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ENHANCING TEACHING IN AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS IN GHANA, KENYA, NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA

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Higher Education

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Acknowledgements

1. Ananga, E (2015) *University education, employability and skills gap in Ghana: perspectives of students.* Research brief. British Council; Oanda, I, Sifuna, D and Ongwenyi, Z (2015) *Expansion of University Education and the Challenges of Quality and Graduate Employability in Kenya.* Research brief. British Council; Adedeji, S and Oyebade, S (2015) *Graduate Employability in Nigeria: Thoughts, Travails and Tactics.* Research brief. British Council; Walker, M (2015) *Student Perceptions of Employability and Inclusive Development: South Africa.* Research brief. British Council. Available online at: https://www.britishcouncil. org/sites/default/files/2.5_student-perceptions-of-employability-inclusivity.pdf ; McCowan, T, Walker, M, Fongwa, S, Oanda, I, Sifuna, D, Adedeji, S, Oyebade, S, Ananga, E, Adzahlie-Mensah, V and Tamanja, E (2016) *Universities, Employability and Inclusive Development: repositioning higher education in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa.* Final research report. British Council.

Introduction

The relevance of teaching quality in the current context

There are widespread concerns about graduate employability across Sub-Saharan Africa. The *Universities, Employability and Inclusive Development* research project investigated these issues in 14 institutions located in four countries in Sub-Saharan Africa – Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa. Findings revealed that the poor quality of regular degree courses is a key constraint in this regard, with students and lecturers raising concerns about issues such as teaching to exams, lack of intellectual challenge, lack of focus on critical thinking, and lack of opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in practice. They also pointed to the limited relevance of curricula, and the use of out-of-date materials.[2]

The structural and financial problems of universities in Sub-Saharan Africa have been well-documented, painting a picture of a context of teaching and learning that is shaped by the challenge of expansion of higher education (HE) systems amidst limited or reduced state funding. The consequences include strained staff to student ratios,[3] insecure working and pay conditions that contribute to brain drain,[4] overburdened academics with unrealistic teaching loads;[5] and inadequate infrastructure and classroom facilities.[6] The fact that graduate employability remains a problem adds to the sense of urgency in this debate, as the limited resources that are invested in the HE system are not necessarily yielding anticipated outcomes of human resource mobilisation for economic growth and broader contributions of graduates to the civic sphere.[7] Furthermore, there are equity considerations, with less privileged students often confined to the most challenging learning environments.[8]

Governments and universities across the four countries have been far from inactive in addressing these significant challenges. There are a range of initiatives underway at national and institutional levels to enhance quality, including a number of highly innovative programmes – even in the context of significant resource constraints. However, there is a severe lack of research literature on these initiatives, particularly in Ghana, Kenya and Nigeria, and greater awareness is needed at a local and national level about existing work and its impact.

Aims, scope and methods of the report

This report aims to address the gap in the research literature on initiatives in the four countries to enhance teaching and learning quality by bringing together overviews of these policies and initiatives at the national and university level. Rather than providing a systematic comparison, the report aims to foster cross-national learning through a juxtaposition of initiatives in each context, drawing on the perspectives of key stakeholders. It is based on the principle that an international perspective can highlight 'generative practices'[9] – not ones to be replicated uncritically across diverse contexts, but to represent sources of new ideas and inspiration, as well as learning about challenges relating to implementation and uptake. This research is supplementary to the main body of the research project, which focused on student and other stakeholder perspectives on employability.[10] The report represents an initial foray into the field, and will need to be supplemented with further in-depth research in the coming years. The study focuses primarily on the perspectives of those responsible for quality enhancement at institutional and national level, and more extensive research with multiple stakeholders would be needed to determine the nature and extent of transformation of practice in the institutions.

There are many aspects of the quality of teaching and learning, such as adequate classroom availability and size, reliable ICT facilities, library resources and information literacy skills, extra-curricular activities, and other academic and pastoral student support services. This report will not be able to cover all of these, but will focus on initiatives that address teaching

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2. McCowan, T (2015) *Students in the Driving Seat: young people's voices on higher education in Africa,* British Council, 17. Available online at: https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/2.5_students-in-the-driving-seat_report_overview.pdf

3. Bamiro, OA (2012) 'Nigeria Toward an open market' in Altbach, P, Reisberg, L, Yudkevich, M, Androushchak, G, Pacheco, I, (eds) *Paying the Professoriate.* New York: Routledge; Odhiambo, GO (2014) Quality assurance for public higher education: context, strategies and challenges in Kenya. *Higher Education Research and Development* 33/5: 978–991.

4. Bamiro (2012) *op. cit.*; Sehoole, CT (2012) The Unequal Playing Field: Academic Remuneration in South Africa. In Altbach, P, Reisberg, L, Yudkevich, M, Androushchak, G, Pacheco, I (eds) *Paying the Professoriate.* New York: Routledge.

5. Wangenge-Ouma, G (2008) Higher education marketisation and its discontents: the case of quality in Kenya, *Higher Education* 56/4: 457–471.

6. Gudo, CO, Olel, MA and Oanda, IO (2011) University Expansion in Kenya and Issues of Quality Education: Challenges and Opportunities. *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 2/20: 203–214.

7. Ntim, S (2014) Embedding quality culture in higher education in Ghana: quality control and assessment in emerging private universities. *Higher Education* 68: 837–849; Odhiambo (2014) *op. cit.*

8. For example, see: Walker (2015) *op. cit.*

9. Scott, D, Terano, M, Slee, R, Husbands, C and Wilkins, R (2016) *Policy Transfer and Educational Change.* London: Sage.

10. McCowan et al. (2016) *op. cit.*

quality specifically, including pedagogical innovation, continuing professional development for teaching staff,[11] and use of feedback and review mechanisms to assess and improve the quality of teaching. While curriculum design is not the primary focus, the remit also includes initiatives that aim to redesign the format and content of taught provision to better reflect students' needs in terms of academic support or employability.

By narrowing the scope to these types of initiatives, the report addresses an area of teaching and learning policy and practice that is currently gaining significant momentum in the focus countries, and that is perceived to have immediate potential impact on quality even while the larger structural problems (such as large class sizes) persist. While the adoption of e-learning is also an area that is undergoing significant expansion, especially in the field of distance education, the majority of teaching provision is still face-to-face, and yet there has been surprisingly little attention from national governments and development agencies to face-to-face teaching and learning. It is important, therefore, for this report to focus on the quality of conventional taught courses, while maintaining an awareness of the development of new pedagogical modes.

In line with the aim and scope of the report, the research has drawn on policy documents and interviews with national- and university-level policymakers and practitioners in the field of quality assurance and/or teaching and learning support services. The universities in question are those participating in the broader *Universities,*

Employability and Inclusive Development research study, and were selected to provide representation of institutional types found in the four countries, including flagship public, regional, technical, private and faith-based institutions.[12] A sample of interviewees was identified using purposive sampling. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants from all 14 universities (15 interviews) and four national regulatory bodies (five interviews).[13] Interviews were designed to be semi-structured so as to allow for generation of themes from the participants' responses while at the same time maintaining a sufficient degree of comparability between data. The questions were designed to be exploratory and avoid an overly prescriptive definition of teaching quality.

The report first provides some background on the perceived importance of teaching and understandings of quality in the context of HE in Sub-Saharan Africa. This is followed by individual sections for each of the countries – Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa – where the research findings are discussed. The context for teaching quality initiatives in each country is described briefly before national- and institutional-level initiatives are described. Drawing on the qualitative data gathered from a sample of universities for this report, the country analyses highlight both perceived challenges to the implementation of teaching enhancement policies, as well as examples of effective and innovative practice. Common themes and implications for future policy developments and research directions are put forward in the conclusion.

While it is acknowledged that there is no universal 'best practice' – with appropriate policies and practices dependent on context and the specific challenges faced – there is nevertheless rich learning that can be gained through placing these HE systems in dialogue with each other.

Quality assurance and quality enhancement in higher education

Enhancing the quality of teaching in Sub-Saharan Africa has attracted attention from major international development organisations such as UNESCO, the World Bank and the African Development Bank. However, this body of research largely addresses the primary and secondary levels. For example, a recent report from UNESCO and the International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA)[14] highlighted the key role that teachers play in equipping students with 21st century skills and improving student achievement, but this kind of analysis is rarely extended to the university level.

Within the context of assessing quality in HE, research is often prioritised over teaching. For example, research outputs frequently play a primary role in systems of remuneration and promotion, as well as in institutional level accreditation and rankings. Large-scale external funding directed at capacity building also tends to be channelled into research activities. For example, Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana are involved in the World Bank funded African Centres of Excellence (ACE) Project, which aims to achieve excellence in research through regional collaboration and specialisation.[15]

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11. At the case study universities this typically includes workshops on lesson planning and delivery, curriculum design and review, and assessment. In some universities, training was also provided in supervision skills for supervising postgraduate students.

12. For further details on selection of institutions, see: McCowan (2015) *op. cit.*

13. Oral consent was sought for interviews. They were conducted in English, transcribed by a third party, and reviewed by both researchers. The researchers conducted eight and 12 interviews respectively.

14. Vavrus, F, Thomas, M, and Bartlett, L, (2011) *Ensuring Quality by Attending to Inquiry: Learner-centred pedagogy in Sub-Saharan Africa (Fundamentals of Teacher Education Development volume 4).* Addis Ababa: UNESCO-IICBA.

Prioritisation of research is symptomatic of a global trend in HE, as evidenced by the pervasive world university rankings, such as the Times Higher Education World University Rankings and the Shanghai Jiao Tong Academic Ranking of World Universities.[16]

Quality in HE remains a highly contested term,[17] and initiatives to improve quality consequently take contrasting forms. Nevertheless, we can categorise approaches in very broad terms into *quality assessment/ assurance* and *quality enhancement*.

Quality assessment or *quality assurance* (QA) systems are characterised by mechanisms that assess learning inputs and outputs. They are driven at least in part by a government's need to demonstrate accountability for public expenditure[18] and to provide prospective students with reliable and comparable information on a university's performance. In this sense, they are a type of summative assessment.[19] For example, failure to meet certain accreditation or audit requirements can result in sanctions such as temporary freezing of admissions or even closures.

Like elsewhere in the world, the national and regional quality assurance (QA) agencies operating in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa tend to set and monitor standards based on certain quality *inputs* – such as academic selection of student intake, maximum student–staff ratios, and qualification level of staff. Regional QA organisations such as the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), the African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) and *Conseil Africain et Malagache Pour L'Enseignement Supérieur* (CAMES) have additionally emphasised regional harmonisation of degree programmes, thus standardising learning outputs. An emphasis on learning *outputs* is also evident in national-level efforts to monitor and quality assure assessment that leads to professional certification. For example, the technical and vocational sector in Ghana is subject to the National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations (NABTEX) which oversees standards in examinations for these sectors.

If quality assessment systems consitute summative forms of assessment, then *quality enhancement* (QE) is formative in nature, interested primarily in generating change.[20] This type of process and improvement-oriented approach to HE quality has entered the international quality debate, placing special importance on the student experience of learning. Examples of this approach in practice at the national level would be the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) initiated in the USA and Australia respectively. At the institutional level, QE involves, for example, establishing communities of practice for academic staff development and student support activities, and engaging in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL).

In practice, these two approaches can be difficult to disentangle amongst stakeholder groups. As will be highlighted in the country sections that follow, national QA organisations often serve in a capacity building role, for example through organising training for university administrators in how to enhance the teaching and learning quality at their institutions. Meanwhile, university practitioners and administrators have to grapple with problems such as how to standardise, evaluate and hence assess teaching quality, for example for the institutional audit or peer review process. The initiatives discussed in this report focus primarily on QE approaches, but are nonetheless discussed against this backdrop of overlapping QA and QE activities.

