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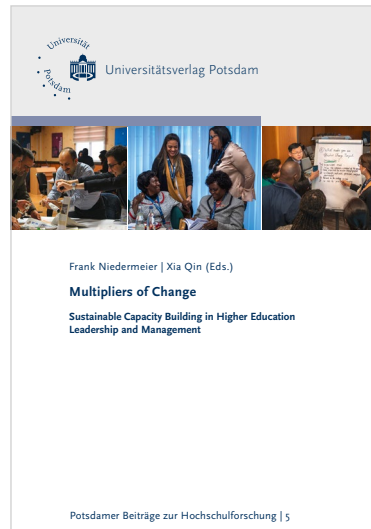
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Quality Assurance in Guinean Higher Education Institutions: State of Play, Development and Perspectives

ABSTRACT: Higher education institutions in Guinea face many challenges, including reporting responsibilities, globalisation, and massification. Institutional evaluations of higher education and research institutions in 2013 could not initiate the implementation of change processes within the institutions. Recently, however, various initiatives have been started to change this situation with the purpose to sensitise and raise awareness and capabilities for quality assurance structures in Guinean HEIs. So far, the emphasis has been put on quality enhancement in higher education, especially on teaching evaluation, curriculum development, as well as on establishing quality assurance structures. This article gives an overview of the state of play and

takes stock of the activities that have been initiated to set up quality assurance mechanisms in higher education and research institutions, and presents perspectives for further development of the quality approach in Guinea. The project 'Quality Assurance Multiplication 2017-2018' serves as an example to describe approaches and activities in setting up stable quality assurance structures, and to strengthen and raise awareness for a 'quality culture'.

KEYWORDS: quality assurance in Guinean higher education, national quality assurance agency in Guinea, quality assurance structures, quality evaluation, quality culture

1. An Overview of Higher Education in Guinea

Among the problems that sub-Saharan countries face, the decline in the quality of education is one of primary concern. The intensity of this quality decline varies from one country to another, depending on the education policy implemented by each government and, above all, on the budgetary resources allocated to the education system (Peter, 2007). After 62 years of independence, the Republic of Guinea still faces, like other African countries do, an unsatisfactory quality of education which becomes visible especially with education standards.

Today, Guinea counts 60 higher education institutions, 42 of which are private. Since 2007, the pedagogical reference system of the Bachelor-Master-Doctorate (LMD) has been implemented in the country. However, the basic principles of this system are not applied everywhere and with the same effort.

1.1 Governance

Public higher education institutions in Guinea, except the University of Gamal Abdel Nasser in Conakry and the Higher Education Institute of Mines and Geology in Boké, do not have an Administration Board (AB). The two administration boards that exist were established through recommendations from the World Bank, which finances the implementation of Schools or Centres of Excellence projects in these institutions. The ABs determine the orientations of higher education institutions and ensure their implementation by applying state policies in the field of higher education and scientific research.

The absence of administration boards contradicts the decrees 062/063, in force since 03 April 2013, which require two governance bodies in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): an internal deliberative body, the University Council, and an external deliberative body, the Administration Board. Furthermore, the Faculty and Department Councils are very important bodies in institutional governance.

The low frequency with which the councils meet, or the quasi-non-existence of certain governing bodies, does not favour the development of a sustained quality approach within Guinean higher education institutions. To make governance more effective, the funding of institutions should be based on performance contracts with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESRS). Such an approach is still not well known in the higher education sector as a mode of university

governance, even though it is mentioned in the development policy as a strategy to strengthen the financing of higher education.

1.2 Human Resources

Guinean higher education has a real need for qualified teaching staff. According to MESRS (2019), the ratio of grade A¹ teachers to the total teaching staff is very low (0.13). At the same time, the student population (92,856)² and the number of higher education institutions (60) are increasing exceedingly. Teachers are often rather elderly, and they are not replaced by younger ones. Furthermore, retirements and death among senior teachers determine the current status quo.

The absence of a clearly defined recruitment policy, training, and academic preparedness of the teaching staff is another reason for the lack of quality in Guinea's Higher Education Institutions. To change this shortage of qualified teaching staff, the MESRS had, in 2018, pooled funds to finance huge amount of teacher programmes, focusing on the training of 1000 PhD students and 5000 master degree holders. This programme starts to produce its first results with master's and doctoral defences organised in Guinea and abroad.

