The Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA)

Seven Years of Regional Higher Education Advancement 2006–2012

John Butler-Adam

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sarua
southern african regional
universities association

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ISBN: 978-0-9869903-9-7

Editing: Helene Perold and Philanie Jooste for Helene Perold & Associates, Johannesburg
Typesetting, layout and proofreading: Compress.dsl, Stellenbosch

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

The authors are responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in this document and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of SARUA and do not make any commitment for the Association.

Recommended citation: Butler-Adam J (2012) *Southern African Regional Universities Association: Seven Years of Regional Higher Education Advancement 2006–2012.* Johannesburg: SARUA.

Contents

1 Introduction 1

2 Higher Education in the SADC Region:
A Brief Status Overview 5

3 Why Higher Education is Important
and How Co-operation Can Build Success 13

The 'Value' of Higher Education 14
The Value of Co-operation 20
Associations of Higher Education Institutions
and Systems 24

4 SARUA's Origins and Objectives and
How they Relate to Co-operation and Growth 29

5 Strengthening SADC Higher Education:
SARUA's Achievements 35

Regional Institutional Mapping and Identity 37
Knowledge Bases and their Significance in the Region 47
SARUA's Policy Contributions 71
Governance, Leadership and Management Courses 76
Co-operation – on the Cusp 78

6 Import: What does a Regional Association of
Universities Mean for the Future of the Region? 83

Notes 88
References 90

As told here, the story aims to set SARUA in the framework of its region, and in the social and economic context of the significance of higher education. As for SARUA itself, the telling relies on its products – documents, presentations, meetings and other seminal events. These provide a map that serves as a guide to SARUA, its aims, objectives and activities over the past seven years.

1 Introduction

This is a story of the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) – 'a' story because there can never be just one way in which to relate the events, activities and processes that constitute the reality of a living organisation, any more than there can be a single biography of a human being. Each telling is shaped by the writer and his or her intended audience and by the stage at which the story is told – in this case, as the end of a phase is reached in SARUA's existence with the conclusion of the current grant from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As told here, the story aims to set SARUA in the framework of its region, and in the significance of higher education. As for SARUA itself, the telling relies on its products – documents, presentations, meetings

and other seminal events. These provide a map that serves as a guide to SARUA, its aims, objectives and activities over the past seven years.

For those who have worked within SARUA the story will, of course, have greater depth and nuance – each part of the map, whether a report or an event, will have its own story and characters. What follows is a broad account that intends to foreground SARUA's operations and achievements as well as their significance in the Southern African region.

Section 2 sets out a view of the landscape of higher education in the South African Development Community (SADC) region. This landscape, of both public and private higher education in SADC, has been documented and analysed in two extensive studies[1] undertaken on behalf of SARUA. These reports contain invaluable data that paint a detailed, comparative picture of the sector. Section 2 explores some of the important elements of the landscape as a background to the sections that follow. These are of two kinds – those that describe the landscape as it is and as it is changing, and those that place SADC higher education in the context of higher education across the world.

In Section 3, a review is presented of why it is that the seriously unsatisfactory condition of higher education in the SADC region is a grave issue – and of how and why the kind of co-operation for which SARUA strives is so important in helping to bring about the changes that are needed. The section considers the work of several economists, assesses the roles and impact of a sample of other higher education regional organisations, and

reviews the reasons for and benefits of institutional co-operation or collaboration.

SARUA's origins can be traced to the time of the eleventh General Conference of the Association of African Universities (AAU) held in Cape Town, South Africa, in February 2005. After the formal proceedings of the AAU events, the vice-chancellors of 29 universities from 14 SADC countries gathered to consider the formation of an association that would serve their interests and promote their common purposes. Section 4 traces SARUA's beginnings and considers the ways in which its activities are relevant to the region's educational growth and success.

Section 5 reviews SARUA's achievements from five perspectives: regional mapping and identity; knowledge bases and their significance; policy contributions; leadership development; and co-operation. Each perspective addresses one of SARUA's objectives and its related indicator-goals. The review illustrates how far SARUA has progressed in laying the foundations needed for SADC higher education systems to undergo radical programmes of change – the change needed to bring the region in line with higher education conditions in many other parts of the world.

The final section – Section 6 – considers the import of SARUA's work for the way ahead. Several questions are posed and set in the SADC context. What value has been created? What will be needed to ensure that the region progresses, moving in the right direction? And how can SARUA's work contribute to this progress?

South Africa's top five universities revealed last month [October 2012] that they had received more than 150 000 applications for 2013 first-year registrations, yet the reality is that only 41 200 will be successful in their bid for higher education through this channel. Prospective students who have not yet applied to those universities will have to make alternative plans, because the institutions also stated they will not be taking late applications. Their facilities are full and there is little they can do to accommodate additional demand.

University World News Africa Edition
11 November 2012

2 Higher Education in the SADC Region: A Brief Status Overview

The landscape of public and private higher education in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has been documented and analysed in two extensive studies[2] undertaken on behalf of SARUA. These reports contain invaluable data that paint a detailed, comparative picture of the sector. Yet there are some elements of the landscape that are important to set out as a background to the sections of the report that follow. These are of two kinds – those that describe the landscape as it is and as it is changing, and those that place SADC higher education in the context of higher education across the world.

In a presentation made to the Extraordinary Meeting of SADC Ministers of Higher Education and Training,[3] SARUA identified the eight major features of the SADC higher education landscape:

1. Systems of higher education in Southern Africa are, on the whole, elite systems because, overall, higher education provision in the region is low by world standards. While there has been rapid growth in student enrolments, country systems remain small so that the competition for places is high.
2. Demand for higher education has outstripped capacity and this has, in some cases, led to over-crowding and concerns about the quality of offerings.
3. Humanities and the social sciences enroll the largest numbers of students. Head counts in disciplines such as science, engineering, technology and medicine are, by comparison, relatively low.
4. There is a strong trend in the region towards undergraduate education, with doctoral enrolments comprising around one per cent of total enrolments. To this trend might be added the fact that, in many countries, there are slightly more female than male undergraduates.
5. There is a growing shortage of university teachers. The current cohort of academic staff members is ageing, and few young people are choosing an academic career. This situation is all the more grave if the need for expansion in the system, to meet the growing demand, is taken into account.
6. A shortage of suitable infrastructure and limited

ICT and library facilities characterise current conditions and hamper future growth.

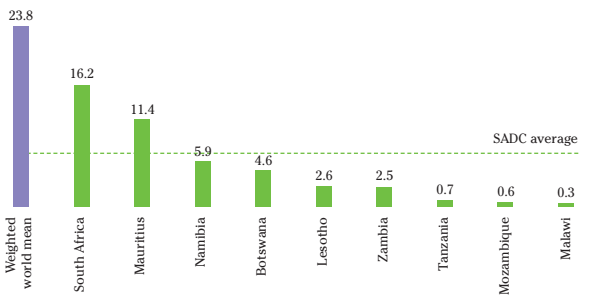
7. Demands for additional funding to improve access to higher education is likely to reduce the funds available for research.
8. With the exceptions of Malawi and Zimbabwe, there are more private than public institutions of higher education. The private institutions are, however, small for the most part, offer practice-orientated programmes and have relatively small enrolments.

While enrolment levels remain low in relation to demand, the period between 1970 and 1990 saw SADC's investment in education close to the global average and, from 1990 onwards, increasing more rapidly so that by 2010 the region was spending more than any other region in the world.[4] Three caveats are needed in relation to this observation. The first is that the figures on which the change is based are averages for the region and so the increase in spending did not necessarily happen in every SADC member country. The second is that the spending grew off a low base; and the third is that the figures are for the education sector as a whole. Investment in higher education grew at a much slower pace and, clearly, has failed to keep pace with growing demand for education at that level.

Information about the proportion of the age cohort 18 to 24/25 years enrolled in tertiary institutions is difficult to obtain, but the Nation Master website offers 'the most recent' data (2005) for 9 of the 15 members of SADC (see Figure 1).[5] According to the SARUA

Ministerial presentation,[6] the average enrolment rate for SADC countries presently stands at 6.3 per cent (as indicated in Figure 1) and will only reach 16.3 per cent in 2050 – 38 years from now, based on present trajectories.

FIGURE 1 Enrolment ratios, 2005



Such slow growth, off such low levels, will leave the region well behind the rest of the world both educationally and economically (see Section 3). In the words of the SARUA presentation, growth of this order 'will [also] erode the future of higher education institutions in the region'. Bearing in mind that a half of SADC's population of 276 million people is between 15 and 29 years of age (i.e. 138 million people), an average enrolment rate of around 6 per cent means, currently, that almost 130 million young people in this age group and in SADC countries will lead their lives without the benefits that accrue from tertiary studies.

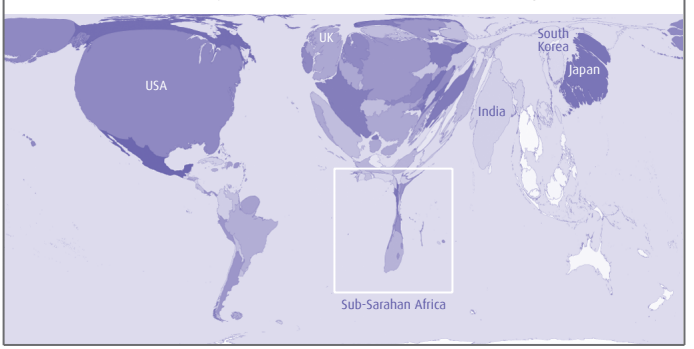
Taking this forward for 38 more years is clearly

untenable. The need for positive change is inescapable, and it is this imperative that is one of the key drivers that lies behind the work of SARUA.

Set in the context of the global situation, the condition of higher education in the region becomes even clearer. Although the data in Figure 2 below are out of date, the proportionalities remain more or less correct. The map shows countries by size in terms of their investment (US$ parity purchasing power) in tertiary education. It is immediately clear that sub-Saharan Africa fades away (with a slight bulge for South Africa at the end of the continent), while the United States of America, United Kingdom, Europe, Japan and Korea are all disproportionately large in relation to their actual land masses.

To help make sense of the map, consider that India, for example, is about one tenth of the size of Africa, while its expenditure on tertiary education makes it vastly larger than Africa in the map.[7]

FIGURE 2 Countries by size in terms of their investment in higher education



Data from the World Economic Forum's *Global Competitiveness Report 2012–2013*[8] are equally revealing. The report does not cover all the member countries of SADC, but Table 1 shows the data for the countries that are included in the study.[9]

Rankings highlighted in yellow are in the bottom quarter of the world scores, those in blue are in the bottom third of the scores, and those highlighted in green are in the top third of the overall scores, with none falling in the top quarter of the range.

These data paint a bleak picture of the global standing of tertiary education in the region. Five of the listed countries (Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Lesotho) fall in the bottom ten per cent of the world rankings for tertiary enrolment, and six of the eleven countries are in the bottom quarter when it comes to the quality of mathematics and science education at the secondary level. Equally worrying, in five of the eleven countries, an inadequately trained workforce is considered to be a serious impediment to economic and social growth.

