

Towards a SADC Area of Higher Education

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Abstract

Regional integration on the higher education and science sector is a multidimensional process of fundamental relevance for the economic and social development of the countries in the region. This process is taking place in a radically changing global context.

This paper is a first attempt to approach the issue of regional integration of higher education in SADC, a topic that until now has been widely neglected in higher education research. The subject can be subsumed under the broad research agenda on the internationalisation of higher education.

In 1997, the SADC Member States agreed to promote regional cooperation and integration on the education sector and formulated the SADC Protocol of Education and Training. Articles 7 and 8 of this Protocol explicitly refer to the sector of higher education and research. The paper summarises the central ideas of the Protocol, systematises the context and its implementation. It tries to show up the impeding and fostering factors of its implementation. Finally, potential scenarios of a future development of the SADC higher education sector are elaborated.

Introduction

Higher education is considered a key sector for the development of the knowledge-based economies that are emerging worldwide. This key sector is developing in a context, where knowledge and ideas are increasingly generated and exchanged across national borders. Worldwide, we can observe an increasing cross-border mobility of students, scholars, study programmes as well as higher education providers that operate in foreign countries. In this context, comparable standards and compatible structures become more important. All these processes are taking place in an ambivalent tension between international cooperation and international competition. For more than a decade, the processes of internationalisation, regionalisation and globalisation have thus also seized the sector of higher education.

Globalisation of higher education is pointing at the transnational character of 'education services', 'education products', knowledge, science, ideas and values transmitted by transnationally acting institutional or individual actors in a space where Nation States lose their unlimited sovereignty. In this transnational process, the educational 'goods' and 'services' as well as the 'science products' and 'intellectual properties' become increasingly commercialised and commodified. Virtual mobility, especially of 'knowledge as a product' in form of e-learning based curricula is characterising this mode of distance education.

Internationalisation meanwhile is considered as cooperation-based interaction across national borders, aimed at achieving more or less common goals, heading for mutual benefits. It is mainly based on trust and confidence. Physical mobility, exchange of ideas and collaborative projects characterise this process. Internationalisation of higher education still has the Nation State as a frame of reference and action. (Hahn 2003)

The internationalisation of higher education is often focused on the region, coupled with multidimensional regional integration processes. These processes would be called 'regionalisation of higher education'.

Regional cooperation and integration in higher education and research are widely seen to be one of the adequate responses towards globalisation. They are supposed to guarantee a synergetic higher education sector that is responsive to the social, educational, economic and political needs of a region. The development of structural compatibilities of programmes and degrees, the harmonisation of law, the formulation of common standards and procedures, For example, in quality assurance and access, relevant curricula and coordinated development of institutional profiles and programmes are challenging tasks for policy formulation and implementation on national level. They are even more challenging for the policy implementation at the level of the higher education and research institution. Regionalisation or internationalisation of higher education implies multidimensional processes of reform and innovation on all system levels of the sector.

The most prominent example of regionalisation of higher education and research is that of Europeanisation. Initiatives of the European Commission aim at creating a European area of higher education and research by agenda setting for an integrated sector, through launching schemes and funding programmes. These initiatives are complemented by multilateral initiatives of the EU member countries and its regional partners outside the EU themselves (the so-called 'Bologna Process').

Other regions and sub-regions also started to foster regional co-operation and integration in 1997, the SADC Member States agreed to promote regional co-operation and integration in the education sector. The process of regional integration is spearheaded and guided by the SADC Protocol of Education and Training. The Protocol is part of the SADC Treaty. Articles 7 and 8 of this Protocol explicitly refer to the sector of higher education and training, and research and development.

1. Global Trends in Higher Education

The process of regional co-operation and integration in SADC is taking place at a time when diverse and antagonistic trends are shaping the sector of higher education and research worldwide and lead to the creation of a global market for higher education. The driving force is the ever-growing demand for a highly skilled and academically trained labour force to cope with the challenges of emerging knowledge societies and the global competition of national economies. Australian forecasts predict a massive increase in the demand of international higher education globally up to the year 2025 of about 7.2 Mio., whereof two third of the demand for international education will come from ten countries alone, most of them in Asia (BÖHM et al. 2002). As many countries will not be able to meet the demand, either quantitatively or qualitatively, the demand will be met by countries that have the needed capacities and have developed adequate policies to attract international students. The supply for international education will most probably not be met by African universities, but by the higher education 'provider' in the United States, Europe, the Asian region or the Pacific Area (i.e. Australia). The predicted development will put enormous pressure on African higher education as the competition on resources (i.e. from international donors) and the competition with regard to the international attractiveness for cooperation and mobility gets tougher.

The massification of higher education with ever-growing access rates (with the coinstantaneous decline of state subsidy) and the emergence of the knowledge society have contributed to internal and external pressures. External pressures do effect national policy making for higher education and initiate a process of 'denationalisation' of higher education – a real and potential loss of steerability of the sector by the Nation State. Also, higher education institutions are faced with external pressures and growing demands. All system levels have to face increasing commercialisation and commodification of higher education as a trans-nationally tradable service or product. The integration of higher education into the catalogue of the General Agreement of Trade in Services ('GATS') of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) gives evidence of these developments. These processes are

intertwined with the growing competition and privatisation of higher education. A 'demonopolisation' of traditionally state funded higher education is taking place. The virtualisation of higher education in the form of Internet or satellite supported transnational learning as well as the unlimited communication and information potentials that were created by the development of the new information and communication technologies, contribute to the emergence of a global market for higher education and research and to the globalisation of higher education. Quality assurance and 'consumer protection' have become most pressing demands in the jungle of programmes, degrees, modes of delivery and the increasing number of higher education 'providers' (UNESCO 2003).

Other new challenges come from the stakeholders' claim for more relevance of curricula and research and for more efficiency of higher education institutions. The quest to produce graduates that are more qualified and the quest for better employability of graduates on the one hand and the demand for economically exploitable research and innovation on the other hand seem to overburden the sector. All of these trends are taking place in a context of historical coincidence of challenges and shortages and are putting high reform pressure to higher education institutions worldwide.

African higher education seems to be particularly challenged by the new context. It is facing the danger of 'falling apart', of being de-linked from the scientific community. 'Globalisation Apartheid' in the higher education sector is a common catchword in debates (MOJA 2003). The most recent UNESCO Statistics on global education reveal that although there has been a substantial growth of higher education in Africa, the average time spent in tertiary education remains marginal (UNESCO INSTITUTE FOR STATISTICS, 2004, 4.). There are several negative factors that influence African higher education systems. Failing States, a lack of resources, quality deficiencies, high drop out rates, de-contextualised curricula, decoupling of research from teaching, mismanagement, brain drain, limited access, privatisation, HIV/AIDS are some of the central issues that dominate political and institutional debates on the future of African higher education. 'The fact is that African universities currently function in very difficult circumstances, both in terms of the social, economic, and political problems facing the continent and in the context of globalisation, and the road to future success will not be an easy one' (Teferra & Altbach 2004, 21). Sub-regional cooperation and internationalisation are ways in which higher education institutions try to get along and create synergies to cope with the new challenges.

2. Theoretical reflections and methodology

With regard to SADC, it would be more appropriate to speak about a sub-regional integration, as SADC forms only one part of a larger, namely African region. When speaking about regional integration in the following, it should be clear, that it is referred to the SADC perspective.

2.1. Theoretical Reflections

Regional integration of higher education in SADC is a multidimensional process. The core processes are those of transnational mobility and cooperation.

- Mobility (mainly transnational student and teaching staff mobility or mobility of scholars, but increasingly also of HEI managers and policy planners)
- Cooperation (programmes, projects, research, management, standards, policy)

Regional integration implies a process of change. Change can take place in a quantitative dimension and/or in a qualitative dimension. The scope of potential changes is rather broad. Change in a quantitative sense simply stands for an increase in numbers (number of mobile students, number of regionally cooperative research projects, number of integrated programmes etc.). Qualitative change can take place with regard to:

