



Opportunities, challenges - and bad weather

Experiences and reflections of African researchers involved in
Danida funded research capacity building 1989-2019

By Lene Møller Madsen & Hanne Kirstine Adriansen



Danida Fellowship Centre
- Sustainable development through research and learning

Experiences and reflections

VIDEO PORTRAITS OF DANIDA ALUMNI

Dr Lillian Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza, Uganda

Supreme Court Justice in Uganda.



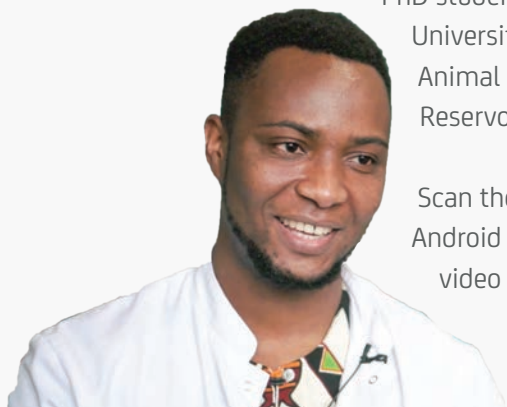
PhD in Law, University of Copenhagen. PhD title: “Women’s Violent Crimes in Uganda. More Sinned Against than Sinning”.

Scan the QR code, using an iPhone camera or QR reader on Android to see Danida alum **Dr Lillian Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza’s** video story.



Dr Gildas Hounmanou, Benin

PhD student at SUND (Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences), University of Copenhagen, Department of Veterinary and Animal Sciences. PhD topic: Evolutionary Genomics and Aquatic Reservoirs of Toxigenic Vibrio Cholera in Tanzania



Scan the QR code, using an iPhone camera or QR reader on Android to see Danida alum **Gildas Hounmanou’s** video story.



Dr Richard Yao Kofie, Ghana

Principal Research Scientist, CSIR-Institute for Scientific and Technological Information, Ghana. PhD title: A Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Perspective for Local Level Planning and Decision making: The case of spatial data integration, health, and sanitation in the Ga District of Ghana



Scan the QR code, using an iPhone camera or QR reader on Android to see Danida alum **Dr Richard Kofie’s** video story.



Dr Evelyn Lazaro, Tanzania

Senior Research Fellow, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Morogoro, Tanzania. PhD in Agricultural Economics. PhD title: Women in Household Economy: The case of Agricultural Plantations in Morogoro Region, Tanzania.

