

# **COLLABORATION IN UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT: NORTH-SOUTH, SOUTH-NORTH. A NORWEGIAN CASE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The article focuses on university collaboration between Norway and countries in the global South. It describes Norway's policies and practices and discusses in particular three programmes in higher education supported by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). Discussing education aid from a postcolonial perspective, the article critiques the current global architecture of education - the hegemonic role of a Western educational discourse- in North-South university collaboration. For comparative purposes, the policies of Cuba are briefly analyzed, as another selected country which has a huge portfolio in university collaboration with countries in the global South.

## **ABSTRACT (Norwegian)**

Artikkelen fokuserer på universitetssamarbeid mellom Norge og land i det globale Sør. Den beskriver Norges politikk og praksis and diskuterer spesielt tre programmer i høyere utdanning støttet av Direktoratet for utviklingssamarbeid (NORAD). Artikkelen er skrevet fra et postkolonialt perspektiv, og kritiserer "den globale utdanningsarkitekturen" ("the global architecture of education) - den vestlige utdanningsdiskursens hegemoniske rolle- i universitetssamarbeid mellom Nord og Sør. I et

komparativt perspektiv blir Cubas politikk kort analysert, som et annet land som har en stor portefølje når det gjelder universitetssamarbeid med land i det globale Sør.

#### **KEYWORDS**

Norwegian university collaboration in the Global South  
The global architecture of education  
De-colonizing teaching and research  
Sustainability  
Cuba's scholarship programme

### **Introduction**

In this article I focus primarily on university collaboration between Norway and countries in the global South. I first briefly describe Norway's policies and practices in university collaboration with countries in the global South and then, from a postcolonial perspective, discuss my own experiences with three programmes in higher education supported by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD). Finally, and for comparative purposes, I include a consideration of the policies of Cuba, as another selected country that I have close links with and which has a huge portfolio in university collaboration with countries in the global South.

While the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have focused on promoting basic education for all (EFA), there now seems to be a growing understanding in the international communities that also development of higher education institutions is crucial for 'development' and change in the global South. This article contributes to the discussion about ways in which countries in the 'North' can collaborate with those in the South in

their efforts to expand and build capacity in their higher education institutions.

### **Norwegian perspectives of North-South university collaboration**

For several decades, Norway has been involved in funding collaboration activities between Norwegian institutions of higher learning and countries in the global South. From a Norwegian perspective it is believed that universities and higher institutions of learning in the South can potentially be important vehicles for change. This recognition is based on the experiences of the interaction between higher education and economic development in the global North. As a NORAD policy document puts it, “investments in higher education and research have a positive impact on economic development and growth.... focusing on higher education is also important for building capacity in public administration” (Hodne Steen and Heen, 2005, p.6). Moreover, a strong focus of such assistance is the need for capacity building in the higher institutions, particularly in terms of the professional development of academic and administrative staff in order to improve these countries’ own capacity to meet national research and teaching needs. The main goals of Norway’s vision for supporting higher education and research in the global South are:

- 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. (Hodne Steen and Heen, 2005, 5).

The main geographical focus for this collaboration has been sub-Saharan Africa, but also countries in Latin America and Asia have benefitted from NORAD's programs. In Sub-Saharan Africa, some countries which have received NORAD support include Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, Sudan and now South Sudan. In Asia and Latin America, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bolivia and Nicaragua have been prioritized.

### **Considering education aid from a postcolonial perspective**

A postcolonial perspective recognises that many countries in the Global South suffer from severe economic underdevelopment that is a legacy of their colonial history. Their fragile economic base means that their desire and goal to develop robust national higher education institutions often cannot be put into practice.

In such a perspective North-South collaboration is not unproblematic. First, such collaboration may be perceived as an attempt to entrench the huge

disparities between the North and the South, and may underscore the global architecture of education where a Western educational discourse is hegemonic. As Gonzalez, Hickling-Hudson and Lehr argue, “traditional North-South approaches to educational aid (referred to in the literature as ‘aid architecture’) have not had the desired effects in tackling the crisis of quantity and quality. Since the 1990s, aid architecture has been slowly improving, but remains inadequate” (Gonzalez et al in Hickling-Hudson, Gonzalez and Preston, 2012, p.36). Moreover, as Riddell claims, even though donors stress the importance of partnership between donor and recipients as being necessary “for aid to have a positive impact, the overall aid relationship remains extremely lopsided with donors remaining almost wholly in control” (Riddell, 2007, as summarized by Klees, 2010). It is also true “that Northern thinking patterns will often not achieve the desired results in environments characterized by very different socio-economic realities.” (Gonzalez *et al*, in Hickling-Hudson *et al*, 2012, p.39).

