

SARUA Leadership Dialogue Series – Vol 1 Number 1 2009

# LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

for Higher Education in Southern Africa

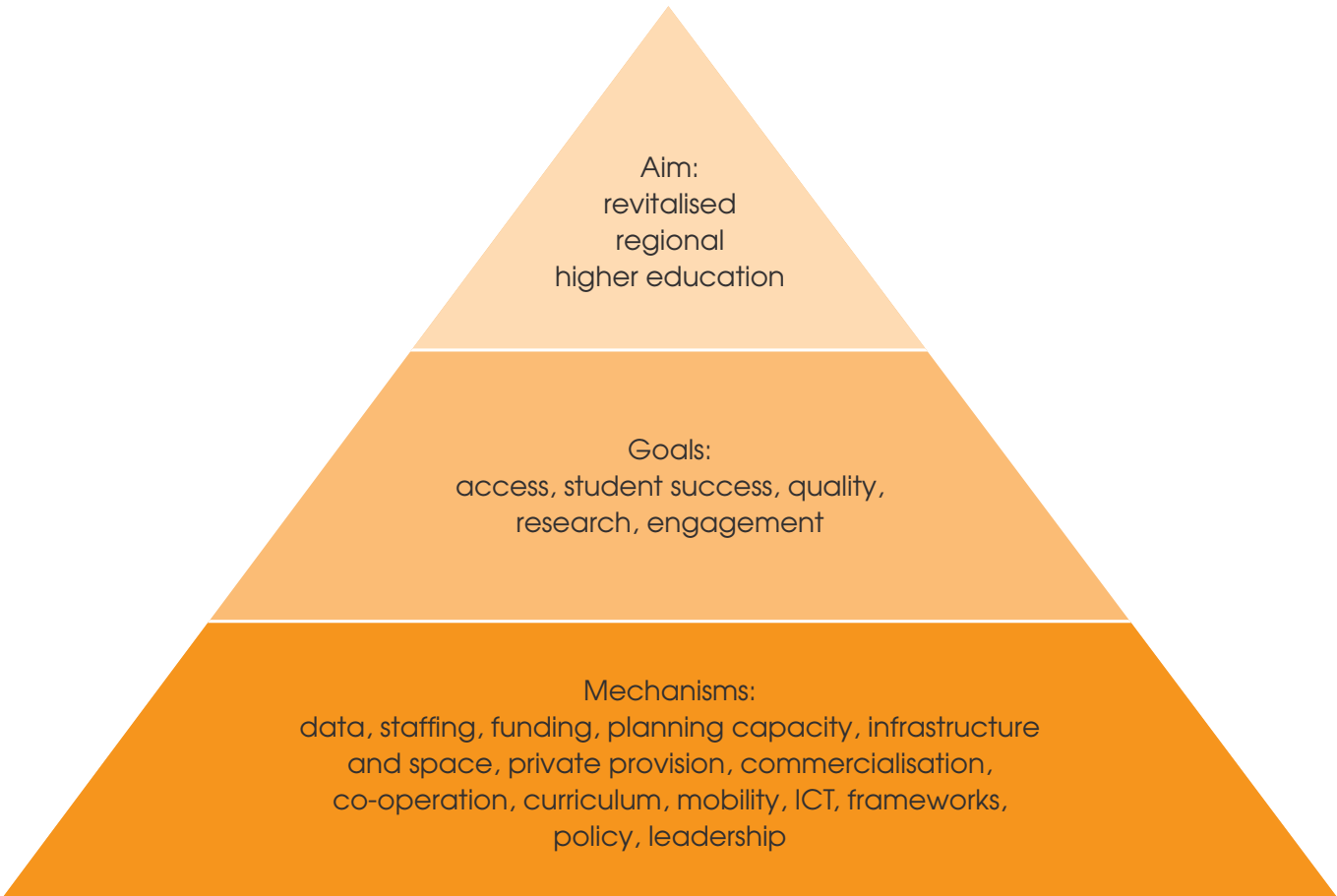


SARUA Leadership Dialogue Series – Vol 1 Number 1 2009

# LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

for Higher Education in Southern Africa

Series Editor: Piyushi Kotecha



Aim:  
revitalised  
regional  
higher education

Goals:  
access, student success, quality,  
research, engagement

Mechanisms:  
data, staffing, funding, planning capacity, infrastructure  
and space, private provision, commercialisation,  
co-operation, curriculum, mobility, ICT, frameworks,  
policy, leadership

System aims, goals and mechanisms for higher education in Southern Africa

# FOREWORD

S a SARUA' R a E a / a  
F a C / a H E a /  
R a a / A a

The *African Union Plan of Action* sums up the continental goal for higher education renewal this way:

*Complete revitalisation of higher education in Africa, with the emergence of strong and vibrant institutions profoundly engaged in fundamental and development-oriented research, teaching, community outreach and enrichment services to the lower levels of education; and functioning in an environment of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, within an overall framework of public accountability*<sup>1</sup>.

It would be fair to say that many aspects of revitalisation are presently being addressed by governments and higher education institutions in the region. Whether these correlate directly with aspects of the vision statement of the African Union is an important question that needs to be addressed at some time. Indeed, when one analyses the existing range and configuration of institutions in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, key questions arise relating to the historical and present function and purpose of higher education institutions. The African Union vision of a multi-pronged approach is, in fact, a vital one where higher education focuses not only on teaching but on development oriented research as well as community outreach and enrichment services at the other levels of education. Ideally, higher education institutions need to be functioning in an environment of academic freedom and institutional autonomy within an overall framework of public accountability.

The Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) research published in *Towards a Common Future: Higher Education in the SADC Region*<sup>2</sup> presents findings from the following studies:

- A Profile of Higher Education in the Region
- Higher Education Funding Frameworks in SADC
- The State of Public Science in the SADC Region
- University-Firm Interaction in the Region<sup>3</sup>

The research highlights a range of development areas not only directed at higher education institutions but also at the environment within which these higher education institutions function and towards which they are required to contribute. *This brief publication takes these issues forward by identifying, from the research conducted, twenty specific leadership challenges for higher education in the SADC region.*

It is important that we ensure that these findings are disseminated broadly and taken into account in planning for the region. SARUA believes that research can make for better governance, and better governance will in turn encourage more research. The role of research influencing policy can be strengthened by a meaningful and significant contribution to regional development by higher education. This is an intensive time-consuming task and requires the building of relationships, understanding and negotiation; along with the realisation that this influence is but one of numerous influences on policy-making and is easily tangled in the coalitions and contradictions of policy.

There are three main positive effects of research on policy, and they apply regardless of the context in which the research takes place:

- *One*, research can strengthen the institutional framework supporting policy-making by enhancing the policy community's collective ability to assess and communicate innovative ideas.
- *Two*, research can improve the intellectual frame work surrounding policy-making by introducing new ideas to the policy agenda, by ensuring that information comes to policy-makers in a form and language they can quickly grasp and use, and by fostering dialogue between researchers and decision makers, as well as providing new insight or information that can expand debate and decision.
- *And three*, research findings can improve the policy-process framework by helping to open and rationalise the procedures of legislating, administering and evaluating government policies and programmes.

<sup>1</sup> African Union (2006) Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015): Plan of Action, Addis Ababa: African Union, section 2.4, paragraph 42

<sup>2</sup> Kotecha, P. (ed) (2009) *Towards a Common Future: Higher Education in the SADC Region*, SARUA, Johannesburg ([www.SARUA.org](http://www.SARUA.org))

<sup>3</sup> Authors of these chapters, whose work is drawn upon in this document, are Neil Butcher et al, Pundy Pillay, Johann Mouton et al, Glenda Kruss and Il-haam Petersen.

We need to understand the intricate process of how research permeates into policy. The effects are not immediate but rather gradually filter through into the ideas of policy-makers. This understanding includes the identification of the communicators and corresponding channels, intended and unintended, which bring these findings to bear.

*At SARUA we want to ensure that we find Southern African answers to Southern African problems within a Southern African context.* It is of utmost importance that we formulate a unique response to the challenges we face and not merely duplicate global 'best practice'. It is of particular significance that higher education be viewed as having more than utilitarian purposes and outcomes because of its potentially broader impact on development – economic, social, political and cultural. This approach has been endorsed at the highest levels of continental and Southern African leadership, backed by formal protocols, plans and resource allocations to underpin its revitalisation.

In conclusion, I believe that SARUA has begun to develop a good understanding of the region politically, economically and socially, and through this research has begun to define the pressing challenges that exist in higher education. Our approach will continue to be one informed by an iterative relationship between evidence-based research, focused dialogues and subsequent analysis in publishable form in our new Leadership Dialogue Series. By embarking upon the first phase of this journey we aim to provide creative dissemination strategies of research findings, which in turn can inform priorities and interventions, and are moving towards the creation of a platform for a regional agenda for higher education.

P K a  
S E  
C E O , SARUA



Published by SARUA 2009  
 P O Box 662  
 WITS  
 2050  
 SOUTH AFRICA

ISBN: 978-0-9814099-6-2

SARUA is a not-for-profit leadership association of the heads of the public universities in the 15 countries of the SADC region. Its mission is to promote, strengthen and increase higher education, research and innovation through expanded inter-institutional collaboration and capacity building initiatives throughout the region. It promotes universities as major contributors towards building knowledge economies, national and regional socio-economic and cultural development, and for the eradication of poverty.

T a a / / /    a / a    N a M  
 / F /    A a .

AUTHORS : Pam Watson, Enver Motala and Piyushi Kotecha  
 SERIES EDITOR : Piyushi Kotecha  
 PUBLICATION MANAGER : Richard Henson  
 PRODUCTION : Gail Robbins: DGR Writing & Research cc  
 PROOFREADER : DGR Writing & Research cc  
 DESIGN and LAYOUT : Ryan Morris: Activism Brand Communication  
 PRINTING : Colorpress (pty) Ltd

The contents of this publication may be freely used and reproduced for non-profit purposes, provided full acknowledgement of the source is given. All rights reserved.

### STATISTICAL INFORMATION

Much of the statistical information presented in this document has been provided either by the relevant Ministries of Education or by the relevant institutions, in response to research questionnaires in a 2008 regional study conducted by SARUA. Between different countries there are some inconsistencies in the way statistics are collated and presented, for example, the manner in which institutions count student enrolments for headcount purposes. Authors in the original study did not attempt to compensate for or eliminate such differences, but simply provided the latest information supplied by the institutions themselves. The statistics in this booklet are drawn directly from the original study. Data provided by the institutions refers to the most recent year for which data were available. Although in most instances, the data was drawn from 2007, in some instances earlier data was provided, and the composite figures given in this document must therefore be read as an approximation.

This document draws extensively on the research performed by the authors of the original study *Towards a Common Future: Higher Education in SADC* (SARUA, 2009). The authors of the chapters in that document are as follows:

*A Profile of Higher Education in the Region:* Neil Butcher, Merridy Wilson-Strydom, Sarah Hoosen, Catherine MacDonald, Andrew Moore, Lindsay Barnes

*Higher Education Funding Frameworks in SADC:* Pundy Pillay

*The State of Public Science in the SADC Region:* Johann Mouton, Nelius Boshoff, Liezel de Waal, Simone Esau, Brighton Imbayarwo, Monique Ritter, Derick van Niekerk

*University-Firm Interaction in the Region:* Glenda Kruss, Il-haam Petersen

# CONTENTS

---

<b>FOREWORD:</b>	2
Situating SARUA's Research Endeavour and Findings within the Continental Higher Education Revitalisation Agenda	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	7
What this Document Contains	
<b>BACKGROUND:</b>	10
Higher Education in Southern Africa	
<b>LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA</b>	13
1. Data collection and availability	13
2. Access	14
3. Postgraduate registrations	15
4. Student success	15
5. Staffing	16
6. Funding	17
7. Planning capacity	19
8. Infrastructure and space	20
9. Private provision	20
10. Commercialisation and entrepreneurialism	21
11. Research development	22
12. Mobility	22
13. Quality	24
14. Qualification frameworks	25
15. Curriculum	26
16. Information and communication technologies (ICT)	26
17. Policy and planning	27
18. Engagement	29
19. Co-operation	31
20. Leadership	32
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	35
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	36
By the Chairperson of the SADC Ministers of Education and Minister of Education of the Republic of South Africa, the Honourable Minister Naledi Pandor at the SARUA Vice-Chancellor Leadership Dialogue Event, 2 April, 2009.	

## LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

### Figures :

Figure 1	: Gross enrolment ratios for tertiary education in SADC countries	10
Figure 2	: Total enrolment in public higher education in the SADC region	13
Figure 3	: Gender representation in the SADC student body	15
Figure 4	: Research output over time	23
Figure 5	: International Internet bandwidth per Internet user (bit/s)	28
Figure 6	: Extent of collaboration with public, academic and development organisations (perceptions ranking)	33

### Tables :

Table 1	: Number of students per major field of study	14
Table 2	: Regional overview of qualifications awarded	16
Table 3	: Academic and research staff in SADC universities	17
Table 4	: Sources of higher education funding as reported by higher education institutions	18
Table 5	: Summary of Ministries of Science and Technology and science policies in the SADC region	29

# INTRODUCTION

Against a context of renewed interest in higher education and in higher education's potential contribution to development, as well as regional and continental commitments to a process of co-operation in higher education, the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) commissioned a number of studies in 2008 designed to provide baseline information on higher education in the Southern African region. The results of these studies have been published in *Towards a Common Future: Higher Education in the SADC Region*<sup>4</sup>.

In April 2009, at a SARUA Leadership Dialogue event organised for the purpose, the results of these studies were presented to Vice-Chancellors from public institutions in the region, inviting them to use the opportunity to engage with the results of the research. The deliberations at the workshop highlighted a number of challenges that face higher education in the region, and that must be addressed if higher education is to improve its contribution to national and regional development. This document attempts to capture aspects of the debate and discussions that took place at the workshop while reflecting simultaneously on the implications of the research commissioned by SARUA.

The research is significant for a number of reasons and its value extends beyond the deliberations that took place at the workshop itself. It provides for the first time a fairly comprehensive perspective on the characteristics of the higher education system in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region; a base of credible data about the public higher education system as a whole, the features of the institutions that make up the system, the levels and efficacy of the support presently enjoyed by these institutions, if and how they relate to the private business sector and other quantitative and qualitative attributes of the system as a whole. In addition, the research also provides a useful compendium of country-based studies to enable a deeper study of the character of higher education in the constituent countries of SADC.

The research is efficacious because it is related to the issue of regional development. Regional development is writ large in the policy premises, protocols and pronouncements of SADC and its member states and is referred to on innumerable occasions by multi-lateral agencies and other participants having an interest in the development of the economic, social and political development of the region. The challenges of regional development are moreover associated with conceptions of regional integration and coherence and are related to the ability of the region as a whole (and the countries within it) to compete globally. Given the prevalence of strong regionally competitive blocs in many parts of the world, it is assumed that unless the countries of the Southern Africa Development Community too act in a concerted and collective way they will continue to remain marginal in the realm of international development. Not only that, but it is also feared that in fact the countries of the region will fall even further behind in their ability to provide for their societies and the citizens within them. The challenges faced by the region are both deep and diverse and require considered approaches and sustained interventions in addressing them. They concern questions about the scale of the regional economy relative to its competitors, inter and intra-regional conflict, terms of trade, migration, energy and food security, transport systems, disease control, political and social stability and the like. However, rationales for and means of regionalisation, as well as its milestones and objectives, need to be explored much more fully than has been done until now.

The ability to conceptualise approaches to these and other issues affecting the region and the development of sustainable strategies for them necessitates the production and use of credible research and knowledge. Only such knowledge can provide a basis for well thought out policy, realistic planning and strategic interventions. That is why an understanding of the characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of the higher education system is so important and forms a critical

<sup>4</sup> Kotecha, P. (ed) (2009) *Towards a Common Future: Higher Education in the SADC Region*, SARUA, Johannesburg ([www.SARUA.org](http://www.SARUA.org))



platform of information required to confront the challenges faced by the region. Such knowledge can and must enhance the ability of governments and other agencies to develop sustainable approaches to their activities and to plan their strategies and activities for both the immediate and longer-term.

The information available through SARUA's research provides a basis for meaningful engagements and conversations about education in particular and development more generally. It speaks to the relational possibilities between regional (and national) policy, planning and budgeting and the knowledge derived from the evidentiary analysis about the countries in the region and their institutions and systems. It can, used properly, provide a critical and evaluative perspective on the assumptions that drive the policy and planning done by governments and other agencies in the region. Such knowledge improves the possibilities for sustainable planning and successful outcomes.

It is hoped therefore that SARUA's (and other such) work will be used productively to support the ideas and practices of development and engender even more detailed and reflective enquiry about the societies of the region and their systems. Similarly SARUA anticipates and will plan for continued conversations among its membership about the implications of its research and how best to interpret its findings. It will also continue to engage with them to renew the base of information it now has and to add categories of information not presently captured, so that a deeper and enduring foundation for its analysis is laid. It is already clear to SARUA that more research needs to be done to support collaborations between its member institutions. Instances of such collaboration already exist and SARUA's research can enhance the possibilities and outcomes of this, widen its scope and amplify its beneficial purposes. The research and analysis now available also provides a basis for constructing both country-based and wider discussions among its member institutions and between these institutions and other parties with the objective

of stimulating dialogic engagements about the role of higher education in development. Through these dialogic processes it is hoped that longer term relationships are constructed with government, business enterprises and civil society more generally, and that the role of higher education can be appreciated and supported more fully.

Speaking more generally, it was not possible, given the scope of the work done to cover issues of context and history more fully. A deeper and more extensive analysis of the historical context in which the higher education system has evolved in the aftermath of colonialism and apartheid is necessary for a properly informed perspective about higher education. Texts speaking to the impact of structural adjustment programmes, the poor policy choices made by successive governments and the denudation of the resources available to higher education systems based on doctrinaire conceptions about trade-offs between higher education and basic education, abound. The impact of the successive policy regimes need to be explored more fully since such an exploration will yield important ideas about the origin of the challenges now facing the task of reinvigorating higher education in the region. And such an exploration will not be able to avoid the impact, equally, of the present arrangement of global systems of trade, finance, debt and other factors affecting educational systems. Similarly, knowing the prevailing context within which higher education functions in the countries of the region, the policy and bureaucratic environment by which it is circumscribed, the structure of internal labour markets, sectoral economic activity, the prevailing political and governance systems and issues of culture and tradition are as important to considered analysis as is baseline data. Understanding these issues require more complex and disaggregated analysis, and the development of perspectives informed by a wider array of competing and often contradictory impulses which seek prioritisation in the determinations of policy-makers and practitioners alike.

Many of these issues will be pursued more fully by SARUA in the years to come so that a more diverse, more contextual and fuller view of the higher education system and its role is provided. In this document we provide an analysis of the extant research as a building block towards the more enduring and extensive perspectives that will be generated in the future. SARUA is acutely aware of the need to deepen the scope of its research in the coming years, especially to cover many of the issues which the completed research was unable to explore in depth. Each of the areas referred to in the text that follows can be the subject of more detailed research and analysis, although, even now it is possible to speak meaningfully to some of the broader implications of the research findings.

## WHAT THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS

This document sets out these challenges in 20 key areas. The list is not exhaustive, nor does each dimension apply equally to all of the fifteen countries which make up the SADC region<sup>5</sup>. The list also cannot be read as an action plan, although each of these areas is one which does require attention. This is because the issues are not as distinct in practice as they may appear analytically and there are interconnections between all dimensions. Moreover, some areas may be logically prior to others, and some, like adequate financing, are essential to long-term improvement across all dimensions. The list should rather be read as a summary of the research findings and the debates which have already been held on these issues. Constructing a meaningful strategy in order to address these challenges will require further refinement, in some areas further research, and much engagement by all the key players. The contention of this document is that leadership at all levels will be central to overcoming these constraints.

The list of challenges is not exhaustive. The unprecedented changes that have recently taken place in the global environment have introduced new challenges which could not be adequately researched and analysed here, despite their considerable importance. However, the challenges identified show the amount of work

that is necessary in the region to build a strong and sustainable higher education system at a foundational level. The problems here are of a different scale and nature to those found elsewhere, and need to be reflected on carefully because of their contextual relevance.

The text of the speech given at the April 2009 SARUA Leadership Dialogue event by the Chairperson of the SADC Ministers of Education and Minister of Education of the Republic of South Africa, the Honourable Minister Naledi Pandor, is included at the end of this document.

<sup>5</sup> Seychelles does not have a higher education institution, and so does not appear in the data cited.

# BACKGROUND

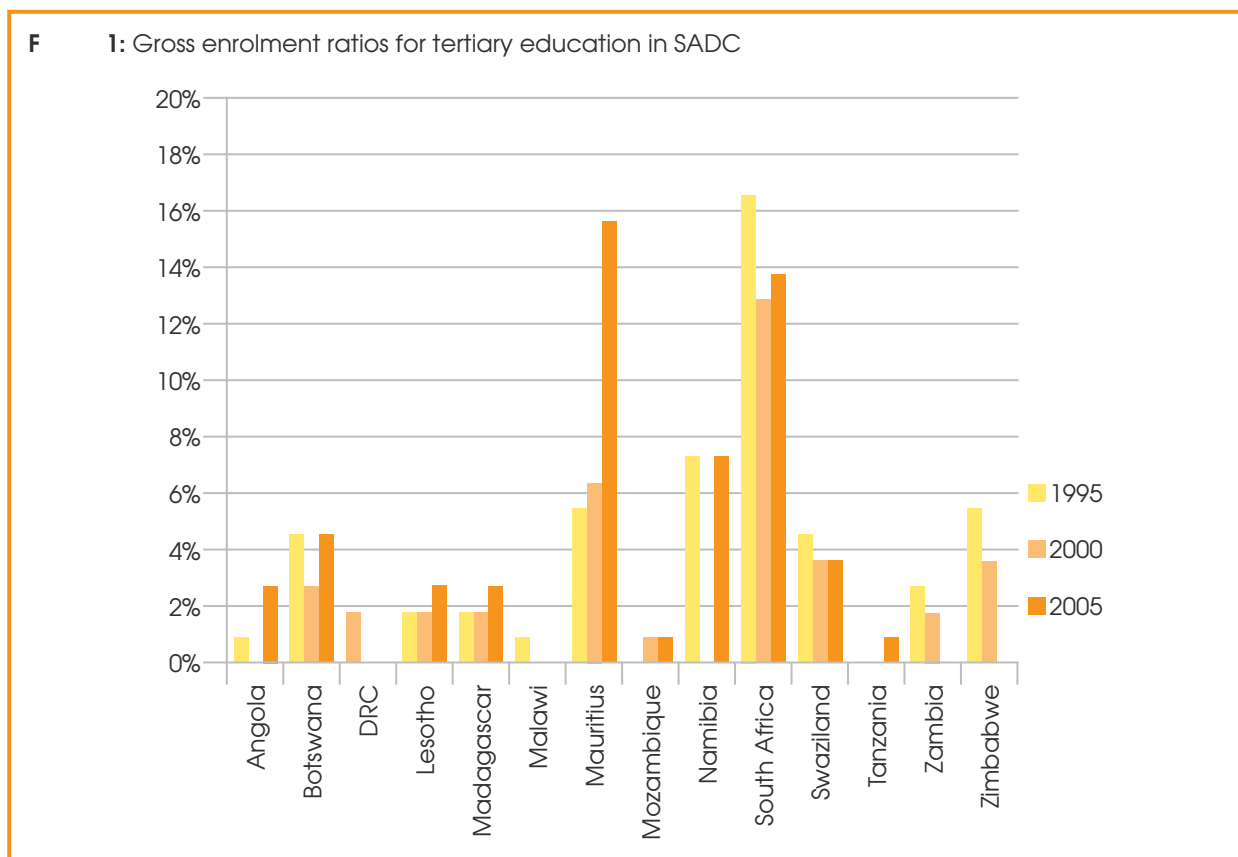
## HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) region comprises 15 countries, which reflect a wide variety of cultures, and uneven economic and social development trajectories. The region suffers from a high degree of poverty, and from the worst HIV/AIDS infection rates in the world. In addition, challenges include high infant mortality rates, low life expectancies, low literacy rates, low gross domestic products, low levels of technology development, and low levels of education participation. The different countries in the region have different histories, particularly deriving from their colonial pasts, and different experiences, traditions, languages, and political forms.

There are a total of 66 public universities, 119 publically-funded polytechnics or colleges, and 178 private universities or colleges in the Southern African region. Twenty-three of the public universities are in South Africa, which also comprises 70 percent of the overall enrolment in the region.