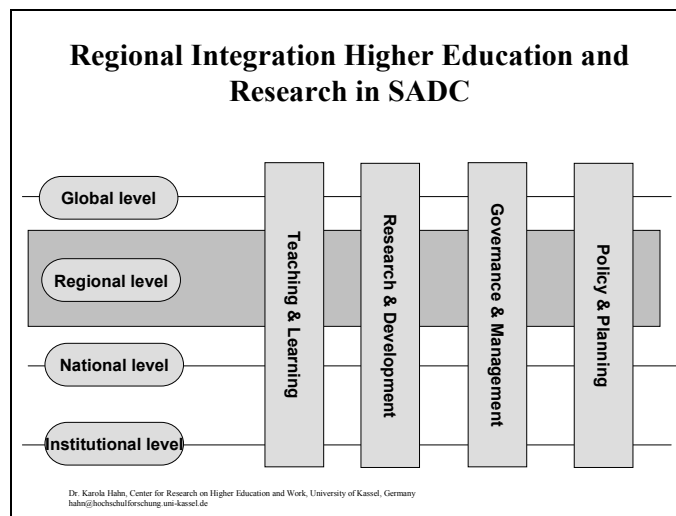
- study programmes (content and relevance of curricula, the internationalisation of curricula, the 'Africanisation' of curricula, cooperative, integrative or 'sandwich-programmes'),
- study structures (harmonisation of degree structure, modular structure and length of programmes on the different levels of study, e.g. graduate, postgraduate, PhD level),
- academic recognition of programmes and transfer of credit points, accreditation and quality assurance, including harmonisation of access (definition of common standards and procedures).
- teaching language (English as lingua franca on the science sector).
- mode of delivery (e.g. virtual mobility as internet or satellite-based transnational education).
- composition of teaching staff and scholars (internationalisation of personnel).
- academic years (harmonisation of the academic calendar and its subdivision into semesters or trimesters),
- cooperative planning in the macro-policy development of the sector (agenda setting, thematic fields being of interest for the entire regional sector are i.e. the scope of programmes offered in the region, the regional research profile, capacity building and human resource development, HIV/AIDS, brain drain and brain gain).
- harmonisation of policies (formulation of a common (international relations) policy towards other integration processes (e.g. NEPAD, AU), towards GATS, or towards donors and agencies (e.g. UNESCO, World Bank, major foundations).

- establishment of an infrastructure that allows coordinated action at the institutional basis (e.g. the creation of a SADC Vice-Chancellors' Association).
- harmonisation of national regulations and laws.

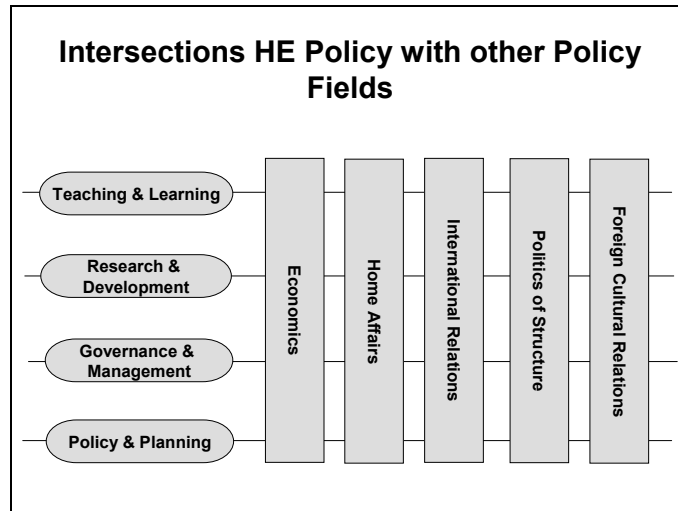
In looking at the scope of quantitative and qualitative changes, two facts become evident: regionalisation of higher education and research has the potential to function as innovation motor on the one hand. However, on the other hand, it also leads to a growing complexity that makes policy formulation and policy implementation more difficult. We find a complex multi-layer and multi-actor system. The regional level appears as a new system level of policy making, which needs new coordination structures and mechanisms as well as powerful actors that drive and implement change. New corporative actors are gradually entering the arena as for example the different SADC Technical Committees and working groups or the network of SADC Vice-Chancellors.

Change through internationalisation of higher education in the form of regional integration can take place on all system levels: on regional level, national level, and institutional level as well as on the disciplinary level. It can also have effects on the international and global level, if the integrated regional higher education (HE) sector is perceived by extra-regional actors as a single regional globally acting actor or if common external policies are formulated.

Four strands of fields of action can be identified that crosscut all system levels: Teaching and learning, research and development, governance and management as well as policy and planning.

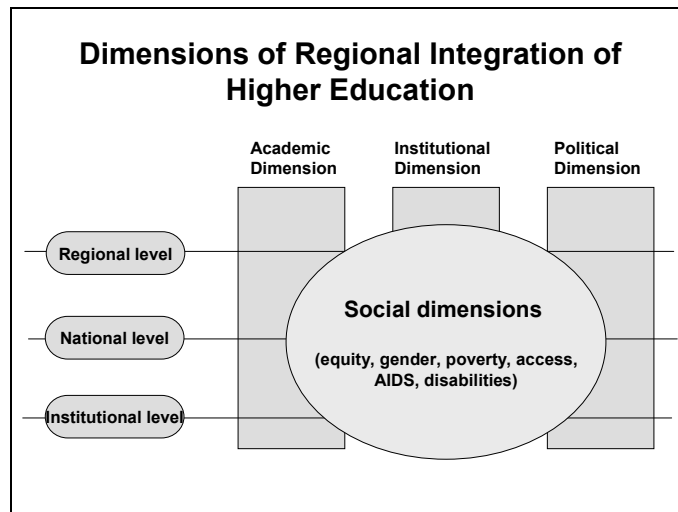


Through the growing intersections with other policy fields, regional integration in higher education and research will also imply changes in policy fields like Home Affairs, Finances, Politics of Trade and Industries, Politics of Labour, Politics of Structure, International Relations Policy, Foreign Cultural Relations Policy etc.



The fact that broad legal reforms and concerted cross-sector and transnational actions will be necessary in the regional integration process demonstrates the depth of the impact and the ongoing denationalisation of a policy field that by tradition has been regarded as highly national with regard to State sovereignty.

The multidimensional character of the issues touched by regional integration of higher education is also leading to a growing complexity. We can identify at least four categories of issues, all of them cross-cutting all system levels: academic issues, institutional and political issues as well as social issues.



The social dimension of the regional integration process crosscuts all other dimensions as well as all levels of policy making.

2.2. Methodology

The methods used to approach the topic of regional integration of higher education and research in SADC mainly consists an internet research and in the analysis of higher education research literature (in particular on the globalisation and internationalisation of higher education) as well as policy papers, other official documents and 'grey literature' (e.g. needs assessments studies, reports, unpublished minutes, protocols). Important data sources were the Handbooks of the International Association of Universities (IAU, in conjunction with the Association of African Universities (AAU)), which provides basic information on the different higher education systems of the SADC member countries and the handbook on African Higher Education published by Damtey Teferra and Philip Altbach.

Some qualitative interviews were conducted with experts of the field (SADC officials, members of Technical Committees, a Minister for Higher Education, senior Ministry officials, representatives of higher education related agencies, academics of universities of the region as well as with the former head of the SADC Vice Chancellors' Forum).

The statistics on higher education and research in the SADC countries are very poor. No central database exists. Nevertheless, some statistical analysis could be given on the transnational student mobility flows of SADC students to South African higher education institutions. The most recent UNESCO statistics publication on the world education sector provided some, even if little information on the higher education systems of the different SADC countries.

3. Higher Education in the SADC Region: Facts and Figures

Higher education and research are considered key dimensions for the economic, social progress and integration of the SADC region. There is a widespread concern among politicians, economists, civil society and academia, that the higher education systems in the SADC region do not perform efficiently their societal roles. Regional cooperation and a more harmonised sector is expected to bring about more benefit to society and economy.

3.1. HE Systems and Student Numbers

The 'SADC area of higher education' is marked by a strong heterogeneity and disparity. It is composed of 13 different national higher education systems¹. The numbers of higher education institutions given in the different sources vary

¹ The Seychelles as SADC member (until 2004) do not have a national higher education system, although there are some institutions of post-secondary education.

significantly according to the different data sources. Even the Homepages of the Ministries concerned did not always provide adequate information. According to the Guide on Higher Education in Africa in 2001 there were 63 universities, 65 technikons, polytechnics, colleges or higher education institutes as well as around 25 teacher colleges and other specialised colleges, which formed the highly fragmented and differentiated sector within the SADC region (AAU & IAU 2002).

Other sources revealed a much higher number of institutions, particular when all the new private higher education providers are added to the list. In any case, the given numbers are not correct, as the databases and handbooks do not reveal the national differences in the classification of higher education institutions. What is named an 'Institute' or 'College' on the tertiary sector in one country must not necessarily correspond to the definition of an 'Institute' or 'College' in a neighbour country. However, the table allows a first glance at the size and heterogeneity of the sector.

Higher Education Profiles of SADC Countries, 2001

Country	Higher Education Institutions		
	Teacher Training Colleges	Polytechnics, Technikons	Universities
Angola	?	1 'Instituto Superior Privado de Angola'	5 (1 State, 4 private)
Botswana	?	0	1 (+1 private planned in Francistown)
DRC	16 'Instituts Supérieures Pédagogiques' (Advanced Pedagogical Institutes)	18 'Institutes Supérieures Techniques' (Advanced Technical Institutes)	3 State Universities, several private Universities (mainly Church) 1 School of Agronomy
Lesotho	?	1	1
Malawi	1	1 (part of UNIMA)	1 (including 5 Colleges, thereof 1 Polytechnic)
Mauritius	1	3 'Institutes' 1 College	1
Mozambique	1	3 'Higher Institutes' 1 Polytechnic (Private)	3 (1 State, 1 Church, 1 Private)
Namibia	4	1 (State) (1 private planned)	2 (1 State, 1 Private)
Seychelles²	?	1	0

² There was no information given on the Seychelles. According to the International Network of Higher Education Research in Africa, Seychelles has one Polytechnic that is largely funded by the Chinese Government.

