

SANORD

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

6-7 JUNE 2012

STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES AS HUBS OF DEVELOPMENT

THROUGH THE SOUTHERN
AFRICAN – NORDIC
UNIVERSITY CENTRE
(SANORD)

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



AARHUS UNIVERSITY



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OPENING STATEMENT

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Modern society faces a number of grand challenges, including climate change, the increasing scarcity of natural resources, public health, food security, and ageing populations. Urban population has surpassed rural population and it is projected that 2/3 of the world's inhabitants in 2050 will live in cities, thereby creating tremendous pressure on urban infrastructure. Population growth, global inequalities, natural disaster and armed conflicts contribute to global and regional migration flows that may be perceived to challenge notions of citizenship, human rights and democracy. These challenges are global, and they all require responses that are not only multi-disciplinary in nature – they must also be ‘multi-vocal’ in the sense that they combine knowledge from the global South and North. Modern universities share the responsibility for finding inventive responses to these challenges. Research universities must therefore share their research platforms globally to form strong international research networks that transcend both academic and national borders, and that bridge Northern and Southern universities.

The 3rd International SANORD Symposium hosted by Aarhus University provides an opportunity for university leaders and distinguished scholars to discuss the role of universities as ‘hubs of development’ that contribute to addressing global challenges in their respective countries and regions, as well as in global networks. The Symposium explores a range of models for North-South-South collaboration as described in this book of abstracts and it takes concrete steps to further developing SANORD on the basis of these discussions. Whereas it is the merit of SANORD to bring together Nordic and Southern African universities, the outcome of the Symposium and its contribution towards fully integrating global challenges into the SANORD agenda depends on the SANORD member institutions. It is a great honour for Aarhus University to host this event.

INTRODUCTION

Brian O'Connell, Chairperson of SANORD, and Vice-Chancellor & Rector, University of the Western Cape, South Africa

It is now clear that humankind is experiencing change at an unprecedented rate and that history suggests that we will have difficulty making sense of it. This human penchant of holding onto what the culture knows and values despite new evidence was wonderfully demonstrated by William Harvey in his address to the Royal College of Physicians about his remarkable scientific discovery which overthrew Galen's 1800 year truth about the nature and role of the heart. He fearfully told his peers that: "what remains to be said about the quantity and source of blood which thus passes is of so novel and unheard of character, that I fear not only injury to myself from the envy of a few, but I tremble lest I have all mankind at large for my enemies so much doth want and custom that become as another nature, and doctrine once sown, and that has struck deep root, and respect for antiquity".

He had the right to be concerned as his work was rejected by many of his peers and his reputation so sullied initially that the majority of his patients left him. Science, a new way of understanding, was tentatively contesting with the past and an entire new paradigm for knowledge creation was emerging and would triumph despite strong opposition from every level of society, the learned included. If anything the social and material challenges that now face us will be even more challenging, and change of unparalleled proportions will be required if we are to endure. Who will assist humankind to make these gigantic leaps away from our current truths, who will be our William Harveys?

I believe that Universities in the 21st Century will have to take far greater responsibility for informing humankind of our current and future challenges than we did in the past. In what will probably be a turbulent world, they will have to ask the hard questions, those that our people might not wish to face up to or even have difficulty in understanding: questions

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about our growing population, about relationships, about food, water, energy and other declining resources, about poverty, about health and well-being, about globalisation and economies, about pollution and climate change, about nations and nation-building, about security, about education and its critical role and most importantly, about what it means to be human.

These hard questions will also be directed at the university itself: why does it exist, how should it be constructed and what should its roles and responsibility be? In whose interest do we function, the state or humankind, and are there ways to reconcile the two? Must we be guided by the notion of engagement which suggests a purposive connection with our environment, local and international, spiritual and material, or do we live our lives committed only to our closest interests?

I have come to believe that the world's universities now have a very special function and must, at the very least, assist humankind to understand just how dramatically these changes will impact on our lives and how they may even challenge the very notion of humanity itself. In particular Universities must speak on matters like the following as governments either can't or won't:

1. The need to move humans in "developed countries" to understand that they have lived beyond their means and they must prepare themselves for a more humble future.
 2. The need to move humans in "developing countries" to understand that they cannot use the developed nations as points of reference for their material expectations, the truth that economic growth has limits.
 3. The need to move all humans to understand that we must develop a wise relationship with our natural environment.
 4. The need to move all humans to think of ourselves as earthlings who must work together to secure our future. This implies a global perspective and a long term view which always includes the well-being of the other.
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5. The need to move all humans to understand that there is a direct relationship between population growth and the availability of resources
6. The need to move all humans to understand that there is a direct relationship between ownership of our challenges, competence to engage with these challenges and hard work on the one hand, and development on the other
7. The need to move all humans to understand that our safety lies in knowledge and partnerships

If universities are to play this role then their strength will come from their knowledge and their networks. The challenges facing humankind now are global and it is only through global understandings and global alliances that far-reaching new truths will emerge and endure. SANORD is such an alliance and must, of necessity I believe, develop a sharpened consciousness about its role. This Aarhus conference, together with the Board and Council meetings of SANORD to be held there, is poised to speak to these matters and begin, through conclusions reached and decisions made, to mark the next chapter of the SANORD story.

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UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE:
BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY
FOR PARTICIPATION IN
INTERNATIONAL KNOWLEDGE
NETWORKS

Enhancing internationalization through research and partnerships

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Universities around the world have responded to the challenges of globalisation by internationalizing their campuses (Lutabingwa, 2005). This is especially relevant for South African universities who prior to 1994 were isolated from the global arena. Recently, the discussion and call for internationalisation of higher education in South Africa has intensified and deepened (Lutabingwa, 2005). Badat (2004) argues that the “international movement and exchange of students, scholars and researchers and of knowledge, ideas research, expertise and skills are vital for the dynamism of South African higher education and science and technology, and a necessary condition for South Africa’s economic and social reconstruction and transformation”. Thus, one of the strategic goals of the University of KwaZulu-Natal is to promote internationalisation by creating, nurturing and fostering carefully selected student exchange programmes and implement curricula and teaching strategies that make on-going connections between local experience and global debate (Strategic Plan, 2007). A critical component in the acceleration of internationalisation at the University of KwaZulu-Natal has been the recent application and introduction of the Erasmus Mundus scholarships which strategically allows for the mobility of postgraduate students and staff to the Nordic countries. South African higher education institutions are rapidly witnessing the outcomes of this mobility scheme.