In short, the higher education landscape across the SADC region is not in an encouraging state and is in urgent need of the kind of attention that will ensure its resurgence. To make matters worse, Africa's universities as a whole produce less than 0.7 per cent of global scholarly publications – half of which comes from just one country.

There are, of course, positive features – not least the fact that in a number of countries young women are enrolling at a greater rate than young men, and that

TABLE 1 World competitiveness indicators for selected SADC countries

SELECTION OF SADC COUNTRIES	RANKING OUT OF 144 COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE					INADEQUATELY TRAINED WORKFORCE AS A GROWTH PROBLEM (out of 16)
	TERTIARY ENROLMENT	QUALITY OF SYSTEM	QUALITY OF MATHEMATICS & SCIENCE EDUCATION	EVALUATION OF RESEARCH & TRAINING SERVICES	EXTENT OF STAFF TRAINING	
Botswana	119	55	66	95	68	3
Lesotho	133	102	119	135	117	7
Malawi	140	65	96	108	94	9
Mauritius	82	46	49	67	37	4
Mozambique	139	119	131	128	119	5
Namibia	115	126	127	131	55	1
South Africa	101	140	143	51	26	1
Swaziland	126	110	110	132	87	13
Tanzania	137	80	122	103	77	7
Zambia	135	39	77	61	108	10
Zimbabwe	120	30	50	104	82	15

SARUA has been laying the foundations for a resurgence – but unless we are clear about what the problems are, it is not possible to start finding solutions. In G K Chesterton's words: 'It isn't that [people] can't see the solution. It's that they can't see the problem,' while C K Prahalad noted that 'If we keep doing the same things we will get the same results.'

SARUA's *raison d'etre* is no longer up for discussion. In Southern Africa, where demand for higher education continues to grow but resources remain relatively limited, regional collaboration becomes a necessity for development rather than an optional extra. The advantages of regional collaboration and cooperation between higher educational institutions are increasingly being accepted by the institutions themselves and their nation states, as attested to by SARUA's growing institutional membership.

Prof. Ihron Rensburg, 2012

3 Why Higher Education is Important and How Co-operation Can Build Success

In this section, we will review just why it is that the seriously unsatisfactory condition of higher education in the SADC region is a grave issue – and how the kind of co-operation for which SARUA strives is so important in helping to bring about the changes that are needed.

To do so, we will look at the work of several economists, assess the roles and impact of a sample of other higher education regional organisations, and review the reasons for and benefits of institutional co-operation or collaboration.

Universities, public or private, are the engines of a knowledge economy and an incubator for skilled labour. They are crucial to industrial research and development strategies. They shape, or have immense potential to shape, Zambia's future by training our people in crosscutting skills.

Dr Kenneth Kaunda, former President of Zambia, once said that a 'University is one of the keys that can open the door to the future of our nation and help us to overcome the persisting evils of poverty, ignorance and diseases; without such an institution we cannot hope to become the nation we want to be.'

Higher education therefore has great value to any country. To thrive as a nation, we must invest where it pays off – [in] education and other critical sectors.

The Post (Zambia)
Thursday 29 March, 2012 Editorial

The 'Value' of Higher Education

'Value' signals that it is important to start this section with a disclaimer. The emphasis in what follows

will be on the contribution that higher education makes to individual, national and regional social and economic wellbeing. The disclaimer is that while these considerations are of real significance, higher education plays a much broader role in offering to its students (of all ages) a wider range of advantages – thinking and problem-solving skills, insight into a range of disciplines and ways of thinking, theorising and practising, and a sense of what it means to be responsible, civic-minded citizens.

Seven years ago, David Bloom, David Canning and Kevin Chan set out an argument for the role that higher education can and should play in driving and sustaining higher education in Africa.[10] One of their central propositions, which is now a commonplace notion, is that higher education convers two distinct sets of benefits: those that are private – benefits to the individual graduate; and those that are public – benefits to the national (and, by extension, the regional) economy.

> [R]ecent evidence suggests higher education is both a result and a determinant of income, and can produce public and private benefits. Higher education may create greater tax revenue, increase savings and investment, and lead to a more entrepreneurial and civic society. It can also improve a nation's health, contribute to reduced population growth, improve technology, and strengthen governance. With regard to the benefits of higher education for a country's economy, many observers attribute India's leap

> onto the world economic stage as stemming from its decades-long successful efforts to provide high-quality, technically oriented tertiary education to a significant number of its citizens (Bloom et al. 2005:3).

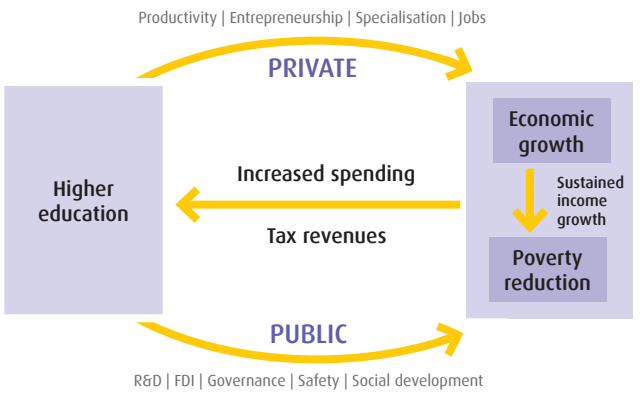
The relationship between tertiary education and economic growth can be seen as follows. Private benefits accrue to individuals in very direct, observable ways. A university qualification improves an individual's employment opportunities, which usually means higher salaries and a greater ability to save and invest. In turn, these basic conditions generally result in better health and an improved quality of life, setting off a 'virtuous cycle' of life expectancy improvements and longer earning lives.[11]

Public benefits can be traced through two routes – the benefits that accrue to the social economy as a result of the private benefits, and the growth that arises from the operation of knowledge economies. University graduates pay higher taxes because of their higher earnings, and they have higher levels of consumption which benefits producers and sellers in the market. In a knowledge-based economy, graduates know more about new technologies and are able to use them effectively – and some of those graduates will develop new technologies themselves, technologies that will help strengthen production and levels of social service.

Bloom et al.[12] describe the relationships diagramatically (see Figure 3). The private benefit route follows productivity, entrepreneurship, specialisation

and jobs, while the public route moves through research and development, foreign direct investment, governance, safety and social development. Each route ends with higher levels of economic growth and reduction in levels of poverty. It is for these reasons that low levels of enrolment in higher education in the SADC region are at the root of low levels of development and high levels of poverty.

FIGURE 3 The relationship between higher education and economic growth

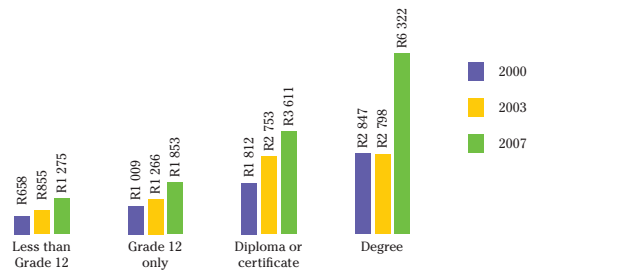


Source: Bloom, Canning and Chen (2005)

To demonstrate the private benefits that accrue from higher education, Branson, Leibbrandt and Zuze[13] asked the question 'Are there strong returns to tertiary study and do they improve with time?' To answer the question, they used labour force data for young black

South Africans, collected across South Africa's Western Cape Province. The results are startling (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4 Monthly earnings by level of education



Source: Branson, Leibbrandt and Zuze (2009)

They show, first, that wages do in fact increase steadily over time. But, more critically, they indicate the considerable differences in monthly earnings (in South African Rand) depending on the level of education that employees have obtained. The actual average earnings are shown for the year 2007. It is worth noting that in 2000, university graduates were earning more than both categories of school leavers were earning in 2007, and more than holders of diplomas were earning in 2003.

The role that higher education plays in national social and economic development has been the subject of work undertaken in a number of countries by economist Pundy Pillay.[14] He reports that data from 49 countries in the Asia Pacific region, for example, show

a strong positive correlation between higher education and economic growth, while the same research showed that 'the stock of the adult population with higher levels of education is an important indicator of the level of development in higher education'.[15] In other words, it's not just enrolment levels in higher education that are important in the higher education-growth relationship, but also the cumulative effect of higher education graduation over the years. Against the situation outlined in Section 2, this is a further factor that puts sub-Saharan Africa at a disadvantage in relation to global economic conditions and competition.

Despite the evident relationship between high participation rates in tertiary education and strong, effective universities on the one hand and social and economic growth on the other, the situation in the SADC region remains largely unchanged. At the beginning of November 2012, Dr Chris Whitty, chief scientific adviser and director of research at the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) reported that, in sub-Saharan Africa, 'unlike in China, South Asia and South-East Asia, where there was a surplus of scientists, engineers, doctors and teachers trained at the early stages of countries' development, in most African countries there are up to 1 000 times fewer scientists than in Asian countries in the equivalent state of development. This,' he said, 'is potentially a major block to the development of middle-income countries in Africa. Developing the capacity of science in African countries, by African scientists, is going to be essential.'[16]

Making a similar point from a somewhat different perspective, Angel Calderon, the principal advisor for research and planning at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, wrote earlier this year:

> Latin America as a region has been undergoing an important transformation for some decades. Education has played a pivotal role in the steady development of the region, and levels of participation in higher education have increased significantly over the past 40 years.[17]

The relationship is clear, and the need is great – so the question arises as to why a regional association of universities in the SADC region is relevant and needed, more especially as the present model of regional co-operation is largely trade-based. As the SARUA report on *Regional Identity*[18] succinctly puts it:

> [It is] regional integration that goes beyond primarily economic (or trade) considerations [that] has the potential to provide greater social and economic benefits (SARUA 2012c:14).

The Value of Co-operation

SARUA has, during this stage of its operations, focused primarily on regional mapping, foregrounding important issues in the region (HIV/AIDS, ICTs and investment in higher education for example), and addressing policy-makers on these issues and the

need for stronger higher education systems in the region. These activities are the building blocks needed for co-operation between institutions and systems across nations and across national borders aimed at strengthening core institutional activities. SARUA's objectives include 'convening strategic fora to enhance collaboration, linkages and partnerships across the sector' while one of its five goals is to ensure that 'regional higher education co-operation is enhanced'.

These are not part of SARUA's objectives and goals by chance. There is a substantial body of research and practical evidence that points to the singular advantages of collaboration and co-operation between higher education institutions.

Co-operative partnerships take a variety of forms – some are created to provide staff and students with seamless access to sets of university libraries across quite broad regions, while others (such as the Russell Group in the UK) serve to promote and protect the interests of their members. In KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, five universities have formed a partnership aimed at providing student applicants with a central applications service, while the United States of America has a large number of university-based library consortia that share their collections, enter into joint electronic licensing agreements, and offer inter-institutional training.

The reasons for and benefits of co-operation or collaboration are well described by Daniel W Lang[19] in an article titled 'A Lexicon of Inter-institutional Co-operation'. The primary driver of co-operation, he

says, citing Burton Clark, is 'demand overload', a term used to describe situations in which the resources needed to support universities become increasingly limited, while the demand for higher education grows, 'making it more and more expensive to retain the status quo'.[20] As was shown in Section 2, this is very close to the situation faced in the SADC region – resources are scarce, higher education is a critical element in the process of growing economies, and while the demand for access to universities is growing, cohort enrolment rates remain low. These are the precise circumstances in which co-operation between institutions becomes a solution.