South Africa		15 (State)	21 (State) ³
Swaziland	3 (affiliated to University)	1 'College of Technology'	1
Tanzania	'several'	7 University 'Colleges', 11 'Institutes' and 'Schools'	10
Zambia		4 'Colleges', 'Institutes', 'Centres'	2
Zimbabwe	1 (other Teacher Colleges affiliated to University)	2	9 (5 State, 4 Private)

Source: Data compiled out of a) Association of African Universities & International Association of Universities (2002). *Guide to Higher Education in Africa. Second Edition.* Houndsmill: Palgrave and b) International Network for Higher Education in Africa coordinated at the Boston College Center for International Higher Education and c) Homepages of the appropriate Ministries.

The cultures and traditions underlying the higher education systems vary along the lines of the former colonial powers and a division line along languages (English, Afrikaans, Portuguese and French as well as African languages, and in the case of the Seychelles, Creole). We find systems that are shaped in Anglo-Saxon structures and traditions (e.g. South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Mauritius), Lusophone systems (Mozambique and Angola) and the DR Congo as a 'French' system.

Another feature that led to deeply rooted differences within and between the HE systems in the region is the legacy of Apartheid in South Africa and Namibia that still today leaves visible traces of inequity.

Above this, the different national systems of higher education vary widely with regard to size (numbers of institutions and student population), age, range of disciplines offered, study stages offered (exclusively undergraduate or also postgraduate and doctoral studies) quality, resources, research profiles, outputs and potentials etc. Some of the systems are – as effect of civil wars or conflicts – highly dysfunctional (i.e. Angola and DR Congo, but increasingly also Zimbabwe), while others are performing well i.e. South Africa and Tanzania. The uneven distribution of

³ With the restructuring of the higher education sector and the merging process the number of institutions will be reduced from 36 to 22, the secondary teacher education has been integrated into the university system. The number of private higher education institutions is changing constantly. 80 private higher education institutions were registered in 2004, 5 were provisionally registered, 7 have been granted an extension of its provisional registration (<http://education.pwv.gov.za/content/documents/419.pdf>).

capacity can be regarded as one of the most striking features of the heterogeneous sector.

Another feature of the SADC higher education system(s) is that of substantial difference in its international perception. The international attractiveness for international students, scholars, scientific and curricular cooperation as well as for donors varies enormously between the SADC countries. South Africa is doubtlessly seen as the most attractive higher education system in every aspect. While other SADC higher education systems receive at least some attention from international donors (i.e. Namibia, Mozambique and Tanzania) or international students (i.e. Namibia), others seem to be white spots on the international cooperation and funding agenda and are hardly recognised by international students and the scientific community.

By now, there is no harmonised centralised higher education database in the region. Basic data is largely missing, or where data is available, it is incomplete or inconsistent. Not even the most recent UNESCO world education statistics from 2004 exactly reveals how many students are enrolled in SADC higher education institutions. Roughly estimated, some 789,000 students were enrolled in SADC higher education institutions in 1999/2000. South Africa has, with more than 600,000 students and 36 institutions, the largest higher education system of the region, hosting more than 75 % of all SADC students.

Enrolments in Tertiary Education 1999/2000

SADC Country	Number of Enrolments
Angola	7,845
Botswana	6,332
Congo	15,629
Lesotho	4,470 (**)
Malawi	3,179 (*)
Mauritius	8,256
Mozambique	9,303
Namibia	11,209 (*)
Seychelles	n.a.
South Africa	632,911
Swaziland	4,730
Tanzania	18,867 (*)
Zambia	23,155 (**)
Zimbabwe	42,775 (**)
Total SADC Countries	788,661

(*) Numbers for 1998/99

(**) UIS estimation

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2004). Global Education Digest 2004. Comparing Education Statistics Across the World. Montreal (<http://www.stats.uis.unesco.org>)

3.2. The SADC Protocol on Education and Training

The SADC Protocol on Education and Training provides the policy framework for regional cooperation and integration of the entire education sector.⁴ Article 7 and 8 focus on the higher education sector: Article 7 refers to Higher Education and Training, Article 8 refers to Research and Development.⁵

The Protocol was signed in 1997 by the 12 SADC member countries (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe). After the ratification by nine countries, namely Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zimbabwe it entered into force in the year 2000. By 2004, the Protocol has been ratified by all member countries except Angola, DR Congo and Seychelles.⁶ After ratification, it provides the legal framework for cooperation in the broad field of education and training. The ratification requires its full implementation in the SADC Member States.

Principles and Objectives

The Preamble of the Protocol summarises the underlying assumptions that led to regional cooperation agreement. It was stated that:

- the development of human resources is essential to tackle the socio-economic problems of the region,
- a high literacy and numeracy as well as socio-economic and technological research are crucial for sustainable development,
- no SADC Member State can alone offer the full range of world quality education and training,
- programmes of human resource development should have a national and regional dimension
- concerted efforts in education and training are needed to equip the region with the necessary competencies for the 21st century.

⁴ The Protocol can be accessed by Internet: <http://www.sadc.int> (Legal instruments).

⁵ Other Areas of Cooperation are Policy for Education and Training (Art. 4), Basic Education (Art. 5), - Intermediate Education (Art. 6), Life-Long Education and Training (Art. 9) and Publishing and Library Resources (Art. 10).

⁶ The Seychelles withdraw from SADC membership by 2004.

Article 2 summarises the underlying principles of the Protocol which can be categorised in academic dimensions, institutional and political dimensions as well as the cross-cutting social dimension:

Academic dimension

Establishment and promotion of regional Centres of Specialisation and Centres of Excellence, academic freedom, high quality education, maximising existing regional expertise.

Institutional and political dimension

Sustainability of co-operative efforts, reduction of costly duplication of effort in provision of education, involvement of key stakeholders (including institutions executing regional education), gradual implementation of equivalence, harmonisation and standardisation of the education and training systems, acknowledgment of different paces of progress of implementation of the Protocol in the Member States

Social dimension

Equality, equitable participation, mutual benefit of all partners.

The meta-goal of the Protocol is to improve the standard of higher education and research by promoting co-operation and creating intra-regional synergies in different areas. All activities are targeted to progressively achieve a regional equivalence, harmonisation and standardisation of the sector within a period of 20 years (Article 3).

Several measures are mentioned to meet the objectives:

- implementation of a common data and reporting system,
- establishment of mechanisms and institutional arrangements to pool resources,
- promotion of coordinated policies, strategies and systems
- promotion of the participation of the private sector, non-governmental organisations and other key stakeholder,
- coordination of science and technology policy and programmes,
- reduction of mobility barriers,
- promotion of English and Portuguese language.

Regional co-operation in policy for education and training includes:

- Widening provision and access, gender equality

- Increasing equitable access, improving quality and relevance
- Rationalising admission requirements and accreditation of qualification
- Encouraging joint development and production of teaching materials
- Achieving a partnership approach to financing education
- Promotion of academic freedom and an enabling environment with appropriate incentives based on merit for educated persons
- Achieving comparability, equivalence and standardisation of education systems.

Central topics of co-operation addressed in the higher education related articles in the Protocol are the following:

- Frame conditions
- Principles of cooperation
- Mobility
- Curricular cooperation
- Research cooperation

As frame conditions and principles are mentioned:

- political and financial conditions (explicit higher education and research policies, science and technology policies, resource allocation),
- legal conditions (visa policies, immigration regulations) and
- structural conditions (e.g. harmonisation of academic calendars, establishment of regional professional associations, bilateral and multilateral agreements, exchange programmes).

The basic principles are:

- mutual assistance and regional capacity building,
- relevance,
- provision with adequate resources and equipment,
- sharing of information and experiences,
- pooling resources and sharing of costs,
- harmonisation and standardisation (with regard to structure, procedures and quality).

The facilitation of student and staff mobility includes the following measures:

- At least 5% of admission to higher education shall be reserved for SADC students,
- exchange programmes shall foster mobility,

- the university entrance requirements shall be harmonised,
- the mutual recognition of qualification shall be enhanced and eventually standardised,
- the transfer of credits shall be facilitated through adequate mechanisms,
- within ten years after signature of the Protocol SADC students shall be treated as home students with regard to fees and accommodation.
- the academic calendars shall be harmonised and legal mobility barriers eliminated, in order to enhance the frame conditions for mobility.