1.3 Education and Career Opportunities

The level of education quality is very heterogeneous. Even though the harmonised LMD reference system was introduced, the comparability of the achieved diplomas is difficult. Guinean higher education institutions do not revise the curricula regularly to make them better. The involvement of professionals in the development, revision, and implementation of academic training programmes is still not very common. Furthermore, New Information and Communication Technologies (NICTs) are little used in training programmes. Another sad reality is that study programmes of Guinean higher education institutions do not sufficiently meet the needs of the labour market, nor is the composition of the different programme levels well harmonised.

The quality of laboratory equipment and documentary resources is another bottleneck in the system. The training of teachers responsible for practical work is also not provided. Similarly, the notorious lack of

1 Teachers of rung A are lecturers and full professors.

2 Student population: All students enrolled in higher education institutions in Guinea.

amphitheatres for use by large student groups makes study conditions very difficult which, in turn, negatively affects teaching quality.

Due to the absence of a formalised framework for cooperation between higher education institutions, enterprises and other companies, internships cannot be organised. Even graduates have difficulties finding employment based on their degrees. Tracer studies to monitor graduates and satisfaction surveys are still not carried out during internships or work situations.

Most higher education institutions do not have internet connections, nor possess a sufficient number of computers. Only two universities offer doctorate degrees but they are characterised by rather irregular graduations. To improve this situation, the MESRS has pooled financial resources during the academic year of 2019/2020, and has started a training programme for scientific assistants, called “1000 PhDs and 5000 Masters”.

1.4 Financing

The budget system is a difficult issue for Guinean higher education institutions. These institutions depend fully on the national development budget. The budget is granted quarterly in proportion to the number of students. However, a huge part of this funding is provided for social transfers, in particular for student maintenance grants. Furthermore, these maintenance scholarships granted by the state are not selective and therefore do not encourage excellence. At the same time, the institutional development of universities also lacks funding. Within academic institutions, very few initiatives are organised to seek additional external funds for innovative projects. As a result, state subsidies are the only funding source of higher education institutions and de facto limit their management autonomy.

1.5 Collaboration

Few partnerships that offer a development windfall for Guinean higher education institutions do exist. These include public/private partnerships, cooperation between institutions at the national level, and the mobilisation of expertise of Guineans abroad. However, the opportunities that such collaborations bring is very little valued in Guinea. Functional and fruitful cooperation agreements are almost non-existent. At the national level, Guinean institutions maintain very few partnerships among

themselves. Similarly, cooperation between companies and education structures seem to be shut down. However, Guinean geographical conditions would be an advantage for cooperation at the national and even sub-regional level.

1.6 Quality Assurance

Quality assurance mechanisms are a transversal and collaborative approach that a higher education institution can implement to continuously increase the level of satisfaction of all its stakeholders (students, teaching and research staff, employers, etc.) (Ganseuer & Randhahn, 2017). Before 2017, Guinean higher education institutions did not have a functional quality and change management system in place, except for the Kofi Annan University of Guinea, even though there were first approaches to strengthen quality assurance mechanisms at that time. In 2011 the MESRS sponsored institutional and study programme evaluations of private higher education institutions. In 2013 another evaluation wave for all Scientific Research Institutions (SRIs) followed, as well as for public and private HEIs.

However, in the case of the public HEIs and SRIs, the results of these evaluations on institutional and programme level have never been published and the recommendations of the assessors did not lead to change processes in the institutions. Some study programmes have been evaluated by the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES) for accreditation based on their initiative. However, these accreditations have now expired. To maintain the accreditation status in Guinea, these study programmes should now be evaluated by another accreditation structure, and then the results submitted to the National Authority for Quality Assurance in Education, Training, and Research (ANAQ) for accreditation in Guinea.

To overcome these numerous challenges, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research was restructured, enacted by Decree 004 on 12 January 2017. The National Directorates have been reorganised into a General Directorate of Higher Education and a General Directorate of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation. Furthermore, a regulatory institution, the National Authority for Quality Assurance in Education, Training and Research (ANAQ), has been created.

2. Activities of Further Education

In facing the challenges of higher education in Guinea described in the first chapter, further education activities should be strengthened with more effort to qualify and organise managers, teachers, researchers, and administrative staff in higher education institutions. Until 2017, very few activities of further education have been carried out in Guinea in the area of quality development in higher education. Corresponding to the implementation period of the LMD framework, during the years 2007 till 2017, two projects on quality assurance capacity building took place in Conakry: the 7th Francophone Quality Assurance Training Workshop and the quality assurance training workshops of the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).