As for the benefits, they are, in Lang's words, 'basically practical and in many cases measurable'[21] but he goes on to argue that reaching the benefits requires 'carefully considered, conscious, and deliberate choices'[22] and that such choices are often prompted by government intervention in order to ensure that the benefits come into being. In situations characterised by a scarcity of resources (as in the SADC instance) the benefits are critical if national or regional goals are to be achieved.

The primary profits to be gained from inter-institutional co-operation, whatever form it might take,[23] are economy and efficiency. How these play out in specific co-operative ventures depends on the mutual needs of the co-operating institutions. Typically, though, they will include:

- sharing scholars in rare fields (such as astrophysics and space science);
- outsourcing courses (until the University of Botswana established its Faculty of Health Sciences, for example, students from Botswana were supported to study medicine in South Africa);
- offering joint courses (where teaching resources are scarce);
- sharing services (such as in library consortia); and
- undertaking joint research projects and postgraduate development (as in the case of the Regional Initiative for Science and Education or RISE[24] which operates in six SADC countries; or the Gauteng City-Region Observatory[25] which is a collaborative venture of the Universities of Witwatersrand and Johannesburg, and the Gauteng Provincial Government).

The specific economies and efficiencies that result from such co-operative or collaborative ventures range from improved quality education, through reduced costs (shared journal subscriptions, for example), to actual cost savings (reductions in, or avoidance, of new budget items).

In view of the situation faced by higher education in SADC, co-operation and collaborative ventures are clearly an essential route to be considered – and are, for this reason, critical elements of SARUA's objectives and goals.

Associations of Higher Education Institutions and Systems

How does SARUA compare with higher education associations in other parts of the world? Most associations of higher education institutions are just that – associations rather than collaborations, although there are exceptions, such as the Asian University Network (AUN), which is part of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). AUN manages several active co-operative networks, including a student credit transfer system, a human rights education network, and an inter-library online system. The Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) is also an exception, most notably as a result of IUCEA's Lake Victoria Research Initiative, funded by the Swedish Government.

Associations do, however, vary considerably. Some are global, such as the International Association of Universities (whose members include individual universities and regional associations), the Association of Commonwealth Universities, and the Commonwealth of Learning (open and distance learning). Others are very small – the Cape Higher Education Consortium, for instance, has four members. There is a host of regional associations in between.

In Africa, the continent-wide body is the Association of African Universities (AAU), while there are four regional associations – SARUA and IUCEA, along with the Association of West African Universities (AWAU), and the *Conseil Africain et Malagache pour l'enseignement supérieur* (the African and Malagasy Council for Higher

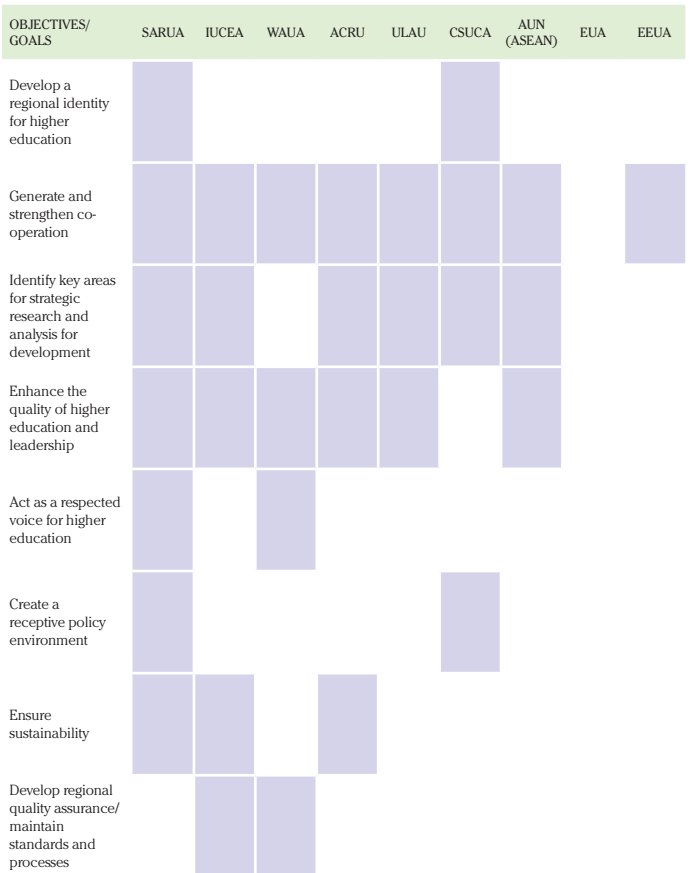
Education or CAMES). In addition, there is the Middle East and North African Association for Institutional Research (MENA-AIR) which supports institutional research throughout its region. Each of these African associations falls within the ambit of a Regional Economic Council, whose member country ministers meet regularly and so provide an existing means through which educational co-operation might readily be supported, encouraged and enhanced. This does assume, however, that the co-operation that the councils promote will go beyond a simple level of economic interaction.

Such regional associations are found across the world. Some examples include the Association of Carpathian Region Universities (ACRU); the International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CSUCA); the Union of Latin American Universities (ULAU); the European University Association (EUA); the Eastern European University Association (EEUA); and, at cross-regional level, the Association of Arab and European Universities (AEUA). A brief analysis of missions, objectives and goals of a sample of the organisations shows some regular patterns. Figure 5 is based on the core of SARUA's objectives and goals and maps those of eight other organisations against those of SARUA.

The most striking commonality is the commitment that all of the associations have to inter-institutional co-operation. Also common to most associations is a concern to identify issues that are of research and development priority, and to strengthen the quality of higher education and its leadership.

Three of the associations are also committed to developing common quality assurance mechanisms, something for which SARUA has consistently advocated.

FIGURE 5 Missions, objectives and goals of a sample of the regional organisations



Across the world, continents and regions, then, higher education institutions have formed associations of common interest, and one of the most frequent amongst their objectives and goals is the intention to generate and provide support for co-operation between institutions with the aim of driving processes of institutional and systemic resurgence. We have reflected on why this might be the case, and now turn to SARUA in greater detail.

SARUA is 'a unique collaborative venture by the leaders of public higher education institutions in Southern Africa that aims to promote the role of higher education in making a meaningful contribution to the overall development of the region. The challenge is indeed a formidable one in a region so vast as ours, with its multiplicity of cultures, a history ravaged by the effects of colonialism and apartheid, lack of resources and infrastructure and large scale problems of poverty and disease'. But SARUA is about 'those who are not daunted by such challenges but who wish to apply their minds and actions to seeking common solutions and a better way ahead for all.'

Prof. Njabulo Ndebele, First Chairperson of SARUA
SARUA Annual Report 2007

4 SARUA's Origins and Objectives and How They Relate to Co-operation and Growth

SARUA's origins can be traced to the time of the eleventh General Conference of the Association of African Universities (AAU), held in Cape Town, South Africa, in February 2005. After the formal proceedings of the AAU events, the vice-chancellors of 29 universities from 14 SADC countries gathered to consider the formation of an association that would serve their interests and promote their common purposes. An executive committee was elected and charged with taking the formation forward.

Early in the following year (2006), the executive

committee met and took decisions to appoint a chief executive officer, to ensure that a more permanent structure would be put in place and that regional programmes would be set in motion. These decisions were implemented promprtly and early in 2007 SARUA formally came into being and its first (and current) chief executive officer was appointed.

The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs generously and judiciously provided funding support for the venture, and in November 2007 the first of SARUA's Triennial General Meetings was held, during which 15 new members were welcomed to the association, bringing the total membership to 44 institutions.

In October 2010, the second Triennial General Meeting was held – at the University of Mauritius – by which time membership had risen to 51 universities in 14 countries – the Seychelles not having had a university at that time. SARUA's membership now stands at 61 universities in all 15 SADC countries.

Professor Ndebele's words in the text box above speak eloquently of the need for an organisation that aims to draw together higher education institutions in the SADC region. The situation described in Section 2, and the region's unhappy position in relation to the global standing of higher education, leave no room for doubt that the systems in the SADC region needed – and still need – considerable, well-planned attention. The existence of an organisation devoted to that purpose was, and remains, an essential step in ensuring that the state of higher education is improved, offering higher

levels of access to quality learning opportunities and improved research output.

SARUA's mission, objectives and goals were refined during the early period of the association's development and they are now as follows (as set out in SARUA's annual reports). The mandate set for SARUA is:

> to assist in the revitalisation and development of the leadership and institutions of higher education in the Southern African region, thus enabling the regional higher education sector to meaningfully respond [sic] to the developmental challenges facing the region.

In order to fulfil this mandate, SARUA's objectives are to:

- develop a regional identity for higher education that is representative of the diversity of the region;
- convene strategic fora to enhance collaboration, linkages and partnerships across the sector;
- identify key areas for strategic research and analysis;
- enhance the knowledge and capacity of higher education leadership; and
- act as a respected voice (and advocate) to speak on behalf of the higher education sector in the region, thereby feeding (informing) a South–South higher education agenda and, in so doing, making a significant contribution to national and regional development.

The following goals were set as indicators that would point to the achievement of the objectives:

- a regional identity for higher education is developed;
- regional higher education collaboration is enhanced;
- regional higher education leadership capacity is enhanced;
- a more receptive higher education policy environment in the region is achieved; and
- a sustainable and effective organisation, capable of delivering its identified outputs, is in place.

A key pre-condition for universities to play their role in generating private and public benefits, thereby promoting social and economic development, is sufficient institutions, each strong and well-resourced academically, administratively and financially. While SARUA's objectives in this phase cannot directly address these needs they do create a strong foundation on the basis of which the core conditions can begin to be met.

Understanding the identity of higher education in the region is the starting point. Unless the current situation is known in detail, there is no hope of knowing what the first steps in the real process of change will be. The logical next step is continued research analysis and advocacy aimed at developing a regional identity for higher education. Co-operation and partnerships create the neural pathways along which future developments will travel, and are invaluable in helping to develop and enhance institutional capacity across the region.

In some ways, the most critical of SARUA's objectives is that it should be a respected voice and advocate

for regional higher education, as this is an essential element in the process of securing and maintaining a more receptive (and respondent) higher education policy environment in the region. Without that as a pre-condition, ensuring adequate funding, proactive and supportive legislation, and institutional academic independence will clearly not be possible.

Taken together, then, the mandate and objectives are directed towards generating and then embedding the conditions that are a necessary foundation for the changes that will be needed going forward. SARUA has made an important start in its first phase (2006–2012) and the next phase will need to build on what has been achieved. In the next section we will look at those achievements in greater detail.

The current socio-economic and political context in our region imposes numerous challenges on universities and on the higher education sector in general. The list of challenges is infinitely long.

