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Engaging Universities in the Regional Integration Project in Southern Africa

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Acronyms

AU	African Union
CHE	Council for Higher Education
CHET	Council for Higher Education Transformation
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
HDI	Human Development Index
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
RISDP	Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SARUA	Southern African Regional Universities Association
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Abstract

Regional integration has historically been viewed as a pathway to development and poverty reduction in Africa. As in other parts of the world, it is viewed as a means to achieve sustained economic growth and socio-economic development, and overcome structural challenges such as political fragmentation, small market size and the landlocked nature of some member states. Within southern Africa, the 15 member states that comprise the Southern African Development Community (SADC) share geographical, historical, cultural and often linguistic ties but differ vastly in size and their levels of socio-economic development. They also face challenges of persistent poverty, failing education systems and health crises that will require ingenuity, resourcefulness and strong leadership to overcome.

The aim of this paper is to explore the potential for engaging universities in promoting greater regional integration in the southern African region, with the intention of prompting further conversation and debate around the role of universities in supporting regional initiatives. The paper considers the regional context and provides an overview of the regional integration project in Africa generally and in the southern Africa region more specifically, noting some of the challenges faced in the process. The paper also considers the role of universities in society, both in terms of the external pressures in today's changing world that are pushing them to actively engage with their contexts, and the internal debates relating to community engagement as a function of universities. Three broad areas in which universities can contribute to strengthening and furthering southern African regional integration and fostering a regional identity are proposed. The paper concludes by posing questions for further consideration.

1 Introduction

Integration has historically been viewed as a pathway to development and poverty reduction in Africa. As in other parts of the world, it is viewed as a means to achieve sustained economic growth and socio-economic development and overcome structural challenges such as political fragmentation, small market size and the landlocked nature of some member states. Within southern Africa, the 15 member states that comprise the Southern African Development Community (SADC) share geographical, historical, cultural and often linguistic ties but differ vastly in size and their levels of socio-economic development.¹ They also face challenges of persistent poverty, failing education systems and health crises that will require ingenuity, resourcefulness and strong leadership to overcome.

Tackling these challenges requires a regional perspective. The role of higher education in promoting development and regional integration is generally viewed as contributing to scientific and technological innovation (research) and developing the high-level skills (teaching) needed to drive national and regional development in a knowledge-based economy. However, through greater engagement with their social, political, cultural and economic contexts (community engagement), higher education institutions have the potential to nurture the creativity, innovation, robust engagement, leadership and cross-border exchanges that are required to tackle the persistent challenges of development and regional integration.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the potential for engaging universities in promoting greater regional integration in the southern African region. The paper begins by providing some insight into the developmental challenges facing the region and discusses the regional integration project in Africa and in the region, noting some of the challenges faced in the process. The focus then shifts to consider the role of universities and the external pressures in today's changing world that are pushing them to actively engage with their contexts. Some of the internal debates relating to community engagement as a function of universities are highlighted, and then three broad areas in which universities can contribute to strengthening and furthering southern African regional integration are discussed. The paper concludes with some questions for further discussion.

1.1 The Southern African context

In a rapidly changing world in which information, technology and innovation is increasingly important for participation in the global knowledge-based economy, the southern African region continues to face many challenges. Poverty is endemic, and while South Africa and Mauritius have sizeable manufacturing sectors, other member states are predominantly underdeveloped with economies dependent on agriculture and mining. The **marginalisation of southern African countries in the global economy** is evident in the country rankings on the World Economic Forum's 2011 Global Competitiveness Index, which measures the productivity of 142 states around the world. With the exceptions of South Africa (50) and Mauritius (54), the 11 other SADC countries for which competitiveness rankings are given all fall in the lower half of the index. Botswana (80) and Namibia (83) are followed by Zambia (113), Malawi (117) and Tanzania (120), while the other six member states are to be found in the 130 to 139 range (World Economic Forum, 2011).²

¹ Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Namibia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

² No data was given for the Seychelles or the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Furthermore, **human development** in the region is low. According to the 2010 Human Development Index (HDI), which ranked 172 countries using a measure based on life expectancy, education levels and income, Mauritius (74) is the only SADC country that has achieved 'high' levels of human development (United Nations Development Programme, 2010).³ Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland show medium levels of human development, while the majority of SADC members are classified as having low levels of human development. Mozambique (168), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (171) and Zimbabwe (172) currently have amongst the lowest levels of human development in the world.⁴ Almost all countries, including those in the SADC region, have seen some degree of improvement in human development over the last forty years. However, a recent review of 135 countries found that only three countries have a lower HDI today than in 1970, and all three countries – the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia and Zimbabwe – are SADC member states (United Nations Development Programme, 2010).

These low levels of human development – that is, the ability of people in the region to live lives they value by expanding their freedoms and building their capabilities (UNDP, 2011) – reflect the health and education challenges in the region. In particular, Southern Africa remains the region most severely affected by the **HIV epidemic**. In 2009, a third of all people living with HIV worldwide lived in just 10 SADC countries (UNAIDS, 2010).⁵ In terms of education, substantial progress has been made in increasing access to primary education in the region, but significant challenges remain in ensuring the quality of teaching and learning. **Enrolment in tertiary education is particularly low**, a serious concern given the importance of high levels skills in a knowledge-based economy.

Furthermore, the region also suffers from high levels of **inequality**, both within and across countries. Based on Gini coefficient calculations, Namibia, Lesotho, Botswana and South Africa have some of the highest levels of income disparity in the world (UNDP, 2010). This inequitable development, together with severe economic imbalances among the member states and the dominance of the South Africa economy in the region, does not bode well for social cohesion in the region.

Addressing these challenges in southern Africa is both possible and urgent, and there is a growing recognition that in a globalised economy, **these development problems cannot be addressed at a national level alone**. The proliferation of regional groupings and economic communities in Africa in recent decades is evidence of the belief that greater regional collaboration and integration is necessary to enable countries in the region to share knowledge and resources, increase efficiencies, solve common problems and compete effectively in the global economy.

1.2 Regional integration as a development strategy

The trend worldwide is towards the **development of regional blocs** and Africa is no exception. Early integration initiatives, such as the creation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) by independent African states in 1963, were rooted in a political desire to liberate the continent from colonial rule and an early recognition of the benefits of co-operation. During this post-independence period there was a mushrooming of regional

³ None were classified as having 'very high' levels of human development, the first of the four categories.

⁴ No ranking was given for the Seychelles.

⁵ Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

groupings or economic communities, which included the establishment of the East African Community and the re-launching of the Southern African Customs Union.⁶

SADC was established in 1992 and replaced the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC), which aimed to promote political liberation and counter the influence of apartheid South Africa in the region. The Common Market for Eastern and southern Africa (COMESA) was established in 1995. Political and economic motivations have traditionally played a strong part in integration in Africa, but recently there has been an increased emphasis on the social dimensions of integration. By 2001, regional organisations had begun to clearly articulate the link between regional integration and social and economic development, as evidenced by the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) by the newly established African Union (AU).

However, despite the existence and efforts of a variety of African regional integration organisations and the numerous declarations, protocols and policies fashioned by those organisations over the last fifty years, there has been **little progress towards achieving regional integration and development in southern Africa**. Why has this been the case?

Integration is a challenging process, and the desired developmental outcomes are by no means automatic. An ambitious timeline for trade integration in the region was laid out in SADC's Regional indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), but as of 2010, the free trade area had not been fully implemented (a goal set for 2008), and the goal of establishing a customs union by 2010 had not been met (tralac, 2011). In a report on monitoring regional integration in southern Africa, the Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa (tralac, 2011:2) **questions the suitability of this linear textbook model for addressing development challenges in the southern African region**, with its central focus on trade in goods and negotiating trade tariffs rather than the "real challenges to regional integration [which] lie behind the border". These challenges include infrastructure deficits, poor regulatory regimes and high-cost and inefficient services. The authors (2011:4) also noted that "regional integration in Southern Africa needs **fresh commitment and political will** to deliver economic, social and political benefits for the people of Southern Africa".

In a review of the challenges and opportunities for regional integration in Africa, Ngwenya (2011) also refers to African economic integration as envisaged along "neoclassical lines of linear progression" and argues that integration in Africa has been "ill-fated" because it has been driven by **deterministic economic ideologies** in the form of a liberal market economy approach. He contrasts this with the more pragmatic approach to integration adopted by countries in East Asia and Europe, and more specifically the social market economy approach that underlies the East Asian approach to development. Ngwenya contends that neo-classical economic theory is unsuitable for the African context, where modernisation and structural transformation is required to move Africa beyond its continued dependence on the export of primary commodities. Ngwenya (2011:262) argues that while there is a focus on trade as a key driver of regional economic integration in Africa, the lack of industry to process these primary commodities means that "it is a leap of blind faith to expect that regional integration on the basis of trade liberalisation will result in increased intra-regional trade. This is simply because there is nothing to trade in due to the absence of product complementarities among countries". He proposes that Africa would be better served by a production based model of integration.

⁶ Established in 1967, the East African Community collapsed in 1977 but was revived in 2000. The Southern African Customs Union was originally established in 1910 under colonial rule and was re-launched by independent states in 1969.