In this paper, I will attempt to explore the benefits of international collaboration initiatives at the University of KwaZulu-Natal with a particular focus on the partnerships and research-led activities that the university shares with the Nordic countries. Another focus would be the benefit of the Erasmus Mundus scholarship programme in enhancing the strategic priorities of the university.

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Lutabingwa, J.L. (2005). *Internationalisation at South African universities: The role of a central international office*. *South African Journal of Higher Education Studies*. Vol 6. pp 1108-1119

Badat, S. (2004). *The challenges of internationalisation. Message from the Council on Higher Education to Study South Africa*. In *Study South Africa: The guide to South African tertiary education*. Durban, South Africa: International Education Association of South Africa

Strategic Plan. (2007). University of KwaZulu-Natal Publication

Experiences and lessons learnt from a NUFU-sponsored North-South veterinary collaborative partnership

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Department of Paraclinical Sciences was an equal partner in a research project on environmental toxicology and zoonotic diseases funded by the Norwegian Council for Higher Education's Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU) for two 5-year periods. The project commenced in 2002 with the main objectives of research collaboration and competence-building within these two areas. The NUFU Veterinary Network comprised six partner institutions in eastern (Uganda and Tanzania) and southern Africa (Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science and National Veterinary Institute in Oslo, the northern partners.

Successes included capacity building at the collaborating Faculties in Africa through post-graduate training of staff members and network building. One of the major successes was that the annual NUFU group meetings created a forum where Deans of Veterinary Faculties in southern and eastern Africa could establish contact and discuss various aspects of mutual interest and cooperation. This has led to the establishment of a Regional Deans Group. In addition, senior scientists in the North and South acted as supervisors for the PhD students ensuring that each student had at least two supervisors for guidance and also promoted joint authorship of scientific publications. The NUFU-sponsored project also afforded members of staff the opportunity to interact and enticed collaboration on other research projects as well. Above and beyond academic collaboration, friendships have also been formed across national borders.

One of the complexities to address when the environmental toxicology project commenced was that all the prospective PhD students as well as the senior researchers in the South were novices in this particular field. The first couple of months were spent to search for and study the relevant literature and

a workshop was also organized to become more knowledgeable in this field. All the PhD candidates were members of staff of Veterinary Faculties in their home countries and had teaching commitments as well as other administrative duties to attend to, which impinged on their time to conduct research and perform other relevant activities. Communication was severely hampered and difficult at times when local networks were down and prevented effective electronic communication (e-mail). Other difficulties which hindered networking included information and communication technology (ICT) problems such as insufficient band-width. Another aspect not foreseen, when the project commenced, was the necessity to train technical staff for support.

Networking, mentorship and capacity building in African universities: opportunities and prospects in Tanzania and the COMESA region

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Networking and collaboration are the most important aspects for academics and scholars in the current global economy but many Universities in African countries have yet to think about and explore this opportunity for knowledge exchange, mentorship, capacity-building and funding opportunities. While there are many formal professional bodies and conferences called and attended, members only meet and no linkages continue beyond conference premises. Many Universities in Africa lack expertise and funding because they do not know what they have in terms of expertise and the little resources are consequently not used prudently. There are cases where experts in qualitative or quantitative research methods are unknown even among lecturers in the same university. They have knowledge on the use of SPSS (quantitative) or Nvivo (qualitative) packages but this expertise is never utilized. There is a wave of hiring of experts from outside because scholars do not know each other's potential. There is also a lot of duplication of research efforts, because scholars in the same university or country often do not know what others are doing, and end up duplicating efforts. This paper seeks to explore some ways through which knowledge exchange, mentorship, capacity-building and networking can be enhanced through local creativity and ingenuity. Among the suggestions put forward in this paper is a creation of list servers and databases of researchers and academics working at universities in the region and their expertise and activities at any given time. Another is a need to intentionally enhance collaboration in the country, in Africa, South-South and North-South in order to benefit from best practices.

Mobility and career paths among Ph.D. holders in the Swedish development cooperation with Ethiopia, Tanzania and Sri Lanka

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This paper is a report from an ongoing project with the aim to longitudinally and comparatively map and analyze modes and rationales behind mobility and career paths/choices among Ph.D. holders in different academic disciplines funded within the frame of the Swedish research cooperation with Ethiopia, Tanzania and Sri Lanka. The project is guided by research questions looking at extent and direction of mobility (geographic and sector) over time internationally and nationally. In which areas and at what positions are the Sida-funded Ph.D. holders at present? What do individual developments look like in terms of geographical mobility and mobility between sectors from the date of graduation up to present? Could specific patterns of mobility be revealed in terms of gender, age and date of graduation? From a longitudinal perspective, are there differences in mobility between Ph.D. holders with degrees from different periods of time and across different disciplines?

The project also has a qualitative approach looking at perceptions and individual rationales behind mobility and career choices. How do individual Ph.D. holders reflect on alternatives on mobility and careers paths linked with their academic position/rank? How do they relate these alternatives to conditions in academia and society at large (gender, age, social background, ethnicity, date (time) of graduation)? What are the driving forces behind individual mobility and career choices and to what extent can these be linked with factors relating to referred systematic changes in the higher education and research sector?

The paper will highlight the need for increased knowledge on mobility and careers paths among skilled researchers to enhance policy development in development cooperation and

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in areas related to the interplay between academia and society in developing countries.

An evaluation of the music, education and cultural identity (MECI) project

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This paper critically examined the extent to which the University of Botswana has positioned itself for the achievement of its ambitious vision of being a leading centre of academic excellence in Africa and the world through the development of international partnerships with universities in Africa and other regions. The paper looked at university governance; that is the structures, policies, processes and mechanisms that are in place in order to achieve excellence in the area. The paper in particular evaluated the impact of the North-South-South (now Music, Education and Cultural Identity (MECI)) programme that was initiated in 2007 between Juvaskjular University in Finland and some universities in Southern Africa of which The University of Botswana is part. The paper investigated how capacitated the University of Botswana is to make the project a success. Since the advent of the globalization syndrome, most universities developed structures, policies and strategies to guide them respond effectively but the question is how universities have built institutional capacity for participation in international knowledge networks. The paper also interrogated similar ventures internationally to establish trends and challenges faced. A combined mixed method research approach was used to gather data for this study. A sample of staff from international offices, faculty and students involved in the project from participating institutions were interviewed for insights into how they built capacity for effective governance – what they thought it was; how they thought it could best be achieved; and why they thought it was important. A survey questionnaire was utilized to get more opinions from the participants.

