

NUFFIC EXPERT MEETING: "A CHANGING LANDSCAPE"

DONOR POLICIES AND COOPERATION MODALITIES

By
Sissel Hodne Steen,
Director, Department for Human Development and Service Delivery
Norad

and
Betsy Heen, Advisor, Higher Education,
Department for Human Development and Service Delivery
Norad

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1. Introduction

The purpose of the paper is:

- to provide an overview of Norway's vision, policy and guiding principles on support to tertiary education and research in developing countries (chapter 2 and 3)
- to describe programmes and funding arrangements (chapter 5)
- to illustrate some of our perceived strengths and weaknesses in a selected number of programs (chapter 6)
- to present some challenges for partner agencies dealing with a changing landscape (chapter 7)

2. Norway's vision on support to tertiary education and research in developing countries

Norway first became a sovereign nation in 1905. Yet at independence Norway already had its own national university! In 1811 the Royal Frederick University (now the University of Oslo) was created, a mere 2 years after the Humboldt University of Germany. It served a double function in its early years: a haven for science and research, and an engine of national development for future leaders, professionals and administrators. Norway is in many respects a good example of how higher education and research have benefited national development.

2.1 Vision 1: on the role of higher education and research in development processes

There is a growing acknowledgement in the international community that scientific knowledge and new technologies are crucial for economic growth and development and important for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). From Norway's own experience we believe that universities are potentially important vehicles for development. Access to higher education is a powerful tool for upward social mobility. And yet the role higher education and research can play in developing countries is seldom explored, often neglected and generally underestimated. While the international community pools its resources to promote basic education for all, there are fewer champions rallying to make tertiary education into an arena for poverty reduction and a source of innovation and economic growth.

Universities have an important role to play in socio-economic and cultural development, democracy and good governance by providing knowledge about key development issues in their own countries. To fulfil this role, universities need to keep their independence and critical distance, while still being able to provide relevant scientific and/or evidence based knowledge for policy making. However, while the industrialized nations have experienced that the tertiary sector was and *is* essential to their country's own knowledge production and development; *developing countries* are witnessing major problems in developing *their* national higher education and research and innovation systems.

Norway's vision is to become a partner in development where developing countries set their own priorities and take responsibility for their own development. One important tool for achieving this is to develop national and regional innovation systems and viable tertiary education that relates to economic growth and achievement of the MDGs. Therefore, in the context of new cooperation modalities and the importance of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) as a development framework, it is worrying that Higher Education, Science, Technology and Research rarely are featured in a country's PRS. However, the second generation PRS such as Uganda's are increasingly acknowledging these issues..

2.2. Vision 2: on development and implementation of national strategies, partner coordination, and maximum synergy effect

Norway believes in comprehensive support to higher education and research in partner countries ¹ and that such support is attached to national steering parameters for basic and long-term research and higher education at university level. Norway seeks to design its support to universities on the institutions' strategic plans and institutional development plans where existing. Norway believes that by developing strategic competence, the institutions will be in a much better position to fulfil their role in national and regional development. Our support to higher education and research in South Africa, Uganda and Tanzania are examples of such an approach.

In line with this, support to the sector is coupled with the need for capacity-building in research and in knowledge dissemination. It also entails strengthening the capacity of recipient countries to coordinate bilateral and multilateral support to individual institutions and universities. Norway seeks to establish coordination mechanisms with other partners involved at country level. This vision is not so easy to operationalise, viewed the personal and interdepartmental relationships one often develops within academic environments. Norwegian resources to higher education and research are limited, and if developing countries are to benefit from them it is necessary to seek optimal synergy effect within areas where Norway is capable of making a contribution. Also here it is Norway's wish to harmonize and optimize programs and activities.

3. Policies, principles and guidelines for support to higher education and research

Norwegian support to tertiary education and research is guided by a number of policies and guidelines. The following three policy documents have key relevance to higher education and research.

¹ "Greater emphasis than before will be attached to the *national steering parameters* for basic and long-term research and higher education at university level. National priorities and policies for the educational and R&D sectors in partner countries will be significant factors when support is being considered. When national priorities are lacking, Norad may consider supporting national policy-making in the area concerned "Strategy for Strengthening Research and Higher Education in the Context of Norway's relation with Developing Countries. (1999)

The one most distinctive policy document on higher education and research in developing countries is

Strategy for Strengthening Research and Higher Education in the Context of Norway's Relations with Developing Countries issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in 1999²³ which outlines the general priorities.