On a slightly different note, Ngwenya also points to the need for regional integration to be based on national institutions and legal reforms that expressly provide for such integration, and observes that decisions taken at a regional level are rarely subject to popular debate in member states. This results in a **lack of accountability** on the part of the leadership and thus the regional integration process “has remained elitist and bureaucratic” (Ngwenya, 2011:259). Furthermore, the exercise of sovereignty by member states has been a meant that decisions taken at regional level are often difficult to implement.

Despite these and other challenges, Ngwenya argues that for Africa to take advantage of the opportunities offered by globalisation there needs to be a speeding up of the integration of the African market. However, this can only be achieved “if there is leadership with the vision that transcends national considerations and accepts that the world does not owe Africa anything, but rather that through its own efforts, African can join the league of nations as an equal partner” (Ngwenya, 2011:277).

A recent UNDP (2011) report on regional integration as a pathway to development in Africa echoes the assertion that regional integration that goes beyond primarily economic (and more specifically, trade) considerations has the potential to provide social, economic and political benefits for the people of Africa:

“Expanded integration could also create opportunities for resilience by pooling capacities to respond to vulnerabilities. Although tariff reductions and the creation of customs unions across the region are steps in the right direction, deeper levels of integration involving investments in infrastructure, technological upgrading and policy harmonization are likely to lead to the largest human development benefits. This can further enhance competitiveness, productivity and employment, especially for young people in a region severely challenged in these areas.”(UNDP, 2011)

Prerequisites for furthering regional integration

Bearing in mind these challenges and drawing on a review conducted for this paper of the strategies, approaches, visions, missions and programmes of a range of regional African institutions, organisations and signatory groups (see appendix for more detail on the review), it is possible to identify several broad issues that must be addressed for further progress on regional integration to be achieved:

- **Political will** is required to implement agreed treaties and mandates, and to prioritise regional integration and developmental goals over other competing interests including national agendas, North-South linkages (a legacy of colonialism) and bilateral relations with new global players (e.g. the BRIC countries) that promote bilateral relations rather than dealing with regional economic communities. In addition, peace and political stability, the rule of law, good governance, accountability and credible institutions are all required as a basis for furthering regional integration.
- A comprehensive review of **economic** issues that must be addressed (and the related debates) is beyond the scope of this paper. However, some of the challenges for regional integration include underdeveloped financial markets, unstable macro-economic contexts and foreign debt service burdens as well as the implications of inefficient African industries and a range of restrictions that arguably resulted from policies of import substitution in earlier decades.

- Moving beyond economic concerns, the formulation of regional integration initiatives should include opportunities for much broader **consultation** and should include an effective **social dimension**. Examples of social issues that require further attention at the regional level include devising strategies to address unemployment and under-employment in the region as a poverty reduction measure, and accounting for the socio-economic status of youth in the various development programmes.
- A number of **operational issues** need to be addressed, including harmonising policies, regulations and procedures governing investment, trade and infrastructure development at regional and continental level (some efforts are underway) and ensuring that specific plans are developed to implement development initiatives or agendas. Given the dominance of a few countries and disparities in size among member states of regional groups, there must be adequate mechanisms for the equitable sharing of the costs *and* benefits of regional arrangements. In addition, the implications of overlapping membership and mandates need to be considered – of the 53 African countries, six are members of a single regional economic community, 26 belong to two, and 21 are members of at least three (Economic Commission for Africa, 2004).
- Other issues that require further attention include building **institutional capacity** within regional bodies; addressing physical **infrastructure** constraints in the region such as a lack of transport, energy and information and communication technologies (ICT) and linking infrastructural resources on a regional level; and encouraging the involvement of the **private sector**.

Regional identity

A further point for consideration is whether or not this process of regional integration is underpinned by a regional identity that is meaningful to those living in the region. The SADC RISDP refers to the “common values and principles and **historical and cultural affinities** that exist between the peoples of Southern Africa”. The cultural and linguistic links are the result of patterns of migration that form an integral part of the history of the region, while the historical links over the last half century relate to shared experiences of colonialism, struggles for political liberation and prolonged periods of political instability and, many cases, conflict. Added to this are economic trends such as the development of the South African mining industry, which sought migrant workers as cheap labour from all over the region and led to more than a century of cross-border migration.

However, these links do not necessarily translate into a strong regional identity or sense of social cohesion in the context of regional integration, particularly in SADC where there is a severe imbalance in the size and levels of development among member states and where identity has been shaped by liberation struggles against minority rule. While people continue to travel between SADC countries and may have kinship, friendship and community ties that span different SADC countries, Kornegay (2006:6) argues that the “real, if limited, sense of being part of a common political space and of holding common political values in southern Africa...is shared more by governments, and in particular heads of state and government, rather than by the average person”. Such state-led regional integration is limited, and regional identity and citizenship must be developed from the **‘bottom up’** if it is to have meaning in the lives of ordinary southern Africans. This ‘bottom up’ approach in turn requires the active involvement of a range of civil society actors, including universities.

Thus, given the potential benefits of regional integration, and the current obstacles to achieving these benefits as described above, **what can be done to support and strengthen**

regional co-operation and integration as a strategy for economic growth and social development in southern Africa?

There is growing awareness of the **pivotal role of education, and particularly higher education, in driving socio-economic development and renewal** within the southern African region and as such there are increasing efforts to revitalise the sector. It is argued here that an engaged and responsive higher education sector has a key role to play in strengthening regional co-operation and integration by not only building technological capacities and developing the 'requisite knowledge and skills for the economy' amongst the people of southern Africa, but also by nurturing active citizens and socially aware future leaders, and using their unique position as a public good to promote the exchange of ideas, creativity and collaboration that is essential for fostering southern African innovation.

2 The role of higher education in the region

Much has been written about the purpose of higher education and the role of higher education institutions in society (for example, see Boulton and Lucas, 2008). In southern Africa, the purpose of higher education is generally identified as being to carry out **three core functions**, namely teaching and learning, research, and increasingly, community engagement.

While the first two pillars – teaching and research – are widely accepted as core functions of higher education, the third “Cinderella mission” of community engagement has been the subject of much debate and has been implemented inconsistently. A recent study by the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA, 2008a) found that while its 51 member public universities place 65% of their focus on teaching and learning and 22% on research, only 11% of their focus is on community engagement.⁷

The different interpretations of community engagement will be discussed in more detail in a later section. However, at its most basic, community engagement refers to the engagement between higher education institutions and the broader context in which they are located.

Discussions of community engagement invariably lead to discussions of the **broader role** of higher education in society, which is influenced by the context in which higher education institutions function. In the developing country context of southern Africa, higher education has a clear contribution to make in promoting socio-economic development in the region. In discussing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the role of universities in the Caribbean, Downes (2010) suggests the following four routes through which universities contribute to the development process in general:

1. Providing academic leadership through high quality research into critical areas of national development (**knowledge creation**)
2. Providing **professional development** through the teaching and training of students for the labour market and other endeavours
3. Providing **advisory/outreach services** to government, private sector organisations, non-governmental organisations
4. Providing general higher education through the development of **analytical skills**, critical and creative thinking

⁷ This is based on the perceptions of responding universities rather than objective measures.

This provides a useful framework for thinking about the channels through which universities engage in development. In addition to addressing development needs, universities also fulfil other roles, including developing “the ability to think critically; the ability to transcend local loyalties and to approach world problems as a “citizen of the world”; and, finally, the ability to imagine sympathetically the predicament of another person” (Nussbaum, 2008).

A further point to be made when considering issues of relevance and responsiveness is that as a public good, higher education must balance the short term with a long view, as elaborated by Boulton and Lucas (2008:4):

“Thus, universities operate on both the short and the long horizon. On the one hand, they train students to go out into the world with both general and specific skills necessary to the wellbeing of society; they work with contemporary problems and they render appropriate the discoveries and understanding that they generate. On the other hand, they forage in realms of abstraction and domains of enquiry that may not appear immediately relevant to others, but have the proven potential to yield great future benefit.”

Before considering in more detail the interpretations of the role of engagement in higher education in the region today, it is worth reviewing briefly the roles that higher education has been called upon to play in the southern African region over the last half century.

2.1 Higher education in SADC in historical context

Today the higher education sector in the region consists of 66 public universities, 114 publicly funded polytechnics or specialised colleges and 170 private universities or colleges, which serve a student population of almost 1.1 million (SARUA, 2008a). While enrolment of students at these tertiary institutions increased between 1999 and 2005 in the region, overall tertiary enrolment ratios in the region remains low. Recent research by SARUA indicates that gross tertiary enrolment ratios (GER) in the region ranged from 0.4 percent in Malawi to 17 percent in Mauritius (SARUA, 2008b). This is compared to an *average* GER of 17 percent for developing countries in general, 56 percent for countries in transition and 66 percent for the developed world (Global Monitoring Report, cited in SARUA, 2008b).

Although centres of scholarship existed in Africa prior to colonisation, the roots of today’s higher education sector in the southern Africa, as in most of sub-Saharan Africa, lie in the few universities established in the region by colonial powers. These tended to be elite institutions, catering to a privileged few (usually in preparation for roles within the colonial administration) and operating along the lines of Western universities, with little interaction with communities or indigenous systems of knowledge.