Personalising collaborative structures: learning from experience

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In their review of the relationships between African higher education institutions and their international partners, Samoff and Carrol (2004) point to a lack of innovation when it comes to the ways in which knowledge and ideas are produced and exchanged within North-South collaborations. They allude to dominating perspectives which have tended to shape the models adopted within these partnerships.

This paper examines some of the experiences of students and staff participating in such programmes of exchange, and these experiences raise questions about the inclusiveness of the assumptions and practices that organise higher education linkages. It was argued here that relying exclusively upon formalised or depersonalised structures for managing academic exchanges tend to result in unequal access to resources and learning opportunities for the participants from the North and South.

On the other hand, the participants' experiences highlight the value of interpersonal relationships in overcoming the technical and cultural difficulties, which are common in such arenas of diversity. Such an interpretation highlights the potential of the relational elements of knowledge and understanding that some epistemological backgrounds can contribute to partnership models. The paper thus suggests a greater emphasis on structures that are informed by local and personal knowledge, such as for example, mentorships, and further contends that such low-level co-operations may be less constrained by the power relations that shape considerations at an institutional level.

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Samoff, Joel, and Bidemi Carrol. 2004. *The Promise of Partnership and Continuities of Dependence: External Support to Higher Education in Africa*. *African Studies Review* 47 (1):67-199.

The internationalisation plan of the Polytechnic of Namibia

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The internationalisation plan of the Polytechnic of Namibia includes three main areas of development, namely Education, Research and Training, and Institutional Services. All these areas are intertwined and they will require equal consideration in order for this institution to transform as a Hub for Development. Therefore, this paper evaluates the status quo with regard to international partnerships and its impact on Education, Research, Training and Institutional Services of the institution. There seems to be a deficiency in the implementation of international networks at the Polytechnic and thus the need for an evaluation of current international partnerships to improve and build upon current practices.

Since its creation, the Polytechnic of Namibia has enjoyed the benefits of partnerships that allowed networking, staff and student exchanges and curriculum development. However, an assessment is due in order to better plan future collaborations based on the needs of this Nation.

The United Nations Millennium Development Goal (MDG) #8 emphasises the importance to develop global partnerships in order to advance developing countries from extreme poverty and exclusion by promoting education.¹ Furthermore, Namibia's Development Plan Three highlights the crucial role that Smart Partnerships played and can continue to play in the country's achievements since its independence.² Polytechnic's partners are very important in the internationalisation process as they share the vision of transforming universities as hubs for development.

In order to better plan the internationalisation process at the Polytechnic of Namibia, this research will delve into reports and individual assessments from different partners, locally and internationally. Findings from this study will assist in the

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writing of the Action Plan and will provide guidelines for future collaborations.

¹<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals//global.shtml>

²http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Namibia/Namibia_NDP3_Vol.1_Revised_Draft_05.06.2008.pdf

Increasing research output: Case study on the University of Johannesburg

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At the start of the merger in 2005, the University set an agenda to be a research-focused institution which meant positioning itself among the top eight institutions in the country by 2015.

The first years were spent on the establishment of the Research and Innovation Division (RID) and promotion of a research culture within the new institution. The RID provides strategic and operational support for research in the university, through five administrative functions, each with well defined activities. The key performance indicators with goals and targets are defined in the short (annual), intermediate (5-year) and long term (10-year) strategic plans of the University's research strategy. The key performance indicators are:

Accredited research output:

- Proportion of international to national research publications;
- Number of active researchers;
- Number of NRF rated researchers;
- Number of postgraduate enrolments.

The three elements of the strategy were: investment, people and environment. Within these three pillars, various incentives were introduced and the research management systems were built. Internal funding for research grew from a base of R15 million to R58 million in 2011, with an additional R39 million spent in establishing and supporting Research Centers and Research Niche Areas over a three-year period. The research administration and policy framework was reorganized, research professors and a number of rated-researchers and high calibre academics were appointed. The Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Research and Innovation, introduced in 2007, recognize and reward senior researchers,

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researchers were incentivized, and research productive academics were encouraged. Existing international research partnerships were nurtured and new ones established, specifically focusing on South-South partnerships.

The 2012 institutional target of 600 units has been achieved. Between 2005 and 2009, the accredited research output grew by over 43%, from 325 to 467 units with 60% of accredited research outputs being published in internationally-rated journals. The number of NRF-rated researchers significantly increased from the low 60s to 95, and the University now has five A-rated researchers and a rapidly-growing number of B- and C-rated scientists. The target for 2020 is to reach 700 units and to realize this programme, a new investment cycle will be needed.

Following the money in Africa – why, and why now?

Karen Bruns & Linda Nordling
Research Africa

African researchers have experienced an increase in the funding they qualify for, as more international research funders and aid agencies commit to build the continent's own research capacity. But where is this funding going? Why are some proposals chosen over others? And how is all this shaping the African higher education and research space? These are some of the questions Research Africa has set out to answer. By engaging with such issues in an independent journalistic way, our editorial team adds a much-needed layer of analysis to the current funding information streams between funders and researchers, and between academics.

SYNERGIES IN NORTH-SOUTH
COLLABORATION FROM BILATERAL
COLLABORATION TO KNOWLEDGE
COALITIONS

*Research capacity for university development hubs:
North-South perspectives on regionalisation,
coordination and harmonization*

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Universities play a central role in global efforts to strengthen research and tertiary education and “Universities as Development Hubs” has been suggested as a concept to study further and modify to needs. In cooperation with external partners such as business, consultants, NGO’s and civil society at large, it emphasizes universities as key agents and providers in new learning, competent and motivated graduates and as indispensable partners in the creation of innovative societies necessary to curb poverty and facilitate prosperity (Hansen et al. 2004).

The paper offers a joint North-South perspective on globalised research capacity for the development of hub universities critically focusing on research capacity and associated indicators. A new agenda for SANORD and North-South university collaboration emphasizes South-South (and North-North) coalitions for regionalization of research and development. SANORD is therefore in a unique position to lead the way forward on the global scene by strategically promoting regional models for university development hubs. A first step will be for SANORD to formally organize its Southern African as well as Nordic members in thematic regional networks. If this organization is accompanied by incentives to bring bilateral North-South engagements into the South-South and North-North networks, project alignment as well as synergy is projected for all in regional research and development value chains of multiple functional partnerships.

Hansen, J.A., Lindegaard, K. & Lehmann, M. (2004): *Universities as Development Hubs*. In: Robert Fincham et.al. (Eds.): *Sustainable Development and the University. New Strategies for Research, Teaching and Practice*. Brevitas Publishers: Howick, Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa.