Five of the SADC countries (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland) have a single public university. In other countries the number of institutions range from two (Malawi and Mauritius) to nine (Zimbabwe). Zambia has three, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Mozambique have four, Madagascar has six and Tanzania has eight. Private higher education institutions outnumber public institutions in all SADC countries, but the majority of enrolment is at public institutions. Seventy-two percent of all enrolment is in contact study (with 28 percent via distance).

The gross tertiary enrolment ratios of SADC countries are among the lowest in the world. These ratios range from 1 to 17 percent (see Figure 1), however, most countries fall into the 2 – 4 percent range. Only Mauritius and South Africa have tertiary gross enrolment rates of above 8 percent. In comparison, the world mean on this statistic for lower and middle-income countries currently stands at 19 percent.



<sup>4</sup> For a detailed account of the countries that make up this region, see Chapter 2 of *Towards a Common Future: Higher Education in the SADC Region* (SARUA, 2009, see footnote 2).

The notion of regional co-operation in higher education in Africa is not a new one, with the earliest agreement on the topic dating back to the 1981 Arusha Convention<sup>7</sup>. The SADC Protocol on Education<sup>8</sup>, signed in 1997, has an entire section devoted to co-operation in higher education, as well as a section relating to co-operation in research and development. More recently, the African Union's Harmonisation Policy for Higher Education<sup>9</sup> sets the same goals. However, not much progress has been made, to date, on any of these policy commitments, despite there being little quarrel with the underlying rationale of co-operation for system development and enhancement. Particularly in countries where higher education is limited, regional co-operation could be a valuable aid at many levels. Combating isolation and developing a community of peers are probably the most important of these. But this co-operation is made difficult by different systems, a lack of data, and a lack of planning capacity, as well as by restrictions on movement in the region, and differing national priorities. The issue of regionalisation itself, and what this might mean for national systems of higher education, is still relatively unexplored. How political regionalisation will impact on higher education, and conversely, how higher education can benefit from regional co-operation, irrespective of the political domain, needs further debate.

Following years of neglect, higher education in Africa has recently been given a boost by the reversal of policies by major multi-lateral agencies and donors who are now emphasising the role that higher education can play in regional development. There is a need to use this opportunity to work towards the revitalisation of higher education in Southern Africa, and to develop our systems so that they can contribute to regional upliftment more broadly.

There is much to be done, however, on a range of interrelated issues. The challenges identified in this document are:

1. Data collection and availability
2. Access
3. Postgraduate registrations
4. Student success
5. Staffing
6. Funding
7. Planning capacity
8. Infrastructure and space
9. Private provision
10. Commercialisation and entrepreneurialism
11. Research development
12. Mobility
13. Quality
14. Qualification frameworks
15. Curriculum
16. Information and communication technologies (ICT)
17. Policy and planning
18. Engagement
19. Co-operation
20. Leadership

<sup>7</sup> Arusha Convention on the recognition of qualifications in Higher Education in Africa (5 December, 1981). Retrieved on 20 August 2007 from [http://www.col.org/colweb/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/docs/mindafviii\\_ArushaConv.pdf](http://www.col.org/colweb/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/docs/mindafviii_ArushaConv.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> SADC: Protocol on Education and Training (1997). Retrieved on 8 August 2007 from [http://www.sadc.int/english/documents/legal/protocols/education\\_and\\_training.php](http://www.sadc.int/english/documents/legal/protocols/education_and_training.php)

<sup>9</sup> African Union (2007): Harmonisation of Higher Education Programmes in Africa: A Strategy for the African Union. Retrieved on 20 August 2007 from <http://www.africa-union.org/root/ua/Conferences/2007/aout/HRST/06-10%20aout/Doc/English/AU-EXP-EDUC-2-III-Harmoniz%20Strategy%20for%20AU,part%20two.doc>

There are many possible ways of ordering these dimensions, each of which may be differently generative. The triangle portrayed on the title page of this document ranks the challenges according to higher education system aims, goals and means. The diagram below shows the same challenges listed according to level of responsibility (regional, national or institutional). This document presents the issues proceeding from the micro to the more macro challenges. However, policies and practices on each of these dimensions affect those at other levels. There is an interconnectedness of these issues which adds complexity to the picture.

The document focuses on challenges, and as such may be perceived to paint a negative picture of higher education in the region. Yet there are clear indications that change is occurring. Student numbers are increasing throughout the region. Research output, although diminishing in world-comparative terms, has also increased dramatically. Institutional contributions towards national development efforts have also shown growth.

The countries covered in this study have different histories, and provide different contexts for higher education. There is a wide range of practices on all dimensions. In particular, differences can be found in the forms of higher education offerings, and in governance relations for higher education. However, a commonality between these systems is the need for higher education to respond to the development challenges of the nation. Although universities in the industrialised world are increasingly required to respond to the economic demands of their countries, very often in these instances, it is the translation of activities to commercial ends that is required. In Southern Africa, as elsewhere in the developing world, the focus is less on the commercial aspects, and more on the developmental aspects of knowledge, innovation and application. Yet in order to be able to perform this role, higher education systems themselves need development. It is in this context that the twenty challenges identified in this document are raised.

#### Higher education leadership challenges in the SADC region

Regional level	No consistent terminology; lack of comparable data; lack of systematic co-operation initiatives; diverse forms of qualifications and governance mechanisms; different policies; different frameworks; insufficient collaboration; different language contexts; need for increased mobility
National level	Absence of funding and appropriate funding mechanisms (e.g. no formula for allocation or earmarked funds); poor ICT infrastructure; lack of planning capacity; lack of policy and regulatory capacity; science systems
Institutional level	Capacity development needed at all levels; student access; student success; postgraduate enrolment; staff attraction; retention and development; research development; community engagement; infrastructure and resourcing; curriculum

# LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

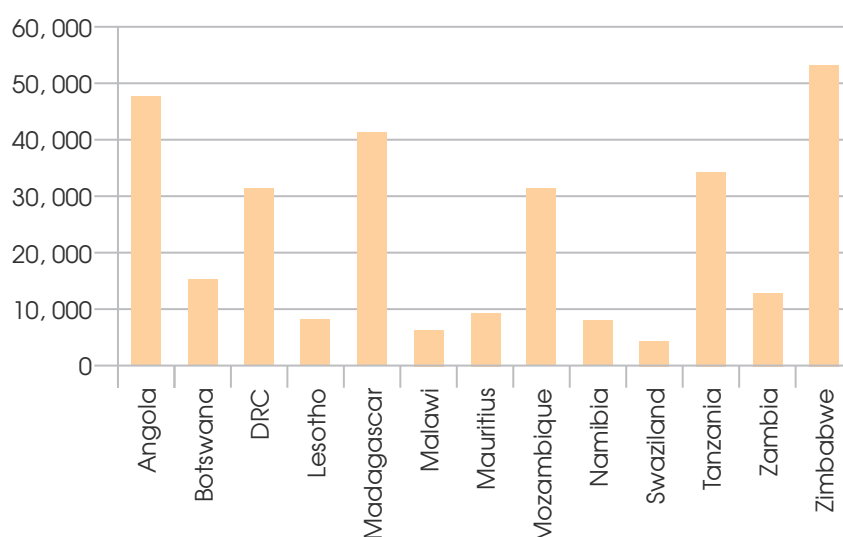
## 1. DATA COLLECTION AND AVAILABILITY

There is an acknowledged lack of data available on higher education in the SADC region. Data is not only unavailable at regional level, but, very often, is not easily available at national level also<sup>10</sup>. Accurate and comparable data is essential for system planning, for understanding where capacity lies and where it is lacking, for research, and for collaboration efforts. In the region there is a need to align definitions, and to begin the process of setting in place compatible national and regional data collection systems. Educational data needs to include student registrations per field of study, student graduations, staffing, and research outputs. Funding data and planning data would also be useful. Some data on higher education in the region is available through global agencies, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

However, the figures available from international agencies tend not to include detailed information. The SARUA study has provided the most recent data available for the region, and on the whole, it seems that high-level figures are fairly consistent between the different sources. It is recognised though that the SARUA data will soon be dated, and it is important that data of this nature is gathered regularly.

Collecting, storing and manipulating reliable data is vital to the development of planning capacity. There have been attempts in SADC to develop systems for data collection, and countries have been working to create information systems with assistance from one another. Yet, although there has been broad agreement to the principle of regional data collection, discussions and activities have faltered.

**F 2: Total enrolment in public higher education in the SADC region excluding South Africa**



(Note that enrolment in South Africa is at 746 538 students.)

<sup>10</sup> The SARUA research has shown the difficulty of getting accurate data from the region. The SARUA studies used a variety of methods to obtain the information necessary to the study. The Profile Study, in particular, relied on submissions from both institutions and ministries. Responses from the two sources were cross-checked and, where differences were evident, were referred back for clarification. Final data obtained were sent back to initial respondents for verification. Yet despite this thorough process, and the care taken by researchers, questions have been raised regarding some of the data. Many of these questions undoubtedly stem from the use of different terminology in the region: what constitutes higher education or tertiary education is not uniform through out the fifteen countries of the SADC region and regional colleges, for example, were not included in the study. Nonetheless, the study provides the first attempt to obtain these numbers directly from the institutions in the region and is thus an important initial attempt to map out higher education provision in the region.

## 2. ACCESS

The SARUA research shows that there are just over a million students registered for higher education in SADC countries (see Table 1). Of this enrolment 75 percent is in South Africa. Enrolment figures per 100 000 of the population show South Africa at 1.6, Mauritius at 1.5, and all other SADC countries below 1, with Angola, Mozambique and Tanzania recording the lowest figures.

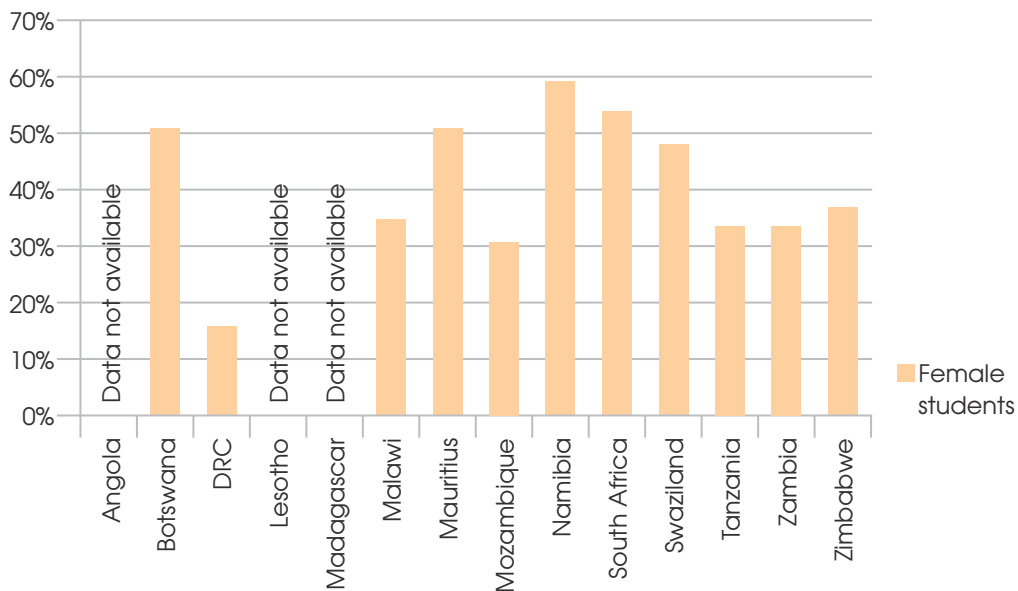
The figures show that student access is currently too low throughout the region. This is particularly true in scarce skill areas: overall figures for science, engineering and technology registrations are low in comparison with business, management and law, and humanities and the social sciences.

There are critical shortages in areas such as health sciences, engineering, and teacher education. Although registration numbers in the humanities and social sciences are proportionately the highest in the region, too few of these students proceed through to postgraduate study. Gender representivity in the student body is skewed: in the full SADC region female students represent 49.9 percent of the total registrations (see Figure 3). However, this overall figure is weighted by the high number of students in South Africa. In approximately half of the SADC countries, female registrations are considerably below this level. Gender disparities are greatest in the science, engineering and technology field, and in post-graduate study.

