uganda

Joseph Brian Kasozi,

Assistant Lecturer- Computer
Science,
Kabale University

Patrick Lugemwa,

Assistant Lecturer,
Makerere University Institute of Open
Distance and e-Learning,
Uganda

Professor Kizza-Nkambwe began the presentation by linking quality assurance and the research process, by stating that; various factors from society, emerging issues, industry and governments continue to make the research process challenging, demanding and complex. This compromises quality of research. There is therefore a need to examine the challenges faced by researchers, promote, ensure and propose quality sustainable solutions for quality and effective research.

As methodology, reviewed and analysed QA policy, Research Manuals, Websites, Handbooks of three private universities in addition to focus groups, informal interviews. Research and development are core activities of all studied cases.

The study revealed that some HEI have developed policies and guidelines to be followed during the research process, on the contrary some have not. Whereas the documents exist, they are mostly not followed, some stakeholders (researchers/students) were not aware of the existence of these policies or guidelines. All these affected the quality of research. Also HEI researchers mainly focus on having articles published in journals instead of focusing on contributing new knowledge.

The researchers proposed the following concepts/model aimed at improving the quality of research. Support the interaction between researchers and research end-users outside of academia, for the mutually beneficial transfer of knowledge, technologies, methods or resources. The idea is creation of strong research teams

Set-up of conducive environment favorable for a strong research culture, investment in a strong research identity and capacity; involvement of practicing researchers in institutional decision-making processes. In relation to creativity and innovation, identify strategies to boost creativity and innovations (e.g functional institutional repositories and databases to display information about previous projects, patents start-ups and partnerships. This will either challenge the current research to do more than the previous works or it will encourage the researcher to execute good quality research.

Encourage and support Interdisciplinary research both at local and international level. The presenter also added that there is need for consultation with researchers and stakeholders, set guidelines and procedures that will help to define what makes up good quality research. In consultation with researchers and stakeholders set up guidelines and procedures that will help define what makes up good quality research. The researcher also provided on the need to identify resources to strategically enhance research identity, areas of strength and research funding. In relation to sustainability, there is need to sustain high quality research with emphasis on trainings (research skills, publication and peer review), invest and support young researchers and make the research career active.

Policies and guidelines; documented practical policies are necessary to communicate expectations of a researcher, supervisor- student relationships.

The presenter proposed the following recommendations: prioritize and support research, fund research initiatives and build capacity, engage policy makers, subscribe to local, regional, global QA bodies (UUQAF, EAQAN, IUCEA etc), promote collaboration and benchmarking.

In conclusion Kizza-Nkambwe argued that, quality assurance in research comprises all the techniques, systems and resources that are deployed to give assurance about the care and control with which research has been conducted. Research systems will continue to evolve and their continuous quality assessment is important

Discussions

Questions on this presentation were raised and responses were provided as follows:

Questions	Responses
Partnerships	Partnerships are there but the application of the guidelines, the partnership in practical terms sometimes is a challenge.
Why did you choose private universities? Why not private and public universities?	Funding was the main challenge which led the researchers to limit the scope. However, they were ready to make the study broader.

Session 7: Competence - Based Education in Higher Education

The session was chaired by **Dr. Hajat Amaal Kinene Nsereko- Finance Secretary, EAQAN**. During this session, focus was on how institutions of higher learning are utilizing quality assurance to respond to the global emerging trends, changing their teaching methods to suit these trends and bringing on board all the institutions' spheres in that journey.

7.1 The Role of Quality Assurance in Responding to the Global Emerging Trends Among Higher Learning Institutions in Rwanda. A Case of the University of Rwanda (UR), Adventist University of Central Africa (AUCA), University of Kigali (UoK), and Kepler College:

by Dr. Cyeze Emmanuel,

Quality Assurance Director, Adventist University of central Africa, Rwanda

Manirakiza Jean Baptiste,

Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Kepler College, Rwanda

Kihumulo Grace Patrick, Lacturer, Adventist University of central Africa, Rwanda



by Dr. Cyeze Emmanuel, Quality Assurance Director, Adventist University of central Africa, Rwanda

Dr. Cyze Emmanuel noted that globally, quality assurance and global education trends in Europe have been closely intertwined as European countries strive to maintain high educational standards while adapting to changing global demands. In Africa, the continent seeks to address its unique challenges while aligning with global developments in education. In Rwanda, the initiation of quality assurance in education has been a significant endeavor aimed at improving the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of the country's education system.

The presenters conducted a study anchored on establishing; what are the global education trends in higher learning institutions in Rwanda, how does quality assurance respond to the global education trends among higher learning institutions in Rwanda, what are the strategies to deal with the global education trends among higher learning institutions in Rwanda.

The study identified the use of technology in teaching, personal and paced learning; blended learning; lifelong learning and upskilling; Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) as some of the global trends in the education sector. It revealed that trends, affect in one way or another, the quality of teaching and learning. Statistics indicated that the most known global education trends are not all used 100% by Rwanda's higher learning institutions even if the rate of use is high. The paper recommends that all decision-makers especially quality managers take the lead in directing higher learning institutions on how to fully handle issues of global education trends.

The term trends in education refers to the general direction in which our present educational systems, policies, theories and practices are developing or changing.

Based on an in-depth study conducted by the presenters, the role of quality assurance in responding to global education trends among Rwanda's higher learning institutions.

Globally, quality assurance and global education trends in Europe have been closely intertwined as European countries strive to maintain high educational standards while adapting to changing global demands. While in Africa, the continent seeks to address its unique challenges while aligning with global

developments in education. In Rwanda, the initiation of quality assurance in education has been a significant endeavor aimed at improving the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of the country's education system.

The presenters indicated the change of the language of instruction from French to English as one major development that the Rwanda adopted to adjust to the emerging trends in higher education.

They noted however that most of the global new developments in education are not used 100% by higher learning institutions in Rwanda. They called upon Rwandan higher

Education institutions to embrace the global trends in order to compete with the rest of the world and quality managers to advocate for the emerging developments at their institutions.

The study revealed that; trends, affect in one way or another, the quality of teaching and learning. Statistics indicated that the most known global education trends are not all used 100% by Rwanda's higher learning institutions even if the rate of use is high. The paper recommends that all decision-makers especially quality managers take the lead in directing higher learning institutions on how to fully handle issues of global education trends.

Discussions

Questions on this presentation were raised and responses were provided as follows:

Questions	Responses
How was the language of instruction change handled and how did you personally manage that change?	Lecturers in higher education institutions were taken through language training sessions in preparation
Were there guidelines? If lecturers are translating or the national CHE was given the guideline for translating	Guidelines were provided for lecturers in the process
Do your four case- study universities face instable internet/ electricity challenges? If yes how did they overcome these challenges in Rwanda?	Changes will always be there, we need to adjust. It is a journey that we need to accept and start

Questions	Responses
What experience/ strategies have you been having in regard to personalized and paced learning in your universities, which is the challenge in many institutions with large classes?	In Rwanda, universities follow a presidential order of 1 lecturer to 25 students ratio
What is the best among the use of French or English languages in teaching and learning?	Competence- based Education has 3 components: knowledge, skills and attitude. We need to change our attitude if we want to move with the world because the world will not stop changing
On your assessment to what extent the STEM emerging trend is addressed, more than 50% of respondents were neutral. Do you have any explanation to that?	People especially ladies are reluctant of joining STEM

7.2 Effective Teaching Methods for Higher Education Level in the 21st Century for sustainable development

by **Sr. Dr. Jackline Okello Alari,**

Country Chapter representative,
Kenya Universities Quality Assurance
Network (KuQAn)

Sr. Euphrasia Mutsotso

Lecturer,
Catholic University of Eastern Africa,
Kenya

Sr. Dr. Jackline Okello Alari and Sr. Euphrasia Mutsotso noted that higher learning functions of teaching, learning and research are facing constant globalization and competition, hence the need for Kenya to adopt digitalization and innovation of their processes, lifelong learning, up-skilling the teaching staff, etc to fit in the 21st century skills demand and implement the competence- based education.

Their study used the behaviourism theory that states that a learner can learn well via interaction in the environment; the cognitive theory which says that a learner is an information processor; the humanism theory that stresses that people (learners for that matter) are inherently good and when exposed to a conducive environment can self-actualize by freely learning; the connectivism theory which argues that learners have the ability to source information from different sources, synchronize it and gain knowledge.

They noted that lecturers are still largely using traditional teaching methods: lectures, take away or group assignments. They also found out that the 21st century university learners need a flexible and technology-driven learning environment; more advanced technology to make learning more interesting; technological gadgets; research-based teaching to make it more captivating; engagement with real-world data; use innovative pedagogies and tools among others.

They stressed the need to use methods that are fit for purpose and required by industry and the market; invest in advanced technologies and align curricula to the 21st century learners' needs.

Discussions

Questions on this presentation were raised and responses were provided as follows

Questions	Responses
Have you benchmarked from other countries? If not how sure are you that these 21st century methods are going to be more successful?	<p>The study is on-going. benchmarking will be conducted from countries like US, UK, Taiwan, that are advanced in the use of technology in teaching.</p> <p>The team will gather views of the top management of the universities because whatever decision that needs to be implemented at operational level (faculty or school levels) must get blessings from them including putting in place relevant teaching and learning facilities, training of lecturers, etc</p>
How have these theories impacted on their research?	<p>The behaviorism theory says that a behavior is learnt; when lecturers use ICT in teaching learners will also emulate and that will become their habit.</p> <p>According to the cognitive theory, the information that is processed in the learner's brain can be enhanced when the learners interact with technology, do it collaboratively, share using technology.</p>

Questions	Responses
	<p>According to the connectivism theory which says that learners have the ability to source from the updated resources. The learners can use the technology (e.g. internet) to source valid materials that are up to date. Most learners are computer native whereas most teachers are computer immigrants. The learners already know the softwares, search engines, etc. where they can get information. Access to updated knowledge makes learning much easier and the teachers' work is made easier because the learners are free to learn on their own and can easily integrate the knowledge they have got.</p>
<p>There are different skills: soft skills, hard pure skills, hard soft skills etc like the ones in Medicine, Engineering, Business Management. Has this research considered them as one basket or technologies are different? How would you make this study as tailor-based?</p>	<p>Technology is key in all the disciplines: medicine, engineering, business and all the other disciplines.</p> <p>For example in medicine, teachers can use videos to show students how to conduct a particular procedure and this video helps to learn how it is done, what processes they go through before and the learner confidently goes to practice on patients.</p> <p>Technology Should be used by all teachers in all disciplines to make learning lively and learner- centered atmosphere where the learner takes the lead and the lecturer is a facilitator to guide the process of learning as the learners discover knowledge by themselves</p>

7.3 Empowering Non-teaching Staff in Enhancement of Quality in Higher Education: A case of Kabarak University, Kenya

by Professor Gladys Jerobon Kiptiony,

Kabarak University,
Kenya

Dr. Antony Somba

Registrar Academic and Research,
Kabarak University

Prof. Henry Kiptiony Kiplangat,

Vice Chancellor,
Kabarak University

In their investigation on how higher learning institutions **Empower Non-teaching Staff in Enhancement of Quality in Higher Education**, **Dr. Antony Somba, Professor Gladys Kiptiony and Professor Henry Kiptiony Kiplangat** noted that Kabarak University, Kenya trained its non-teaching staff in internal quality audit, does team building, mental wellness, informs them on health issues, retirement, investment, etc on a regular basis (annually). And in order to identify these staff needs, the university conducts training needs analysis (TNA) every year.

The study was underpinned by; Crosby's theory which advocates for investment on quality for an institution to provide quality services and products to its customers (Agrawal, 2019). Kanter's (1993) theory of structural empowerment, which advocates for situations to be structured in a way that employees feel empowered, resulting in the organization benefiting in terms of improved employee attitudes and increased organizational effectiveness a powerful mechanism for increasing employee involvement (Lawler, 1986).

The study, according to Professor Kiptiony, involved 214 non-teaching staff and the method of data collection involved. Target population; 214 non-teaching staff, while the participants selected through stratified random sampling were (35 participants). The methods of data collection included a questionnaire, Focus Group Discussion, interviews, document analysis.