Is competition the only possible approach to quality assurance for long-term institutional research capacity strengthening?

*Jens Seeberg
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Recently, Universities Denmark has introduced a new mechanism for university collaboration under the title “Building Stronger Universities in Developing Countries” (BSU). This initiative, financed by Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Danida) focuses primarily on institutional capacity building, especially in connection with PhD training. BSU represents an innovation in its bringing together all relevant Danish universities in a single collaborative structure. BSU is organized in four platforms that represent broad focus areas. The platforms have identified separate countries/universities as core partners, with three platforms present in Ghana and Tanzania, and one platform being present in Nepal, Kenya and Uganda. The platforms have been competing for resources for the initial two-year phase. This paper compares BSU with existing Danish mechanisms for support to research for development and discusses the role of competition in a project that focuses on long-term institutional capacity strengthening and identifies early lessons learnt. It concludes that quality assurance in this area must be established through other means than competition in order to avoid counterproductive discontinuities in long-term university development at the partner universities.

The university of Jyvaeskylae (Finland) developing ties and capacities with Africa

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In international comparisons, a high educational knowledge base has been one of the most valuable advantages and assets of Finnish society. University of Jyväskylä (JyU), Finland, has increasingly sought to value and utilize this quality in its research programmes, international partnerships and global capacity development projects. Through building regional collaboration and knowledge hubs in the South, the aim has been to promote capacity development for reaching the Education for All (EFA) targets and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Clear advantages of the wide variety of activities have been the possibility to bridge international research, policy and practice, share knowledge for development, and to involve different generations in the various partnerships. Collaboration between University of Jyväskylä and southern universities has included joint research projects, active student and teacher exchanges, training courses involving students and faculty, partnering up for congresses and publications, creating and endorsing international partnerships, and organizing joint seminars for disseminating research findings. This session aims to describe two special cases where University of Jyväskylä (JyU) has been active in creating knowledge coalitions through North-South partnerships.

The first case describes a JyU-led network for exploring the notions of cultural identity through music. The Music, Education and Cultural Identity (MECI) project has sought to increase cooperation between different actors and organizations in Finland, South Africa, Kenya, Botswana and Zimbabwe. The results of the project help improve the level of music teaching in educational institutions of various levels, including rural schools of South Africa.

The second case describes the long-term collaboration between the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, in analyzing the role and meaning of secondary and higher education, in the lives of women and girls. The project provides a research-based complementary perspective to education sector development processes and enhances the role of research in stakeholder dialogue on education, gender and inclusive education. The collaboration has significantly enhanced research capacity in the two universities and beyond, among their partner organizations and within SANORD. The two cases highlight key strengths and challenges for moving from bilateral collaboration to seeing universities as true global hubs for development and cooperation.

From North-South to North-North-South-South: An example of two networks interacting

*Kristina Lindström
University of Helsinki, Finland*

The Nordic NOVA university network consists of agricultural, veterinary and forestry universities, faculties and departments from all Nordic countries. The fees that members pay are used to financially support international intensive graduate courses (M.Sc. and Ph.D. levels) on which NOVA students have priority but others are welcome. The funding applications go via NOVA networks. In 2006 we funded a network, Soil and Society (SoilSoc) to promote teaching and interaction in soil related sciences, with an emphasis on high-quality science and its importance for society.

The SoilSoc network (www.soilsoc.is) has organised several successful courses. The most innovative one was the course *Sustainable use of tropical soils* in Ethiopia, Hawassa, in 2010, the first NOVA course outside the Nordic countries. Nordic as well as Ethiopian teachers and students gathered around the topic, learning from lectures, discussions, excursions and group work around problems that the students themselves defined. In 2012 *Sustainable use of tropical soils 2* will be arranged in much the same way as the first one, with partly the same enthusiastic local and Nordic crew as last time. This year, however, we have additional funding and participants thanks to a Finnish CIMO North-South-South network encompassing Finland in the north and Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and South Africa in the South.

These networks strengthen the collaboration in research and graduate education that already exists between Finland and Ethiopia and involve in addition to the intensive course, teacher and student exchange and curriculum development in the south.

International cooperation in student and staff mobility between universities in Finland and universities in Africa

*Elizabeth Agbor Eta
University of Turku, Finland*

Most Universities and educational systems with the assistance of governments and international organizations are developing policies to attract and facilitate students and staff mobility. In Finland the launching of the North-South-South Higher Education Institution Network Programme (NSS) by the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) which is funded by the Finnish ministry for Foreign Affairs has facilitated international student mobility between universities in Finland and Universities in Africa and other developing countries.

Based on interviews with students and academic coordinators, CIMO archives, and data (questionnaire administered to students, staff and academic and administrative coordinators) used for the evaluation of the 2009 NSS programme, this paper examines the criteria for selecting universities in Africa for International University Cooperation with universities in Finland, the motives for participation in the programme by students, staff and universities, the benefits and challenges involved in mobility from the perspectives of students and staff. It is my wish that participating universities will utilize the results in making positive changes especially in universities in Africa when it comes to students' welfare, learning difficulties and challenges associated with students' adjustment in the new learning environments and other barriers that may hinder effective learning from taking place. This is in an effort to make Universities in Africa more attractive destination for international student mobility.

Communication as an important component of functional collaborative projects?

Karen Bruns¹ & Ms. Melissa Plath²

¹ Research Africa; ² UNIPID/Africa Call

In his message to SANORD's annual meeting 2011, Brian O'Connell, Chairman of SANORD, reminded us of Manuel Castells' response to how we could cope with the huge global changes facing us. "Through knowledge and networks" was Castell's reply. Communication within knowledge networks and multi-partner projects, together with the reach of new knowledge into the public sphere, is not possible without dynamic communication practice.

Research Africa acts as the communication hub for a number of international partnership projects. This presentation looks at the need for effective communication within and between projects. Karen Bruns, the COO of RA, will give an overview of the principles and practice that RA engages in order to groom partnerships and facilitate dialogue amongst partners and with stakeholders, with special focus on the role that the communicator plays.

The central case study will be the CAAST-Net (Coordination and Advancement of Sub-Saharan Africa-EU Science & Technology Cooperation) project.

Melissa Plath, of UNIPID, Finland, and a consortium partner of CAAST-Net, will speak about the Coordinated Call for Africa (FP7-AFRICA-2010). In 2010, the European Commission, Directorate General for RTD, implemented a Coordinated Call for Africa (FP7-AFRICA-2010), which brought together the following themes: Health; Food; Agriculture and fisheries, and Biotechnology; and Environment (including climate change).