**Table 1:** Number of students per major field of study

Major field of study	Level of study					
	Under-graduate degrees/diplomas	Post-graduate diplomas	Master's degrees	Doctoral degrees	Other	Total
Science, engineering and technology	202 546	7 139				
Business, management and law	284 469					
Humanities and social sciences	344 948	23 724	19 454	4 663	17 513	410 302
Health sciences	61 201	3 857	7 550	909	3 965	77 482 (7%)
Other						
Total						
Total not including South Africa						

**F 3: Gender representation in the SADC student body**



Although overall registration statistics remain low, most countries in Southern Africa have recorded a large growth in enrolment in the past decade. However, this increase has occurred without a commensurate increase in resourcing. This is placing a huge constraint on institutional capacity and is impacting on the quality of provision. Yet, in some countries, finance ministers themselves are pushing for increased student numbers. Sufficient funding for increased access is crucial to ensuring student success, and the two dimensions cannot be seen independently.

### 3. POSTGRADUATE REGISTRATIONS

There are a total of 57 676 masters and 10 587 doctoral registrations in the SADC region, in the most recent year for which data was available (these figures drop to 16 009 masters and 685 doctoral registrations if South Africa is excluded). Postgraduate registrations, and in particular PhD registration numbers, are thus critically low throughout much of the region. This has a profound impact on the high level skills available to

society and the economy nationally and regionally, and, as importantly, raises concerns regarding the renewal of higher education itself.

The low registrations are undoubtedly a function of staff shortages and the resulting lack of qualified supervisors in the region, as well as of the lack of infrastructure and resources for research. Developing capacity for postgraduate training and encouraging registrations at this level must be a priority of the region. This is a challenge that will require sustained and long-term development.

### 4. STUDENT SUCCESS

The SARUA research gives graduation numbers, by field and level of study, in the most recent year for which data was available. This figures show low overall graduation numbers, particularly at postgraduate level. The figures show a total of 180 264 degrees awarded, of which 1 326 were at doctoral level (these figures drop to 49 914 degrees awarded, of which 143 were at doctoral level if South Africa is excluded).



**Table 2:** Regional overview of qualifications awarded (most recent year for which data was available)

As a proportion of registration numbers, the success rates<sup>11</sup> for the region are at 15 percent for undergraduate programmes, 40 percent for postgraduate diplomas, 20 percent for master's degrees and 13 percent for doctoral degrees. Although this is currently the only available indicator of student output success, this measure is not particularly useful, as it does not take into account the length of the different programmes, and is highly susceptible to changes in student registration numbers. Ultimately, it will be necessary to gather longitudinal data on student throughput in order to judge the success of the system.

Although there is no conclusive evidence regarding teaching and learning efficiency, there is an acknowledged need to improve the number of graduate outputs, and the throughputs of individual degrees. Student support mechanisms are crucial to this achievement.

There is a need also to ensure that there is a match between outputs and economic needs:

despite low levels of tertiary provision, graduate unemployment is evident in some countries. Graduate production for absorption into the economy, as well as for economic stimulation, is necessary.

## 5. STAFFING

There is a critical shortage of appropriately qualified staff throughout the region. The total figures show 32 474 academic and research staff in the region (13 621 outside of South Africa). This situation derives primarily from a lack of resourcing: poor working conditions (low remuneration, high administrative loads, high teaching loads, and the need to supplement salaries through additional work) and lack of facilities for high level research. This is exacerbated both by the impact of brain drain within and out of the region, and the impact of HIV/AIDS. As a result, in some countries, the staff body is reported to be ageing and top-

**Table 3: Academic and Research Staff in SADC Universities**

Major field of study	Gender breakdown		Level of study					Total academic and research staff
	Female (%)	Male (%)	Under-graduate degrees/diplomas	Post-graduate diplomas	Master's degrees	Doctoral degrees	Other	
Science, engineering and technology	25.2	74.8	1 623	823	2 908	3 487	834	9 675 (34%)
Business, management and law	34.8	65.2	834	562	1 633	922	915	4 866 (17%)
Humanities and social sciences	38.3	61.7	915	655	2 363	2 623	1 130	7 686 (27%)
Health sciences	46.5	53.5	1 130	376	1 275	975	719	4 475 (19%)
Other	50.4	49.6	719	106	481	434	0	1 740 (3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>39.0</b>	<b>61.0</b>	<b>5 221 (18%)</b>	<b>2 522 (9%)</b>	<b>8 660 (30%)</b>	<b>8 441 (30%)</b>	<b>3 598 (13%)</b>	<b>28 442</b>
Total not including South Africa	24.5	75.5	2 490	590	3 803	3 747	1 627	13 621

concern. In many countries, there is a reported over-reliance on part-time and temporary staff.

Currently, only 26 percent of the academic and research staff in the region hold PhD degrees. This places limits on research capacity and the ability to teach at postgraduate level. Gender imbalances in staffing are apparent, particularly at higher levels of the academic hierarchy. Staff shortages are reported in all areas, but are felt to be particularly of concern in the field of science, engineering and technology<sup>12</sup>.

The attraction and retention of highly qualified and experienced staff is a priority for the region, but is unlikely to occur in the absence of resources. The development of existing staff must take priority. On the positive side, mechanisms for this development are in place in many institutions. These could be enhanced by means of co-operative inter-institutional staff development initiatives, exchanges and qualification upgrading schemes. Regional mechanisms for staff mobility

could aid in preventing the loss of expertise currently associated with brain drain. At institutional level, policy consideration needs also to be given to the appropriate use and development of part-time and contract staff.

## 6. FUNDING

Higher education in the Southern African region has suffered from historical underfunding. Structural adjustment policies, and the influence of international agencies, favoured an emphasis on primary education during the 1980s and 1990s. Although these policies have been reversed in the last decade, evidence shows that higher education systems are still facing serious financial constraints, are severely under-resourced and are not capable of fulfilling the new expectations which are being placed upon them. As a compounding factor, student numbers are increasing everywhere, without a commensurate increase in resourcing. Quality, which is dependent on

<sup>12</sup> Although actual staff numbers in this field appear high, these numbers include technical staff and related non-teaching staff.

**Table 4:** Sources of higher education funding as reported by higher education institutions

Country	Sources of funding (%)				
	Student fees	Government subsidy	Donations	Loans	Other
Angola	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Botswana	26,0	74,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
DRC	48,3	33,3	4,5	0,0	0,0
Lesotho	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
Madagascar	19,6	75,4	0,2	0,2	3,8
Malawi	7,7	91,3	0,5	0,0	0,5
Mauritius	58,5	39,5	0,0	0,0	2,0
Mozambique	1,3	88,5	0,5	0,0	10,8
Namibia	21,0	62,0	13,0	0,0	4,0
South Africa	29,3	46,0	2,6	3,4	13,9
Swaziland	20,0	66,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Tanzania	18,9	62,6	14,1	0,6	3,0
Zambia	31,5	62,0	0,0	0,0	6,5
Zimbabwe	12,4	82,4	0,2	1,3	4,2
Regional average	24,6	65,3	3,0	0,5	4,1

N<sup>2</sup> : Not all rows total 100 percent. However, data is reported as given by institutions.

resources and particularly on the ability to attract and retain suitable staff, has suffered as a consequence. Higher education is increasingly being looked at to play a role in national and regional development. Yet insufficient resources impact on its ability to do so.

The SARUA research shows that, in general, governments recognise the need to increase higher education funding. However, public commitment to higher education spending in SADC countries varies, both in terms of the proportion of national income and of the budget. Where expenditure is low, this tends to be because educational expenditure is low generally, because schooling is a priority, or because there is inter-sectoral competition for resources. Higher education tends to be a low priority for funds and departments of higher education within Ministries of Education tend to be weak. Even where commitment is high, since government budgets in the region are small, the

level of resourcing for higher education is inadequate. There have been significant increases in donor funding for higher education in some countries (e.g. Mozambique and Tanzania), but this support tends to be ad hoc rather than systematic, and raises questions regarding sustainability.

There are a wide range of national funding arrangements in SADC countries, from systems where little government support is provided (e.g. DRC), to those which are fully funded (e.g. Zambia). The forms of funding in use also differ, and range from student grants or loans, to direct institutional subsidy. Although alternate sources of income are being explored, most universities remain heavily dependent on government funding (for more than 60 percent of their income in nine of the twelve countries for which data was available, see table 4). In general, student fees are the only other significant contributor to

institutional funds, and in many instances this is indirectly funded by government through student grants. Donations, loans and third-stream funding together account for less than 10 percent of institutional funds in all except four countries, with no country exceeding 20 percent.

Since government funding to higher education is unlikely to substantially improve in the short term, some diversification of income sources is necessary. Responses include the introduction of cost-sharing mechanisms (fees, privatisation and, in some cases, dual-track provision), as well as plans for increasing commercial and fund-raising activities. At this stage, however, commercialisation of activities is not a large feature of Southern African universities, and few institutions report that support from business and industry is part of their funding strategy. The introduction and expansion of the private higher education sector is another response to the challenge.

In many countries in the SADC region higher education has, since independence and as part of the national project, been made available cost-free to students on the basis of government grants or loans (this is not the case in the Francophone countries). This model of funding has limited access to higher education, has proved to be inequitable, and is increasingly becoming unsustainable. In recent years, some countries have considered the introduction of direct fees to students, but plans to do this have been met by student resistance and protest. Fear of the political implications of fee introduction, in some cases, has delayed the debate. On the other hand, an economic crisis, such as that seen in Zimbabwe, can lead to reform which goes beyond the immediate circumstances that led to its adoption.

In some countries, student loans are offered for fee payment. Loans are seen as a mechanism to increase equity, by providing financing to students who do not have the necessary funds. However, in most instances in the region, these loan schemes do not run with effective loan recovery schemes. Experiences in South Africa and Kenya show that successful loan schemes have some necessary pre-conditions, such as an

efficient tax system through which loan recovery can be implemented. Other successful strategies have included the Youth Service scheme which used to operate in Botswana, through which graduates were ensured of employment, and through which debts could be repaid. Unfortunately, this scheme is no longer operating, and high levels of graduate unemployment mitigate against effective debt collection strategies. Student mobility is another barrier to effective loan recovery, as there are no current international agreements with regard to student loans, and it is difficult to recover loans from students outside the country.

The SARUA research has identified a number of financing to

efficiency at institutional level. Increased predictability of revenue, the promotion of institutional autonomy within a framework of accountability, and in-built incentives for effectiveness may all result. In this regard, the development of capacity with regard to the management of higher education financing is crucial, at both ministerial and institutional level, and needs further attention. It is particularly important to ensure adequate funding for increasing higher education student numbers. The likely impact of the global economic meltdown on higher education institutions must also be considered.

In most countries, links between higher education funding and national development objectives tend not to be explicit. Higher education is rarely mentioned in national poverty reduction strategy papers, and is thus not included in national aid strategies. This limits the funding available to higher education, and results in a non-alignment between country development plans and higher education plans.

It is clear that that greater planning capacity is necessary in the region. This will require developing understandings of higher education's potential role in development, and a need to investigate targeted incentives and schemes to strengthen the link between higher education and national development.

## 8. INFRASTRUCTURE AND SPACE

Infrastructure availability and quality is fundamentally connected to funding. Although no regional infrastructure audit has been conducted, it is reported that there are severe infrastructure constraints in most institutions in Southern Africa. These constraints affect capacity for both teaching and research. Teaching effectiveness is limited by inadequate facilities, laboratory equipment and computing infrastructure. Student access is limited due to insufficient classrooms or accommodation. Infrastructure for research is of critical importance: lack of this infrastructure may be a primary contributor to the brain drain of scientists.

There are both inter and intra-country differences in infrastructure constraints. In South Africa, for example, rural institutions face far greater problems with regard to infrastructure than do their urban counterparts. It may be useful to investi-

gate infrastructure capacity and constraints in the region's universities in order to recommend strategies in this regard. On a positive note, however, the past few years have seen a number of new institutions, campuses and facilities being opened in the region.

## 9. PRIVATE PROVISION

Private provision is one possible means of addressing the capacity constraints in higher education, and the sector has been rapidly growing in Southern African countries. There is a general lack of data regarding this provision. The SARUA research shows that in most countries private institutions outnumber public institutions, although it appears that the number of students in the public sector is greater than that in the private sector.

