Report on the 2015 CIQG Annual Meeting Executive Summary

By Peter Okebukola
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The Third Annual Meeting of the CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG) which was held from January 28 to 29, 2015 and attended by 343 participants from 35 countries had as theme: "Quality Assurance: Whose Responsibility?" The conversation on this question ran through eight plenary sessions led by 12 presenters with contributions from other participants. The key conclusions of the meeting were:

• The global quality assurance landscape in higher education is fast changing with the dynamics reflecting diversity on one side and harmonization on the other – "same same but different." There is a heightened need to strengthen and reshape quality assurance in the face of the increasing number of non-traditional providers and the miscellany of emerging technologies that are impacting the higher education delivery process.

Peter Okebukola, President, Global University Network for Innovation

CIQG
2015 ANNUAL MEETING

External Quality Assurance in Higher Education: How Can It Fight Corruption and Other Malpractices?

Michaela Martin, *External quality assurance in higher education. How can it help prevent and reinforce the stand against corruption and malpractices?* Paper prepared for the IIEP Policy Forum on Planning Higher Education Integrity, held at the UNESCO/IIEP, in Paris, France, 18 to 20 March 2015.

Michaela Martin, Programme Specialist, IIEP UNESCO

This paper, written by Michaela Martin, Programme Specialist at the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), has three main purposes. First, it briefly studies the factors that enhance the risk of corruption and malpractice in higher education. Second, it examines how quality assurance systems can potentially identify and prevent corruption in higher education. Third, it discusses organizational options that prevent corruption in the quality assurance procedure itself. In other words, how should the quality assurance procedure be built in order to lower the risk of becoming itself the object of unethical behavior and corruption?

The purpose of quality assurance (QA) agencies is to ensure quality standards in higher education institutions (HEI), but the basic argument of the paper is nonetheless that QA can also help fight corruption and malpractices in higher education institutions.

QA can best contribute to fight against the risks of corruption when it subjects the HEI to a recurrent compulsory evaluation/accreditation process on the basis of a pre-established standard system. The standards for accreditation often relate to issues of integrity, transparency and fairness, and introduce within the HEI a system of checks and balances for collective oversight. Standard systems can be quite explicit with regard to expectations from good governance and academic integrity, but they refer to all areas of academic life.

QA agencies can therefore contribute to the prevention of corruption. However, the agencies themselves are exposed to risks of corruption. One example is the increasing number of alleged accreditation mills, which hand out accreditation certificates without any real evaluation of the HEI.

Certain options in the quality assurance procedure and structure can make QA more resilient to corruption. Typically, the accreditation process consists in three steps: a self-assessment exercise; an external review; and the decision on the outcome of the accreditation. The external review permits validation of the internal self-assessment. In order to avoid malpractice during the external review, it is essential that the QA agency formulates clear policies to prevent any conflict of interest. The third step is the final decision of the agency and its public disclosure. In the event that the HEI does not agree with the agency's decision, it is important to have in place an independent appeal system.

Also, the QA agency must be independent from undue pressure in order to ensure its integrity, and guarantee that the final decision is not influenced by the HEI, ministry or any other stakeholders. Secondly, the QA agency needs installed accountability mechanisms. Normally, QA agencies are accountable to the ministry, HEIs or to the public in general, but they can also take voluntary "safety" measures, such as joining a quality network, e.g., the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR), which demands regular evaluation of the agency. Lastly, QA agencies can improve integrity and transparency by publishing standards of good practice, which serve as an inspiration for HEIs and reinforce the transparency of the accreditation decision.

In the end, however, the main responsibility to fight corruption lies within the HEI itself, and it is essential, therefore, that the standards of QA are transformed into HEI policies that will improve integrity and transparency in higher education.

Click *here* to link to the full paper.

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Executive Summary
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- The locus of roles in quality assurance is diffuse through a broad spectrum of stakeholders including government, quality assurance organizations, professional bodies, higher education institutions and the general public. Within this context of role assignments, the twin issues of trust and accountability are deemed important.