Curricular cooperation can take place on undergraduate and postgraduate level: The provision of undergraduate education primarily remains a responsibility of the Member States. Assistance will be given by other SADC countries, if needed. Cooperation can take place in the design of the programmes, joint teaching, production of teaching and learning material, exchange of students and staff, external examiners from the Region as contribution to comparable standards. The postgraduate education shall be strongly internationalised (significant mix of SADC students) and supported by scholarships for socially disadvantaged students.

Curricular cooperation as contribution to regional capacity building shall be supported through Centres of Specialisation at existing institutions. These training institutions shall deliver high quality education in specialised and relevant areas. The programmes offered at these centres are mainly designed for the postgraduate level, but in some critical disciplines also for the undergraduate level (e.g. in health sciences and engineering).

Sector encompassing cooperation in research and development shall be directed to strengthen basic and applied research and consultancy work as contribution to regional development. Special research programmes shall be designed. University and non-university research shall link up, also with industry and the private sector. In critical and priority areas of research special Centres of Excellence shall be established. Intra-SADC mobility of researchers and consultants shall be facilitated. Quality assurance will be exercised through monitoring and assessment mechanisms.

The legal character of the Protocol

The legal character of the Protocol resembles more a 'benevolent declaration of intent for cooperation' or a 'Memorandum of understanding', rather than a binding political agenda for governments and higher education institutions. All issues and objectives are packed into soft formulations ('shall be', 'shall become', 'shall be realised', 'shall function', 'shall be reserved' etc.) The subjunctive conjugation form of the verb 'will' is the most commonly used verbal form in the Protocol. Even some of the more concrete aims (i.e. the 5 % SADC admission quota) still are formulated in the subjunctive form.

Although the Protocol provides the legal policy framework for the cooperation on the regional HE sector after ratification, it does not have the formal strength of a 'regional law'. No concrete, legally strictly binding obligations can be derived from the Protocol. The degree of the mandatory character remains subject to interpretation. This is one of the basic features that distinguishes the SADC Protocol on Education and Training from the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). There is no effective instrument of penalty or sanction in case of non-respect or retarded implementation of the Protocol by some Member States, although the Protocol provides in Article 23 for the settlement of disputes.

The soft legal character of the Protocol is at the same time weakness and strength, rendering the cooperation in higher education to its natural dynamic and pace that evolves out of voluntary multilateral and bilateral cooperation within the region.

3.3. SADC Infrastructures and Operational Mechanisms

According to the sector and decentralised approach of SADC, the SADC Protocol on Education and Training was attributed to the Human Resources Development Sector. The higher education sector was lead-managed by the SADC Human Resources Development Sector Coordinating Unit in Mbabane, Swaziland.

Relevant organs to coordinate the human resource development (HRD) sector were established according to Article 11, namely a Committee of Ministers from the field of education, a Committee of Senior Officials from the Member States as well as the Secretariat comprising a Director and appointed or seconded staff.

Several Technical Committees made up by experts of the Member States have been installed to promote, prepare and guide the implementation of the Protocol. The higher education sector relevant Technical Committees were the Technical Committee on Higher Education and Training and Research and Development, the Technical Committee on Intermediate Education and Training, the Technical Committee on Life-long Education and Training, the Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation and Scholarships and Training Awards as well as the Technical Committee on Distance Education. At a later point another Technical Committee on Special Needs Education has been installed. The Technical Committee on the Training Fund was constituted by the Technical Committee on Scholarships and Training Awards, already established in 1995.

The SADC HRD Sector Coordinating Unit as well as the Technical Committees elaborated strategic five year plans.

The SADC HRD Coordinating Unit's strategic plan for 2001-2006 foresees the following priorities – only those priorities are mentioned here, that are relevant for the sector of higher education and research.

Academic dimension

- Promotion of recognition of prior learning
- Promotion and support of research and development
- Promotion of cooperation in production of learning and teaching material
- Improvement of education standards

Institutional and political dimension

- Development of human and institutional capacity in critical areas to promote economic development
- Development of human and institutional capacity in critical areas to promote social and economic development
- Capacity building in institutional management
- Fostering regional identity and cooperation through networking, sharing of information, expertise and resources
- Maximising efficiency of higher education
- Strengthening core skills in education policy formulation, research and management

Social dimension

- Coordination and support efforts to fight HIV/AIDS
- Promotion of gender mainstreaming
- Promotion of special needs education
- Increase of access to education (also in lifelong and distance learning)

The overall goal is in harmony with the SADC goal 'to achieve sustainable development and economic growth, alleviate poverty and enhance the standard and quality of life of the people of Southern Africa and support the socially disadvantaged through deeper regional cooperation and integration.' (SADC HRD Sector Coordinating Unit 2001, 4).

The SADC Technical Committee on Higher Education and Training & Research and Development (TCHETRD) was only launched in February 2002, five years after the signature of the Protocol. As priority areas the Committee identified the following issues to be followed up to 2007.

- Improving equitable access to higher education and training
- Funding for higher education and research
- Creating and enhancing an enabling environment for the promotion of higher education and research
- Networking and information dissemination
- Institutional capacity building and optimal learning and teaching.

The TCHETRD considered the establishment of a sub-committee on science and technology but reorganisation plans of SADC led to other decisions. (SADC HRD Annual Progress Report 2001/2002, 16).

With the restructuring of SADC organisational structures, the sector of education has been submitted to the Directorate of Social and Human Development and Special Programmes (SHDSP), whereas the sector of science and technology will be coordinated by the Department of Strategic Planning, Gender and Policy Harmonisation headed by the Chief Director at the SADC Secretariat in Gabarone.

The differentiation of the two strongly interdependent sectors was made, as it was assumed, that higher education and research refer to the 'academic' frame of reference, while science and technology refer more to the overall strategic planning as a cross-section issue.

According to the restructuring plan of SADC all the Technical Committees were dissolved. The Human Resources Development Sector, like all other Sector Coordinating Units, ceased to operate from Swaziland. It was relocated to the SADC Secretariat, under the Directorate of Social and Human Development. The permanent structures will be drastically reduced. The new approach to foster the implementation of the Protocol will consist in task oriented ad hoc committees and working groups of experts of the field.

4. Implementation of the Protocol – Instruments and Developments

In general it can be stated that the implementation of the Protocol is progressing slowly compared to other regional integration processes for example on the economic sector. With the process of restructuring and the dissolution of the Technical Committees, it nearly came to a stand still of activities. Only those programmes were continued that already were at an advanced stage and functioned well.

Common policies and strategies had to be developed to implement the Protocol. This process took some time and is now interrupted by the restructuring activities of the SADC infrastructure. For the implementation process itself, the different capacity building programmes constituted the core activities. These programmes were complemented by the conceptualisation of mobility programmes and the creation of a regional 'corporative actor' that is explicitly created to implement the Protocol on Education and Training on the level of the higher education institutions.

Another activity to help implement and guarantee the sustainability of the SADC Protocol and Training was the interlinking with other regional and international initiatives.

4.1. Capacity building programmes as instruments

The major instrument to foster the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training are the different programmes for capacity building of key actors.

SADC Initiative in Educational Policy Development Planning and Management

A central programme for human resource development and capacity building is the 'Initiative in Education Policy Development Planning and Management' in order to achieve sustainable education development. This initiative was successfully raising international funds from the Netherlands, Sweden and the World Bank.

One of the first instruments was the creation of the Education Policy Support Initiative (EPSI) implemented in 2000. EPSI operates in the areas of training programmes, policy capacity building fora, joint policy activities and research, networking and information dissemination.

Within the EPSI, three SADC centres specialising in Education Policy, Planning and Management have been identified within universities of member countries (University of Dar Es Salaam, Universidade Pedagogica, University of Witwatersrand). The aim of these Centres of Specialisation is to deliver training programmes within the areas of education policy review and sector analysis, financial planning and management, management of education delivery, monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation as well as information management.

Target groups of the EPSI training programmes are mainly senior Ministry officials (mainly education planning practitioners), but also representatives of non-governmental education agencies as well as higher education institutions' managers. Until 2004, a substantial number of experts have participated at the EPSI training programmes. EPSI is one of the projects that continued during the restructuring process.

Another initiative was the implementation of a Policy Capacity Building Forum on 'Managing Change in Education' to facilitate policy dialogue and information exchange in the region.

Further projects were the development of a database of SADC government contacts, institutions and experts as well as a database on SADC experts in education, planning and management (SADC HRD Sector, Annual Report 2001/2002, 22-23).

A programme that, according to the above mentioned annual report, did not report major progress was the SADC Science and Mathematics Programme for improving teacher education in mathematics and science.

Other programmes designed to contribute to capacity building in the region were the Training for SADC Organs and for the Human Resources Development Sector

Coordinating Unit. As a consequence of the restructuring process, the programmes for capacity building for SADC organs and the SADC HRD SCU were interrupted, due to the closure of the mentioned institutions.