For the purpose of this report, we understand QE initiatives as those policies and practices which aim to enhance the student learning experience and thereby promote students' employability as well as active participation in society. Examples of these initiatives, (which are discussed further in the country sections), are summarised below:

• Evaluation processes for ascertaining students' perceptions of teaching quality (e.g. student course evaluation surveys, graduate surveys).

15. The World Bank (n.d.) The Africa Higher Education Centers of Excellence Project. Available online at: www.worldbank.org/projects/P126974/strengthening-tertiary-education-africa-through-africa-centers-excellence?lang=en The total project cost is estimated at USD 290.80 million.

16. For a discussion on the international competition and complex power relationships fuelled by these rankings, see for example Pusser, B and Marginson, S, (2007) University rankings in critical perspective. *The Journal for Higher Education* 84/4: 544–568.

17. Westerheijden, DF, Stensaker, B and Rosa, MJ (eds) (2007) *Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Trends in Regulation, Translation and Transformation*, Dordrecht: Springer, 1–11; Dill, D and Beerkens, M (eds) (2010) *Public policy for academic quality: analyses of innovative policy instruments*, Dordrecht, London: Springer.

18. Harvey, L and Newton, J (2007) 'Transforming Quality Evaluation: Moving on' in Westerheijden, DF, Stensaker, B and Rosa, MJ (eds) (2007) *Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Trends in Regulation, Translation and Transformation*, Dordrecht: Springer, 227.

19. D'Andrea, M (2007) Improving Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Can Learning Theory Add Value to Quality Reviews? In Westerheijden, DF, Stensaker, B and Rosa, MJ (eds) (2007) *Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Trends in Regulation, Translation and Transformation*, Dordrecht: Springer, 211.

20. *Ibid.*

- Provision of academic staff development[21] relating to teaching and learning.
- Incorporation of teaching evaluation into promotion criteria.
- Formal postgraduate teaching qualifications for academic staff.
- Adoption of student-centred pedagogical approaches such as learner-centred pegadogy (LCP), problem-based learning (PBL) or competency-based training (CBT).[22]
- Initiatives to evaluate and redesign teaching formats and content to better match student and employer expectations.

- Dedicated units, centres or directorates within university administration or faculty structures for the purpose of promoting and organising initiatives to enhance teaching and learning quality.
- Avenues for collaboration and networking among lecturers/ quality enhancement practitioners/ policymakers to promote teaching quality.

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21. This is alternatively referred to as faculty development, faculty enrichment or faculty enhancement, (especially in the North American context). The report includes these alternative terms when cited by interviewees or in policy documents. Elsewhere, the term 'academic staff development' will be used.

22. This report does not assume that the adoption of such pedagogical methodologies necessarily entail improved teaching and learning quality per se. Within the literature on primary education and English language education, the relevance of LCP to various cultural and resource contexts has been questioned, for example in Clifford, I and Htut, KP (2015) *A transformative pedagogy for Myanmar?* Paper presented at the 13th International Conference of Education and Development, University of Oxford, UK. Within the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, the politico-economic rationales for the promotion of LCP by aid agencies is discussed extensively in Tabulawa, R (2013) *Teaching and Learning in Context: Why pedagogical reforms fail in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Dakar: CODESRIA. Nevertheless, a growing interest in these types of LCP reflects the fact that they are perceived as compatible and/or helpful to university-level contexts in contemporary Sub-Saharan African countries.

Ghana

Context

Ghana has a semi-marketised HE system, with the comparatively small number of ten public universities/ institutes in comparison to 66 private degree-awarding institutions.[23] In addition, there are a range of public and private colleges and polytechnics.[24] The majority of enrolments are at the large public institutions, which rely heavily on government subventions for their operations.[25] In 2015, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) for tertiary education was 15.57 per cent.[26]

Funding constraints in HE are related to decades of political and economic instability. During the 1980s, under the military government rule of the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC, 1981–92), broad privatisation and decentralisation reforms were introduced as part of the World Bank/ IMF Economic Recovery Programme (ERP).[27] Between 1986 and 1988 the University Rationalisation Committee (URC) produced two reports highlighting major challenges to the HE sector including a lack of funding and infrastructure, as well as breakdowns in the relationship between HE institutions and government.[28] It was in this context that education reforms were passed in 1986 paving the way for reduced state provision of education, and a framework for the expansion of the private sector.[29]

While there was a clear move to introduce marketisation via growth of private providers, national development goals were still to play a key role in shaping HE. The subsequent 1991 White Paper on tertiary education reform aimed to align tertiary education output with national development needs. This included increasing participation among female students to redress gender inequality and controlling the spread of enrolments across disciplinary areas to favour economic needs, as well as creating 'institutional capacities for quality monitoring and policy evaluation'[30] for the purpose of driving up quality. The establishment of the University for Development Studies in the poorer, rural areas of Northern Ghana in 1992 is a further example of how the government intended HE to serve national development needs.[31]

Many of the objectives outlined in the 1991 White Paper remain pertinent today. Overstretched academic and physical facilities at public institutions, including rising staff–student ratios, remain a key challenge to quality HE provision.[32] Ghana suffers from high levels of youth unemployment, including graduate unemployment,[33] raising concerns over the relevance and quality of degrees. A positive development is that policies relating to quality are receiving greater attention. Most public universities have a formal, dedicated administrative structure to plan and monitor policies on quality. One recent study of Ghanaian private universities has shown that a 'quality culture' is emerging in the private sector as well.[34]

National level initiatives

Given the funding constraints referred to above, capacity building in quality assurance has often been taken on through international partnerships. One example was the recent Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (TALIF) (2004–09), which formed part of the World Bank-funded Ghana Education Sector Project.[35] The concept behind this type of fund is to provide a competitive funding avenue for projects initiated at the individual and/ or institutional level of the participating institutions. For example, the fund may be used by an individual to conduct a piece of research, or by a department to run a multi-year collaborative project. The TALIF, which was earmarked USD 33.4 million, was channelled into seven funding 'windows',

23. National Accreditation Board Ghana, (n.d.) Public Universities. Available online at: www.nab.gov.gh/public-universities; National Accreditation Board Ghana, (n.d.) Private tertiary institutions offering degree programmes. Available online at: www.nab.gov.gh/private-tertiary-institutions-offering-degree-programmes

24. These private institutions include colleges, university colleges, institutes, seminaries and international branch campuses that offer degree programmes.

25. Enrolments at public institutions constituted nearly 80 per cent of enrolments in the academic year 2011–12. Ministry of Education, Republic of Ghana (August 2013). *Education Sector Performance Report*. Available online at: www.moe.gov.gh/assets/media/docs/FinalEducationSectorReport-2013.pdf

26. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) (2015) Gross enrolment ratio by level of education. Available online at: http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=142&lang=en

27. Manuh, T, Gariba, S and Budu, J (2007) *Change and Transformation in Ghana's Publicly Funded Universities*, Oxford; Accra: James Curry, Woeli Publishing Services in association with Partnership for Higher Education in Africa.

28. Ntim (2014) *op. cit.*

29. Manuh, T, Gariba, S and Budu, J (2007) *Change and Transformation*, 22.

30. *Ibid.*, 43.

31. Abukari, A and Corner, T (2010) Delivering higher education to meet local needs in a developing context: the quality dilemmas? *Quality Assurance in Education* 18/3: 191–208.

32. National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) (2010) Annual Report. Accra: NCTE. Available online at: www.ncte.edu.gh/index.php/publications-books-articles/annual-report

33. Ntim (2014) *op. cit.*

34. *Ibid.*

35. The TALIF Unit, NCTE (September 2005) *Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund (TALIF) Ghana*. Available online at: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTAFRREGTOPTEIA/Resources/Ghana_Teaching_Learning_Innovation_Fund.pdf

namely Polytechnic, Postgraduate, Leadership and Management, HIV/AIDS, Distance Education, Tertiary Support Institutions, and University for Development Studies (UDS).[36] Similar funds have been set up in Mozambique and Ethiopia, also with World Bank funding.[37] The benefit of this type of fund is its flexibility in allowing participants to generate projects most relevant to their needs. The limitations include the finite nature of the funding, the dependence on high order project-based management skills, the pre-determined scope and participation set in the partnership agreement, and the fragmented nature of the projects that does not necessarily translate into national-level policy and practice in quality enhancement.

An alternative model of an externally funded initiative is the TrainIQAfrica capacity building project conducted jointly by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Rector's Conference (HRK).[38] The project, which is running from 2013–17, is training university quality managers in five key areas, including quality assurance of teaching and learning. The aim is to enable the participants to 'become multipliers of internal quality assurance' at their respective institutions, formulating policy and advising on appropriate methodologies.[39] Our interviews with heads of quality assurance units or directorates who are participating in the project spoke enthusiastically of the collaborative and educational experience that TrainIQAfrica has been.

DAAD has also partnered with the National Council on Tertiary Education (NCTE) to assist in the conversion of polytechnics to technical universities, for example through organising workshops and training in Ghana, study tours to Germany, and institutional affiliation between German universities and Ghanaian polytechnics. A national policymaker interviewed for this study indicated that opportunities for academic staff development will become especially relevant in these newly converted technical universities, where lecturers will be expected to be proficient in competency-based training and to pursue related PhD degrees in their areas of expertise. Scholarships and linkages with international partners could help to serve this end.

The Carnegie Corporation has also provided funding for Senior Academic Leadership Training (SALT) at public and private universities organised by the NCTE.[40] This programme, which targets senior council members and heads of department (HoDs), aims to develop institutional capacity in governance and performance evaluation. Training for HoDs aims to make an impact at the department level by guiding them in their roles as leaders, managers, faculty developers and scholars, as well as emphasising their role in MPhil and PhD supervision.[41]

However, feedback from both national policymaker and university-level administrators indicated that overall, there is a clear need for more capacity building in QA and QE at a national level. In Ghana, institutional authorisation and programme accreditation falls under the remit of the National Accreditation Board (NAB), while the NCTE formulates policies, issues guidelines, and advises the Ministry on the funding and development of the tertiary education sector. As demonstrated by the SALT initiative described above, the activities of the NCTE often go beyond mere assessment of quality to building capacity in quality enhancement, including in the area of teaching and learning. This was corroborated by a Ghanaian policymaker interviewed for this study who spoke of the NCTE's role in not only monitoring quality but in assisting institutions to build on quality. A recent study of how the NAB operates in Ghana has similarly demonstrated how the NAB often functions in this type of capacity building role, especially when advising on academic programmes in conjunction with professional bodies.[42] Given the significant role that these national bodies play in generating and disseminating quality enhancement policies, building a critical mass of expertise in QA and QE in these organisations was cited by a national policymaker as a priority for the Ghanaian HE sector.

36. *Ibid.*

37. Materu, P (2007) *Higher Education Quality Assurance in Sub-Saharan Africa: Status, Challenges, Opportunities and Promising Practices.* Washington, DC: World Bank.