During the recent years, continuing education activities have been strengthened with the support the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) such as the 'Training on Internal Quality Assurance in West Africa (TrainIQAfrica)' or the 'National Multiplication Trainings (NMT) Programme to multiply skills in the field of quality assurance in HEIs. These activities are presented briefly in the second chapter.

In addition to these external programmes, the National Authority for Quality Assurance (ANAQ) has developed and improved quality assurance approaches in HEIs. The third chapter presents the institution ANAQ, its mission, activities, and existing opportunities and challenges for quality assurance in HEIs.

2.1 Workshops on Quality Assurance Training Organised by the IIEP

Supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) organised two workshops (one distance and one face-to-face) on external quality assurance in 2008 and 2013, which were attended by seven members from the MESRS of Guinea. However, due to the loss of some trained staff (death, retirement), these training sessions created a very limited impact on the higher education subsystem.

2.2 7th Francophone Workshop on Quality Assurance Training

The 7th Francophone Workshop on Quality Assurance Training was organised from 25th to 26th November 2013 by CAMES, closely linked to its 28th Colloquium on the Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas in Con-

akry. It was the first workshop in Guinea that offered the possibility to exchange with participants from public and private higher education and research institutions quality assurance practices in Francophone Africa in a context of globalisation. After an introduction by CAMES on the state of the art of quality assurance in higher education in the CAMES region, the workshop focused on concepts, principles, goals, and purposes of quality assurance in higher education. Successful experiences in internal and external evaluations were shared. These were policy and stages of evaluation by the International Conference of Deans of French-speaking Medicine Faculties (CIDMEF), and the internal evaluation of the UFR Biosciences of the University Félix Houphouët Boigny from Ivory Coast (Sarr, 2017).

2.3 The ‘Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies’ (DIES) Programme of the DAAD

Based on the mentioned CAMES workshop, some staff had been sensitised on quality assurance in higher education and continued to follow training opportunities in this area. One person followed the international call for applications to participate in the training programme on Internal Quality Assurance in West Africa (TrainIQAfrica), organised by the University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE) from 6th September 2015 to 28th October 2016. This training was part of the DIES programme (Dialogue on Innovative Strategies in Higher Education) which aims to strengthen the structures of higher education and research institutions for administrative management and governance in developing countries. The purpose of TrainIQAfrica was to set up a cohort of experts in quality assurance in Francophone West Africa capable of developing suitable communication and implementation strategies for change processes and continuous improvement in higher education institutions.

In 2017, the DIES Quality Assurance training course in Central and West Africa (DIES-AQA) (2017–2019), coordinated by the University of Saarland (Germany), followed the TrainIQA courses, with the main objective of strengthening quality assurance in higher education in Central and West Africa. The DAAD’s DIES AQA programme has enabled another Guinean alumnus to be trained in quality assurance.

2.4 NMT Programme

To strengthen alumni in their role as multipliers in higher education management and to promote the sustainability of training courses, the DIES programme offered a National Multiplier Training (NMT). Coordinated by the Centre for Quality Development (ZfQ) at the University of Potsdam in Germany, the first NMT cohort was completed in 2018 with ten alumni teams, and with more than 200 participants, implementing training courses in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. The multiplication project submitted by Guinea was one of these laureates.

The principal goal of these multiplier training is to meet the needs of higher education institutions in the target countries and contribute to capacity building in higher education management. Former DIES students acquired knowledge and skills to provide relevant expertise and to organise themselves into multiplier workshops.

Thus, the NMT programme encourages DIES alumni to form the training committee responsible for coordinating and organising support from experienced quality assurance experts. Thus, on a very competitive note, the NMT projects submitted by Guinea were selected in 2017 and 2019. The three members of the training committee for the NMT 2017–2018 programme were from Mali, Senegal, and Guinea (for 2019–2020, two were from Senegal and two, from Guinea). Worth mentioning here is the fact that three members of the training committee were alumni from TrainQAfrica and one represented DIES AQA.

To strengthen the capacities of the members of the training committees in preparing and implementing the workshops, a ‘Training of Trainers’ workshop was organised by the DIES programme.