A successful initiative was the establishment of a regional Centre of Specialisation for Public Sector Administration and Management (CESPAM). CESPAM is run by the University of Botswana and offers a Masters programme in Public Sector Administration and Management as well as short-term executive development programmes offered for middle level managers and administrators in the public, private and para-statal sectors (some of them from higher education). Between 1999 and 2001, 37 SADC nationals have participated in the programme, funded by scholarships of the German and Belgium governments as well as by other donors. Short-term trainings were supported by the German GTZ (SADC HRD Sector Annual Progress Report 2001-2002, 25-26).

Another parallel initiative that is aimed to regional capacity building is the so-called Zambezi Forum on Higher Education (ZFHE) sponsored by the World Bank. The objectives of the Forum are to bring together stakeholders of the higher education sector, mainly in Southern Africa. The forum is supposed to enhance the capacity of higher education in Africa and to transform its institutions in order to maximise their contributions to local and global innovation. Activities planned are the formation of a network of relevant actors, financial support for activities and outputs that nurture capacities for innovation, improvement of communication to enable collaboration and institutional governance that ensures an efficient use of resources and a high quality of outputs. The Zambezi Forum on Higher Education will regularly host meetings of SADC policy makers and representatives of the 'innovation chain'.

4.2. A Regional Universities' Association as Integration Instrument

An initiative that was not directly steered by SADC policies but as a regional bottom-up initiative by stakeholders of the sector, is the creation of a regional Vice-Chancellors' Association and a regional universities association. According to a SADC senior official, Letsiwe Dlamini (Directorate of Social and Human Development and Special Programmes), there has been co-ordinated stakeholder networking in higher education of the region from as far back as 1994, when the former SADC HRD SCU convened a regional Conference on 'Access to Higher Education in the SADC region'.⁷

The formation of a SADC Vice-Chancellors' Association is welcomed by the SADC Executive Secretary, Prega Ramsamy. It is considered as an important initiative and complementing the SADC Offices' and the Ministry's work. The SADC Vice-

⁷ The deliberations and some outputs of that conference culminated into what today constitutes some of the provisions of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training, particularly those that have to do with Centres of Specialisation.

Chancellors' Association is supposed to function as a think tank and vehicle in the implementation of higher education related articles of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training and to fill existing gaps in the lack of capacity in the national Ministries.

Up to now four consultative workshops or meetings of the SADC Vice-Chancellors have taken place in Windhoek, Mauritius, Cape Town and Lusaka. In 2002, some Vice-Chancellors of SADC universities met in a consultative meeting in Windhoek. Background were different meetings of the Working Group on Higher Education (WGHE) of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) as well as of the African Association of Universities (AAU) to address specific sector related problems in sub-regional groups. SADC was considered as one of the sub-regional groups. The first follow up meeting of the SADC Sub-Committee was chaired by Peter Katjavivi, founding Vice-Chancellor of the University of Namibia. He widened the perspective and initiated the foundation of an institutionalised SADC Vice-Chancellors' Association, namely a Regional University Association, that shall become a central actor in the higher education policy formulation of the SADC region and the implementation of the Protocol on Education and Training.

In the first meeting it was agreed that work would be done on the role of universities with regard to HIV/AIDS, the creation of an online educational research journal as well as tracer studies on past university studies. However, issues of operationalisation and implementation of the SADC Protocol on Education were not touched directly at that point but it was agreed to consider the implementation of the SADC Protocol as priority for the follow-up meetings (UNAM & Otaala 2000, 1-2). In the following meetings, the priority issues of the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training were identified and first steps of its operationalisation discussed.

In the following meetings, the institutionalisation of the informal network as the SADC Vice-Chancellors' Association was decided and concrete steps were prepared. A Technical Committee was appointed to oversee the preparatory work for the establishment of the Association. The preparatory work was coordinated by the South African University Vice-Chancellors' Association (SAUVCA). In May 2004, at the last consultative workshop in Zambia, a draft report was presented that identified the objectives and the modus operandi of the Regional University Association. One of the issues discussed was the integration of the Zambezi Forum on Higher Education into this Association. The official launch of the SADC Vice-Chancellors' Association is planned for October 2004.

It is expected that this new association, involving experts and stakeholders from the 'grass root' level of key institutions for higher education and research, namely the universities, will effect a push in the regional integration process on this sector.

4.3. Student mobility within SADC

One of the major instruments to foster regional integration on the sector of higher education and research is that of student mobility. A world renowned success story of a fruitful regional student mobility scheme is that of ERASMUS, later SOCRATES/ERASMUS, funded by the European Commission. Since 1987, more than 1.3 Mio European students have been exchanged within the European Community Member States and between partner countries in Central Europe and other associated European countries. This number of transnationally mobile students is approximately the number of the entire Namibian population – just to illustrate the scope of the exchanges.⁸

When we speak about student mobility in the SADC region we should differentiate between two different types of mobile students: 'free mover' and students participating in a funding scheme or in a more or less organised programme (e.g. sandwich programme, integrated study programme, exchange programme).

In the SADC Protocol on Education and Training it was agreed that 5 % of all available study places should be reserved to admit of students of SADC member countries (Article 7). In 2002, more than 5 % of all students enrolled in South African universities and polytechnics were SADC students. Some higher education institutions in Namibia and South Africa already exceed the 5 % quota significantly.

It was agreed that within 10 years of the Protocol entering into force SADC students should be treated like home students for purposes of fees and accommodation. South Africa has already decided to treat SADC students as home students and treating them equally with regard to fees and accommodation. With the introduction of the 'citizen status' for SADC students, the problem of under-preparedness of students of certain countries will be a major hindrance in transnational student mobility that needs political attention.

At SADC level, a programme to foster intra-SADC student mobility was launched as part of the implementation strategy of the Protocol. The Technical Committee on Scholarships and Training Awards agreed on funding students and graduates from the following fields of study: Medicine and Health, Agriculture, Information Technology, Engineering, Education (Mathematics and Science Education), Finance and Tourism. (SADC HRD Sector, TCSTA, Record of 8th meeting, 6). A number of training institutions have been identified in several SADC countries. The selection of some institutions does not always seem to follow academic quality criteria but rather political rationales. It is therefore doubtful, whether the programmes of the receiving institutions will fit the purpose of capacity building in the selected field. Some of the chosen institutions cannot even be considered as institutions of higher learning in a strict sense.

⁸ The intra-European mobility flows are often referred to as horizontal mobility between more or less equal partners (TEICHLER 1999).

The running scholarship programme foresees 42 grants annually, three provided by each member country. The Belgium Government is expected to add another 800 grants until the year 2009. According to the Annual Report 2001/2002 the SADC Scholarships and Training Awards Programme have not been implemented as responses from donors were still awaited (SADC HRD Sector 2002, 20-21).

The poor statistical data available on student mobility within the SADC region, reveals a strong southbound student flow.⁹ In 2002, South Africa attracted more than 30,000 students from SADC countries according to statistics of the Department of Education in Pretoria (DoE, 2003). It is reported that in 2002 the enrolments of SADC students increased up to 10 % at the University of Namibia (UNAM). Some South African Universities, mainly historically white universities have a much higher number of SADC enrolments than agreed in the Protocol (e.g. the University of Cape Town or the Rhodes University).

The highest ratio of SADC students in South Africa originates from Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia.

SADC Students enrolled at South African Universities and Technikons 2002

Country of Origin	Enrolments
Angola	679
Botswana	6.037
Congo (DR)	296
Lesotho	3.383
Malawi	357
Mauritius	1.627
Mozambique	581
Namibia	5.389
Seychelles	4
Swaziland	1.621
Tanzania	206
Zambia	2.445
Zimbabwe	9.099
Total SADC Students in South Africa	31.724
Percentage of SADC students in South Africa	5,04 %

Source: Department of Education, Pretoria 2003

⁹ Another aspect relevant for student mobility and regional capacity building is that of brain drain to the US, UK and other non-African countries and its impact to the regional sector. This aspect is not considered here, as it would exceed the scope of the paper.

Even within South Africa we can observe a certain pattern of student mobility. SADC student mobility is mainly taking place to so-called 'historically white universities' (HWUs). In 2002 there was significantly low student mobility to three of the 'historically black universities', the University of Venda, University of Transkei and University of Zululand (DoE, 2004).

The transnational student flows of SADC students to South African universities, especially to historically white universities, can be interpreted as vertical student mobility, a transnational mobility to higher education institutions and systems that are presumed to present a better quality standard than those of the home country of the student.

The instrument of student mobility in the existing form of vertical, non-reciprocal mobility can not necessarily be regarded as an integration instrument as it has a potentially disintegrative dimension of brain drain. It leads to an uneven geographical distribution of capacity building. It also needs to be stressed that most student mobility is not taking place as 'coordinated' or 'programme related' flows. Individual student mobility of the so-called 'free mover' is the predominant form of mobility, although there are some bilateral agreements between universities to provide cooperative study programmes.