38. TrainIQAfrica is part of the Dialogue on Innovation in Education Strategies (DIES) programme and is funded by the Federal Ministry for Cooperation and Development (BMZ). There are two rounds of the project, one for Francophone Africa and one for Anglophone Africa, of which Ghana is one of the participating countries. TrainIQAfrica (n.d.) Brief description. Available online at: www.trainiqa.org/article/brief-description/Brief-Description.html

39. TrainIQAfrica (n.d.) Project Goals. Available online at: www.trainiqa.org/article/project-goals.html

40. 2010–14 Senior academic leadership training in West Africa programme and 2014–16 Final grant for senior academic leadership training in West Africa programme. Programme summaries from the Carnegie Corporation Grants Database are available online at: https://www.carnegie.org/grants/grants-database/?q=national+council+for+tertiary+education&per_page=25&per_page=25#!/grants/grants-database/grant/33898.0/

41. NCTE (n.d.) *Senior Academic Leadership Training (SALT) Phase 2,* Available online at: www.ncte.edu.gh/index.php/senior-academic-leadership-training/30-senior-academic-leadership-training

42. Utuka, G (2011) Demonstrating Quality: Evaluation of institutional and programme accreditation in Ghana. *International Journal of Vocational and Technical Education* 3/8: 135–142.

Currently, the NCTE issues guidelines on QA for the HE sector, while institutional autonomy means that individual universities decide on specific practices. Interviewees at the institutional level felt that there was scope for further ministerial level regulation and 'stepping up' of quality assurance and quality enhancement activities in the HE sector. They cited the following reasons for this: variance in quality assurance policies and practices between institutions (especially in the private sector), inconsistent support at the senior management level for QA and QE, and a need to keep the evaluation momentum going in between the five-year audit cycles.

Institution level initiatives

Dedicated administrative structures for quality assurance

Since the late 2000s, formal administrative structures mandated with overseeing quality issues have become common in Ghanaian universities. At the universities included in the sample for this study, one such structure took the form of a directorate, while QA units took responsibility for QA in the other institutions. At a smaller university, quality assurance activities were integrated into existing academic and planning committees. While centres of teaching and learning are not currently common, the quality assurance units/directorates currently provide related activities such as compulsory orientation for new staff members, as well as year-round or end-of-year training and workshops in teaching, curriculum design, assessment or other topical themes such as e-learning. Universities with an education faculty or college are

likely to provide these types of academic staff development activities via that faculty.

One major challenge noted by interviewees was establishing QE practices in very large institutions. At the large universities, where a relatively small unit staffed with under five people may be responsible for a university with tens of thousands of students, it has been necessary to decentralise the quality assurance structure, for example by using faculty and department level quality assurance officers and committees. A respondent from a large public university cited the flexibility needed to accommodate a variety of faculties and departments. A decentralised structure allows QA and QE policies to filter through, while allowing peer review of teaching, for example, to be relevant and appropriate to different disciplinary practices. However, this type of decentralised approach can present its own risks of fragmentation and hijacking.

In addition, creating a shift in organisational culture and fostering general awareness and appreciation of teaching and learning quality in such large organisations was cited as a frequent challenge. Hence the task of such units or directorates cannot be understood as a purely technical one. They function as advocates for quality enhancement policies in general, and are involved in a complex process of organisational change.

Related to this point is the availability of resources. Institutional backing is necessary to secure adequate financial and human resources. For example, an interviewee at one public university suggested that greater availability of financial resources was needed in order to facilitate more training

organised by the university itself as well as to participate in outside training provided nationally, regionally and internationally. The interviewee also spoke of a need for human resources in terms of experienced and qualified staff to take on senior-level QA and QE roles.

Academic staff development activities and the culture of teaching

The centres or directorates described above typically offer lecturers compulsory orientation in addition to training in the form of workshops to help with pedagogy, curriculum design, assessment and moderation. At one large university, there were even workshops on time management and stress management. Levels of participation in orientation programmes are high, and interviewees reported that feedback from lecturers has been positive. At one large public university, HoDs are required to take part in mandatory training on assessment and moderation to support quality assurance in assessment procedures. Feedback on academic staff development training from lecturers also indicated that there is a strong demand and appreciation for this type of training among regular staff too. An interviewee from one public university noted an increase in the adoption of alternative assessment methods, such as groupwork and presentation assignments, which may indicate that lecturers are paying more attention to curriculum and assessment design as a result of academic staff development provision. At another public university, there were plans to make training modules in teaching and assessment mandatory for all staff in the future.

Ashesi University College is a private university that places a strong emphasis on cultivating ethical leadership and entrepreneurial skills among its student body. It also has a clear teaching 'ethos' which is based on explicit learning outcomes or graduate attributes, including problem-solving skills and communication skills. The importance of a culture of reflective teaching practice is highlighted as key to enhancing overall teaching quality. This is facilitated through a collegiate atmosphere in which new members of staff are encouraged and supported by their HoD to develop their teaching. Lecturers are not afraid to present new ideas to their HoD and there is ample opportunity for them to obtain constructive feedback on their teaching performance, syllabus design and assessment design. As a compact liberal arts college whose primary mission is teaching, Ashesi is well positioned to develop high quality provision: it remains to be seen whether such an approach can be replicated in larger research intensive universities.

Evaluation and feedback mechanisms to improve teaching provision

At the universities included in the sample for this study, feedback was sought on teaching provision from students via course evaluation surveys.

The QA staff at one large public university even monitored teaching activities to verify that lecturers were indeed present at their scheduled lectures. Student surveys were perceived by the interviewees as an evaluation and feedback mechanism, intended to be developmental in nature, with clear follow-up procedures in place. The survey results were usually analysed both centrally via the quality assurance structure, and via the HoD to the individual lecturer, whereby the results were used as a basis for discussion on performance and further training needs.

One major limitation relating to the use of student course evaluation surveys lies in data collection. A low response rate from students with the current online evaluation system was cited as a challenge by interviewees at two public universities. However, it was felt that online evaluations were necessary in order to obtain better quality, impartial data. A further problem is that with numbers of completed evaluations patchy, the feedback is not necessarily generalizable or valid, and so it cannot be incorporated into more formal performance appraisal or promotion structures.

Incentives for teaching

There are incentives for enhancing teaching to a certain extent in the sense that student appraisal may feature in promotion criteria. However, as discussed above, there are problems related to the lack of sufficient evidence collected for this purpose, for example low response rates in student evaluations, and absence of peer review of teaching. At one public university, however, there was a clear teaching component in the promotion criteria, including teaching workload and level. The challenge in this model of appraisal has been ensuring a standardised evaluation system for teaching, as currently scoring that component is the prerogative of the HoD. Collecting more evidence via student evaluations is helping to provide additional data needed for this purpose, but nonetheless alternative means of evaluation need to be developed.

Practical skills as an avenue to employability and inclusive development

Employability for inclusive development is strongly evident at two of the universities included in the study. In both cases, a very explicit and unique university mission contributes to the way that teaching provision has been re-designed to more adequately reflect student, employer and local/national (or Pan-African) needs.

At UDS, regular fieldwork in surrounding communities has been incorporated into the programme design, known as the Third Trimester Field Practical Programme. Such off-site learning allows students a chance to apply what they have learned in practice. Students also work together with peers from different disciplinary backgrounds, highlighting the need for collaboration in innovation and problem-solving. This initiative demonstrates how the three core university activities of teaching, research and community engagement can come together in a way that benefits the learners, the teachers, the researchers, and the local communities alike. At Ashesi, skills relevant for employment such as communication and teamwork are cultivated in the degree programmes. This is done both through regular teaching, (for example through regular groupwork and presentation tasks), as well as through a compulsory internship programme.
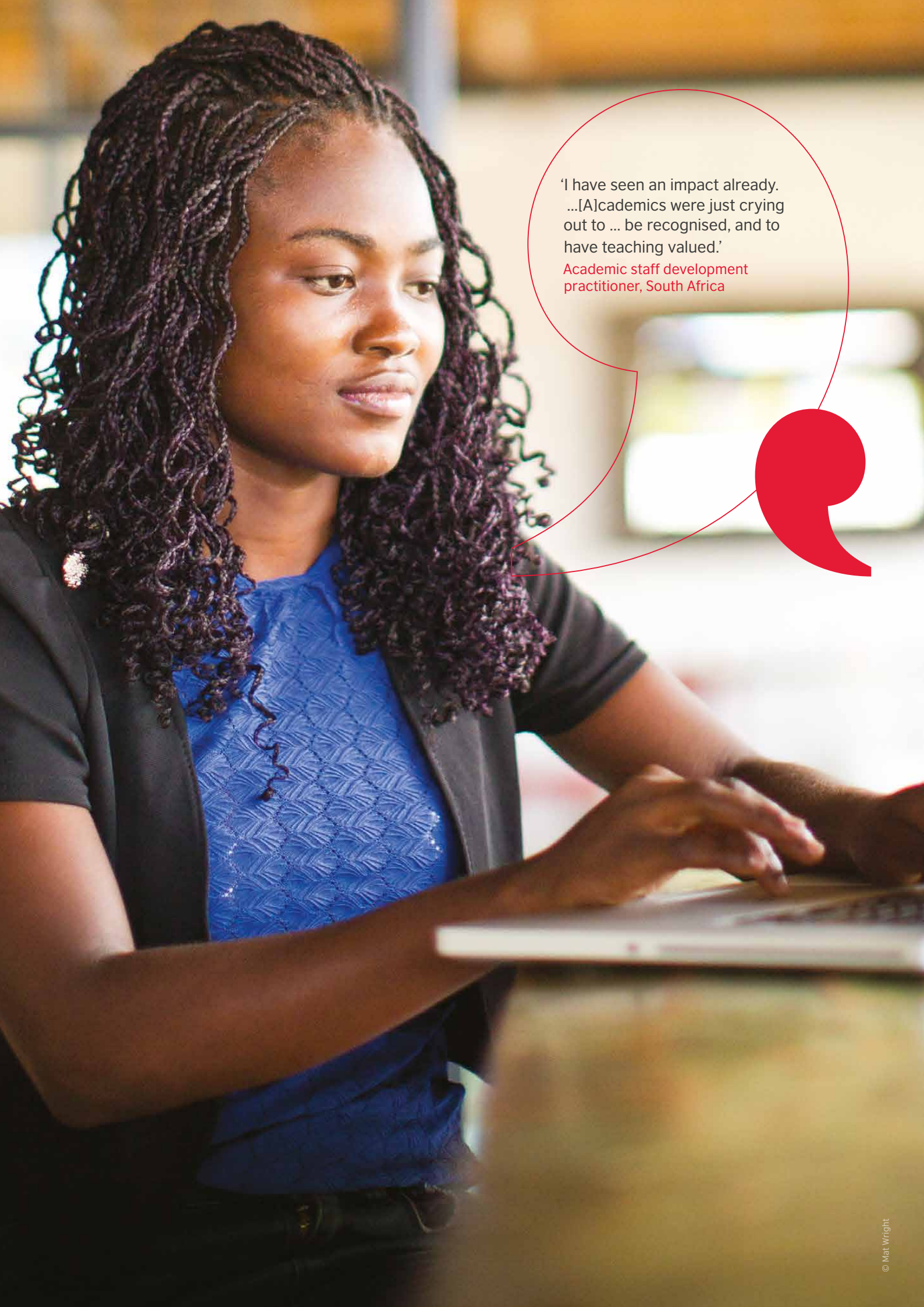
Collaboration and networking

Collaboration and peer-networking in the field of enhancing teaching and learning in Ghana takes place within the remit of QA. One instance in which there is a clear opportunity for collaboration, capacity building and peer networking within Ghana is between mentor and affiliating institutions. As mentioned above, a large proportion of HE institutions in Ghana are private colleges or universities. These institutions initially operate based on an affiliating status with an accredited institution before the government issues them their own charter. This system can serve to build capacity in QA and QE among the affiliating institutions when the mentoring institution is committed and when the affiliating institution is keen to adopt and adapt practices it is exposed to by the mentoring counterpart. The affiliation system seems to provide an opportune avenue for peer networking and development of QE policies and practices, and even the pooling of human resources. However, the nature of this collaboration is dependent on

the particular needs, approaches and broader mission of each partnering institution. When these are not aligned, results can be mixed.

