State of Play of Internal Quality Assurance in the SADC

Purpose of the IQA Project in the Context of the SARUA Strategic plan

Martin Oosthuizen
IQA Supports SARUA’s Vision and Mission

**Vision:**
To be a dynamic regional hub that enhances the responsiveness and impact of the higher education sector in the SADC.

**Mission:**
To build and sustain a vibrant regional higher education network that makes a distinctive contribution to regional socio-economic development and integration through collaborative networks and partnerships.
Through its Vision and Mission, SARUA wishes to ensure that SADC Universities become active contributors to the achievement of the SADC regional development plans and the SADC Protocol for Education and Training, as knowledge producers and developers of institutional and human capacity.
SARUA’s Strategic Focus Areas

An HE Sector that Contributes to Regional Development

1) SADC HE Academy (Leadership, Management, Planning)
2) Knowledge Co-Production (Sustainable Development Goals)
3) Institutional Quality Management
4) HE Digital Transformation
5) HE Mapping (Reliable data on HE in the SADC)
Importance of IQA

- Responsiveness
- Standards
- Innovation
- Knowledge “Production”
- Student Voice
Responsiveness

• Institutional Missions: Appropriate to their contexts
• Programme Purpose: Develop knowledge, skills and values that prepare students to make a productive contribution in their professional lives and as engaged citizens

Thus: IQA is a principled conversation about how HEI’s define and achieve their vision and mission. Assisting the SADC’s HE sector to contribute to regional development, through an appropriately differentiated sector.

• The SADC HE Academy plays a critical role in developing strategic leadership capacity.
• The Regional Mapping Process provides the basis for informed vision and mission development.
Standards (Key Aspects)

- Programme Design and Delivery
- Student Academic Achievement
- Staffing: Academic and Support
- Services: Information to Students & other stakeholders; Library and Information; ICT; Registration; Student Support
- Facilities and Infrastructure
- Monitoring & Evaluation
Standards ensure that institutions *purposefully* pursue their vision and mission, in an *evidence-based* manner, through policies, plans, structures, financial provision, support services and facilities and infrastructure. They play a key role in ensuring that the SADC HE sector is fit for purpose - with the capacity to contribute to regional development.

SARUA wishes to contribute to standards development through its HE Academy, IQA capacity development, and its focus on digital transformation.
Standards are about *compliance and innovation*: Compliance with standards is important. It ensures trust in terms of meeting threshold standards. But standards should not lock us into accepted norms and approaches (the “established way of doing things”). Instead, they should provide a firm foundation for evidence-based innovation. *Thus IQA should ask each institution in the SADC: How are we adapting to a changing environment?* SARUA promotes *HE Transformation* through innovative approaches to HE leadership and management, Knowledge Co-production, Learning and Teaching, Research and Engagement -
INNOVATION

- Environmental Scanning
- Feedback loops
- Peer Review
- Peer Learning
  - Benchmarking
  - Good Practice Guidelines

Five-Step Framework for Institutional Change

- Determine Goals
- Assess Institutional Rules, Roles & Tools
- Measure & Evaluate
- Implement Plan
- Develop Action Plan
Institutional Quality Assurance of teaching and learning, research and innovation and engagement must lead to questions about Knowledge:

- What counts as valid knowledge? What is excluded? (Decoloniality and the curriculum)
- Who contributes to knowledge production? What is their role?
- What is the institution’s responsibility towards society? Who benefits from the production of knowledge?
- Who has access to knowledge resources? (Open Access; OER)
IQA asks questions about the role and importance of students:
• What kind of graduates are we trying to develop?
• How well have their programmes prepared them for their chosen careers? Do we know?
• Are they customers? Are they partners? Or Both?
• Are they co-creators of knowledge or just recipients?
• What can they contribute to the institution?
• Do they have agency in making their voices heard?
• How does the institution promote student engagement in learning?
• What is the role of the co-curriculum?
Thank You.

Martin.Oosthuizen@sarua.org
www.sarua.africa