According to the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) no data base on the international and regional cooperative programmes has been established yet, so it is not possible to have central data on organised or programme-based student mobility within SADC.

4.4. Teaching Staff Mobility as Integration Instrument

Another major instrument to foster regional integration on the sector of higher education is that of teaching staff mobility. Here also we have to distinguish between 'free movers', seeking permanent employment in another SADC country ('vertical mobility') and organised teaching staff exchanges or teachers delegated within special programmes (curricular or capacity building programmes).

The Technical Committee on Scholarships and Training Awards supported the idea of a Staff Exchange Programme, which was supposed to be sponsored by the Belgium Government. This programme is in an advanced planning stage, but due to the restructuring process, it could not yet be implemented. There are reflections to link it up with a bigger SADC Intra-Regional Skills Development Programme.

As one of the first measures, the Technical Committee on Scholarships and Training Awards was suggested to first build up a database on the regional needs and the available training resources in the different Member States (SADC TCSTA 2001, 8.). There are no SADC statistics on permanent or temporary teaching staff by nationality or on teaching staff exchange. According to the South African higher education statistics there seems to be an attractiveness for 'free movers' (teaching and research), seeking academic employment at South African Universities. In

2000, a total of 164 academics from SADC were employed at South African public universities and technikons. This flow could be interpreted as vertical academic mobility. However, the ration of SADC academics remains quite marginal (0.4 %) compared to the 36,184 South Africans and the 832 teaching and research staff members employed (Pillay et al. 2003, 33-34).

Up to 2004, the development of student and teaching staff or scholars' mobility within the SADC region indicates more disintegration or absorption, rather than regional integration. If student and staff mobility is to function as an integration instrument, the aspect of exchange and reciprocity should be strengthened by targeted mobility programmes and funding schemes. The SADC officials are aware of this problem and plan to steer against this trend by channelling and funding mobility in a way that it contributes to the capacity building of those countries that cannot meet the quantitative and qualitative needs in the provision of higher education by themselves.

4.5. Accreditation, Academic Recognition and Quality Assurance

In 1995, a Technical Committee on Certification and Accreditation was established with the purpose to develop and recommend policy guidelines, instruments, structures and procedures that should facilitate equating, harmonising and eventual standardisation of accreditation and certification of qualification (SADC Technical Committee on Accreditation and Certification 2001, 3.).

While in the beginning priority was set on the development and facilitation of National Qualification Frameworks within the Member States, in the last few years, major efforts have been targeted to the development of a Regional Qualification Framework (RQF). There is a common consensus that it would be synergetic to develop an overall qualification framework for the region. Some critics argue that not all countries would need a separate National Qualifications' Framework as a Regional Qualifications' Framework could fit the same purpose, especially for the 'smaller' higher education systems. A major input into the process is given by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), which gathers broad expertise through its cross-sector co-operative development of a National Qualifications Framework for the large South African education system.

An initial stocktaking of existing structures of the educational systems and qualification frameworks revealed major disparities in the education structures of SADC countries. Disparities were identified especially from junior secondary education on:

- in the entry requirements to Universities,
- in the minimum length of universities studies and
- in the large institutional spectrum of responsibilities for accreditation and certification (ibd.).

Some SADC Vice-Chancellors discussed the establishment of a regional Quality Assurance Centre and the creation of a Regional Accreditation Board as instruments to facilitate the implementation of the SADC Protocol (Otaala 2002, 12). Countries like South Africa do not favour this idea as they are not willing to give away quality assurance authority to a supranational body. The lack of resources will most likely hinder the realisation of this project anyhow.

The issue of the harmonisation and eventual standardisation of university entrance requirements was discussed in a meeting of some SADC Vice-Chancellors. There was consensus that this issue is a major challenge, but that it is only achievable for former SADCCS States, where the minimum entrance requirement is an O-level after twelve years of schooling. Concern was expressed with regard to the South African minimum standards and the differentiated system of Matric Examination exemption, a system that will be replaced in the near future, as there has already been a decision made by the South African Ministry of Education to abolish this model. The Further Education and Training Certificate (FECT) will be effective in South Africa from 2007. The group of SADC Vice-Chancellors has been recommended to establish a Task Team that investigates and makes recommendations with regard to this issue (Otaala, 2002, 11-12).

Parallel to this SADC oriented initiatives, a number of bilateral co-operations has been initiated in the field of quality assurance and the formulation of national standards and national quality frameworks. As the South African quality assurance system is very elaborate, several universities and polytechnics in the region as well as Ministries and non-governmental associations were seeking South African assistance in building up their own quality assurance institutions and mechanisms. The collaboration between the Council on Higher Education (CHE) with Mozambique or with the University and Polytechnic of Namibia may stand exemplarily for many co-operations (i.e. those of the Southern African Quality Agency or the South African University Vice Chancellor's Association SAUVCA). A regional, but not SADC-based conference in this field is planned and lead-managed by the CHE to take place later in the year 2004.

Closely linked to the issue of academic recognition is the issue of credit transfer in case of transnational mobility. This topic has not really been touched so far, as it was assumed that credit transfer is more a bilateral matter between individual institutions than of the entire sector.

A regional system of credit transfer thus would have the potential to really link different strands of the regional integration policy on the sector. It could establish an integrative part of the mobility schemes, of the study programmes and degree structures and serve as a basis for equivalence agreements. It could even be a link between life long learning, the recognition of prior learning and university studies. The heterogeneity of the SADC HE sector presents a huge challenge in respect to regional schemes of quality assurance, academic recognition and credit transfer.

4.6. Study and Degree Structures

The harmonisation of the study and degree structures is one of the long-term goals of the regional integration process in higher education. Until now, there is a striking heterogeneity of study and degree structures between the systems and also within the different national systems.

In 2001, the Technical Committee on Accreditation and Certification carried out an assessment of the existing structures, degrees and qualifications offered by universities and colleges within the region to get an overview of the status quo and identify regional incompatibilities. What seems to be a common feature at least of those countries with Anglo-Saxon tradition and in Mozambique is the two-tier structure in higher education, undergraduate and postgraduate. Some of the systems only provide courses on undergraduate level (often leading to a Bachelor's degree) or below (Certificate or Diploma), only few have a developed post-graduate sector providing Masters and PhD or doctoral degrees. The length of study varies broadly, even within some countries. The creation of structural convergence in order to facilitate intra-regional mobility, will be one of the major challenges for regional integration of the SADC HE sector.

4.7. Curricular Cooperation

One of the central issues in the SADC Protocol on Education and Training is the curricular cooperation in undergraduate and postgraduate studies (i.e. joint design, development, production and use of learning and teaching materials, joint or integrated programmes, joint teaching, exchange of students and teachers within collaborative programmes). There are a number of regional curricular collaborations, but most of them are bilateral collaborations between individual universities based on specific agreements or partnership arrangements.

Particularly in 'expensive' educative programmes, for example, in Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, Engineering, Technology, Chemistry, Physics and other Natural Sciences. We find a number of cross-border collaborations mostly on an advanced study level (Masters or PhD). According to some experts, there are more curricular co-operations with universities overseas than within the region. As in the other issues, there is no central database of the collaborative programmes offered in the region. An assessment of all the programmes in a central database and an identification of best practice examples could help to identify the regional needs and potentials.

4.8. International linkages

As regional integration of higher education is part of a more encompassing multi-level process, linking up to the international and global level is of fundamental importance. To enhance the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training and to guarantee its sustainability, a number of initiatives have been started

to link the diverse discussions and activities to different developments and initiatives on an African and international level. Inter-linkages and discussion platforms have been established with UNESCO, the World Bank, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), the African Association of Universities (AAU) as well as with the NEPAD process.

The first steps have been taken to initiate the EU-SADC dialogue on higher education and regional integration via the University of Namibia, the Centre for Research on Higher Education and Work at the University in Kassel and corporative actors in the Europeanisation of Higher Education, namely the German Rector's Conference (HRK) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

5. Hindrances for regional integration

As the governance on the higher education sector has become increasingly complex, only little progress could be made in improving regional integration in the sector of higher education and research. However, first decisive first steps have been taken to implement the relevant paragraphs of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training. We can identify different reasons for the relative slow implementation process. Most of the indicated reasons are not particularly sector-specific.

5.1. Lack of financial and human resources

The lack of financial and human resources is one of the most common arguments brought up in discussions. The support-structures on regional, on national and on institutional level are weak and fragile. There is only a very small team of SADC officials on the regional level designated to guide and coordinate the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training. Most member countries did not create specific posts for the coordination of regional reforms within their countries. It is assumed that senior officials add these new tasks to their regular agenda. Also on institutional level there seems to be no clear support-structure with special task representatives.

In addition to this weak support-structure the financial means to foster change are far from being sufficient. This is true for the mobility schemes and grants, for seed funding and incentives for regionally integrative measures as well as for the means to coordinate the sector reforms nationally and regionally.