Summary

Despite the structural constraints on physical and human resources in Ghanaian universities, there have been several positive and innovative developments in the field of QA and teaching and learning enhancement. Capacity building and opportunities for peer-networking are of vital importance at this stage. As quality enhancement activities are experiencing a rising uptake, the ability to appropriately evaluate initiatives trialled thus far and identify areas for improvement is imperative for future development of QE. An adequate pool of qualified and experienced staff at the management level is urgently needed to help manage the transition in organisational culture to one of quality enhancement, as well as to provide technical and methodological support to policymaking on quality. This is especially important given the fact that the current HE

landscape is characterised by a significant degree of institutional autonomy and flexibility in setting specific policies and practice regarding teaching quality. National bodies and international partnerships reflect co-ordinated attempts to build capacity in QA and QE nationally. Nevertheless, universities themselves decide on issues such as mandating or encouraging postgraduate qualifications in teaching, incentivising teaching in promotion criteria, and the level of financial and human resources dedicated to academic staff development. As the sustainability of international partnerships is never guaranteed, local and/or regional hubs and peer networks might offer alternative means of accessing human and material resources needed for expanding QE activities.

'I have seen an impact already. ...[A]cademics were just crying out to ... be recognised, and to have teaching valued.'
Academic staff development practitioner, South Africa

Kenya

The Government of Kenya has announced a plan – 'Vision 2030' – to transform Kenya into a middle income country by 2030. To achieve this vision, the government has assigned HE an important role in national development by producing human capital for economic growth, fostering entrepreneurialism to create jobs, and developing research in key economic areas.[43] Expansion of HE has been phenomenal over the past decade. Between the year 2000 and 2011 the number of students enrolled in HE rose from 59,200 to 198,300, and then increased again to a staggering 444,000 by 2015.[44] Much like in the West African cases of Ghana and Nigeria, the challenge of resource constraints is pressing. As much as 80 per cent of enrolments are at the 22 public universities,[45] but only a fifth of qualifying secondary school graduates gain access to university.[46] The fact that the sector has had to resort to drastic measures such as double intake admissions in 2011–12 is further evidence of pressure to absorb qualifying secondary school graduates and curb the exodus of young people to universities abroad.

In the East African region, there has been a trend to introduce fee-paying 'parallel programmes' to generate additional revenue for universities in the absence of adequate state funding.[47] While marketisation via this type of cost-sharing policy was pitched as a solution to expansion, in Kenya the policy has exacerbated human resource constraints, raising serious challenges to ensuring teaching quality. One recent study examining marketisation at a public university in Kenya identified the following effects: unreasonable teaching loads, delegation of teaching responsibilities to unqualified teaching assistants, supervision of postgraduate students by unqualified lecturers, the abandoning of the tutorial system, as well as teacher absenteeism.[48]

Maintaining standards of quality teaching provision and enhancing the teaching and learning experience, therefore, are clear challenges in the Kenyan context. Nevertheless, there is a growing trend in Kenyan public and especially private universities to develop internal quality assurance mechanisms, and to provide academic staff development programmes in order to enhance teaching and learning.

National level initiatives

Quality assurance developments in Kenya are strongly linked to regional networks in East Africa. International partnerships have been a key feature of these developments. Kenyan universities are represented in the Inter University Council of East Africa (IUCEA) and the East African Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN), which aim to develop and harmonise quality assurance systems within the East African Community (EAC). As a member of the IUCEA, Kenya has benefited from a capacity building programme in QA run in partnership with the German agencies DAAD and HRK. This included training workshops, study tours to German universities, and the developing of quality assurance handbooks for use by universities in the region.[49] The role of these regional organisations in promoting QA and QE development was described by one national policymaker as significant, in fact serving as the pillars of institutionalisation of QA in the country.

The EAQAN also runs regular networking for quality assurance officers. Participation in international networking and capacity building opportunities by national-level regulatory bodies was also seen by an interviewee from such a body as a valuable activity. For example, exposure to developments in South Africa has increased awareness and appreciation of the quality enhancement rather than quality audit approach among Kenyan regulatory body representatives, according to one national policymaker.

There have also been international partnerships that focus specifically on enhancing teaching quality. Between 2007 and 2010, York St John University (UK), with funding from the British Council, organised a training programme for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education Practice (PCAP)[50] in Kenya. Successful participants were also awarded Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (the UK national recognition scheme for lecturers). Over two rounds, academics from a total of nine Kenyan public and private universities participated in this programme.[51]

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43. Republic of Kenya (2009), cited in Gudo et al. (2011) p. 204.
44. Republic of Kenya (2015) *Economic Survey*. Nairobi: Government Printer.
45. In addition to the 22 public universities, there are many more university colleges and other tertiary institutions offering diploma and certificate level programmes.
46. Commission for Higher Education (2012) *Accreditation and Quality Assurance Report: June 2006 to June 2012*. Nairobi: Commission for Higher Education.
47. This applies to a lesser extent in Tanzania, where the African socialist *Ujamaa* political ideology stymied privatisation until the late 1990s. See Munene, I (28 October 2015) *Profits and Pragmatism: The Commercial Lives of Market Universities in Kenya and Uganda*. SAGE Open. DOI: 10.1177/2158244015612519.
48. Wangenge-Ouma (2008) *op. cit.*
49. IUCEA (n.d.) Quality Assurance Historical Background. Available online at: www.iucea.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=106&Itemid=238
50. This qualification is accredited by the Higher Education Academy (HEA), UK.

In the second round, graduates of the first cohort worked as co-tutors together with York St John University staff, acting as key motivators for the next cohort. Including local trainers also allowed for the content of the training to be contextualised.[52] According to the team leader of the programme, it has already had an impact both at the individual level of the teachers' practice and at the institution level, as graduates of the PCAP influence policy and practice more broadly.[53] One of the knock-on effects has been enhanced provision offered by the university's own centre as the PCAP graduates have become involved in its activities.

DAAD has also been instrumental in setting up the East and South African–German Centre of Excellence for Educational Research Methodologies and Management (CERM-ESA) based in Moi University, Kenya. The Centre involves five universities from Germany, South Africa and East Africa, aiming to use international networks to enhance its visibility in the scientific community. The activities of the centre incorporate an academic programme, a research programme, and a capacity building and staff development programme. The centre has a specific aim to stimulate debate in Africa-centred educational research.[54] Feedback from an interviewee at the host institution in Kenya suggested that participation in the staff development programme has already had a concrete impact. As an example of this, an education-related department was able to design and introduce new postgraduate programmes and increase postgraduate admissions significantly as a consequence of relevant training organised through CERM-ESA.

At a national level, the country's main advisory and regulatory body on HE has introduced a regulatory framework on internal quality assurance, which includes aspects of teaching and learning, such as use of evaluation mechanisms and harmonisation of promotion criteria. Currently, there is discretion at the university level over exactly how to implement the guidelines. While there was initially some resistance, a national-level policymaker interviewed felt that this new policy framework is generally being implemented. (Examples of specific practices are discussed in more detail in the subsections below). One valuable lesson learned as cited by a senior-level policymaker at the regulatory body was that the policymaking process needs to be more inclusive, involving vital stakeholders such as vice-chancellors or deputy vice-chancellors of universities if consistent implementation is to be secured.

Institution level initiatives

Centres for excellence in teaching and learning

The recognition of the role that quality teaching and learning plays in overall quality provision is evident in the many centres for excellence in teaching and learning. These were initially established at private universities, but are now becoming common at public institutions as well. The Commission for University Education (CUE) is currently working with the World Bank at a regional level to support the further establishment of such centres. This development is in line with a recent framework introduced by the CUE to harmonise appointment and promotion of academic staff. The framework

includes the recommendation (but not obligation) to provide academic staff with training in pedagogy. A quality assurance director at a public university spoke of the benefits that establishing this type of formal structure for academic staff development can bring. As commonly described in the Ghanaian and Nigerian interviews as well, academic staff development has tended to be provided by a college of education. This meant that provision had been ad hoc, less frequent, and harder to arrange logistically due to limited facilities. It remains to be seen whether centres for teaching and learning can overcome these challenges in the context of large, multi-site public universities.

The types of activities offered at these centres of teaching and learning include compulsory orientation for staff as well as further training and workshops, for example in pedagogy, designing appropriate assessment, and research supervision skills. An alternative model cited by an interviewee at a private university was the use of small reading groups held in tandem with workshops. Aside from providing a forum for guided discussion and reflection on teaching-related subjects, the reading groups also served to identify needs for future workshops or other academic staff development provision.

The impact of academic staff development provision was clear to the head of one such centre of teaching and learning; it not only had an impact on lecturers' practice and motivation, but those lecturers also observed improved learning behaviours among their students. As long as participation in academic staff development remains voluntary, uptake will nonetheless vary.

51. Strathmore University (n.d.) *Strathmore hosts first session of Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice*.
52. Calvert, M (2010) *Overview of PCAP Kenya*, York St John University. Available online at: www.yorksj.ac.uk/pdf/PCAP%20Overview.pdf
53. *Ibid.*
54. CERM-ESA (2015) *CERM-ESA Objectives*. Available online at: http://cermesa.mu.ac.ke/index.php/about-cermesa/objectiives

Part-time staff often have greater barriers to participation, although the experience of the private university was that part-time staff participate equally, if not more so. However, the more general trend corroborated by several interview responses was a generational one, whereby long-serving faculty are harder to reach and persuade, especially as incentives via promotion may not apply to them in their mature career stages.

Formal qualifications

Formal qualifications in teaching competency are also becoming more common, whether externally provided (such as the PCAP programme mentioned above) or internally provided. At the private university, there was a plan to make this qualification mandatory for all tenured staff, phased in gradually over a few years. An interviewee from a public university commented that participation in the one-year long postgraduate qualification in teaching that the university currently provides had not been ideal, mainly due to the fact that academics' workload and the time commitment required render participation difficult. As a result, the Department of Education has devised a shorter and more flexible six-month qualification using blended learning, which it is hoping to roll out for the entire university. This course would possibly be made mandatory for all staff to complete within a certain time period.

Overall, interviews conducted for this study demonstrate a growing interest in providing formal qualifications for teaching from national policymakers, senior management, QA practitioners and providers of academic staff development. In spite of these developments, a national policymaker commented that such qualifications were unlikely to become commonplace in the immediate future due to current levels of buy-in from faculty in the HE sector overall remaining low.

Evaluation and feedback mechanisms to improve teaching provision

The current regulatory framework includes the use of evaluation mechanisms to review courses. At one large public university, this was conducted at the programme level, including a question that gauged students' perceptions of support for effective learning. Follow-up action involved programme reviews which were monitored up to the level of the deputy vice-chancellor. The quality assurance directorate also worked closely with programme committee chairpersons to support them in programme review and programme design. In this instance, the quality assurance directorate plays a capacity building role in dissemination of QA and QE practice across the university, which has potential to produce systemic changes in quality teaching provision. Commenting on the impact of evaluation and feedback mechanisms, an interviewee from a separate public university raised concerns about lack of change in practices. While there was ample evidence collected on teaching quality and professional development provision via evaluation and research, the interviewee felt that there was not necessarily the will nor the resources to act on that evidence.

Organisational culture as challenge

There was consensus among all interviewees that transforming the organisational culture at universities in Kenya is a key challenge in boosting recognition of teaching and learning. As one director of quality assurance said:

'We're actually trying to change people from wanting to teach students what they know how to teach, to teaching students what the students ought to be taught. Now that will require culture change.'

