

STATEMENT OF THE AFRICA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS WORKSHOP
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“Knowledge, Development and Academic Partnerships” Conference,
University of Helsinki (Finland), 12-14 February 2009

OVERVIEW

This document summarizes the key issues and recommendations put forth during the Africa Regional Partnerships Workshop, held on 13-14 February 2009 as part of the “Knowledge, Development and Academic Partnerships” Conference at the University of Helsinki, Finland.

This workshop brought together over forty individuals from the North and the South to discuss existing Nordic-Africa co-operation and networks. The format included short presentations and group discussions focusing on partnership opportunities and challenges in the field of higher education through the activities of various organizations and thematic partnership networks. The workshop was co-chaired by Professor Liisa Laakso from the University of Helsinki and Professor Erkki Sutinen from the University of Joensuu, with the proceedings recorded by Lisa Marika Jokivirta and Bidemi Coker from the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. It is our hope that the following document may generate further debate and discussion, with the aim to strengthening and expanding Nordic-Africa co-operation and networks in the field of higher education, including research, training, and institutional capacity-building.

DAY 1: FEBRUARY 13, 2009

The first day of the workshop featured short presentations by three organizations actively engaged in the area of Nordic-Africa cooperation. Each presentation provided an overview of the organization’s activities and mandates, and was followed by group discussion.

Presentation about SANORD

- Director Leolyn Jackson provided an overview of the Southern Africa-Nordic Centre (SANORD), a partnership of higher education institutions from the Nordic countries and Southern Africa.
- SANORD’s primary aim is to promote multilateral cooperation and facilitate research and development programmes between clusters in member institutions in the Nordic and Southern African regions. There are currently 20 members, with SANORD looking forward to welcoming further members.

- For more information, please contact Director Leolyn Jackson (leolyn.jackson at global.uib.no) or visit SANORD's website at <http://sanord.uwc.ac.za/>

Presentation about NAI

- Director Carin Norberg and Research Director Fantu Cheru made a presentation about the Nordic Africa Institute (NAI), a research, documentation and information centre on modern Africa for the Nordic countries that is based in Uppsala, Sweden.
- NAI promotes research and studies on Africa in the Nordic countries and co-operation between African and Nordic researchers. It also disseminates information about current African issues. NAI offers a range of study/ travel and guest researcher scholarships.
- For further information, please contact Carin Norberg (carin.norberg at nai.uu.se) or Fantu Cheru (fantu.cheru at nai.uu.se) or visit NAI's website at <http://www.nai.uu.se/>

Presentation about CAAST-Net

- Project Coordinator Tuija Tiihonen outlined the key objectives and activities of CAAST-Net, a network for the coordination and advancement of Sub-Saharan Africa-EU Science & Technology Cooperation.
- CAAST-Net is a joint Africa-Europe platform dedicated to advancing bi-regional cooperation in science and technology. It is supported under the European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme.
- For more information, contact Tuija Tiihonen (tuija.tiihonen at uku.fi) or visit CAAST-Net's website at <http://www.caast-net.org/xwiki/bin/view/Main/>

Discussion and Key Issues

Please find below some of the key issues and recommendations emerging from the first day of presentations and group discussion:

- Funding was identified as one of the main challenges of Nordic-Africa institutional collaboration. There is a need to diversify and find new modalities of funding (e.g. foundations), and to ensure the sustainability of the funding at the outset of the cooperation.
- There is a need to focus on policy relevant research. We also need to become more active in communicating the outputs of Nordic-Africa collaboration to policy makers.
- Nordic-Africa collaboration should be output-oriented; this should produce a result, not just a meeting. We should be more elaborate about our expectations in terms of output. The roles, responsibilities and types of collaboration/ research should be clearly defined.

- There should be a growing emphasis on multidisciplinary research/ collaboration – across clusters; inclusion of and intersection between different disciplines; diversification of geographical areas, particularly Southern and Western Africa
- There is a need for greater collaboration with other regions. Situating Africa in the global context means that we need to engage more constructively with other countries, e.g. China.
- There should be less of an emphasis on individual networks and more collaboration and contact between different networks (e.g. SANORD-UniPID cooperation).

DAY 2: FEBRUARY 14, 2009

The second day of the workshop featured short presentations by thematic North-South university networks at UniPID member institutions. These were also followed by group discussion.