Even though Norway does not have a legacy of colonialism, it is located in the global North, the centre of the capitalist world system, and it is therefore legitimate to ask if Norway can be a trusted partner with Southern universities in higher education in the global South.

The “global architecture of education” can be defined as ‘a common (Western) epistemological discourse which dominates most educational systems in the South and in the North’ (Breidlid, 2013, p.2). It is pervasive in the Norwegian higher education system even though critical voices are heard from time to time. However, a critical

discussion of the 'global architecture of education' does not seem to be part of NORAD's strategy of university collaboration. Norway's vision to become a partner with countries in the South in assisting (in a small way) to develop viable tertiary institutions based on the countries' own priorities and the strategic plans is therefore not a straightforward, unambiguous vision. To what extent does Norway's own interests play a role in this endeavor? Clearly Norway has an interest in extending its contact with these countries in order to have an advantageous position in terms of trade, commerce and business.

On the other hand, Norway's prioritization of predominantly poor countries in sub-Saharan Africa seems to indicate a vision or position which transcends the "what is in it for me" thinking that is prevalent in much North-South collaboration. Moreover, the fact that NORAD underlines the importance of South-South collaboration in these programmes is a factor mitigating the imbalance in power relations. The very fact, however, that the higher institution in the North is the funding institution makes the leveling out of this imbalance difficult to envisage.

It is therefore naïve to believe that this imbalance of North-South collaboration in higher education does not impact on the ideology and the epistemological orientation of what is being taught. This does not mean, however, that one should sever all links between institutions in the North and the South because of the danger of perpetuating the colonizing of southern minds, but it requires a continuous debate about what is involved ideologically and epistemologically in such a collaboration.

## **Experiences with NORAD funded educational programmes**

In the discussion below I reflect on my own experiences with three Norwegian programmes of development cooperation involving collaboration between a Norwegian institution of higher learning and four universities in Africa, and the problems and potential solutions involved in the implementation of the projects

The projects I participated in were implemented during a five-year span. As Professor of International Education and Development in the Faculty of Education and International Studies at Oslo University College, I participated in these projects in several ways, including: applying for grant funding from the Norwegian government, collaborating with colleagues in the four African universities, teaching and supervising in the Masters both in Norway and in Africa as well as doing research in countries of cooperation. A primary goal of these projects was to make them sustainable in the global South.

Given NORAD's lack of ideological guidelines (except the more technical guidelines referred to earlier in this article) it was our responsibility in the projects with NORAD funding to 'conscientise' (using the concept popularized by Paulo Freire, 1972) staff and students in the North institution as well as the partners in the South about the need to critically scrutinize the ideological and epistemological content of the collaboration (as discussed above) in order to highlight hegemonic power structures.

Even though the three programmes – NOMA, NUCOOP and NUFU had a different profile, the focus in all three programmes was capacity building in various ways in higher institutions in the global South as well as in the North. Each of these contributed to the development of the funded program of university collaboration with Africa. Below is a short description of each programme.

#### 1) NOMA: NORAD's Programme for Master's degree studies

NOMA is the programme for Master's degree courses carried out by several Norwegian universities in collaboration with universities in the global South. The core activity in NOMA was to contribute to education through building capacity at Master's level at higher education institutions in the South and to enhance gender equality in all programme activities.

A number of Higher Education institutions were selected for the development of Master of Education programmes, in close collaboration with Norwegian higher education institutions. According to NORAD, Norwegian HEIs would also benefit through the strengthening of their skills and competencies in integrating global and developmental perspectives in their professional work.

#### 2) NUCOOP: The Norwegian University Cooperation Programme for Capacity Development in Sudan

The overall goal of NUCOOP was to contribute to the development of sustainable capacity of

higher education institutions in southern Sudan (now South Sudan) and to provide the workforce with adequate qualifications in selected fields of study through multiphase cooperation.