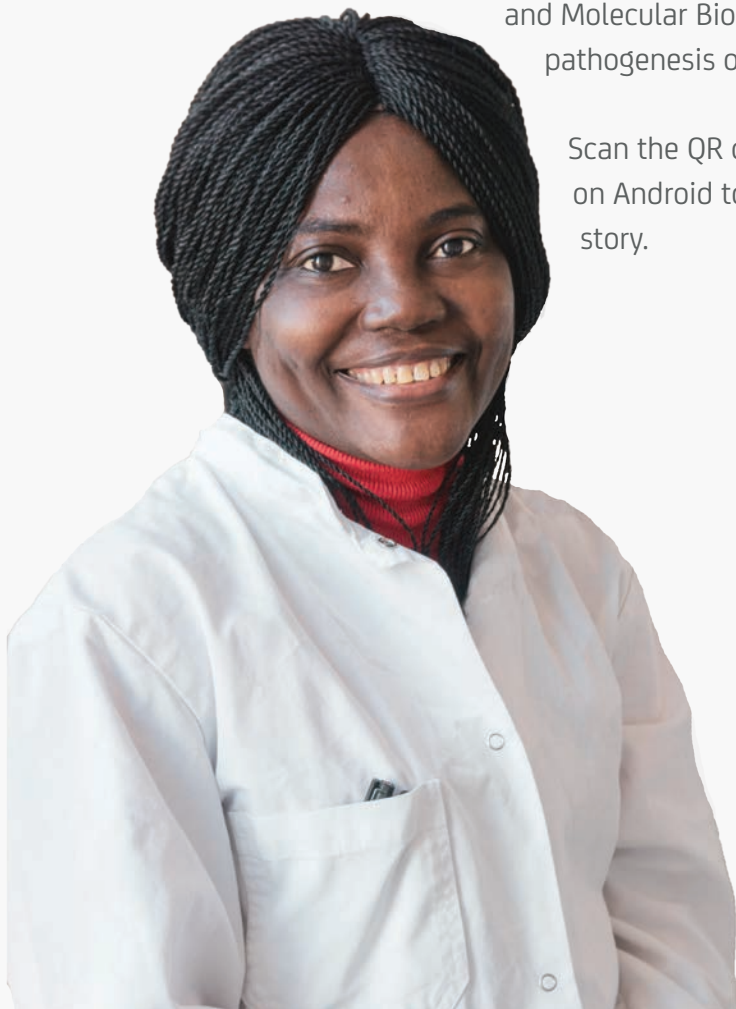


Scan the QR code, using an iPhone camera or QR reader on Android to see Danida alum **Evelyn Lazaro's** video story.



Cecilia Smith, Ghana

PhD student, University of Ghana, Department of Biochemistry, Cell and Molecular Biology. PhD title: "The role of malaria in the pathogenesis of endemic Burkitt's lymphoma".



Scan the QR code, using an iPhone camera or QR reader on Android to see Danida alum **Cecilia Smith's** video story.





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Preface

Supporting African researchers through scholarships and research partnerships can be seen as a means of strengthening the research capacity of individuals and institutions in the Global South as well as a means of promoting 'Danish' notions of what is good research and 'Danish' values associated with academia.

The study was conducted between August 2018 and April 2019. The report was completed on 1 May 2019 and presented at the 5th Joint Nordic Development Research Conference Copenhagen, 27-28 June 2019. Discussants were Anders Breidlid and Faustin Maganga. The study was supported and funded by Danida through Danida Fellowship Centre.

This report presents the results of a study that looks into the experiences and reflections of African researchers involved in Danida supported research capacity building within the past 30 years. The study was conducted by Lene Møller Madsen, Department of Science Education, University of Copenhagen and Hanne Kirstine Adriansen, Department of Education, Aarhus University. The statistics and tables were prepared by Kaya Toft Thejls. The video portraits of Danida alumni were directed by Vibeke Quaade, Danida Fellowship Centre. Graphic Design: Victor Drile, Grand Brand and Jakob Brus, Danida Fellowship Centre. The appendix on Danish support for building research capacity in Africa was written by Bente Ilsøe, Danida Fellowship Centre. An advisory group provided valuable input to the construction of the questionnaire and the outline of the report. The members were Annette Skovsted Hansen, Karen Valentin, Margrethe Holm Andersen, Peter Kragelund and Stig Jensen. The authors take full responsibility for the content of the report and all the usual disclaimers apply.

We would like to extend our deep gratitude towards all of the participants involved in this study, especially the interviewees who shared their life stories with us.

1

Setting the scene



This report focuses on the experiences and reflections of African researchers who were involved in Danida funded research capacity building 1989-2019. For three decades, support for development research partnerships and research capacity development has been an element in Danish development cooperation channelled through Danida. Albeit in different forms, the main objective of Danida's support to development research has always been to contribute to the solution of developing countries' problems, both in terms of new research results and in the building of research capacity. The main focus in this report is on the

individual outcomes, but it includes the reflections made by some of the informants on institutional capacity building. Why should we be interested in the individual outcomes of the Danish funded capacity building of higher education institutions in Africa within the past 30 years? We found two main reasons for this.

Firstly, there have been a number of evaluations of Danida's support to building research capacity, but these take their point of departure in the logics and rationales of Danida and the aims and objectives of the support. There is little knowledge about why individual African researchers choose to engage



in research capacity building and how capacity building has influenced African scholars' knowledge production and wider life choices in a long-term perspective.

Secondly, studying the individual outcomes of capacity building brings insight into the implied notions of doing good research and the values that are promoted in Danish research environments and wider society. It can also give insight into the partnerships and the relational issues that the participants experience. This can help unfold how Danish ways of doing research live on and are transformed through African researchers and their institutions. This is important for the design of future interventions for building the capacity of higher educational institutions in Africa.

The objectives of this report are:

1. To give voice to African researchers who have been involved in Danida funded research capacity building projects in the period 1989-2019, and to unfold their experiences and share their reflections regarding research capacity building.
2. To provide a systematic overview of the participants' current employment and continued relations with the Danish research environment.

