

Building Capacity in Tertiary Education

Quality assurance, institutional development
and the challenge of context

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Health and agility of system

- Tertiary education institutions
 - Essential drivers of the knowledge economy
 - Producers of knowledge
 - Societal structures delivering public goods through multiple externalities
 - Limited resources must produce
 - Concrete results through learning outcomes
 - Operational effectiveness of the institutions

Increased focus on quality factors

- Demand for higher skills
- Demographic pressures
- Compression of public expenditure
- Greater mobility of skilled labor
- Bologna Process – worldwide impact
 - Recognition
 - Harmonization
- Cross-border higher education

Quality Assurance

- Structured processes
- Growth in number of formal agencies
 - INQAAHE membership
 - 18 countries 1991
 - 80 countries 2005
 - Growth in number of quality assurance systems now coming from developing countries

Heterogeneity abounds

- Heterogeneity of study programs
- Heterogeneity of country contexts
 - Size
 - Population
 - Tertiary education system
 - Demographic profiles
 - Socioeconomic factors
 - System differences
 - Public / private
 - Governance / finance
 - University / non-university
 - Indigenous / cross-border
- Yet...

Convergence on quality assurance practices is real

- Many types of formalized quality assurance processes
 - Audit, accreditation, evaluation or other methodologies
 - Nearly universal elements of practice
 - Institutional or program self-assessment
 - External peer review
 - Reporting to the institutions, authorities and stakeholders
- Yet QA systems vary according to...
 - Purpose, philosophy
 - Level of state involvement
 - Tools used for assessment
 - Nature of judgments
 - Level and method of reporting
 - Nature of benefits and sanctions
 - Linkage to regulations and funding decisions
 - Involvement of professional associations

Developing countries pose particular challenges

- Building capacity for quality assurance
 - Appropriate
 - Sustainable
- Context issues
 - Weak and fragile economies
 - Limited financial resources
 - Unavailable or overstretched human resources
 - Post-conflict environments

Capacity building for quality assurance – lessons of experience

- Ideal system based on convergence model
- Manageable system based on candid assessment of needs and context
 - System creation
 - System development
 - System reform

Essential: dialogue and consensus on key issues

- Purposes
- Philosophy and incentive structures
- Audience
- Administration, autonomy, authority
- Mechanisms (i.e. accreditation or other form)
- Methodology (i.e. data, self assessment, peer review, etc.)
- Financing – costs (including opportunity costs) and source
- Human resource capacity needs
- Level and focus of analysis
- Consequences
- Link with funding to stimulate cultures of quality
- Unintended consequences

Sustainable capacity

- Ability to harness indigenous capacity
- Not only
 - Ability to cope with creation, operation, and development of the system
- But also
 - Ability to manage the evolution of the system

Sequencing is key

- Phased strategy
 - Think of big picture and long-term objectives
 - Focus on basic needs
 - Develop an evolution plan
- Involve tertiary education institutions
 - Ultimately responsible for quality
- Emphasize self assessment process
 - Develop cultures of quality based on incentives for achieving goals
- Consider most cost-effective ways to proceed
 - Institution vs. program
- Focus on human resource capacities needed
- Encourage partnerships and regional synergies
- Build systems that can accommodate both indigenous institutions and cross-border challenges
- Consider how linkages to resource allocation and stimulate cultures of quality rather than stifle them

Focus on organizational culture

- Shared philosophy, values
- Shared behaviors, habits
- Shared rules, climate
- Stability
- Sharing of experiences and learning

Develop leaders and managers of quality

- Key function of leaders
 - to create organizational culture
- Key function of managers
 - to work within the cultures created by leaders

Thank you