One of the requirements of the NMT programme is that participants in the workshops work on individual change projects for implementation in their higher education institutions before the end of the training. The thematic priorities of the NMT programme, together with ANAQ, were elaborated, specifically by the Executive Secretary-General of ANAQ, who was also responsible for the NMT training. To strengthen quality assurance in HEIs, two key aspects had been focused on:

- a) the first NMT training (evaluation of teaching in HEIs), and
- b) the second NMT training (introduction and consolidation of the implementation of quality assurance structures).

The Guinean group of the 2017/2018 cohort organised two workshops. During the first workshop, participants learned knowledge and tools

valuable for planning and implementing their projects. The trainers accompanied them, functioning as mentors, during the workshops, but also afterwards, during project implementation. The aim was to develop a project that was suitable for the higher education institution of each participant. It was important to contribute and serve the specific needs of each participant's institution. Since quality assurance is not yet a regular part of university governance (cf. I. Governance), this approach should support awareness and strengthen the commitment to establish stable quality assurance structures.

During the first NMT training (2017/2018) the main topic was teaching evaluation, as it is one of the basic activities to validate teaching quality. The results accorded a basis for developing prioritised objectives and measures to improve education quality. The second training (2019/2020) continues with a more in-depth review of quality assurance structures in higher education institutions by answering this specific question: What kind of structures are participants able to establish in their own higher education institutions considering the available means, qualified staff, strategic plan, and central objectives? Once again, the participants chose a small project, linked to the university's strategic plan, to be carried out in their institutions. One of the key challenges was choosing a feasible topic, which raises more serious engagement in higher education institutions, over an issue that would simply remain a theoretical idea. As in the first training, the trainers made themselves available as mentors and advisors. Also, the person responsible for the training was a senior executive in the higher education and scientific research system in Guinea. His main function was to support the liaison between the project participants and the directorates of the higher education institutions.

Because of alumni contribution and the support of the DAAD, 52 quality managers have been trained in Guinea and have been made responsible for implementing individual change projects in their institutions. The NMT programmes financially supported the training sessions and gave the participants important documentary resources on quality assurance. The change projects of the participants had an impact on quality assurance in Guinea in creating internal quality assurance units in the HEIs and in involving internal governance bodies in the approval of teaching evaluation questionnaires. The participants also provided support for their HEIs' senior management in this initial phase of introducing quality assurance mechanisms.

3. Creation of the National Accreditation Agency

3.1 A Retrospect

To strengthen and maintain the long-term quality assurance structures in higher education institutions in Guinea, a legal framework and a team of recognised stakeholders were needed. This need allowed the creation of the National Authority for Quality Assurance (ANAQ). A short introduction is now given to better understand the context surrounding the establishment of ANAQ and its role in quality assurance in higher education institutions.

In 1998 the MESRS adopted a strategic plan for the period 2000–2010. The framework defined in this document determined the form and size of the network of higher education and scientific research institutions as well as the configuration of further education. However, a study programme evaluation conducted in 2001 showed weaknesses of university relations compared to companies. Therefore, it was decided to organise a broad curriculum reform. Considering international trends, this reform should be based on the Bachelor-Master-Doctorate system. This was the reason why the Ministry in charge of higher education introduced the Bachelor-Master-Doctorate system for the academic year of 2007.

During the Third Republic in 2010, the Ministries of Planning and Higher Education published a Strategic Paper on Poverty Reduction which recognised the strategic role of higher education and scientific research in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in improving the living conditions of the population (MESRS, 2017). In 2012, education sector policy letters were drawn up, and the consultation days on higher education for a successful start to the academic year in August 2012 were organised. These increasing ideas led to an iterative elaboration of policy and strategy document for the development of higher education and scientific research for the periods 2013 to 2020. This document aimed to promote, in a context of globalisation, a higher education, scientific research and innovation system of high quality to respond appropriately and effectively to economic, social, cultural, and environmental needs.

One of the strategic axes of this reform process is quality assurance and the development of teaching and learning. Therefore, the strategy document mentioned above recommended the creation of a national agency for the evaluation of higher education and scientific research. As a performance indicator, it defined the number of institutions with

quality evaluation units and the number of accredited institutions and programmes.

In 2015, the Guinean government launched the project 'Boosting Skills for Youth Employability' (BOCEJ), which was supported by the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank Group. This project offered institutional and regulatory support, including the establishment of a National Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation for higher and vocational education. A steering committee was created to set up the formation of this agency. The National Authority for Quality Assurance in Education, Training and Research (ANAQ) was then created by the Decree 007 of 12 January 2017. A DAAD alumnus was appointed as Executive Secretary and an international consultant is recruited to support the operationalisation of the ANAQ.

