



PREPARE-PhD

Promoting Excellence
in Ph.D. Research
Programmes in East Africa

Project Coordinator

University of Copenhagen, Denmark



Partners

Makerere University, Uganda

Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania

University of Nairobi, Kenya

Setting up efficient Ph.D. systems in East Africa

Competent and higher-level human resources are critical in addressing the socio-economic development needs of societies in the East African region. In recent years, labour market demand for well-trained Ph.D. natural science graduates has been rising sharply. However, East African universities have too few Ph.D. students and of too inconsistent quality to meet this demand. Furthermore, the quality and reputation of many HEIs in the region do not meet international standards. This results in the departure of the best brains to overseas studies. The PREPARE-PhD project sets out to address this need and to develop competent high level human resources within agriculture, veterinary science, human nutrition, natural resource management and related fields.

The "Promoting Excellence in Ph.D. Research Programmes in East Africa" (PREPARE-PhD) project will strengthen local research capacity and regional networking in East Africa by upgrading whole Ph.D. systems through a holistic and inclusive approach, actively involving the institutions' management, but also administrative staff, supervisors and Ph.D. students themselves. This will be carried out through networking and sharing of knowledge between three universities in East African and one in Europe: Makerere University in Uganda, Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania, University of Nairobi in Kenya and the University of Copenhagen in Denmark.

Upgrading administrative rules and academic staff skills

The first set of PREPARE-PhD activities will be aimed at streamlining the administration of the Ph.D. programme and training staff to provide quick individual and total overviews of student progress in the different Ph.D. programmes.

Current rules and regulations for Ph.D. programmes in participating African universities will be updated. They will be supported by administrative guidelines for examiners, supervisors and students: 150 copies will be printed for each institution. An information dissemination strategy will ensure that all relevant stakeholders get copies.

Moreover, five member teams of supervisor trainers will be established in each African university and supported through regional trainings. Training material for the supervisor training will be developed and 80 supervisors per university will have received training in best practice supervision, in how to apply to the new rules and regulations in Ph.D. training and in their capacity as supervisors as well as examiners.

Enhancing curricula and student networking

The PREPARE-PhD partners will also develop six crosscutting courses per participating African institution, covering subjects of relevance for all Ph.D. students, such as Scientific Writing, Research Methodologies and Statistic and Computer Application. Later on, these courses will together form a 3-4 month compulsory package, mandatory for all new Ph.D. students.

Additionally to support the Ph.D. students' professional and social position PREPARE-PhD will facilitate the formation of independent PhD student associations in each university by organising the first assembly and supporting the association financially in the project





Duration

36 months

EU Co-Funding

EUR 485.911,00

Total Budget

EUR 598.111,00

Contact

Dr. Carl Erik Schou Larsen,
University of Copenhagen

Tel: 0045 35 33 26 59

Fax: 0045 35 33 26 64

Email: kesl@life.ku.dk

Website: www.ku.dk

period. These will contribute to the personal, scientific and social networking of the PhDs.

Finally, to ensure efficient networking and exchange of relevant information on newly developed courses, quarterly electronic bulletins for Ph.D. programmes will be published by involved universities. These will disseminate information on the experience and achievements from the Ph.D. programme upgrading exercise to other relevant universities and stakeholders in the region.

Reducing the brain drain of Ph.D. graduates in East Africa

Clearer rules and regulations, coupled with stricter enforcement and quality control, will make life easier for Ph.D. students as their rights and obligations will be clear from the start of their studies. Improved supervision will benefit them directly as it will facilitate their work, increase quality, speed up the process and most likely reduce the percentage of drop-outs. A smoother administration and better follow-up on the examination process will also benefit the students in that they will now devote most of their time to Ph.D. work and less on administrative matters.

The participating universities will become more attractive study environments for researchers from the region. This will contribute to reducing the current brain drain and to securing better revenue for the participating universities.

In a wider sense, the project will greatly benefit societies in East Africa by establishing new standards for Ph.D. education in the region that are regionally integrated, internationally competitive and can serve as a robust platform for securing the next generation of qualified high-level civil servants, politicians, and researchers. The research output from these institutions will be of higher relevance to the societies and their socio-economic development.

© ACP Secretariat 2008

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the ACP Secretariat and the European Union. The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the ACP Secretariat or the European Union.