According to the Strategy, the overall objective is to promote individual as well as institutional competence building in the developing countries, with a view to improving these countries' own capacity to meet national research and teaching needs. Public universities as hubs for research-based education are given particular emphasis, as is Norway's view that these institutions are crucial to the developing countries' ability to develop and disseminate knowledge on their own terms. It is underscored that research support should be viewed in the context of the whole educational system. The Strategy also includes development research in Norway aiming at increasing the knowledge base to be tapped into for policy development, monitoring and quality assurance in development cooperation. Support to Norwegian institutions in the area of poverty related research aims at making it possible for these institutions to participate and contribute to global knowledge development in this field.

The Strategy also seeks to generate greater synergy between the various measures that aim at strengthening competence building in the South and those that aim at increasing Norwegian knowledge about developing countries.

When it comes to *principles* for Norwegian support to Higher Education and Research, Norway's point of departure is two-fold:

- to support viable and sustainable higher education systems in the South and relevant education and research that contributes to poverty reduction and economic growth
- to help build up research competence in developing countries.

This involves a given set of practices which include:

- promoting South-South collaboration
- promoting dialogue with research institutions in the south as a part of an integrated Norwegian - South policy
- strengthening competence and capacity in key subject areas of strategic importance to recipient countries with a main focus on poverty reduction and where Norwegian institutions have particular expertise and competence.
- long term institutional collaboration between institutions in Norway and in recipient countries where the commitment to core activities are reflected in the Norwegian institutions overall strategies for R&D.

² <http://www.dep.no/ud/engelsk/publ/handlingsplaner/032091-990287/dok-bn.html>

³ <http://odin.dep.no/archive/udvedlegg/01/05/utdan018.pdf> :

“*Fighting Poverty*” the Norwegian Government’s Action Plan (2002) for combating poverty in the South towards 2015 contains a general commitment to higher education and research and to the need for further academic and applied research that provide new knowledge about the factors that create and maintain poverty. It states that investments in higher education and research have a positive impact on economic development and growth and that focusing on higher education is also important for building capacity in public administration.

It makes the point that broad-based relevant knowledge is essential to combating poverty effectively. In addition to social science research the Action Plan calls for research in medicine, science, technology and the arts.

Education Job number 1: Norwegian Strategy for Delivering Education for All by 2015 (2003) states that support to higher education and research is an important contribution to developing countries’ knowledge and competence building efforts. Referring particularly to the education sector it calls for the strengthening of national research capacity in educational research. This means that Norway will support research environments that can make a valuable contribution to the development of the education sector. The Strategy emphasizes the importance of investing in reform of teacher education and in continuing education. It speaks in favour of a holistic approach to support for education; every segment of the educational chain – from primary to tertiary education including vocational training is equally important.

4. Global trends and the Norwegian Context

Norway’s support to Higher Education and Research in development cooperation needs to be seen in a global and as well as national context.

4.1. Internationalisation, the Quality Reform and Norwegian provision of higher education

Internationalisation and harmonisation in wake of the Bologna and Lisbon processes have long since reached Norwegian Universities and University Colleges. Thus tertiary education is no longer only a national issue, but has become a commodity on the global market. The recent *Quality reform of higher education* was developed as a consequence of some of these reform processes. It has been fully implemented since 2003. One of the main aims of the reform is increased internationalisation.

Internationally standardized degree structures have been introduced to facilitate trans-border credit transfer among institutions. The new reform calls for the option to do a study period abroad as part of a student’s undergraduate degree. It aims at increased student mobility and mutual exchange with developing countries. Furthermore it intends to attract more foreign students by increasing the number of academic courses offered in English. A new funding formula is more result-oriented.

Through its development cooperation Norway, as of today, is a provider of higher education *for, but not in* some developing countries. For example: there is a growing interest in developing joint degrees between Norwegian universities and universities

in the South. We also see increasing interface between national and regional research networks (north-south; south-south-north) where research training is an integral part.

While this is the case today, it is a fact that Norway supports including higher education among the services covered by the GATS agreement. Obviously there is a growing need to do more research on what seems to be two different paradigms of support to higher education: promoting higher education as a public good, and promoting higher education as a commercial good. As of now Norway's involvement in trans-border provision is limited to capacity-building programs of the type illustrated above. Norway is also involved in developing e-based tertiary programs within the field of sustainable development. These are tied to the Global Virtual University, a collaborative effort between the United Nations University (UNU), UNEP/GRID Arendal and Agder University College.