### 3) NUFU: The Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education

The NUFU Programme aimed to build capacity in research and research-based higher education through North-South cooperation. It included education of Master's and PhD students, development of Master's and PhD programmes, training of technical and administrative staff in the South as well as joint research programmes and the publication and dissemination of research results.

Below I discuss the projects in which we participated within the above programmes. The focus is primarily on NOMA which was the most extensive project and involved many partners in the South.

## **Oslo University College and the Implementation of NOMA, NUCOOP and NUFU**

### **NOMA (NORAD's Programme for Master's degree studies)**

The NOMA project at the Faculty of Education and International Studies which I headed was a Masters in International Education and Development with a specific focus on HIV/AIDS and education, a collaborative course developed by Oslo University College, Ahfad University for Women, Sudan, the University of Zambia, Zambia and the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa. Interestingly, involvement in this Norwegian initiative was the first occasion in which UCT's Education Faculty had cooperated with universities in other countries of Sub-Saharan Africa even though the South African government has encouraged South-South collaboration in order to challenge post Cold War hegemony (Hammett, 2007, 65). The collaborative link between UCT, Zambia and Ahfad thus helped to fulfill one of the objectives of the NOMA programme: South-South collaboration.

The M.Ed program consisted of students from the four countries referred to above. It was a priority to accept students from a low-income background, that is, students who could not afford to study for a Masters in their home country or abroad. The NOMA programme provided completely free education for the students including tuition, textbooks, food, and accommodation, an approach similar to the provisions of the Cuban scholarship programmes. Even the travel from the South to Norway and back, and travel between the Sub-Saharan countries were provided for.

In the first year, the students studied for one semester in Norway, then two half semesters in either Zambia and Cape Town or Zambia and Khartoum. In the second year the students from Africa undertook field work in their home countries, while the Norwegian students did field work in countries of the global South to prepare to write their Masters theses. These dissertations were co-supervised by staff in Norway and in the three African countries. The close cooperation between the institutions also resulted in joint teaching in Norway and in Africa, and substantial staff capacity was built, both in the global South and in the North. Almost 50 students graduated from the program. Most of these came from the global South.

### **Thematic focus. De-colonizing teaching and research**

The thematic focus of the project, HIV/AIDS prevention and education, required a thorough consideration of the epistemological basis of the course project. Our commitment was, as is described for another context, “to address the inadequacies of the education systems inherited from European colonialism, addressing the educational needs in Southern communities” (Gonzalez *et al* in Hickling-Hudson *et al*, 2012, p. 41).

What we noted in our interaction with students from the global South was how the privileging of Western epistemology- also the case in the Southern universities - meant that the epistemological background of many students from Sudan, Zambia and South Africa had previously been completely marginalized. Clearly the global architecture of education (the Western educational discourse) has

reinforced the epistemic dominance in countries in the semi-periphery or periphery, which already experience the negative aspects of the present world order.

It was important for us in the NOMA project to include the students' own experience and home environment in the whole learning process. We therefore tried to raise the consciousness of ourselves and the students as to how the hegemonic educational discourse, the global architecture of education—across the curriculum of school and university systems and across nations—has helped to promote the capitalist world-system and globalization and defend Northern positions of power. To challenge this hegemonic knowledge necessitated a deconstruction of Western epistemology—the hegemonic power of (neo)colonization, and implied a decolonizing of the curricula and the educational discourses globally (see Breidlid, 2013). This was no easy task, as it necessitated questioning our own critical thinking. That is, we had to ask ourselves to what extent we were critiquing our own knowledge assumptions. To what extent did we realize that our knowledge transfer was also biased, embedded in a historical legacy of colonialism and imperialism?

On the basis of these considerations and reflections we seriously attempted to combine Western and indigenous epistemologies in the teaching and the research activities. It meant an attempt to decolonise the curriculum and not to impose a Western hegemonic discourse. To do this, we strove to use literature from the South, not the least in the teaching of methodology. Did we succeed?

Probably only to a certain extent. Our manoeuvring in this colonizing/colonized terrain was and is extremely demanding, since the imposition of such a hegemonic ideology cannot be dismantled overnight or through a Masters course in education and development. Despite our critical views on the global architecture of education our staff in the North are deeply rooted in Western epistemology and ideology, and such a 'world view' and epistemological orientation cannot easily be deleted from our mental hard disk. Even our Southern partners had internalized this discourse, and were in some instances even more reluctant than we were in the North to question the superiority of the Western discourse. The colonizing of the Southern mind over the centuries has indeed been quite successful!