Thus, the report gives insight into how Danida research support has influenced the careers and wider life choices of the African researchers involved, and how it may have contributed to knowledge production at higher education institutions, governmental research institutions and, more broadly, the societies and communities in which they live. Danida's support to research underwent a thorough evaluation in 1994 and 2001, and evaluations covered selected areas in

2011 and 2013 (see Further Reading). However, none of the evaluations covered the long-term perspectives of the support, and they did not attempt to gather information systematically about the results of the individual capacity enhancement decades later.

This report addresses this gap by using the views and life histories of African researchers who have been involved in the partnerships supported by Danida. Danida's support modalities have changed over the 30 year period (see appendix 1). It is not the goal of this report to give an impression of how the different modalities work. Quite a few of the respondents have been involved in different projects and partnerships, which in any case would make it difficult to separate the long-term outcome of one modality from another. Thus, the present study is not an evaluation, but instead it shares the voices and reflections of the African researchers (not of the Danish researchers) involved in those partnerships.

We address the objectives by travelling in the footsteps of the respondents' academic careers. Firstly, we look at how African researchers become Danida funded PhD fellows. Secondly, we hear about their experiences as PhD fellows with an emphasis on the time they spent studying in Denmark. Thirdly, we share their reflections on the long term influences of capacity building on their academic careers and include those researchers who have been involved in Danish research capacity building later in their academic career. In each section a combination of data from the interviews and the questionnaire is used. Finally, we provide a conclusion that we hope can be used in future discussions of Danish support to research capacity enhancement in African countries. However, let us first provide a brief outline the methods used in the study.

2

What we did



The methods used to collect empirical material for this study were qualitative interviews, a questionnaire and a workshop as described below. We have also drawn on knowledge from our other research projects regarding capacity building in higher education in Africa (see Further Reading).

Interviews

We conducted 14 qualitative interviews with African researchers who had been involved in research capacity building supported by Danida. Two interviews were conducted via Skype, one interview was conducted as a group interview and the rest were individual, face to face interviews. All interviews focused on the individual experiences and perceptions of being involved in research capacity building both in relation to Danida's

funding and in relation to broader issues of power in North-South relationships.

Access to interview persons was obtained through DFC's list of visiting research fellows, DFC's lists of Danish project holders and our own network within the Danish research community. Apart from interviewing two researchers who were not in Denmark via Skype, we conducted all the other interviews with researchers who were visiting Denmark. Being in the same room often helps build trust and reduces the risk of misunderstandings, issues that are important for producing reliable knowledge through qualitative interviews. Therefore, we prioritised interviewing researchers who were in Denmark rather than interviewing via Skype. However, in order to have a fair representation of respondents, we chose to use Skype interviews to



access researchers who were not currently involved in partnerships with Danish researchers. We did discuss traveling to Ghana and Tanzania where there is a large number of researchers who have been involved in Danida partnerships but this would have been very time consuming compared to interviewing African researchers who were in Denmark. If we had decided to travel to Ghana and/or Tanzania, we would have had to reduce the number of interviewees or leave out other parts of the data collection. Moreover, in our experience, it is beneficial to interview people 'on location' as this sparks memories about what it is like spending time in Denmark and collaborating with the Danish partners.

Questionnaire

In order to provide a systematic overview of the participants' current employment and continued relationship with the Danish research environment, we carried out a survey of all present and former African participants in Danida funded capacity building. The questionnaire had about 50 questions that focused on the respondents' current employment, research collaboration, publications and mobility, as well as a number of open-ended questions regarding their ideas about benefits and challenges of being involved in research capacity building. Some of the questions were inspired by a questionnaire made by Måns Felleesson and Paula Mähle in 2013 about SIDA funded PhD fellows described in the report *Academics on the Move* (see Further Reading).

The questionnaire was electronic and we wanted to e-mail it to all present and previous African participants in research capacity building funded by Danida. However, a total list of all researchers and master's students who had participated in Danida funded projects over the 30 year period does not exist. Therefore the only feasible way to find these

people was to combine different data sources.