5.2. Heterogeneity and Fragmentation of HE Systems

The extreme heterogeneity in size, quality, capacity and resources, structures, cultures and traditions seem to make structural and procedural harmonisation a sheer dream. The fragmentation within the national education systems themselves often show de-linked education sectors where different Ministries or authorities

responsible (e.g. Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education) do not contribute to the likeliness of a unified and harmonised SADC area of higher education and research. The one-sided international attractiveness of the South African higher education and research system and the quality gap to other SADC countries will cause additional challenges for regional integration of the sector.

5.3. Uneven distribution of capacity

A distinctive feature of the heterogeneity of the higher education sector is that of the uneven distribution of capacity in the region. This does not only refer to the higher education and research institutions as such but also to the sector coordination on political level. Some countries have a differentiated system of governmental and non-governmental actors and institutions that shape the HE sector. South Africa, for example, has a vivid and dynamic higher education cooperation culture driven by intermediary bodies, (Council on Higher Education, South African Vice-Chancellor's Association etc.), while other countries only have a 'one university, one polytechnic and one Ministry of Education' higher education system. Due to their small size, they don't need intermediary or coordinating bodies.

5.4. Inconsistency of Policies

We find inconsistencies of policies on the SADC level as well as on the national level.

Inconsistencies of policies (or discontinuity of policies) are visible with regard to the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP). RISDP is aimed at providing the SADC Member States 'with a coherent and comprehensive development agenda on social and economic policies over the next fifteen years' (SADC 2004, 7). However, it reveals little coherence and continuity with regard to Human Resource Development policies in general and higher education and training (Article 7) and research and development (Article 8) in particular (as part of the human resource development policies).

Although it is stated in the RISDP that "SADC Member States accord priority to social and human development ... as one of the core areas of integration" (RISDP, 39), less than one page is devoted to the entire topic. Higher education is just mentioned in an enumeration amongst other fields of activity. Sector-crossing social aspects seem to get more attention (i.e. gender, disabilities, AIDS) while sector specific aspects are not mentioned at all. The only explicitly mentioned aspects directly related to education (not even explicitly to higher education) are 'exchange of teacher/student programmes, exchange of experiences as well as inclusion of HIV and AIDS in the curriculum and gender mainstreaming and equality in the development of educational and training materials' (RISDP, 40).

There are only few higher education aspects that are touched, mainly deficiencies like 'low tertiary enrolment rates, concern of lack of competitiveness, low levels of

efficiency, high repetition and dropout rate, high overhead expenses, negative impact of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, limited access to high level training, inequitable access especially by disadvantaged groups, such as women, disabled people and people from rural areas, mismatch between demand and supply for skilled labour, lack of comparable standards and qualifications across all training institutions, brain drain, need for the education system to enhance employability'.

There is also little direct linkage to higher education and research specific aspects in the rest of the document. One of the linkages made – though not explicitly linked to Articles 7 and 8 of the Protocol – is the improvement of regional collaborative research in the field of agricultural research and training. (RISDP, 35)

In Chapter 4 of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan, dealing with the priority intervention areas, 'Science and Technology' have a separate sub-chapter, while higher education is not mentioned at all. The overemphasis on science and technology matches the new 'Zeitgeist' that is emerging globally with the overarching economic rationale aimed at 'globalisation mainstreaming' at a quick pace (Hahn 2004). It is overlooked that science and technology do not flourish in empty spaces. The backbone of science, technology and innovation is a sound education system, especially on the level of higher education and research training.

The prioritisation within the RISDP leaves the impression of a predominant influence of some sector or lobby groups. It is not clear whether the little inclusion of education aspects in general, and higher education and research aspects in particular into the RISDP, is just due to the absence of relevant lobby groups or if there are other reasons for the low appreciation and attention to this sector. In just analyzing this document under the perspective of the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training (Article 7 and 8) one has the impression as if nothing has happened and nothing had been discussed and agreed upon since signing of the Protocol in 1997. Under the paragraph of the Human Resource Development Section 'Challenges of Policies and Strategies' no word is spent on the strategies for the entire sector. (RISDP, 40) The little attention to aspects of higher education and research in the RISDP is not likely to predict a more successful implementation process of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training.

Inconsistency of policies on the national level is evident in the immigration policies, the policy of visa and residence for international students, teaching staff and scholars. The missing link between the policies of regional integration and those of Home Affairs seems to be one of the major practical barriers to regional mobility.

5.5. Lack of instruments for sector coordination and integration

Though higher education and research are widely accepted as being key sectors in economic and social development there is little link within the RISDP to other central issues like i.e. to the science and technology. The issue of science and technology

is a section on its own without any explicit linkage to higher education and research, key arenas where new knowledge is stored, generated and transferred. This conceptual decoupling of highly interdependent sectors can have different reasons, i.e. the relative marginality of research within the SADC higher education sector, its lack of quality, or just the influence of lobbyists of independent commercially oriented research institutes and R&D enterprises. In any case, this strict division will not help to implement the Article 8 of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training, and there is a justified concern, that - according to experiences already made in NEPAD - higher education and research will be far less prioritised than science and technology, although the latter can not flourish without the input of the first.

The lack of coordination is also visible on national levels, involving different actors with few inter-sector networking.

One of the main reasons for the retarded implementation of the Protocol is the lack of adequate instruments that can foster regional integration. Major instruments would be well funded and elaborated mobility schemes and funding programmes. Leave alone, that it has not already been put into practice, the launched mobility scheme for students and teachers is much too small to have any sustainable effects on the regional integration. A critical mass of teacher and student mobility as well as a balanced mobility is necessary to initiate grass-roots developments in regional co-operation and integration.

The lack of regional authorities that could foster, coordinate and regulate regional integration is another hindrance.

5.6. Lack of data and information

One of the major deficiencies for the implementation process is the lack of systematically generated and centrally stored and analysed data. There is no regional database on higher education and research institutions, student enrolments and graduate rates, student mobility, entry requirements, teaching staff, teaching staff mobility, national, international or co-operative programmes, study structure, degree structure, accreditation, national and third party funding, salaries, partnerships, collaborative projects, research cooperation etc.

The most recent UNESCO publication on educational statistics world-wide reveals the weak data on HE in SADC countries. Some countries do not provide any or hardly any data e.g. Seychelles, DR Congo and Angola. Others only provide very weak and inconsistent data. Only South Africa seems to have an elaborated data system of higher education and research.

To analyse progress made in regional integration and to formulate policies you need to know what is the starting point of development. The elaboration of systematic data generation and centralised databases seem to be one of the most urgent needs for a successful implementation of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training.

5.7. Lack of concreteness and operationalisation

Most of the issues mentioned in the Protocol and the derived strategies and measures suffer from a lack of concreteness and operationalisation. Still seven years after the signing of the Protocol many issues are still being discussed. Even the Protocol itself has now been translated into all official national languages of SADC (SADC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS 2004). Declarations of intentions are repeatedly expressed, while not much is happening on a national and institutional basis. Few goals were translated into measurable parameters, the 5 % quota of admissions reserved for SADC students is one of the few positive examples. Operationalisation thus is also very much dependent on resources. Another point is that priorities change too often and less central or social issues that are not specifically sector related (i.e. gender mainstreaming, equity for disability) get priority status before the central sector specific points e.g. quality of programmes, graduates, teachers, research, management and institutional and sectoral profiles.

5.8. Lack of ownership

The SADC Protocol on Education and Training has widely been a result of consultations on governmental level with little involvement of stakeholders from the higher education sector. It can thus be interpreted as a top-down initiative that now struggles with the appropriate support from those who are key actors for its successful implementation: the Vice Chancellors and Rectors of higher education institutions, intermediary agencies like Vice-Chancellor's or rector's conferences, education or quality assurance agencies as well as the individual professors engaged in academic self-administration, students, employers and other stakeholders. The creation of the SADC Vice-Chancellor's Conference (SADC VCC) in 2004 with its explicit aim to implement the Protocol according to the needs of the 'grass-root'-level of the sector could enhance the feeling of ownership significantly.

Another reason for the lack of ownership lies in the lack of publicity the SADC Protocol on Education and Training is receiving. There seems still to be quite a number of higher education managers and stakeholders that do not know about the Protocol as they have not yet received copies (Otaala 2002, 10). The translations of the Protocols have only recently been accomplished and will hopefully contribute to the publicity and cognisance of the Protocol. A new information campaign, coupled with the RISDP and SADC VCC advertisement campaign could solve this problem.

6. A limited and asymmetric regional integration pattern with different sub-variants as future scenario

There is one major pattern evolving in the regional integration of the higher education sector, which indicates limited and asymmetric regional integration of the SADC sector of higher education and research. It is not likely that all the above

mentioned deficiencies will lead to a fully integrated SADC area of higher education and research. This main scenario may have different sub-variants.