4.2 Norway's new White Paper on Research and Development

A new White Paper⁴ on Research and Development "The Will to Research" has just been issued by the Ministry of Education and Research of Norway. It draws up new goals for R&D and makes internationalisation a key element in Norway's research policy. The White Paper points to the particular responsibility universities have to carry out long-term and fundamental research on a broad level. The Quota Scheme, a student financing system, will continue having 1100 master or doctoral students from developing and East European countries studying in Norway. New scholarship and exchange programmes will also be established.

Furthermore, it states that research will be given a more significant role as part of development cooperation policies. Research collaboration with international organisations such as WHO and UNESCO will be strengthened.

5. Programmes and Funding Arrangements

Norway allocated through the development cooperation budget approximately 600 million NOK (2003) to research and higher education. The Ministry of Education and Research is the coordinating ministry for research policy in Norway and the major funder for basic research, while other line ministries are responsible for funding sector-focused and applied research. Most of the funds for applied development research are appropriated from the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is administered by Norad. Funds from other line ministry budgets for development oriented research have been limited. This continues to be a significant challenge since there is broad agreement that more funds are needed in several sector specific areas such as environment and resource management, global health and child development.

The level of funding for research has increased during the last years in absolute numbers, but the proportion of the total development aid budget has been more or less constant. The proportion of the total development aid budget to education sector has increased steadily through recent years. The share to higher education and research

⁴ St. Melding <http://www.dep.no/ufd/norsk/tema/forskning/p30005331/bn.html>

has however decreased. In spite the fact that Norway has underlined the importance of higher education as essential for development, this has not been matched with funds.

5.1 The most important programmes funded through Development Cooperation budgets

Norway supports several programmes and activities:

- Collaboration with research institutions in Norway and in developing countries i.e. the **NUFU programme** and collaboration with research institutes.
- Support to regional research networks and research funds
- Support to higher education and training (Master degree and PhD)
 - **The Norad Fellowship Program**
 - “Courses in the South”
 - The Culture and Arts Programme
 - The Quota Scheme
- Support to Higher Education and Research at country level through bilateral development cooperation
- Support to Formative research linked to programmes and interventions
- Support to development oriented research in multilateral organisations
- Support to development research in Norway.

The relative importance in financial terms is briefly outlined in the following table. These are rough percentages based on 2003 figures:

Research Channels	Distribution of allocations to research and higher education between programs
Research in multilateral organisations	30%
State-state direct support and other support through regional vote	25%
Norwegian Development Research	10%
Higher education and training (NFP +)	10%
Regional Research Networks and funds	4%
NUFU + other research collaboration	11%
Misc	9%.

Table 5.1: Distribution of funds to research and higher education

5.1.1. National Programme for Research and Higher Education (NUFU)

The Norwegian Council for Higher Education's Program for **Development Research and Education (NUFU)**⁵ supports competence building and academic co-operation between individual researchers in Norway and in countries where Norway has

⁵ As a consequence of reorganisation, the future agreement will probably be made with SIU

substantial development co-operation. The NUFU program is based on a five year renewable agreement between Norad and the Norwegian Council for Higher Education/SIU. The programme is based on equal partnerships between institutions in Norway and in the South. The objective of the programme is to promote mutually beneficial co-operation based on priorities by the institutions in the South. Universities, university colleges and research institutions in Norway co-operate with corresponding institutions in the South, primarily in Africa south of the Sahara, as well as in South Asia, Central America and the Middle East. Funds from Norad directed through the NUFU-programme do not cover salaries of the Norwegian researchers, thus a substantial share of the total expenses is carried by the Norwegian universities themselves.

The NUFU-programme is in its third programme period that ends in 2006. Altogether 956 Ph.D. and Master Candidates have been educated since the start in 1991. Currently, there are more than seventy NUFU-projects in 18 countries. Over 60 % goes to Sub-Sahara Africa. In the last application round a share of the funds was reserved for projects at the four most important institutions in Norwegian bilateral support to higher education, Makerere, Addis Ababa, University and University of Dar es Salaam.

5.1.2. Support to **long term joint research co-operation between research institutions⁶ in Norway and the South** with the aim to develop applied capacity and knowledge – with priority to social and political sciences and multidisciplinary research⁷. This scheme contrary to NUFU, covers salaries of research staff.

5.1.3. Support to **regional research organisations and networks in the South**. Norad has established a long-term collaboration with regional research organisations and networks mostly situated in the Sub-Saharan region. The support goes mainly to regional research funds (councils) that manage programmes in the social, political and economic sciences. Most of the organisations are research councils to which researchers may apply for support for individual research projects that also function as hubs for networking and research collaboration. Some are research institutions that produce research in delineated areas, like environment. Norad offers core support to about ten regional organisations⁸.