Rwekaza S Mukandala in *Doctoral Education: Renewing the Academy*[26]

'We have made a lot of progress on primary education, but we can't stop there,' said Obiageli Ezekwesili, World Bank Vice President for Africa. 'Africa's population is seeing a "youth bulge", and so we simply cannot avoid tertiary education – it has to be the bedrock of Africa's development.' Ezekwesili highlighted some of the challenges in expanding higher education in Africa. These include the need to strike a balance between democratisation of access to higher education and the quality of education provided; and to ensure that higher education turns out graduates with the right skills for the job market. Yet higher education faces financing constraints, and graduates often remain unemployed. [...] 'There are no easy answers to the question of how Africa's higher education institutions can grow and thrive. But we do know that good policies, strong political will, resources, leadership, and public-private partnerships are necessary.'

AMIP News[27]

5 Strengthening SADC Higher Education: SARUA's Achievements

In this section SARUA's achievements from five perspectives are reviewed: (1) regional mapping and identity; (2) knowledge bases and their significance; (3) policy contributions; (4) leadership development; and (5) co-operation. Each of these addresses one of SARUA's objectives and its related indicator-goals.

This review illustrates how far SARUA has progressed in laying the foundations needed for SADC higher education systems to undergo radical programmes of change – the change needed to bring the region in line with higher education conditions in many other parts of the world.

SARUA's activities revolve primarily around four clusters of activities each aimed at achieving aspects of its objectives.

The first cluster, publications, includes *Higher Education News*, a study series, the SARUA Leadership Dialogue Series, annual reports, a handbook and an action guide.

The second cluster, meetings and convenings, cover the Triennial General Meetings, the Vice-Chancellors' (Leadership) Dialogues, as well as conferences and regional workshops.

The third cluster consists of the governance, leadership and management (GLM) courses that SARUA has offered (more recently in conjunction with the University of the Witwatersrand's School for Public and Development Management in 2010 and for the Leadership Forum for Higher Education in 2012). The fourth cluster of SARUA activities consists of SARUA's presentations to and interactions with ministerial and SADC meetings.

These activity clusters demonstrate close synergy. Leadership Dialogues lead to publications, as do meetings and convenings. Publications, in turn, contribute to presentations made to ministerial and SADC events and feature in GLM programmes. In the sub-sections that follow, it will become clear just how this happens as the activities play out in support of the objectives as SARUA works towards creating the platform on which change can be built.

Regional Institutional Mapping and Identity

Key challenges for the future: The need to acquire a comprehensive understanding of higher education in the region and gain a consolidated picture of its many aspects including policies, practices, outputs and opportunities (*SARUA Annual Report 2007*).

A range of SARUA's research programmes have led to the publication of four documents that map higher education in the region and debate the emergence of a regional identity. These are:

1. *Towards a Common Future: Higher Education in the SADC Region* (2008)
2. *Private Higher Education in the Southern African Development Community* (2011)
3. *A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa Volumes 1 and 2* (2012)
4. *Perspectives on Regional Identity and the Role of Higher Education in Southern Africa* (2012)

A fifth publication, *Doctoral Education: Renewing the Academy*, might also be included as it documents aspects of the postgraduate landscape in the region.

Towards a Common Future includes chapters on revitalising higher education, the profile of higher education, higher education funding frameworks, the state of public science, and university–firm interaction – all in the SADC region. Along with the other four publications, these studies provide comprehensive pictures of conditions in the higher education systems

in the countries of the region. Taken together, *Towards a Common Future* (Chapter 2) and *A Profile of Higher Education* offer two snapshots, with accompanying analysis, of the region – the former covering the 2006/2008 (depending on the best data available at the time) and the latter 2011. As the authors of *A Profile of Higher Education Volume 1* point out:

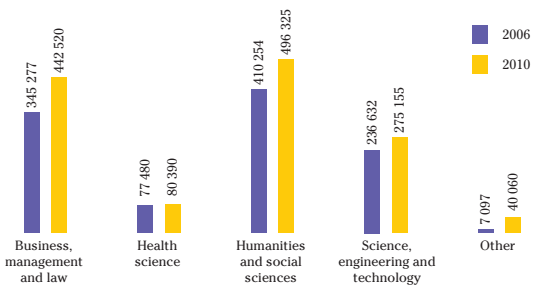
> While there have been other studies on higher education in Africa that focus on the collection of institutional data, no other studies apart from SARUA's work in this area have sought to comprehensively profile regional higher education with the population of all universities in the region. As such, this work is breaking new ground in understanding public higher education in the SADC region (Kotecha 2012a:8).

The data contained in the two studies are valuable in themselves, but reviewing the changes that have occurred from the 2006/2008 to the 2011 period provides revealing insights about changes in the region. Perhaps the most gratifying development has been the establishment of a university in the Seychelles, meaning that there are now higher education institutions in all 15 of the SADC countries. Also of interest is the increase in enrolment in the system, mentioned earlier, from 1 070 183 students in the regional system as reported in the 2008 study to 1 365 495 in the 2012 version – an increase of 295 312 enrolments, or a 28 per cent rise over a period of six to eight years, albeit from a very low base.

The 2008 publication indicates that at 2006, 49.9 per cent of the students in the region were women (36.8 per cent if South Africa were to be excluded), while the 2012 study shows that, overall, 51 per cent of the students in the regional systems were women – a considerable improvement for the region as mentioned in Section 2, although this varies (for the 2012 report) considerably between countries. In Madagascar, for example, 83 per cent of the students are men, while in Namibia and South Africa, women account for some 58 per cent of the student bodies.

Enrolments by field of study show that enrolment patterns have changed to a rather limited degree, despite a growth in enrolments. Figure 6 from research by Wilson-Strydom and Fongwa[28] shows that while there has been greater growth in business, management and law than in other areas, and almost no growth in the health sciences, the overall pattern remains similar for the years 2006 and 2010.

FIGURE 6 Enrolments in SADC by major field of study (head count enrolments)



Patterns of enrolment by level of study show, however, a more worrying pattern. Both studies present figures for the region, excluding South Africa, as shown in Table 2.[29]

TABLE 2

	% of total HE enrolments	
Level of enrolment	2008	2012
Undergraduate	85.7	87
Postgraduate less than masters	6.8	8
Masters and doctoral	5.1	5

Although the shifts are small, there might be reasons for concern. The growth has occurred in the proportions of undergraduate and lower level postgraduate students, while masters and doctoral enrolments have remained virtually flat. In this regard, the SARUA report *Doctoral Education: Renewing the Academy*[30] provides even more worrying data. While enrolments at the master's and doctoral levels are around five per cent, the figures for doctoral enrolments are one per cent for the region, but 0.17 per cent if South Africa (where 71 per cent of all undergraduate and postgraduate university enrolments are to be found) is excluded. In this light, renewing the academy throughout Southern Africa becomes an issue of major concern. If mapping the regional landscape had served only to reveal this problem, it will have been of considerable value. In support of this work, SARUA is actively engaged in the

Erasmus Mundus programme known as Co-operation in Doctoral Education between Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe (CODOC).

Thus far, the landscape under consideration is that of the public higher education system, but the region also has a large number of private higher education institutions. The 2011 SARUA report by Pundy Pillay[31] has revealed valuable information about this part of the picture, although Pillay offers three caveats about this sector: first, three of the fourteen countries were unable to provide information; secondly, even where information was available, it was not always possible to verify the details; and thirdly, the 'most recent' data fell into the time range of 2007–2010. The figures taken from the report are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Country	Private HE enrolments	% of total HE enrolments
Angola	55 180	not known
Botswana	21 759	45
Madagascar	6 313	14
Malawi	2 148	18
Mauritius	7 300	35
Mozambique	12 475	20
Namibia	3 258	15
South Africa	71 378	10
Tanzania	32 340	28
Zambia	8 548	33
TOTAL	220 699	

Although these data are partial, they suggest that, overall, fewer than a quarter of students throughout the region are enrolled in private institutions, despite the fact that there are considerably more private than public institutions.

With the exception of Angola, where private institutions offer programmes spanning engineering, commerce, law, medicine and the humanities, most private institutions offer programmes that focus on business, design disciplines and ICT, often at the diploma or certificate level, but also at the degree level.

A particularly interesting aspect of the private higher education sector is the role played by foreign institutions. The Pillay study reports on this phenomenon as follows:

> Botswana and Lesotho both have campuses of the Malaysian University Limkokwing and a campus will probably soon be developed in Swaziland. In Malawi, branches of foreign universities that operate in the country function in two modes:
>
> 1. Offering a joint programme with either a public University or private University: These include the Universities of Derby and Dublin which are working with the Malawi Institute of Management in offering Masters Degrees in Strategic Management. The University of Nicaragua offers Bachelor's Degrees in Finance, Business and Accountancy with Blantyre International Universities.
> 2. Working on certain research projects with a

government institution or working as quasi-NGO: These include John Hopkins University which is working as a quasi-NGO researching on HIV vaccination and University of North Carolina which is working with the ministry of Health on ARV related research.

In Mauritius, in collaboration with local private partners, two branch campuses of overseas universities are already operating in Mauritius. Several others are in the pipeline. There are also some 50 overseas institutions and examination bodies providing courses and programmes through distance education and open learning mode. These institutions/bodies are based in the UK, South Africa, India, France/Reunion, Switzerland, and the USA. Several of the institutions also have collaborative arrangements with the local private institutions.

In Tanzania, the Aga Khan University College–Tanzania Institute of Higher Education is a branch of the Aga Khan University. In South Africa, Monash (Australia) and Bond (UK) Universities are branches of their respective home country institutions.

In Zambia, there are eight franchise universities which are attached to and controlled by foreign universities. They are licensed to use existing programmes found in parent universities and remit some of the proceeds to foreign universities. Three are religious and for profit universities: DMI–St Eugene (India); Northrise University (Australia and United Sates); Adventist University (Zimbabwe). Five are non-

> religious and for profit universities: Australian Institute of Business and Technology (AIBT) (Australia), Copperstone University (Bangladesh), Cavindesh University Institute (UK), University of Africa (South Africa) and the University of Technology and Tourism (Malaysia) (Pillay 2011:28).

The process of coming to terms with higher education in the region would not be complete without looking at the extent to which universities as knowledge generators make their resources available for innovation in firms and industrial sectors.[32] New knowledge and technological developments, harnessed to the social economy, can help to address public health, food security, water resources, the extraction of mineral wealth, the exploitation of bio-diversity, and drive new industrial and ICT developments.

While the potential for university–firm interactions and benefits are considerable, Kruss and Petersen[33] report that they:

> found interaction to exist primarily in isolated instances or on a small scale across the sampled universities in the SADC region.
>
> There are [however] aggregate trends that provide indications of directions and points for future intervention:

- Collaboration between local universities exists most strongly, on a moderate to wide scale, and there is an encouraging scale of collaboration

with public research institutions, although there are not many public research institutions in each country.

- Collaboration on a moderate scale exists with a wide range of public sector and development partners – national government, regional government, community organisations and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – potentially important for universities' roles in support of local development.
- Those forms of interaction tending towards a moderate scale are the education of work-ready students, related to the core teaching role of most universities, as well as consultancy.
- The channels of communication with firms that are most freely available in the public domain, informal and tacit, are most important.
- There are few outcomes of interaction with firms other than the traditional results of university activity such as students and publications.
- Initiating interaction has tended to be a matter for individual academics.
- Universities have research policy and structures, but very few have internal and external interface structures to support and facilitate innovation.

