

Towards a Regional Quality Assurance Regime: The Case of the Higher Education Quality Management Initiative for Southern Africa.

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Abstract

This paper discusses the issues relating to the Higher Education Quality Management Initiative for Southern Africa (HEQMISA) in the context of globalization and the Millennium Development Goals from an African perspective. It presents the argument that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals should encourage more cooperation and collaboration among the African States themselves first as the initiative drivers and developed nations second as partners. The challenge of higher education in Southern Africa however, is that the commercialisation of Higher Education (HE) in the North has already encouraged the establishment of satellite universities in Southern Africa whose main objective is to generate money for their parent institutions in Europe and Northern America. The motive for their establishment them is obviously profit. This therefore has led to the exploitation of the education market by numerous private providers and encourages a growing gap between poor and rich HE institutions within Southern Africa as well as the poor recognition of emerging problems by local academics. A regional focus on quality improvement in HE institutions in Southern Africa could assist in making them more attractive and competitive. It is expected, that this Quality Management initiative has an significant impact on institutional capacity building as well as strengthening South-South networking allowing mutual partnerships at a global level.

HEQMISA facilitated the development of a comprehensive vision and mission through an intensive stakeholder consultation process. The paper concludes by discussing the main activities, mandate of quality assurance centres in the region, key result areas, expected outcomes and impact and a suggested model for a Regional Quality Assurance Agency..

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