The findings revealed that Kabarak University has a program for empowering Non-Teaching Staff, training by the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Institutional Planning, Kenya Bureau of Standards and Directorate of Excellence in Learning and Teaching, ISO 9001:2015 requirements, against which the university is certified. It was also found out that training needs assessments are done on an annual basis. Thus was prompted by the Office of the Registrar (Administration and Human Resource). Based on this the university assists the staff in identifying required skills and a 50% tuition waiver, with leave days for study to improve their skills. The Kenya Bureau of Standards and the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Institutional Planning train staff on analysis of stakeholders' requirements, risk handling and root cause analysis, setting of quality objectives, formulation of action plans, monitoring and evaluation, all in line with the ISO 9001:2015 certification.

More findings show that several non-teaching staff have been trained as Internal Quality Auditors and Lead Auditors in 21st Century Skills (Directorate of Excellence in Learning and Teaching), team building, investment, mental wellness, health issues, retirement and investment is done annually to all staff members. The study revealed that the non-teaching staff perceive such training programmes as helpful to their career growth and job performance and 90% of the staff confirmed that such programmes help them to be more creative and innovative. Additionally, they gain more confidence as a result of acquiring new competencies through training.

The presenters stressed that Kabarak University has nurtured the quality culture in all its staff, both teaching and non- teaching partly due to its ISO certification that has very good processes, which the university has to comply to. The Vice Chancellor being the ISO manager, the top management is involved in the quality assurance debates and takes part in those trainings.

Discussions

Questions on this presentation were raised and responses were provided as follows:

Questions	Responses
How is quality assurance integrated in training programmes?	<p>Kabarak University programmes are done from a very highly researched process and are supported based on literature and being ISO certified, they get a lot of support from the Kenya Bureau of Standards.</p> <p>Kabarak University has a lot of regulators.</p> <p>First, ISO certification has very good processes which the university has complied to.</p> <p>Secondly, the Commission for University Education conducts visits to the university very often for quality assessment of their structures and everything they do</p>
You focused on motivation, was it empowerment in broad terms?	The half- fee waiver has been an excellent motivation for the non-teaching staff to be able to get the skills.
How empowering non-academic staff would contribute to quality assurance?	<p>Every corner of the institution has got to do what quality requires (e.g. security staff, kitchen)</p> <p>Quality assurance encompasses all the spheres of the institution: teaching & administration; it is cross-cutting. Quality should be observed in a holistic manner; it should be embedded in all the institution's processes. The way you handle the catering, admission, accommodation, finances, promotion, curriculum development, conducting senate business, etc affect the outcome of teaching and learning.</p> <p>Quality is at the centre of the 3 core roles of our institutions. It should be mainstreamed in our standards. Integrating quality in non-teaching services enables institutions admit quality students on one hand and on the other hand produce quality graduates.</p> <p>Quality is meeting the expectations of customers; it is also meeting the standards.</p>
What methods did you use to identify these staff training/ performance challenges?	Staff training needs/ performance challenges are identified through Training Needs Assessments (TNA), which are conducted every year
How do you bring the top management in the quality assurance debates?	With ISO certification the Vice Chancellor is the manager: management is there in those trainings

Session 8: DAAD DIES Programme



Dr. Leonie Schoelen, Senior Desk Officer, Higher Education Management Development making her presentation

This session highlighted DAAD (Association of German Universities) and DIES (Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies) higher education areas of support and opportunities for quality assurance practitioners. It was **moderated** by **Dr. Baguma Abdallah, President, EAQAN.**

Dr. Leonie Schoelen, Senior Desk Officer, Higher Education Management Development Cooperation: Partnership Programmes, Alumni Projects and Higher Education Management, DAAD Bonn reported that the **DAAD DIES Programme** is an independent organization of German higher education institutions and their student bodies devoted to internationalizing the academic system, DAAD (Association of German Universities) and the National Agency for Erasmus+ and the world's largest funding organization for international exchange with a worldwide network. It contributes to shaping the European Higher Education and Research Area. Specifically, DAAD's interventions include training skilled personnel and managers through scholarship programmes; supporting higher education institutions in developing cutting-edge curricula/study courses; exchange of expertise.

She also highlighted DIES (Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies)' main functions. Jointly coordinated with HRK (German Rectors' Conference), DIES focuses on dialogue (which fosters the exchange on topics of higher education management and quality assurance) and training (to equip

university managers with skills for innovative higher education management). Whereas the dialogue is conducted in the form of conferences, seminars and visits to Germany, training courses target faculty managers (International Deans' Course, IDC), top managers (UNILEAD) and directors of international offices (Management of Internationalisation), quality assurance officers (TrainIQA).

Session 9: Africa Continental Harmonization and the Implications for QA in East Africa: Results and Opportunities under the HAQAA Initiatives

9.1 HAQAA1/2 results - ASG-QA, User's Guide and PAQAA (Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency) progress

This session focused on the progress in the domestication of the continental standards, namely the ASG-QA, HAQAA1/2 results, the dissemination of HAQAA2 training activities and HAQAA3 opportunities for quality assurance practitioners. The session was chaired by **Dr. Baguma Abdallah, President, EAQAN**



by Professor Youhansen Eid, co-author of the ASG-QA and former president of NAQAAE, Egypt making her presentation

Professor Youhansen Eid, co-author of the ASG-QA and former president of NAQAAE, Egypt highlighted the main successes of **HAQAA1/2 - ASG-QA, User's Guide and PAQAA (Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency)**. As part of the 12-year AU- EU project on Harmonization, Accreditation

and Quality Assurance in African Higher Education (HAQAA), HAQAA 1 (2015-2018) was the first phase with a main focus in quality and accreditation and HAQAA 2 (2019- 2022) was the second phase, focusing on students' mobility and employability.

The key achievements of HAQAA 1 are the development of Africa Standard & Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASG-QA), ASG-QA User guidebook for use of the guidelines, training of four (4) cohorts of 150 HEIs quality assurance staff in 50 African countries who became HAQAA ambassadors, etc. HAQAA 2 main successes include support to dissemination projects to promote the ASG-QA (example the Self- assessment tool for Open and Distance Learning, Kenya), support the development of national quality assurance systems against African standards, the establishment of the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency responsible for the operationalization of the Pan-African Quality Assurance Framework (PAQAF).

9.2. Dissemination and multiplication of the results of HAQAA2 training activities in East Africa



Professor Jean Chrysostome Ndamaniha, Head- Department of promotion and development of QA, Directorate of QA, University of Burundi making his presentation

Professor Jean Chrysostome Ndamaniha, the Head of the department of promotion and development of quality assurance in the Directorate of Quality Assurance at the University of Burundi presented that from

the academic year 2011-2012, the University of Burundi entered in Bologna system (LMD) in order to: harmonize education systems, programmes and quality assurance mechanisms, promote student mobility, recognition of qualifications employability and youth self-employment. In order to support this objective of harmonisation, the AUC initiated development of the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF).

One of the instruments for the appropriate functioning of PAQAF is the development of the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASG-QA). The ASG-QA were developed, in the context of the Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Initiative (HAQAA). The dissemination of these ASG-QA was then needed for the purpose of harmonization. At University of Burundi, these ASG-QA were implemented using a staff training.

The overall Objective was to establish how ASG-QAs are understood, harmonized with national minimum standards and applied at the University of Burundi. While specifically, it was to examine how ASG-QA are mastered, comparison of the University of Burundi are compared with the ASG-QA, quality references of the University of Burundi are harmonized with the ASG-QA, to assess how ASG-QAs are used to perform an audit. The presenter said that several strategies were used; whereby the first strategy entailed installation of quality assurance local points (one by faculty), the second strategy entailed involving higher authorities of University of Burundi in HAQAA 2 initiative, while strategy 3 entailed explaining why ASG-QA was introduced at the University of Burundi and strategy 4 was purposed to explain ASG-QA to the UB staff (teaching and non-teaching).

The participants were organized in groups; quality assurance local points, representatives of non-teaching staff, representatives of teaching staff. The method of training was in form of workshops where trainer and trainee exchanged information.

He indicated that through the project, quality assurance focal points were established at every college, trained and supported to carry out an internal quality audit; teaching and non-teaching staff representatives were sensitized

on the ASG-QA of the HAQAA Initiative.

9.2.1 Capacity Building of Kenyan QAA and HEIs in the Development and Application of Quality Assurance Tools for Accreditation and Quality Monitoring of ODeL Centres and Academic Programmes in Universities



by Dr. Beatrice Achieng' Odera- Kwach, Senior Assistant Commission Secretary in charge of Library Accreditation and Information services, Kenya Commission for University Education making her presentation

Senior Assistant Commission Secretary in charge of Library Accreditation and Information services, Kenya Commission for University Education

Dr. Beatrice Achieng' Odera- Kwach, Senior Assistant Commission Secretary in charge of Library Accreditation and Information services at the Kenya Commission for University Education (CUE) reported that, following the presidential directive to go online in response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and with the support of a HAQAA2 dissemination project, the CUE worked with experts to develop guidelines to self- assess and regulate the new system and build the capacity of HLIs in Kenya on how to deliver the OdeL.

Through the project, the self-assessment tool for accrediting ODeI institutions and programmes was revised and aligned to the ASG-QA and AQRM; the evaluation tool for accrediting ODeI institutions was revised, 35 staff

responsible for ODel centres, from the Commission and HLIs were trained on preparation of self-assessment reports for accreditation of ODel institutions and programmes; 12 ODel institutions were accredited, among others.

She remarked further about the training needs that were identified in the process of implementing the project, for the remaining ODel directors, curriculum designers on content development for ODel programmes, faculty on model use of the ODel Learning Management System and universities on key technologies for ODel content development.

9.2.3 Final Results of the ASG-QA Mapping and Dissemination- HAQAA2 QA Network Project- RAFANAQ/EAQAN/CNAQ

*by Abdou Cisse,
Secretary General,
RAFANAQ*



Abdou Cisse, Secretary General, RAFANAQ making his presentation

Mr. Abdou Cisse, Secretary General RAFANAQ highlighted the **Final Results of the ASG-QA Dissemination project**. He presented the main objective of the dissemination project as to mainstream the ASG-QA into quality assurance agencies and HLIs' quality systems. The project aimed at mapping ASG-QA standards in the three components of internal quality assurance (IQA), external quality assurance (EQA) and quality assurance agencies' internal assessment (QAAs) with those of two regional organisations, namely CAMES (The African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education) covering 19 Francophone African

countries and IUCEA (Inter- University Council for Higher Education) covering the East African Region and carrying out dissemination and capacity building on the same.

He found out that the Standards and Guidelines of IQA are aligned with the ones of CAMES and IUCEA; QA Standards and Guidelines for EQA are globally comparable to the ones developed by CAMES and standards for internal assessment of QAA are similar with those of CAMES & IUCEA. Several activities geared towards dissemination of the ASG-QA were carried out involving the three continental networks of RAFANAC, EAQAN and CNAQ (Lusophone); during HAQAA2 events and through a global report.

The presenter however noted that QAA are at different levels in the implementation of the continental standards for Quality Assurance systems, country standards are well aligned with the ASG-QA, QAA face difficulties with regard to the standard of independence, there is little development in the quality assurance and evaluation of research, doctoral education and ODeI in QAA, lack of information related to the ASG-QA among the quality assurance practitioners, the need to continue the dissemination activities; etc.

9.2. HAQAA3 snapshot and forthcoming opportunities for QA professionals



Apiyo Okwiri, OBREAL Global making her presentation



Marie Eglantine Juru, AAU making her presentation

Apiyo Okwiri, OBREAL Global and Marie Eglantine Juru, Association of African Universities jointly presented IQA and EQA training, the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (PAQAA), the pilot of the African Credit Transfer System (ACTS), and HE Data for policy analysis. HAQAA3 was

reported as the third phase (2023-2028) of the HAQAA Initiative, aiming at providing African countries with skilled workers, managers and administrators to foster sustainable development, promote trade and nurture democratic values. In order to achieve that, the project will focus on quality culture in HEIs and QAA, mutual recognition and evidence-based policies for regional integration.