With independence came a new focus on higher education and a new role for African universities as a resource for meeting the human capital needs and development goals of the newly established states. However, this model of a ‘development university’ guided by the state to meet national development priorities, proved unsuccessful as it was characterised by state interference, limited development planning and inadequate funding. As a result, academics and states alike became sceptical of the role of universities in development (CHET, 2011).

With the onset of fiscal crisis and economic decline in the late 1970s, public funding to higher education was drastically reduced. This trend continued under the structural

adjustment programmes of the 1980s, as governments came under pressure from the World Bank and IMF to limit public spending on higher education in favour of basic education, on the grounds that investment in primary education would yield greater individual and social returns. Although this position was reversed by the mid-1990s, it resulted in significant decline in the higher education systems of many southern African countries. The authors of a recent study of universities and economic development in Africa by the Council for Higher Education Transformation (CHET, 2011:3) described the devastating impact this policy had on development potential in Africa:

“This World Bank strategy in Africa had the effect of delinking universities from development. In addition, it led to development policies that had negative consequences for African nations and their sustainable development potential. Neglect of higher education led to the disestablishment of research centres, medical schools, agricultural centres, telecommunication and technological development, business training centres, vocational schools and other areas in the higher education sector, which are critical to the development of African societies and their economies.”

Since the late 1990s, expectations of the role of universities in society have changed once again and **universities have moved from the periphery to the centre of government agendas once more**. In light of technological advances, increasing globalisation and a growing recognition of the essential role of higher education in the new knowledge economy (Castells, 1994), effective higher education is now regarded as a vital development tool. There have therefore been increasing calls for the revitalisation of higher education in Africa. The 1997 SADC Protocol on Education and Training committed SADC countries to improving the standard of higher education and research by promoting co-operation and creating regional synergies.

This brief overview of the historical context of higher education in the region, and the broad array of community engagement activities that take place across the region today, show that **engagement with the outside world is not a new phenomenon**; as Muller (2010) contends, “In different forms at different times, it is something that has always happened”. However, the form that engagement with the context and other role-players should take today in the African, and more specifically southern African, region continues to be the subject of debate, both within the higher education sector and outside of it.

The following section will consider the broader societal forces that are pushing universities to engage more proactively, referred to by Watson (2005:2) as “those externally driven, reactive aspects which represent a wider societal and economic system demanding change”.

3 Engaging with a changing world

The 2009 World Conference on Higher Education hosted by UNESCO paid special attention to the revitalisation of higher education in Africa and noted the need for higher education to work towards a “comprehensive transformation to sharply enhance its relevance and responsiveness to the political, social and economic realities of African countries”. At local, national, regional and global levels there are a range of complex and often contradictory pressures and demands pushing universities to move beyond the proverbial ivory tower to engage with the “political, social and economic realities” of the context.

3.1 Economic pressures

The forces of **globalisation** and the information and communication technology (ICT) revolution that accompanied it have transformed the world economy over the past two decades. The world has become ever smaller and better connected through the emergence of transnational corporations and technical advances in communication such as the internet and cell phones. As access to knowledge, technology and innovation become ever more important in conferring competitive advantage, so the **production of knowledge and the application of that knowledge have taken on a new significance**. Although research and development is increasingly taking place in industrial and commercial settings, higher education institutions remain an important site of knowledge production. In the words of Castells (1994:16), “if knowledge is the electricity of the new informational international economy, then institutions of higher education are the power sources on which a new development process must rely”.

Higher education is therefore increasingly a part of development agendas, with higher education institutions being seen as playing a key role in delivering the knowledge requirements for development as well as being sites of research and innovative thinking. Research has suggested a strong association between higher education participation rates and levels of development, with higher education participation rates in many high-income countries being well over 50%, while in most cases in sub-Saharan Africa they are below 5% (Bloom et al. 2006). Furthermore, the ‘East Asian Tigers’, China, India and some European countries such as Ireland are often cited as examples of countries that have reaped the economic benefits of investing in education in general and higher education in particular, although they differ in other aspects of their development strategies. Emerging economies such as China and India have not followed the expected traditional growth path and have been able to ‘leap-frog’ stages of development by investing in higher education (CHET, 2011). Therefore countries and regions with the skills and competencies to engage with new technologies have the opportunity to build new development pathways, since “we cannot assume that future development will mimic past advances: in many respects, opportunities are greater today and will continue to be so in the future” (UNDP, 2010:102).

Calls for higher education to engage with the context are increasingly being driven by economic imperatives, leading to **concerns** about the “commodification of knowledge” (Bawa, 2003) and increasingly instrumentalist approaches to higher education. Boulton and Lucas (2008:17) argue against a narrow focus on the potential benefits of higher education for economic development, stating that “universities are not just supermarkets for a variety of public and private goods that are currently in demand, and whose value is defined by their perceived aggregate financial value”. Furthermore, they (2008:5) caution against a misunderstanding of the role of higher education as a driver of innovation, and an over-emphasis on the role of the university in meeting short term needs:

“Indeed, there is a danger that the current approach to universities is undermining the very processes that are the source of those benefits so cherished by government. It may stanch the universities’ capacities to look beyond today’s concerns in order to prepare the thoughts and the ideas that the future will need. Ultimately, they would be left as universities only in name.”

Mamdani (2011) considers these issues in light of Africa’s historical context and identifies two post-independent visions of the role of higher education – the first being state-driven and the other, later vision, being market-driven. He argues that the market-driven model,

with fee paying students (privatisation) and market-driven curricula (commercialisation), has become dominant in African universities and has led to a “corrosive consultancy culture”, in which research revolves around finding answers to problems defined by a client, rather than critically thinking through or formulating a problem. He argues that the formulation of research problems in the humanities and social sciences in universities in the region today tends to be externally driven, and this does little to build African scholarship and local knowledge production.

3.2 Social pressures

At the same time as globalisation requires governments and higher education institutions to look outwards to meet the demands of a new global economy, there is also a pull for higher education to respond to and engage directly with **local and national social-economic concerns**, particularly in developing country contexts. As a public good, there is an ethical duty for higher education to promote local socio-economic development in all its facets, and it is from this perspective that community engagement in higher education is often promoted, as a means to serve local communities in the form of extension services, service learning and community outreach.

A further call for engaging more deeply with the local relates to the arguments for higher education in the region to recognise that the dominant intellectual paradigms in most African universities are products of a particular Western experience; and that there is a need to draw closer to the concerns and values of the local context to develop an **African scholarship** that is informed by ‘the vantage point of the local’ (Mamdani, 2011). As Muchie (2008:50) notes, “Central to the peculiarities of the evolution of modern higher education, research and knowledge in Africa is the lack of indigenous authenticity and identity”.

3.3 Political pressures

A further external pressure for change in the southern African region in particular is the move towards the establishment of competitive multi-party **democratic governance** structures in the region. While some systems may be more democratic in name than in practice, this shift across the region has brought with it an increasing emphasis on issues of equity of access to higher education and the opportunities it provides. This is reflected in the observed increase in enrolment in tertiary institutions in the southern African region between 1999 and 2005 (SARUA, 2008b), and the increasing interest in the role of community engagement in higher education, as a means of increasing broader access to knowledge.

Therefore the external pressures on higher education to engage with the context and with other role-players within the context are complex and varied. At the same time, within academia there are numerous notions and interpretations of the forms such engagement should take and debates about how (if at all) community engagement fits into the epistemological mission of higher education.

4 Engagement as a university function

Community engagement is often cited as one of the three core functions of higher education, but the SARUA (2008a) research suggests that in practice it is not always treated as such. This is in part because there are different understandings of what constitutes

community engagement, what its purpose is and how it fits into the process of producing knowledge that is central to higher education institutions.

Notions of community engagement vary and include engagement with government and the private sector as well as with poor communities in rural and urban areas. This is a reflection of the diversity of contexts and missions of higher education institutions, as well as the array of partners with which different departments within a single institution may be engaging.

A recent debate about the nature of community engagement in South African higher education institutions (CHE, 2010) highlighted the challenges of finding a common definition. There was **little agreement about the definition of terms**, and some alternative concepts were suggested, including 'social responsiveness', which covers a wide range of responses to social, economic, cultural and political development needs (Favish, 2010) and the much narrower 'third sector' approach, which focuses on civil society alone (Hall, 2010). Several participants suggested that, given the range of interpretations, an inductive process that builds on an understanding of what is already taking place at higher education institutions may be the most appropriate strategy for achieving consensus on a broad and flexible conceptual framework for community engagement in higher education (CHE, 2010).

The debates about definitions reflect a deeper concern, namely the **relationship between community engagement and the other core functions of higher education**. There is a tension between a view of community engagement as "activities on the periphery of higher education, performed by well-meaning souls, not quite on a par with the main core functions of teaching and research" (Slamat, 2010:109) and the view that community engagement is not in fact 'new' to higher education and forms part of the teaching and research functions of universities. Bawa (2003) gives an example of universities engaging with communities and civil society organisations as part of the struggle for social justice and political freedom under apartheid, but goes on to argue more broadly that it is risky to propose that community engagement (understood as a separate and distinct function) is the only way in which universities interact with the 'real world'. He asks (2003:52): "what physicist or engineer or actuarial scientist or anthropologist does not engage with the 'real world'?" Similarly, Muller (2010) notes that in the context of technological advances and the knowledge economy, research active universities need no prompting to engage with the public domain. In his view, "the 'ivory tower' has these days little more substance than the unicorn" (Muller, 2010:81).

