Quality Assurance and Cross Border Higher Education in the Commonwealth:
The Work of the Commonwealth of Learning

Professor Asha Kanwar
Dr. Willie Clarke-Okah
Sir John Daniel
Cross-Border Higher Education

or

???
Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES
Cross-Border Higher Education

“programmes, providers, people and services that cross national boundaries”

Jane Knight
The Commonwealth
UNDER 25s

India  60%

Zambia  50%
1960:
29 countries without college students

1990:
The Gambia; Comoros; Guinea-Bissau
Age Participation Rates (APRs)

~50% in richer countries
<10% in poorer countries
India

9.2 million students
15,000 colleges
330 university institutions

BUT

Access to <10% of 18-23 year-olds
India

**Distance Education**

24% of HE enrolments in:
13 open universities
106 dual-mode institutions
(AIM: 40% by 2010)
The Reality

Cross-border HE in:

-- India
-- Jamaica
-- Sierra Leone
India

Cross-Border Providers:
27 in 2000
114 in 2004
(30% not recognised)
India

Cross-Border HE is a non-issue in India. The enrolments it attracts are negligible in the Indian context.
Jamaica

Aim:
APR of 30% by 2015

50 foreign providers
Sierra Leone

University (4 colleges)

Other tertiary (6 institutions.)

APR = 2% (Africa = 4%)
Enrolments
(taking UK as an example)

2002/03: 101,645 cross-border in 191 countries

(HESA data)
Enrolments
(taking UK as an example)

c-b enrolments correlate with HDI

e.g. HK-SAR (26th HDI)
Singapore (28th HDI)
Malaysia (58th HDI)
Enrolments
(taking UK as an example)

2002/03: 101,645 cross-border

Of which:

- India 1203
- Jamaica 777
- Africa (30 countries – not SA) 100
“cross-border enrolments in countries with low rankings on the Human Development Index are minimal. Indeed, given the unmet demand in those countries, they are practically negligible.”
South-South CBHE in the Commonwealth

UNISA – especially in Africa

OU Malaysia – Middle East

IGNOU – Middle East and Africa
The Response to GATS

- *Accra Declaration (2004):*
  
  GATS and Internationalisation of Education in Africa

- *International Association of Universities (2005):*
  
  Statement on Sharing Quality HE Across Borders

  (mainly focused on postsecondary)
The Response to GATS

Of the 47 countries which have made commitments under the GATS only 7 are Commonwealth – and only Lesotho and Sierra Leone have made commitments in all five education sectors.
Trends in Commonwealth CBHE

- Huge demand, need to expand access
- For-profit providers active
- Usually low quality, low enrolment and cater to the elite
- Public developing world open universities active
- GATS discussion focused on postsecondary
- Counties with high HDI have most foreign providers
- Developing countries not making GATS commitments
- Trend to south-south collaboration
- Increase in distance learning and eLearning
- Distance and eLearning difficult to track
Trends in Commonwealth CBHE

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CONCLUSION
Governments should respond creatively
Cross-Border Higher Education

or

???
CBHE in the developing Commonwealth is a symptom rather than a full-blown malady…
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so governments have time to act
"It is advisable to follow not just best practices, but to develop next practices to blaze a trail and stay ahead of the pack!"

C.K. Prahalad
The hard fact is that many Commonwealth countries cannot afford either the financial or time demands of developed-world quality assurance systems.
Botswana College of Distance & Open Learning

Kyambogo University, Uganda

NOT: *Internal and/or external assessment*

BUT: *A Culture of Quality*
A Culture of Quality:

- Care shown to students
- Attitude and ethos
- Quality of study materials
- Quality of learner support
COL’s work

“enhancing access to education and training through open, distance and technology-mediated learning”

- Promoting policies
- Developing systems
- Building models
- Creating materials
- Enhancing capacity
COL’s work on Quality Assurance

- Guidelines for effective QA for ODL and eLearning in HE and Teacher Education
- Sharing guidelines and approaches between countries
COL’s work on Quality Assurance

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- Sharing guidelines and approaches between countries

(Let’s not reinvent the wheel!)
COL’s work on Quality Assurance

EXAMPLES:

• Sri Lanka: QA guidelines for the Open University of SL and the University Grants Committee
  (now being reviewed by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan for use there)
COL’s work on Quality Assurance

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• India (NAAC): Performance indicators for Teaching Training
  (now being used in Nigeria)
COL’s work on Quality Assurance

EXAMPLES:

- India (NAAC):
  - Course on QA in Higher Education
  - QA Assessors’ Handbook
'return on spending on instructional materials in education is up to fourteen times higher than the return on spending on physical facilities....'

Filmer and Prichett
(World Bank)
University of Surrey
Case Studies of Transnational Education in:

Bangladesh
Malaysia
Jamaica
Bulgaria
Senegal
University of the West Indies

Foreign Providers in the Anglophone Caribbean
Higher Education Crossing Borders:
A Guide to the Implications of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) for Cross-border Education
“countries will increasingly have to demonstrate that they are treating foreign providers in the same way as national institutions”
COL’s work on Quality Assurance
Guidelines
Research
Course Materials
CAPACITY BUILDING
The Commonwealth
The Small States
Criss-Cross-Border Higher Education

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

CONTENT:
Tourism; Small Business Management; Professional Development for Teachers, Health Workers; Public Servants; etc.

METHOD:
Collaborative on-line development of material
Adaptation and use by local institutions
Criss-Cross-Border Higher Education

The Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth

MATERIAL AVAILABLE AS:

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Creative Commons (BY & SA)

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PLEASE...

do not put ‘Non-Commercial’ (NC) restrictions on Open Educational Resources!

You both limit their use by those who need them most and the richness of what you can produce
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VUSSC Participants
COL’s work on Quality Assurance

• QA mechanisms
• Policy formulation
• Systems development

With multi-level involvement:
  individuals
  institutional
  national
  regional
  international
Conclusions

• A Central Unit for CBHE?
  - One-stop shop
  - Coordinate with stakeholders
  - Overseas and local
  - Import and Export
  - Contact, distance, eLearning
Conclusions

• A Central Unit for CBHE?
• Assure quality of exports
Conclusions

• A Central Unit for CBHE?
• Assure quality of exports
• Institutional responsibility
A Culture of Quality:

- Care shown to students
- Attitude and ethos
- Quality of study materials
- Quality of learner support
Economics

“People respond to incentives; all the rest is commentary.”

Steven Landsburg
The Armchair Economist
INCENTIVES

Agencies (UNESCO, COL):

Access to quality HE for development

Governments:

Join the international knowledge economy

Institutions:

Academic integrity and reputation

Individuals:

Learning = Common Wealth of Humankind
Learning is the Common Wealth of humankind...
Let us not debase the coinage
Thank you!

Professor Asha Kanwar
Dr. Willie Clarke-Okah
Sir John Daniel