Kruss and Petersen went on to identify a clear pattern relating to university–firm interactions:

> Those universities with a moderate scale of interaction with industry:

- Relatively new medium to large universities with a new strategic science and technology orientation focused on national development needs.

Those with a small scale of interaction:

- Established larger universities with a more traditional orientation.
- Very new small universities with a new-technology and entrepreneurial orientation.

Those with isolated instances of interaction:

- Established small universities.
- Small new universities with an orientation towards new technology.

Such distinctions potentially facilitate more nuanced and targeted developmental interventions aimed at groups of universities with similar experiences.[34]

As with other aspects of the work that has identified and analysed the conditions in the region, the university–firm picture sets out a set of tasks that will need careful attention from the leadership of the region's higher education institutions and systems.

Knowledge Bases and their Significance in the Region

Key challenges for the future: The need to undertake proactive and systematic research in order to act as a barometer of significant developments, an early warning system and as an advocate for responsive change (*SARUA Annual Report 2007*).

Against the backdrop of the regional higher education landscape, SARUA has supported research and dialogues that have focused attention on some of the most critical issues faced by the region and its universities. Two groups of activities are reviewed here: Leadership Dialogues (in which senior leaders of the region's universities were active participants), and the research reported in the Study Series, along with the SARUA website, which provides access to a wealth of information about the region and its institutions.

Group 1: Leadership Dialogues[35]

Not surprisingly, one of the earliest of the Leadership Dialogues focused on the issue of regional integration (defined at various levels), the role that higher education institutions should play in such processes, and the implications that integration might have for systems of universities. As regional integration is both a complex and a contested idea, one of the most important roles that emerges for universities is that of providing sound foundations, anchored in knowledge about and for Africa, on which proposals and practices for regional relationships can be developed. The implications for higher education institutions and systems include,

then, undertaking the kind of research that will lead to constructive debate and planning around regionalism – but also considering what that research will mean for institutional co-operation. Here, Mammo Muchie[36] has positive proposals to offer:

> There is a real need for a multi-pronged and at the same time simultaneous approach to motivate development in higher education, research and knowledge. The approach should:
>
> 1. Create a Pan-African open higher education, research and knowledge area.
> 2. Build on the existing universities' research, higher education and knowledge capacity.
> 3. Foster the conditions that facilitate the creation of innovative curricula, mobility of staff, students and training by opening the free movement of knowledge, research and higher education.
> 4. Create free movement without borders in higher education, research and knowledge in Africa.
> 5. Include a vision to create a few strong institutions in Africa that can be ranked as world-class universities.

Muchie goes on to identify the challenges that institutions will face in an attempt to achieve such open academic interaction and co-operation:

1. The lack of African political will to open a higher education, research and knowledge area.

2. The fear of losing state sovereignty over education, research and knowledge if borders permit a free movement of knowledge, research and higher education along with the free movement of economic activities, labour and capital.
3. The problem related to internal and external resistance to a Pan-African framing of the higher education, knowledge and research area.
4. The fact that external actors treat South Africa differently from other parts of Africa, North Africa differently from sub-Saharan Africa, Lusophone Africa different from Francophone Africa and all differently from Anglophone Africa. As long as this divisive approach reigns, a Pan-African research, knowledge and higher education vision that inspires the resolution of the higher education crisis is very unlikely to take hold.
5. States in the different countries may wish to build universities for status and prestige rather than education and development for their people.

In some ways, these challenges are very similar to those that an organisation like SARUA faces in initiating and supporting co-operation between its members – and none can be overcome without a serious and long-term commitment to strengthening higher education in a systematic manner.

SARUA's Leadership Dialogue on *Building Regional Higher Education Capacity Through Academic Mobility*[37] takes forward Muchie's proposals that there is a need for an 'open higher education, research and knowledge

area' and an enabling 'free movement without borders in higher education, research and knowledge in Africa'. Appropriately, the dialogue focuses on both staff and student mobility so that the senior leaders of the region's institutions are able to consider the potential of academic mobility as a capacity-building strategy for higher education in the region. As the series editor, Piyushi Kotecha, explains:

> The […] dialogue on Building Regional Higher Education Capacity through Academic Mobility in SADC brought together senior experts and higher education leaders in the region to consider the global trends and key features of academic mobility, the state of academic mobility in SADC, institutional innovations in promoting academic mobility, and assessing the potential for building capacity in the higher education sector through academic mobility (SARUA 2011:iv).

In her contribution to the SARUA publication *Building Regional Higher Education Capacity Through Academic Mobility*,[38] Mercy Mpinganjira sets out the rationale for academic mobility in the SADC region:

> Countries and higher education institutions in the region need to be clear as to what kinds of benefits they hope to derive through promotion of academic mobility, since these will help inform the kind of programmes that need to be developed, implemented or supported. A clearly articulated set of rationales

> will also help in assessing the effectiveness of mobility initiatives/programmes (SARUA 2011:32).

She describes major areas of benefit under the headings of human resource development, promoting social-cultural development for students and staff, enhanced research production, and commercial benefits along with income generation. These, Mpinganjira points out, are critical elements in the drive for a stronger higher education system. They are also the foundations of improved levels of internationalisation. She goes on, however, to identify the major challenges that will have to be addressed successfully for mobility to become a more common feature of the region and to contribute to healthier higher education systems.

First amongst the challenges is a lack of funding to support mobility and to cover the costs of students studying outside their own countries. The second challenge is the absence of a framework for and agreements on the recognition of qualifications – both across the region and between the region and the rest of the scholarly world. Without such agreements, it is almost impossible for students to enrol for post-graduate qualifications away from home. A related challenge is the need for recognised and approved systems of quality assurance – without which the recognition of qualifications is unlikely to happen.

A fourth challenge is that of immigration laws, again both within the region and more broadly. Promoting mobility will require the relaxation of migration laws and regulations along with streamlined processes for

issuing study permits and short-term work permits. At present, mobility within the region is characterised by major flows into South Africa, and Mpinganjira feels that the fifth challenge will be to improve the diversity in the direction of mobility flows – and this is closely related to the issue of quality assurance. Finally, Mpinganjira points to two administrative challenges: the fact that few universities in the region have administrative services available to support staff and student mobility, and the challenges presented by the reality that universities in the northern part of the region – and in the northern hemisphere as a whole – have different annual academic calendars from those in the south of the region. The senior leadership of the region's universities will undoubtedly have experienced many of these challenges and found themselves in agreement with Mpinganjira.

The Leadership Dialogues around Development and its Implications for Higher Education (2009) and Investment in Higher Education for Development (2010) dealt with higher education's important role in promoting social and economic development, along the lines set out in Section 2, and with approaches to financing universities in order to support this role.

Writing in *Development and its Implications for Higher Education*, Omano Edigheji[39] sets out the role of universities in development:

> The role of universities is to contribute towards advancing freedoms and sustainable environments through their research, teaching and civic

engagements. Especially in the context of building democratic developmental states on the continent, African universities need to emphasise politics, class, and citizenship in order for them to become relevant to the everyday existence of the people. In effect, for African universities to contribute to the construction of democratic developmental states, they have to bring back their civic and public functions. As noted earlier, the public role of universities is their primary function. This is all the more important if they are addressing crises on the continent such as the ravaging HIV/AIDS pandemic, poverty, and squalor. This is to say that actions by academics to promote justice, to improve the conditions of life of their fellow human beings, and to participate in the transformation of the world are all a constitutive part of the social dimension of the academy in Africa, as it is elsewhere. This means that higher education institutions must be responsive to the needs of their immediate communities, their neighbourhoods, localities, nations and the continent at large. This, however, requires more attention, especially now that the continent is trying to overcome its history of deprivation and marginalisation in order to improve the living conditions of the majority of the African people. The point, therefore, is that universities need to place a greater premium on civic engagement or public scholarship for them to undertake their social functions and to become 'engaged universities'. This will require that greater resources are geared towards civic engagement, and also that civic engagement

> should receive equal importance as research and teaching in the evaluation of academics (SARUA 2009a:72).

Edigheji's message to the senior leaders of the region's universities is that promoting social and economic development is not just a matter of teaching and research, but of teaching and research that are relevant to the region's needs. And that such relevance relies on universities being civically engaged.

To achieve this state, universities need to be suitably funded, and in *Investment in Higher Education,* Pundy Pillay[40] assesses the trends in and possibilities for funding higher education institutions. Pillay opens his contribution to the dialogue thus:

> In Africa in general, and in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in particular, the analysis of higher education financing issues is critical to enhancing access and equity. Currently access and equity are unacceptably low. Moreover, access is highly inequitable in terms of gender, location, and socio-economic status. Higher education financing policies must act to address this twin challenge of access and equity.
>
> A related issue concerns the relationship between higher education and development. There needs to be a greater recognition, on the part of African policy makers, of the growing importance of higher education for development in its broadest terms (that is, economic, environmental, and social). *Recognition*

> *of the increasing importance of higher education in developing countries will lead to greater attention being paid to how higher education can and should be financed* (SARUA 2010c:19; emphasis in the original).

Pillay goes on to indicate what is needed to support institutional funding:

> It is inevitable, given serious public resource constraints, that the higher education sector must look at alternative mechanisms for generating funding to enhance access and equity. Among the funding mechanisms that need to be considered are some form of cost-sharing and the development of loan schemes that promote access and equity and are efficient in terms of cost recovery. A third issue relates to the development of a funding formula for higher education that can promote the more effective utilisation of scarce financial resources and enable governments to achieve broader objectives of the higher education system (e.g. appropriate human resource development) (SARUA 2010c:24).

The most critical points here are that funding is not just to be generated for the general good of each institution, but as a basis for ensuring access and equity, while institutions must themselves operate in ways that ensure the most efficient and effective use of the funds that are available. Supporting universities in ways that promote access and equity should become a funding norm. In view of the reality faced by the

higher education sector in the region, and the role that the sector should be playing, this is certainly one of the most vital considerations that the dialogue has brought to the fore.

Three imperatives drive the need for high quality information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the universities of the region. The first is the need for world class access to the Internet in order to overcome the isolation from the rest of the academic world that universities have faced for many years and to allow research to be undertaken and published. The second is to provide for management information systems within institutions, for without the data and analyses that information systems provide, it will remain very difficult for institutions to know what decisions are needed to help them move forward and improve their all-round performance. Finally, in view of the low student enrolment figures in Southern Africa, it has become increasingly clear that teaching and learning need to include e-learning models that work effectively on and off campus. ICTs are, then, a critical issue for the region and its education institutions, so the SARUA Dialogue devoted to ICT infrastructure and connectivity[41] addressed one of the most serious challenges that stand in the way of strengthening and extending higher education systems.

The report includes three presentations made to 70 members of the region's higher education leadership at a meeting held at the University of Dar es Salaam. The papers cover the topics of recent developments in ICT infrastructure and connectivity, innovative models

for financing access, and 'Africa Connect' concrete possibilities for the sector.