5.1.4. **The Norad Fellowship Programme**

The Norad Fellowship Programme is based on a vision that good educational opportunities at Norwegian universities and university colleges can contribute to increased competence in the South. The NFP has gradually developed from a professional manpower development programme to an academic capacity building programme – based on institutional collaboration. Currently, the programme includes about 22 eligible masters degree courses. Most of these courses are held in Norway

⁶ apart from Universities and University Colleges that are included in the NUFU programme.

⁷ “Guidelines for support to Research and institutional Collaboration with South” – in Norwegian

⁸ “Guidelines for support to Research Organisations in the South” – in Norwegian

and run over a period of two years. All courses are considered to hold a high academic standard.

The courses are part of regular international programmes offered by institutions in Norway. There is strong competition among universities to offer courses under the NFP. The courses are open to students from both Norway and from other countries. Norad covers institutional as well as student expenses for a certain number of students from developing countries. NFP is a continuing education programme. For acceptance students are to be currently employed either in government, civil society organisations, universities or research institutions or in the private sector. However, very few of the students come from the private sector. The education should contribute to strategic institutional competence building. Thus, their employers must give them a 2-year leave to complete their degrees. Curricula and all lectures are given in English. In principle, fieldwork is performed in the student's country or region. This ensures the relevance of doing the theoretical part of the degree in Norway.

The Norad Fellowship programme also includes a small number of courses given at institutions in the South mainly in a Sandwich model format and in a network. Courses are offered in South Africa, Mozambique⁹, Tanzania, Malawi and Nepal¹⁰.

5.1.5. The Quota Scheme

The Quota Scheme greatly resembles the Norad Fellowship Programme. It differs in the following aspects; it offers PhD studies in addition to Master degrees, the students may participate in all courses and it has a slightly different funding arrangement¹¹. Its goal is to give students relevant competence which can be used in the home country once the student has returned. The scheme is also designed to strengthen Norwegian institutions' participation in the global society.

Eleven hundred students are admitted for study on the Quota Scheme. Of these 800 come from developing countries. Norwegian institutions compete on national level for a given number of students. On the whole candidates are selected amongst applicants whose institutions have established cooperation agreements with the Norwegian institutions. There is now little room for so-called "free movers" in the present system.

5.1.6. Country level support through bilateral state to state country programmes covers everything from framework agreements with specific universities, support to institutional co-operation between research institutes, regional co-operation and large-

⁹ Master in Health Management Information System (HISP)

¹⁰ SIU: Norad Fellowship Programme: About Norad Fellowship <http://siu.no/vev.nsf/O/Norad-Norad+Fellowship-About+Norad+Fellowship>

¹¹ The Quota scheme does not cover institutional costs, only student cost through the regular loan system for Norwegian students financed by MOE&R. Students who return to their home country and work there for at least one year can apply to have the outstanding loan balance written off. The costs involved are covered by the development aid budget.

scale programmes for bilateral research co-operation, to smaller research projects in the partner countries.

In three of Norway's main partner countries, support to higher education and research is one of the main sectors and receives considerable financial support and merits technical support and follow-up; South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.

5.1.7. Formative research is a limited activity. However, it deserves to be mentioned since Norad has given it some importance.

It started as a pilot initiative in 1998. The aim was facilitating the use of research as a more integrated tool in the implementation of development programmes and policy reforms in the partner countries. Formative research has become known as an approach to the research process where the researcher takes on the role as mediator between "objects" of the reform and the "subjects" - the authorities that are in charge of implementing the reform. The effects of a reform or a development programme is under scrutiny. This feed-back function is essential to formative research, as is the longitudinal character of the scientific endeavour. The objective is to make use of a sound scientific analysis and rigorous data collection in formulating advice on how to make necessary changes in the policy reforms, thus not compromising the scientific method nor allowing the researcher to take over the role as a decision maker.

The Norad initiative has up to now resulted in seven projects, some completed and some at the very start¹². A general assessment of the projects shows that they differ substantially with regard to the way that the researchers have interacted with the national authorities or the donors supporting the reform programme. While some researchers have focused more on the participatory aspects engaging in a dialogue with the groups affected by the programme, others have been more conducive in bringing the results back from the research to the national authorities and donors which is the main purpose of the approach. This is a challenging research approach; researchers are not necessarily used to communicate with policy makers. However, we do believe that rigorous research is useful and important in bringing about the expected results in development programmes.