Managed by AAU, DAAD, ENQA and OBRIEL Global, HAQAA3 partners are SARUA, IUCEA, CAMES, CNAQ, NAQAAE, RAFANAQ (ANAQ- Sup), AUF, AASU, EUA, UNESCO and its Advisory Board is rotational and will be engaging additional relevant stakeholders like Regional QA Networks. The project's interventions areas include HE regional integration policy dialogue and capacity, African Credit Transfer System (ACTS), African HE data Capacity, PAQAA/ IQA/EQA training and capacity building. Under the IQA work area, there will be training of QA professionals on managing internal quality assurance, dissemination projects will continue, university leaders will be sensitized on quality management and continental objectives. The EQA work area will focus on training of QAA staff and authorities, training of students, staff exchange for QAA, expansion of the pool of African QA evaluators, follow up reviews, agency reviews and consultancy visits to help establish QA systems, webinar series, revision of the ASG-QA and publication of the revised version in the four languages of the AU, assessment of compliance with the ASG-QA, etc.

For every work area, three levels of activity will be exercised, namely policy development, training/ capacity building and implementation/ pilot.

Discussions

An appreciation was expressed to DAAD and OBREAL Global for the important information for participants to use to enhance quality assurance systems in East Africa. Participants were assured that IUCEA is a strategic partner in the HAQAA3 initiative and that it will ensure its members across the region, councils and commissions for higher education, QA practitioners actively participate in HAQAA3. Furthermore, the late Rispa Odongo and Professor Mayunga Nkunya were recognized and acknowledged for their influential contribution to the development of not only the East African quality assurance system but also the African quality assurance system.

Questions on sessions 8 and 9 were raised and responses were provided as follows:

Questions	Responses
<p>Are we sure that accreditation means the same thing in English and French? At country level and regional level? At which stage a programme is accredited at CAMES, IUCEA? What is the life cycle for a programme?</p>	<p>ASG-QA Guidebook documents how we can interpret accreditation. In short, accreditation means validation.</p>
<p>For new quality assurance practitioners who are in this conference, how can we be trained in quality assurance? Is there any institution that provides training?</p>	<p>On HAQAA2 website, there are training materials that can be used for the IQA. In case there are still questions, connect with DAAD and AAU who are working on the training component.</p>

12th EAQAN Forum Recommendations

During the Forum, several emerging trends and some challenges in higher education were identified and the role of quality assurance in nurturing these new ideas discussed as follows:

No	Emerging Trend	Area	How do we respond to that as QA?
	Emerging technologies (incl. the emergence of AI)	Teaching, learning and assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To change the teaching method to be student-centred, more personalized and paced • To use more practical work for students' assessments, technology-driven exams • Streamline quality assurance from entry into the university (access) to exit upon completion (success) • To put in place mechanisms for supporting students with disadvantaged factors (gender, socio-economic, ...) for access to the university for a more adaptive and flexible way of teaching • Support students beyond the classroom (e.g. mentorship) • To use digital tools to enhance engagement of students • To adopt the blended mode of student- supervisor engagement • To embrace technology in supervision of students • Give more support to female PhD students towards the completion of their theses • Promote collaboration among institutions for higher learning best practices in QA & programme accreditation
		Curriculum development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To carry out curriculum reforms that address the current digital literacy gaps • To conduct curricular reforms for the fifth job • To involve students in curriculum development • To conduct mid-term curricula reviews to cater for emerging trends

No	Emerging Trend	Area	How do we respond to that as QA?
		Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To invest in ICT infrastructure and connectivity • To build strong quality assurance centres within our HLIs to improve the learning space
		Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop stronger quality assurance professionals in our institutions for higher learning • To train teachers, students and PhD supervisors in the utilization of ICT tools to enhance their level of capacity • To engage students in quality assurance
	<p>Internationalization and globalization (academic qualifications, harmonization of higher education, programme accreditation, programmes, policies...)</p> <p>e.g. Bologna process, UNESCO is developing passports for refugees to access education in different parts of the world to ensure there is mobility, HAQAA3, ASG-QA, Regional accreditation with IUCEA, ...)</p>	Networks and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To connect with regional, continental and international platforms in the implementation of higher education reforms, strengthening capacity within university units responsible for quality assurance (e.g. GUNi, HAQAA3, RAFANAQ, ...) • To participate in HAQAA3 initiative (training quality assurance professionals from HEIs, dialogue sessions) • To strengthen links with international partners like OBRIEL Global • To adopt programme accreditation within the Region • To promote collaboration among institutions for higher learning best practices in quality assurance and programme accreditation • To revise the Road map to Quality handbook, specifically its 4th volume on "Implementation of a quality assurance system" to make it robust and reliable for a bigger impact
		Policies and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To integrate global and regional qualifications frameworks into national policies
		Curriculum development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To refer to existing benchmarks when developing programmes

No	Emerging Trend	Area	How do we respond to that as QA?
	Education Reforms (e.g. Competence-Based Curriculum in Kenya, Kenya new funding model, in TZ adopted ... model, in Uganda in Competency- Based teaching started with secondary education	Curriculum development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To conduct regular reviews of curricula with reference to the existing regional programme benchmarks (to foster harmonization) To develop competence- based curricula in collaboration with the private sector and government employers to prepare for the middle layer and not to wait until they join Higher Education
		Policies and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To mainstream global, regional and national quality assurance references into institutional quality assurance standards & Guidelines (Localization)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To put in place regulations for the competence- Based education
		Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To invest in competence- based facilities: coding, robots' development. etc.
	Global declining funding		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To adopt new funding models. E.g. government sponsoring needy students, universities waiving tuition and fees for at least one student from each of the other EAC member states, etc. To enhance collaboration (rather than competition) amongst higher education institutions, sharing human and physical resources
	Global declining student numbers especially in the Western universities, making them look to attract our local students as a way to address their declining funding		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enhance the quality of education to be able to retain local students and attract foreign students to raise funding To develop an institutional quality culture To strengthen quality assurance offices to effectively nurture and monitor growth, focusing on markets beyond our borders: import students/ workers, export students/ workers To have a teaching- learning centres at our higher learning institutions (can be part of quality assurance directorate) because PhDs teach them to be researchers not to teach

No	Emerging Trend	Area	How do we respond to that as QA?
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To empower senates to independently exercise their mandate in matters quality (senate members from education specialty) • To consult with top management for goodwill, ownership and support to the quality assurance officers • To streamline quality assurance from entry into the university (access) to exit upon completion (success) • To integrate quality assurance holistically in all HLLs systems, i.e. for both academic and non-academic roles (e.g. admissions, recruitment, registration, etc)
	Africa youth bulge versus aging population in the West	Teaching, learning and assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enhance the quality of education to be able to adequately prepare the graduates for jobs in the West (training for tomorrow, supply of skilled labour)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To give students skills (not content) to become life-long learners, critical thinkers, programme-solvers, good communicators, etc. to be able to face the unknown future
		Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To revamp institutions' strategic plans, focusing on risk and mitigation factors
	Liberal education	Curriculum development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop curricula that allow students extend/ augment their degrees (flexibility) • To adopt a general education curriculum which provides students a broad exposure to multiple disciplines (broad knowledge) and empower students with transferable skills; a stronger sense of values, ethics, and civic engagement... • To organize off-campus community service, internships, research, and study abroad in order to cultivate student civic engagement • To embrace alternative credentials and pathways: build careers

Session 9: Africa Continental Harmonization and the Implications for QA in East Africa: Results and Opportunities under the HAQAA Initiatives

The General Assembly was chaired by **Dr Baguma Abdallah, President, EAQAN.**

Registration of Participants

Participants to the 11th EAQAN General Assembly registered from 0800 to 0900 hours in a designated hall at King's Conference Centre (Appendix A).

Constituting the 11th General Assembly of EAQAN

The EAQAN President declared constituting the 11th EAQAN General Assembly; he read the General Assembly provision in the constitution (function/ duty). The constitution was adopted on consensus.

The Assembly started by a word of prayer that was led by Sr. Dr. Maria Goretti Kaahwa.

Contribution of Quality Assurance networks in enhancing quality education



by Professor Juma Shabani, Director- Doctoral School, University of Burundi making his presentation

The contribution of Quality Assurance networks in enhancing quality education was presented by **Professor Juma Shabani, Director of the Doctoral School, University of Burundi**. He explained the role of higher education/ quality assurance networks in respect with four global new developments, namely the knowledge-based economies, the Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs), regional and international integration and academic reforms.

In the context of the knowledge economy era which is based on intellectual capital and which requires a very rapid evolution of technology and competencies, higher education is required to produce the required labour. With regards to the SDGs, quality assurance is aligned to the fourth sustainability development goal on quality education, which includes higher education involvement. For regional and integration done mainly through the ratification of protocols (e.g. East African Common Higher Education Area, 2017), quality assurance plays the role of harmonization of programmes among others.

In light of academic reforms that evolved from the Bologna process (e.g. LMD, one of the major reforms), higher education/ quality assurance role is also in terms of harmonization.

He elaborated the available international, regional and national opportunities for quality assurance networks in regard to harmonization, which is a robust programme worldwide that started in mid-2007 in Africa by the AU. At the global level, the "License- Master- Doctorat" (LMD) reform from the Bologna process for Francophone countries (the Anglophone countries already had a Bachelor-Master-Doctorate model) is being gradually adopted by ministries responsible for higher education and aims at the harmonization of systems, programmes and policies. At the continental level, HAQAA Project's main goal is harmonization and programme accreditation and one of its core milestones is the development of the ASG-QA. Tuning Africa, another continental initiative, promotes the development of learning outcomes focusing on various degree programmes while emphasizing the development of generic and subject level competences in selected thematic areas. Pan African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF), a continental framework geared toward the harmonization of quality assurance, with several action lines and

tools that have been developed or are in the process of being developed, intended to ensure quality provision in higher education in Africa, recognition of studies across borders and a common understanding on quality definitions and standards.

Other initiatives include the Register of Higher Education Programmes, Pan African Accreditation, African Mechanism for credit transfer and accumulation, African Continental Qualifications Framework, etc. At regional level, he explained that several regional economic communities developed their qualification frameworks and that several programmes have been harmonized at bachelor, master and doctoral levels. These are the East African Qualification Framework for Higher Education for the East African Community (EAQFHE), Economic Community of West African States Regional Qualifications Framework (ECOWAS RQF) for West African countries and Southern African Development Community Qualifications Recognition Manual (SADC-QR).

At national level, Professor Shabani shared the experience of Nigeria which, this year, completed harmonization of all undergraduate programmes in their universities (263 in total) in just five 5 years and replaced Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) for various disciplines.

Quality assurance networks also have a role to play regarding the UNESCO's Addis Convention on the recognition of academic qualifications on Higher Education in African States. Established in 2014, the convention came into force in November 2019 and the role of quality assurance networks is to facilitate inter-university cooperation and exchange through the mobility of students and exchange of labour (researchers and faculty). This applies to the ratifying African countries that are so far thirteen, that is Togo, Burkina Faso, Congo, Djibouti, Gambia, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritius, Mauritania, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, and the Holy See.

Professor Shabani stressed the need for quality assurance agencies to leverage partnerships with different players in the implementation of the various higher education reforms.

On facilitating and monitoring the implementation of global decisions on matters of innovation by UNESCO, the African only surviving chapter of the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNi) is the main partner. Here, he emphasized the need for quality assurance agencies to organize conferences on quality assurance in collaboration with UNESCO and avoid duplication.

The AFRIQAN started in 2007 but faced challenges in terms of human resource and finance. However, a new mandate was proposed, and it is now operating from AAU with OBRIEL.

RAFANAQ is a new network of quality assurance agencies in Burundi (CNES), Guinée (ANAQ-Guinée), Mali (AMAQ), Maroc (ANEAQ), Niger (ANAQ –Niger), Sénégal (ANAQ-Sup), DRC (ANAQ –ESU) and Mauritania (AMAQ- ES) as full members, directorates of higher education in Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Togo, Cameroon and Madagascar as associate members and some observers. It was created in Dakar, Senegal in February 2020 and is doing very well in the area of trainings, programmes to strengthen capacity within universities and units responsible for quality assurance.