One source was data on all previous and current DFC fellows related to research projects. The data were drawn from the information about individual persons on study stays in Denmark stored in the database of DFC. A total list of 377 fellows was registered. For those fellows, whose email addresses were not to be found in the database or in the DFC files, or whose email addresses turned out not to be valid (133 in total), names and mail addresses were manually searched for on the web, as well as on the Danida Alumni Network webpage. Another source was former and present Danish researchers responsible for Danida projects. They were asked to give contact information for researchers in their project. A final email list of 499 names was compiled from the two sources and used for the distribution of questionnaires. There had been no previous attempt to compile a full list.

The questionnaire was distributed in October 2018 and two reminders were sent out in November 2018. A total of 297 people completed the questionnaire, a response rate of 60%. The aforementioned Swedish study, *Academics on the Move*, had a similar response rate.

We conducted statistical analysis in the form of cross tables and figures. In some instances we also produced tests of significance. For the significance tests we set the level of significance at 95%. Even though it represented a large percentage of the population (60 %), the sample was small for the statistical analysis (297 responses). For this reason, the findings based on test of significance should be treated tentatively. Where one or more categories had less than five respondents, indications of significance can at best be interpreted as a possibly interesting correlation. When this is the case, we have stated it in the text.

Workshop

We held a workshop at DFC on 5 November 2018 attended by 45 African fellows linked to various Danida funded projects and who were currently in Denmark. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss specific questions from the questionnaire in order to get a qualitative understanding of these issues (Figure 1). These included broader questions about the purpose of going to Denmark and notions of empowerment. These were first discussed by the participants in small groups and then they were discussed in plenary.

Respondents

The respondents can be divided into four categories: 1. *Master's Students* who had received a Danida scholarship for studying in Denmark for their entire master's degrees or had been part of a Danida funded project; 2. *PhD Fellows* who were currently doing a Danida funded PhD or had finished their Danida funded PhD within the previous year; 3. *Early Entry Danida Researchers* who had finished a Danida funded PhD more than a year before; and 4. *Late Entry Danida Researchers* who had not obtained a PhD funded by Danida and had entered a Danida funded project later in their career. These four categories could not be differentiated beforehand. As we were only interested in categories 2, 3 and 4, we had to make a questionnaire that could identify those who belonged in category 1.



Figure 1. Participants at the workshop trying out the questionnaire and discussing their answers (Photo: Hanne Kirstine Adriansen)

The distribution of the four categories of respondents is outlined in the following tables. For the qualitative interviews, five PhD Fellows, four Early Entry Danida Researchers and five Late Entry Danida Researchers were chosen.

Category	Number of respondents	Percent of respondents
Master's Students	21	7.07 %
PhD Fellows	117	39.39 %
Early Entry Danida Researchers	119	40.07 %
Late Entry Danida Researchers	23	7.47 %
Unplaceable Respondents	17	5.72 %
Total	297	100.00%

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to category.

The two categories of respondents who currently had or had had a Danida funded PhD scholarship (PhD Fellows and Early Entry Danida Researchers) each constitute 40% of the total group of respondents (Table 1). If we look at the fields of study of the PhD Fellows and Early Entry Danida Researchers, we see that they are unevenly distributed across the various academic disciplines. A little more than one third of the respondents' studies were in the natural sciences, while a little under one third of each of the two groups' studies were in the social sciences. Health was the focus of one fifth of the respondents while the number doing engineering was low, which is not surprising as only about 10% of all the projects were within the field of engineering until a few years ago. As seen in Table 2, 70% of the total number of respondents are male and 30% female, with almost the same distribution for each category of respondent. This corresponds to the gender distribution in the total population of the survey, which leads us to conclude there is no gender bias in our questionnaire study.

Category of respondent	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Master's Students	4 19.05 %	17 80.95 %	21 100 %
PhD Fellows	38 32.48 %	79 67.52 %	117 100 %
Early Entry Danida Researchers	30 25.42 %	88 74.58 %	118 100 %
Late Entry Danida Researchers	7 31.82 %	15 68.18 %	22 100 %
Unplaceable Respondents	7 43.75 %	9 56.25 %	16 100 %
Total	86 29.25 %	208 70.75 %	294 100 %

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to gender.