6.1. Sub-Variant A: South Africanisation of the SADC higher education sector

To a certain extent there may be a South Africanisation of the SADC HE sector in the sense of standard and agenda setting with regard to the topics discussed, policy, academic standards in teaching and research, quality assurance and accreditation, governance models, and innovations. Its expertise might help South Africa to expand its local hegemony into an ever-growing regional leadership where South Africa will serve as frame of reference for policy and planning on all system levels of other SADC countries. A South Africanisation of the SADC HE sector as a 'politically steered and targeted process' is probably not in the interest of either stakeholder (also not from a South African perspective) but it might just turn out as a social reality.

6.2. Sub-Variant B: Sub-SADC higher education sector as southern African core network

South Africa may form the heart of a southern African core network together with some of the countries in the region. These may be countries where strong cooperative links already exist, where common interests and mutual benefits are identified for the future. To enhance efficiency in cooperation, the core network will consist bilateral and multilateral initiatives outside the political arena of SADC. Communication will be effected in informal, thematic networks.

The evolution of an integrative core network around the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) is the most likely. This core network could consist the SACU Member States South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. In fact the longstanding close collaborative relationships between Swaziland, Botswana and Lesotho and the close cooperation of Namibia with South Africa after Namibian independence could be regarded as the two integration poles of a Sub-SADC higher education sector. A SACU-based multilateral cooperation in thematic networks could establish the avant-garde of regional integration in higher education.

6.3. Sub-Variant C: Bi-polar HE area with a small front state corridor HE network

The stronger integration of South Africa into the global market for higher education and research might contribute to a widening gap between South Africa and the rest of SADC. To reduce, to some extent, dependency of the 'big brother' in the South, it is also possible that some neighbouring countries, i.e. the former 'front states' and Namibia will cooperate more closely and form a corridor network. This corridor might become attractive for those students and scholars of the region that do not get

access to the high quality system of South Africa. This network could serve as a second pole in the SADC area of higher education as anti-pole to South Africa. Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Tanzania could participate in the 'front state' or 'east-west' corridor.

6.4. Sub-Variant D: SADC area of higher education with disintegrative dimensions

It is most likely that some of the SADC member countries in short or medium may not integrate into the SADC HE community. Some members might remain disintegrated: The Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola and Seychelles might remain on the margin of regional integration initiatives as the gaps and disparities are insurmountable within the current context and the limited resources. A collapse of dysfunctional, smaller, under-developed or under-funded HE systems of SADC member countries might result in an exodus of academia and students towards other SADC higher education systems or elsewhere in the world.

6.5. Sub-variant E: Trans-regional Southern and Eastern African core network

Actual cooperative initiatives indicate another possible development. Those SADC core countries that identify common interests in regional higher education and research cooperation could intensify their linkages to eastern African HE systems. South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique, Tanzania on the one hand and Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda on the other hand could develop a multilateral trans-regional core network.

6.6. Sub-variant F: Regional disintegration through South Africa's linking up and integration into the global scientific community

To a certain extent a regional disintegration in higher education is probable through the linking up and integration of South Africa into the global scientific community and cooperation networks while leaving the rest of the SADC countries behind. The different national capacities and with it the speed of sectoral developments, innovation and reform might lead to a widening gap between South Africa and the other SADC Member States. This development is the more likely to happen, the slower the regional integration process proceeds. The often predicted 'globalisation Apartheid' (Moja 2003) would be the effect. Substantial international funds to channel balanced regional integration and even capacity building could minimise the disintegrative trends. This could also be in the interest of South Africa as it would guarantee stability at its 'back door'.

6.7. The SADC Vice-Chancellors and the integrative leap

Some hopes for a real push in regional integration on the higher education and research sector are expressed with regard to the creation of the SADC Vice-Chancellors' Association or a Regional Universities' Association in October 2004. It is assumed that the leaders of the grass-root level, namely the level of the universities, will significantly shape the integration process and add a dynamic dimension to it. Some even expect a real integrative leap, when the expertise and engagement of the bearer of change potentials come into play. The strengthening of the feeling of ownership by this decisive stakeholder group might actually help to push the process forward.

Achievements, outlook and further research

In 1997, the SADC Member States agreed to promote regional cooperation and integration in the education sector and formulated the SADC Protocol of Education and Training. Articles 7 and 8 of this Protocol refer to the sector of higher education and research. Since 1997, slow progress has been made in implementing the mentioned Protocol.

Three major activities have been initiated by the SADC Secretariat:

- the systematic study of the field,
- identification of fields of action and priority issues and
- development of strategies.

The three major strands of strategies (worked out by the different Technical Committees and other stakeholders) are:

- establishment of programmes for capacity building of senior managers in relevant fields,
- establishment of platforms for dialogue with policy makers (regional and worldwide), higher education managers and representatives from business,
- development of a Regional Qualifications Framework and
- conceptualising of funding schemes.

Some of the initiated projects (i.e. mobility and scholarship schemes, the establishment of a centralised comprehensive database for the entire education sector and related fields) have not been put into practice yet.

Some core processes of regional collaboration and integration still mainly happen on a non-SADC 'steered' level, i.e. student mobility (mostly vertical mobility of free movers towards the South African higher education system) and teaching staff mobility. Curriculum cooperation, collaborative projects (i.e. in research or quality assurance) run bilaterally between individual higher education institutions or other bodies from the education sector, outside the formal frame of SADC. The new

SADC Vice Chancellors' Association will most probably contribute to more multilateral cooperation and concerted action on the SADC level.

However it can be stated, that in the first years after signing the Protocol, the way to its implementation has been paved. The prerequisites, terms of references and necessary structures are prepared for further action.

The stronger linkage of the regional integration of higher education and research into the African Association of Universities' activities and the sharing of experiences with the Europeanisation processes of the sector could enhance progress in the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training. The new EU-ACP programme to be launched by the European Commission and EuropeAid to foster co-operation in higher education could be used to help implement the Articles 7 and 8 of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training.

One of the major success factors for the regional integration of higher education and research in SADC will depend from the progress made in the NEPAD process. If higher education and research is to gain a more prominent place within the NEPAD policies and strategies, than it has today, it will likely have a positive influence on the political consciousness of key actors in the SADC sector (Essy 2003).

The implementation of Article 7 and 8 of the SADC Protocol implies major reforms and innovations in all higher education and research systems of the signatory countries. For these to be realised within 20 years after signing the SADC Protocol of Education and Training, more financial input is needed and more political support and engagement is required on all system levels and from all stakeholders. The institutionalisation of the new SADC Vice-Chancellors' Association in October 2004 will most probably add a more dynamic integrative dimension to the process and accelerate the speed and scope of implementation of the Protocol.

A fully integrated and harmonised 'SADC Area of Higher Education and Research' however remains more a vision than a realistic goal. The most probable future scenario is that of a limited and asymmetric regional integration of the SADC sector of higher education and research with a mix of elements of the above mentioned scenarios. Due to the above mentioned deficiencies, it is not likely to lead to a fully integrated 'SADC Area of Higher Education and Research'. But the existing 'spirit of partnership' that is guiding mutual assistance, solidarity and affinity of relevant stakeholders, in particular on the level of the intermediary organisations and the universities themselves, will strengthen the cooperative regional ties. Without any doubt there will be an implicit South African leadership with regard to presumed quality, standards, agenda setting and attractiveness.

Application oriented higher education research could support and guide the regional integration process in the SADC countries. A first step could consist in a stocktaking of data and information, compiling existing studies and documentation of the status quo (national policy and governance structures, student, teaching staff mobility, mobility of scholars, curricular cooperation, research cooperation, identification of

existing or potential centres of excellence, study and degree structure, quality assurance, recognition and credit transfer etc.) On the one hand, this could help to identify existing potentials or to identify gaps where further action is needed. On the other hand, the gathered information could serve as a manual for policy planners and practitioners, active in implementing the SADC Protocol on Education and Training.

Governance on the higher education and research sector has become increasingly complex. The regionalisation (or internationalisation) of the sector has added another dimension to the complexity (new system level where policy is formulated, multiplication of actors, interactions and steering instruments, increasing number of stakeholders, increasing number of policy fields and intersections of policy fields, various governance structures and institutional realities etc.).

Further research could therefore focus on:

- the changing governance structures and mechanisms on regional and national level,
- the institutional change within higher education institutions of the region,

the interrelationship and compatibility of the regional integration process in higher education and research in SADC with other processes and policies on the African continent (i.e. NEPAD, AAU) and worldwide (UNESCO, World Bank, developments in the global market for higher education, GATS)

- the relation of and tensions between the internationalisation of higher education and the regional integration of higher education in SADC and
- a comparative study on the implementation of the SADC Protocol on Education and Training with the process of Europeanisation (EU and Bologna-driven).

The regional integration of the higher education and research sector in SADC is a process of political, social and economic relevance, that needs more attention from higher education researchers.

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