Private provision in many countries is on a strictly fee-paying basis and attracts those students who are unable to gain access to the public sector, very often because they have not had the benefit of the best schooling. This raises concerns regarding equity of access and funding in the sector. There is a need to better understand the extent and form of private provision in the region in order to adequately complete the big-picture profile of higher education.

In many countries the regulatory frameworks to effectively monitor both local and overseas private providers are absent. Concerns have been raised regarding the extent to which these providers are serving the skill needs of the country, since emphasis in the private sector tends to be placed on less expensive tuition programmes. Concerns have also been raised regarding the quality of private provision. Quality assurance mechanisms are essential for optimising the value of private provision. Protection also has to be created in systems where international providers are running on a for-profit basis, and could withdraw at any stage, and the long-term sustainability of these institutions must be examined.

A particular form of private provision which has emerged in Africa is the semi-privatisation of public sector institutions. Effectively, institutions offer a dual-track teaching system, with government-sponsored students taught in regular

classes, and a second stream of private, fee-paying students taught, usually in evening classes. This model provides a source of income which institutions need, and is viewed very positively in some sectors. However, the model has implications for the quality of 'core business', and there is a growing sense that the dual path has not contributed positively to institutional development. East African examples show the impact that this can have on the core functions of an institution<sup>14</sup>. Teachers overloaded by teaching both streams (and supplementing their income while doing so) are less likely to be able to fulfil their research roles. Fee-paying streams also, very often, have a more vocational focus than traditional generic degrees (as this is what students are prepared to pay for), which may have implications in terms of what is being taught, and the reduction of university functions to a labour market production role.

## 10. COMMERCIALISATION AND ENTREPRENEURIALISM

In the SADC region, as elsewhere in the world, a lack of adequate funding is driving institutions, and the individuals within them, to seek to supplement their income. The commercialisation of university activities takes a number of forms, which may include teaching arrangements, contract research, or the commercialisation of research application activities. There are benefits to such activities that can feed back into core institutional activities: teaching of short courses in new content areas, for example, may lead to the development of new fields of study. Collaboration with industry can aid universities, not only in supplementing their income by tapping into private sector funding, but also in ensuring the relevance of their activities and their contributions to national development. There is a pivotal relationship in this regard between funding, collaboration and commercialisation activities.

The Zimbabwean situation provides an interesting case study of this: during Rhodesian times, government funded minimally and there was a lot of collaboration between university professors and staff and the mining industry, agriculture and other aspects of the economy. After independence the funding was centralised and almost entirely from government. Even students were funded and the tradition of collaboration with industry which had been generated out of necessity almost disappeared. The financial crisis in Zimbabwe has, however, led to a change, and collaborative activities are re-emerging. These are not limited to funding, but also derive from firms seeking knowledge generated by universities.

There are cautions that need to be borne in mind in commercialisation endeavours, and these activities should not be allowed to happen at the expense of the core academic mission. Concerns with regard to teaching would include that financial considerations not be allowed to outweigh quality concerns (numbers of students admitted, capacity of teachers to take on additional teaching at the expense of research etc.). On the research front, unregulated commercial activities may constrain publication rates, which would ultimately further devalue Southern African higher education systems in world comparative terms. In many systems, consultancy activities on the part of academics, although important from the perspective of knowledge production and development, may threaten the attention that needs to be paid to core activities.

International models of commercialisation and institutional entrepreneurialism, which rely on highly competitive forms of engagement with industry, are generally not appropriate in Southern Africa. Cross-border for-profit operations, for example, contribute little to regional upliftment. University businesses or incubators may be appropriate

<sup>14</sup>Mamdani, M. (2009) *Scholars in the Marketplace: The Dilemmas of Neo-Liberal Reform at Makerere University 1989 – 2005*, HSRC Press: Cape Town

in certain contexts, and may contribute to institutional finances, but may detract from other institutional responsibilities. While universities should find means of being enterprising or innovative in the broader sense of engaging with firms, local small-scale industries and the community, in the African scenario, human and economic development cannot be separated. Much of this is about finding the right balance between engagement, the need to supplement income, and pure commercial interests. Proper planning for these activities, moreover, should ensure that the benefits contribute at the institutional, and not just individual, level.

## 11. RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

Research output in the region is low and has been identified as a major challenge by Ministries of Education and universities. Data, produced on the basis of journal articles published in ISI Web of Science and Medline, shows that 79 percent of research output in the region comes from South Africa. South Africa's output in terms of articles per million of the population stands at 119.3 on 2007 figures. Botswana is a close second at 95.5. No other country has figures on this indicator above 40. Although the majority of countries in the region have increased their output in absolute terms in the period since 1990 (in seven cases by 100 percent or more, see Figure 4), a small number have not managed to achieve this. Moreover, the increase in the number of publications for the region as a whole is not keeping pace with world research growth figures. The low numbers of post-graduate students in the region raises concerns also with regard to the development of research capacity. The ability of Southern Africa to participate in the global 'knowledge economy' is threatened as a result.

Finding means of improving data collection with regard to research outputs is important, since the current reliance, in institutions, on self-reporting by researchers, appears to have limited response. In addition, work conducted with colleagues in the North is frequently not captured as emanating from the South.

Access to research conducted in the region, by libraries and other researchers in the region, is reported to be low. In part, this is due to the excessive costs associated with journal purchasing, which are beyond the financial capacity of many of the region's institutional libraries. In part also, this is due to the fact that there are limited publication opportunities within the region for local researchers: research conducted on these shores tends to get dispersed, rather than collected in a form which would make it valuable to other researchers in the region. In addition, much research conducted here remains unpublished: development research in particular tends to be released only as non-peer reviewed research reports, rather than as research which is 'counted' in world ranking schemes.

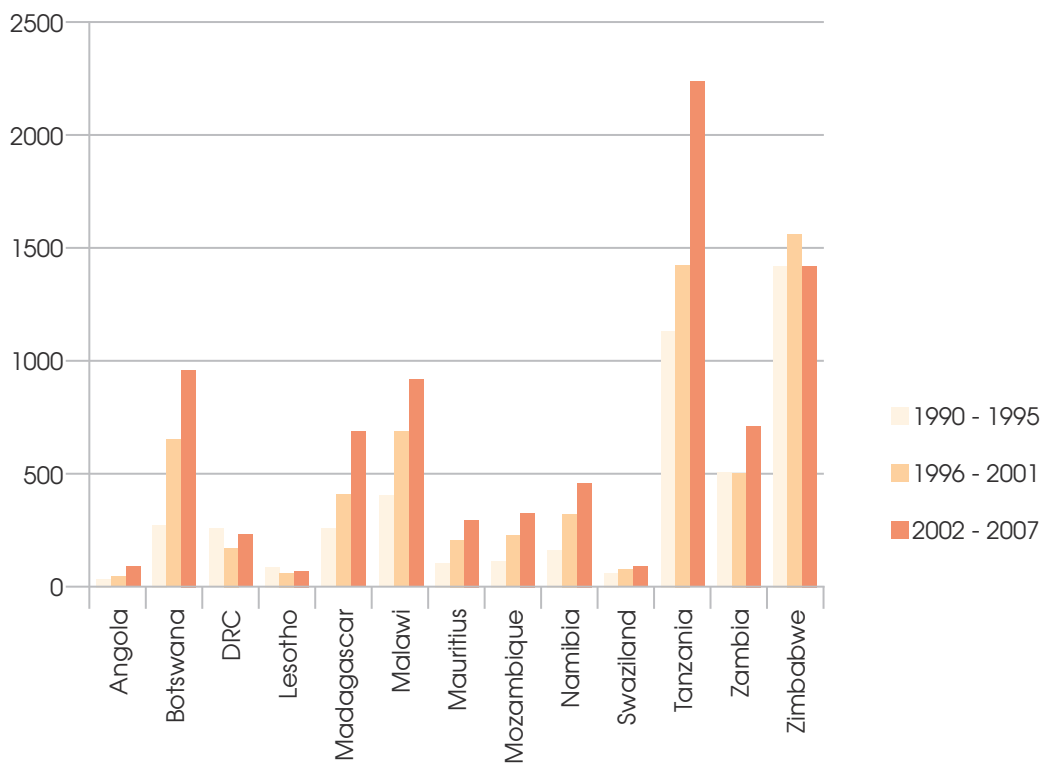
In order to augment the important gains made on this dimension, it is evident that there is a need for research capacity development at all levels in the region, including governance, institutional research management, funding, and staff capacity. At regional level, recommendations include finding mechanisms to improve intra-regional collaboration, such as collaborative networks and specialist centres. There are a number of actors already engaged in research capacity development: it may be useful to conduct a mapping exercise of all of these initiatives. It is important also to develop a regional knowledge base of scientific projects and scholars in the SADC region.

## 12. MOBILITY

Staff and student mobility within the region is seen as key to the achievement of many of the goals relating to the development of regional higher education.

Firstly, it is seen as a means for sharing existing capacity in the region. This is important particularly where the capacity to teach and research in a particular field is not available in a particular country. It is a long-standing practice in some SADC countries, to send students for training elsewhere in or out of the region. However, without exception, the institutions of all countries in the

**F 4: Research output over time**



(Note: South Africa not included here. Its research output went from 22 515 units in 1990 – 1995; and to 29 225 in 2002 – 2007, an increase of 30 percent).

region are over-extended, with little or no spare capacity, and too much reliance should not be placed on mobility as a tool to address the resource constraints of individual countries.

Secondly, the argument has been made that this is a means to reduce duplication in teaching programmes, and thus costs in certain disciplinary areas. This may be a possibility with regard to the running of certain high-cost research programmes. However, evidence shows that teaching capacity throughout the region can, if anything, be characterised as an under-supply, rather than over-supply. The possibility of the large-scale reduction of teaching costs through elimination of duplicate programmes is thus not feasible.

Developing a regional community of scholars is a much stronger rationale for the promotion of mobility. This can be achieved through staff exchange programmes and visits. This could provide communities of support for teachers and researchers in particular disciplinary fields where capacity is low, and may provide a means for maximising the use of existing expertise. Developing a regional identity and promoting cultural understandings are other potential benefits. Finally, as has been shown in the European ERASMUS programme<sup>15</sup>, mobility can act as quality improvement catalyst for the system.

There are a number of constraints currently acting on student and staff mobility in the region. These

<sup>15</sup> European Commission (December, 2008), The Impact of ERASMUS on European Higher Education: Quality, Openness and Internationalisation, DG EAC/33/2007

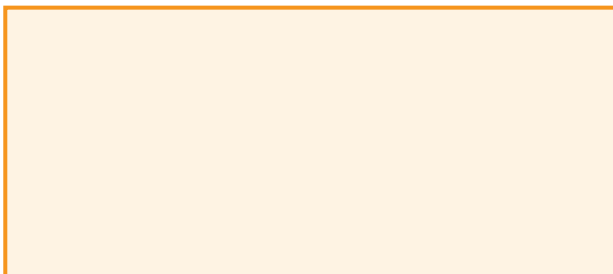


alone may risk not engaging with the substantive causes, in instances where quality is perceived to be low.

Systems of assurance of the quality of institutional offerings in the region are key to the achievement of many policy goals: student and staff mobility and qualification portability, regulation of private provision, equivalence of qualification frameworks, and increased co-operative teaching arrangements, for example. Quality assurance frameworks are already under discussion regionally, and SADC has done some groundwork in establishing current practices and proposing a strategy for the region.

At national level, more than half of the SADC countries either have already established a quality assurance framework, or are in the process of setting one up. Ministries of Education report a range of priorities in the area of quality assurance: reviews of faculties, staff qualifications, funding mechanisms, quality of courses offered, management, accreditation of qualifications, capacity building, working conditions, and quality of entering students are among them. Imperatives to improve quality are in many instances in tension with the need to expand access. Issues of institutional autonomy, and perceived threats to this autonomy, also cannot be ignored, although the debate on appropriate levels of accountability that must exist in the system must still occur. Also, though national systems are in development, it is unclear how well these systems are being implemented.