The focus of our NOMA project was HIV/AIDS and education. It made sense to everybody to include in the coursework indigenous ideas/epistemologies and practices concerning the disease, not the least because Western/Northern interventions had proven unsuccessful in many African countries. In Zambia, one of our partner countries, HIV/AIDS interventions had proven largely unsuccessful until the public governmental and educational actors with a modernist agenda started collaborating with the indigenous leadership structure, viz. the chiefs and elders in the villages. The opening of a dialogue/reflection between the two epistemological positions created what I have termed a third space (Breidlid, 2013) where new solutions not earlier tried out proved to be quite successful. Examples such as the one above helped to create better understanding among students and staff that context matters and that an automatic transfer of

knowledges from the North to the South is not necessarily the right answer.

## **Sustainability**

Probably the most encouraging result of the NOMA project is that it has become sustainable in the sense that the Master of Education degree is now accredited and is running in Zambia and Sudan. It may be that one reason for this 'success' story is the above-mentioned transparent discussion about what knowledges count and are useful in the countries in the global South. While the profile of the Masters is the same as the original NOMA version, the two institutions have even gone further than the original project in adapting it to the local context. The project also resulted in the publication of a book on HIV/AIDS and education with contributions from staff and Master's students in both North and South (Baxen and Breidlid, 2009), and joint articles. In collaboration with the NUCOOP project described below, a culminating conference was arranged in Khartoum, Sudan in December 2012 where more than 30 graduates from these projects presented their papers together with keynote speakers from Australia, South Africa and Norway. A book from this conference is now in the pipeline.

The graduates from the NOMA project have, generally speaking, got good jobs in their home countries, and some have proceeded to PhD studies. An important question is whether there is space in the Ministries, colleges and NGOs where they are working to challenge the hegemonic knowledge production of their work places.

## **Challenges**

Obviously there are challenges running such a Master of Education project between the North and the South. The students came from different learning cultures. Coming to Norway exposed the students from the global South to a way of studying which, with its limitations suggested above, involved a degree of critical and analytical thinking. It resulted in a culture shock for many of the students since the academic culture in their home countries did not stress this aspect in the same way. Many of them found it challenging to be required to read academic books and articles critically, and to discuss these with other students.

Working on a thesis that required 80-100 pages of independent writing was also unfamiliar to some, if not all of the students from the global South. When the students returned to the South the experience of uneven internet access and lack of access to adequate literature caused problems, and this was also a culture shock for the Norwegian students. In another article I discuss whether the structuring of the programme also needs to be decolonised (Botha and Breidlid, 2013).

### **NUCOOP (Norwegian University Cooperation Programme for Capacity Development in Sudan)**

Our department was also fortunate to receive funding for the NUCOOP programme with a Masters in International Education and Sustainable Development with a more developmental rather than HIV/AIDS focus, a programme I also headed. The project involved a training component and a research component, and took place in a country just emerging from one of the longest civil wars in Africa, South Sudan.

All the students came from disadvantaged backgrounds, and all their costs were covered by the programme. In contrast to the NOMA project the NUCOOP students did not travel to other institutions in Africa or in Europe, and given the low efficiency of internet and the lack of proper teaching material the confinement to one university in their home country was obviously a disadvantage.

Our first partner in South Sudan was the University of Upper Nile in Malakal. Unforeseen circumstances included a military clash on campus between the liberation movement and the militia. The campus was completely destroyed and the students lost all their books and computers, so the project was moved to the capital city, Juba, and was eventually included in the portfolio of the University of Juba.

Initially the teaching in the present day South Sudan was done by Norwegian lecturers. In addition to the Masters students three PhD students from South Sudan were included in the project. The NUCOOP project provided courses for administrative staff in Khartoum, Sudan, and English, ICT and supervision courses for the academic staff in England and Kampala, Uganda. Some academic staff came to Oslo where they attended a similar Masters course and gave lectures. Later in the project period joint supervision between Oslo and Juba was encouraged in all the main subjects, and also in relation to the students' Master's theses. The teaching was gradually transferred to the local lecturers at the University of Juba.