Presentation about SUMAG

- Adjunct Professor Tapio Katko and Professor, Dean Bayou Chane provided an overview of SUMAG, a university network aimed at building capacity in water services and management.
- The SUMAG network has already co-hosted an international conference, and is aimed at organizing country-specific workshops that involve all members of the network as well as local engineering associations. The network stakeholders include NGOs, municipalities, researchers, and municipal citizens.
- For further information about SUMAG, please contact Professor Tapio Katko, Tampere University of Technology (tapio.katko at tut.fi); Bayou Chane, Dean, Addis Ababa University (bayou_medi at yahoo.com); or, Professor Alfred Damas Mashauri, University of Dar es Salaam.

Presentation about Globalisation, Pedagogy and Body

- Professor Hanna Tegegn and Director Mulumebet Zenebe, Institute of Gender Studies at Addis Ababa University discussed the Globalisation, Pedagogy and Body Network, aimed at developing collaborative scholarship of gender and queer studies in the North and the South.
- As part of the North-South-South Higher Education Institution Network Programme (2009-11), the Network includes 7 partner institutions working in gender issues. The network's activities include an intensive course for postgraduate students and teacher/ staff exchanges.
- For further information, please contact Kattis Honkanen (khonkane at abo.fi) or Salla Tuori (salla.tuori at abo.fi), Åbo Akademi; Dr. Hanna Tegegn or Director

Mulumebet Zenebe, Institute of Gender Studies, Addis Ababa University.

Presentation about ICT4D

- Professor Erkki Sutinen, University of Joensuu, made a presentation about the ICT4D Network, aimed at promoting North-South collaboration in the area of information and communication technologies.
- The network aims to promote institutional capacity-building and ICT-based knowledge sharing between the North and the South. The network's activities include university courses focusing on the theme of ICT for development.
- For further information, please contact Erkki Sutinen, University of Joensuu (erkki.sutinen at cs.joensuu.fi), Paula Kotze, Principal Researcher of Meraka Institute in South Africa (paula.kotze at gmail.com), or Nicholas Bangu, Professor, Tumaini University in Tanzania.

Discussion and Key Issues

Please find below some of the key issues that were outlined during the presentations and the group discussion that followed:

- There is a need to upgrade the qualifications/ skills of faculty/ staff members at Southern partner institutions, e.g. through expanded PhD opportunities.
- Reciprocity should be emphasized during the Nordic-Africa cooperation process. Partners in both the North and the South should participate in all stages of the collaboration, including the preliminary planning process.
- The sustainability of the collaboration should be ensured. Outputs should be designed in a way that partner institutions can replicate and re-use these after the project has phased out.
- The willingness of partner institutions to share outputs with each other and with other non-partner universities (particularly in the South) should be encouraged, e.g. through resource sharing.
- Networks should help African universities to work with other universities in Africa, e.g. an emphasis on more South-South and not just North-South collaboration.
- All collaboration should be in line with local and national development goals to address a real development need.
- However, we should also need to be more actively involved in shaping the Nordic-Africa research/ collaboration agenda on the basis of our needs. We should be in direct dialogue with ministries and policy-makers in order to communicate the relevance of our research and collaboration.
- Overall, there is an urgent need for a more “pracademic” approach to research/ collaboration – e.g. closer cooperation between academic and practical thinking – as well as a more proactive approach to shaping the research/ collaboration agenda itself.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

(A) Expanding and Diversifying Nordic-Africa Research/ Collaboration

(1) There should be a growing emphasis on multidisciplinary research/ collaboration – across clusters; inclusion of and intersection between different disciplines; diversification of geographical areas, particularly Southern and Western Africa.

(2) There is a need for greater collaboration with other regions. We need to engage more constructively with other countries and regions, e.g. China.

(3) There should be less of an emphasis on individual networks and more follow-up and contact between different networks in a collaborative manner.

(B) Ensuring the Sustainability of Nordic-Africa Research/ Collaboration

(4) There is a need to diversify and find new modalities of funding (e.g. foundations), and to maximize the prospects of the sustainability of funding at the outset of the cooperation.

(5) Outputs should be designed in a way that partner institutions can replicate and re-use these after the project has phased out.

(6) The willingness of partner institutions to share outputs with each other and with other non-partner universities (particularly in the South) should be encouraged, e.g. through resource sharing.

(7) The network should help African universities to work with other universities in Africa, e.g. an emphasis on more South-South collaboration.