T Moll unhrersin theparandipvels repe de-0.0001 Tc0.0002 Tw(es



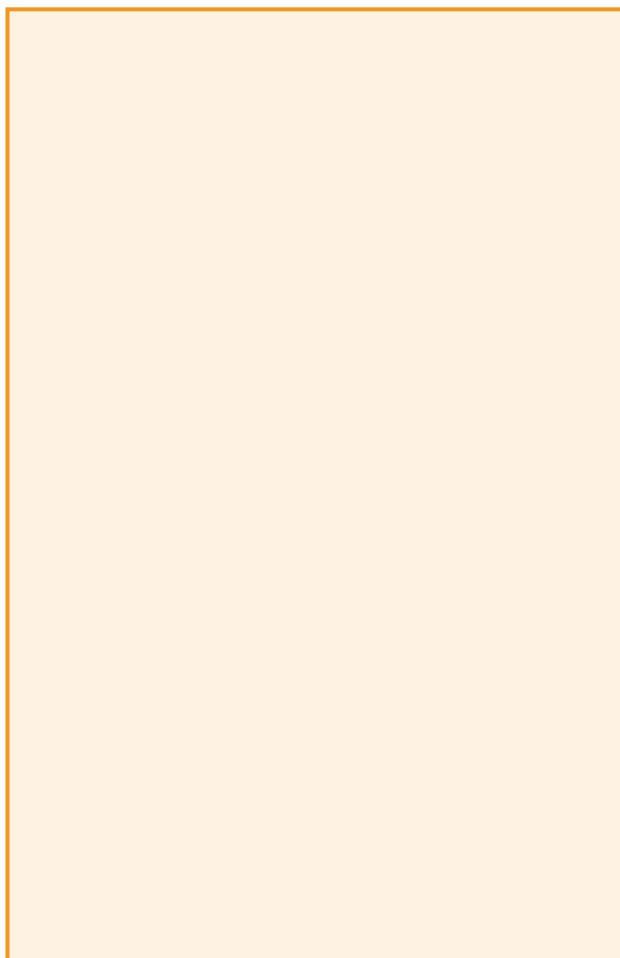
institutional capacity for implementation of quality assurance mechanisms needs to be developed and there is a need to ensure that national systems are comparable within the region.

#### 14. QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORKS

The SADC Protocol on Education<sup>16</sup> sets as its ultimate objective 'to progressively achieve the equivalence, harmonisation and standardisation of the education and training systems in the Region'. Qualification comparability is necessary to achieve goals of enhanced mobility, credit transfer and student access in the region.

Although the notion of a qualifications framework was not included in the Protocol itself, subsequent deliberations by the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation recommended that the formation of such a framework would be a 'necessary tool'<sup>17</sup> to achieving the Protocol's objective. The vision is of a 'regional qualifications framework that is a driving force for regional integration, quality assurance and global competitiveness of education and training systems in SADC Member States'<sup>18</sup>.

The idea of a regional qualification framework



## 15. CURRICULUM

There is no question that the issue of curriculum relevance must be high on the agenda of SADC higher education. Curricula derived from an era in which change was slow, communication technologies were underdeveloped, and labour skills were developed in the course of a life-long association with a particular company, are not appropriate for the challenges of the twenty-first century. There is a new focus on 'skills', values and ethics, teamwork, and the need to equip individuals with the capacity to generate their own income. The implications of the knowledge economy for learning and for individual functioning in a society in which knowledge is easily available must have implications for how curricula are taught, and the particular skills which those curricula impart. The availability of knowledge, and the speed at which it is now generated, has implications also at the level of the content which is taught. In addition, the education of values alongside traditional content knowledge is seen to be a high priority.

Some care is also needed though, as some of the calls for relevance derive from a short-term and limited understanding of the roles that higher education plays. Universities do not function purely to serve the needs of the labour market. University graduates are not certified to hold the specific practical skills necessary in a very different domain. University education must be seen primarily as relating to the academic development of the individual. In doing so, it must serve the function also of the development and reproduction of the research capacity of the nation, as well as high scientific skills in society. Technical education, by its nature, serves a different, and equally important, function.

A caution also needs to be raised regarding curriculum 'standardisation', which is frequently mentioned in policy documents alongside the need for curriculum change or restructuring. While mechanisms to ensure quality should be in place, and means should be sought for establishing equivalencies so that credit transfer and student mobility are not hampered, curriculum standardisation, in its basest form, is likely to lead to system

weakness. A model in which 'minimum standards' prescribe the content of what is to be taught, or that centralises curriculum and reduces lecturers to the role of delivery of pre-bundled content, is disempowering and de-professionalising, and will ultimately weaken systems of higher education still further. Rather, the focus should be placed on staff development and co-operation endeavours, and a model should be sought in which there is strong developmental collaboration over specific curricula. Strengthening existing arrangements such as external examiner input, joint teaching programmes, lecturer exchange programmes, or sharing of curriculum development expertise may be an appropriate way forward.

The SARUA research shows that capacity and expertise in materials development is lacking in many instances. This limits regional capacity for distance education programmes in particular. Strategies to increase sharing of expertise on this dimension are important. Strategies for sharing expertise regarding broader curriculum development strategies, which focus on new pedagogical methods and understandings of student learning, at a quicker rate than is currently the case, also need consideration.

## 16. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Information and communication technologies (ICT) are an essential tool to enabling higher education institutions to move towards participation in the knowledge society, facilitating better mechanisms for administration, alternate strategies for improving teaching and learning, tools for research and, fundamentally, mechanisms for improving research dissemination, communication and network building. Previous SARUA research<sup>20</sup> has shown the capacity constraints in the SADC region regarding ICT availability and usage. There have been positive developments on this front in recent years: available bandwidth in particular has grown and will do so further once the new SEACOM cable is complete.

Despite these developments, SADC universities continue to experience critical constraints and have gaps in their ICT infrastructure and systems

<sup>20</sup> SARUA (2007) Study on Optical Fibre for Education and Research Networks in Eastern and Southern Africa; SARUA (2008) A Status Review of ICT in Universities in the SADC Region

deployments. Access to computers is still too low (with an average, in 2007, of four teaching staff per computer, three administrative staff per computer and seventy students per computer). Progress towards the development of Research and Education Networks is still slow, although there have been positive developments in this area also.

#### **T SARUA 'F Pa / O K / ':**

- Create and share knowledge and establish the expertise of our universities through open knowledge practices and the work of institutional champions;
- Create Southern African scholarly communities working for open education, open access and open research, and making unused and under-used knowledge resources available through open access channels;
- Support the establishment and growth of international peer-reviewed, open journals based in Southern Africa;
- Support the establishment of systems for peer review of open educational resources;
- Incentivize pioneers and early adopters of open knowledge practices in education, research and community engagement, and reward others who adopt such approaches;
- Establish scholarly communications as strategic functions of universities bringing together teaching, research and community engagement; Begin building the institutional systems and processes which will underpin open knowledge, including examining the promotion and reward mechanisms for open knowledge practices, and establishing and editing peer reviewed open journals;
- Establish systems for self-reporting by academics of their use of open knowledge;
- Establish systems that enable universities to recognise and record all scholarly communications;
- Establish systems which enable scholars and universities to track the developmental and human impact of scholarly communications.

One of the critical areas affecting institutional research capacity is the gap in availability and accessibility of knowledge<sup>21</sup>. The domination of

scholarly publishing endeavours by multinational corporations, and high process charges, has led to a situation in which many institutions could be classified as 'knowledge-poor'. Moreover, research conducted in the region is often not easily available in the region, which has implications for the development of a regional knowledge-base for research. The adoption of open access publishing and licensing strategies, the development of institutional and regional research repositories, and the development of local journals are strategies proposed to move beyond the impasse. The adoption of these strategies in the region will not be simple though, and will be limited both by infrastructure availability and an environment which is not conducive to risk-taking. Careful planning and advocacy of the issue is necessary.

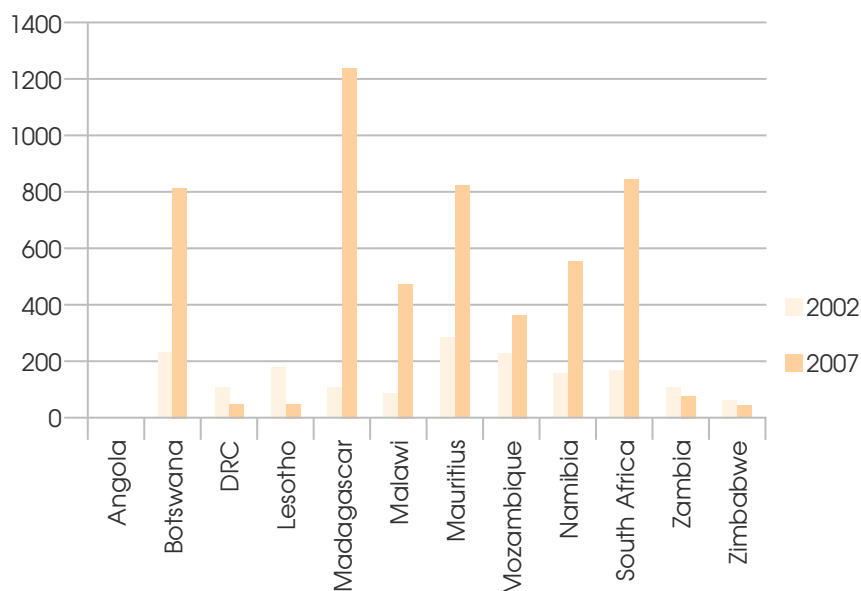
### **17. POLICY AND PLANNING**

There are a number of supra-national policy agreements having an effect on higher education in Southern Africa. Chief among these are the SADC Protocol (now somewhat dated) and the more recent African Harmonisation Policy of the African Union, with its proposed update of the Arusha Convention.

In order to give effect to these policies, it is necessary to examine the co-ordination and integration of national education policies and goals and regional development priorities, and develop new and aligned regional and national visions for higher education. Particularly where national systems of higher education are small or under-developed, questions regarding whether national systems must be in place first or whether regional policies can substitute and drive local policy development are important to address.

All SADC countries have national higher education policy frameworks in place, although the sophistication of these national policies differs. Tertiary education councils exist in six countries. Other national bodies existing in various countries (not including ministries) currently include bodies responsible for vocational education, and for quality assurance and qualification frameworks. However, a number of countries in the region do not have any bodies specifically tasked in the higher education sector outside of the ministries themselves. In addition, the extent of control and monitoring by ministries differs vastly.

<sup>21</sup> SARUA (2009) Opening Access to Knowledge in Southern African Universities, Johannesburg ([www.SARUA.org](http://www.SARUA.org))

**F 5:** International Internet bandwidth per Internet user (bit/s)<sup>22</sup>

Note: Angola, Swaziland and Tanzania figures not currently available.

A cursory analysis of higher education policy and regulatory environments shows some similarities and some differences. A more detailed review of national policies and legal frameworks is necessary to understand how higher education in different countries is positioned. A socio-political analysis of these policies in terms of the policy environment and legislation in each country could also reveal much regarding the problems being faced by universities.

Examination of the governance arrangements for science in the SADC countries shows that, although most do have Ministries of Science and Technology, not all have science policy documents. Similarly, not all universities have research policies or strategies in place. Policy commitment to research and to research funding is important. The development of governance mechanisms at regional, national and institutional levels is thus necessary. There is also a need to develop a critical mass in infrastructure and capacity, and

to identify areas of national and regional strength in order to enhance collaboration in the region.

One of the contextual realities of developing countries in this era is that there is some instability in government responsibility for higher education and science. New ministries are created, portfolio responsibilities shift, and political allegiances change. While some of these changes are positive, in some instances this leads to differences in policy responsibilities and reporting arrangements, and some insecurity regarding new arrangements. Times of crisis also have their effect on institutions, both regarding the macro-political context and in more local terms. In real life, politics influences, and social upheaval and political conflict disturb, universities. Data, in times of upheaval, will reflect that context, and may not be a full reflection on the proper capacity of the higher education system in that country. This has to be taken into account in interpretation of the data.

<sup>22</sup> Data from Measuring the Information Society: The ICT Development Index, 2009, available from <http://www.itu.int/publ/D-IND-ICT01-2009/en>

**Table 5:** Summary of Ministries of Science and Technology and science policies in the SADC region

Country	Ministry of Science and Technology	Date of establishment	Science policy document	Date issued
Angola	Yes	1997	No	
Botswana	Yes	2002	Yes	1998
DRC	Yes	2003	No	
Lesotho	Yes		Yes	2003
Madagascar			No	
Malawi	Yes	2004	Yes	(revised) 1991
Mauritius	Yes		No	
Mozambique	Yes	2000	Yes	2003
Namibia	No		Yes	1999
South Africa	Yes		Yes	
Swaziland	No		No	
Tanzania	Yes	1990	Yes	1996
Zambia	Yes	1992	Yes	
Zimbabwe	Yes	2002	Yes	2002

There are a wide range of practices with regard to institutional autonomy in the region. In some countries, strong state and bureaucratic control leaves little room for institutional self-determination. In others, there is a history of institutional autonomy which resists new attempts at regulation of the sector. In the latter systems, issues such as the introduction of quality assurance frameworks are facing greater implementation challenges. There is an acknowledged need to establish high-level policy forums to advise governments on national policy issues, and this is currently the focus of many development agency initiatives. Bringing together researchers from universities with representatives from government and the private sector, for meaningful engagements around development issues, is also important.