Alleviating resource constraints through improved funding mechanisms is therefore not enough. There is a perceived lack of understanding of the relevance of teaching quality at both senior management level and at faculty level. The head of a teaching and learning centre stated that teaching larger classes was even seen as a solution, not a problem, by some senior management staff. In those instances where senior management have supported teaching enhancement initiatives, buy-in from faculty remains a further hurdle. The assessment culture which places great emphasis on final exams was seen by several interviewees as another barrier to the implementation of teaching enhancement initiatives, because it continues to shape student and lecturer behaviour in the teaching and learning environment

Collaboration and networking

Opportunities for peer-networking have mostly emerged at the institution level. Support and funding for this has not been available, although according to a national-level policymaker, 'it would be something that would be appreciated'. Nevertheless, despite high levels of competition between universities, which often discourages collaboration, peer networking across the HE sector does exist. A cadre of well trained and informed faculty grew out of the PCAP experience and was informally sustained for a while by the York St John Kenya Alumni Society which encouraged staff to come together. This led to the formation of the Association for Faculty Enrichment of Learning and Teaching (AFELT) in 2014,

which brings together the Aga Khan University's own Network of Teaching and Learning and faculty from other Kenyan universities.[55] The association sees itself as a vehicle for advocating teaching and learning enhancement initiatives in the country. It performs an important networking task by creating exposure of AFELT at public events and galvanising support and membership from public and private universities across Kenya. They have even had support for their activities expressed by a representative of the national regulatory body, indicating the potential the association has for national-level collaboration and policy development.

Kenyan lecturers also have access to numerous professional organisations related to education such as the African Network for Internationalisation of Education (ANIE), and the Commonwealth Council for Education Administration and Management (CCEAM). Other cross-border disciplinary networks also exist, such as the Organisation of Social Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA). One interviewee from a public university felt that these professional organisations might serve as a platform for dissemination of effective practice in QE, and for promoting the benefits of academic staff development more generally. Nonetheless, attendance at conferences organised by these networks/organisations is contingent on institutional support in the form of time off and travel expenses, which may be problematic.

International partnerships more generally can also have a positive knock-on effect on enhancing quality. Two interviewees from public universities spoke of the propensity for bilateral partnerships to modify current QA and teaching practice via exposure to alternative practices.

In focus: Network of Teaching and Learning at Aga Khan University (East Africa)

In 2013, Aga Khan University launched the Network of Teaching and Learning to promote academic staff development. Their aim is to develop communities of practice and foster scholarship of teaching and learning, while remaining cognisant of the particular needs of academic staff working in developing world contexts. They provide a wide range of services, including not only training and events, but also web-based resources for staff, such as blogs and teaching resources. They have also recently partnered with Academics Without Borders (AWB) to provide a Faculty Virtual Mentorship Programme. The programme aims to foster collaborative projects in teaching and learning between Canadian and American mentors with Aga Khan University mentees. The project also aims to provide mentees with support in pursuing research on teaching and learning.

Summary

While resource constraints will no doubt continue to be a challenge, initiatives to enhance teaching are gaining momentum. A central theme in the Kenyan example has been finding the right balance between regulation and institutional autonomy. Experience with private universities has shown that direct supervision from a regulatory body can be instrumental in spurring structural change, such as the establishing of centres for excellence in teaching and learning, as well as assuring quality more generally. The current framework allows institutions a degree of flexibility in the implementation of teaching quality policies. This approach can be beneficial in the sense that it allows each university to retain their particular mission and draw on their own experience of successful practices. At the same time, both university practitioners and national body representatives have acknowledged a need for stronger and more explicit regulation from the ministerial level to formalise and standardise teaching provision at Kenyan universities, so that successful models do not remain isolated cases benefiting a minority of students and staff.

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55. Aga Khan University (9 March 2015) *AKU Network of Teaching and Learning leading a transformative teaching initiative in Kenya.* Available online at: www.aku.edu/qtl/news/Pages/AFELT-Initiative.aspx

Nigeria

Context

Nigeria is a lower middle-income country with a GNI per capita of USD 5,710.[56] While the tertiary GER has been estimated to range between 12 and 15 per cent over the past decade,[57] its huge population of 177.5 million makes it the largest HE system of all the four countries in this study. Public institutions are distributed equally in number between federal and state sectors (40 of each kind),[58] and there are a further 61 accredited private universities, most of which are faith-based institutions. Federal universities receive the greatest amount of government funding, followed by state universities, while private institutions do not receive subsidies from the government. The proportion of public to private enrolments is around two thirds public – one third private.[59] The National Universities Commission (NUC) is responsible for accreditation of all programmes offered in Nigerian universities, and about a quarter are subject to additional accreditation by professional bodies.[60]

Like its West African counterpart Ghana, the development of the HE sector in Nigeria has been stymied by resource constraints linked to political and economic instabilities. Brain drain in terms of qualified academic teaching staff leaving the country is possibly most acute in Nigeria, with destination countries including African nations such as South Africa, Ghana and Botswana, as well as non-African destinations further afield. One estimate from the 2008–09 academic year suggested that the shortage of academic staff was as high as 5,000.[61] The government has introduced a scheme called the 'Linkages with Experts and Academics in the Diaspora Scheme' (LEADS) to attract Nigerians working abroad to return to Nigeria. The 'Consolidated University Academic Salary' negotiated in 2009 after strikes from academic staff unions is a further national-level measure that aims to alleviate the brain drain.[62]

The challenge of implementing teaching quality initiatives in the context of Nigeria is hence establishing coherent and systematic policies across such a large sector, and engaging faculty in professional development at a time when the human resource capacity is clearly strained.

National level initiatives

In focus: Tertiary Education Trust Fund

In order to supplement limited government funds with a consistent and reliable source of investment in education, the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) Act was passed in 2011. The law empowers the Financial Inland Revenue Service to levy a two per cent education tax on all companies in Nigeria. The money is invested into physical insfrastructure as well as academic staff training and development at public universities. Such activities include participation in training, conferences and workshops, individual or group research, and grants for writing books or journal articles. Individuals submit proposals to their HoDs/Deans at their university, and the applications are vetted at senior management level. Because the funds are disbursed to the universities regularly, the universities are able to manage the allocation and use of funds fairly conveniently. There are clear mechanisms in place to avoid misuse of funds, and if any misuse does occur, the TETFund management have the authority to withdraw the funds from the university.

This source of investment is absolutely vital for state universities, which would otherwise not be able to support their staff to engage in such training and development due to financial constraints. According to a senior university administrator responsible for overseeing TETFund applications at a state university, the response from faculty has been very enthusiastic, with almost a third of staff benefiting from professional development activities funded through the scheme in the previous academic year. The quality of applications from staff was generally good, with as many as 90–95 per cent of the applications being approved.

56. World Bank (2015) GNI per capita, PPP (current international $) Available online at: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.PP.CD/countries

57. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) (2015), Gross enrolment ratio by level of education, http://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=142&lang=en

58. NUC (2015) *Federal Universities*. Available online at: http://nuc.edu.ng/nigerian-univerisities/federal-univeristies/ NUC (2015) State Universities. Available online at: http://nuc.edu.ng/nigerian-univerisities/state-univerisity/

59. Okebukola, P A (2014) *Emerging Regional Developments and Forecast for Quality in Higher Education in Africa*, Paper presented at the 2014 CHEA International Quality Group Annual Conference, Washington DC, USA, January 29–30.

60. Okebukola, PA (2010) *Fifty Years of Higher Education in Nigeria: Trends in quality assurance*, Paper presented at presented at the International Conference on the Contributions of Nigerian Universities to the 50th Independence Anniversary of Nigeria, 27–29 September.

61. This was calculated using the NUC benchmarks for staff to student ratios, which are 10:1 to 15:1 for science-based programmes and 30:1 for the humanities/social sciences. Bamiro (2012) *op. cit*. p. 247.

62. *Ibid.*, 249.

The NUC has issued a policy framework including recommendations that all academic staff undergo requisite training to demonstrate their pedagogical competency. Interviews with university staff from across the sector indicate that this is currently the norm within the discipline of education, but varies in non-education ones. Implementation remains fragmented and dependent on commitment from individual universities. There was an attempt by the Teachers Registration Council to extend teacher registration to HE institutions, but it was unsuccessful. One interviewee at a state university commented that in most universities, the overwhelming perception is that teaching qualifications are only imperative at primary and secondary school levels. Yet at the same time, one interviewee at a private institute commented that there was a growing expectation for all lecturers, including those in the private sector, to demonstrate their teaching competency via some form of qualification.

As mentioned above, adequate funding in support of teaching and learning policies can be problematic, especially at state universities where the level of government funding is lower than that in federal universities, and even more so in private universities, which do not receive any government subventions. In order to address the need for a constant and safeguarded source of funding for HE, Nigeria employs a national-level taxation initiative. The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), as it is called, earmarks funds specifically for investment in academic staff development and material resources for HE. The scheme is described in more detail above. Currently, this fund does not extend to the private sector. Private institutions instead rely on donations from banks, corporations and individuals, but these account for a relatively minor and irregular source of income.

Institution level initiatives

Varied administrative structures for quality assurance and teaching enhancement

The formal structures for quality assurance and teaching enhancement vary in Nigeria. There is often a quality assurance role within senior administrative positions dealing with academic planning, and the co-ordination and monitoring of teaching enhancement activities usually falls under their remit. A Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) has been established at Ibadan University, but this is an exception. Factors that were instrumental in the founding of the centre included enthusiasm from academic staff conducting research into teaching and learning, support from senior management, and a grant opportunity via the MacArthur Foundation. Although the centre has only been functioning for a year and a half, the director spoke of a noticeable impact, namely in terms of a 'paradigm shift' among faculty. The most important impact has been gaining acceptance of the need for academic staff development from both junior and senior members of staff.

Academic staff development activities and the culture of teaching

Where there is no dedicated unit or centre for teaching and learning, academic staff development is typically provided by a faculty/college of education. As mentioned above, teaching competency is a prerequisite for lecturers within the discipline of education, but often not compulsory beyond that. At the federal university, there was, however, a comprehensive academic staff development programme being rolled out across the entire institution. This comprised pedagogical training, post-training mentoring with classroom observations of the mentor, post-observation discussions, and the writing up of a reflective report by the participant for analysis by the centre of teaching and learning staff. In this instance, there was a deliberate effort to ensure that professional development would not remain 'one-shot training', but rather constitute a continuous and supportive process with feedback loops for both participants and providers of academic staff development.

Challenges to carrying out academic staff development include the fact that the culture of research is still prioritised over the culture of teaching, as well as ensuring participation from part-time staff. This is especially pertinent as universities tend to hire large proportions of their staff on a part-time basis to save costs given the current budgetary constraints. Buy-in from staff also reflects a generational trend, whereby younger staff are more likely to identify a need for and hence actively seek academic staff development opportunities. For example, at the state university, the majority of TETFund applications came from younger faculty.[63] Meanwhile, the working conditions for younger faculty can act as a barrier to involvement in academic staff development initiatives. For example, feedback from lecturers for the federal university's teaching and learning centre indicated that young lecturers are often burdened with many responsibilities, high teaching loads and large class sizes. In the state and federal universities, the sheer size

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63. The generational divide of course reflects the fact that those lecturers with the longest experience teaching often feel the least need to undergo formal training, even when such training does become available. Furthermore, evaluation of their teaching competency may not be of prime importance to them at their particular career stage, where performance in terms of research output and administrative duties plays a greater role.

of institutions can pose a challenge to academic staff development provision, even when buy-in is there. Ensuring that all members of staff have an equal chance to undergo training will prove challenging, especially with limited levels of human and material resources available to academic staff development providers currently.