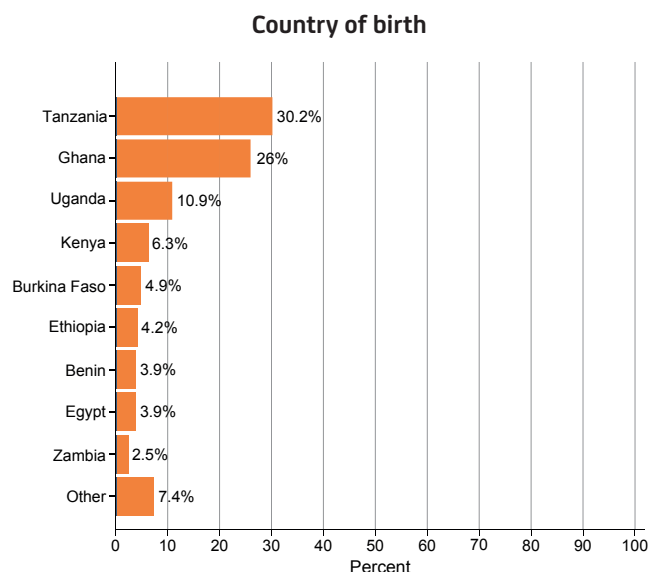


Figure 2. Distribution of respondents according to country of birth (n=285).

The majority of respondents were born in Tanzania (30%) or Ghana (26%) (Figure 2). In Table 3 it can be seen that the majority of the respondents (no matter which category) had their current principal employment in the university sector, followed by the public sector (together these constitute 83%). If we look at the Master's Students, there are at least two interesting points: A high number of them had found employment in the university sector and none of them were unemployed. An additional finding for the Master's Students is that they were more engaged in local and international politics than the other categories of respondents. However, the life trajectories of Master's Students was not part of the terms of reference for the present study.

Anonymity

Interviewees and participants in the questionnaire were all promised anonymity so that they could express their views and critique freely. This was particularly important due to the fact that this study was funded by the same organisation that funded and may continue to fund some of their research. For the workshop participants, anonymity was not an option although we did not register anything about the participants, not even their names. Throughout the report, pseudonyms are used and we have deliberately avoided mentioning where the interviewees are from. However, in quotations from the questionnaire, countries are mentioned, as the number of respondents mean that anonymity is kept.

Current principal employment	Master's Students	PhD Fellows	Early Entry Danida Researchers	Late Entry Danida Researchers	Total
University	9 42.86 %	72 61.54 %	81 68.07 %	18 78.26 %	180 64.29 %
Public sector	8 38.10 %	24 20.51 %	17 14.29 %	3 13.04 %	52 18.57 %
Private sector	0 0.00 %	3 2.56 %	3 2.52 %	0 0.00 %	6 2.14 %
International donor/aid organizations/NGOs	0 0.00 %	2 1.71 %	7 5.88 %	1 4.35 %	10 3.57 %
Think Tank	1 4.76 %	2 1.71 %	1 0.84 %	0 0.00 %	4 1.43 %
Unemployed	0 0.00 %	7 5.98 %	1 0.84 %	1 4.35 %	9 3.21 %
Own business/consultant	1 4.76 %	2 1.71 %	2 1.68 %	0 0.00 %	5 1.79 %
Retired	0 0.00 %	0 0.00 %	1 0.84 %	0 0.00 %	1 0.36 %
Other	2 9.52 %	5 4.27 %	6 5.04 %	0 0.00 %	13 4.64 %
Total	21 100 %	117 100 %	119 100 %	23 100 %	280 100 %

Table 3. *Distribution of the different categories of respondents according to their principal employment. No significant differences were found between the respondent category and their current principal employment.*

3

Getting into a Danida funded PhD programme



‘Somebody told me of an opportunity for doing a PhD and I said, why not?’ (Flores, interview).

‘So everybody who gets his or her master’s or PhD in Ghana feels a little bit intimidated by colleagues who have schooled outside. So everybody wants to go outside’ (Michael, interview).

Over the past 30 years, Danida has funded the PhD studies of researchers living in more than 18 different African countries. The structure of a PhD programme varies not only from one country to another, but it has also changed over time. Therefore, it is not surprising that the interviews revealed a number of different ways of gaining admission to a PhD programme. These will be explored in this section.

Most of Danida’s funding for research capacity building is given to projects based in institutions. Betty’s story represents what is taken to be the typical way of starting a PhD supported by Danida.