- In many countries, the role of government in quality assurance is mainly setting broad policy guidelines leaving quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions to implement at the practical level. Hence, governments have no direct role in quality assurance. Agencies saddled with the responsibility of quality assurance should have an established legal basis and should be formally recognized as quality assurance agencies by competent public authorities. Government defines priorities and hence is interested in how quality drives the attainment of national priorities.

- Most national quality assurance agencies, as reported in examples from Africa, Europe and many countries in the Asia-Pacific region, are largely autonomous of government. They are legally empowered to set standards, measure performance of programs and institutions against the standards, provide judgment on accreditation and encourage the development of and implementation of quality-improvement plans.

- In the quest for improving quality, it is important not to reform a thing that is not broken. If broken, we should identify where the gaps are and thereafter target intervention to close quality gaps in those specific areas. For instance, people are forever complaining about the quality of students currently enrolled in the higher education system. The intervention we need is to assign roles that will lead to adjustment in classroom practices and pedagogic approaches and will transform the curriculum to adapt to the changing socio-economic dynamics of the society and of the school system.

- Over the last decade, the European Bologna process has impacted quality assurance in higher education systems outside Europe, especially in stimulating harmonization of quality assurance practices across national borders. The examples of the development of the African Higher Education and Research Space (AHERS), Bachelor, Master and Doctorate levels (LMD) reform, the TUNING project, and the Latin American initiatives towards harmonization provide notable impacts.

- More in-depth work is required to achieve alignment as Bologna gains ground for global recognition, mobility and credit transfer and under the Africa–European Union strategic partnership slogan of 2 Unions 1 Vision. Africa's regional cooperation efforts should focus more on developing common frameworks compatible with Bologna and other international frameworks to ensure mutual recognition of degrees and enhance quality.

- The Latin American/Caribbean (LAC) region presents a very different context since it has nothing comparable to the EU integration process. For instance, it has no vision for integration at continental level; no common tools, policies, budget or labor market; and no tradition of cooperation/mobility in higher education within LAC. The higher education landscape in the region is also different from that of Europe. In spite of apparent similarities, strong national differences occur. These include highly rigid, elitist, stratified, fragmented, island systems. In spite of recent massification, there is strong competition among the many private higher education institutions. The Ministries of Education have limited power (very different from Europe) and the thrust of the activities of the institution is hardly geared towards research. Internationalization is also limited.

- The steps towards a global convention on recognition of degrees and diplomas have progressed significantly since 2011. There are a number of guiding principles related to implementing the global convention. One is to ensure proper participation and wide ownership. Others are to include flexible conditions that do not put barriers to implementation; monitor what works and what does not work in the regional conventions; and help build capacities to strengthen the regional recognition conventions. The next steps in the process of finalizing global approval of the global convention are to draft the preliminary report requested by UNESCO General Conference in November 2013 and consult broadly on

the key aspects; develop the political dialogue around a possible global recognition convention; convene another experts' meeting to discuss the draft preliminary report for UNESCO's 38th General Conference in November, 2015; and support regional initiatives for modernization of regional conventions.

- With regard to technology and impact on quality, students are now demanding the application of technology; they are seeking greater flexibility in how, when and where they study and technology is one enabler of this. Technology is a component of a solution to the challenge of providing flexibility. Flexibility is the key to our future and is the driver for the work of unbundling. It could involve faster, better, smarter assessment of prior learning using competency-based and outcome-based assessment rather than the current cumbersome comparison of one course with another. We should stop focusing on technology or institutions, but instead focus on what it is that students need and want. If we want to have a quality, flexible and affordable system then we need to create a quality assurance mechanism that encourages and enables flexibility.

- There was some unanimity among participants that government and non-government actors have both singular and overlapping roles in promoting quality, with partnership as an important glue. Other related conclusions include: the cross-national Bologna process in Europe is emerging as key driver for change in higher education and quality assurance in other areas of the world; new models of technology-driven delivery are offering seductive alternatives; and development of a global convention on the recognition of qualifications, now being discussed, has a potentially huge impact on quality assurance when fully evolved.

- Participants also reached a high degree of consensus that all persons within the higher education community, the public, government and the private sector share in the responsibilities of quality assurance. The issue of trust and accountability also overlaid conclusions on the responsibility of the different actors in promoting quality assurance in higher education.