5.1.8. Development oriented research in multilateral organisations receives significant funding from Norway, primarily through programmes and research activities in UN organisations and the World Bank. Most prominent is support to the Consultative Group for International Agriculture Development (CGIAR) as well as for Global Health Research (included vaccine research), through the World Health Organisation, IAVI and health research networks. UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) along with UPEACE and UNU/WIDER are also beneficiaries.

¹² Connected to projects and programmes in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, South Africa, Tanzania

5.2 Organisation and management strategies

Norad has overall responsibility for the global grants for research and higher education, while the MFA has responsibility for support to research through multilateral organisations and country/regional grants for bilateral aid agreements.

MFA entered into an agreement with Norwegian Council of Universities (UR) at the inception of the NUFU programme in 1991 to administer the programme on its behalf. The responsibility for the agreement was transferred to Norad in 1999. The Fellowship programme was managed for many years by Norad. In 1998, the administration of NFP was also transferred to UR as represented by The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU). Norad has recently renewed its agreement with the Research Council of Norway for management of the grant for Development Research to Norwegian Universities in Norway. Most of the financial resources in support of development research in Norway are allocated to thematic research programmes administered by the Research Council of Norway.

Contracted agreements are monitored through annual and biannual meetings between the parties. Representatives from the development cooperation administration participate as members or observers in programme boards. As of 2005, administration of the Quota scheme is also handled by SIU.

6. Strengths and weaknesses of programmes and lessons learned

6.1. Overall support to Higher Education and Research

Concentration of resources

Norwegian support to research and higher education includes several schemes and a plethora of activities and projects. This has its advantages as the different instruments are tailored for different purposes and complement each other. Priority is also given to main countries of cooperation – so considerable part of the resources flow to these countries. In addition, the institutions in the South and in Norway have combined the different schemes in innovative ways to maximise the limited resources.

However, the sizes of the different schemes are relatively small. It may therefore be argued that few resources are spread too thinly and that these instead should be concentrated more strategically towards fewer countries and fewer institutions. Furthermore, research topics need more than currently, to *be relevant to priority country level development challenges and poverty reduction*. This may imply that there is a need to define some priority issues (“theme approach”). Yet, the long-term partnership approach should be continued in these research programmes. Direct commissioning of research has a different perspective and purpose.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring results of the different programmes and of the implementation of the comprehensive strategy is an ongoing challenge. Results and achievements at

individual and project levels are possible to document¹³. Still, impact has to be measured in terms of strengthened research capacity at institutional level, of universities that fulfil their roles in nation building and in development of the society as well as producers of relevant knowledge and innovations for development used by policy-makers. The new agreement with SIU has a paragraph about its responsibility when it comes to monitoring quality and results. Proper instruments and indicators to monitor progress are still needed.

Coordinating with other donors

Contrary to other sectors, donor coordination has not been particularly common. Effective coordination among donors (e.g. donor consortium) could contribute to a reduction in transaction costs and more transparency. At country level, a sector wide support mode to higher education would probably also result in better use of limited resources.

Outsourcing

Outsourcing the management of programmes has potentials to improve quality, cost-effectiveness and relevance of the programmes. It is generally felt that this is a viable model, but it does pose challenges; to Norad as contractor to focus on providing clear framework of policies, criteria and priorities and monitor accordingly and to SIU as the contractee to operationalise these and provide evidence through adequate reporting procedures.

Gender

The Strategy¹⁴ points to the need to enhance *the women's perspective and gender equality* in academic research collaboration and the introduction of measures to increase women's participation.

The gender imbalance in the recruitment of participants in the NFP and the NUFU programme has been a constant concern. There have been some achievements throughout the years; Norad in 1987 took the initiative, in cooperation with the Women's Law Institute at the University of Oslo, to establish a Diploma Course in Women's Law for Eastern and Southern Africa. The course was run in Oslo for three years and in 1990 it was transferred to the University of Harare and established as a regional post-graduate programme, with academic support from the University of Oslo. The course was evaluated in 1997 and the overall assessment was that it had been highly successful in achieving its objectives. Makerere University has developed an internationally reputed Centre for gender studies. Norway has given considerable support, both to the building erected, and the programmes offered.

¹³ More than 1000 PhD and Master Candidates have been educated. The NFP accepts about 100 students every year of which most return to their countries of origin. Research results have been published through a vast number of scientific articles.