Evaluation and feedback mechanisms to improve teaching provision

Capacity to evaluate the quality of teaching as well as the provision of academic staff development varies considerably. The most developed model cited by interviewees for this study was at the federal university, where the quality assurance directorate in conjunction with the teaching and learning centre collect evidence to evaluate teaching quality. Student course evaluations constitute one feedback mechanism that is managed by the QA directorate. These evaluations are designed to be developmental in nature, forming just one element of staff appraisal in conjunction with classroom observations and evaluation of teaching by HoDs for promotion purposes. The challenges have included administering student evaluations throughout the university in the face of resistance from some staff, as well as devising appropriate and standardised mechanisms for evaluating teaching. Currently, teachers are rated by HoDs on a subjective basis, which tends to produce generic and non-critical feedback. It is hoped that the introduction of a pedagogically informed standardised measure will help to build the quality of teaching evaluation.

The teaching and learning centre has also incorporated feedback from student evaluations into their training programmes, which has helped to provide evidence for the need for enhancement of teaching quality. This demonstrates the importance of collecting sufficient evidence to inform policy and practice in the effort to secure buy-in from staff.

The director of the teaching and learning centre also stressed the need to put in place appropriate measures to evaluate the centre's own activities, such as pre-training surveys and post-training focus group discussions to evaluate the impact of the training as well as attitudes of staff to teaching more generally. The role of the QA directorate was also recognised as vital to the overall implementation of academic staff development initiatives. The QA directorate could in the future even serve to externally evaluate the activities and programmes of the teaching and learning centre. Such evaluation and feedback mechanisms will be necessary to engender an improvement-oriented approach.
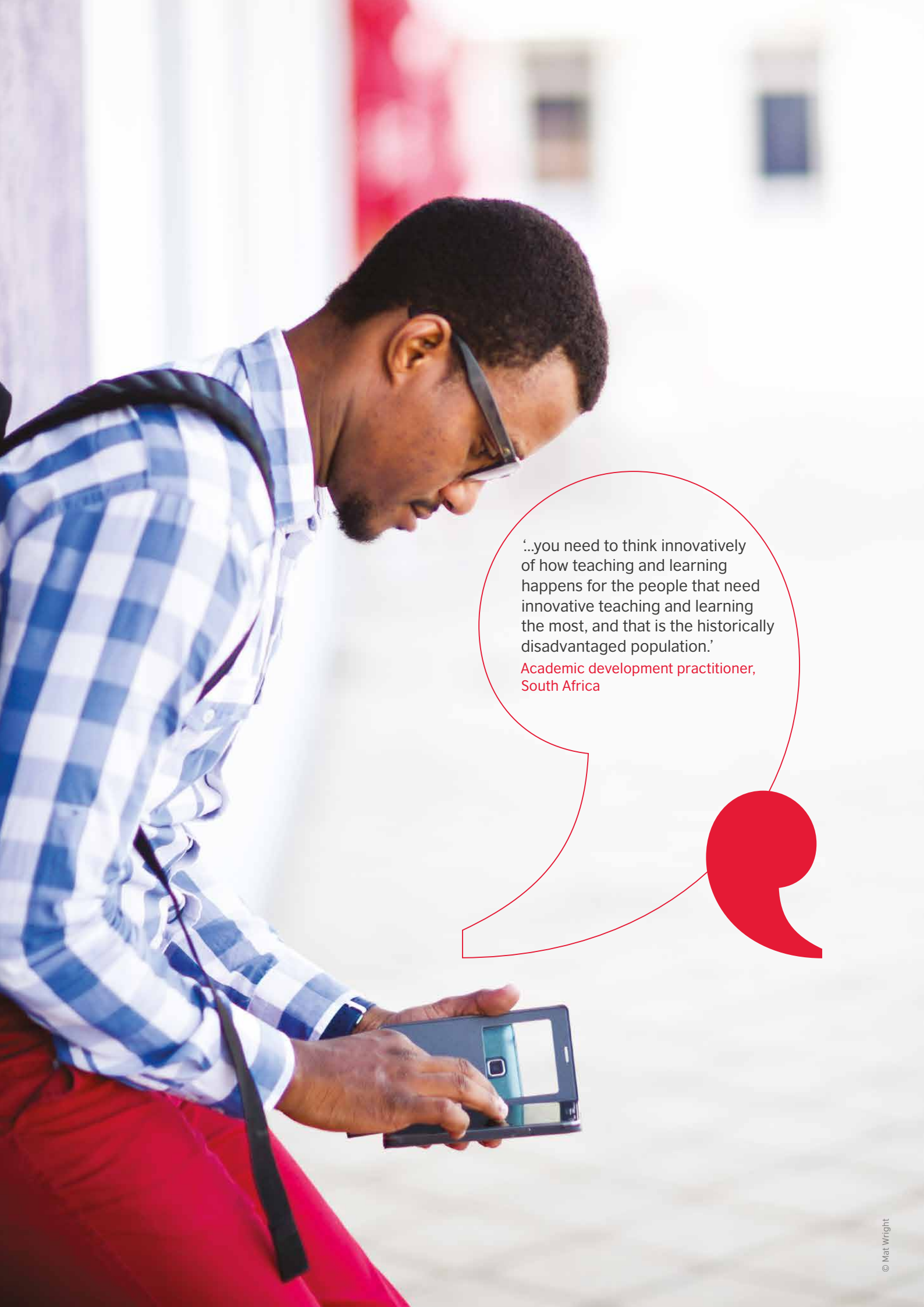
Collaboration and networking

Currently there are some opportunities for peer-networking, although not ones that exclusively address teaching and learning or academic staff development. The Vice-Chancellors in Nigeria have their own committees where they can share best practice on quality assurance and/or teaching enhancement policies. University faculties or departments as well as national bodies such as the NUC have recently organised conferences that address aspects of teaching and learning, such as the use of technology-assisted learning.

Exposure to international contexts through partnerships and fellowships has spurred interest in academic staff development, and was cited by all the interviewees at the institution level as influential in developing QA and QE work at home institutions in Nigeria. As mentioned above, in one instance this even led to the institutionalisation of teaching enhancement via the establishment of a teaching and learning centre. Regional or international exchange programmes were described by interviewees at both the national and institution level as beneficial because they can result in the sharing of effective models for academic staff development as well as providing opportunities for direct experiential knowledge. An interviewee also emphasised that partnerships can help efforts to secure buy-in from faculty. When the teaching and learning message being driven internally is corroborated by outside parties, this adds weight to teaching and learning policy. Once again, this demonstrates the need to provide staff with appropriate and sufficient evidence for QE needs in order to ensure buy-in.

Summary

At present, academic staff development initiatives in Nigeria remain fragmented and varied. More opportunities are needed for peer networking nationally, as well as collaboration regionally and/or internationally. The number of formal administrative structures for quality assurance and academic staff development remains low, which suggests that a great deal will need to be done to build up human resource capacity and expertise in this field. While the TETFund is a positive example of an innovative strategy to overcome funding limitations, a detailed and consistent national policy to guide teaching enhancement is not yet in place that might have a systemic impact on the sector as a whole. Given the predominance of the public sector and the strength of the NUC, there is potential for centrally-co-ordinated sector-level initiatives to have widespread impact. However, the stark contrast in availability of human and material resources for academic staff development between federal, state and private universities will remain a challenge, and creative solutions are needed for pooling resources and building on the pockets of expertise at the various colleges and faculties of education.

'...you need to think innovatively of how teaching and learning happens for the people that need innovative teaching and learning the most, and that is the historically disadvantaged population.'

Academic development practitioner, South Africa

South Africa

Context

The South African HE system is predominantly public. Enrolments at the 26 public institutions total just under one million students, with approximately 80 per cent of these at the undergraduate level.[64] The public HE system is characterised by strong central governance by the Department for Higher Education and Training (DHET), which is mandated by the Higher Education Act (1997) to control academic programme planning, student enrolment planning and funding. In this way, the state is able to steer the system in line with the national development agenda set out in the 1997 White Paper *A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education.*[65] This includes goals of increasing access and equality in the post-Apartheid era, as well as planning HE to serve national economic needs.

The South African HE sector benefits from a decades-long tradition of institutional support for teaching and learning activities. Most universities have a quality assurance as well as a teaching and learning support presence in some form. Increasingly these activities are co-ordinated by Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. South African academics publish actively in the field of scholarship of teaching and learning. The Council on Higher Education (CHE) is engaged in national quality reviews and capacity building in quality enhancement, and the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) provides data annually to monitor system performance and inform future planning.

Yet, despite these structural conditions that would seem to be supportive of efforts to both evaluate and improve teaching quality, there are two major challenges. The first is in terms of equality across the sector, namely between historically advantaged and historically disadvantaged universities. Those universities with the most prolific portfolios of teaching and learning support tend to be the historically advantaged ones. The second is in terms of student throughput rates and dropout rates. Data from 2012 revealed that the completion rate on three-year undergraduate programmes was as low as 55.9 per cent.[66] The difference varied by about 15 percentage points along racial lines, with White students graduating at a higher rate (65 per cent) compared to their Indian (57 per cent), Coloured (52 per cent) and African (50 per cent) counterparts.[67] In a context in which widening participation across historically disadvantaged sections of society is a national priority, institutions have been under pressure to take on greater numbers of students. Meanwhile, institutions have not necessarily been able to adjust or augment their teaching and student support provision to adequately meet the needs of a diversified student body. Hence the issue of enhancing teaching quality in South Africa is deeply intertwined with the broader socio-political issue of establishing and maintaining quality HE provision for all students in a historically unequal education sector. Meanwhile, funding constraints at the national level amidst expansion of the sector poses a serious challenge to this aim, as illustrated by the 'fees must fall' protests in 2015 and associated debates on student finance.

National level initiatives

One national-level response to the challenge of student success rates has been the South Africa Survey of Student Engagement (SASSE) – modelled on the NSSE used in North America. Commissioned by the CHE, the pilot survey from 2010 sought to highlight the importance of student engagement in initiatives to improve student success rates. By creating a strong evidence base on student engagement, the CHE hopes to promote both inter-university and intra-university dialogue and reflective practice that can ultimately lead to more effective intervention strategies.[68] The survey is now being rolled out in a number of other South African universities.

There has also been a recognition of the role that teaching plays in the student experience and consequently in student success rates. Enhancing teaching is therefore understood as a fundamental aspect of overall education quality.

In response to this, the DHET has established a number of earmarked funds. For example, the Teaching Development Grants (TDGs), which amount to over R600 million per annum, aim to enhance student learning through lecturer development, the establishment of 'First Year Experience' initiatives which take a holistic view of the student learning experience (building strongly on the SASSE information), the introduction of

64. Data from CHE, South Africa (2013) *Higher Education Data: Overview.* (800,955 undergraduate students, 159,548 postgraduate students, total 983,698 students). Available online at: www.che.ac.za/focus_areas/higher_education_data/2013/overview

65. Bunting, I, Sheppard, C, Cloete, N and Belding, L (2010) *Performance Indicators in South African Higher Education 2000-2008.* Wynberg, South Africa: Centre for Higher Education Transformation, 4.

66. Council on Higher Education (2014) *Vital Stats 2012,* Pretoria: Council on Higher Education, Figure 92: Throughput rates for three-year degrees with first year of enrolment in 2007 (excluding UNISA).