Support for **integrating engagement** into the teaching and research activities of universities has been assisted by recent contributions to debates about how new knowledge is constructed through community engagement. The work of Gibbon and his colleagues (1994) on the new "knowledge society" juxtaposed *mode 1* knowledge generation (expert-led, discipline-based, hierarchical) with the increasingly prevalent *mode 2* knowledge generation (applied, problem-oriented, demand-driven, networked and trans-disciplinary) and has been highly influential in these discussions. Another contribution to these discussions is the concept of engagement as scholarship, which is based on Boyer's (1996) work on the redefinition of scholarship. This paradigm of scholarship outlines four interlocking forms – the scholarship of discovery, integration, application (or the scholarship of engagement) and sharing knowledge. This conception places community engagement at the heart of the knowledge work of universities, and connects the engaged university with pressing social and civic challenges.

A final point to note is that, while there is strong support for connecting teaching and research with engagement in SADC universities, there is little publicly available information about the nature of community engagement in practice at southern African universities, making it difficult to build a picture of community engagement in higher education in the region. This is an area that should be explored further in future work.

5 Engaged higher education and regional integration

To take stock: in the changing world and in our changing region, there are numerous external pressures on universities to break out of the proverbial ivory tower and engage with the challenges and demands of the southern African context. From within higher education there are various definitions and interpretations of community engagement, but there appears to be a consensus that community engagement can and should be integrated into the core knowledge generation mission of the university. Increasingly, there is recognition of the need for higher education institutions to be responsive to their political, economic, social and cultural contexts, and to engage with a range of partners, including communities, civil society organisations, the state and the private sector, in a manner that is appropriate to the institutions' mission and setting. **How can an increasingly engaged and responsive higher education system contribute to development and change in the region?**

To return to the discussion of challenges of regional integration, it seems that despite a long-standing recognition of the benefits of regional co-operation and integration, the regional-integration process in southern Africa (and in much of the rest of Africa) has consisted of declarations, treaties and other agreements that have not translated into impact on the ground. The focus of regional integration has been almost exclusively on economic concerns (and more specifically trade), to the detriment of social issues as well as political concerns around the importance of building democracy. Progress towards regional integration has been slow, and the idea of regional integration and the "sense of being part of a common political space" has remained an idea in the minds of the political elite and has not been actualised among citizens on the ground (Kornegay, 2006).

The vision of regional integration in the SADC region is to promote sustained and equitable growth and socio-economic development in the region, with the aim of eradicating poverty and improving the quality of life for the people of southern Africa. However, clearly much more needs to be done, both in term of meeting development needs and advancing regional integration. The review of the range of socio-economic and development challenges facing the southern African region in the introduction highlighted the **danger** of the region becoming ever more marginalised if it is unable to strengthen its human and technological capacities to compete in the world economy; however, it also points to the **possibilities** that are open to the region if it is able to harness the potential of its youthful population and take advantage of the new world order.

A revitalised, well-resourced higher education system, in which community engagement is an integral part of the core mission, is central to achieving this turn around. If southern Africa is to become a hub of uniquely southern African innovation able to compete in the global economy, with socially responsible leadership with a vision that "transcends national considerations" (Ngwenya, 2010:277), it is essential to heed the lessons that can be learned from the experience of other developing countries and emerging economies – namely that investment in education, and higher education in particular, should be a key component of the regional development agenda.

Higher education institutions are the only institutions in the region with the mandate and means to develop the high-level skills and leadership on which the future of the countries in the region depends. Therefore socially responsive higher education systems can support regional integration by producing an “educated cadre that has the requisite knowledge and skills for the economy” (Ngwenya, 2010:276). However, the resolution of many of the intractable challenges facing the region will require more than professional training; it will require ingenuity, innovation and strong leadership, and greater engagement between higher education institutions and their external contexts.

Given the challenges in achieving greater regional integration and the essential role of higher education in advancing socio-economic development in the region, how can universities engage with these issues of regional co-operation and integration? **There are least three broad areas in which education institutions can promote a ‘bottom up’ approach and foster broader participation in the process of regional integration.** These are:

1. Broadening participation by engaging with regional policies and programmes
2. Contributing to a regional identity by building southern African scholarship and innovation
3. Fostering active citizens and socially responsible leadership

Each of these will be discussed in turn below.

5.1 Broadening participation by engaging with policies and programmes

The first area in which deepening community engagement in higher education can contribute to strengthening regional co-operation and integration is through the engagement with regional policies and programmes. Local scholarly capacity and expertise within the Southern African higher education system that can be drawn upon to engage with policy development initiatives, development strategies, formulation of legislation and regional programmes and projects, either directly, in the form of advising, providing input or conducting **high quality formative or evaluative research into critical areas of regional development to inform the broader integration process**; or in the form of **robust critique and debate of the policies and programmes** from outside the process. Both approaches increase the participation of civil society in the process of regional integration, and strengthen the grounded nature of the policies and programmes.

In addition, through their engagements with communities, civil society organisations and other partners as a public good, universities can broaden the participative base of regional integration by forming a ‘bridge’ between communities or civil society and other partners, and the regional stage. Cooper (2009), in his work on civil society as the ‘fourth helix’, argues that the so-called ‘triple helix’ of research linkages between university, industry and government are gaining ground, but that civil society is being left out of these new networks. He further argues that links between universities and civil society are necessary to “enhance community development at a local and regional level, to ensure that economic growth takes on a form of greater equity and redistribution.”

5.2 Building Southern African scholarship and innovation

It is widely acknowledged that, as Muchie (2009:51) notes, “from its inception, higher education has not been an African home-grown institution designed to serve the needs, aspirations, well-being and development of the African people”. Community engagement provides a means by which higher education institutions today can **engage more closely with the local context and move closer to the goal of creating southern African knowledge that provides solutions to southern African problems and spurs southern African innovation.**

The need to interrogate the dominant Western intellectual paradigm within African higher education and challenge the steering of local scholarship by external agendas (such as donors, Northern universities or the markets, among others) has been noted by many scholars (Mamdani, 2011; Fowler, 2011; Muchie, 2009; Assie-Lumumba, 2006). However, a process of building endogenous knowledge does not necessarily mean replacing one form of knowledge with another. Cloete and Muller (1998) argue that in an increasingly networked and interdependent world, “the ‘here - there’ logic of postcolonial discourse has been radically undermined by the forces of globalisation, such that every country now partakes, albeit unequally, both in the local and the global”. In describing a postgraduate course at Makerere Institute for Social Research (MISR) intended to counter some of the challenges faced by African scholars, Mamdani (2011) suggests a possible **combination of the local and the global** as follows:

“MISR will seek to combine a commitment to local [indeed, regional] knowledge production, rooted in relevant linguistic and disciplinary terms, with a critical and disciplined reflection on the globalisation of modern forms of knowledge and modern instruments of power. Rather than oppose the local to the global, it will seek to understand the global from the vantage point of the local.”

There are at least two ways in which increased engagement with the local – or in this case, regional – can encourage greater regional integration. The first is guided by the development imperatives of the region, and involves **framing teaching, knowledge and research in the region to produce tangible solutions to southern African problems that draw on both local as well as global systems of knowledge and are grounded in southern African experience, norms and values.** This includes advancing a southern African scholarship that re-thinks old questions and formulates new ones from the vantage point of the local (Mamdani, 2011). By engaging with the complexities of the southern African context, higher education can contribute to strengthening regional integration through a ‘bottom up’ approach to addressing the regional development priorities in the SADC RISDP, either in the form of research and teaching that tackles these regional development priorities directly from a local perspective, or more indirectly by adding to the endogenous knowledge base in the region.

Higher education also has a pivotal role to play in the broader renewal of the region by **promoting the exchange of ideas and experiences at a local, national and regional level that is essential for nurturing and sparking new approaches and innovation.** Higher education institutions provide sites for creative interaction, debate and a dynamic exchange of ideas both within countries and across national boundaries. Through regional exchange programmes, higher education institutions are in a unique position to provide opportunities for increased mobility and reciprocal learning, building a regional knowledge base and identity, expanding access and creating the conditions for social, cultural and economic

cohesion. It is essential that regional collaboration, mobility and exchange are recognised as necessary features of the cross-fertilisation of ideas and the search for innovation.

5.3 Fostering active citizens and socially responsible leadership

Thirdly, a widely recognised role of higher education as a public good is the role that it plays in strengthening democracy by fostering public debate and contributing to a critical and engaged citizenry through the development of analytical skills and critical and creative thinking. Taking the longer view, community engagement in higher education has the potential to produce “**leadership** with the vision that transcends national considerations”, by providing **opportunities for young people to get involved, engage with others they may not otherwise come into contact with, and develop a sense of social awareness** that they can take with them into the wider world.

Higher education is therefore in a unique position to foster democratic values, active citizenship and leadership skills amongst youth in the region. In a discussion of the place of party politics on university campuses, Jansen (2011) recently described the ‘training ground’ role of student politics in the following way:

“A university is, without question, a place that should accommodate and give expression to the range of political ideas and ideals of the broader society. It is a place where such ideas should be articulated, defended and contested without fear. Indeed, student politics is and should be a mechanism through which to learn the habits of democracy and to learn the duty of service to the disadvantaged.”