¹⁴ "Strategy for Strengthening Research and Higher Education in the Context of Norway's relation with Developing Countries. (1999)

In 2002 under the NFP, the number of enrolled female applicants for the first time reached 50%. However, the number has fallen again and was 37,1% of the enrolled applicants in 2004, which is a slight increase since 2003 when the number was 34,4%. This is mainly the result of Norwegian institutions giving top priority to *qualified* women applicants (“preferential treatment”) rather than of a large number of female applicants. In the current NUFU programme period, only 26% of the researchers from the developing countries (including PhD) and 48% of the MA candidates are women.

Norwegian policy implies that gender is a cross-cutting issue and should be mainstreamed in all activities. *This remains a challenge*. Apart from courses with a particular gender focus such as Gender and development, gender is not well covered in the courses.

6.2. Strengths and weakness of selected programmes

6.2.1. The NUFU programme

The NUFU-programme aims at building capacity at universities in developing countries through research cooperation. It is also a North-South partnership program. The support is tied to cooperation with a Norwegian institution. This has its advantages, but also its weakness. The strength of NUFU-programme lies in *real* partnership between researchers that have common interests in an academic discipline or research area. The evaluation of the NUFU-programme, done by NUFFIC in 2000¹⁵ attributed the success of the program to the enthusiasm and efforts of the individual researchers as the driving force of the programme. However, to maximise the impact, institutional (both in Norway and in the recipient country) commitment and involvement has been emphasised. The actual institutional commitment varies and depends on whether the leadership at the universities gives it priority and if anchored in the strategic planning of the institutions. The evaluation in 2001 also pointed to the weak influence of the South partner in planning as well the decisionmaking in the programme. Under the current NUFU-period the selection procedure grants the South institution considerable more influence, by basing the selection on a merged ranking system where the South is given double weighting. The challenge of a system with institution based ranking and assessment of projects is the concern of non-partisanship of the decision makers. This is true both for institutions in the Norway and in the South. Another discussion that is related to the decentralised (institution based) decision making is securing a threshold for scientific quality and equality in the scientific assessment of joint research. In the planning for a new programme period the issue of introducing a peer-reviewer system is given new actuality.

Yet another challenged is related to an increase in applications for the NUFU-programme, that can be explained both by an increase in the number of eligible institutions, not least at the Norwegian side and to the spreading of information about

¹⁵ MFA: Evaluation of the NUFU Programme – Norwegian Council of Universities’ Programme for Development Research and Education

the programme as such. Facing more demand, strategic choices as how to allocate scarce resources and priorities among institutions as well as countries is paramount. In many developing countries the number of private institutions offering higher education is steadily increasing. Thus, keeping the programme open and demand-driven from an institution/ researcher point-of view has to be weighted against considerations of effectiveness and efficiency by concentrating the support to few institutions with a national mandate in each partner country.

Many universities in developing countries have few links with the international research community due to low capacity and limited resources. North-South programs like the NUFU program can break the isolation, linking the South environment to international networks and facilitating access to the global knowledge base. North-South focus may on the other hand hinder *South-South collaboration*. It is therefore suggested that network projects that stimulate South-South collaboration are given a share of the funds in the next programme period.

Building research capacity is a long term endeavour and requires a gradual approach; starting with staff development, continuing by building capacity in graduate programmes. The overall solution of step-wise capacity building seems most effective if one takes advantages of the synergy between programs and institutional commitment. The fundamental question always remains, whether aid tied to Norwegian partners is the most appropriate/effective way to build long term capacity within relevant higher education and research in developing countries, or whether the aid should rather be channelled through untied state-to state measures that are more directly linked to the poverty reduction strategies of each developing country.

6.2.2. The Norad Fellowship programme (NFP) –

In the course of its more than 40 year history NFP has trained somewhere in the vicinity of 5000 students. Over the years greater emphasis has been given to training students in academic and higher technical fields. The masters' degree has replaced the training certificate and diploma. In many ways this is a result of a "graduate diploma push" that is equally strong in industrialised and developing countries. Students from developing countries bring with them a cultural input that enriches the Norwegian academic environment. Judging from the bibliographies of Masters Theses which come out each year, data collected in developing countries make a substantial contribution to knowledge in Norway. An inherent strength in the program is the continuing education aspect. Only students in active employment are admitted to the programme. The return rate of NFP students is high, and although no real tracer studies have been undertaken on the global level, there is evidence that most students return to their home countries and get reinstated in their former positions. There is also some evidence of increased areas of responsibility and/or promotions with a higher academic proficiency.