(8) There is a need to ensure longer-term institutional capacity building, e.g. upgrading the qualifications of faculty/ staff members at African partner institutions through expanded PhD opportunities.

(C) Emphasizing a ‘Pracademic’ Approach to Nordic-Africa Cooperation

(9) The focus should be on “pracademic” research/ collaboration. Nordic-Africa collaboration should be output-oriented, emphasizing concrete action and closer cooperation between academic and practical thinking.

(10) There is a need to focus on policy relevant research and collaboration. We need to become more active in communicating the outputs and relevance of Nordic-Africa collaboration to policy makers.

(11) Nordic-Africa research and collaboration should be demand-driven. All collaboration should be in line with local and national development goals to address a real development need.

(12) However, we also need to assume a more proactive stance in defining the Nordic-Africa research/ collaboration agenda. We should be in direct dialogue with ministries and policy-makers in order to identify development needs and to communicate the relevance of our research and collaboration.

STATEMENT OF THE LATIN AMERICA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP WORKSHOP
FOCUS ON THE ICI INSTRUMENT

“Knowledge, Development and Academic Partnerships” Conference,
University of Helsinki (Finland), 12-14 February 2009

OVERVIEW

This document summarizes the key issues and recommendations put forth during the Latin America Regional Partnerships Workshop, held on 13-14 February 2009 as part of the “Knowledge, Development and Academic Partnerships” Conference at the University of Helsinki, Finland. The focus of discussion was on the ICI Instrument and its impact on Finnish-Latin American higher education collaborations. This conference brief has been prepared by Jussi Pakkasvirta, Mikko Vesa, and the Latin America Regional Partnership Group.

INTRODUCTION

Finnish and Latin American studies have an institutional history of some decades and the cooperation between academic institutes in Finland and Latin America is well established at both the institutional and personal levels. These are especially well established at the Latin American Studies Programme and the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Helsinki (mainly social sciences and humanities); University of Turku (natural sciences); as well as various bilateral agreements with Latin American universities.

- Generation of the 1980s, 1990s and 2000 - senior researchers and the generation graduating with a MA or PhD from the Latin American Studies programme at the Renvall Institute (University of Helsinki)

Now, the cooperation between universities seems even more important and therefore Finnish and Latin American academics should collaborate to develop high-quality research together, based on regional and/or thematic expertise.

- Existing e-mail lists, such as suomi-latam@helsinki.fi, should be reactivated in order to create a space for sharing information rapidly. Good traditions also exist in the form of electronic journals (Semana Latinoamericana, 1994-1996; Revista XAMAN. 1997-2005 and El Norte – Finnish Journal of Latin American Studies, 2006-). Also, national and Nordic Latin American Studies

conferences have been organized regularly at the University of Helsinki. The Renvall Institute also participates in the European Virtual Master's Programme of Latin American Studies (AMELAT).

INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION INSTRUMENT

- The Instrument has also existed earlier, but now it is going to be organized in a new way.
- Institutional cooperation is not a new idea; Finnish and Latin Americanists have previously presented similar projects.
- More resources will be available through the new ICI channel. In the big projects, the funding could be around 500 000 Euros/ 3 years.
- Funding comes from the partner country's budget frame (i.e. problematic for Latin America; only Nicaragua is an official Finnish ODA partner country).
- Possibility of regional projects (not just bilateral cooperation)?
- A promise has been made by the Ministry that the funding will not be exclusively bound to the partner country list.
- Now it is time to give suggestions to the Ministry, because the instrument is not ready. Quality projects based on long-lasting traditions of academic cooperation should be given priority.

Latin American institutional contacts present at the conference (examples):

- CATIE (Costa Rica)
- UCR (Universidad de Costa Rica), UNA (Universidad Nacional), Costa Rica
- Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Honduras
- UNAM (Mexico)
- National University of San Marcos (Peru)
- USAC , Universidad Rafael Landívar (Guatemala)
- UCA (Universidad Centroamericana), URACCAN (Nicaragua)
- Contacts cover also other countries like Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, etc.
- At the disciplinary level, the contacts are manifold.