These address some of the S&T objectives of the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, particularly on "Water and Food Security" and "Better Health for Africa". The aim of the call is to strengthen local capacities in relevant S&T and to provide innovative management and governance tools, as well as adaptive technologies suitable for future use to stakeholders

and regional actors. The call particularly emphasizes the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to the theme, including an obligation for the projects to establish synergies between the projects to enhance complementarities and deepen the impact of the projects. Melissa Plath's role within CAAST-Net is to support the networking and cooperation between the projects funded under the Africa Call,

One of the critical tools is good communication and dissemination. RA manages the communication and dissemination of CAAST-Net and will share and expand on the knowledge gained from this experience. Over the five year life time of the project, RA has learnt a great deal through mistakes and successes on communication within a consortium made up of partners from 23 countries in Africa and Europe, as well as outbound communication and dissemination to CAAST-Net stakeholders and the public. Both speakers will touch on the media strategies used to advance the findings and implemented policies of such projects

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*A case study of three African academic networks:
PANGeA, TRECCAfrica & Periperi U*

*J. Christoff Pauw & Hennie J. Kotzé
Stellenbosch University, South Africa*

The paper will present three African ‘knowledge coalitions’ of which Stellenbosch University is currently the secretariat. PANGeA, the Partnership for Africa’s Next Generation of Academics, is an initiative of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences together with similar faculties at six other leading African universities. Their goal is to co-present world-class doctoral programmes, ultimately as joint degrees, for African students who will become the academic and professional leaders of tomorrow. The section of PANGeA will be presented by Prof Hennie Kotzé.

The second network is the successful outcome of an EU Intra-ACP/Nyerere proposal titled TRECCAfrica – Transdisciplinary Training for Resource Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation in Africa. Coordinated by the Postgraduate and International Office and the relevant academic units at Stellenbosch, this network will manage 80 mobility opportunities for staff and postgraduate students at six different African universities.

Periperi U is a ten-university African consortium which has rapidly and successfully mobilized skilled human capital to reduce risks in many African countries. It stands for ‘Partners Enhancing Resilience to People Exposed to Risks’ – with a special focus on advancing university action on risk and vulnerability reduction in Africa. Through new modules and degree programmes, short courses, and research the consortium is generating a surge of new capacity in a domain that was traditionally dominated by intervention from the developed world.

All these networks focus on placing universities in Africa in their rightful position as contributors to and benefactors of Africa’s huge developmental potential in coming years and decades. The presentation will reflect on the role that

Sub-theme 2: Synergies in North-South collaboration

northern institutions may play in such networks as co-creators of knowledge and capacity.

Primafamed: An institutional network for the development of family medicine training and primary health care in Sub-Saharan Africa

Per Kallestrup¹ & Maaïke Flinkenflögel²

¹⁾ Aarhus University, Denmark; ²⁾ National University of Rwanda, Rwanda

International studies have demonstrated that well-functioning primary health care organized around family and community health teams is adamant in establishing a cost-effective health system that provides equitable and accessible health services to the entire population. The World Health Report 2008 (PHC Now more than ever) urged health systems worldwide to make a shift to more comprehensive health care.

Family and community medicine training is developing in Sub-Saharan Africa but in many countries there still is a long way to go. With a network linking the different training programs in African universities synergies can be established and training programs can get stronger with good quality assurance. With South-South cooperation the partners share experiences and resources and therefore improve the development of the training.

Research into the effects on health and civil society of these efforts are equally necessary to provide innovation and documentation to sustain the continuous recruitment of political support, funding and human resources in this quest to construct adequate health services.

Examples of already established collaborations within an existing network and the various outcomes with respect to curriculum development, institutional strengthening and advocacy will be presented and new ideas to incorporate research based initiatives will be shared.

The international science programme at Uppsala University: 50 years experience of capacity building in basic sciences in developing countries

*Peter Sundin, Leif Abrahamsson & Ernst van Groningen
Uppsala University, Sweden*

The International Science Programme (ISP) is devoted to building capacity for scientific research and higher education in basic sciences in developing countries, since 1961 in physics and since 1970 and 2002 in chemistry and mathematics, respectively.

Interdisciplinary and applied research, as well as scientifically based technology development, is important in addressing a number of development challenges, but the basic sciences form the pillars on which applied sciences and engineering are built. Without a proper scientific base it is difficult to sustain research and technology that can contribute well to development and create solutions meeting local needs. However, in most developing countries funding for research and training in basic sciences is scarce.

ISP support collaboration aims at creating sustainable research groups and scientific networks with strong local ownership, and has a long-term approach. South-North collaboration is an important component in the support modality, based on the needs of the collaboration partner in the South, and relevant to the development strategy in the country where the support is received. Support to scientific networking partly compensates for limited resources, facilitating the strengthening of certain scientific fields by South-South collaboration including sharing instrumentation and training.

In a recent evaluation the approach of ISP is strongly supported and several reasons are given why capacity for science is needed and relevant to development efforts. Also the Swedish policy for development cooperation 2010-2014 stresses the need to strengthen and develop scientific research in developing countries as a means for strategically combating poverty.

TOMORROW'S COMMON RESEARCH
PRIORITIES FOR NORDIC AND SOUTHERN
AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

Futures studies for the southern African region: "from Africa" not "on Africa"

Roddy Fox, Kate Rowntree¹ & Juha Kaskinen²

¹Rhodes University, South Africa; ²University of Turku, Finland

In his keynote address to the World Futures Studies Federation, Yale's Professor Wendell Bell (2001: 65) posed the following question:

' ... futurists ... cooperate across disciplinary boundaries ... adopt perspectives that are holistic, issue-driven, action-focused, value-relevant, and future-oriented. Could futures studies help lead the way in reshaping education for the twenty-first century? The answer, I think, is yes ...'

Futures Studies is well established in the Nordic region where Futures Studies and Foresight is widely applied. The first part of our presentation examines the important role that the Nordic region has played in fostering key initiatives that impacted on Futures Studies. The first International Futures Research Conference was held in Oslo in 1967 and the World Futures Studies Federation, founded after the conference, has had key inputs from prominent Nordic members since that date. Several of the Nordic countries have promoted Futures Studies organizations since then, for example the Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies was established in 1970, the Finnish Society for Futures Studies in 1980. The cross disciplinary connections between Environment, Development and Sustainability date back to the UN Conference on the Human Environment which was held in Stockholm in 1972. In 1984 Norway's then Prime Minister, Gro Brundtland, was mandated to form the World Commission on Environment and Development. In spite of these initiatives and important events, however, Futures Studies is not particularly well represented in the Higher Education curriculum of Nordic Universities.

