

## **Comments to the review of the BSU master programme**

The publication of the review has been under way for some time. The delay was due to a wish to obtain guidance for the future focus of the programme from the Danish Government through the Finance Act. However, the Finance Act was published relatively late in 2015. Meanwhile, the government has set up a committee that will provide recommendations in relation to the overall Danish foreign policy, including the development policy by May 2016. It has therefore been decided to publish the review with the current preliminary recommendations pending clarification on the government's priorities expected in May 2016.

### **Purpose of the review**

The review was designed as a preliminary evaluation focusing on the lessons learned and looking forward towards potential improvements in the programme. At this early stage of the programme it was not possible to properly assess actual effects, detailed cost-efficiency, and longer term sustainability. The output of the review is an intervention logic outlining the causal links of the programme, and the changes it aims to bring about, as well as developed indicators for the establishment of monitoring and evaluation procedures for the programme.

### **Discussion of multiple goals**

One of the challenges is that the programme aims to achieve many objectives. Originally the focus was on the individual capacity building of the students and their potential contribution to the general development of their home countries. At the same time the programme is an integrated part of the BSU programme with the focus on the institutional capacity building of the BSU partner universities.

The master candidates' affiliation with their home university varies. It can be discussed whether to have a stronger focus on selecting staff from the universities, or whether it should be the most talented students, as currently is the predominant criteria. Another question is whether the universities in the south have the capacity to offer research and teaching opportunities, and/or whether this option should be included in continuation of a possible BSU III.

Danida could also aim for a scholarship programme which contributes to capacity development in a broader sense with mutual benefits for both the global South and Denmark. The programme could be seen as a soft power tool to further public diplomacy focusing on ensuring network to Danes and Danish organizations and companies. The talented master students are likely to take up important positions in countries with large growth potential, and hence, may thus in many instances be able to institute change.

Having multiple goals and objectives for the programme is not considered to be a problem as such. It is, however, important to note that this makes the programme less focused. Furthermore, it will have implications for the management and effectiveness of the programme unless more emphasis and resources are set aside for creating internship in Denmark and job creation in the South, and/or increased focus on creating research opportunities in the South.

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### **Additional information after completion of review**

37 out of 38 candidates from the 2013 intake have completed their master study, and the vast majority with very good results. Most have returned to their former jobs, including at the BSU partner universities. Four candidates have been granted a PhD, one at home, two in Denmark, and one in the EU, and in addition one candidate has been granted a master degree in the United States. Others are still awaiting results of PhD applications in Denmark. The exact figures will be examined in August 2016, where questionnaires will be sent out.

The results from this year's master intake in September 2015 have shown that applicants far exceeded the number of BSU scholarships. Thus, there were about 300 applicants and 38 scholarship awarded, equal to a success rate of less than 15%. Similarly to the intake in 2013 more than half of the applicants came from Ghana. The gender balance of the awarded scholarships is 44 % female.