

## **The (IUA): A Distinguished Career (Some landmarks)**

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### **Key words:**

Career/ Quality/ Performance/ Stakeholders/ African Studies/ Academic Out-put/ Services/ Society statute.

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this work is to introduce “ The International University of Africa” as a higher education institution, distinguished for its efficient performance and effective output.

From the early procedures of its inception, the ( IUA ) was based on solid grounds of clear vision and well defined mission, together with a comprehensive and well written statute of clear-cut objectives and structure.

The IUA kept continuous and sustainable career and traditions of excellence in procedures within its education research and community service activities.

To meet the requirements of its target stakeholders the IUA developed in the last ten years to comprise today more than 20 academic units with a total number of over 14 thousand students and over 7 hundred teaching staff.

Sound research and publication facilities are maintained with efficient bodies guiding effective research output , together with the organization of numerous conferences & workshops.

Over 20 thousand graduates of IUA from more that 80 countries are now holding effective positions in various African Asian societies and else where.

In some late ranking of African universities the IUA secured advanced positions, surpassing prestigious universities, in the reason region.

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With this sound career in mind, the IUA could later develop its own views on quality and excellent academic achievement, based on basic principles, clear concepts and fixed terms of reference, such views are worth mentioning to concerned scholars for further reflection and fruitful discussion.

With all its finance-caused setbacks and constraints, the IUA can still play the role of introducing African studies to regional & international universities.

### **Introduction**

In a stage when higher education institutions in developed countries are seriously and consistently addressing requirements of labor market and stakeholder, the establishment of HE institutions in many parts of underdeveloped countries – African and the Arab world are included- is still made on basis other than satisfying the real needs of their target societies at both national and regional levels.

This is why labor organizations complaints always focus on the two chronic problems of unemployment and low profile outcome.

Quality in HE services is governed by satisfying the actual needs of the stakeholders

Proper establishment of any given HE institution, determines steady progress and sustainability in its services.

This paper is intended to introduce the International University of Africa (IUA) as a distinguished example of proper establishment and steady development and expansion towards excellence and distinction in the academic performance.

### **Theoretical framework**

#### **(a)Basics.**

Philosophers of education place much emphasis on the importance of a unique philosophy to guide and monitor any educational system. This Philosophy which draws mainly on social needs and aspirations is essential

in making up necessary clear vision and well stated general objectives on which educational system is based.

Similarly any progress in a given educational set-up should be based on reconsidering the development and changes the society has undergone where sporadic revision of the general objectives should take place according to the new vision,

Higher education is more concerned with these essential bases, because of the complicated role it plays within the rapid changes in life requirement in a continuously changing world.

Scholars of HE development unanimously agree on three areas of service in any HE institution; education, research and community service.

The attainment of quality service in each of these areas also takes a triple approach of; input, procedures and out-put.

Quality performance in all of these areas and approaches is governed by excellent leadership at institutional, faculty and departmental levels.

With all this complexity in the academic work, quality person shall always remain the master key to success, which is always determined through the academic out-put of the three areas.

Human resources therefore shall always be the main target in any quality achievement process; leaders students, teaching and supporting staff and of course labors at all levels should be under focus in capacity building and skill promotion.

**(B)Quality achievement:**

Quality as a term often implies concepts such as excellence, distinction, and a class of work typical to what is required by the stated goals in a given firm or institution .

In Arabic the equal term often used is “Jawdah” which refers to similar concepts like distinction, perfection and good class of work or product; other similar terms preferred to by many Muslim scholars are:“ Ihsan” and “Itqan” which indicate top perfection in any kind of achievement. “ Ihsan” in its various usages in the holy Quran and the Prophet’s Traditions is

emphasized as an important value of measuring all kinds of deeds or duties undertaken by a Muslim.

In application, it seems that there is no significant variation between the concepts of both quality and Jawdah except that quality may have some deviation towards out-put and product, while Jawdah may be more related to the procedures and works.

Nevertheless, the two terms are alternatively used for both procedure and product.

The term (Ih'san) in particular, with its various applications, is taken by the present writer as a unique term of great value in the academic setup, because it is of much deeper connotation which looks more relevant to address quality within the complex setup of HE institutions.

This is more so, when one bears in mind, the ultimate goal of quality achievement in quality academic out-put , where as Ih'san is highly required in every part of it.

With this essential reference in mind the IUA is on the process of developing its own approach to quality achievement, together with building up distinctive accumulation of traditions.

### **(c) The IUA, An Historical Background**

In the early seventies a good number of distinguished educationists from Sudan thought to lay the foundation of a nongovernmental academic institution which can academically play the role of several public education centers run by individual scholars in different areas of the country, hosting hundreds of African students. Thus the first seed of the IUA was then sown in Khartoum the capital of Sudan, the Arab countries gate-way to Africa.

The Islamic African Center (IAC) was therefore established on an unquestioned clear vision that took into consideration the dire need of the target societies in the continent.

A comprehensive statute was then written with clear-cut objectives and necessary subjects to monitor the activities of the center and meet the requirement of the academic institution. A powerful board of trustees was

then formed, of seven leading countries, a finance committee, a governing council and an academic planning committee were well structured.

A well selected administrative and teaching staff were recruited to shoulder that great responsibility. The first academic structure of the center was designed perfectly reflecting the vision and mission stated in the statute. Three major departments were established: Education, Research and Community Service, each has developed over the years to form the present numerous academic units of the IUA.