With the notable exceptions of the United Nations Environment Programme's Africa Environment Outlook process, and the postgraduate Futures Studies program at

Stellenbosch University (South Africa) Futures Studies barely exists in an institutional form on the African continent. Consequently Africa remains largely a context in which empirical studies have taken place but it should be the location from which important studies of cultural responses or empowerment-oriented solutions to issues such as climate change have emanated.

The main contention of our presentation is that key global issues such as sustainable development and climate change, economic growth and the debt crisis, water management and land degradation need to be studied by inter-disciplinary, Futures Studies programs located within the Southern African region. Such programs need to be intellectually coherent, methodologically innovative and critical of the normative context within which they are framed. Southern African Universities, however, are poorly equipped to respond to the question presented by Bell above. We show that there are few Universities, they are poorly funded, with limited research capacity; furthermore they are located within very diverse and challenging sustainability contexts.

Effective collaboration, however, is found between Nordic countries, with their considerable experience of Futures Studies, and southern African Universities, geographically well positioned to tackle the pressing issues listed above. One outcome of three years of collaboration from 2007 to 2009 between the Finland Futures Research Centre (now a part of the University of Turku) and Rhodes University was a proposal to develop a multi-disciplinary, inter-institutional Futures Studies program with Rhodes University and the University of Turku.

The final part of our presentation reflects on the experiences that we have had to date in developing the proposal and pursuing supporting funding. We conclude by asking *quo vadis?*

Bell, W. (2001): *Futures Studies comes of age: twenty-five years after. The limits to growth. Futures* 33: 63-76.

Responding to the burden of chronic non-communicable diseases: Cross-cutting research imperatives for universities and research institutions in Nordic and Southern African countries

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There is a surging momentum in the recognition that chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including cancers, diabetes, mental disorders, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, contribute significantly to the global disease burden¹. Together, they account for 36 million deaths each year, corresponding to 63% of all deaths worldwide. The surprising fact is that 80% of these deaths occur in low and middle-income countries (LMICs), which are traditionally thought of as primarily affected by communicable diseases, including malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. Aptly described as “a problem neither the developed nor the developing world can afford,” the 2010 Global Risk Report from the World Economic Forum ² revealed that the risk of severe economic loss as a result of the burden of NCDs is on a par with the global financial crisis².

The imminent European Strategy on Chronic Diseases³ advocates a bold and multi-pronged approach to addressing NCDs which shifts focus to population-level preventive measures that modify the known risk factors of NCDs - diet and food consumption, physical inactivity, alcohol consumption and smoking. A unique opportunity exists for harnessing this momentum of attention on NCDs to engender research on shared interconnected risks of NCDs in Nordic and Southern Africa countries that will allow a better understanding of the systems behind risks as well as the various risk contexts.

In this paper, we elaborate on the cross-cutting research imperatives on NCDs for Nordic and Southern African universities and research institutions.

Sub-theme 3: Tomorrow's common research priorities

United Nations General Assembly, 19 May 2011: *Report by the Secretary-General on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases* (A/66/83) Online:

http://new.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=13588&Itemid [Accessed 30 June, 2012]

World Economic Forum: *Global Risk Report*, 2010 Online:

http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GlobalRisks_Report_2010.pdf

[Accessed 30 January, 2012]

European Union: *Health Policy Forum Answer to DG SANCO Consultation on Chronic Diseases* Published 13 January 2012 Online:

http://www.eph.org/IMG/pdf/EU_HPF_Answer_to_Consult_on_CDs_Jan12.pdf [Accessed 30 January, 2012]

M4D – Mobile communication 4 development

Jakob Svensson & Caroline Wamala, Karlstad University, Sweden

The rise of mobile communication has been remarkable. At the end of 2010, mobile telephony was available to 90% of the world population. This is especially the case in developing countries, which by 2010 had 72% of the total number of mobile subscriptions. This is largely the background to the emerging academic field of M4D to which we want to devote this paper. Here the research at the centre for HumanIT at Karlstad University has been a driving force in establishing M4D as an academic discipline through organizing three international conferences.

While insufficient access still is an important obstacle, there is no doubt that the proliferation of mobile telephony in developing countries has opened up a range of possibilities and new avenues for aid agencies and NGOs, and it has empowered people in their everyday lives. Examples range from using the mobile phone for telemedicine, to report and monitor malaria outbreaks, in agriculture, for mobile money, to learn English, reinforce literacy and educate populations about AIDS as well as to monitor elections, fight corruption and mobilize support for social and political change. However being an emerging academic field there are needs for greater conceptual and methodological rigour in the conduct of research as well as theoretical and methodological development. This paper will give a background of the current research being carried out, its benefits and constraints. The main focus will be to explore the possibility of establishing M4D as a research priority for Nordic and Southern African universities.

The Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Centre at the University of Limpopo generating new research possibilities within SANORD

*Rachmond Howard & Rachael Jesika Singh
University of Limpopo, Zambia*

Multiple stresses such as poor service delivery, poverty, inadequate supply and infrastructure in water and energy, complex disease burden and food crises, which Africa is most vulnerable to, will be aggravated by climate variability and change. All people, more especially the poor in rural areas, who are already experiencing a low quality of life, are predicted to suffer the worst. The Department of Science and Technology in South Africa, cognisant of this scientific prediction, responded by funding the establishment of Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Centres (RVAC) at rural universities in South Africa. RVAC's core mandate is to supply quality research data on rural areas on a number of critical indicators identified in the South African Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Atlas. In addition, these Centres are expected to provide excellent tertiary education in Spatial Analysis and Modelling applied to the environmental, economic, social, and health sectors. Data and information from the Atlas will be used by local authorities for improved planning, decision-making and appropriate intervention strategies at the target sites. This paper presents an overview of the RVAC at the University of Limpopo and explores some of the research areas in which the University of Limpopo can collaborate with other members in the SANORD Partnership.