When it comes to weaknesses of the program: it should be noted that even though NFP is considered to be an institutional capacity building program, there is always an element of uncertainty as to the impact these types of programmes have on actual

strengthening of institutions. Furthermore, the students may not come from institutions that are capable of applying the knowledge that these have acquired. Although open for students from the private sector, there have hardly been any. Since the role of the private sector for economic development is undisputable, it may therefore also be argued that more efforts should be made to mobilise the private sector as partners. The NFP may also be considered to be largely supply driven as courses are mostly developed in Norway. Although many of the courses were historically “Norad courses” developed to meet a direct need in developing countries and the newer courses are selected because they are considered relevant for country needs, these may not be the real needs. The number of courses have also increased during the last years mostly due to increased interest in Norway. There is obviously a question to the number and relevance of courses and to what extent the knowledge acquired through these particular courses actually contribute to reducing poverty. One may also question the cost-effectiveness as well as long-term impact of having students attend master courses located in Norway. A few courses have been established in South in collaboration with a Norwegian institution applying a “sandwich” component. This has proved to be an effective and viable model. Lastly, as the two schemes – the Quota Scheme (5.1.5.) and the NFP have become more and more similar over the last years, the relevance of maintaining both, merits a discussion.

Norad felt a need to evaluate the current approach and assess the result of the NFP and suggested that a thorough and independent evaluation be undertaken. This evaluation is now in its completion stages, and we foresee that it will recommend substantial changes in future NFP period in line with some of the issues raised above.

6.2.3. Support to Higher Education in Tanzania – an example

Norway has invested some NOK 800 million (in current prices) in higher education in Tanzania over the past 30 years. Today the figure is about NOK 36 million a year including support to university-based research programmes. The majority of this support has gone to three Universities i.e. the University of Dar-es-Salaam (UDSM), Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) and Mzumbe University (MU), formerly Institute of Development Management (IDM). This investment has often consisted of a series of small, often unrelated interventions, based on bilateral relations between individual institutions in Tanzania and Norway. Investments have not previously been the subject of a general strategic planning exercise as Norway has up to now not had a general strategic plan for support to the sub-sector. Tanzanian-Norwegian co-operation in the higher education sub-sector has therefore rarely been directly related to national policies and goals. In 2004 general agreement was reached that co-operation between Norway and the three Universities should be re-oriented in order to focus more directly upon relevance to the country’s own development priorities and quality assurance.

The new Norwegian Strategy for support to Higher Education and Research in Tanzania establishes the value of a more direct link between higher education and poverty reduction. The immediate outcome of the new strategy is a relative shift in

priorities and a considerable restructuring of Norwegian assistance. It will mean phasing out some programmes and phasing in new ones. The main objectives of the new strategy are:

- To support higher education and research related to the national goals of Tanzania, in particular poverty reduction
- To support Tanzania in the qualitative and quantitative improvement of higher education and research
- To contribute to strengthening and expanding Tanzania's research capacity on the higher educational level through institutional partnerships
- To contribute to increasing knowledge production and dissemination of results of academic research
- To enhance the management of Norwegian support to higher education and research in Tanzania¹⁶

The main elements of the Norwegian support to higher education in Tanzania will be: (i) knowledge production and management (ii) dissemination of research findings, and (iii) capacity building (including some infrastructure). As in the past, support to the universities will be designed to fit into the Universities' own strategies. It is also the intention to have an even closer collaboration between the support to higher education and research through NUFU programme and NFP and the general country programme to increase the impact of the Norwegian support to the sector.

6.2.4. The South Africa – Norway Programme for Research Cooperation – another example

The South Africa – Norway Programme on Research Co-operation is an example of a bilateral initiative to promote research excellence and quality in joint research. Approximately NOK 40 million have been provided from both the South African and the Norwegian side in the first programme period (2001- 2005). A new bilateral agreement is being prepared to continue the programme from 2006 to 2009. 39 research projects in thematic areas of mutual concern and relevance have been funded to date. The research programme is based on the principle of equal partnership and seeks to build the foundations for sustainable co-operation and long term research collaboration. An internal review confirms that it has been very successful in this task, and that the programme has produced excellent results in a very short period of time.