3.2 Mission of ANAQ

As a governing body for the promotion of accreditation and quality culture, ANAQ is a public administrative institution with financial, organisational, and regulatory autonomy, independent in its decision-making procedures. Its governing bodies include the Board of Directors, the Scientific Council, and the Executive Secretariat. ANAQ's mission is the evaluation of the quality of education and research offered by higher education and research institutions and by public and private vocational and technical education institutions, as well as the accreditation of institutions and programmes.

ANAQ serves to

- define the quality standards to be respected by the institutions, following the Ministries in charge of higher education and scientific research, vocational, and technical education;
- approve the capacity of these institutions to meet the quality standards and expectations of the beneficiaries;
- contribute to the promotion of an institutional culture of quality;
- ensure the protection of the direct and indirect beneficiaries of study programmes by producing and disseminating systematically coherent, credible, and publicly accessible information about the quality of education;
- provide technical advice to the ministries involved (higher education, scientific research, technical and vocational education) concerning the creation, authorisation to open, and accreditation of institutions and their study programmes;

- propose policies and strategies for the continuous improvement of higher education, vocational and technical education, and scientific research to the ministries involved; and
- maintain partnership relations with similar African and international institutions (Decree 007 of 12 January 2017).

The activities of ANAQ had been the concern of 253 institutions, which are:

- 18 public institutions of higher education,
- 42 private institutions of higher education,
- 30 scientific research institutions,
- 58 public technical education and vocational training institutions, and
- 105 private technical education and vocational training institutions.

3.3 First Activities of ANAQ

ANAQ started with adopting an appropriate statutory and regulatory framework (organisational framework and functioning of the Executive Secretariat, code of ethics and deontology, management manual of quality assurance procedures, regulations to create and open institutions and programmes, and the authority of accreditation). ANAQ recruited its staff and expert evaluators through a call for candidates and adopted its evaluation tools and the evaluation frame of reference. In 2018 the piloting evaluations resulted in the accreditation of five bachelor programmes, out of eleven, that had been submitted.

3.4 Ongoing Activities of ANAQ

The main ongoing activities of ANAQ are related to the evaluation of 78 candidate programmes for accreditation. The 2020 evaluation session was launched on 27 September 2019 by a call of application which resulted in the selection of 78, out of 80, programmes that had been submitted. Two applications were not accepted due to a lack of administrative authorisation. The internal evaluations of the study programmes and the application for accreditation have been completed, and the self-evaluation reports have been submitted. The external evaluation and the validation of its results are the final steps in this accreditation process.

The second ongoing activities are related to the institutional capacity building on infrastructure which is focused on setting up an evaluation process through the creation of an online evaluation management plat-

form, the construction of an intranet network, and the establishment of an energy autonomy through the acquisition of a generator.

The third ongoing activities centre on participation as a quality assurance expert in the project 'Internationalisation and Development of Indicators for Better Governance of Guinean Higher Education (INDIGO)'. This three-year project (2019–2022), coordinated by the University of Paris 1, Panthéon Sorbonne, is co-financed by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

3.5 Interaction with the Higher Education Institutions and Supply with Further Education

Numerous training sessions, awareness-raising, and interaction activities have been organised with concerned stakeholders in the implementation of quality mechanisms both in public and private institutions. These stakeholders were technically and financially supported by various programmes, including the DAAD, the Boosting Skills for Youth Employability in Guinea (BOCEJ)/World Bank project, and the Francophone Institute for University Governance of the International Organisation of the Francophonie (IFGU/OIF). These training sessions were carried out by DAAD alumni, using TrainIAfrica's training material as a teaching aid. Some examples of such training activities were:

- coaching and awareness-raising for 188 rectors, founders, general directors, and directors of higher education, vocational and technical, and research institutions;
- involvement in quality assurance activities for 50 vice-rectors and deputy-general directors;
- pedagogy in quality assurance for 52 teachers, researchers and ANAQ agents;
- presentation of the ANAQ quality assurance procedures in nine higher education institutions;
- self-evaluation procedures and creation of self-evaluation reports for 178 members of strategic steering and internal quality assurance units; and
- on-site exchanges with members of the steering units, internal quality assurance units, and academic authorities for follow-up on the self-assessment of the 78 programmes applying for accreditation. ANAQ has set up technical support to ensure proper self-evaluation process and preparation of internal reports of 288 participants.