Professor Shabani proposed to the participants that there was need to conduct two to three meetings to train new quality assurance practitioners and share with them good practices to be able to catch up the senior counterparts, in collaboration with national councils/ commissions for higher education through the cost sharing arrangement (e.g. provision of meeting rooms).

Discussions

It was noted that EAQAN is for quality assurance practitioners while other networks are for quality assurance agencies. The former are employees in their institutions with limited decision- making abilities whereas the latter are CEOs. EAQAN members were urged to leverage that uniqueness and mitigate the challenges from that reality by connecting with the mainstream and all those continental platforms.

Questions on this presentation were raised and responses were provided as follows

Questions	Responses
<p>One of the challenges national councils/ commissions for higher education are facing is qualification when the prior learning for people seeking qualifications is not aligned to the discipline applied to. How can this diversity of academic qualifications be accommodated?</p>	<p>Qualifications are guided by the Addis convention. First, there is need to check whether the programme was accredited properly. Secondly, there has to be coherence of pathways between bachelor, master and doctorate. For example, it's not acceptable for one bachelor in some area, then master in the same area and PhD in another area because the background is wrong. However, special interim programmes to bridge the gap are acceptable to give proper background then continue.</p>

Opening Remarks and Report on EAQAN Activities

The President thanked participants for the support given to the EAQAN Executive Committee. He introduced the other members of the Committee, that is Professor Maurice Okoth- Vice President; Dr. Julius Tweve- Secretary General; Dr. Hajat Amaal Kinene Nsereko- Finance Secretary; Ms. Jane Wambui Mugo- Country representative, Kenya, Professor Justin Urasa- Country representative, United Republic of Tanzania; Ms. Betty irabwa- Country representative, Uganda; Mr. Nathan Taremwa Kanuma (online)- country representative, Rwanda and Dr. Simon Bisore- Country representative, Burundi.

Considering that South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo did not have national chapters, he indicated the need to allocate them a slot for the country representation as per the constitution requirements and for the spirit of enabling Regional Integration.

He emphasized that during the past year, the Executive Committee was mainly implementing resolutions of the 10th EAQAN General Assembly and preparing the 12th EAQAN Forum.

Report of the Executive Committee of EAQAN



by Dr. Abdallah Baguma, President, EAQAN presenting the EAQAN annual report

Dr. Abdallah Baguma, the President of EAQAN, presented a **report on activities that were conducted by the EAQAN Executive Committee since the 10th Annual General Assembly that was held from 20th to 23rd September 2022, in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania,** guided by the EAQAN constitution specifically article 6 on the functions of the network, article 10 on the functions, powers and meetings of the general assembly and article 12 on the office bearers of the Executive Committee as well as resolutions of the 10th EAQAN AGM and recommendations of the 11th EAQAN Forum.

Whereas the constitution provides for at least two meetings of the Executive Committee a year, he reported that the Committee held several meetings for the coordination of the activities of the Network. On the representation of the network to continental forums, he highlighted the involvement of the network in HAQAA initiative forums; Conference of Rectors, Vice-Chancellors and Presidents of African Universities; attended AfriQAN with Secretary General etc. He further stated that the year under review was busy with the preparation of the 12th EAQAN Forum and 11th Annual General Assembly.

He appreciated HAQAA3 through OBRIEL Global support in the organization of the 12th EAQAN Forum by facilitating a good number of speakers. A special appreciation was also expressed to OBRIEL Global for supporting a consultant

who will support EAQAN in revamping the network and its strategic plan, Professor Youhansen Eid.

The President also mentioned challenges that the network faced during the year under review. The strategic plan was not worked on because it coincided with other equally important activities. The other challenge is related to the unique status of EAQAN as a network of quality assurance practitioner; these are employees at their institutions and at times can be constraints on the time to dedicate to the network activities. He also mentioned constraints of financial and human resources.

He committed to hand over an action plan to the incoming team.

The detailed activities conducted by the Executive Committee and their output as well as the proposed action plan are hereto attached as Annex 2.

Professor Youhansen Eid, expert supporting the EAQAN in developing their strategic plan reported findings of her investigation of the EAQAN functions and strategic plan.

On the functions of the network, her finding were as follows:

- she noted the unique feature of EAQAN as a network of quality assurance practitioners;
- according to her, a term of two years for the executive committee is a very short period to enable the continuity of activities of the network;
- contrary to other networks that have headquarters and a dedicated secretariat (SAQAN has a headquarter in Namibia with a secretariat running the business, European network is based in Brussels, ANQAHE's headquarter is in Bahrain, ...), the EAQAN neither has a physical office nor a permanent secretariat;
- it was further noted that there are overlaps between IUCEA, EAQAN and country chapters;
- the network is not financially stable with limited income-generating activities.

Professor Youhansen remarked that there is no need of a major change of the constitution and that EAQAN is a very successful network, which just needs to be nurtured. Some of her recommendations include the following:

1. on the absence of a headquarter and a dedicated secretariat for the network, she proposed the establishment of a location for the headquarter and appointment of an administrative secretary and permanent supporting staff with clear roles;
2. regarding the two-year non-renewable term of the executive committee, she recommended three years;
3. on financial stability, she proposed the following diversification of the network's activities:

Area	Recommended activity
Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> expand the membership through reaching out to other countries in the region diversify the membership categorisation (affiliate membership, alumni, etc) attract new members by offering benefits like online technical support, showcasing innovations
Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> boost income from training programmes conduct thematic workshops (HAQAA ambassadors, ASG-QA dissemination) enhance the network visibility (newsletter, bulletins) support the establishment of QA networks (South Sudan)
Regional/ international collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> collaborate with agencies and networks within and beyond the EAC participate actively in HAQAA 3 partner with international organizations (e.g. OBRIEL Global)
Diversified activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> organise thematic symposia (originating from the forum/ suggestions from members) undertake funded research projects offer consultancy services become a think-tank for QA in and beyond EAC

Area	Recommended activity
Professionalization of QA practice	Set standards and licensing practice for transnational reviews train and license reviewers for cross-boarder review and be the network responsible for licensing maintain a database of reviewers offer a QA diploma by collaborating with networks/ open universities/ Pan African university/ HEIs

On the review of the strategic plan, her general observations were as follows:

- very few members participated in the development of the plan, thus lack of ownership;
- absence of a detailed action plan with timelines, responsibilities and budget for the activities
- lack of a secretariat, permanent staff and sub-committee for planning to monitor the achievements of key performance indicators;
- too ambitious strategic plan: some objectives are vague and cannot easily be measured.

She also reviewed the strategic objectives, and her recommendations/ comments are as follows:

Strategic objective (SO) no.	Description	Review comment
SO 1	To train and enhance capacity on internal and external QA systems in higher education	Merge SO 1 and SO 2 SO 2 can be one of the targets of the merged objective
SO 2	To develop a critical mass of experts in quality assurance	Remove the best practice dissemination since it is already addressed in SO 3 Add to the objective such strategies as TOT programmes for QA trainers, professionalization of QA practice, developing a license certificate for registered transnational reviewers

Strategic objective (SO) no.	Description	Review comment
SO 3	To strengthen networking and collaboration in higher education quality assurance	Rename SO 3 (e.g. projecting/ reposition the network beyond the scope of the EAC"), merge with SO 4 and suggest new targets and strategies.
SO 4	To support quality of teaching, learning and assessment in higher education institutions	Add on strategies collaboration with HAQAA 3, strengthening links with international partners like OBRIEL Global, apply for and conduct QA research regionally and in the continent
SO 5	To carry out research and publication on quality assurance in HEIs	Could be combined with thematic research that can be the outcome of the Forum as expressed by members earlier in the functions of the constitution
SO 6	To increase advocacy on quality assurance matters	Delete SO 6. It is implicated in other objectives Nothing has been done in this regard The wording is vague and cannot be measurable for both targets and KPIs
SO 7	To strengthen EAQAN capacity to mobilize adequate resources to meet its core objectives	Diversification of funds
SO 8	To enhance the use of ICT as an EAQAN platform for interaction and exchange of information and ideas	Need a lot of work to revamp and facelift the website Form a sub-committee to implement, follow up and update the website

Discussions

Dr. Abdallah Baguma, EAQAN President outlined the main recommendations that came out of Professor Youhansen review and tabled the following requests to the 10th General Assembly:

1. Receive and approve the report of the 10th AGM
2. Admit South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo into the network by waiving the constitutional requirement of having a chapter to be a member of EAQAN
3. Approve the proposed review and procedures of getting the final reviewed constitution and strategic plan
4. EAQAN leadership to have three years and having bi-annual EAQAN forums
5. Members considered the requests and agreed as follows:
6. received the report of the 10th AGM and approved it with a proposition that in future, reports be sent to members ahead of the meeting (at least 30 days before) to understand and conceptualize it;
7. granted the Republic of South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo a waiver on the membership requirement and admitted into EAQAN; they were allowed to process membership later;
8. approved the request to review the constitution;
9. agreed to change the term for the EAQAN executive committee be extended from two to three years, to begin after the review of the constitution; and
10. consider rotating the representation of the Executive Committee to meetings instead of sending two people in one meeting.

Financial Status Report

Dr. Amaal Kinene N. Nsereko, the Finance Secretary of EAQAN, presented a financial report covering a period from September 2022 to September 2023.

She first alluded to the change of the network from a company to an association, which was resolved during the 11th EAQAN Forum and indicated that as a company, they are required to pay returns to the Registrar of companies while that requirement would not be there if it's an association. She also appreciated the benefit of the electronic banking that was adopted; it has shortened the signing procedure. She encouraged all individuals who are passionate about quality assurance to become members even if they left their university. She informed the Assembly that the members who have actively paid up their subscription fees would be given appreciation certificates (e-certificates).

She reported the membership payment status for country chapters, that is Kenya University Quality Assurance Network (KUQAN), Ugandan Universities' Quality Assurance Forum (UUQAF), Tanzania Universities Quality Assurance Forum (TUQAF), Rwanda Higher Education Quality Assurance Network (RWAQAN) and "Forum Burundais d'Assurance Qualité" (FOBAQ). She deplored the poor payment of membership fees by institution members (15 out of 58, that is 26%) and individual members (30 out of 144, that is 21%).

The detailed financial report is hereto attached as **Annex 3**.

The report was submitted for adoption, discussion and approval.

Discussions

Members recommended empowering local chapters to collect membership fees in local money as a strategy to simplify the payment procedure.

Reports from National Chapters

a) Burundian Quality Assurance Forum («Forum Burundais D'assurance Qualité -Fobaq)

The Country Chapter President Dr. Bisore presented on behalf of the In Burundi, the concept of Quality Assurance was recently introduced and the Burundian Forum of Quality Assurance or Forum Burundais d'Assurance Qualité (FOBAQ) was created.

This above network was established to respond to the harmonization and sharing experiences with other East African countries and beyond about the concept of quality assurance.

The vision of the chapter is to promote quality assurance and to implement the BMD system in higher education in Burundi. While its mission is to enhance quality assurance for the best education in higher education in Burundi.

The role of the forum is to organise workshops and conferences and train about the concept of quality assurance in Higher Education Institutions, to build capacity and raise awareness about quality of research in higher education institutions, to respond to the challenges relate to the quality assurance in higher education.

Achievements:

These included; the implementation of the evaluation framework in accordance with the National Commission of Higher Education, the harmonization of training programs in higher education institutions verification of the regularity of students' academic records in higher education institutions. FOBAQ made another salient achievement by co-hosting the 12th EAQAN forum held at Kings Conference Hotel in Bujumbura. At institutional level, the Chapter contributed to the implementation of new benchmarks for the accreditation of programs in different higher education institutions; provided tools to evaluate programs and services, conducted a self-assessment of training programs (Bachelor and Master), and also improved the interaction platform with former students (alumni) in high academic institutions.

The Chapter also experienced challenges such as; lack of the materials of new technology system (ICT), limited human resources trained in quality assurance management; inadequate financial resources to support FOBAQ's activities, lack of a budget to run the chapters strategic plan.

Way forward:

Given the prevailing challenges, the Burundi chapter seeks to strengthen the structure of FOBAQ by building capacity, enlarging the structure of FOBAQ by including all Higher Education Institutions in Burundi, increase the QA training of all directors of quality assurance in higher education institution in Burundi.

b) Kenya Universities Quality Assurance Network (KuQAN)

Sr. Dr. Jacklyne Okello Alari, the country Chapter representative presented (online) the achievements registered by the Network during the year 2021-2022, planned activities for the next year and recommendations.