The literature on civic engagement suggests that student participation in community engagement activities has the potential to build self-worth and empowerment (Gillette, 2003); promote norms of solidarity and reciprocity (Alessi, 2004); and build tolerance for diversity (Dobbie and Fryer, 2011; Brewis, Russell and Holdsworth, 2010) and are more likely to be active citizens in adulthood (Hart, Donnelly, Youniss and Atkins, 2007).

Participating in community engagement activities also exposes young people to environments that value engagement, social responsibility and helping others (IANYS, 2010), values that enable future leaders to see beyond narrow concerns.

Therefore taking the **long view**, deepening community engagement in higher education has the potential to contribute to greater regional co-operation and integration by producing young leaders in the region that are socially aware and socially responsible. In the **shorter term**, universities can also provide the impetus for greater public participation in debates about issues of regional integration, both through direct curriculum-based interventions and by fostering broader public debate and raising public consciousness of these issues.

6 The way forward

The purpose of this paper is to explore the potential for engaging universities in promoting greater regional integration in the southern African region and to provide a basis for **further debate and conversation** about the role of higher education in the SADC region. Below are four questions that may help to take this debate further.

- Can we foster a meaningful regional identity within the SADC region? If so, how could we go about it? What binds us together and what pulls us apart?
- Beyond disciplinary choices made by students, how can student learning become more responsive?
- What will inspire higher education institutions to mobilise or produce local knowledge for global competitiveness?
- In what ways can regional exchanges between universities be supported? What kind of exchanges would contribute to building regional knowledge?

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Appendix: Regional integration for development in Africa

The objective of this review exercise was to analyse the definitions and approaches to regional integration and development utilised by various regional African institutions, organisations, or signatory groups to cooperative trade or political protocols or treaties to:

- a. Determine how the various groupings talk about regional integration as a force for development, and how they define 'development'; and
- b. Identify any ways in which this discourse relates to the three pillars of higher education: teaching, research and community engagement.

Therefore the strategies, approaches, missions, visions and programmes of the following were analysed; AU, SADC, African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA), NEPAD, African Capacity Development Foundation (ACDF), African Development Bank (ADB), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and COMESA.

A brief history: Motivations and organisations

The objectives of regional integration have since the commencement of the collapse of colonialism been driven by political and economic factors.⁸ The central idea was the combination of small and weak economies to increase, through collective identity and cooperation, Africa's political power and economic competitiveness.

Political: The 1960s had a particularly political flavour. For the Southern African Development Community⁹ it was about attaining political liberalisation; for the liberated states it was about identity formation and overcoming the spatial and economic legacy of colonialism.

Economic: The economic motivations and related policies for regional integration have changed over the preceding five decades. In the earlier decades regional integration focussed on import-substitution and industrialisation.

The focus subsequently changed to increasing global trade through economic liberalisation as a strategy to bring about development and reduce poverty. Economic liberalisation initiatives include exchange system liberalisation, emphasis on the development of macro-economic policies in the region, lowering/removal of trade tariffs, removal of other trade barriers, facilitation of capital mobility, free movement of persons and improved environment for private sector initiatives.¹⁰ Instead of inward-looking import substitution, outward-looking export orientated initiatives were embarked upon.¹¹

A crucial component of the change in economic approach was recognition of the need to successfully enable Africa to participate in the global economy within the context of globalisation, and the proliferation of successful regional integration initiatives elsewhere,

⁸ African Development Bank, Regional Integration Strategy 2009-2012

⁹ Southern African Development Community Profile (website), www.sadc.int

¹⁰ African Development Bank, African Development Fund, Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy, February 2000, and see ECOWAS, Workshop on ECOWAS trade liberalisation scheme, Press Release No 182/2011, Abuja, 26 September 2011

¹¹ African Development Bank, African Development Fund, Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy, February 2000

notably; the North America Free Trade Area, the European Union and the Association of South East Asia Nations.¹² A second component to the changes was the “unrelenting revolution in information and communication technology”.¹³

Both economic approaches, however, saw regional integration as an opportunity to increase Africa’s ability to compete by, for example:

- Expanding available markets
- Introducing economics of scale
- Diversifying the economic base¹⁴
- Linking land-locked economies
- Sharing limited communication and transportation infrastructure
- Combining skills to compensate for insufficient skilled human capital
- Combining and exchanging knowledge and know-how

The methods to promote economic growth through regional integration have also remained constant and are limited to (as the sequential list below will show) the establishment of free trade unions, customs unions, common markets and economic unions.

Social: In the later decades (perhaps stemming from a realisation of the inability of the poor majority to access the benefits of market liberalisation) there has been an increasing inclusion of social and human development components within the ambit of regional integration initiatives and organisational strategies. By 2001, regional organisations began to clearly articulate the link between regional integration and social and economic development (notably NEPAD). This is illustrated by the increasing attention regional integration organisations are paying to cross-cutting issues such as health, education and the environment. The incorporation of a social dimension in regional integration has also resulted in the promotion of democratic participation and the attainment of basic socio-economic rights (e.g. education, social security, poverty reduction).¹⁵

Pragmatism: The later decades of regional integration in Africa are also categorised by more pragmatic interventions with measurable outcomes. The clearest example of this is the increasing emphasis on, and funding for, infrastructure development and implementation.

¹² African Development Bank, African Development Fund, Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy, February 2000

¹³ Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) profile (website), www.comesat.int

¹⁴ African Development Bank, African Development Fund, Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy, February 2000

¹⁵ Robert R, The Social Dimension of Regional Integration in ECOWAS, Working Paper 49, Policy Integration Department of the International Labour Office (ILO), Geneva, December 2004. Development within ECOWAS is a case in point. The organisation initially did not recognise the need for popular participation, but the realisation that more than 50% of the population lived in poverty which would exclude them from the benefits of market liberalisation has changed the organisation’s approach. ECOWAS now has a community Parliament. Another example of the is the extension of the APRM to civil society organisations. The initiative involves an assessment of civil society of government performance using the same questionnaire and the comparison of the government and civil society reports.

Timeline – key African regional integration organisations

- 1964 – Establishment of the African Development Bank
- 1964 – Customs and Economic Union of Central Africa, which later became the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC).
- 1967 – East African Community (which existed until 1977)
- 1969 – South African Customs Union
- 1972 – West African Economic Community
- 1975 – Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- 1978 – Lusaka Declaration of Intent and commitment to the Establishment of a Preferential Trade Area for Eastern And Southern Africa (PTA)
- 1981 – Preferential Trade Area (which became COMESA in 1995)
- 1980 – Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC), which became SADC
- 1992 – Southern African Development Community
- 1989 – Arab Maghreb Union
- 1994 – West African Economic and Monetary Union
- 1994 – Abuja Treaty set up the African Economic Community
- 1995 – Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)
- 2001 – The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (programme of the African Union).¹⁶
- 2002 – African Union (Morocco being the only excluded state)
- 2002 – launch of the African Peer Review Mechanism (which grew out of the NEPAD)¹⁷
- 2002 – NEPAD’s Short Term Action Plan (STAP) was established to address specific infrastructure development problems including facilitation, capacity building, physical and capital projects, and studies required to prepare future projects.¹⁸
- 2007 – The NEPAD Infrastructure Project Preparation Facility (IPPF), which is a fund managed by the African Development Bank was set up to assist in developing high-quality infrastructure proposals.¹⁹
- 2010 – The AU/NEPAD African Action Plan 2010 to 2015 which includes 80 programmes and projects for regional and continental integration and focuses particularly on the provision and linking of infrastructure (including ICT).²⁰
- 2010 – AU summit established a High-Level Sub-Committee on Infrastructure which is tasked with managing infrastructure projects with maximum impact.

Institutional understanding of regional integration and its relationship to development (as illustrated by areas of strategic involvement)

None of the institutions/organisations assessed provided a definition of development *per se*, but it is clear from their strategies, missions, visions, agendas, objectives and activities that their understanding of development is not limited to economic growth, but includes broader concepts such as poverty alleviation, social and human development and environmental integrity.

¹⁶ New Partnership for Africa’s Development Profile (website), www.nepad.org

¹⁷ African Peer Review Mechanisms Toolkit, South African Institute of International Affairs, 2011, www.saiia.org.za

¹⁸ New Partnership for Africa’s Development Profile (website), www.nepad.org

¹⁹ New Partnership for Africa’s Development Profile (website), www.nepad.org

²⁰ New Partnership for Africa’s Development Profile (website), www.nepad.org

All the assessed organisations viewed regional integration as an important contributing factor to sustainable socio-economic development. Strategies for the promotion of regional integration in most cases covered political strategies (e.g. good governance), economic strategies (e.g. trade liberalisation and infrastructure provision), and human development/social strategies (e.g. information sharing, gender equality, poverty alleviation, health). What follows is an interpretation of organisational understanding of and strategies towards regional integration.

African Union: The AU understood regional integration primarily as a strategy to more favourably position the African continent in the global economy. Its key areas of intervention/integration initiatives include; peace and security, political affairs, infrastructure and energy provision, social affairs, human resources development, science and technology, trade and industry, rural economies and agriculture, economic affairs, legal affairs, women and gender and development, and civil society and diaspora.

South African Development Community: SADC understands regional integration as a strategy that will lead to improved standards of living and quality of life through the promotion of equitable economic growth and socio-economic development.

