

Draft Terms of Reference

Overview of Danish and Nordic Initiatives and Thinking on Higher Education for Development

1. Background

Higher education is increasingly being recognised by policy makers as a key ingredient for achieving sustainable development. In the recent report of the Danish Africa Commission post primary education is included as one of the five key initiatives (“Realising the Potential of Africa’s Youth – Report of the Africa Commission”, (<http://www.africacommission.um.dk/en>)). The assumption behind this recommendation is that human and capacity building weaknesses pose a severe constraint to development in Africa and by investing in the knowledge of young people you could create an asset, which could boost economic development.

However, the education and training provided in African higher institutions is often outdated, and there is a real need for updating curricula and improving teaching and learning, particularly in less well resourced universities. Academic staff grapples with developing suitable frameworks and methods that are conducive and adaptive to change, and during recent decades the structural organisation of higher education and development has undergone a number of changes. A good example is the systemic competence development approach being implemented at Makerere University in Uganda, promoting systemic thinking, broader integration of disciplines and knowledge systems, and new ways of thinking and learning, and building skills for facilitating interactive learning.

To improve coordination and collaboration, sub-regional and regional organisations and networks have been formed at global, continental and regional levels. The Southern African-Nordic Centre (SANORD, <http://sanord.uwc.ac.za>) is an example of such an organisation aiming at promoting multilateral cooperation between institutions of research and higher education in Southern Africa and the Nordic countries. Currently two of the eleven Nordic members are Danish and other Danish institutions are in the process of becoming members.

Nordic universities involved in higher education and capacity building for development, have also undergone change. In Denmark, some universities have merged and all eight Danish universities have been encouraged by policy makers to identify their strengths and priority areas. Danish support to Research and Development has shifted from long-term bilateral university-to-university North-South partnership projects with a focus on institutional capacity building, to larger strategic partnership projects with in-built capacity building and involving multiple partners and institutions. The involvement of non-traditional/non-researcher partners is also reflected in the Africa Commission’s initiatives within the area of post primary education. This poses a significant challenge to the traditional thinking and conceptual frameworks for North-South collaboration on higher education.

In short, collaboration on higher education for development is ‘on the move’. In order to take stock of the current “landscape” and trends in the thinking about future North-South collaboration, the Danish Development Research Network (DDRN) will conduct an overview of ongoing and planned initiatives on higher education for development at Danish and to some extent Nordic universities.

2. Purpose and objectives

The overall purpose of the overview is to capture current ideas and modes of thinking on collaboration in relation to higher education for development. The purpose of the overview is to look forward and provide and take stock of current trends and tangible plans for future initiatives, rather than collecting and analyzing past experiences. The overview will identify and describe on-going and planned activities on higher education for development within at least the following contexts:

- Internationalization of higher education at Danish universities
- Individual training programs at Danish universities organized through the initiative of the Danish Fellowship Centre
- Other individual study programs (Master and PhD level) at universities related to and sponsored by Danish development assistance interventions
- Programs of collaboration on higher education for development at university level (e.g. 'focal points')
- Programs of collaboration on higher education for development at department level (e.g. capacity development/strategic research projects).

For planned activities, the review will indicate their current status in terms of decisions made and funding obtained.

This overview will together with DDRN's recent overview on "Strategic Collaboration on Research for Development" contribute to discussions on effective support to African institutions on higher education and research and provide the basis for informed decision-making.

Specifically, the overview and its key findings will be presented by DDRN at a parallel session on "Strategic Collaboration in Higher Education and Research for Development" at the SANORD Conference "Inclusion and Exclusion in Higher Education" in South Africa on December 7-9, 2009.

2. Tasks

The consultant will carry out the following tasks:

- Map and review ongoing and planned initiatives aimed at strengthening higher education in Africa at Danish Universities and selected Nordic universities
- Document current strategies and modalities for collaboration on higher education for development between North and South, utilized by Danish and selected Nordic universities
- Capture current thinking and ideas on higher education for development at the eight Danish universities and selected Nordic universities
- Produce a report on the above-mentioned mapping, reviewing and documenting tasks, including findings and recommendations
- Write a brief on the key findings and recommendations

3. Methodology and staffing

The assignment will be carried out in close collaboration with the DDRN secretariat and the consultant is expected to carry out part of the assignment from the DDRN secretariat's office. The approach will be a desk study utilizing a combination of report/literature review, questionnaires and interviews with the Danish University (DU) group, university focal points for higher education for development, relevant departments, resource persons and other stakeholders.

The focus will be on initiatives of the Danish universities, including activities conducted through Danida Fellowship Centre and master education sponsored through Danida programmes and projects. Furthermore, relevant ideas and models at selected Nordic universities (chosen among SANORD members) will be included.

The content of the mapping report should include the following elements:

- Mapping of ongoing and planned initiatives, including description of selected cases

- Review of ongoing initiatives to identify key trends, and strategies, modalities, and principles utilized – What are the key challenges, and how are they dealt with?
- Synthesis of key elements of current ideas/thinking on higher education for development, identifying main types of approaches to higher education for development
- Key findings and recommendations

The following topics should be explored:

- Coping with asymmetric partnerships
- Adapting higher education for development initiatives to key challenges in North-South collaboration
- Brain drain/brain circulation
- Northern universities going South
- Inclusion/exclusion of stronger and weaker universities
- The role of non-traditional stakeholders (e.g. private sector, NGOs and farmer organisations) in education and research collaboration
- Ensuring access to global commons of knowledge, networks, and opportunities - also in the recent economic crisis
- Other key topics that may emerge/be identified

A reference group of DDRN Board members will be established to provide feedback and advice during the period of the consultancy.

The overview and analysis should be compiled by a person specialised in areas related to higher education and development. For searching activities and document compilation, the consultant may appoint a research assistant (the terms of the collaboration e.g. task definition and time consumption are to be indicated in the application).

4. Outputs and Reporting

The consultant will submit the following to the DDRN Secretariat:

- A Draft Report in English (max. 40 pages plus annexes) to the DDRN secretariat covering all the above-mentioned aspects
- A Final Report taking comments from DDRN and others into account
- A Brief on key findings and recommendations

The report will be presented by DDRN at the SANORD Conference on December 7-9, 2009 at Rhodes University, South Africa.

5. Duration and time frame

The consultancy will be carried out in 4 weeks during September-November, 2009.

Deadlines for submission to the DDRN Secretariat and milestones:

- Sept 7th, 2009 Expression of interest incl. CV and budget
- Sept 14th, 2009 Comments to ToR and budget
- Sept 21st, 2009 Strategy, method, and work plan
- Sept 28th, 2009 Tentative list of content incl. main headings
- Oct 19th, 2009 Draft report
- Oct 23rd, 2009 Comments from DDRN to the consultant
- Oct 30th, 2009 Final draft report
- Nov 9th, 2009 Final report incl. annexes
- Nov 9th, 2009 Brief on key finding and recommendations

6. Qualifications

The consultant should possess documented relevant working experience, preferably operational experience in research and higher education for development. Solid knowledge of the Danish university system (priorities, organisational structure and modes of operation) and the institutional landscape for higher education and development in Denmark and the Nordic countries is required.

Expressions of interest with curriculum vitae and proposed budget should be submitted **by email** no later than **Monday, September 7th, 2009** to:

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