Achievements:

These included training of members in collaboration with universities in Kenya, growing the network in numbers

The presenter mentioned challenges encountered mostly of financial nature and a few dormant staff.

She stated that the network plans to continue training of its members through webinars and sign MoU with more partners to strengthen collaboration.

Sr. Dr. Alari recommended to the EAQAN to develop working sub-committees.

c) Rwanda Higher Education Quality Assurance Network (RWAQAN) Activity Report 2022-2023

The Rwandan Country Chapter representative presented that in 2021-2022 the Chapter had Full registration of the national chapter (RWAQAN), the membership expanded at (individual & institutional), quality assurance capacity building and training, expanding collaborations, enhanced support and networking.

The chapter also addressed feedback from RGB, secured local government (district) collaboration, conducted two meetings; Executive Committee meetings and a General Assembly, and approved the revisited RWAQAN Statutes in the General Assembly held on 3rd September 2023. The chapter also registered expansion of individual and institutional membership.

Achievements:

The Chapter organized the first ever online webinar on the Role of QA Networks in Development and Promotion of QA Culture. The keynote speaker was Professor Youhasen Eid (Expert)

Members of the RWAQAN won a grant under the DIES National Multiplication Training (NMT) - 2023-2024 with training dates being 13th to 17th November

2023 and 15th - 18th October 2024. The theme of the training is 'Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) Systems in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Rwanda. Whilst the NMT Training Team is comprised of Dr. Liliane Umutesi, Mr. Celestin Twagirumukiza, Mr. Grace Patrick Kihumulo, the mentors of the IQA Trainings / NMT Program 2023-2024 will be Petra Pistor (Germany) and Professor Michael Mawa (IUCEA).

The Chapter representative informed members that RWAQAN's activities are supported mainly by its members and organisations such as: HEC, and UR.

For communication purposes, the network has increased networking and sharing of information among members through the RWAQAN official e-mail (rwaqan.org@gmail.com) as well as the RWAQAN website (www.rwaqan.org) to be launched by June 2024.

In spite of the achievements, the network is constrained by inadequate funds to undertake RWAQAN activities characterized by low numbers of paid up members (individual and institution membership).

Future of RWAQAN:

The Rwandan Quality Assurance Network seeks to strengthen membership drive at individual and institutional levels, enhance research in the area of quality assurance, expanding collaboration with HLIs, HEC, IUCEA, and other chapters, promote proposal writing to solicit funding from various stakeholders including DAAD-UNILEAD, draft RWAQAN's Strategic Plan (2024-2029). The Chapter also intends to officially launch of RWAQAN and Elections of New Executive Committee (June 2024), the network intends to conduct a benchmarking visit to; Uganda Universities Quality Assurance Forum (UUQAF) and Kenyan Universities Quality Assurance Network.

d) Tanzania Universities Quality Assurance Forum

Professor Justin Urasa, the country Chapter representative reported the continuous commitment of members to the success of the network through voluntary work in addition to their full-time teaching.

He reported financial constraint as the main challenge encountered during the year under review. Dr. Urasa indicated that the network main outlook is training of its members.

e) Ugandan Universities Quality Assurance Forum

The report for the Ugandan Chapter of quality assurance was presented by Sr. Dr. Maria Gorretti. The representative provided that the current membership of UUQAF entails (54) higher educations. These are degree awarding Institution, which are recognized by NCHE, conforming to Standards of Education underlined by one voice, common voice, Togetherness, Unity, Understanding, Mutual, and common ideology (UUQAF, CONST., 2015).

Establishment:

The Ugandan Universities Quality Assurance Forum (UUQAF) was established on the 22nd April 2010, by a group of QA Officers from the Universities in Uganda. UUQAF is a registered Association in accordance with the laws of Uganda.

Whereas the goal of UUQAF is to establish and maintain quality standards in Ugandan universities and other degree awarding institutions in line with national, regional and international regulations; its purpose is establish a network of quality assurance coordinators in order to enhance quality assurance in Higher education Institutions in Uganda and beyond".

Meanwhile the vision of UUQAF is to promote efficient planning, management and provision of quality services in order to achieve excellence, nationally, regionally and internationally. And the mission is to strengthen, consolidate and maintain Total Quality Assurance in Ugandan Universities and Other Degree awarding Institutions of learning.

Areas of priority of UUQAF include; building capacity QA officers, training in quality assurance for the Ministry of Education and Sports, resource mobilization, increase on membership, promoting QA culture through awareness, promoting research on QA matters, enlargement of quality assurance information management system, establishing UUQAF Secretariat, developing a quality assurance journal.

The Ugandan network recorded several achievements such as; election of new UUQAF office bearers, negotiations for UUQAF to be a training QA organ nation with Ministry of Education and Sports are in progress, two of UUQAF members were nominated by DAAD as Multi-International Trainer in quality assurance issues. Whilst capacity building of members was on going, many

QA officers were being promoted into higher posts. It was also reported that two UUQAF members had gone to Germany for more training in QA matters. The Chapter also produced an Audit Report 2021/2022 in bid to enhance its financial perspectives. Whereas new members were recruited and inducted, the country chapter acquired a physical office at Kyambogo University and a lot of bench-marking has been taking place-comes with collaboration, trust and improvements.

In spite of the achievements, UUQAF lacked a secretariat with permanent staff, the network was financially constrained, high turn-over rates of QA officers, the officers had limited time to engage in project writing.

The future of UUQAF focused on enlarging the boundaries and turning UUQAF into a training organ for the MoES in quality assurance issues. Whilst writing projects, research, training, innovation etc., building capacity, mobilizing resources, publications in quality assurance,

The presenter concluded that, the following aspects had been noticed in UUQAF; the creation of strong QA Officers, nurturing and monitoring growth, quality culture and quality practice has taking shape quickly; collaboration and networking cultivated trust among QA officers in cultivating trust, love and working hard among the members; bench-marking and improvements had increased.

f) South Sudan

The South Sudanese representative thanked IUCEA for facilitating them attend the 12th EAQAN Forum. He reported that they are trying to establish a country chapter and that they have so far recruited 8 out of 10 members. He affirmed their resilience for over 50 years despite the war and determination to QA both at home and in the region.

The presenter acknowledged that their system for HE is different from those in the Region and appreciated the experience that they are getting from others in the region.

He communicated their unreadiness to nominate names for the upcoming election and committed to submit names for representation in 30 days, citing the need to first build a strong structure at home, a system.

The presenter expressed the need for training to build their capacity and be able to expand the QA network and increase quality culture in the country.



South Sudan QA Practitioners with the EAQAN President and Secretary General and CNES Permanent Secretary

g) Democratic Republic of Congo

The DRC representative from the Catholic University of Congo gave the status of the progress of quality assurance in the country. Though QA was born in 2010, it started being implemented in 2018. Currently, there are more than 900 universities.

The presenter requested for support from EAQAN in this journey.



DRC QA Practitioners with the EAQAN Secretariat and CNES Permanent Secretary

Election of a new Executive Committee for the period 2023-2025

Dr. Abdallah Baguma, EAQAN President informed members that the involved positions are that of President, Vice President, Secretary General, Finance Secretary and country representatives (including South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo). He outlined the regulations guiding elections and the previous Executive Committee membership since 2014-16. Some of the requirements for holding those positions were being trained in quality assurance, being an EAQAN member, among others.

For the position of President, the priority was for Burundi followed by Kenya. However, the Burundi country chapter indicated that they are not ready and they requested to use the next two years to develop and build their network; then the position went to Kenya. Both Tanzania and Uganda qualified equally for the position of Vice President given that they have never occupied that position. Considering that Uganda must have a representative among

the four positions by virtue of being the host of the network, and that the country preferred to have the position of Secretary General, the position of Vice President was given to Tanzania. For the position of Finance Secretary, Rwanda, Kenya and Burundi qualified at the same level. However, considering that Kenya got the President position and Burundi requested to participate in the next term, the Finance Secretary position went to Rwanda.

Chapters nominated names for their allocated positions and submitted them to the outgoing Secretary General for confirmation that they are EAQAN members.

Country chapters' nominations

Dr. Cosam, IUCEA EASTRIP Coordinator, coordinated the election. He proposed election by show of hand and members approved that arrangement. He first invited country representatives to formally present their chapter nominations for the Executive Committee positions and/ or country representative.

For Kenya, **Professor Paul Nzioki** was nominated for the position of President and **Dr. Mukirai Njihia** for country representative. Professor Nzioki has a strong quality profile, is engaged in various projects, is a peer reviewer on quality-related matters, with a strong base in terms of quality assurance. Dr. Mukirai Njihia was trained in quality assurance, is a member of KUQAN Executive committee and chair of the subcommittee on capacity building.

Tanzania nominated **Dr. Lulu Luflenge** for the position of Vice President and **Dr. Jaha Naulema** as country representative. Dr. Luflenge is a quality assurance director at her university and is a paid-up member of EAQAN. Dr. Naulema is a member of EAQAN as well.

Dr. Hajat Amaal Kinene Nsereko was presented for the position of Secretary General and **Mr. Otieno Okoth Ronald** as country representative. Dr. Amaal has been a member of UQAN, a founding member of EAQAN and is a good planner. Mr. Otieno is a planner; he is a member of EAQAN.

For Rwanda, **Dr. Jean Bosco Shema** was presented for the position of Finance Secretary and **Ms. Judith Tindimwebwa** as country representative. Dr. Shema is a PhD holder specializing in Finance and Accounting, has been working

as Director of quality assurance at his university, is the advisor of the vice chancellor in matters of finances and worked with SIMIRWA as Administrative and Finance Director. Ms. Tindimwebwa is a member of EAQAN.

Burundi nominated **Professor Rachel Akimana** as country representative. She is a lecturer, Quality Assurance Director and has been involved in many quality assurance activities: self- assessment of programmes, training academic & non-academic staff in quality assurance.

South Sudan committed to nominate a country representative within 30 days and Democratic Republic of Congo requested to first consult.

All the nominated members were elected and they all accepted the positions. In his acceptance address, Professor Nzioki, the President elect, thanked members for trusting him and pledged to uphold the vision & mission of the network, build on predecessor's dedication & hard work, cultivate a strong engagement and collaborations, revamp EAQAN. To fellow members of the Executive Committee, he urged them to uphold integrity, continue innovating, empower new chapters (South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo), abide by transparency in discharging their duties.

Excursion

On the fourth day of the Forum, participants were treated to an excursion which was crowned by a gala dinner accompanied by an exhibition of a number cultural Burundian dances. Led by Professor Léonidas NDAYIZEYE, the first destination of the excursion was the prestigious Van Beach Complex located on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, in the northern part of the city of Bujumbura. After a moment of relaxation on the sand of the beach, the tour continued towards the University of Burundi where a visit to the East African Center of Excellence for Nutritional Sciences (EANSI) was scheduled. On arrival at EANSI center, the Director of the Center, Professor Mélance NTUNZWENIMANA, gave the members of the group a warm welcome and after a tour of the Center's buildings and equipment, he invited them to a presentation detailing the EANSI program which took place in one of the Center's meeting rooms.

In the evening, after the visit of EANSI and the University of Burundi, the group was hosted at Zion Beach Restaurant, on Lake Tanganyika, where took place a gala dinner and a cultural event. The event was graced by the presence of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Higher Education in Burundi who represented the Government of Burundi. Participants shared drinks and Burundian foods and cultural artists made the evening unique by the exhibitions of varied Burundian cultural dances including the emblematic drummers' dance. The event also was an occasion for words of appreciation from the participants before concluding it towards midnight.