3.6 Opportunities and Challenges of ANAQ

Opportunities

Several opportunities regarding the constitution of ANAQ are worth mentioning here. They are (a) the political will as expressed by the authorities; (b) the portfolio of ANAQ which includes the broad range of higher education, technical education and vocational training, and research institutions; (c) the support of different partners; and (d) a starting optical fibre for a high-speed connection.

Challenges

Despite opportunities, ANAQ also has to face several challenges, such as the following: (a) lack of awareness for quality assurance by stakeholders, (b) the difficulty of involving technical education and vocational training institutions in the quality process, (c) lack of expertise at the national level to evaluate certain programmes, (d) lack of respect for regulatory documents, (e) instability of the directorates of higher education institutions, (f) obsolescence of certain regulatory documents, (g) the implementation of performance contracts, and (h) the search for additional funding.

4. Results of Training Activities

4.1 Participants' Skills Achieved by the Training

The activities on further education developed by ANAQ support different target groups in a variety of skills within the scope of quality assurance. These activities address the challenges mentioned above. Some results of the training activities are the following:

- Rectors, founders, general managers, and directors can set up internal quality assurance units in their institutions, based on good practices in the field and based on ANAQ's quality missions and objectives.
- Vice-rectors and deputy general directors of the participating institutions can share the concepts of quality assurance and the missions and objectives of ANAQ in their institutions, and with it, to overcome resistance to change.
- Teachers, researchers, and quality managers can organise teaching evaluations by students, and also to manage an Internal Quality As-

urance Unit (CIAQ), thus further sharing the concepts of quality assurance and the missions and objectives of ANAQ.

- Participants of the training activities and awareness-raising workshops in the institutions can properly inform the staff of their units about the missions and objectives of ANAQ and its evaluation procedures.
- The members of the steering units and internal quality assurance units trained to support the evaluation process in 2020 can carry out the self-evaluation of a study programme and to set up the internal report according to the management manual on quality assurance procedures.
- Members of the steering units, internal quality assurance units, and academic authorities can improve the process of self-evaluation, study programme evaluation, and internal reporting.

4.2 Current Impact on Participants from Higher Education Institutions

ANAQ activities on further education have a positive impact on quality management in higher education and vocational and technical education institutions. A core group of quality assurance multipliers has been trained and is continuously being strengthened. Therefore, ANAQ's missions are widely shared and are increasingly known by stakeholders.

Based on the training and awareness-raising workshops for rectors, founders and general directors, twenty-four higher education/vocational and technical education institutions have set up a quality assurance unit, as guarantor for quality management. In addition to its mission to implement an institutional quality assurance policy, these units have piloted various study programme evaluations. The majority of the quality assurance units is managed by those persons who were trained in quality assurance by ANAQ. Based on this, teaching evaluation by students, a requirement of the LMD's study regulations that was not respected before, has become a reality. Due to the training in quality assurance, two cohorts of teachers could contribute their newly gained skills at the service of their institutions.

5. Perspectives

As a result of the activities described in this article, important steps have been taken in Guinea in recent years in establishing an appropriate and stable framework to strengthen and guarantee the quality of teaching, research, and technical education. At the same time, the challenges briefly outlined the measures launched by the National Authority for Quality Assurance (ANAQ) and indicated that there is still a long way to go. This way requires a great deal of perseverance, motivation, and commitment. Stable governance structures require a willingness and an open attitude to change processes. Objectives that are to be pursued within certain time frames should be defined and checked whether they are achievable. To do so, higher education institutions need people who can support and sustain the resulting change processes.

The quality assurance training activities that have already taken place in Guinea are very important for this development to continue. Teaching and research staff, administrative and support staff, academic leaders, students, and civil society should learn and understand the changes to be able to support them. Furthermore, higher education institutions need further support to strengthen their commitment to establish an internal quality assurance unit (CIAQ) and to further professionalise their quality management mechanisms. Moreover, it would be useful to create a network among the alumni of the NMT and other programmes on quality assurance to reinforce exchange and to benefit from different ideas and approaches to ensure and enhance the quality of teaching and research. Finally, it is important to ensure reliable and sustainable funding and sufficient staff, so that the initiated path of quality assurance in higher education institutions can be continued in the long term.

Examining the European example and the time it had taken to professionalise quality assurance structures and mechanisms, it becomes clear that this is a long-term process that needs a lot of commitment. Guinea has proven that it is ready to go farther on this path.

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