A topic covered in all three papers was the importance of national research and education networks (NRENs). In his paper, John Kondoro explains that NRENs were 'originally a product of academic research to find efficient and cost-effective ways of sharing scarce expensive computer resources'.[42] They are now essential elements of national and regional (RENRENs) connectivity and effective communication. Kondoro continues:

> Recent developments have provided high-capacity submarine fibre optic cable systems on the eastern coast of Africa. One of these optic cables is SEACOM, which has a capacity of 1.28TB/s, linking Africa to Europe and Asia through the Middle East. It connects all the countries on the east coast between Mtunzini (South Africa) with Marseille (France) and London (the United Kingdom). It started its operations in July 2009. EASSy submarine cable system runs from Mtunzini to Port Sudan linking the cities on the eastern coast of Africa with Europe. It has a capacity of 3.84TB/sec and started its operations in August 2010. The TEAMS submarine cable system links Mombasa port with the Middle East, with a total length of 4 500 km and a capacity of 40Gb/sec but upgradeable to 640Gb/sec.
>
> Access to dedicated high-performance research and education networks is necessary if the [region] wants its research and higher-education institutions to be able to fulfil their missions. It has been shown in

> other parts of the world that growth in the deployment of the Internet is mirrored by an increase in economic development of the nation. Failing to provide such network resources will make the institutions fall behind, incapable of participating in most international research areas, and cause frustration leading to brain drain (SARUA 2010b:26).

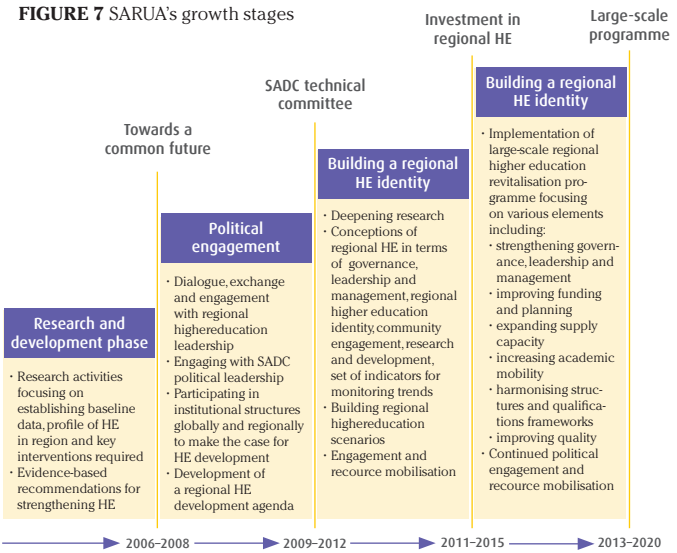
A number of organisations, SARUA amongst them, have championed or supported NRENs and RENRENs in Africa, more especially in Southern Africa, since the early years of this century, but this is an area that requires considerably more attention, planning and funding. Duncan Martin,[43] in his paper, suggests that

> [f]or an NREN to fulfil this role it must be a bottom-up, membership-based organisation that is manifestly not controlled by any single institution or small subset of institutions, or by government officials. The senior management of the institutions, including the ICT Directors, must be willing and able to trust their NREN. If you don't trust your NREN, find out why and fix the problem. The NREN cannot negotiate deals and conclude contracts if its participating institutions do not believe in the NREN and do not work with it to realise the shared infrastructure and services upon which real economic advantage rests (SARUA 2010b:22).

This review of the SARUA Dialogues ends with the session devoted to *Building Higher Education Scenarios 2025: A Strategic Agenda for Development in SADC*,[44]

held in 2011. The report that covers the dialogue has two main sections. A background chapter examines past, and projects future, trends in the key areas of the sector – public spending on higher education, enrolment rates, gender parity and similar variables. The second main section deals with creating and presenting the scenarios, taking into account two key driving forces – technological revolution (a continuum from inaccessible to accessible) and human capacity (from scarcity to abundance). In her introductory chapter, Piyushi Kotecha[45] provides a diagram capturing SARUA's growth stages with the final stage from 2015 to 2020 being that to which the scenarios would apply.

FIGURE 7 SARUA's growth stages



At the end of the first main section of the report, the authors come to this conclusion, by way of a caution to those who will produce the scenarios:

> Improving education requires long-term policy interventions, and there is a lag in reaping the benefits from such policies. However, those countries that have managed to sustain such a process over time have seen large benefits from it. For example, tertiary enrolment rates for SADC and East Asia and the Pacific (EAP) were quite close in 1970, at 0.75% and 1.1% respectively. Over the subsequent decades, enrolment in the EAP continued to grow rapidly and by 2010 had reached 22%, whereas SADC had reached only 6.3% enrolment during the same period. Of course, the growing gap in education went hand in hand with an increasingly severe income gap in the two regions. History and forecasts show that SADC will be able to close this gap if they adopt good education policies and are able to sustain such policies over a long period of time (SARUA 2012a:23).

The four scenarios, based on the two key drivers are:

1. the knowledge village (accessible, abundant);
2. higher education: a missed flight (accessible, scarcity);
3. university searching for its soul (inaccessible, abundant); and
4. the demise of SADC higher education (inaccessible, scarcity).

The scenario-building section provides this observation on the current situation as a prelude to the choices that need to be made:

> The higher education sector in SADC is at a critical juncture in its evolution. A glance at the top-line statistics suggests that the revitalisation of the sector is well under way. According to UNESCO, tertiary enrolment in sub-Saharan Africa has increased 22.3 times to 4.5 million students between 1970 and 2008, albeit from a low base. On average, public expenditure on education in Southern Africa has grown by 6.5% per annum since 2000. Tertiary education receives on average about 20% of public expenditure on education. With a growth in student numbers of about 17% over the last 15 years, a key question that arises is whether funding, infrastructure and other capacity development measures can keep pace with the growing demand for higher education in the region. Moreover, the growth in student numbers is taking place during a time of significant change in the higher education sector, including changing ideas about the role of higher education in society and new developments in post-school education pathways, the nature of instruction and the application of technology. Work done by SARUA and other institutions points to several challenges that need to be addressed. Finance, equity and access, quality and research have been identified as the key thematic priorities for strengthening and building the higher education sector in SADC.

It is on this note that we move to the second group of activities.

Group 2: Study Series and the SARUA website

As is the case with the Leadership Dialogues, the Study Series focus on issues critical to the region's universities. They also serve to provide valuable extensions to the ambit of the work reported above in the section on mapping. The studies include *Science and Technology: A Baseline Study on Science and Technology and Higher Education in the SADC Region*; *ICT Infrastructure and Connectivity*; *HIV/AIDS: an Action Guide for Higher Education Institutions in the SADC Region* (although the publication is a guide, it contributes valuable knowledge about and for the region); *Opening Access to Knowledge in Southern African Universities*; and *Mainstreaming Higher Education in Regional Development in Southern Africa*.

The *Science and Technology*[46] publication is a major work in excess of 200 pages. The foreword explains its relevance:

> The critical importance of Science and Technology (S&T) to regional development is set out in the 2005 NEPAD document: Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA). The CPA articulates Africa's common objectives and commitment to collective action in order to develop and use S&T for the socioeconomic transformation of the African continent, and its integration into the global economy.

> The continental commitment to S&T was highlighted at the 2007 Summit of the African Union Heads of State and Government, when its members declared 2007 as the launching year for building constituencies and champions for science, technology and innovation in Africa. This declaration called for the development and mobilisation of all segments of Africa's population to contribute to the eradication of poverty, fighting diseases stemming environmental degradation and improving the global economic competitiveness of the continent through the application and development of Science and Technology (SARUA 2007b:3).

The comprehensive executive summary shows, sadly, that much remains to be done in order to meet the African Union Heads of state. Johann Mouton, who compiled the report, provides an overview of the situation:

> *Proposition 1*: The real challenge for science development in the region does not lie in individual or even institutional capacity-building but in building (and nurturing) robust and sustainable institutions of science. The need to build strong research institutions has different implications and requires different strategies from those needed to build scientific capacity. *Proposition 2*: The imperatives associated with institution-building concern addressing the enabling conditions that make institutions (universities, research centres and laboratories) robust and viable. It speaks to conditions associated with the autonomy

and research freedom enjoyed by such institutions, the value and recognition accorded them within the national ethos, adequate resourcing within national budgets for such institutions as well as adequate recognition and reward of staff who contribute to institution-building through research and (graduate) programmes that are cumulative over time.

Proposition 3: The status of the scientific or scholarly community is one manifestation of the institution of science. Within the African context in general and specifically within the SADC region, there is insufficient support given to the development and expansion of scientific communities. It is essential that all aspects of scientific community, informal meetings and conferencing, communication through journals, networking through scientific societies and associations and the inscription of the value of science in a national academy, receive attention (SARUA 2007b:10).

The report proper consists of two sections. In the first, high level findings for the region are presented, while in the second section data are presented for each of the 14 SADC countries that had universities in 2007. The variations in scientific output in the region are well captured in the table on the following page. In the period under review (2001–2007) South Africa produced 80.2 per cent of the publications listed in the ISI records, with Tanzania and Zimbabwe following next with a combined output of 8.5 per cent of the publications.

TABLE 4 Bibliometric performance profiles of SADC countries (2001–2007)

	TOTAL NO. OF PAPERS	RELATIVE CONTRIBUTION PER COUNTRY (%)	RELATIVE CONTRIBUTION PER COUNTRY (%) EXCL. RSA	ANNUAL AVERAGE	AVERAGE PAPERS PER MILLION OF POPULATION	PRODUCTIVITY RANK
South Africa	38 232	80.2%	–	5460	124	1
Tanzania	2 408	5.0%	25.4%	344	9	9
Zimbabwe	1 680	3.5%	17.8%	240	20	4
Botswana	1 062	2.2%	11.2%	151	17	5
Malawi	1 020	2.1%	10.8%	146	11	7
Zambia	776	1.6%	8.2%	111	10	8
Madagascar	763	1.6%	8.1%	109	6	10
Namibia	480	1.0%	5.1%	69	35	3
Mozambique	401	0.8%	4.2%	57	3	12
Mauritius	358	0.7%	3.8%	51	43	2
DRC	245	0.5%	2.6%	63	1	13
Swaziland	103	0.2%	1.1%	15	14	6
Angola	90	0.2%	1.0%	13	1	13
Lesotho	75	0.1%	0.8%	11	5	11
Total		47 694		488.57	21	

Source: SARUA (2007) *Science and Technology: A Baseline Study on Science and Technology and Higher Education in the SADC Region*, page 35

Vital support for the growth of science and technology enrolments, research and publications is to be had from encouraging open access to knowledge, and this is the subject of SARUA's Study Series of 2008, *Opening Access to Knowledge in Southern African Universities*.[47] In the executive summary, the situation in universities as it was in 2008 is set out:

> Experiments with open access are already underway in universities, with initiatives such as the development of an electronic catalogue of university scholarly materials at the Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique that could act as foundation for developing an institutional repository; the establishment of a repository of electronic theses and dissertations (ETDs) up and running at the University of Pretoria, South Africa and in the preparatory phase at the University of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania; the implementation of an institutional repository for all scholarly output including images from cultural collections and the production of an electronic journal, also at the University of Pretoria. These initiatives face considerable challenges to successful introduction into the mainstream of university life and practice and provide interesting pointers to the issues that need to be addressed for the successful implementation of open access projects and an open knowledge paradigm. A favourable university policy environment, as well as effectively funded institutional and technical capacity, is needed in order to promote sustainable implementation of initiatives to enhance

scholarly publishing and dissemination in the region (SARUA 2008b:9).