Click *here* to link to the full report.

Harnessing Culture for Sustainable Development and Human Security in Africa

Published by the Institute for African Culture and International Understanding to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Peter Okebukola, Editor)

Review by
Sir John Daniel

There are almost thirty contributions in this impressively produced collection and they approach the issues of sustainable development and human security in Africa from many directions with commendable candour. What are the common threads that make the whole book greater than the sum of its parts? Over at least the last 30 years, governments, scholars, practitioners and intergovernmental organisations like the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank have devoted enormous energy to identifying assured routes to sustainable development and human security: what have we learned and what does this authentically African contribution add?

Peter Okebukola sets the stage by arguing that sustainable development and lasting human security require the proactive engagement of people to increase their capacities through education and the development of useful knowledge. The discovery of abundant valuable natural resources can provide a welcome boost to employment and national budgets, but all resources eventually run out. Moreover, absent an effective political framework for exploiting these riches, the drive for development and security can actually go into reverse as the powerful pocket the benefits and the weak remain poor.

Many of these papers address the challenge of creating strategies to break the spells that have held Africa back in the past. Those strategies include better education systems, investment in infrastructure and sensible regulatory reforms. The various authors develop them in ways that blend indigenous African culture and knowledge with the universal lessons drawn from human

political development from prehistoric times. In *The Origins of Political Order and in Political Order and Political Decay*, Francis Fukuyama identifies three basic elements of political order: the rule of law, democracy, and accountability. He shows that these elements of political order long predate the rise of Europe and the West. Tribal societies had strong notions of democracy. The challenge for Africa, as for all contemporary societies, is to base its development on a combination of democracy, accountability and the rule of law that creates a sustainable political order to underpin human security.

Despite various attempts to introduce foreign models of industrial development to Africa, it appears that today the informal economy is the most successful component of Africa's development. This sector of the economy owes much to indigenous knowledge and also relies heavily on women. Several papers in this book urge for a genuinely grassroots approach that, by creating a supportive and enabling environment, empowers individual Africans to make a greater contribution to development and security.

Various authors urge the importance of bringing young people and women more fully into the processes of cultural, political and economic development. In the case of youth, Fred Awaah argues for the importance of involving youth directly in the resolution of indigenous conflicts since young people, because of their energy and numbers, will otherwise intensify whatever conflicts start. It may seem ironic that Africa, which has a particularly young demography, has been so slow to harness the potential of youth in positive ways.

One paper, however, suggests that intergenerational conflict may be a special challenge in Africa, partly because change has been so rapid. Despite appearances, for example, the infatuation of the young with imported information technology, it may be that the older generation has slowed Africa's development by adopting insidious foreign habits like the autocratic use of power. If so, these older vested interests, which abhor the democratization of knowledge and the notion of accountability because they hope to maintain their positions of dominance, will have to be confronted, persuaded or outwitted in order to implement the many excellent ideas that recur throughout this book.

This book is full of ideas, applicable to many areas of life in Africa, to advance sustainable development and human security in this spirit. The editors and authors have assembled some rich material. Having served as a senior official at UNESCO, it gives me great pleasure that this volume celebrates the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Cultural Diversities. As Irina Bokova, UNESCO's Director-General, commented after receiving this book: "…our societies are more and more confronted with a number of threats so it is necessary to step up international action to ensure (that) cultural diversity is a driving force for development."

2015 INQAAHE in Chicago

The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) held its 2015 Biennial Conference in Chicago on March 31 – April 3. Working with the U.S. –based Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs, this was the first INQAAHE Conference to be held in the United States.

Carol Bobby, INQAAHE President and President and CEO of the Council for Accrediting of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, welcomed colleagues from 66 countries who came together for several days of discussion, deliberation and camaraderie. Keynote speakers included Antony Stella, former President of the Asia Pacific Quality Network; Hans de Wit, Director of the Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation at the Universita Cattolica Sacro Cuore in Milan; Sofiane Sahrauoui, President of the Arab Governance Institute; and Judith Eaton, President of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. Jagannath Patil, incoming INQAAHE President and Advisor to India's National Assessment and Accreditation Council, addressed the conference.