11th EAQAN General Assembly Resolutions

The 11th EAQAN General Assembly approved the report on the implementation of the 10th AGM recommendations, the financial report since the last 10th EAQAN AGM that was held on the 21st September 2022 as well as the elected members of the Executive Committee for the period 2023-2025 as follows:

No.	Position	Name	Country
1	President	Prof. Paul Nzioki	Kenya
2	Vice President	Dr. Lulu Luflenge	Tanzania
3	Secretary General	Dr. Amaal Kinene Nsereko	Uganda
4	Finance Secretary	Dr. Jean Bosco Shema	Rwanda
5	Representatives of Country Chapters	Prof. Racheal Akimana	Burundi
		Dr. Mukirae Njihia	Kenya
		Judith Tindimwebwa	Rwanda
		Dr. Jaha Naulema	Tanzania
		Mr. Othieno Okoth Ronald	Uganda

South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo will nominate their heads of chapter within 30 days.

In addition, from discussions on the statements by EAQAN Executive Committee and presentations made, the following key resolutions were made for follow-on and implementation:

1. To grant a waiver to South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo in regard to the fulfilment of membership requirements and admitted them into the Network as they process membership

2. To review the EAQAN Constitution by an expert
3. To review the EAQAN Strategic Plan by contracting an expert
4. To allow the Burundi Chapter to concede its turn to preside over the EAQAN for the period 2023-2025 as they strengthen the national chapter
5. To prepare mechanisms of income diversification by having different sources
6. To maintain and increase networking and collaboration with other networks or Associations
7. To pursue the change of the status of EAQAN from a Company to an Association
8. To establish a committee within EAQAN to involve Country Chapters to oversee different activities
9. To review and extend the MoU between OBREAL GLOBAL and EAQAN for three years, from 2022-2025 to 2027/2028
10. To provide a certificate of appreciation for members who are active in terms of fee payment it will be in electronic form
11. To review the EAQAN website for more visibility
12. To facilitate the establishment of Country Chapters for South Sudan and DRC
13. To introduce, enhance capacity building among country chapters through different partnership for example through HAAQA3, and country commissions
14. To review the term of EAQAN leadership from two years to three years
15. To conduct EAQAM Forums biannually
16. To review the EAQAN action plan and strategic plan on time due to changes of technology



Outgoing and incoming EAQAN Secretariats with the CP QA&QF Prof. Mawa

High-level quality assurance dialogue (8 September 2023)



The ES of IUCEA giving his remarks at the opening session of the High-Level dialogue

Opening Session; The session was **chaired by Professor Michael Mawa – IUCEA**. It was opened with the Burundi National Anthem and the East African Community Anthem

1.1 Statement by Dr. Lulu Luflenge, EAQAN Vice President elect

Dr. Lulu Luflenge, Vice President elect of the EAQAN (representing Professor Paul Nzioki, President elect of the EAQAN), welcomed participants to the last day of the Forum, particularly Beathe Schindler-Kovats from DAAD and heads of national councils and commissions for higher education who joined the Forum on that specific day.

She thanked the outgoing President, Dr. Baguma, for his unwavering commitment and leadership in steering the EAQAN during his tenure.

She emphasized the vital role of all the stakeholders in higher education including heads of HLIs and regulatory bodies in ensuring the higher education institutions uphold excellence and relevance.

Dr. Luflenge commended the collaborative spirit that has shaped this Forum, exemplified by the diverse expertise and experiences shared by presenters from various regions and continents. Partnerships with esteemed organizations and institutions, both within and beyond our borders, are believed pivotal in enriching dialogue and driving sustainable change.

The EAQAN Vice President elect furthermore urged the participants, as they engage in substantive discussions, exchange best practices, and explore innovative approaches, to leverage the insights from this Forum to shape the future of higher education.

She concluded by extending gratitude to IUCEA, CNES, the EAQAN Secretariat and individuals whose unwavering support and dedication have been instrumental in organizing the Forum.

1.2 Statement by Dr. Baguma Abdallah, EAQAN outgoing President

Dr. Baguma welcomed all members to the 12th Annual Regional Quality Assurance Forum co-hosted by the IUCEA, CNES and EAQAN. Currently the President of the EAQAN and also the Director of Accreditation at the African Leadership University, Rwanda. Dr. Baguma was grateful to his university for offering him time to serve in the various capacities in addition to the required job descriptions.

He informed members that the 12th Regional Quality Assurance Forum was expected to enhance the contribution of quality assurance in promoting transformational trends in higher education. This was in line with the mission

of the EAQAN of promoting, enhancing and improving the quality of higher education in East Africa hence the year's *theme; Nurturing Emerging Trends in Higher Education Through Quality Assurance*.

The specific outcomes of the Forum included:

- a. Enhanced understanding on the indicators of transformational trends in higher education.
- b. Enhanced collaborations and networking among Quality Assurance stakeholders
- c. Increased understanding of transformations in higher education quality assurance in a rapidly changing world
- d. Shared information on best practices of transformational higher education and quality assurance in the EAC and African Higher Education systems.
- e. Enhanced visibility of the quality assurance activities in the East African Common Higher Education Area.
- f. Increased information and awareness on quality assurance guidelines and tools to nurture emerging trends in the region, the continent and beyond
- g. Increased understanding of desired outcomes of emerging trends in higher education

Thus, this year's 12th Forum is expected to come up with sound recommendations and statements of commitment from higher education quality assurance practitioners and higher education managers to not only confront challenges that impede the achievement of the goal to establish and maintain quality assurance in higher education, but also constraints that hinder desired transformations in higher education.

Relatedly, the outgoing President of EAQAN noted that, higher education sector is experiencing rapid transformations driven by technological advancements, evolving learner expectations, and changing labour market and societal needs. Emerging trends such as online and blended learning, competency-based education, digitalization regional and international accreditation are reshaping the higher education landscape. To effectively

harness the potential of these trends, quality assurance mechanisms are crucial to guide, assess, and continuously improve them.

He informed the guest of honour that the main responsibility of higher education institutions is to teach the right things in the right ways in order to produce responsible citizenship and to achieve this, HEIs are not only expected to have Quality Assurance (QA) systems, but also Quality Assurance systems that are well managed. However, this comes with a diversity in higher education amidst emerging trends such as changes in labour market needs and modes of delivery. This variously impacts on the input, processes and outputs in the higher education sector and calls for interventions that are necessary across all levels including, institutions of higher learning, regulators and policy levels.

Dr. Baguma emphasized that as a network of Quality Assurance practitioners within the higher education institutions in the EAC, the EAQAN provides a platform in which practitioners come together [on an annual basis] to share experiences on areas of common interest in ensuring and managing quality in the institutions. It is in this regard that, since establishment of the EAQAN in 2012, 11 forums have been organized to engage higher education professionals, experts and other stakeholders to reflect on the place of quality assurance in higher learning education, not only in the region, but the continent and beyond. The structure of the forums includes plenary presentations, panel discussions, poster session and interactive discussions. This is expected to enable benchmarking, sharing of best practices and capacity building.

Dr. Baguma informed the participants that; the forum is arranged in the framework of cost-sharing. This was a departure from when several years ago, participation used to be fully covered by the IUCEA. The presenter took the opportunity to share that, even under the cost sharing arrangement, participation is steadily increasing. In addition, with the hybrid mode of participation, this year's forum is attended both in person and virtually. The outgoing EAQAN President further informed the participants that as indicated the programme and book of abstracts experts had been identified from different regions, continents/countries. This was a result of collaborations with partners within the region, the continent and beyond. In line with the theme of the forum, presenters were solicited through submission of papers. It was envisaged that presentations on the main theme and sub-themes of the

forum and poster presentations would be made available. Given the richness that comes with diversity members were informed that the presentations to be made during this forum, were by presenters from the region, other regions of the continent, and beyond.

The EAQAN President acknowledged institutions, committees and persons that had enabled the preparation of the forum. These included the following:

- i. The coordination of the organising committee led by Professor Leonidas the Permanent Secretary - CNES
- ii. The IUCEA for identifying presenters through development partners the DAAD and for the guidance and technical support.
- iii. Higher education institutions for supporting QA practitioners to participate
- iv. The African Leadership University (Rwanda) for supporting part of the conference materials and the commitment to be a strategic partner of the EAQAN
- v. Previous members of the EAQAN Executive Committee present in person and virtually
- vi. EAQAN Members both active and passive members, those who intend to join during this forum, please see the EAQAN Finance Secretary
- vii. Country Chapters Presidents for Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.
- viii. Development partners were also acknowledged as follows:
 - O'BREAL Global supporting our participation in QA Events: i) Supporting ongoing revamping of the EAQAN as part of implementing the resolutions of the previous AGMs, details will be presented during the AGM scheduled on 07th September, 2023; Support to establish a QA network in the Republic of South Sudan.
 - Director General of NCHE, Republic of South Sudan Dr. Sisto and respective higher education leaders and QA Practitioners in the Republic South Sudan

- Taylor and Francis Group which made a presentation 'Role of QA in Promoting Research and Innovation, and Assessment in Digital Era'. This was a result of the COREVIP Conference 2023 in Namibia.
- HAQAA Events: i). HAQAA2 QA Projects, which have contributed to presentations from the region and the continent and HAQAA3. ii). Participants of the AfriQAN Conference in Mozambique including; officials of AfriQAN and the AAU Higher Education Programme Officer also responsible for AfriQAN. iii) Collaboration with RAFANAQ and Francophone University Agency

1.3 Statement by Director, DAAD Regional Office for Africa, Kenya

Beate Schindler-Kovats, the Director of DAAD Regional Office for Africa thanked the organizers of the Forum (CNES, EAQAN secretariat & IUCEA) for inviting her. She appreciated the warm welcome extended to her on behalf of the DAAD office. Ms. Schindler-Kovats expressed her excitement for the opportunity for visiting the Republic of Burundi for the first time before the end of her mission in east Africa.

She reaffirmed DAAD commitment to EAQAN which made them facilitate experts in various topics of the Forum.

Following the onset of the 4th industrial revolution, she highlighted DAAD advocacy for higher education systems to keep up with the rapid technological advancement, which has revolutionized the job market as huge technologies change the way people do their work. She therefore called the participants to embrace life-long learning, consider reskilling and training for the rest of their working time.

With the trend of digitalization, Ms. Schindler-Kovats expressed DAAD determination to promote the use of AI and data.

In response to the trend of diversity agenda, with inclusion, international academic exchange as building blocks for shaping higher education in the future, she reiterated DAAD commitment to increase diversity in higher education by providing people from various parts of the world to support EAQAN.

She stated that since the beginning of her term in office in 2019, she endeavoured to create momentum to address new trends for higher education. She promised to take the experience and many ideas drawn from the 12th EAQAN Forum to the head office in November 2023 as she will be going back and will consider them in DAAD future work.

She concluded her remarks by thanking the IUCEA for the long-standing cooperation and wishing participants fruitful deliberation.

1.4 Statement by President O'BREAL Global, & Coordinator of the HAQAA Initiative

Apio Okwiri, representative of the President O'BREAL Global & Coordinator of the HAQAA Initiative, thanked the host for a warm welcome. She appreciated the work done for the previous term and conveyed OBREAL's expectation to work with the new team.

Ms. Okwiri highlighted OBREAL's commitment to continue working with IUCEA. To Vice Chancellors, national councils and commissions for higher education, quality assurance practitioners, she commended them for attending the Forum, which gave her the opportunity to meet them as they would like to work with them on quality culture.

O'BREAL's belief in inter-regional dialogue was emphasized so quality assurance stakeholders can be able to understand each other considering that integration and dialogue are the backbone of what they are doing.

Ms. Okwiri indicated O'BREAL's wish to continue working with EAQAN beyond the region & the quality culture. O'BREAL has different activities that are taking place in the continent and in collaboration with EU and AAU, is working to ensure different practitioners are brought on board.

1.5 Statement by Executive Secretary, IUCEA

Professor Gaspard Banyankimbona, the IUCEA Executive Secretary, welcomed participants to the high-level dialogue, especially those who joined the Forum on that specific day, namely Beathe Schindler-Kovats from DAAD, national councils and commissions for higher education, namely Professor Mary Okwakol (Uganda), Dr. Sisto Otim Oywak (South Sudan), Professor Mike Kuria (Kenya) and Dr. Telemu Kassile (representing the TCU Executive Secretary).

He highlighted the importance of the presence of Prof. Jude Lubega, member of the IUCEA QA Committee of the Executive Committee because every recommendation that would come out of the Forum will be first owned, then easily taken to policy makers to be transformed into guiding policies.