QUESTIONS RAISED

- Is ICI feasible?
- Are bilateral agreements still better?
- What is actually meant by 'higher education'?
 - Are research activities included?
 - Will polytechnics also be included?
 - No "hidden agendas"

- What kind of practical cooperation should be developed?
 - Joint ventures aimed at developing study programmes
 - PhD supervision – is this included within ICI capacity building and training? How is ODA understood?
 - Cooperation also at the Master’s programme level
 - Professor and teacher exchanges
 - Student exchanges
 - Institutional (?) cooperation between universities in the South - what is really meant?
 - Less Eurocentric ways of cooperation?
 - Virtual mentoring/ coaching programmes?
 - Match-making possibilities?
 - Cooperation between the public and private sectors
 - Flexible exchange programmes
- Will OECD countries be left outside the ICI? (Mexico, Costa Rica, Chile, Argentina... how they will be included?)
- What are the expected outcomes?
 - What is the donors’ idea of the outcome?
- Do universities have enough resources for the ICI?
 - There are already too many administrative tasks (taking time away from research and teaching)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Good contacts and active networks already exist between Finland and Latin America. We should concentrate on utilizing and strengthening the long-lasting relationships that we already have, instead of ‘reinventing the wheel’ again. It is better emphasize the development of existing cooperation schemes.
- More variety is needed.
 - Not just universities, but other kind of research institutions should also be included (FLACSO, CLACSO, etc.)
- In general, we have to organize ourselves behind a good idea that could be based on:
 - Geographical or thematic focus
- Long-lasting and high-quality programmes are needed.
- The new ICI instrument needs more clarification. For example, if no resources are allocated to research, what is it all about then? Teaching? Supervising? Meetings? Curricular development?
- This should not be an instrument for academic tourism.

- Inter-disciplinarity – this is obvious, but should be the starting point for collaboration.

STATEMENT OF THE ASIA REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS WORKSHOP
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“Knowledge, Development and Academic Partnerships” Conference,
University of Helsinki (Finland), 12-14 February 2009

OVERVIEW

This document summarizes the key issues and recommendations put forth during the Asia Regional Partnerships Workshop, held on 13-14 February 2009 as part of the “Knowledge, Development and Academic Partnerships” Conference at the University of Helsinki, Finland. This summary has been prepared by Juha Tahkamaa from the Turku School of Economics, Finland.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Asia as such is a large area, and for the purpose of this working group, mainly East and Southeast Asia were discussed, but India was also taken up as an important area to focus on in the future. The Group suggests two sets of recommendations, domestic and foreign.

Domestic

- 1) Improve communication between Asia actors in Finland. This includes all institutions, departments, researchers and research units that are engaged in Asian studies. The National University Network for East and Southeast Asian Studies offers a platform and a forum for communication. The website of the Network can be found at www.asianet.fi/yliopistot. The Network operates a mailing list consisting of approx. 400 Asia interested people from the private and public sectors and from universities and polytechnics. Students and researchers are members of the list as well. The mailing list can be used as a tool for disseminating spread information about Asia-related UniPID activities immediately.
- 2) Developing Southeast Asian studies in Finland. Currently East Asia, especially China, to a large extent dominates the field of interest in academic enterprises. SEA expertise exists, e.g. at the University of Helsinki in Humanities, but SEA expertise in the field of social sciences and economics are harder to come by. However, the interest towards SEA is rising and the importance of SEA is rising. This calls for a deeper understanding of the

countries in the area to meet this demand. SEA studies should be offered to students. This could be done with existing domestic experts and experts from SEA countries. In due time, a sufficient body of SEA students and a proper training system of SEA experts should be developed.

- 3) Developing multidisciplinary teaching and research. Technology, natural sciences, social sciences and humanities could all benefit from each other. This became obvious in the group as many projects presented by the group members from various academic backgrounds clearly intersected. Again, enhanced communication between actors would facilitate development of multidisciplinary teaching and research projects. Asianet is available for this purpose.

Foreign

- 1) Developing foreign co-operation with Asia should be based on substance. Agreements between institutions without existing co-operation between researchers and teachers are not perhaps the best way to build co-operation. If agreements are signed on the basis of already existing co-operation in research and teaching they are more likely to produce results that benefit both sides and provide substantial results by strengthening the institutional links between the two. In this regard personal contacts and networks are important in building initial contacts and laying the groundwork for formal agreements.
- 2) Curriculum development and upgrading the qualifications of the core staff of SEA partners. Many universities in the area lack qualified staff, and upgrading their credentials is something that Finnish counterparts could do. Also, staff capacity building, staff recruitment and training, on the job training and short-course training are something that the Finnish universities with which they could assist their Asian counterparts.