The ongoing research projects involve research teams from 15 Norwegian and 10 South African universities and research institutes. Research on a wide range of topics have been produced. The design of the programme gives importance to its broad based and inclusive approach. This is reflected in the number of fields and disciplines¹⁷ represented in the project portfolio. It has in addition sought to have an impact on capacity building of individual researchers and the recruitment of students

¹⁶ Recommended Strategy for Norwegian Assistance to Higher Education and Research in Tanzania (2005-2014)

¹⁷ The following eight fields have been given priority: Health and medical sciences; HIV/AIDS; Information and communication technology; Aquatic research; Environment, ecology and energy; Governance, Democratisation and social development in the South, including peace and conflict studies; Economic growth and globalisation, including their socio-political impacts; and Education. In addition, a few projects in other fields have been granted support.

from traditionally disadvantaged groups. It has only been moderately successful in this regard, and will focus more on how to attract more principal investigators from main targets groups in the next phase. Achieving redress¹⁸ in all research areas is an important objective, and should be achievable, but requires priority attention.

As a result of the programme, there has been a sharp increase in co-authorship of scientific papers between researchers from the two countries, and all projects report to have had contributed towards capacity building, principally through training of students and research staff.

The programme has to a large extent succeeded to make use of each other's comparative advantage. It has promoted complementarity by allowing research strength within some areas in one country help compensate for relative weaknesses in the other country and vice versa. In this way, new knowledge has been developed. A future ambition is to make the research even more mutually beneficial than it is today.

Maintaining the highest quality standards possible is a main objective. This is ensured by a thorough peer-review process – scrutinizing each project proposal that is submitted carefully. This process is undertaken from the administrative units in both countries, the Research Council of Norway and the National Research Foundation in South Africa. An additional aspect of quality assurance regarding academic assessment lies in the need for increasing the multi- and interdisciplinary element of research projects, particularly against the background of the rapid transformation of the South African society. This will be given more emphasis in the next phase of the programme.

Although all the research projects have funding from other sources, the sustainability of the new research partnerships created under the programme is a concern. The challenge is to maintain the momentum built up in the first phase and support the continuation of collaborative efforts while allowing for new initiatives.

7. Questions and Challenges

To sum up it might be useful to list a number of challenges which emerge from an assessment of Norway's vision, policy, activities and experiences for support to tertiary education in a changing landscape. The following gives a few examples of areas which require more analysis:

- *Norway's Quality Reform and collaboration for development:*
A new output-based funding scheme for Norwegian institutions is mainly linked to a number of completed degrees issued by Norwegian institutions. This does not give these institutions sufficient incentive to collaborate with universities in developing countries through a sandwich model, where the aim is to get a student to take the final degree in his/her country. It also creates imbalance in trade in the sector.

¹⁸ Meaning that previously disadvantaged groups are to be included

- *Internationalisation and Globalisation:*
While Norway's policy underscores the importance of internationalisation of national institutions, this may have unintended negative consequences for partners in developing countries. Since one of the main goals is to increase the number of students from developing countries to Norway, there may not be enough incentives to support establishment of courses in partner countries and to support training in the South, which should be a priority for development cooperation policy. This represents a potential conflicting agenda.
- *Optimal effect of support to tertiary education:*
Partner harmonization is a key element in support to basic education. Harmonization on the higher education level has proven to be considerably more difficult, due to the often personal or interdepartmental relationships researchers have with one another. Still, there would seem to be some potential for linking up like-minded partners. Opportunities need to be explored with other donors in collaboration with partner country authorities and universities.
- *Norway's (and other donor countries') role in trans-border provision:*
As of now Norway's involvement in trans-border provision is limited to capacity-building programs of the type illustrated above. Norway is also involved in developing e-based tertiary programs within the field of sustainable development. These are tied to the Global Virtual University, a joint programme between the United Nations University, UNEP/GRID Arendal and Agder University College. Developing countries have different opinions when it comes to trans-border provision of education. Norway and other donor countries need to engage more with partner countries to discuss these issues. This is potentially an area where development cooperation policies and general trade policies may conflict and is *therefore a policy coherence issue*.
- *Bridging research and policy for national and international purposes*
Translating knowledge into related action has proved to be quite a challenge both nationally and internationally. Research based knowledge is a much underutilized source of information that could provide significant value added to development processes. Whether produced by national capacities or (in cooperation with) international research communities, such knowledge should be most relevant for the formulation of national policies as well as aid policies and in defining conditions for successful implementation of development cooperation on the ground. Particularly, the current emphasis on national poverty reduction strategies requires locally based research to provide the evidence-base needed for designing and implementing these.

"Policy makers seem to regard '*research*' as the opposite of "action" rather than the opposite of "ignorance" - Martin Surr 2002