The challenges running NUCOOP were on the whole bigger than those in running the NOMA project. Fortunately I have been involved in

teaching, research and aid work in the country for several decades, and this experience was useful in addressing the various challenges we encountered. One challenge was the weak nature of the university structure in a country just emerging from war.

Besides the military turmoil in Malakal, there was a shift in leadership of the Vice Chancellor, and a fundamentalist Muslim took this office. This caused problems for all foreign projects at the university, and eventually the VC broke all contracts with partners in the North, apparently due to ideological or religious reasons. Our transfer to the capital, Juba, and the University of Juba, went however quite smoothly, but incurred a huge additional cost since all our students had to transfer to a new location far away. Another big challenge was the recruitment of female students, for the simple reason that South Sudan ranks at the global bottom of female literacy and that very few young women have completed the Bachelor degree. NORAD's vision of gender balance was therefore very difficult to reach.

As mentioned above the textbook situation was very difficult, and textbooks were imported from Norway for the different cohorts of NUCOOP students. A small library was set up, and a link to an electronic library system with Norwegian institutions was also established. Given the unstable internet situation in Juba, the question remains how one can make the learning environment conducive when Oslo withdraws. Partly as part of the project and through collaboration with South Sudanese the first history book of South Sudan (Breidlid, Androga Said, Breidlid, 2010) was published and distributed to secondary schools and

higher learning institutions in South Sudan. The feedback we have received from Southern Sudanese is that the book is going to play a very important role in the nation-building efforts of the new country.

In terms of ideological and epistemological issues our experiences and challenges were similar to the ones we experienced with NOMA.

### **NUFU (National Programme for Research and Higher Education).**

The third programme that was funded by NORAD was through NUFU. Our project addressed key issues in relation to gender, equality, equity, education and poverty (GEEP) in the present South Sudan and South Africa. The project was established in 2008 and was a joint collaboration between Oslo University College (Norway), Ahfad University for Women (Sudan) and the University of the Western Cape (South Africa).

The project 's objectives were twofold, consisting primarily of research activities, which included research supervision of Masters and PhD students and capacity-building and training in particular within research in the universities in South Africa and Sudan.

The GEEP project not only addressed and compared the key issues around gender equality, equity, education and poverty in post-conflict contexts in South Africa and South Sudan, but also provided a critical analysis of how global aspirations to advance gender equality and equity are

understood. Key questions included: who participates in implementation; what are the meanings of gender; which schooling and global relations are negotiated; what constraints are experienced and overcome; and what concerns about global obligations emerge?

A key focus was how global policy initiatives are interpreted and acted upon in local contexts. In addition, the project provided an opportunity of opening up cooperative networks between African scholars that did not exist previously. Due to the apartheid regime there were limited opportunities for academic cooperation for South African scholars until post-1994, while Sudan has been limited both in capacity and by internal conflicts. Thus, it is argued that there is often too little cooperation between scholars in African countries and that the partners in the South have much to learn from each other, but such cooperation has often not been possible without external funding. The funding provided by NUFU was a valuable start in promoting this cooperation. The project has produced one book (Holmarsdottir; Nomlomo; Farag, 2013) and arranged one international conference in Oslo in September 2012.

### **Reflections on a comparison of Norway's and Cuba's international scholarship programmes.**

It is in this context of interest to compare the Norwegian scholarship programme with that of Cuba. Being quite familiar with Cuba after having conducted field work there and visited the country several times (see Breidlid 2007, 2013) I found it useful to employ my Cuban experiences in relation

to our own North-South collaborations efforts. Particularly in terms of epistemological and ideological principles I felt Cuba had much to offer.

Both Norway and Cuba offer extensive scholarships to students in the global South, but Cuba's programme is much bigger than the Norwegian programme if compared to the GNP of the two countries. Besides the issue of the different size of the funding of the programmes, the different locations of the two countries in the global world order makes the contributions of the two countries quite different. Cuba's location in the global South means that Cubans are, as Trista Perez states, "firmly grounded in an understanding of the needs of the developing countries. This allows them to gather knowledge and experiences keeping in mind the national context. Their new knowledge is not considered suitable for automatic transfer but becomes the basis of an adaptation process that facilitates the development of appropriate technology" (Trista Perez, in Hickling-Hudson et al, 2012, p.167).