Ministerial engagement with Vice-Chancellors is also central to developing understandings of what is necessary to make higher education effective and to creating realistic plans, both for

the short term and the long term, for the sector. Engagement around issues of finance for higher education is unavoidable, but is likely to be unproductive if additional finances are not available: this is why the issue of connecting policy planning and finance is important to building long-term systemic capabilities.

It is necessary also to develop understandings of regional or national innovation systems: examining dimensions such as the form that these could take in Africa, the functions they might serve, and their potential contribution to local economic needs.

## 18. ENGAGEMENT

University engagement includes the wide range of activities undertaken by universities for the direct benefit of external constituencies. Into this range fall activities aimed at community outreach or community service, as well as

innovation and technological application functions. Although some engagement activities may lead to commercial gain such as the development of knowledge in co-operation with industry, more typically the term tends to relate to service to society and the role of institutions contributing to the public good.

Engagement may occur with a wide variety of different actors; these would include industry, civil society, government and policy actors, the broader community and the informal sector. The latter is important, particularly in an African context. Engagement should not be seen simply about working with the formal, large industries. It also relates to how universities can work with small-scale sectors and what they could do to help local economic development initiatives. It is necessary to develop understandings of the place of community service or engagement in higher education in Southern Africa, as well as the types, purposes, good practices of current engagements in the region. This is important to meeting the challenges of playing a renewed developmental role.

In the industrialised world, engagement with industry is of primary importance and results in commercial enterprises for institutions. In contrast, universities in small economies are placed under a particular pressure to respond directly to the economic needs of the country. In the developing world, there is an additional pressure on institutions to contribute specifically towards national development<sup>23</sup>. This results in huge expectations on a sector which is already battling under the load. The focus could be positive, by compelling higher education to be relevant and situating it at the core of national development efforts. However, ill-considered responses to the development question could, in effect, position regional higher education less well globally if, for example, it results in a focus on the production of undergraduates and applied (particularly unpublished) research at the expense of high-level activities. This issue needs to be examined beyond the

rhetoric of higher education's contribution to development: questions need to be asked about what is intended over and above existing activities, and how will this impact on higher education in the longer term. It is also important that African universities find their own ways of being responsive and engaged in a manner that best suits African conditions.

The SARUA research shows an institutionally self-reported regional average for community service or outreach activities of 10 percent of total institutional activity. This is a subjective measure, but even so it is evident that, proportionately, this activity is very low.

The SARUA research shows that there is a limited amount of university-firm interaction in the region, despite strong aspirations towards enhancing the developmental role of the university and university-firm interactions. There are constraints to the achievement of these aims: these include weak political support for science and technology; inadequate policies; low research and development spending; weakened national universities; low quality of science, engineering and technology education; high levels of brain drain; weak science and technology institutions; firms with low levels of innovation and technological capability; and weak linkages between institutions. One of the dangers is that African universities are expected to, or aspire to, adopt uncritically the strategies and practices that have proved effective in developed economies, or in developing economies with very different trajectories of development. The risk is that these engagements will continue to be driven by external agendas that do not take regional, national and local possibilities and constraints sufficiently into account.

Currently, there are few outcomes of interaction with firms other than the traditional results of university activity, such as graduate production and publications. Interactions tend to be in the form of the education of work-ready students, or of consultancy. Universities may have research

<sup>23</sup> The question of what is meant by 'development' is also a relevant one.

policy and structures, but very few have interface structures to support and facilitate innovation. Key obstacles to furthering interaction that the universities in the SARUA research identified include the lack of understanding and knowledge of firms and universities of one another's activities and potential; the need to build research capacity and infrastructure; and the need to overcome the dominance of foreign-driven research agendas. Despite these obstacles however, there are positive experiences within the region.

The collaboration of Dutch universities with universities in Tanzania is one example which shows that if universities are given assignments in which they collaborate with firms they could build long-lasting relationships, and may be able to bid for international funding together. This model may be useful for other contexts.

## 19. CO-OPERATION

Regional co-operation in higher education in Southern Africa has been proposed as a means to overcome the legacies of poorly-funded systems. Policies such as the African Union's Second Decade of Education<sup>24</sup>, and its Harmonisation Policy on Higher Education<sup>25</sup>, as well as the SADC Protocol on Education<sup>26</sup>, all talk of the need for this co-operation, and have been agreed on a political level. There may be disputes about the mechanisms and means for regional harmonisation, but the fundamental notion of co-operation between institutions, with the broader goal of enhancing institutional performance, is not in question.

The SARUA research shows that a high value is being placed on collaboration by institutions in the region, and that there are a number of these projects currently under way between institutions in the region. However, too little is known about the extent of these arrangements, and their success. What is lacking is an account of these initiatives that profiles the types of projects that are being conducted, their funding and success,

the collaboration opportunities that they offer, and models for adaptation to other contexts. Some of the challenges that limit this success are known to include the lack of funding for regional collaboration; South African universities often having a dominant position in partnerships; poor infrastructure and facilities that support learning and teaching; staff turnover; little or no involvement by researchers in practical research which involves their local environment; internal apathy; maintaining effective communication; and poor national ICT infrastructure. Other potential disadvantages of collaboration, such as, for example, the impact of a regional agenda on national higher education plans and investments, have not yet been explored.

Frequently, where collaboration projects are entered into on the basis of donor funding the collaboration tends, as a condition of the funding, to be with institutions which are outside of the region. There are many consequences of this type of funding arrangement. A large proportion of the donor funds tend to flow back into the extra-regional partner institution. The agenda for the collaboration tends to be determined extra-regionally, and may not be driven by local needs. Sustainability tends to be an issue, with projects being limited by their funding time-frame, and not becoming an integrated part of the curriculum or institutional activity. Finally, this form of collaboration tends not to develop intra-regional self-reliance and institutional networking.

There is another form of the funding rationale for collaboration; this relates to initiatives driven primarily by a financial motive. In the search for additional funds, institutions seek to bring in foreign students, particularly fee-paying students, and to export educational services. While this can be a mutually beneficial arrangement in areas where local capacity is poor, the impact of intra-regional competition needs careful consideration. Questions that could be raised include: What is the impact on higher education in the country from which students are moving – do the students

<sup>24</sup>African Union: (AU SDE) Second Decade of Education in Africa (2006 – 2015): Plan of Action (document undated). Retrieved on 20 August 2007 from [http://www.africa-union.org/root/ua/Conferences/2007/aout/HRST/06-10%20aout/Doc/EXT-AU-EXP-EDUC-2%20\(1\)%20-%20Plan%20of%20Action.doc](http://www.africa-union.org/root/ua/Conferences/2007/aout/HRST/06-10%20aout/Doc/EXT-AU-EXP-EDUC-2%20(1)%20-%20Plan%20of%20Action.doc)

<sup>25</sup>African Union: (AU Harm 2007b) Harmonisation of Higher Education Programmes in Africa: A Strategy for the African Union (2007b). Retrieved on 20 August 2007 from <http://www.africa-union.org/root/ua/Conferences/2007/aout/HRST/06-10%20aout/Doc/English/AU-EXP-EDUC-2-III-Harmoniz%20Strategy%20for%20AU-part%20two.doc>

<sup>26</sup>SADC: Protocol on Education and Training (1997). Retrieved on 8 August 2007 from [http://www.sadc.int/english/documents/legal/protocols/education\\_and\\_training.php](http://www.sadc.int/english/documents/legal/protocols/education_and_training.php)



return to contribute? Does the availability of a strong competitor for students ultimately weaken higher education in the weaker partner state? What positive contribution is made to this system by the stronger partner? What is the impact of the arrangement on national development and planning efforts? Can these movements be factored in to those plans, along with strategies for reversing the brain drain and ultimately developing the local higher education system? What protection can be recommended against the worst forms of academic market-grabbing or cultural imperialism? Is it possible to derive a framework for collaboration that sets out some of the principles on which good collaborative practices can be based?

The second rationale for collaboration efforts is academic, and relates to the development of teaching and research in the region. The development of teaching collaborations could aid in the development of curricula and teaching quality in the region. Collaboration could aid in addressing intellectual isolation. The development of research networks could aid in strengthening African institutions to enable them to meet the challenges of playing a role in regional development. Collaborative projects, particularly in areas of crucial importance to development such as water, food shortages, and health, would be of great benefit. In order to facilitate the development of these collaborations, however, it is important that a 'mapping' exercise of current research expertise, activity and strength in the region be conducted.

It is also important to further develop understandings of the extent and form of current collaboration activities – what is being done and with what effect – and through this to understand the dynamics, tensions and possibilities that these practices raise in order to encourage better practice in the future. In addition, there is a need to continue the process of bringing people together, facilitating discussion, and building networks in the region. Finally, arising from any research that is undertaken could be the development of a frame-

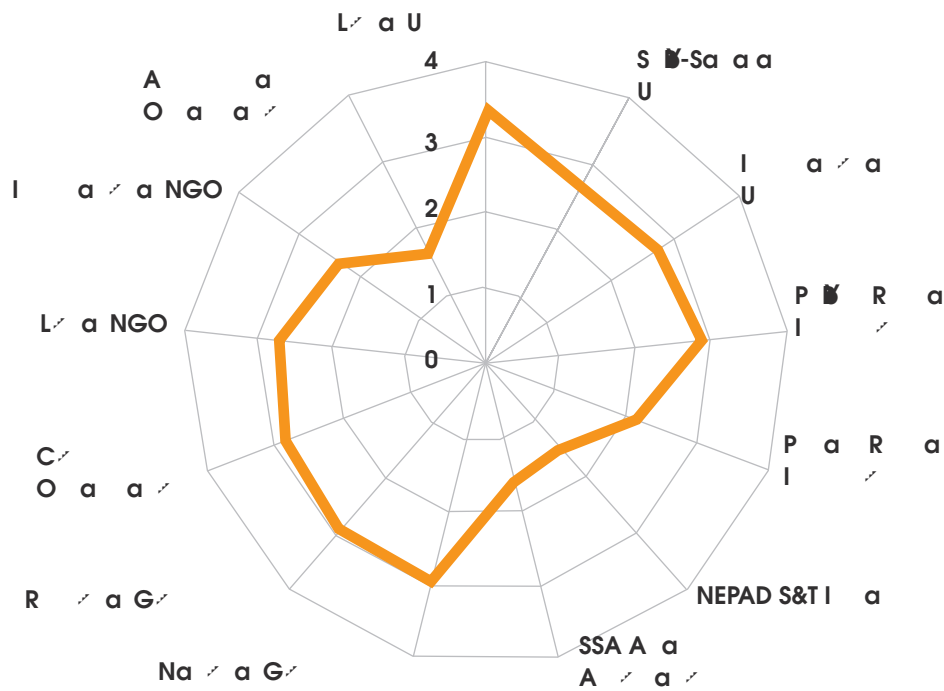
work consisting of basic principles for collaboration which stress equality and mutual benefit. Since funding for research, particularly for science and technology, is inadequate throughout the region and it is impossible for individual universities to develop good facilities in all areas, the argument is that a mechanism for collaboration must be found. Centres of Excellence are a mechanism used to achieve co-ordination in a variety of SADC sectors, and are proposed in the SADC Protocol on Education as a means of sharing of resources for research and teaching. There are a number of different forms taken by the SADC Centres of Excellence. In some instances, an existing unit is appointed as a centre for the region, in others, a virtual entity with the specific mandate to increase regional co-operation is formed.

