Call for Papers by the Transversal Work Area of the EU-funded HAQAA3 Initiative: ‘Leveraging the AfCFTA for Higher Education Integration'

By:

Afronomicslaw

May 30, 2024

One of the defining features of African Trade Agreements has been the multiplicity of their objectives. Through them, African countries typically pursue not only trade liberalization and economic development but also several other policy objectives. One of such objectives that are commonly found in African Trade Agreements (ATAs) is the promotion of education, science, and technology. While the depth and breadth of the provisions vary, almost all ATAs contain provisions that call upon their parties to cooperate in these areas. Some of these provisions have prompted the initiation of various initiatives for higher education integration.

However, higher education integration remains at a very low level both at the continental and regional levels – with limited progress in key areas such as student and staff mobility and the recognition of qualifications. The overall poor track record of ATAs in promoting cooperation in the field of higher education is not dissimilar to their track record in the realm of intra-regional trade. The rate of formal trade among African countries remains one of the lowest intra-regional trade rates in the world despite decades of efforts and numerous agreements.

In 2018, African States adopted the agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), fully operational since 2021, to overcome the challenges undermining their intra- regional trade and strengthen their continental integration process. They also adopted a Protocol to the Agreement establishing the African Economic Community relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment, even if it has not yet entered into force. These developments reaffirm the determination of African countries to deepen their economic integration and realize the objectives of Agenda 2063, the continent's strategic framework for inclusive growth and sustainable development. Deeper economic integration promises to create opportunities for the advancement of the continent's higher education integration agenda. However, the links and interactions between economic and higher education integration in Africa in the pursuit of sustainable development and in the promotion of a peaceful and cooperative system of international relations remain largely unexplored. The academic and policy discourse around these two key areas of African integration often takes place in different spheres with different approaches, giving rise to two unconnected epistemic communities.

Furthermore, the interaction between continental trade integration and the multilateral system has usually been explored from the perspective of non-African regions and continents, as well as that between trade and educational multilateral institutions.

Against this backdrop, the Transversal Work Area of the EU-funded HAQAA3 Initiatives, has decided to initiate a process through which African scholars, policymakers, and practitioners explore and discuss the critical interplay between economic and higher education integration in Africa and the world.

The process will be steered through Biennial Conferences. The first one is launched coinciding with the African Union's 2024 Year of Education, which has the theme: '*Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building Resilient Education Systems for Increased Access to Inclusive, Lifelong, Quality, and Relevant Learning in Africa*'. The Biennial Conferences, and the work carried out between them, will provide a platform for sharing insights, research findings, and innovative ideas that help strengthen the role of African trade agreements in fostering higher education integration.

The Conference is organized by OBREAL Global, the lead of the HAQAA-3 Implementing Consortium, and the Association of African Universities (AAU), the African member of that Consortium, together with the Pan African University (PAU), and with the collaboration of the Cameroon WTO Chair and SIEL's African International Economic Law Network (AfIELN).

The organizers will invite the African Union Commission, the European Commission, the AfCFTA Secretariat, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and the WTO Secretariat to atend the Conference.

Venue: University of Yaoundé II in January 2025

Abstract Due: 24th June, 2024

Check out more about the Call for Papers.

Submissions should include a curriculum vitae (2-pages maximum), with email and institutional affiliation. Successful applicants will be notified by the **25th of July 2024**. Confirmed participants must submit a draft paper of 5000-7000 words no later than **25th November 2024**. The Conference organizers will make some contribution to the travel and accommodation expenses of participants based in African higher education institutions (applicants must indicate their wish to apply for funding when submitting their abstracts).

View online: Call for Papers by the Transversal Work Area of the EU-funded HAQAA3 Initiative: 'Leveraging the AfCFTA for Higher Education Integration'

Provided by Afronomicslaw