Papers and presentations at the Conference included attention to issues of vital significance to today's leaders in national and international quality assurance, exploring such topics as international quality expectations and understanding, the growing diversity of higher education and implications for quality assurance, change in quality assurance practice and methodology and international cooperation in addressing quality in higher education. Several pre-conference workshops were held and the various regional networks met as well.

CHEA and its International Quality Group Hosts State Department-Sponsored Leadership Institute On Quality Assurance and Accreditation

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and its International Quality Group hosted a U.S. Department of State EducationUSA Leadership Institute on quality assurance and accreditation from February 13 to February 24, 2015 in Washington, DC.

The Leadership Institute brought together educators and government officials from countries around the world to explore opportunities for capacity building and international collaboration in the field of quality assurance and accreditation, providing participants with insight into both U.S. and international accreditation and quality assurance frameworks.

The Leadership Institute program addressed a variety of issues, including the history and origin of U.S. accreditation, an in-depth examination of accreditation policy and practice, exploration of the effectiveness of accreditation, the role of accreditation in society, accreditation and internationalization and key challenges for quality assurance and accreditation now and in the future. Sessions provided information on how to use CHEA and the U.S. Department of Education databases to obtain reliable information on accredited U.S. higher education institutions and programs; insights from representatives of various U.S. accrediting organizations on their activities and operations; and a discussion of international trends in quality assurance.

Recent 2014-2015 CIQG Members
(New and Rejoining)

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- *National Accreditation Board,* Accra, Ghana
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- *The Accreditation Council of Trinidad & Tobago,* Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
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- *International Council for Evangelical Theological Education,* Zahle, Lebanon
- *University of Lodz,* Lodz, Poland
- *UAE University,* Al-Ain, United Arab Emirates

News from the OECD: Revised Proposal for the AHELO Main Study

After the end of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO) Feasibility Study in 2012, and after several unsuccessful attempts, a revised proposal for the AHELO Main Study has now been accepted at a meeting held earlier this year. The leadership of the project has been entrusted to Dirk Van Damme (head of IMEP),* who has shared the following:

- The revised proposal should frame the assessment of higher education learning outcomes around higher order transversal skills, and build any disciplinary assessments and contexts around those.

- Participants agreed that individual student results and feedback will be critical to institutional and student engagement and, therefore, that the assessment should extend to all eligible students of participating entities, rather than a sample only.

- Participants agreed to report results from the assessment both in absolute terms (bottom-line results) as well as relative to the socio-economic and institutional context of individuals and universities (analytic value added), so as to enable fair and meaningful comparisons among similar entities. The development of measures of individual learning gains would be an optional longer-term perspective for the project.

- Participants asked the OECD to devote greater attention to the development of intermediate outputs (frameworks, instruments and methodologies), not only to ensure that participating entities obtain short-term value for their investments, but also to facilitate the important dialogue with the academic community and other stakeholders on substantive and methodological issues around the assessment of higher education learning outcomes.

- The AHELO Main Study should be governed by national or subnational government authorities, but the governing body should be complemented with a strong Academic Advisory Group from among participating institutions that would oversee much of the substantive development of the assessment. The governing body would be made up of those countries or subnational entities that contribute to the development and financing of the project, while recognising that not all participating entities may be able to implement the assessment from the outset. All participating entities would contribute their full share of the total international costs, irrespective of when then join the project. The governing body could decide to invite observers to its deliberations, including representation of key stakeholders, such as groups of students or universities.

On the basis of these conclusions the 'Scoping Paper for an AHELO Main Study' was revised and has now been sent to countries (see full text at *http://www.chea.org/userfiles/uploads/EDU-EDPC(2013)17-REV3-ENG.pdf*).

* *The Innovation and Measuring Progress Division (IMEP), which covers both the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) and the Indicators of Educational Systems (INES) programme, in the OECD Directorate for Education and Skills.*

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The CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG) serves as a U.S.-based international forum for quality assurance and accreditation. The CIQG provides services to CIQG members intended to advance understanding of international quality assurance, assist institutions and accreditation/ quality assurance organizations in their expanding international engagement and further enhance capacity for academic quality in international higher education.

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