Professor Banyankimbona thanked the host country through the Chief Guest for a good reception and appreciated the contribution of the outgoing executive Committee of the EAQAN. He also appreciated the support from development partners, such as DAAD one of the long-standing supporters of quality assurance initiatives in the Region and called upon their support in training for francophone countries considering that the EAC is partly a francophone community with Burundi, Rwanda and DRC.

He welcomed and congratulated the new Executive team and assured them that IUCEA will support and work with them. He urged them to continue the close working relationship he had with the outgoing team through their president. He acknowledged the short period of their term (2 years) but at the same time encouraged them to do their part as they can make a lot of progress.

Professor Banyankimbona congratulated heads of national councils and commissions for higher education for the MoU for collaboration that they worked on and were going to sign.

He reaffirmed IUCEA commitment to support EAQAN and quality assurance practitioners through capacity building in order to instil quality culture in the Region.

1.6 Opening address by the Guest of Honour, Permanent Secretary, National Council for Higher Education, Republic of Burundi

Professor Leonidas Ndayizeye, Permanent Secretary of the Burundi National Council for Higher Education (CNES), welcomed participants to the fourth and final day of the EAQAN Forum as he outlined the vibrant exchange of ideas around the theme during the previous three days.

He welcomed the experts that were present, educators and other quality assurance stakeholders who shared their commitment to advance quality assurance in the Region.

Professor Ndayizeye called upon the heads of national councils and commissions for higher education, Vice Chancellors and other stakeholders to collaborate in order to confront the challenges and forge a path to quality higher education systems.

Session 2: Keynote presentation: Nurturing Emerging Trends in Higher Education through Quality Assurance

This session was chaired by Dr. Joseph Cosam. During the session, emerging trends in higher education were outlined and quality assurance responses were proposed.

Professor Mike Kuria, CEO of the Kenya Commission for University Education, started by recognizing partners like DAAD and congratulating them for the upcoming 50 years anniversary. He expressed his wish to see the relationship with national councils and commissions for higher education strengthened.

In his presentation, focus was on AI and life-long training to address the issue of disappearing jobs in the course of time and unemployability.

Professor Kuria outlined current challenges that are facing higher education systems such as funding challenge, demographic challenge and emerging trends, namely the emerging technologies, internationalization & globalization of higher education, education reforms and their implications especially on the future of work.

In light with the emerging trends, Professor Kuria recommended the following responses:

- Revise the Road map to quality (volume 4) to make it robust and reliable for a bigger impact;
- Strengthen university quality assurance systems, taking into consideration those changes;
- Implement a quality assurance system with the assumption that lecturers care about quality;

- Establish strong independent senates that will take up their positions and empower them (Senate members from education specialists) to exercise their mandate in matters quality;
- Establish stronger quality assurance officers who can command in senates;
- Embrace nurturing growth and innovation and monitoring roles in our HLIs;
- Adopt quality culture and practices;
- Be both physicians and prophets;
- Focus on market beyond our borders: import students/ workers and export students/ workers;
- Collaborate rather than competing;
- Embrace alternative credentials and pathways to build diverse careers.

MoU signing Ceremony between NCHES in EAC Partner States



MoU signing Ceremony between NCHES in EAC Partner States and IUCEA

Professor Gaspard Banyankimbona, IUCEA Executive Secretary, gave a brief background of the initiative. He indicated that debates on harmonization of higher education in the Region started in 2006. With the enactment of IUCEA Act in 2009, the critical role of national councils and commissions for higher education on quality assurance was clearly stated as "ensure establishment of quality assurance through the development, in partnership with national councils and commissions for higher education, of criteria for assessing standards and assuring the quality of teaching and research in the community through advice on quality assurance mechanisms, ways of self-evaluation and comparability of degrees" (Art. 6-(c)-(ii)).

IUCEA found it wise to formalize the engagement with national councils and commissions for higher education on quality assurance matters through signing an MoU, which is believed to help advance the implementation of the Common higher education Area (CHEA) and enhance collaboration.

The Executive secretary indicated that the MoU, which is in English and French, was shared with all the heads of national councils and commissions for higher education for approval. He indicated that the signing of the MoU formally creates a Forum of collaboration; with Prof. Mary Okwakol, Executive Director of the National Council for Higher Education- Uganda being the chairperson.

He congratulated the CEOs and assured them of IUCEA's unwavering commitment to working with them.

Prof. Okwakol, the chairperson of the Joint Committee of the Forum of NCHE, expressed her excitement about that milestone. She highlighted the vital role of Uganda in pushing for the revival of that collaboration, which was initiated in 2014 but was not successful as only three EAC partner States were party of the signing of the MoU and along the way the idea stalled.

She commended IUCEA Executive secretary and his team for facilitating the CEOs of NCHE to come together some time back in Entebbe- Uganda, go through the framework of collaboration and thereafter send it to various agencies for validation, ensuring they do not contradict any national law.

Session 3: Panel discussion: The implications of Emerging Trends in Higher Education for Higher Education

This panel discussion was held to address the implications of emerging trends in Higher Education for Higher Education Management. Panellists gave their own reflection on what those new trends are and how they are impacting on them. The panel brought together three distinguished university leaders with various academic backgrounds to share their insights and recommendations on these topics. These are:

1. Professor Jamil Serwanga, Vice Rector for academic affairs at Islamic University in Uganda;
2. Dr. Audace Manirabona, Rector of the University of Burundi and
3. Dr. Tashmin Khamis, Vice Provost of the Aga Khan University.

This session was chaired by **Dr. Robert Ayine, Senior Qualifications Framework Officer at IUCEA.**

By Professor Jamil Serwanga, Vice Rector for academic affairs at Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) shared two emerging trends, which according to him, are disrupters of the purpose of higher education, that of suppling skilled labour, facing contemporary challenges. these trends are online teaching and ranking of universities.

In response to online teaching, IUIU is reviewing its curricula, establishing adequate infrastructure to enable them to sustain the upward trend of enrolment, they are building the capacity of staff in the area of AI and improving the pay.

With regard to the ranking of universities, he called fellow leaders of HEIs to get ready for that failure to which they may be relegated as academic institutions. He stated the need to consider incorporating issues of vocational, entrepreneurship, Science versus humanities, salaries improvement, business mindedness of HEIs, cost-benefit analysis in everything they do.

Dr. Audace Manirabona, Rector of the University of Burundi) mentioned the open and distance teaching and learning. However, he raised the issue of funding as the main challenge the university faces.

Dr. Manirabona expressed the need to change the standards from physical mode to virtual mode or blended mode and come up with guidelines on how assess the results of learning online to measure the impact to the society (relevance).

He also acknowledged gaps among HEIs in embracing open and distance teaching and learning and called upon the leaders to collaborate in leading their institutions to an open space.

Dr. Tashmin Khamis, Vice Provost of the Aga Khan University, focused on AI. She acknowledged the dedication of QA practitioners/ directors in changing quality but to drive these changes, HEIs must change their teaching methods, giving students skills such as life-long learning, critical thinking, problem solving, good communication rather than content in order to adapt in the unknown future.

Dr. Khamis explained that PhD training teach faculty to be researchers not to teach and thus suggested the establishment of teaching- learning centres in every university to enable faculty to teach better.

Comments

The following comments were made on the panelists' reflection:

- Universities should prioritize the development and enhancement of their IQA systems to ensure the quality of education;
- Quality Assurance Officers should be recognized and supported in their roles to effectively implement and oversee IQA processes;
- Higher Education institutions should proactively integrate AI and technology into their teaching methods to better prepare students for the future job market;
- Competence- based curriculum (CBC) model should be streamlined from primary to university levels., and higher education institutions should collaborate to ensure a smooth transition.
- Collaboration with the private sector and government employers should be promoted to create job-relevant curricula and address employability challenges.

Session 4: Panel discussion: Accreditation and Quality Assurance in the digital era Management



Session 4: Panel discussion: Accreditation and Quality Assurance in the digital era Management

This panel discussion was held to explore the dynamics of accreditation and quality assurance (QA) in the digital era, with a focus on the experiences and challenges faced by East African countries. The panel featured five distinguished regulators of higher education, each representing their respective countries, namely:

1. Dr. Sisto Otim Oywak, Director General of NCHE- South Sudan;
2. Dr. Leonidas Ndayizeye, Permanent Secretary of the NCHE- Burundi;
3. Professor Mary Okwakol, Executive Director of NCHE- Uganda;
4. Dr. Kassile Telemu, Director of Accreditation at TCU and representing Professor Charles Kihampa, Executive Secretary of the TCU; and
5. Dr. Beatrice Achieng' Odera-Kwach, Senior Assistant Commission Secretary for Library Accreditation and Information Systems at CUE- Kenya (representing the Commission Secretary, Professor Mike Kuria).

The discussion centered around the evolving landscape of accreditation and QA in the context of online and distance learning, in response to the digital era.

The session was chaired by **Dr. Robert Ayine, Senior Qualifications Framework Officer at IUCEA.**

Dr. Kassile Telemu initiated the discussion by stressing the basics for accreditation, that is compliance with set standards and guidelines. He highlighted the importance of strengthening compliance with standards. In that regard, the discussant reported that TCU established guidelines for accrediting online courses after the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on staff skills, relevant technology, and student orientation to online delivery.

Dr. Leonidas Ndayizeye indicated that the digital era poses both challenges and opportunities. He reported that Burundi is adapting to this changing landscape.

Dr. Beatrice Achieng' Odera-Kwach focused on the guidelines for online accreditation. She reported that Kenya developed guidelines for accrediting online and distance education programs and centers and sought expert input on such aspects as program structure, center requirements, funding for Learning Management Systems (LMS) and IT infrastructure.

Professor Mary Okwakol's reflection was centered around accrediting QA Instruments for the Digital Era. She emphasized the need to consider different capacity indicators. In that respect, the Uganda NCHE set minimum standards before COVID-19 for developing online programmes and established emergency guidelines to address the pandemic's impact. Professor Okwakol raised the challenges of lacking infrastructure, inadequate staff, and student diversity that face the process of adapting to the digital era. She stressed the need to prioritize capacity building and reskilling of staff to adapt to the evolving landscape of higher education, ensure equitable access to online education by all students particularly in rural areas to avoid leaving anyone behind and collaboration among EAC countries to share best practices, policies and government instruments for a unified approach to digital education.

Dr. Sisto Otim Oywak emphasized the issue of HEIs capacity and reskilling of accreditation staff. He indicated that South Sudan recognizes the importance of digital education. He raised two issues: capacity issues for HEIs and the

need for expert support in developing policies and legal instruments that help measure institutional capacities as well as the importance of reskilling accreditation staff and building their technical capacity.

Questions & Answers

Questions	Responses
<p>During the COVID-19 era, there were notable concerns regarding the quality of e-learning sessions, particularly when students chose to keep their video feeds off. There was a recognition that merely recording attendance does not confirm active learning participation, as the act of teaching does not automatically guarantee that students are effectively absorbing the material.</p> <p>The overarching question posed is: How do we evaluate learning outcomes across various modes of instruction, including face-to-face, online, or blended learning environments?</p>	<p>Evaluating learning outcomes is a significant challenge. Only assessments can genuinely ascertain whether students have indeed grasped a concept or not.</p> <p>It is indeed a challenging task; nevertheless, when curricula are meticulously designed in Tanzania, the focus is placed on formulating minimum competencies or desired learning outcomes.</p> <p>In Burundi the challenge of internet connectivity stands as a prominent issue affecting educational endeavors.</p> <p>The evolving paradigm of learning suggests that the contemporary learner's lifestyle will involve a fusion of activities such as eating and learning, as well as sleeping and learning. This new generation of learners is anticipated to embody a holistic approach to learning that integrates education into various aspects of daily life.</p>
<p>What is the quality of the data being utilized within our institutions?</p> <p>As AI is emerging and tools that incorporate AI technology are used, an important concern arises: who is accessing and utilizing institutional data externally?</p> <p>Moreover, who bears the responsibility for safeguarding and managing this data?</p> <p>Addressing these inquiries stands as one of the most substantial challenges we face in integrating AI into our systems. What proactive measures are being undertaken to ascertain that our institutions retain control over the data being utilized?</p>	<p>In Uganda, there is an ongoing initiative to enhance the system, ensuring it effectively captures data from the institution. Moreover, measures have been taken to secure a reliable backup system to safeguard this crucial educational data.</p> <p>Universities serve as pivotal sources of knowledge dissemination; however, it is noteworthy that regulatory bodies do not enforce specific mandates regarding what universities must precisely undertake.</p>

Questions	Responses
What is our course of action? Should we wait until we have all the infrastructure in place, or should we contemplate employing alternative solutions?	The primary course of action should focus on resolving the connectivity issue for rural students, as they are at a disadvantage in this regard.