Its regional integration strategy aims to provide each of its 15 member states with “a comprehensive and consistent programme of long-term economic and social policies” that ensures economic well-being with a social component. The strategy commits member states to “good political, economic and corporate governance entrenched in a culture of democracy, full participation by civil society, transparency and respect for the rule of law.”²¹ SADC explicitly links socio-economic development and regional integration. SADC’s mission, for example, “is to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development through efficient productive systems, deeper co-operation and integration, good governance, and durable peace and security, so that the region emerges as a competitive and effective player in international relations and the world economy.”

SADC’s priority intervention areas to promote regional integration and therefore socio-economic development are; integrating SADC in the world economy, promoting balanced and equitable development, eradicating poverty (top priority), decreasing HIV and AIDS infection rates, providing accurate statistical information, promoting trade through economic liberalisation, provision of infrastructure, human and social development, and promoting gender equality.

The Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) also recognises the importance of science and technology, and information sharing, in economic development and increasing competitiveness. “The goal of this priority intervention area is to develop and strengthen national systems of innovation in order to provide scientific and technological solutions to/for sustainable socio-economic development, regional integration and poverty eradication.” Strategies for attainment include; strengthening regional integration and cooperation in science & technology, developing legal and policy frameworks and programmes to promote regional cooperation in science and technology, and developing instruments to promote collaboration in science and technology in SADC”.²²

²¹ Southern African Development Community (SADC), Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), chapter 4, 2001, available at www.sadc.int

²² Southern African Development Community (SADC), Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), chapter 34, 2001, available at www.sadc.int

African Peer Review Mechanism: The APRM understands regional integration as a peer pressure tool that can be used “to foster the adoption of policies, standards, and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental integration through sharing of experiences and reinforcement of successful and best practice, including identifying deficiencies and assessing the needs of capacity building.”²³ The APRM draws a particularly strong link between good governance through regional integration and economic development.

Development Bank of Southern Africa: The DBSA has made infrastructure (energy, transport and telecommunications) development the key strategic focus (funding area) of its approach to regional integration. The Bank views infrastructure provision/integration as a necessary condition for regional development.

New Partnership for Africa’s Development: NEPAD’s concept of regional integration is comparatively broad and conceptually includes the positioning of Africa in the global economy, economic growth and development and infrastructural integration. Accordingly, its strategic areas are also broad including *inter alia* participation in the global economy, economic and corporate governance, agriculture, media, peace and security initiatives, climate change, human development, poverty and marginalisation, mobilising political will, harmonising regulatory systems, fostering partnerships with the private sector, knowledge sharing, an African development agenda created by Africans, as well as, cross-cutting issues such as gender, capacity building, communication, and technology.

NEPAD’s understanding of regional integration includes a clearly articulated trade component. Increased regional/ inter-country trade is viewed as a key part of “building a stronger and more sustainable African economy”.²⁴ Like the DBSA, NEPAD emphasises infrastructure provision and integration. It states: “There can be no meaningful development without trade and there can be no trade without adequate and reliable infrastructure”.²⁵

African Capacity Development Foundation: The ACDF does not clearly define development or its understanding of regional integration in the documents consulted. An analysis of its activities suggests that it views development as a result of three factors. First, having the capacity to develop and implement appropriate macro-economic policies. Second, reducing dependence on sources of information and skills external to the African continent. Third, an active role in the attainment of the former factors by institutions of higher education. The ACDF is also clear on its role/key focus area in regional integration, notably “Capacity building of Africans in areas that are assumed to spur economic growth, reduce poverty and strengthen good governance”.²⁶ These areas include; development of leadership skills, supporting think tanks involved in formulating and improving macro-economic policies, and technical skills to reduce African dependence on external technical assistance. It also focuses on knowledge and best-practice exchange.

African Development Bank: The African Development Bank defines regional integration as follows: “Regional Integration refers to the outcome of processes, including cooperative arrangements, the implementation of inter-governmental treaties and market-led processes, through which economies of countries in a region become more closely interconnected. . . Regional integration is essential to building markets, creating robust and

²³ Herbert R, African Peer Review: An overview, SAIIA, 2010

²⁴ www.nepad.org

²⁵ www.nepad.org

²⁶ The African Capacity Development Foundation website, www.acbf-pact.org

diverse economies, increasing opportunities for growth, and attracting new sources of investment finance.”²⁷

The African Development Bank views regional integration as a priority and a necessary condition for regional development. Its regional integration strategy centres on promotion of trade through trade liberalisation policies, encouragement of investment (partly through private sector led growth), and delivery of regional infrastructure. The Bank believes that the pursuance of regional integration will result in *inter alia*; increased competitiveness for Africa, increased foreign direct investment, improved private sector performance, enhanced African performance in the global market, and increased intra-regional trade.

The Bank’s focus/activity areas include; climate change, peace building, state building, food security, trade relations, land policies, science and technology, and energy infrastructure. The sectors in which the Bank operates/ funds initiatives include; agricultural and agri-industries, climate change, economic and financial government, education, energy and power, environment, gender, health, information and communication, infrastructure, private sector development, human and social development, transport and water supply and sanitation. The Bank emphasises the importance of scientific knowledge and integrated information communication technologies in bringing about regional integration and development.²⁸

ECOWAS: ECOWAS differentiates between regional integration and economic integration. It views regional integration from a governance perspective: “Regional integration refers to the emergence of a governance level between the national and global levels within the system of world governance based on cooperative behaviour and the designs of common policies and institutions by actors that traditionally belonged to the national governance level”.²⁹

Economic integration refers to preferential trade areas, free trade areas, customs unions, common markets and economic unions.

ECOWAS aims to promote economic integration in “all fields of economic activity”, and particularly in industry, transport infrastructure, telecommunications infrastructure, energy infrastructure, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions, and social and cultural matters.³⁰

The organisation argues that an effective economic integration strategy could be evaluated against the following indicators;

- Political indicators; conflict prevention, good management, good political governance, good economic governance
- Economic indicators; economic integration, increased competitiveness, macro-economic stability and harmonisation of trade policies, development and interconnection of infrastructure
- Social indicators: improved human capital, poverty reduction.

COMESA: COMESA views regional integration as an arrangement which aims to ensure domestic growth while also strengthening the competitiveness of small economies.

²⁷ African Development Bank, Strategy for Higher Education, 2008

²⁸ African Development Bank, Strategy for Higher Education, Science and Technology, 2008

²⁹ Bamba, ECOWAS Regional Integration: Position of Common Investment Market, ECOWAS Commission

³⁰ www.comm.ecowas.int

The organisation has the following regional integration strategy to which its members agree;³¹

1. Setting-up of a full free trade area, including the removals of all non-tariff barriers for the free movement of goods and services.
2. Establishment of a customs union.
3. Free movement of persons.
4. Payments union.
5. Establishment of a common monetary union by 2025.

The organisation's regional activities include; promoting free trade, investing in private sector development, infrastructure provision and integration, climate change, agriculture, information and networking, legal institutional affairs, peace and security, finance and budgeting, information resources and strategic planning.³²

Regional integration initiatives: Performance

Despite approximately five decades of commitment and initiative to promote regional integration and arguably socio-economic development, success has been limited. As the African Development Bank in its Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy states; "African economies continue to be constrained by political boundaries, marginalised, and remain un-integrated into the rapidly globalising world economy."³³ With regard to extent of integration, the Economic Commission of the United Nations' measurements of integration show an annual increase of 4.5% between 1994 and 1999.³⁴

More specifically the ADB's research shows;³⁵

- That participation in regional initiatives remains low, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where participation was estimated at 2% in 1990.
- That inter-regional trade remains low, amounting to only 6% of total foreign trade of African nations in 1990 (compared to 35% in Asia and 41% in North America).³⁶
- That inter-regional export trade within major regional groupings in Africa has been negligible.
- That there has been no significant change to the structure of African economies, where exports remain confined to basic minerals.
- That despite many accounted attempts at the provision and linking of infrastructure by regional institutions/organisations, there is no clear link between the "proliferation of regional and sub-regional institutions and the development of regional infrastructure". This is illustrated by a 2009 World Bank³⁷ study which found that; the availability of African infrastructure continues to lag behind all other world regions, that

³¹ World Bank, Southern Africa: COMESA – Regional Integration in Africa, <http://web.worldbank.org>

³² www.comesa.int.

³³ African Development Bank, African Development Fund, Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy, February 2000

³⁴ Economic Commission On Africa Report, printed in Africa Renewal, 14 July 2004, available www.un.org. The African Integration Index measures the rate at which economies are being linked together in 8 key sectors – trade, transport, money and finance, communications, energy, agriculture, manufacturing, and human development and labour markets.

³⁵ African Development Bank, African Development Fund, Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy, February 2000

³⁶ Also see Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), Regional Integration in Africa (chapter 6), in Regional Integration and food security in development countries, www.fao.org

³⁷ Cited in Monyae M, The role of the South African Development Finance Institutions in regional infrastructure development, Policy Brief 20, Development Bank of Southern Africa. See also Economic Commission On Africa Report, printed in Africa Renewal, 14 July 2004, available www.un.org

infrastructure in Africa is twice as expensive as anywhere else, and that the provision of power/energy remains the biggest challenge. (It should be noted, however, that the 2009 World Bank report draws a conclusion conflicting with the ADB's research arguing that: "although institutional, regulatory and administrative reform have only been partially implemented, they are already having positive effects on operation efficiency". The discrepancy may be a reflection of the nine years lapsed between the two studies).