67. *Ibid.,* Figure 96: Throughput rates by race for three-year degrees with first year of enrolment in 2007 (excluding UNISA) – accumulative.

68. Strydom, JF and Mentz, M (2010) *South African Survey of Student Engagement: Focusing the Student Experience on Success through Student Engagement,* Pretoria: Council on Higher Education.

mentors and tutorial schemes, and the promotion of research into teaching and learning issues. The TDGs have been running for about six years, and provided the springboard, early conceptualisation, and very importantly, the funding, to support the CHE's Quality Enhancement Project (QEP). The project, which builds on previous quality audit exercises by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC), examines policy and practice among all public HE institutions in teaching and learning in four focus areas: enhancing academics as teachers, enhancing student support and development, enhancing the learning environment, and enhancing course and programme enrolment management.

In sum, these major undertakings reveal a commitment to engendering a *quality enhancement culture* within the public HE system, and teaching quality has been highlighted as playing a key role in overall quality culture. A particular challenge is the demands these undertakings place on management and professional expertise at both the system and institution levels. In addition, widespread collaboration between institutions at the national level will be imperative in order for these schemes to achieve maximum impact.

Institution level initiatives

Dedicated administrative structures for teaching and learning and quality assurance/advancement

South African universities often provide teaching and learning support via dedicated units or centres, serving both the staff and student populations. The teaching and learning centres organise compulsory induction programmes and non-compulsory year-round workshops, seminars and other training sessions for academic staff. The content of these sessions

covers, for example, pedagogy and teaching methodology (e.g. lectures for large classes for undergraduate contexts, and research supervision for postgraduate students), curriculum design, assessment and e-learning. Low uptake is frequently cited as a challenge for these non-compulsory support activities. Reasons for this include problems attracting part-time staff to attend, academics' high workloads, as well as a lack of awareness and/or understanding among academics of the relevance of teaching quality. As one academic staff development provider expressed: *'The main challenge that we have at the moment is bringing academics on board, because seemingly academics do not actually understand our role.'* Uptake tends to be greatest among new faculty, suggesting that involving senior academics is a significant challenge, for the same reasons discussed in the preceding sections.

There are several benefits associated with teaching and learning centres. Firstly, they provide a focused and well-planned support service. This is especially helpful in large university contexts in which policy and practice tends to be uneven from department to department. Establishing a centralised structure also reflects a formal recognition by the institution of the importance of teaching, a fact which has been welcomed by academic staff. As one academic staff development provider explained, the establishment of a teaching and learning centre provides direction and co-ordination from a core of staff who can function as advocates of the cause of teaching and learning quality. Such staff can play a key role in raising awareness of student-oriented and improvement-oriented approaches, which is a necessary precursor to more widespread transformation of organisational culture in favour of quality enhancement.

Additionally, the involvement of teaching and learning centre staff in department or programme-level evaluation exercises such as academic reviews was cited as a clear benefit at one institution. Teaching and learning centre staff were able to customise their provision of support activities based on direct experiential insights working together with academic staff on academic reviews.

Overall, the challenges associated with running these centres include limited numbers of staff, or limited capacity to mainstream policies and practice in large universities where departmental practice varies.

Formal qualifications in teaching

A formal qualification in the form of a postgraduate diploma in higher education is available, often offered in distance-learning mode by a partner institution when unavailable at the academic's own university. While it is not compulsory at the institutions included in the sample for this report, interviewees suggested that feedback from academic staff who have pursued these qualifications has generally been positive. Given the often low level of staff academic qualifications, however, and national policy on increasing the proportion of academics with PhDs, there is a tension between completing higher disciplinary qualifications or teaching qualifications.

Evaluation and feedback mechanisms to improve teaching provision

Student feedback is sought on individual courses and at the programme level, although there are reservations as to the impact and effectiveness of the feedback. Depending on the faculty, student surveys may have a more accountability or developmental focus. External peer evaluation systems were cited as having a more developmental

character, as they encourage comparing and assessing institutional practice, including sharing of successful QA and QE models. Furthermore, at the individual level the use of mentorship programmes can play an important role in both providing ongoing peer support for academics, as well as creating opportunities for peer feedback.

Incentives for teaching

While there are incentives for teaching in the form of recognition and awards, both quality assurance/advancement as well as teaching and learning centre staff members felt that teaching excellence lacked equal bearing to research activity, as promotion criteria still heavily favoured research output.

Collaboration and networking

There are numerous opportunities for institutions to participate in regional and/or national level conferences and other professional development opportunities. These activities are funded either by national bodies such as the CHE in relation to the QEP, or by the institutions themselves. There are also professional networks run by interested academics such as the cross-border Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA). HELTASA organises conferences, an annual Teaching Excellence Award (in conjunction with CHE), and comprises several special interest groups (SIGs) in the field of teaching and learning. The organisation has recently launched a Teaching Advancement at University (TAU) Fellowship scheme with funding via the DHET's Teaching Development Grant.

According to interviewees in this study, international staff exchange is less common. However, personal exposure to university contexts abroad can at times provide examples of effective practice that are then introduced in the South African context. Nevertheless, international exchanges may not always be effective, as some ideas which the exchange partner brings may be unviable due to infrastructure constraints or other differences in the local context.

In focus: The Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC)

The CHEC concentrates the teaching and learning resources of four universities – Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Stellenbosch University, University of Cape Town and University of the Western Cape[69] – in one regional hub. The CHEC jointly runs a postgraduate diploma in higher education, short courses on teaching development, as well as training modules for middle management. It also co-ordinated a groundbreaking graduate destination survey of the 2010 cohort of graduates from the Western Cape Universities. Inter-institutional collaboration allows for joint efforts and co-ordination in provision of library resources and in procurement of expensive research equipment.

Diversifying teaching provision for students from disadvantaged backgrounds

A key feature of the South African system is the provision of teaching and monitoring activities geared towards students who need additional academic support. This refers to activities that exist in addition to academic and pastoral support services, and includes for example mentorship or tutorial systems that employ non-lecturer staff to provide out-of-class contact hours with students. Bridging programmes between high school and undergraduate education are also offered by several South African universities as a strategy to improve access while equipping students with necessary skills for academic success. Tracking of students' academic achievement is also used to trigger early intervention and then steer the student to relevant support services. One participating university collects data on student progress to evaluate the impact of its student support interventions, such as the tutorial system. This has enabled it to demonstrate that attendance at tutorials can noticeably contribute to higher student achievement. However, the importance of having a centralised system in order for this to work effectively was stressed, as was the need to integrate an inclusive approach into the entire curriculum and teaching approach more generally.

Integrating an inclusive approach into the entire curriculum can be challenging, as it involves shifting the mentality of teaching staff to become student-oriented:

'Instead of finding ways of dealing with these students, you find [lecturers] complaining that these students are not prepared. I think it's our challenge as a centre to bring that awareness that yes, we do have these students, we can't shy away from them: then what do we do? Let's come up with innovative ways to bring them on board, because we do want graduates.'

Interview with an academic staff development provider at a South African university

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69. Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC) (2013) *Pathways from University to Work*. Cape Town, South Africa: CHEC.

Summary

South Africa has a history of promoting the importance of teaching and learning in quality HE provision. It can be described as a pioneer on the continent in the field of enhancing teaching and learning quality. Nevertheless, throughput rates and inequality remain serious challenges. Creating a more inclusive society will also entail building a more inclusive academic community of practice committed to the national development goals of employability and social cohesion. The QEP serves as an important example of collaboration being sought between universities in place of competition, while at the same time demonstrating the challenges that a central governmental body faces in driving national projects to engender systemic change, given that these types of initiative ultimately rely on buy-in from individual institutions. Peer networks (such as HELTASA) can play an important role in fostering cross-institution collaboration, and the central governmental body does indeed support these networks, for example by making funds available to them in the form of Teaching Development Grants.

Formal, institution-level schemes for collaboration like the CHEC might provide a further model for cross-institution collaboration. The South African case also demonstrates how structural conditions that favour research goals (such as promotion tracks and university rankings) can undermine teaching goals, even when academic staff development provision is available.

Conclusion

Context of inequality impacts quality HE provision

In each country context, inequality in access to and provision of HE features in the system. These tensions play out between rural–metropole, federal–state, public–private and historically advantaged–historically disadvantaged institutions. Some categories of institution have been in a better position to acquire resources and ensure a high quality learning environment. At the same time, even some prestigious institutions struggle with teaching quality. The challenge in the future will be that of developing human and material resources in a way that maximises quality teaching and learning provision across the whole sector.[70]

Inequality also manifests itself within student bodies. Advantaged students often have more opportunities for academic enrichment and career guidance prior to and during their university studies, while first generation students often struggle academically and in terms of social networks. As widening access has become a priority in all four countries, and the student body becomes increasingly diverse, enhancing teaching to adequately meet the needs of all those students becomes increasingly relevant.

In summary, in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, policies to enhance teaching and learning quality across national systems need to take into account the uneven nature of the HE landscape within which they operate.

Funding constraints impact quality HE provision

The recent expansion of the HE systems in all four countries has not been accompanied by adequate increases in public funding, thereby placing strain on existing human and material resources. All policymakers and practitioners agreed that this has had a negative impact on teaching quality. However, there have been some innovative solutions to funding constraints. The TETFund in Nigeria, and the Teaching Development Grants in South Africa, are positive examples of how funding earmarked for enhancing teaching quality can be achieved in a sustainable, locally-sourced manner that avoids leaving initiatives dependent on donor funding.

Human resource capacity and organisational culture are key

Overcoming funding constraints is essential but is not a solution in itself. In all the four countries, policymakers and practitioners agreed that developing adequate human resource capacity and transforming organisational culture are also key to enhancing teaching quality. There is a need for experienced and qualified staff at all levels, and trainers and mentors are needed for academic staff development provision at teaching and learning centres. There is also a need for qualified and experienced management-level staff to effectively operate, assess and develop teaching and learning initiatives on an institution-wide basis. At the senior management level, institutions need guidance in how to effectively evaluate their teaching, as well as how to evaluate their own programmes that aim to enhance teaching, and how to respond accordingly. Hence there is a need for capacity building in quality assurance more broadly as well as in academic staff development more specifically.

Related to the issue of human resource capacity is the capacity of institutions to effectively manage changes in organisational culture. The issue of low levels of buy-in from both senior management and lecturers has been cited as a major challenge. Nevertheless, all the interviewees referred to elements of faculty that are serving as advocates of the teaching and learning agenda, and some faculty or even senior management are engaging in teaching enhancement activities. Achieving buy-in and maximising impact nonetheless requires a clear, concerted and skillfully-managed effort from the very highest levels of the university administration.

Collaboration and peer networking support capacity building

Both national and institutional level policymakers and practitioners spoke of the overwhelmingly positive impact of peer networking and international partnerships and/or training opportunities. International partnerships have a long history in African higher education, and have played a key role in teaching quality developments so far.[71] A cautionary note should be added, however.

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70. This is not to say that those universities with greater experience and access to resources in terms of teaching and learning should be sidelined or excluded. Quality teaching and learning is not a benchmark to be achieved, but rather a continuous process that all institutions are engaged in continuously.

71. Smail, A (2015) *Bridging the gap: enabling effective UK–Africa university partnerships.* Summary report. British Council. Available online at: https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/2.5_bridging-the-gap.pdf; Schowengerdt, B (2016) *Building effective UK–Africa university partnerships: perspectives from Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa.* British Council.