There is no doubt that Cuba's track record in international educational collaboration is very good. Cubans "do not go with a suitcase full of answers before they have studied the problems and the context" (Trista Perez, in Hickling-Hudson *et al*, 2012, p.168), and compared to Cuba's economic capacity, their support abroad is massive. Moreover Cuba's own educational discourse is grounded in a counter-hegemonic, anti-capitalist ideology, linking indigenous and sustainable knowledges in the national curriculum (Breidlid, 2013, p.159). This means that Cuba's international collaboration is not involved in the automatic transfer of the global

architecture of education. On the contrary, Cuba is one of the few, if not the only country in the non-Muslim world which conveys a more independent course in international educational collaboration.

It is noteworthy that Cuba has never received a cent from the World Bank and the IMF and is thus delinked from the demands of these big lending institutions. Nevertheless, Cuba's academic success, which is unrivalled in the global South, is impressive. Its uniqueness in a global perspective, its more or less universally distributed cultural capital and its focus on sustainability represents an alternative educational, and to some extent epistemological course which ought to be of interest to many countries in the global South. Cuba's history of resistance and struggle for sovereignty and political and educational independence are lessons to be learnt from other countries in the global South steeped in Western dependency.

But since Cuba like Norway is funding the collaboration between higher institutions of learning there are obviously power imbalances between the donor (Cuba) and the recipient country in this type of collaboration as well. It is therefore important that Cuba also asks critical questions about its involvement internationally, related both to its political agenda as well as to the quality of the academic collaboration. It is, however, an open question if their capacity for self-critical thinking is more developed than in the West.

These reservations on Cuba notwithstanding, Norway has a lot to learn from Cuba's international work in higher institutions. Unfortunately NORAD seems to have drawn few, if any lessons from the Cuban experience, most probably due to Cuba's

pariah status in international educational cooperation (UNESCO being a notable exception). While both Cuba and Norway have similar scholarship programmes in terms of covering all expenses of the students, the ideological and epistemological approach to university collaboration is necessarily different due to their different locations in the global world order.

Norway is not necessarily firmly grounded in an understanding of the needs of developing countries even though Norway's international experiences date back for a long time. Our perception of what is important for change (development is a charged word) is not necessarily the same as our partners in the South. Cuba's way may not be desired by all partners in the South either, and the response of the West and Norway to questions like that of educational sustainability in a global context is in my opinion not always credible or 'sustainable' (see Breidlid, 2013).

While Cuba is involved ideologically and politically on a macro level in university collaboration (nation- to nation collaboration) the Norwegian state is apparently giving Norwegian higher institutions much freedom in how the Southern partners are approached ideologically and epistemologically. From a Norwegian perspective- so steeped in Western epistemology and the global architecture of education- this means, however, that Norwegian institutions in most cases do not deviate from their educational and ideological course at home.

Cuba's advantage in these collaborative efforts over its Western counterpart is that Cuba is on the same playing field as their Southern partners, and is

thus better able to understand the challenges that face the partners. Moreover, Cuba's independent course and decolonised curriculum naturally strike a positive chord in many countries in the global South. Cuba's disadvantage might be that their socialist orientation and their lack of economic success, at least from a capitalist perspective, is less attractive to the elites and decision makers in the Southern partner countries.

## **Conclusion**

Seen from the perspective of our small department in Oslo, our collaboration in the three programmes referred to above has been very challenging and rewarding. It has not at all been a one-way learning process, but has given us much insight and knowledge, not only in terms of running the programs administratively and academically, but also in terms of methodological and professional knowledge. It would not be correct to say that the power imbalance between the institutions has been reversed, but it helped to a very large extent to highlight and emphasize the Southern inputs to learning and knowledge production, and led to inspired discussions as to how this imbalance can be reversed.

My own experience from Cuba has, I think, helped me to rethink in a more fundamental way the challenges involved in collaborating with higher institutions of learning across the North-South divide.

The fact that the NOMA programme now is sustainable seems to prove that the profile and significance of the programme has also resonated in

the South. Lastly one should not forget the human dimension of the programme, viz our friendship with staff and many students from Sudan, South Sudan, Zambia and South Africa.

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