Similarly, the Southern African Development Community, in its RISDP argues that its current policies and strategies of regional coordination and integration have "not been very effective" and "regional integration and development has been limited".³⁸ The report states that although the economic situation for a number of SADC countries has improved since the 1990s, several countries continue to experience "low and decreasing levels of per capita gross national product, low growth rates of gross domestic product, relatively high budget deficits and interest rates, relatively low savings and investment rates and high external debt burdens, all of which have contributed to high levels of poverty".³⁹ Further, the level of human development has declined in the majority of SADC states. This is illustrated by the widespread decline in life expectancy at birth, decreases in real per capita income, reduced school enrolment rates, rising levels of illiteracy in some states, shortages of critical skills in all states, and rising levels of HIV infection in some states.⁴⁰

With regard to the removal of trade barriers, which was a goal particularly of post 1990 regional integration initiatives, a report by the United Nations Economic Commission in Africa⁴¹ has found that goal attainment has been mixed. The report assesses, *inter alia*, the extent to which countries have/are removing barriers to trade (e.g. tariffs) and facilitating the free movement of persons between countries. Findings include;

- The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have made considerable progress, commencing with attempts to eliminate tariffs in 1981, and lifting tariffs on industrial goods in the 1990s.
- Of the 14 regional communities that were studied, ECOWAS, the West African Economic and Monetary Unions, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) had the highest regional integration ratios, averaging 6% for the period 1994-1999.

The African Peer Review Mechanism claims that its activities have resulted in greater transparency within African governments (including realistic assessments of governance weaknesses), as well as, improved documentation and accountability by means of creating pressure to comply through a regional platform for the promotion of good governance.⁴² It also cites increased voluntary compliance to the peer review mechanism arguing that 29 African countries, representing more than 75% of the continent's population have voluntarily acceded to peer review (8 in 2003, 14 in 2004 and an additional 1 or 2 each successive year). In turn, this has promoted investor confidence and peer learning and exchange of information and experience.

³⁸ Southern African Development Community (SADC), Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), chapter 3, 2001, available at www.sadc.int

³⁹ Southern African Development Community (SADC), Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), chapter 2, 2001, available at www.sadc.int

⁴⁰ Southern African Development Community (SADC), Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), chapter 2, 2001, available at www.sadc.int

⁴¹ Economic Commission On Africa Report, printed in Africa Renewal, 14 July 2004, available www.un.org

⁴² Grudz S, Ten Reasons to keep faith with Africa's peer review process, in Governance and the APRM process, Policy Briefing 17, SAIIA, May 2010

Challenges to successful regional integration

There is consensus in the literature consulted that the following are some of the key factors inhibiting regional integration and development.

1. A lack of political will to implement agreed treaties and mandates, and the elevation of national sovereignty issues above long-term regional developmental goals.⁴³
2. Related to a lack of will or commitment, “inadequate mechanisms for equitable sharing of the costs and benefits of regional arrangements, which eroded member commitment”.⁴⁴ “The dominance of a few countries and the huge disparities in size among members of regional groupings led to concerns about the distribution of benefits. Regions have found it difficult to address the equitable distribution of gains and losses from integration. Mechanisms to provide compensation to the less development members of groupings have been either absent or ineffective”.⁴⁵
3. The absence of specific plans to implement the articulated development initiatives or agendas. This is a criticism levelled particularly at the NEPAD.⁴⁶
4. Political instability and civil war.⁴⁷
5. Some initiatives, particularly in the first decades of regional integration and later NEPAD, have been criticised for being formulated without extensive consultation and for lacking an effective social dimension.⁴⁸ (As noted in the discussion on the development of the concept and implementation of regional integration there has been a shift and an increased emphasis on the social dimension in the more recent decades. ECOWAS is a particularly good example of concerted efforts to expand participation and the focus on the social dimension of initiatives and their implementation consequences).
6. Underdeveloped financial markets⁴⁹ coupled with unstable macro-economic contexts and foreign debt service burdens.⁵⁰
7. The import substitution policies embarked upon in the first decades of regional integration have arguably resulted in inefficient African industries⁵¹ and a range of restrictions (trade licensing, foreign exchange allocation, special taxes, import deposits) that created an economic context unfavourable to the development of regional commitments.⁵²

⁴³ Osema W, Regional Integration in COMESA – State of Plan and Challenges, July 13, 2011, www.comesa.int, and African Development Bank, African Development Fund, Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy, February 2000, and Economic Commission On Africa Report, printed in Africa Renewal, 14 July 2004, available www.un.org

⁴⁴ African Development Bank, African Development Fund, Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy, February 2000

⁴⁵ FAO, Regional Integration in Africa (Chapter 6) in, Regional Integration and food security in developing countries, www.fao.org

⁴⁶ Robert R, The Social Dimension of Regional Integration in ECOWAS, Working Paper 49, Policy Integration Department of the International Labour Office (ILO), Geneva, December 2004, and Economic Commission On Africa Report, printed in Africa Renewal, 14 July 2004, available www.un.org

⁴⁷ African Development Bank, African Development Fund, Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy, February 2000, and FAO, Regional Integration in Africa (Chapter 6) in, Regional Integration and food security in developing countries, www.fao.org

⁴⁸ Robert R, The Social Dimension of Regional Integration in ECOWAS, Working Paper 49, Policy Integration Department of the International Labour Office (ILO), Geneva, December 2004

⁴⁹ African Development Bank, ADB Group Regional Integration Strategy 2009 - 2012

⁵⁰ FAO, Regional Integration in Africa (Chapter 6) in, Regional Integration and food security in developing countries, www.fao.org

⁵¹ African Development Bank, African Development Fund, Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy, February 2000

⁵² FAO, Regional Integration in Africa (Chapter 6) in, Regional Integration and food security in developing countries, www.fao.org

8. And related “the design of African integration schemes around inward-looking industrialisation meant that the economic costs of participation for member states are often immediate and concrete (in the form of lower tariff revenues and greater import competition), while the economic benefits are long-term and uncertain and are often unevenly distributed among member states”.⁵³
9. Overlapping membership and mandates, which result in inefficiencies and resource wastage, as well as, unnecessary administrative and financial burdens.⁵⁴ The Economic Commission of Africa, for example, explains that of Africa’s 53 countries, 6 are members of one regional economic community, 26 belong to two, and 21 are members of at least three.⁵⁵
10. There is a general failure in the majority of regional policy documents to develop strategies to deal with unemployment and under-employment even though “these are among the primary reasons for poverty”⁵⁶ and a likely (and predictable) consequence of trade liberalisation. An exception to this would be the African Union Extraordinary Session on Employment and Poverty Alleviation which focuses specifically on issues of un- and under-employment.⁵⁷
11. “Heavy reliance on tariffs for fiscal revenue” in the earlier decades has, according to the African Development Fund, “stifled official inter-and intra-regional trade, and encouraged parallel markets with rent-seeking characteristics”.⁵⁸
12. The lack of harmonisation of policies, regulations and procedures governing investment, trade and infrastructure development at regional and continental level.⁵⁹ Although, as the discussion in this document shows, many attempts have been made and are underway to attain such harmonisation.
13. Physical infrastructure constraints such as lack of transport, energy and Information Communication Technologies (ICT).⁶⁰ Much of the current intervention, particularly by the DBSA, ADB, NEPAD and others are, however, focussing on the provision of infrastructure in all three these forms, and in linking infrastructural resources on a regional level.
14. Lack of institutional capacity/institutional weakness (i.e. lack of skills, resources, internal conflict, absence of dispute resolution policies, and excessive bureaucracy).⁶¹

⁵³ FAO, Regional Integration in Africa (Chapter 6) in, Regional Integration and food security in developing countries, www.fao.org

⁵⁴ African Development Bank, ADB Group Regional Integration Strategy 2009 – 2012, and African Development Bank, African Development Fund, Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy, February 2000, and Robert R, The Social Dimension of Regional Integration in ECOWAS, Working Paper 49, Policy Integration Department of the International Labour Office (ILO), Geneva, December 2004, and FAO, Regional Integration in Africa (Chapter 6) in, Regional Integration and food security in developing countries, www.fao.org

⁵⁵ Economic Commission On Africa Report, printed in Africa Renewal, 14 July 2004, available www.un.org

⁵⁶ Robert R, The Social Dimension of Regional Integration in ECOWAS, Working Paper 49, Policy Integration Department of the International Labour Office (ILO), Geneva, December 2004

⁵⁷ http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/afpro/addisababa/pdf/followup_en.pdf

⁵⁸ African Development Bank, African Development Fund, Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy, February 2000

⁵⁹ African Development Bank, ADB Group Regional Integration Strategy 2009 – 2012, and Osema W, Regional Integration in COMESA – State of Plan and Challenges, July 13, 2011, www.comesa.int, and Economic Commission On Africa Report, printed in Africa Renewal, 14 July 2004, available www.un.org

⁶⁰ See www.dbsa.org, African Development Bank, ADB Group Regional Integration Strategy 2009 – 2012, and African Development Bank, African Development Fund, Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy, February 2000

⁶¹ African Development Bank, ADB Group Regional Integration Strategy 2009 – 2012, and African Development Bank, African Development Fund, Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy, February 2000, and FAO, Regional Integration in Africa (Chapter 6) in, Regional Integration and food security in developing countries,

15. Inadequate involvement of the private sector.⁶²
16. Related to the lack of capacity, over ambitious goals and unrealistic time-frames for implementation.⁶³
17. Lack of rule of law and good governance with associated corruption, lack of accountability and consequent lack of credibility of institutions and initiatives.⁶⁴ (This is something that an initiative like the African Peer Review Mechanisms specifically aims to address.)
18. Initially dependence of colonial powers resulted in the prioritisation of North-South linkages over regional integration.⁶⁵ Currently, the emergence of new global players (e.g. BRICS) that promote bilateral relations rather than dealing with regional economic communities.⁶⁶
19. The failure of regional integration initiatives and organisations to specifically account for the socio-economic status of youth in the various development programmes.⁶⁷

Regional integration and education in Africa

The majority of the regional organisation assessed included education as a factor/activity for the attainment of the human development component of regional integration strategies (i.e. as a contributing factor to sustainable socio-economic development).