Since, in the education sector the rationale for these centres tends to relate less to co-operation than to sharing of resources, it is more likely that centres based on existing units are formed. However, this model may be susceptible to a number of inherent problems, including competition between institutions for the 'title', a sense that the centre may be benefiting a single institution rather than the region as a whole, and conflicts for the unit itself between existing functions, national demands and the regional agenda. Research institutes, very often, are seen as national assets, which governments may not want to surrender to the region. It is perhaps for reasons such as this, as well as lack of funding, that current perceptions are that existing higher education centres of excellence are not working. Alternate models, such as virtual centres, existing as a partnership between units or individuals in different countries, may prove to be a better model. Common themes, or areas of common interest, could be defined and co-operation projects created to link universities in these research areas. This is an area which could be explored further.

## 20. LEADERSHIP

The issues identified above are primarily system issues which impact on capacity in higher educa-

**F 6: Extent of collaboration with public, academic and development organisations (perceptions ranking)**



tion, and on higher education’s capacity to contribute to national development. However, they are simultaneously challenges for governance, leadership and management of higher education in the region.

The macro picture painted above does not allow for an in-depth look at the individual contexts of higher education operating in the 15 countries that make up the SADC region. Higher education contexts, for the most part, are nationally determined, since it is at this level that policies are formulated and resources are allocated. Moreover, the nation state has a particular historical trajectory, into which the higher education system is often bound. These national contexts are important frames for, and determinants of, the higher education systems in their spheres. However, there are sufficient commonalities in these contexts to suggest that some of the governance, leader-

ship and management challenges being faced are not unique to individual countries. Although some of the issues identified are of national rather than regional concern, there could be benefits in learning from the experiences of others on aspects of system-level governance and policy. Similarly, experiences with regard to efforts to reform internal governance could be shared. In addition, leadership at a regional level will be critical in forging strategic regional collaboration projects.

At institutional level, the past fifteen years have seen a dramatic increase in the attention given to the development of higher education managers and leaders worldwide. This attention has manifested in a proliferation of educational offerings, both formal and informal, for management development, in research directed towards the issues of management and leadership in higher education, and in funding trends towards

development of this domain. Much of the activity in this field has been justified by new contexts for higher education and new demands being made on the sector. Global trends in higher education, such as massification, funding reduction, adoption of new public management ideals with their stress on the accountability and efficiency domains, new relations and forms of relations with the state, and the adoption of market mechanisms and competition in a previously insulated sector have required changes both in the way that institutions view their activities, and in the way that they manage them. Traditional management styles, particularly the oft-cited collegial model, have come under threat due to their apparent inability to adapt to the rapidly changing environment, and new, more managerial models have sprung up in their place.

Increasingly a more professionalised management is seen as a necessary condition for the institution's attempts to deal more adequately with both external and internal pressures and demands. External demands range from new policy initiatives and new governmental legislation to opportunities for the formation of industry or community partnerships. Internally, greater planning and more efficient allocation of resources are required, as well as providing incentives to academics to respond to opportunities and markets. The rising administrative profession is, implicitly and explicitly, challenging the traditional dominance of the academics in institutional affairs... (Maassen and Cloete, 2002, p. 28)

Within the Southern African context, changes in management practices have not been as profound. To a large extent, in many nations the challenges being faced by the higher education sector are a continuation of years of underfunding, poor infrastructure, and insulated systems. The times of rapid higher education change described as global trends have not impacted here to the same extent that they have elsewhere, although pressures are being experienced from rapid growth in student numbers in

some contexts, and from changing expectations on the sector in others. Yet, increasingly it is acknowledged that traditional models are no longer sufficient to position the sector for its role in national development. The Report of the Commission for Africa<sup>27</sup>, for example, places a focus on the development of higher education in Africa, and on the need for the development of professional and leadership skills in higher education. The Abertay Conversation<sup>28</sup> similarly calls for the 'strengthening of the leadership of African (higher education institutions)'.

The contexts in which Southern African higher education is operating require, in some ways, greater skill and greater commitment than those of our more privileged partners. The challenges of rebuilding higher education in the Southern African region are large, and it will require a committed and expert leadership to achieve the profound changes necessary. Development of the region is crucial, and higher education is being called on to play a role in areas as diverse as poverty reduction and knowledge economy participation. Development of the capacity of higher education to contribute must take high priority. Development of the leadership capacity within higher education to enable it respond to this challenge is key to achieving this goal<sup>29</sup>.

The regional dimension of current higher education policy adds complexity to the challenge, but can also be seen as a source of strength for developing higher education systems. However, this is dependent on shared understandings and a common vision of higher education for the region. The challenge is to develop a regional perspective on the one hand, and to provide platforms for interaction and for exchange of ideas, while maintaining sensitivity towards local cultures and practices on the other. Communication and the spread of ideas, as well as exchanges at all levels, will feed into the development of a regional understanding of higher education. In addition, this will better position institutions with a range of alternatives that could be applied in their own context.

<sup>27</sup> Report of the Commission for Africa (2005) obtained from [http://www.commissionforafrica.org/english/report/thereport/english/11-03-05\\_cr\\_report.pdf](http://www.commissionforafrica.org/english/report/thereport/english/11-03-05_cr_report.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> The Abertay Conversation: Communiqué to G8 Leaders, Dundee, July 2005, (p.1) [http://www.che.ac.za/documents/a000097/Abertay\\_conversation\\_July2005.pdf](http://www.che.ac.za/documents/a000097/Abertay_conversation_July2005.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> SARUA (2008) Understanding Current Governance, Leadership and Management Development Practices and Needs in the Southern African Region, Internal Document

Achieving the aim of revitalising higher education will require a leadership strategy that incorporates governments, the private sector and institutions. This strategy needs to incorporate broader continental and international perspectives, and draw at the same time on insight and best practice from other parts of the public and private sectors. This will encourage the development of local expertise and capacity, and, ultimately, contribute to the broader development of higher education in the region.

We need to make a distinction between intellectual leadership and organisational leadership. There has always been intellectual leadership in universities because all good researchers seek to be at the forefront of their disciplines. But organisational leadership, to do with getting structures right, effecting balances between thrust and control, and securing institutional change, is a different matter. This kind of leadership is about organising academic workers so as to advance institutional success within the chaos and contradiction that is a university. (Dearlove, 1998, Higher Education Policy, 11:1, p. 70.)

## CONCLUSION

The SARUA research has aimed at enhancing understandings of higher education in the Southern African region. This publication, as the first of a series of Regional Leadership Dialogues, aims to more widely disseminate both the research findings, and the debates which these results engender. In the broader political domain in Southern Africa, little interaction has taken place between the geo-political frameworks which have been constructed and critical role players from civil society and the private sector at the level of scenario planning and targeted interventions. SARUA's aim is thus to begin to fill this void in the critical domain of higher education. The research has also alerted us to the need to identify our areas of competitive strengths, to make these visible and to translate them into strategic opportunities for the region.

This publication focuses on the intra-sectoral challenges for higher education but any future regional growth and renewal strategy should also be informed by geographical and environmental opportunities hitherto unexplored. The Regional Leadership Dialogue initiative will embrace a

continuum of topics designed precisely to advance such joint visioning between higher education, government and the private sector over a defined period of time.

It is hoped that this specific publication has potential value for both institutional and wider policy development, for planning purposes and for strengthening many elements of the higher education system so that it can realistically meet the demands placed on it. It provides, moreover, a basis for engagements with governments, donor agencies, business and other organisations about how they conceptualise the role of higher education and the order of priorities affecting that role.

Finally, it bears reiteration that the ability to conceptualise approaches to the challenges facing the region and the institutions in it can only be based on the production and use of credible research and knowledge. Only such knowledge can provide a basis for thoughtful policy, realistic planning and budgeting and for designing strategic interventions.

# ADDRESS

B C a / / SADC M /  
E a / a M / E a / /  
R / S / A a, H / a / M  
Na Pa / a SARUA V -C a /  
L a D a / E , 2 A , 2009.

Let me start by congratulating the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) on the achievements of this organisation after such a short period of its existence.

SARUA gives effect to the SADC Protocol on Education and Training signed in 1997 by more than ten member countries. The key objective of this protocol is to provide a framework for regional co-operation in addressing regional educational needs. The protocol was signed two years before the Europeans signed the Bologna Declaration, which has similar aims to our protocol.

The studies conducted by SARUA, which will be reported at this workshop in the next two days, are the first in a series that should guide us on what we should be doing to give effect to the protocol. The studies should also guide us on how we strengthen higher education more broadly by pooling our collective strengths. They deal with important issues.

First of all, access to higher education is far too low in all our countries. Access to higher education has been a challenge in developing countries for many years. According to the latest figures of the World Bank, the gross participation rate in tertiary education in sub-Saharan Africa is only 6,1 percent, whereas that of North Africa is 26,6 percent. The average Southern African Development Community (SADC) higher-education participation rate is approximately 5 percent. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has reported that the growth rate in enrolments in higher education in sub-Saharan Africa is among the highest in the world. Yet participation rates remain very low.

The other side to the access challenge is that too many students are leaving SADC countries to study abroad. Within our own region, the movement of students is largely in the direction of South Africa, which we welcome but is cause

for concern. South African universities currently enrol some 60 000 international students. Of these, more than 40 000 are from the SADC region.

Internationalisation is good for knowledge and skills transfer, and can be beneficial for the higher education system in the region. However, there is a 'brain-drain' problem. Currently we do not have proper systems in place to monitor the mobility of people in and out of the region. Of course, it is not only students who leave their countries, but also academics and other professionals such as nurses, teachers and engineers.

My view has always been that we should try to improve the conditions within our own borders to make sure that we retain the best of our students and academics in our countries. We should also pay attention to ensuring that within SADC, we promote genuine 'brain-circulation'.

It's encouraging to note that many SADC countries have in place or are in the process of setting up higher education quality assurance structures. Strong national quality assurance structures and processes are a precondition for the building of regional quality assurance systems.

Quality is a many-sided process. But a lack of adequate infrastructure is a problem in many of our universities. For instance, it is still common in some institutions to find more students per class than the capacity of the lecture room. Therefore, in the ideal situation, the increase in enrolments should be followed by necessary infrastructural change.

Of course, quality improvement is dependent on funding. Several countries within the African continent have increased investment towards developing the higher education system in the past decades.

According to a report that was presented last year to African Ministers of Finance, enrolments in African universities tripled between 1991 and 2005, expanding at an annual rate of 8,7 percent, which is one of the highest regional growth rates in the world. However, over a 25-year period, the spending per student declined from an average of US \$6,800 per year to a low of US \$981 in 2005 for 33 countries.

One of the very substantial achievements of the South African government has been to halt the decline in per capita funding that occurred in the ten years before 2006. We need to take stock of our funding policies to make sure that they respond to the needs of the region. In the SADC region, the national expenditure on education as a percentage of gross national income varies between two percent and ten percent.

The case for improved funding provision for higher education will certainly be strengthened if, as a region we work hard to ensure that we have strong and stable institutions that are able to respond to the many challenges that we face, including the contribution of higher education to the economic and social development of our nations and region. This brings me to the issue of leadership. It's important that we develop good, visionary leadership across our institutions. At the same time, we need to be mindful of the equity aspect among our leaders. Currently, leadership in higher education across the SADC region, and to a certain extent, elsewhere in the world, is dominated by males. Comparative research shows that there is a notable under-representation of women at senior and leadership levels of universities even in developed countries such as the United States and Australia. The male domination trend is also evident within the academic staff profile.

Institutions should therefore begin to take cognisance of this in their succession planning. As a region we also need to increase our postgraduate student production. Currently, the number of postgraduate students that graduate from our institutions annually, particularly at doctoral level, is very low compared to that of developed countries.

We need to build capacity in all areas of research. One of the obvious capacity constraints is a lack of PhD supervisors. For us to increase the number of PhD graduates, we must first develop the supervisory capacity at our institutions. The situation now is that we have too many academics without doctoral qualifications. This is, of course, why many postgraduate students go abroad.

Postgraduate studies can also be supported by way of regional collaboration, through, among others, joint programmes and supervision. Such collaboration can also be extended to include international partner institutions. A number of models exist of such partnerships, including the South Africa-Norway Tertiary Education Programme. It has promoted joint postgraduate programme development by universities in the region.

I am also aware that the issue of Internet connectivity is high on SARUA's agenda. Access to high speed connectivity for all of our universities is the key to strengthening teaching and learning and enabling collaborative partnerships in the region and beyond.

In closing, I would like to reiterate the importance of the publication that is launched and discussed here today, and I have no doubt that the publication will have a positive impact on the higher education landscape in the region. I hope that many more studies will emerge as a result, even from researchers from outside SARUA.

## THANK YOU