The significance of the state of science and technology in the region lies not just in the low productivity of the institutions. It is also in the implications that this holds for university–firm–government partnerships and the innovation that science and technology can drive, and for improvements in health, water quality and housing, amongst other critical socio-economic areas.

The value and importance of ICT to the region emerged clearly from the Leadership Dialogue on ICTs and their pivotal role in reaching the scenarios for the future. Alex Twinomugisha's[48] contribution to the Study Series in 2007 provides an insight into the anatomy of the ways in which ICT departments in universities operate and of their status in the countries of the region. Twinomugisha also sets out roles that SARUA might play in this area of regional development – and he lists these as advocacy, convening, co-ordination, facilitation and advice. The Leadership Dialogue clearly forms part of these roles.

Some data from SARUA reports and this paper might help to foreground the importance of ICTs. Scarce data about enrolment figures for members institutions, for example (see enrolment figures in Section 2) suggest that members institutions do not always have the ICT capacity needed to record, analyse and publish such information. Both the first and second regional profiles for the region (*Towards a Common Future* and *A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa, Volume 1*) reveal

the difficulties that surround attempts to find accurate and up-to-date data for institutions.

The authors of *A Profile of Higher Education in Southern Africa, Volume 1*, for example, point out that many institutions failed to respond to the questionnaire that they circulated (e.g. 1 of 6 responded from Angola, 6 of 36 from the DRC and 12 of 23 from South Africa). Some of these failed responses would inevitably be due to poor administration, but others will have been because the data requested were simply not available.

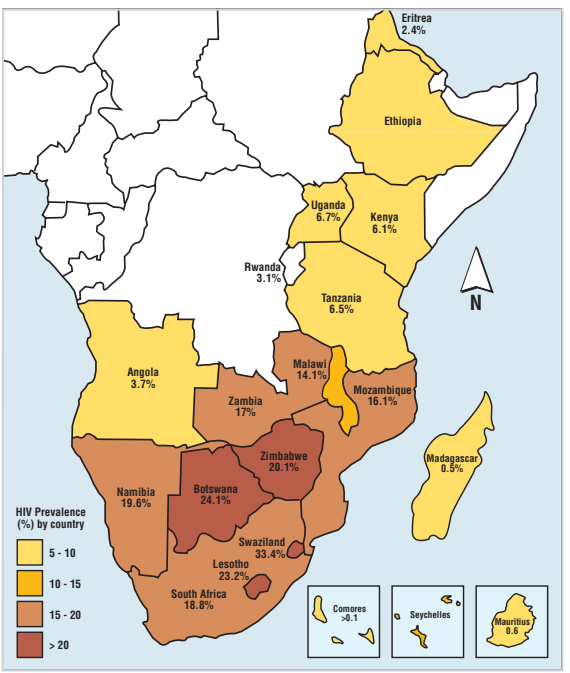
As a result, the authors are constrained to use qualifiers – 'based on available data' and '[s]ince not all universities were able to provide data regarding numbers of applications and numbers of new students enrolled, the figures should be seen as indicative of trends'. Building strong institutions requires sound, reliable data which, when analysed, provide bases for decision making. Just as poor scientific outputs have broader implications so, too, inadequate ICT systems have implications for university development – and for students.

Sub-Saharan Africa is known to be the epicentre of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and southern parts of the region Africa's epicentre. Figure 8, taken from the SARUA publication *HIV and AIDS: An Action Guide for Higher Education Institutions in the SADC Region*,[49] tell this story as it was in 2005.

This is a situation that SARUA could not have ignored, and it did not do so. Since the demography of HIV infections and AIDS deaths in the region affects younger people more acutely than older people,

higher education institutions are under a special duty of care to be aware of HIV/AIDS matters and to ensure that policies and practices are in place to support students and staff – in terms of protection, prevention and medical treatment. *HIV and AIDS: An Action Guide for Higher Education Institutions in the SADC Region* (2007) provides an explanatory background to the pandemic and then sets out strategies and guidelines for universities in managing the challenges that the disease creates.

FIGURE 8 HIV prevalence in SADC, 2005



In view of the vital role that universities play in social and economic development, and the need for further development in the region, it is reasonable to assume that SADC countries will have development plans and that higher education institutions and their part in development processes will feature prominently in those plans. Research for *Mainstreaming Higher Education in National and Regional Development in Southern Africa*[50] set out to establish whether this assumption was correct.

Sadly, the findings found that the assumption was incorrect:

> To what extent does higher education feature in these plans? [the researchers asked]. The answers vary from country to country, but the majority of country development plans do not align with national education plans. All countries have planning documents that relate to development issues, although some of them go no further than poverty relief. A worrying reality is that the majority of country development plans do not align with plans for higher education. In many cases, development and higher education are simply not thought of as relating in any significant way. A key problem here is a serious lack of strategic planning capacity in the various ministries. In addition, even when good strategic plans exist, they are all too often not deliberately linked to the budgetary processes and therefore remain inadequately financed. In spite of these shortcomings, however, there appears to be a growing awareness that access to higher education, as

> well as its subject offerings and quality relate closely to successful socio-economic development. A few countries talk enthusiastically about the importance of a 'knowledge economy', but these ambitions need to be seen against a backdrop of extremely low research outputs, a situation that indicates inadequate investment in research infrastructure and equipment. In this regard, a few countries have invested heavily in basic school education at the expense of higher education (SARUA 2008a:4).

The SARUA website (www.sarua.org) is a valuable source of information about SARUA projects, its member institutions and higher education in the SADC states. The publications, and most other SARUA documents referred to in this book, are available on the site, as is background information on SARUA's history, mandate, objectives and vision. The Governance, Leadership and Management (GLM) and PULSAR development programmes (see below) are featured and sub-sites offer information about SARUA events and news. The *SARUA Handbook*[51] of its members is of particular interest and is to be found under the 'publications' tab.

The open source site became operational at the end of June 2007 and has since been extended and strengthened. The value of the site may be seen in the growth access statistics. In 2008, the site had around 1 000 hits a month. By 2009 this had trebled to 3 000 – and that level had doubled to 6 000 by 2010. SARUA planned to establish an Electronic Directory of Public Science in SADC, but this has yet to be completed.

SARUA's Policy Contributions

Key challenges for the future: The need to secure and maintain the political commitment of key players in higher education, government and business (*SARUA Annual Report 2007*).

Drawing on earlier sections in this book, it is possible to foreground the essential role that higher education has to play in the region, along with the reality that few countries include higher education in their developments plans. Unless that happens, however, the growth potential that universities have to offer will not be realised – nor will the potential of the large number of young people in the region who are hungry for knowledge and employment opportunities of the sort that tertiary studies can bring.

Mindful of the need to 'secure and maintain the political commitment of key players', SARUA has engaged with SADC ministers of higher education and training, and has drawn up a plan for a regional research and development fund for the regional higher education sector.

In March 2010, SARUA made a presentation, by invitation, on research findings and recommendations for the region to the ministerial meeting held in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Four areas of concern emerging from SARUA's research at the time were outlined. These are issues that have been reviewed in this book and will not come as a surprise. The first problem area is the low levels of higher education participation in the region, followed

by critical staffing shortages both currently and, more seriously, in the future. The third concern is the low levels of research outputs and the fourth, the need for concerted efforts to improve policy, governance and leadership in the higher education sector.

Against this background, the priority areas identified as recommendations were as follows:

- the collection of reliable data and statistics;
- the need for better co-ordination between higher education funding and planning;
- the importance of improved ICT (fundamental to the success of the first point and to increasing research output and student participation);
- the development of science systems in the region; and
- effective quality assurance systems.

Following the meeting of SADC ministers in 2010, it was reported that:

> SARUA's recommendations were received positively and the Ministers subsequently recommended that a Technical Committee on Higher Education be established. The Technical Committee will commence work in 2011 and SARUA has been invited to participate in the work of the Committee. In 2011 SARUA will also be undertaking research into 'Cost barriers to access to Higher Education and Student Mobility in the SADC region' on behalf of the SADC (SARUA 2010c:5).

This meeting was followed by a further invitation for SARUA to make a presentation to the Extraordinary Meeting of Minsters of Higher Education and Training held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2012. At this meeting, four detailed recommendations were made around a differentiated expansion of higher education enrolments; the strengthening of the quality of teaching and learning; changing how universities work in the areas of governance, leadership, management and scholarship; and planning for the development of research capability. These imperatives for change were supported by ten strategies for expanding and transforming higher education, and a five point action plan for the revitalisation of higher education.

In addition to the interactions with SADC ministers, SARUA has drawn up a plan for the creation of a regional research and development fund. The *SARUA Annual Report 2011* lays out the rationale for the fund as follows:

> There is now widespread global recognition of the importance of innovation in responding to the social and economic developmental needs of our societies. We also know how important it is for countries to innovate, in order to participate in the global information and knowledge society.
>
> Research and development (R&D) are essential to innovation. Innovation takes place across all sectors, but publicly-funded universities are recognised as being the prime site of R&D and innovation in a knowledge-driven society, and therefore essential to development.

> University systems as a whole are being called upon to produce research and innovate, in addition to their other public responsibilities. However, the history of development of universities in our region shows that universities have served many purposes, and not all can be research institutions, or technology-focused institutions.
>
> In Southern Africa we are also driven by the reality of resource, infrastructure and skills constraints to collaborate. We cannot innovate as national or regional systems if we do not seek collaboration.
>
> With this increasing knowledge about the state of our science and research systems, and the knowledge of approaches being taken in other developing regions, we can start to develop responses to deepen our research capacity and collaboration in the SADC region. This SARUA proposal for a Southern African Universities Research and Development Fund is one possible response. In 2010, SARUA conducted a study to examine the feasibility of such a Fund (*SARUA Annual Report 2011*:9-10).

The core findings of the research are also presented in the SARUA *Annual Report 2011*, with the objectives of the fund being:

- Strengthen the research capacity of universities within the Southern African region;
- Strengthen the networks between researchers from universities within the region, particularly between countries which have not collaborated historically

despite many good reasons for doing so;
- Increase the research output of these universities in areas of direct and specific relevance to the region including health, infrastructure, social sciences, mining, financial services and manufacturing; and
- Increase the output of postgraduates from the region's universities who are well equipped to undertake the development of innovative products and services to meet the needs of the region.

There is no doubt that there is a pressing need for such a regional fund. Ensuring that it comes into being and that there are sound systems for its management and use will be difficult tasks, but tasks worth taking to a successful conclusion.

Governance, Leadership and Management Courses

The need for major improvements in governance, leadership and management in the universities of the region is a concern that has been repeatedly raised in the work undertaken by SARUA. Measures have, therefore, been taken to provide opportunities for senior leaders and managers in the institutions to attempt courses that will develop the skills and practices needed for those improvements to take place.