The Nansen-Tutu Centre for Marine Environmental Research

*Johnny A. Johannessen
University of Bergen, Norway*

The Nansen-Tutu Centre for Marine Environmental Research at the University of Cape Town was officially launched on 20 May 2010. The vision of the Nansen-Tutu Centre for Marine Environmental Research is to serve Africa through advancing knowledge of the marine environment and climate system in the spirit of Nobel Peace Laureates Desmond Tutu and Fridtjof Nansen. The aim of the Centre is to improve the capacity to observe, understand and predict marine ecosystem variability on timescales from days to decades in support of scientific and societal needs including fisheries, coastal management, maritime security, recreation and tourism. To this end, one of the core activities at the Centre focus on education and exchange of young researchers and students from different cultures and countries through the Nansen-Tutu Scholarship Program. The approach is to advance the sustainable marine science base for developing and implementing ocean observing and modelling systems with particular focus on:

- Ocean state characterisation
- Marine environmental and ecosystem modelling
- Research underpinning operational oceanography
- Climate and global teleconnections

Increasing awareness and utilization of Indigenous crops in Southern Africa – future prospects for development policy and research

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¹⁾ Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden; ²⁾ University of Botswana; ³⁾ Botswana College of Agriculture, Botswana; ⁴⁾ Cornell University, USA; ⁵⁾ University of Namibia, Namibia

In the last decades, climatic, technological and demographic trends have coincided with particular economic and political paradigms that have triggered new challenges for livelihoods globally. The impact of these events has been strongly felt by the most vulnerable, especially the rural poor, women and those afflicted by diseases, particularly in Southern Africa. On the other hand, the challenges also created rationality for diversification of livelihood activities. Utilizing indigenous crops offers a unique opportunity for creating alternative income generation activities thereby improving the livelihoods of vulnerable groups. Moreover, indigenous crops possess associated comparative advantages, i.e. drought resistance, less external input requirements and enhance biodiversity. This unique potential was identified by both researchers and funding institutions. Since then, specific research and development projects have been implemented with an increasing number and scope in the last decade. However, despite a few success stories, as in the case of *Rooibos*, and *Moringa* and other ongoing projects such as on *Morama* and *Jatropha*, there have not been many comprehensive value chain studies. Consolidating the experience of these success stories and previous research offers opportunities in designing effective indigenous crop utilization policies, projects and research. This paper aims to examine this gap by analyzing the literature on awareness and utilization of indigenous crops of Southern Africa as well as the experiences of past and ongoing projects using a value chain approach.

Prioritising university-community engagement in North-South research partnerships

Retha de la Harpe & Izak van Zyl

Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa

This paper will respond to the theme of multidisciplinary areas of research that are considered of high importance for SANORD's member universities and countries. It will explore the facilitation of existing networks and initiatives, with a specific focus on innovation, in forging partnerships that are useful and appropriate to communities. The ambition here is to address the knowledge discrepancies between universities and communities by establishing collaborative networks that actively involve members of both institutions. The strength of this endeavour is its reciprocal nature where local stakeholders are fruitfully and continuously engaged as network contributors and facilitators. Ultimately, the paper will explore the development of possible North-South actions involving researchers, educators, and local role players that assist citizens of local and global communities, aligned around mutual objectives in a single network. Practical university-community engagement is not, by default, formalized in transparent and readily available policies – this is in line with recent literature (Hall, 2010). Favish (2010) proposes a common discourse policy framework for social responsiveness. Bender (2009) indicates that research on curricular community engagement is lacking, if not imperative. He states that community engagement can be regarded as a method, process, programme and practice in higher education. In light of these findings, this paper will attempt to ground such engagement as an academic and civil research priority in terms of the collaboration between Southern African and Nordic universities. This certainly has special merits in a global context, supporting an aligned interest for multi-disciplinary and multi-levelled partnerships.

Bender, C.J.G. (2009). *Curriculum enquiry about community engagement at a research university*. South African Journal of Higher Education, 22(6):1154-1171.

Sub-theme 3: Tomorrow's common research priorities

Favish, J. 2010. *Towards developing a common discourse and a policy framework for social responsiveness*. Kagiso 6:89-103.

Hall, M. 2010. *Community engagement in South African higher education*. Kagiso 6:152

Diversity, democracy and inclusion as common research priorities for Nordic and Southern African universities

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To continuously participate in qualifying the basis for appropriate development of societies and countries, education, educational institutions and higher education play a crucial role. A range of common research priorities apparently could be outlined in both Nordic and Southern African universities.

The paper sets out to discuss concepts of diversity, democracy and inclusion as means to discuss and address the increasing complexity and development of modern societies not only in northern European countries like Denmark but also as a possibility to reflect the development of research priorities for universities in Southern African countries.

Based on theoretical concepts the presentation will address and reflect upon the increasing diversity of European countries like Denmark with respect to the existence of many various ethnic groups. The paper sets out to discuss questions and challenges of how diversity with respect to different background, educational level, language knowledge, gender etc. in the population has been addressed. Among others, the development of laws and curriculum documents with respect to the rights to education, e.g. to first and second language education, to culture education, to aspects of gender education and diversity education etc. will be outlined. Questions and challenges for a country addressing various questions of diversity will be discussed.

Participatory design in the developing world – issues and opportunities from case studies of adapting Nordic participatory approaches to a South African Context

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Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa

In the field of Participatory Design originating in Scandinavia, where approaches are developed for actively engaging local stakeholders in change processes, a major part of the research has been confined to Western contexts. The need to study Participatory Design in broader settings outside Western organisations has been stressed in the research community over the last decade, but later research indicates that still relatively few studies are done in developing countries. Researchers recognize that Participatory Design approaches cannot simply be transferred to developing country settings as there are numerous challenges for enabling participation, e.g. power distance, cultural barriers, low educational levels and geographical distances. However, Participatory Design offers substantial opportunities for developing countries, regarding empowerment in local communities and democratization of change processes. Arguably, the appropriation of Participatory Design approaches and methods to developing world settings is an important priority in research cooperation between Nordic and Southern African universities. This work presents issues and opportunities for introducing participatory design in a South African context, based on two case studies. In the first case, concepts for new information technology were developed for a small-scale wine farm in the Western Cape, engaging multiple stakeholders on the farm. In the second case, a hyper-local news agency where street journalists source and distribute news via Bluetooth technology has been developed in a socially challenged suburb in the Cape Flats in Cape Town. Issues on appropriation of strategies and methods for participation are discussed, and directions for further research in the field are identified.

GROUP WORK - INTRODUCTIONS

Group work 1

Developing a strategy for SANORD with short-term and long-term objectives

The Southern African-Nordic Centre is currently a partnership of 37 research-led higher education institutions from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and institutions in Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In 2009 the members adopted an Action Plan which is annually updated by the SANORD Central Office (SCO) and the members. This action plan is used to gauge the progress of the SCO and our SANORD members in the current academic year. It primarily addresses the action by the SCO in the current year and should promote the goals in the SANORD Mission statement of 2007.