The discussion in this paper is limited to those institutions that specifically referred to higher education in their regional integration strategies/approaches.

African Union: The African Union, like most regional organisations, includes the promotion of quality education as an important contributing factor to the human development component of regional integration.

The African Union goes further than many other organisations, however, referring to the “paramount role” of education in “promoting regional integration through inter-university cooperation”⁶⁸ and its stated commitment to the mainstreaming of education “fully into the policies, programme activities, and organisational structures of the African Union Commission and the Regional Economic Communities”.⁶⁹ This commitment is illustrated by the Revised Arusha Convention which allows for the mutual recognition of degrees and

www.fao.org, and Economic Commission On Africa Report, printed in Africa Renewal, 14 July 2004, available www.un.org

⁶² FAO, Regional Integration in Africa (Chapter 6) in, Regional Integration and food security in developing countries, www.fao.org, and Economic Commission On Africa Report, printed in Africa Renewal, 14 July 2004, available www.un.org

⁶³ Osema W, Regional Integration in COMESA – State of Plan and Challenges, July 13, 2011, www.comesa.int, and African Development Bank, African Development Fund, Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy, February 2000

⁶⁴ African Development Bank, African Development Fund, Economic Cooperation and Regional Integration Policy, February 2000, and Economic Commission On Africa Report, printed in Africa Renewal, 14 July 2004, available www.un.org

⁶⁵ FAO, Regional Integration in Africa (Chapter 6) in, Regional Integration and food security in developing countries, www.fao.org

⁶⁶ Osema W, Regional Integration in COMESA – State of Plan and Challenges, July 13, 2011, www.comesa.int

⁶⁷ African Union, Youth Empowerment Key for Africa Development, Press Release 35 of 2011, Directorate of Information and Communication, Addis Ababa, 4 April 2011

⁶⁸ African Union, Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States, Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology, May 2011

⁶⁹ African Union, Meeting of the African Education Ministers concludes by considering and endorsing key policy documents relations to the PAU project, Press Release, Nairobi, 13 May 2011

qualifications in higher education,⁷⁰ as well as, by the launch of the Second Decade of Education for Africa Plan of Action.

The AU perhaps provides the clearest example of a regional integration in higher education initiative through its envisioned Pan-African University. As the AU optimistically explains; “The Pan African University is the culmination of continental initiatives of the Commission of the African Union to revitalised higher education and research in Africa. It is a project that will exemplify excellence; enhance the attractiveness and global competitiveness of African higher education and research, and establish the African University at the core of Africa’s development. The Pan African University will greatly boost the production and retention of high level human resources and quality knowledge outputs, and be able to attract the best human resources from all over the world”.⁷¹

APRM: Country reports for the African Peer Review Mechanism, as well as the more recent civil society reports, include under the thematic area of socio-economic development, an extensive assessment of each participating countries’ performance in improving the efficiency and efficacy of the education system.

NEPAD: This regional integration initiative focuses specifically on education and training in primary, secondary and higher education. NEPAD has a number of objectives regarding education but those most relevant to higher education are (1) promoting open and distance education, (2) capacity building in the public sector, and (3) modernising education and assisting in the reconstruction of education infrastructure in post-conflict environments.

African Capacity Development Foundation: The foundation focuses on regional integration and development through capacity building and training. As such it focuses on the development of skills it views as particularly important in contributing to integration and development. These include leadership skills, support to think tanks and universities involved in the development or improvement of macro-economic policies, support to knowledge sharing initiatives and the development of relevant technical skills. The ACDF has established partnerships with a number of universities, training institutions and civil society organisations. It selects its partners in terms of their ability to “enhance critical capacity and to promote political and social stability”.

African Development Bank: One of the sectors in which the Bank is involved (in its capacity as an institution for the promotion of regional integration) is education. In this regard, it provides support for national and regional centres of education throughout Africa. It currently supports 63 such projects. These projects focus on relevant skills development and training, science and technology and vocational skills development.

Science and technology development in particular is viewed as key to a sustainable future through environmental and economic management. The Bank therefore has a Higher Education Science and Technology strategy “to promote excellence, and to target the transition from school to work”.⁷²

⁷⁰ African Union, Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States, Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology, May 2011

⁷¹ African Union, First Extraordinary Session of the Conference of Minister of Education of the African Union, Preparation for launching the Pan African University, Media Invitation, www.au.int

⁷² www.afdb.org

Since 2008, the ADB has also housed the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, which promotes African education research and evidence-based advocacy.

The Bank views its support of education as a long-term strategy, which requires long-term funding commitment. Funding extends beyond education to the provision/re-building of educational infrastructure in post-conflict societies or fragile states.⁷³

ECOWAS: ECOWAS has a Department for Education, Culture, Science and Technology situated within its Commission of Human Development and Gender. Its approach to education is largely aligned with initiatives of the AU, NEPAD and the Millennium Development Goals. ECOWAS has adopted a Regional Protocol on Education as well as the Convention on the Recognition and the Equivalence of Degrees, Diplomas and other Qualifications.⁷⁴ The organisation’s education programmes relevant to higher education include HIV/AIDS prevention, the promotion of science and technology and technical and vocational training initiatives.

SADC: One of the goals of the human and social development priority intervention area of the SADC is “to improve the availability of educated, skilled, healthy, flexible, culturally responsive productive and efficient human resources for the promotion of SADC’s equitable growth, deeper integration and its competitiveness in the global economy”.⁷⁵ One of the strategies for the attainment thereof is the “harmonisation and engendering of education”.

A role for institutions of higher learning: A way forward

In the table below, following an analysis of the activities and needs of the organisations assessed, the potential contributions institutions of higher learning could make are categorised according to the key roles of these institutions: teaching, research and community engagement.

Teaching (Skills Development)	Research (Development and Innovation)	Community Engagement
Promoting regional integration through inter-university cooperation	Promoting regional integration through inter-university cooperation	Promoting regional integration through inter-university cooperation
Facilitate academic mobility by participating in initiatives such as the revised Arusha Convention		
		Participate in civil society initiatives such as the APRM assessment of education
Capacity building and skills development of individuals capable of supporting the design, implementation and integration of transport, energy and telecommunications infrastructure	Conduct research and development studies to support the design, implementation and integration of transport, energy and telecommunications infrastructure	Through community initiatives promote inter-generational interest in the design, implementation and integration of transport, energy and telecommunications infrastructure
		Through community initiative promote uptake and use of telecommunications infrastructure
Fill critical skills gaps	Identify critical skills gaps	Promote interest in and access to study fields related to filling critical

⁷³ www.afdb.org

⁷⁴ www.comm.ecowas.int

⁷⁵ SADC RISDP Executive Summary

Teaching (Skills Development)	Research (Development and Innovation)	Community Engagement
		skills gaps
Capacity building and skills development of individuals capable of supporting the growth of science and technology	Conduct research and development studies to support science and technology	Through community initiatives promote inter-generational interest in science and technology
		With NEPAD participate in initiatives to modernise education and assist in the reconstruction of education infrastructure in post-conflict societies
With NEPAD support capacity building in the public sector	Policy research	With NEPAD support capacity building in the public sector
Promote open and distance learning	Promote open and distance learning	Promote open and distance learning
Like ACDF prioritise/ subsidise development of skills pertinent to regional integration and development e.g. leadership skills, policy formulation skills, economists, relevant technical skills		Priority skills development initiatives within communities.
	Participate in or convene knowledge sharing initiatives at institutional level	Participate in or convene knowledge share initiatives at community level
	Participate in macro-economic policy development think tanks	
		Develop partnerships with civil society organisations
Produce skills required for private sector development	Assist with research supportive to private sector development	Develop partnerships with private sector
Focus also on Vocational Skills Development		Embark on Vocational Skills Development
	Support and conduct African education research	
	Conduct research for evidence-based policy advocacy	
	Provisions of accurate statistical information to organisations such SADC	
Producing scientists focussing on climate change	Climate change research	Climate change education
Medical skills	HIV/AIDS research	HIV/AIDS education
Teaching self-employment, training and vocational skills	Research initiatives to reduce unemployment	Small-business generation initiatives

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