The Governance, Leadership and Management Programme (GLM) had offerings at three levels – a Vice-Chancellors' Leadership Exchange event series, Executive Strategic Focus events, and a Certified

Course in Higher Education Management, offered in partnership with the School of Public and Development Management at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa.

The Certificate Course included four modules – Academic Planning and Policy, Governance and Strategy, Systems Management, and Managing People and Change. Four case studies have been developed to support the course, representing stories of systems and institutions in the region undergoing fundamental changes. Four different countries were included – Botswana, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe – and the case studies cover diverse areas relevant to the four modules. By the end of 2010, 70 candidates had successfully completed the course, which is now undergoing re-design to ensure relevance to the changing situations in the region.

PULSAR is a programme run by SARUA in association with the United Kingdom's Leadership Foundation for Higher Education. The aim of the programme is to enhance the performance of senior leaders across a range of their responsibilities. These include strategic and academic planning, finance, human resources, research management, and information and communication technologies. Participants are required to develop action plans and a strategic project on which they receive support from the programme team. These projects were wide ranging in nature – from creating an alumnus association, to improving science, engineering and technology enrolments, to developing a succession planning and management strategy.

The first workshop was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in July 2012 and continued in November. Eighteen participants from eight SADC countries rated the courses highly – although noting that the training was very intense. Together with the GLM programme, the PULSAR venture creates a raft of opportunities which might well contribute to the strengthening of the leadership in the region's higher education system.

Co-operation – On the Cusp

This exciting and innovative programme has the potential truly to enhance collaborative possibilities amongst SADC universities (*SARUA Annual Report 2011*).

SARUA's work in its first phase (from 2006 to 2012) has focused on the four clusters of activities identified in Section 5 – publications (primarily based on research); meetings and convenings; leadership training; and policy interventions. These are all necessary elements of preparing independent institutions and complex regions of nation states for co-operation.

One Leadership Dialogue has, however, taken an important global and regional issue to the edge of co-operation – the threats that come with the climate change that the world (and again the region) are experiencing. The Leadership Dialogue on climate change took place in November 2011 and is reported in SARUA's annual report for that year. It was based on a Leadership Dialogue publication published in 2010.[52]

The publication is, like the science and technology volume, a substantial collection of contributions. They deal with the impacts of climate change in Southern Africa, scenario developments for sub-Saharan Africa, and papers on food security, water, public health, and university curriculum design. A framework for action on climate change is also included.

The Leadership Dialogue that followed (after two preparatory meetings) resulted in a vision for a collaborative programme (the step forward) and a defined set of outcomes. The vision is:

> to significantly enhance the climate adaptive capacity and resilience of the SADC region through the development of a collaborative network of higher education institutions capable of pooling resources, maximising the value of its intellectual capital and attracting significant investment into the region. This will involve changes in: research, teaching and knowledge generation on climate change, adaptation measures, low carbon development options and the associated costs and benefits; the dissemination of information and knowledge amongst all stakeholders; sensitising communities, governments and the private sector about the risks of climate variability for development prospects in the region; regional evidence-based policy development and implementation; and regional capacity for active participation in international policy networks.
>
> Over the next five years this programme will focus on significant investment in collaborative research,

> teaching and learning, and policy and community outreach, centred on major current and future issues of adaptation, mitigation and development in the region. Knowledge sharing and brokerage will play a key role in underpinning these activities, based on a shared knowledge platform (*SARUA Annual Report 2011*:6).

The objectives identified are as follows:

- Collaborative network development: Six collaborative networks (a policy and community outreach network, two themed research networks, a curriculum development – teaching and learning – network, a knowledge management network, an institutional development and evaluation network) established, each with a coordinating hub (and associated chair) and each with agreement for potential growth hubs.
- Policy and community outreach: Agreement of a knowledge co-production framework with policy makers and community development workers in each country.
- Research: Two themed collaborative research networks operational, with 140 PhD students (average 10 per country) participating by the end of 2016. The PhD training programme offers exchange events and short courses between countries participating in the networks, plus international mentoring for the senior staff cadre (through visiting professors).
- Teaching and learning: Climate change issues have been fully mainstreamed across 50 per cent of all

development-related undergraduate courses run by universities participating in the SARUA network. A regional portfolio of masters teaching modules is available, with customised programmes running in 50 per cent of member countries, resulting in the graduation of 420 masters students (30 per participating country) by the end of 2016.

- Knowledge management: A regional database or platform of climate-related research and teaching activities across the SARUA network provides the basis for networking and is updated on a regular basis. Dedicated spaces within this platform host each of the collaborative research networks as well as virtual meeting spaces.
- Institutional learning and support: Institutional factors enabling and constraining the development of the programme were identified and addressed in the development plans of 50 per cent of participating universities. Institutional factors enabling and constraining the development of the programme identified and addressed in the development plans of 50 per cent of participating universities. Members of the institutional development and evaluation network providing active facilitation support to the other five collaborative networks, leading to improvements in reflexive practice and inter- and trans-disciplinary working.

A start has been made on drawing together the organisations (universities, research centres and agencies of various kinds) and individuals who would

be central to setting the planned co-operative venture in place and then making it work. The first steps in this regard are promising.

Both the vision and the objectives express a high level of ambition. They deserve to be met – but taking into account the other visions and objectives that phase one of SARUA has left in place, prioritising the projects and objectives within projects will be an essential task. Equally important will be to decide on the kind of organisation best suited to take this work forward, and how the co-operation will be funded. For instance, will it be more important to ensure that the research and development fund is in place as a financing vehicle – or should climate change, in view of its importance to the region, go ahead along with an associated search for funds? These and other questions will be critical topics of debate for the future of the region.

6 Import: What does a Regional Association of Universities Mean for the Future of the Region?

There could not be a better time than the present to take forward, with energy and determination, the cause of regional institutional co-operation aimed at strengthening higher education institutions and systems in the SADC region. SARUA has laid the foundation and highlighted the significant issues on the basis of which the cause can be promoted and given effect. Other organisations have been providing detailed data and analyses that offer valuable insights and understandings of the situation within institutions and, in doing so, have created networks of committed

university academics and administrators.[53] These need to be harnessed along with SARUA's admirable work.

And, perhaps most importantly within the broad regional context, sub-Saharan Africa is poised to take tremendous economic and social strides forward – provided higher education is fully supported so that it can play its central role with efficiency – not just with regard to economic growth, but also as the promoter of democratic freedoms.

The cover of the 3 November 2012 edition of *Time* magazine proclaims: 'Africa rising – it's the world's next economic powerhouse (but huge challenges lie ahead)'. This says it all. The potential is there, but so, too, are the challenges – including the task of liberating the transforming potential of the higher education sector. A less propitious and, to a degree, ironic development comes in the form of Agreements signed in early November between the European Union (EU) and the SADC. In earlier sections of this paper, the close and indispensable relationship between higher education and public and private development has been described. The agreement between the EU and the SADC will provide funds for regional trade integration, industry and finance, HIV/AIDS programmes and similar projects, while excluding higher education and human capacity development as beneficiaries. The irony lies in the fact that the projects that are to be funded will require considerable contributions from the higher education sector, and will also depend on high levels skills.

The Agreements, which will lead to grants to the

SADC of 36 million Euros (about ZAR 450 million), are intended to 'show a deeper commitment of the European Union to reinforce SADC's ownership, systems, capacity development and aid effectiveness'[54] although they will exclude the fundamental engines of capacity development.

In some ways it stands to reason that the nature of the EU–SADC Agreements should serve to make the way forward an even greater imperative.

The question that arises, then, is how the endeavour should be undertaken. Several approaches will be required. First, wherever possible, current data and analyses should be updated. Information ages quickly and in order to keep the picture of the landscape, and therefore of needs, current, it will be important to ensure that what is known is reviewed and refreshed as regularly as possible.

The second approach arises from the reality that the most effective way of strengthening institutions, and then systems, is to strengthen institutions one at a time. For this to happen, two conditions must be met: institutional data systems must be put in place along with the skills to create and use information management systems as a basis for sound institutional decision making; and senior managers need to be trained on site to make the most of the data that become available – both within their institutions and as a basis for making the case for system-wide support from national treasuries. On-site training is important in ensuring that what managers learn happens in the context of their current working conditions and

practices. Learning gained out of a home context can easily be forgotten, set aside, or found not to be practical when attempts are made to use skills and knowledge in a different environment.

The third approach is to create close links with ministers and their senior directors, in ministries of higher education and of finance. This is an important advocacy task, aimed at developing a very clear understanding of the role that higher education plays in national and regional development. As part of this process, attention will need to be given to demystifying the misleading notion that growth in gross domestic product (GDP) is synonymous with genuine social and economic growth. Amartya Sen[55] has long since shown that national economic abundance can leave large portions of the population in poverty, and has argued that political and related freedoms, of the kind that wide access to higher education can begin to offer, are fundamental to real social and economic change. This is the concept of 'development as freedom' rather than development as unequally distributed wealth.

Finally, these three approaches need to be co-ordinated and implemented by sophisticated project managers who also understand higher education and its role, and who are politically astute. SARUA has, in its first phase, ably and systematically provided the information and analysis needed for the process to move forward. What happens next will require new approaches, nuanced strategising and strong implementation skills. This might seem a great deal to expect. The process has, however, achieved so much

thus far that the gains simply cannot be lost. They must be turned into regional higher education systems that will change the lives of the region's people at a rate not previously imagined.

Notes

1. Pillay (2011); Kotecha (2012b).
2. Ibid.; Kotecha (2012a)
3. Kotecha P (2012c).
4. See www.nationmaster.com/graph/edu_ter_enr-education-tertiary-enrolment (accessed 12 November 2012)
5. Ibid.
6. Kotecha (2012c).
7. See www.worldmapper.org/display.php?selected=211 (accessed 14 November 2012).
8. World Economic Forum (2012).
9. The bases and data on which the scores in the table are calculated are set out in the WEF Global Report.
10. Bloom et al. (2005).
11. Ibid.:3.
12. Ibid.:17.
13. Branson et al. (2009).
14. Pillay (2010).
15. Ibid.:22.
16. SciDev Net (2012).
17. *University World News* (2012).
18. SARUA (2012c).
19. Lang (2002).
20. Ibid.:154.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.:155
23. Lang identifies five forms of co-operation/collaboration: consortia, affiliations, contractual agreements, federations, and semi-autonomous co-operation within mergers. It should be clear that SARUA is not any of these – it is an association out of which co-operation might well develop.
24. See http://sig.ias.edu/rise. RISE is supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York.
25. See http://www.gcro.ac.za/
26. Mukandala (2012).
27. SciDev Net (2012).
28. Kotecha (2012a).

29. Figures in the original reports were rounded and some data were missing – so figures do not necessarily add up to 100%.
30. SARUA (2012b).
31. Pillay (2011).
32. Kruss and Petersen (2008).
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. The Leadership Dialogue Series also included a session on climate change. This report is discussed in Section 5.
36. SARUA (2009a).
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ISBN: 978-0-9869903-9-7

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