International partnerships can be ineffective when initiatives are not designed in a manner relevant to the local context. They also tend to be limited in terms of time span and in terms of proportion of academics targeted, which raises concerns about equality of opportunities to participate, as well as potential for lasting impact. As one interviewee explained, international partnerships should be designed in a way that maximises impact across the national system, for example by involving multiple stakeholders with real and symbolic influence from both the national and institution level. There is a clear desire and need for more peer-networking at a national level within the four countries, as well as regionally. This would support capacity building and facilitate the sharing of successful models within institutions and also across institutions facing similar challenges. Where there are resource constraints, collaboration between institutions should be sought as a solution, such as the joint provision of academic staff development training by several institutions.

Tension between regulation and autonomy in achieving national impact

In implementing teaching enhancement initiatives, there is a tension between the desire for greater regulation on one hand, and retaining institutional autonomy and focusing on bottom-up change on the other. Desire for stronger regulation may be a symptom of uneven HE systems in which a quality assurance or quality enhancement culture has not been fully embedded in all institutions, and backing of teaching enhancement initiatives from senior management is inconsistent. Examples of stronger regulation include budgetary stipulations to ensure adequate material and human resources for quality advancement structures more generally, as well as teaching and learning centres specifically. Another example of desired regulation is in stricter enforcement of current policy frameworks that outline teaching competency benchmarks for academic staff, provision of academic staff development training, and evaluation of teaching in promotion criteria.

At the same time, there are concerns that regulation will lead to compliance rather than enhancement. Furthermore, there are doubts as to whether provision of academic staff training can feasibly be mandated given the current human resource capacity constraints – will there be enough trainers and centres to provide teaching qualifications, and will they reach all groups of academic staff equally?
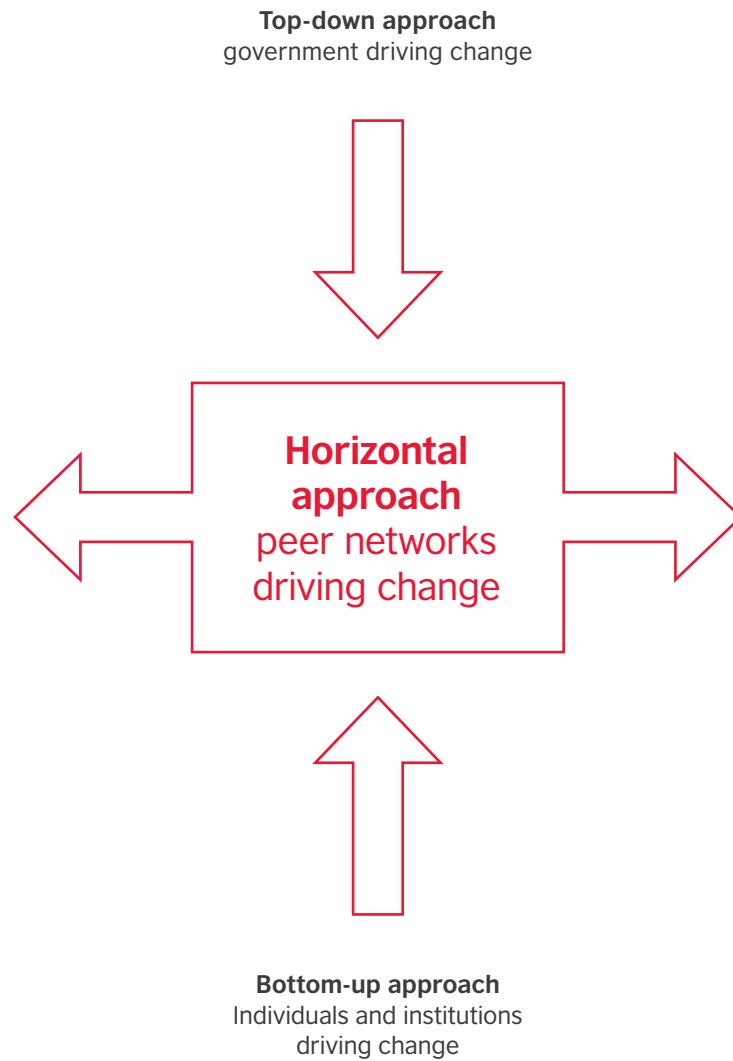
Maintaining institutional autonomy is also desired by institutions to allow them to develop quality enhancement policy and practice relevant to their own context. At universities with a strong, explicit mission oriented towards transformative learning and inclusive development, there is often greater leadership and engagement in quality teaching provision. This suggests that universities themselves can act as drivers of change, developing teaching enhancement initiatives immediately relevant to their local context. Such internally-instigated initiatives are likely to succeed due to local relevance. Nevertheless, the question of how to achieve national scale impact remains. Harnessing the enthusiasm and practical experience of such institutions for the benefit of the system as a whole via collaboration and peer networking could be an alternative model to top-down imposed regulation.

Towards impact in enhancing teaching quality

There are three possible approaches to achieving national level impact in enhancing teaching quality: top-down from the government level to the institutions; bottom-up driven by individuals and institutions; and horizontally via peer-networking and dissemination of practice within and between institutions. (See Diagram 1 below.)

Diagram 1: Enhancing teaching quality – three avenues

Top-down approach
government driving change

Horizontal approach
peer networks
driving change

Bottom-up approach
Individuals and institutions
driving change

In each of the three approaches, key actors serve to support the successful implementation of teaching enhancement initiatives in different ways. Participants in this study identified several important roles that these key actors play in this process, and these are outlined in Table 1. While peer networking was referred to at all levels of the HE system to some extent, it was identified most clearly and strongly for the 'quality assurance and academic development practitioner' group and for professional organisations.

Effective co-ordination between all three (top-down, bottom-up and horizontal) approaches to enhancing teaching quality will ultimately yield the most effective results. However, it should be noted that the top-down approach will rely on advances in human resource capacity. Mandating provision of academic staff development, or compulsory qualifications for teaching staff, needs to be planned carefully in line with actual institutional capacity to deliver on such objectives. It would also need to be supported by adequate material and financial resources.

Evidence gathered for this report points to the particularly promising potential for collaboration and peer-networking to drive change in organisational culture, both within institutions and between institutions. Given the uneven HE landscape and the limited human and material resources available, collaboration will be crucial. Where institution-driven policy is weak or inconsistent, (for example due to a lack of backing at the senior management level), strong top-down approaches can serve to impose systemic change.

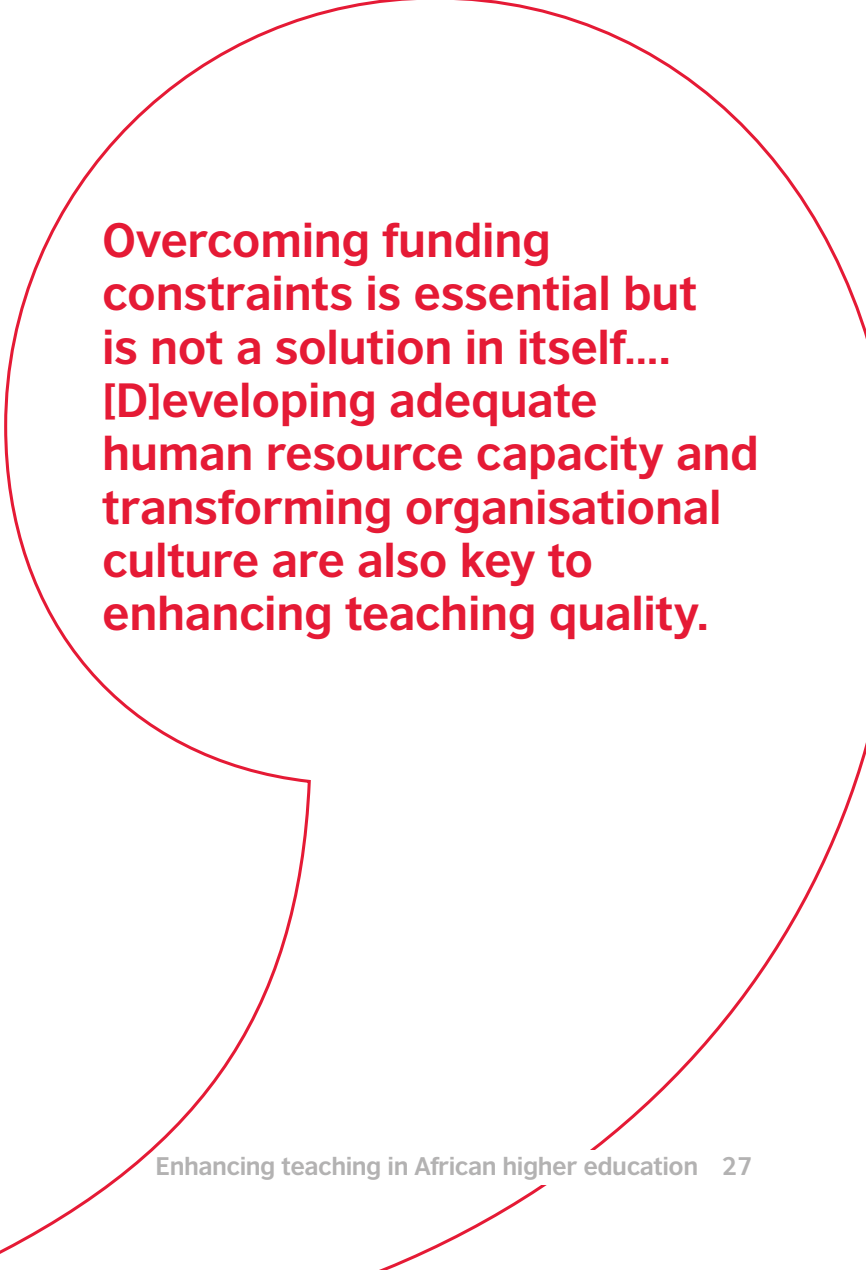The following areas are of priority for future policy:

1. **Building human resource capacity:** more trainers are needed for provision of academic staff development activities, and more qualified and experienced management staff are needed to effectively evaluate and improve teaching quality initiatives.

2. **Strengthening collaboration and peer-networking to forge communities of practice:** creating a critical mass of teaching and learning experts can drive the policy and practice needed to transform organisational culture. Strengthening collaboration nationally and regionally can help overcome resource constraints and foster reflective practice.

3. **Ensuring adequate financial resources:** joint provision of resources (whether through national, regional or international partnerships) can help overcome funding constraints in the short term. Lasting solutions will rest upon ministerial-level decisions on funding for HE more generally.

4. **Incentivising teaching:** academics should be supported in developing their own teaching practice by having appropriate career incentives (rewarding quality teaching as well as research), as well as time allowance for staff development and encouragement of scholarship of teaching and learning.Ga. Runtius, temporia dolum que landi denimin cidipsuntet quis mos velitam qui conestia volut fugiam quiat perum, sit unt il es consequas entur sit, to venimpersped qui iur?

Table 1: Key actors and their roles in teaching enhancement initiatives

Level	Key factors	Roles	
National	Ministries, regulatory bodies	• regulation and guidance • funding (for public institutions) • capacity building • (peer networking)	
	Professional organisations	• capacity building • peer networking	
Institutional	Senior management	• institutional backing • (peer networking)	• fostering an organisational culture that is supportive of teaching enhancement
	Quality assurance and academic development practitioners	• capacity building • peer networking	
	Academic staff	• individual buy-in • (peer networking)	

Overcoming funding constraints is essential but is not a solution in itself.... [D]eveloping adequate human resource capacity and transforming organisational culture are also key to enhancing teaching quality.

'We're actually trying to change people from wanting to teach students what they know how to teach, to teaching students what the students ought to be taught. Now that will require culture change.'

Director of quality assurance, Kenya