Session 5: Transforming Teaching and Learning: Innovative Pedagogy and Technology

This session was chaired by **Dr. Ayine Robert, the Senior Qualifications Framework Officer at IUCEA.**

During the session, **Dr. Nhlanhla Thwala, Vice-Chancellor and Provost at the African Leadership University in Rwanda** presented a comprehensive approach aiming to reshape Africa's higher education by emphasizing contextual relevance, balanced education, innovation, and community impact as essential pillars for sustainable growth and development.

He delivered a compelling presentation addressing crucial issues in Africa's higher education landscape. He highlighted Africa's youthful population and the necessity for a more extensive tertiary education sector, emphasizing its lag in enrolment rates compared to other regions. Notably, despite this, many graduates struggle to find suitable employment, indicating a deficiency in producing workforce-ready individuals.

Moreover, Dr. Thwala pointed out the scarcity of Ph.D. holders, critical for managing higher education institutions, thus revealing a shortage within the academic sphere.

To address these challenges, the presenter put forward a customized higher education model for Africa. This model also promotes a well-rounded university approach, focusing not only on preparing students for jobs but also on nurturing citizenship values like active learning and critical thinking. These values play a crucial role in empowering graduates to make meaningful contributions to their communities.

Furthermore, he emphasized the necessity of building a robust ecosystem to effectively support the model. This includes ensuring sufficient faculty, an adaptable and innovative quality assurance system, comprehensive student-life support, technological assistance, financial aid.

Ultimately, Dr. Thwala urged Higher Learning Institution leaders to adopt the Frugal innovation approach in addressing these needs. This approach involves re-evaluating traditional teaching and learning methodologies, creatively leveraging available resources, and developing solutions that are accessible and cost-effective for a wider population.



Panel discussion: Transforming Teaching and Learning: Innovative Pedagogy and Technology

Panel discussion

This panel discussion was held to get other higher education stakeholders' perspective on the implications of emerging trends in Higher Education. Panellists gave their own reflection on what those new trends are and how they are impacting on them. The panel brought together three distinguished university leaders with various academic backgrounds to share their insights and recommendations on these topics. These are:

1. Innocent Hatungimana, student at Ecole Normale Supérieure (in Burundi) and Representative of Postgraduate Students on the panel;
2. Dr. Jean Bosco Shema, Rwanda Institute for Conservation Agriculture and Representative of QA practitioners on the panel; and
3. Professor Juma Shabani, Director of the Doctoral School, University of Burundi.

This session was chaired by **Dr. Robert Ayine, Senior Qualifications Framework Officer at IUCEA.**

Professor Juma Shabani started his reflection by an emphasis on the need for institutional curricula and teaching methods to be regularly reviewed and adapted to incorporate changes.

He then shared the success story of the University of Burundi's doctoral school. The University of Burundi's doctoral school initiated with a SWOT analysis to determine the most suitable approach. The specific model used for the doctoral school is based on five pillars, namely dual supervision for students (one in Burundi and one externally), mandatory ICT courses, interactive sessions where students discuss and invite external participants, staff mobility to provide optimal lab environments and platforms for e-learning and video conferencing.

The discussant indicated that the school was established five years ago and has enrolled over 400 students, with over 50 candidates ready to defend their theses and 250 professors as external supervisors from over 60 universities globally. This is the highest enrolment rate by the country since independence.

Regular student seminars are conducted. Students have published over 200 international journals this year, constituting 20% of researchers in Burundi who are either graduates or students of the doctoral school.

Specific projects were mobilized due to current international visibility. These projects focus on postgraduate programmes in mental health involving 24 students distributed across Senegal, Cotonou (Benin), and Dar es Salaam. Additionally, there is a digitalization project by the EU implemented by a consortium of four universities, and a project establishing a medical program funded by Switzerland.

An incubator centre established by a German foundation in microfinance has trained over 4,000 youths in entrepreneurship.

Professor Shabani expressed challenges that the doctoral school face, including a rapid increase in student enrolment and managing the number of supervisors. Also the model lacks ownership by several partners.

He concluded his reflection with the opportunities that the school have, such as the continuous development of staff capabilities, partnerships with institutions like the Kenya Medical Institute, agreements for access to resources from universities like Washington University, and the establishment of a Cancer Research and Training Centre.

Dr. Jean Bosco Shema stressed the importance of enhancing digital literacy and contemporary skills. He outlined a contribution that him and Dr. Baguma, the EAQAN outgoing President, made in conducting a workshop in Rwanda on Quality Assurance and digitalization of Higher Education aimed at sharing practical knowledge.

He shared Rwanda Institute for Conservation Agriculture experience in nurturing entrepreneurship and leadership skills in their students.

Finally, the discussant stressed the need to put a greater emphasis on assessment of students not only ensuring that they possess the necessary content knowledge, providing them with the space to achieve the learning outcomes.

Innocent Hatungimana's reflection focused on the main challenges facing students in the new era of AI. He mentioned the lack of access to gadgets as a significant challenge; the need for training in ICT relevant to their respective fields such as mathematics, chemistry, and agriculture, involving proficiency in various software applications; language as another pertinent issue, with the medium of instruction predominantly in French while most academic publications are in English, posing a challenge in accessing scholarly material and restricting students from effectively competing in East Africa and deterring their participation in calls for opportunities.

Hatungimana concluded by recommending to policy makers to transition from French to English, focusing on enhancing soft skills to alleviate this barrier. Additionally, he suggested equipping laboratories with updated laptops and smartphones for both private and public universities, as it is challenging to conduct online learning effectively. This requirement aligns with emerging trends in education.

Questions & Answers

Questions	Responses
<p>Various challenges have been raised.</p> <p>Highlight experiences of how these challenges have been innovatively addressed by some members so that others can learn.</p>	<p>During the COVID-19 era, internships were carried out at the university instead of going upcountry because the latter were costly and students would be scattered and difficult to monitor. So COVID brought problems but also created opportunities to innovate.</p> <p>An experience from some universities in Tanzania is the innovation of seminars whereby a PhD student must deliver publications and share findings before graduation in addition to their theses. This is done for them to foster sharing. TCU has put up a minimum number of publications for that matter.</p> <p>Partnering with Students in QA is very important in the review of curricula. The University of Burundi developed a platform for alumni in order to get feedback for improvement of programmes.</p>
<p>It was mentioned that 50% of teaching takes place outside the classroom. Where did that initiative start from? At the institution? Or it was a move from the regulator?</p>	<p>This was a result of trying to be intentional and understanding of the challenges we are facing. This programme was addressing the demands of the labor market. So that was an initiative of the university.</p>
<p>It was stated that at the Doctoral School of the University of Burundi, more than 200 students have gone through their hand and presumably have published. Who have they published with? The advice is to bring researchers together so that some of those challenges can be addressed.</p>	

Session 6: Closing Session



Closing session: Statement from EAQAN Vice President elect

6.1 Statement from EAQAN Vice President elect

Dr. Lulu Luflenga, EAQAN Vice President elect (representing Professor Paul Nzioki, EAQAN President elect) expressed gratitude to all the participants for their time, patience, and contributions throughout the event. She acknowledged the Vice-Chancellors' participation in the high-level dialogue.

Dr. Luflenga emphasized the significance of taking contributions seriously and striving to elevate the network to the next level. She thanked Baguma's team and encouraged them to pass on their energy to the new team for continuous progress.

Appreciation was extended to all partners, specifically recognizing DAAD and O'BRIEL Global for their consistent support from the beginning to the end of the Forum.

The EAQAN Vice President elect expressed gratitude to IUCEA for their continuous presence and thanked CNES for hosting the dinner.

In conclusion, she wished everyone the best going forward.

6.2 Statement from -Executive Secretary CNES, Burundi

Professor Leonidas Ndayizeye, Permanent Executive Secretary of the Commission for Higher Education in Burundi expressed gratitude to the participants for their presence in Burundi, for sharing their experiences and for actively engaging in the forum. It was an honor for CNES to have hosted the event.

He thanked the Inter-University Council for East Africa for making the event possible.

Gratitude was extended to the East African Quality Assurance Network and their partners.

Professor Ndayizeye congratulated the newly elected Executive Committee members and country chapter representatives. Appreciation was also expressed to the outgoing Committee.

He thanked the organizers, both local and from IUCEA and EAQAN teams.

He concluded by wishing a safe journey back home, expressing hopes for their return to Burundi in the future.

6.3 Vote of Thanks



Closing session: Vote of thanks by Dr. Alier Maker from Rumbek University of Science and Technology

Dr. Alier Maker from Rumbek University of Science and Technology in South Sudan, the second youngest chapter of the EAQAN, delivered the vote of thanks. He expressed gratitude to the host country, the Government and the people of Burundi for their warm welcome. For some participants, it was their first time in Burundi and created enduring memories of their visit to the country.

He also thanked the National Council for Higher Education for hosting the event and for ensuring participants' entertainment during their stay.

Dr. Alier expressed appreciation to the East African Quality Assurance Network for their kindness and willingness to share knowledge. He also extended gratitude to Dr. Baguma, the outgoing President, for his efforts in engaging people in the learning process.

To the Inter-University Council for East Africa, he conveyed appreciation for the invitation to attend the event, which provided valuable insights into quality-related matters. He expressed the intent to utilize this acquired information to enhance their practices. Anticipating future engagements, he expressed a hope for further interactions and the prospect of catching up soon.

He also expressed appreciation for the contributions and suggestions from fellow Quality Assurance practitioners, acknowledging their exceptionally constructive nature. He emphasized that their inputs would significantly contribute to their developmental efforts.

Dr. Alier extended special gratitude to O'BRIEL Global and DAAD for their facilitation and support in enabling quality assurance practitioners from South Sudan to participate in the event.

Sincere appreciation was conveyed to all the presenters who generously shared their knowledge. Their contributions have been greatly valued, and the information received will significantly aid in our continuous learning process.

Finally, he extended gratitude to all the participants for their attendance at this pivotal forum. Their presence played an instrumental role in the success of this event.

6.4 Closing Remarks -Executive Secretary, IUCEA

Professor Gaspard Banyankimbona, the Executive Secretary of IUCEA highlighted the importance of networks. He commended participants' commitment to the EAQAN that was shown by staying up to late despite self-sponsorship. He urged them to leverage the use of networks like EAQAN for success in Higher Education.

The Executive Secretary acknowledged the shortcoming of networking can hardly happen online and for purposes of encouraging human interaction, he stressed the need to make efforts to consistently prioritize physical meetings.

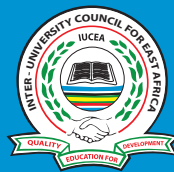
Appreciation was extended to all participants attending for the first time, encouraging them to challenge themselves and explore new destinations such as Juba or Kinshasa.

Professor Banyankimbona expressed gratitude to the online participants, in addition to those present physically.

He promised the resumption of training of Quality Assurance officers with the support of DDAD despite limited resources. The selection of trainees will be done through a call for applications that will be launched before the end of this calendar year; it will be highly competitive.

He called upon the new team and the outgoing President to have a special session aiming to strategize moving forward.

Professor Banyankimbona concluded his closing remarks by calling upon the leaders of the institutions of higher learning present to embrace regional accreditation of programmes. He informed them that a call is open, and so far, there have been three applications from Zambia. To the Quality Assurance practitioners, he urged them to advise their Vice-Chancellors to pursue regional accreditation.



Plot M833, Kigobe Road Kyambogo,
Kampala, Uganda.
P.O.Box 7110, Kampala, Uganda
Telephone: (+256) 414256251/2
Email: info@iucea.org
Twitter: [@iucea_info](https://twitter.com/iucea_info)