#### **(D) Development and Expansion**

As stated by scholars of HE development, rapid changes in the needs and requirement of the target societies should be met with necessary changes in contents and forms of the academic programs so as to meet the requirements of the new setup. Modern universities do not only address, the current changes but go further to detect possible future changes and work for meeting them several years ahead, by setting development plus some years a head.

In early nineties the IUA leaders decided to review the academic structure of the then two faculties of the (IAC) and concluded that the existing setup was far beyond the new expectations of the stakeholders. In addition to the dire need of extending the services from limited regional realm to a wider international scope.

Vertical and horizontal development took place, New faculties were established, in addition to offering new courses in existing faculties .

Post-graduate study deanship was also incepted. It is important to note that this development was preceded by a comprehensive review of the statute to add new objectives and subjects suitable to the new vision so as to address further development.

#### **IUA of Today:**

- Expanding in the Last ten year the IUA now comprises over (20) faculties and academic, (8) of them are in medical and applied science alone, other academic institutes, centers and deanships are

more than ten in number, of which the Institute of Disaster and Refugees Studies is unique in its academic programs

- The IUA offered degrees to over 20 thousands graduates in various disciplines, many of them now holding effective positions in their societies and elsewhere.
- The IUA now hosts more than (14) thousands students, from over (80) countries over the world, at least one third of whom are boarding students, with more than (700) members of teaching staff, taking care of them.
- The IUA today avails necessary research facilities of which (CRAS) is well known for its world wide spread (JAS) with a considerable number of reputed Africanists behind. The higher research and publication board works now with (14) Faculty research committees as tributaries, together with a postgraduate studies deanship backed by a powerful postgraduate studies board.
- About (10) scientific research periodicals are currently run at the IUA in addition to other (4) quarterly magazines.
- Over(20) international and regional conferences, seminars and congresses were convened on the IUA premises and elsewhere to address regional and international problems. The latest was convened Oct. 2015.
- Community services constitute a top priority of the (IUA): Caravan trips , camps and workshops at local, regional and international levels are constantly organized twice a year, with full participation and involvement of both students and staff.
- Academic staff appearance on the media is frequent, addressing cultural, social, political, economic, religious and other current developmental issues. The IUA is so reputed that nearly a dozen of Colleges and Institutes are affiliated to her and a good number of other applications are underway. The IUA Board Cast services has vigorously emerged recently.

### **Elements of Success:**

The fore mentioned landmarks of the (IUA) may suggest identified elements behind the success; important of these elements are:

- (a) Establishment of the solid bases; which includes right vision that inspires well defined mission which enforces good preparations and selection of right human resources.
- (b) Steady development based on proper consideration of real changes in the target societies, that leads to addressing the arising needs and making the required shift in approach .
- (c) Realistic expansion based on best utilization of opportunities and resources, close contact with stakeholders, all necessitates gradual shift towards internationalization.

### **(E) IUA views on Quality achievement:**

Aware of these elements, together with other forces that contributed to the distinguished career of achievements, the (IUA) has established her own traditions on quality achievement with an open eye on other fruitful best practice examples of world and region class institutions.

With all this in mind the (IUA) is working hard to develop clear concepts and views on quality performance .

The following points may shed light on the main lines of argument:

#### **a. Principles:**

- (1) Quality performance cannot be achieved through mere imitation and copying. Creativity, novelty and reform finger prints, are essential.
- (2) Quality human resources should always be in focus in recruitment and training.
- (3) Quality out-put is the ultimate goal constantly kept in focus.
- (4) Islamic code of ethics and moral values should always remain a major source.

**Concepts :-**

- World Class University is an essential aspiration in modern university development, suitable for developed countries rather than underdeveloped.
- “Class University” can be viewed as relevant requirement in underdeveloped countries, through particular terms of cultural references.
- Classification of universities can seriously be affected by cultural diversities and variation of values.
- University classification should acknowledge difference in cultures, ideologies, identities and values.
- University ranking should be viewed within the context of identical groups of similar entities.

**Terms of Reference for Quality Achievement :-**

- Clear vision & accurate mission.
- Cultural heritage and background.
- Educational sciences & Technology.
- Accumulation of best fruitful practices .
- Institution's own traditions and career in quality performance .

**Targets in Focus:-**

- Best human resources.
- Excellence in professional performance.
- Quality in academic input & output.
- Continuous tally, and matching with labor market requirements.

**Conclusion:**

Within a short period of less than 3 decades the IUA could gain repute and secure advanced position in local and regional Top University ranking. Reference to such positions can be made to 2013 and 2014 Spanish ranking of African Universities where the IUA was ranked number 7 and number 3 of top Sudanese universities respectively, surpassing many national and regional celebrated universities.

With all this distinctive career, the IUA is still facing some finance-caused constraints with regard to certain Issues such as internationalization, strategic African research facilities, implementation of dozens of cooperation agreements, and protocols, and affiliation requests. However the IUA attempting to overcome its financial constraints, has never stopped, trying her best in utilizing its human and other resources, in addition to that, continuous attempts are underway to regain the support of its former board of trustees, and signs of success are evident in 2014 – 2015.

Regardless all its setbacks, the IUA can still play a significant role in developing African studies in collaboration with African, Arab and other world universities.

The IUA maintains a very rich resource of information on African studies in addition to the fact that the human population of the IUA is, by itself, a good randomly selected sample relevant to, different field studies on humanities, as well as hot social and ideological issues.

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