The following goals form the cornerstone of the SANORD centre:

- To bring together the leadership of Nordic and Southern African institutions of higher education and research for discussion, planning and joint endeavours.
- To provide opportunities for academics to meet around issues relevant to the mission.
- To promote and assist with the development of strategic cooperation projects.
- To offer relevant resources and information services, including virtual and physical meeting places, to facilitate and stimulate cooperation.
- To promote cultural exchanges that strengthen academic life.
- To build relevant relationships with the donor community, commerce, industry and the media.

We must bear in mind that SANORD is a low-budget organisation which depends on the actions by its members and the synergies between them. The actions to be performed

by our SANORD members should be emphasised. The SCO, with reference to the action plan, is responsible for liaising with members, stimulating events, maintaining the portal and other work requested by the Board. The Action Plan seeks to give direction to the work by the SCO and to identify expected action by SANORD members.

However, the vision to expand the network from Southern Africa to Sub-Saharan Africa poses new opportunities and challenges. Given the experiences with SANORD till date, this working group should attempt to describe these opportunities and challenges. It should provide its reflections on concepts such as 'strategic' and 'relevant' and consider whether the above expansion should be accompanied by changes in SANORD's focus, goals and objectives, keeping both short-term and long-term perspectives in mind.

Group work 2

Developing a plan for ERASMUS-collaboration among SANORD members

ERASMUS FOR ALL is the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport proposed by the European Commission on 23 November 2011. The proposal is now under discussion by the Council (27 Member States) and the European Parliament who will take the final decision.

Therefore, the future modalities for ERASMUS collaboration between European (Nordic) and African countries are not yet clear. On the basis of the presentation on ERASMUS FOR ALL delivered by an EU representative on Day 1, as well as any other information concerning the programme that is available during the Symposium, this group work will initiate a planning process that aims at facilitating ERASMUS collaboration among SANORD partners.

The work of the group will continue after the Aarhus Symposium. The objective will be to describe and recommend concrete mechanisms for facilitation and enhancement of ERASMUS collaboration and other funding mechanisms that the working group may wish to include in its work. The outcome will be presented at the SANORD conference in Malawi in 2013.

Key figures: Erasmus for All (2014-2020)

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Overall budget | €19 billion (includes €1.8 billion for international cooperation) |
| Overall mobility opportunities | 5 million people |
| Higher education | 2.2 million students |
| Staff mobility | 1 million teachers, trainers, youth workers and other staff |
| Vocational education and training | 735 000 students |
| Volunteer and youth exchange schemes | 540 000 young people |
| Master's degree loan guarantee scheme | 330 000 students |
| International students | 135 000 students |
| Joint degree grants | 34 000 students |
| Cooperation targets: | |
| Strategic Partnerships | More than 20 000 linking together 115 000 institutions |
| Knowledge Alliances | 200 set up by 2000 higher education institutions and businesses |
| Sectoral Skills Alliances | 200 set up by 2000 education and training providers and businesses |

Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus-for-all/>

Group work 3

Developing a framework for research collaboration among SANORD members

SANORD is committed to advancing strategic, multilateral academic collaboration between institutions in the two regions, as they seek to address new local and global challenges of innovation and development. SANORD currently operates at two main levels:

Institutional: Bringing together leaders of universities ‘for discussion, planning and joint endeavours’ (strategic and otherwise).

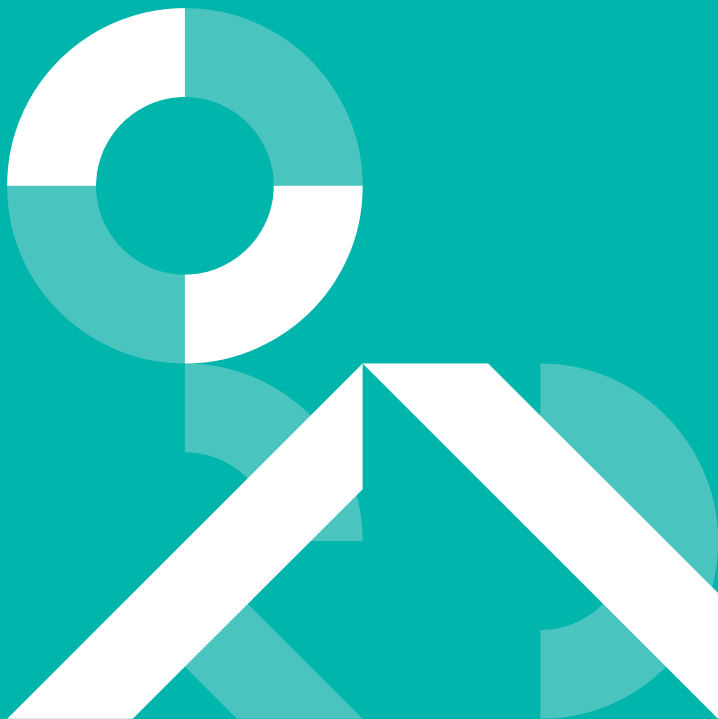
Research Support Structures: Providing brokering services/logistics/information services, support to strategic research project development, cultural exchange, and; builds relationships with non-academic stakeholders (donors, industry, government).

Capacity development in research and tertiary educational institutions is a priority across Africa. Excepting NEPAD, SANORD does not explicitly align itself with any processes or institutional frameworks, yet it aims to attract donor funding for research programmes with capacity building as a more or less explicit objective. *Should SANORD be better aligned with national and regional strategies and policies for capacity development?*

Reflecting current demand, SANORD predominantly supports research collaboration in the social science and humanities. However, addressing many of the development challenges in SSA, such as climate change, environmental challenges, health and food security challenges calls for more involvement of the natural sciences and for interdisciplinary approaches. *How can SANORD better address this challenge?*

SANORD’S research support functions have been crucial in getting research projects up and running and are highly valued by researchers. However, do we have systematic information about the quality of assistance, effect and impact

in relation to SANORD's support activities and in relation to the projects that have been supported? Would it be possible to integrate a student mobility component in SANORD's research portfolio? Would an improved quality assurance system, perhaps in the shape of a monitoring and evaluation system, contribute to obtaining better knowledge about these issues? This might be particularly pertinent in light of the intention to attract more donor funding and closer alignment with research priorities in the regions.



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