Betty had been working at a national research institution for seven years before she started her PhD recently. The institution was involved in the process of selecting the candidate and approving the project together with the Danish counterpart. Betty had clearly the capacity building of her institution in mind when she chose the focus of her research for her PhD. As she herself says: *‘It is an institution that is trying to build the capacity of its employees.’* Her experiences and use of different kinds of funding from different donors around the world are all within the context of the institution within which she worked.

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The majority of our interviewees, however, had a different way of telling their story: it was based not on the rationale of the institution but on the rationale of their individual life trajectories. They revealed how they negotiated the various opportunities that were available. Gideon is a case in point. He is highly mobile and has moved between institutions and African countries during his bachelor's and master's degrees. Having applied for more than 30 PhD scholarships all over the world, he ended up having four offers to choose from. These were located in different parts of the world: Africa, the Middle East, Europe and Asia. When explaining how he prioritised the different offers, he said that he wanted to become a researcher in an international setting: *'I was moving out of Africa... because I did my bachelor's in Africa... I needed the PhD to be completely out of the continent.'* Interestingly, he ended up choosing a fifth option, namely to do his PhD in Denmark in a Danida funded project. His choice was based on his desire to work in an international setting but the determining factor for accepting the offer was the professional and personal relationship he had developed with a Danish researcher during his master's degree. Personal relationships are important for many involved in research capacity building.

Over the years, there have been many different ways to get a Danida funded PhD. Anthony is a case in point. He was employed at a university in his home country and was collaborating with Danish researchers, when *'the issue of a PhD came up'*. The Danida project was coming to an end, but there was some money left which meant *'they gave me a stipend for one year and then they sponsored the fieldwork'*. After getting the funding for one year from Danida, Anthony managed to find funding for his PhD research from other sources *'As soon as I started the PhD there was a sponsorship to*

the university and then I applied'. This story shows that from the individual point of view there are many different ways of joining a Danida funded PhD programme. There are other examples of researchers who had managed to put together funding in somewhat unconventional ways with the help of Danish researchers in Danida projects. Both during the interviews and in the questionnaires, some participants argued that they found the Danish system flexible and less bureaucratic in comparison with other countries. Marshall, who enrolled in a PhD in Denmark in 1996, had this impression of Denmark: *'It's a modest society but very organized and also of course very wealthy to some extent because of that good organization that the society has.'* He sees a thread running from the modest and well organised society to the simple and flexible system that allowed him to be registered as a PhD fellow.

Another aspect is that Denmark was seldom an active choice but rather an opportunity that presented itself. The following two stories illustrate this.

Flores had been working in a ministry for 30 years. She had applied to do a PhD some years earlier and had started her data collection. However, it was a self-financed PhD and at some point her priorities changed: she decided to spend her money on building a house instead of doing the PhD so the PhD came to a halt. In 2014, a new opportunity with Danida funding presented itself. She explains: *'I was asked to give in my papers and wait for the feedback. Later on I came to realize that I had all the qualifications they were looking for and that was why I was taken for this programme. That is how the story started.'*

Carolynne had been working as a teaching assistant at the university in her home country for five years before starting a Danida funded PhD. In order to



stay in the university system she needed to do a PhD and she had made many applications. In the beginning, she was looking for a full degree abroad, but then she had children and being a single mother made it difficult for her to manage going abroad. She started applying for a 'sandwich model' PhD. When we asked her if she had had any preferences in terms of where she wanted to go, the short answer was 'no' and in the subsequent conversation she said: *'[I would go] everywhere I think I would be able to do my work.'*

In many African countries, there are still close links to the former colonial powers and the language of the coloniser is used as the medium of instruction at university level and even as early as at primary level in many countries. The language issue means that it is natural to look for opportunities in former colonies and other countries with the same mother tongue. While English is or should be spoken in Danish research environments, when non-Danish speakers are around, this is not always the case: *'my worst experience is the weather and also how the Danish quickly switch to speak Danish even when you are in a meeting with them'* (Female, PhD Fellow). In the questionnaire there were other remarks about the Danish language as a reply to the question about worst experiences: *'it was difficult to cope to the all Danish. From letters addressed to me, to labels in the supermarket, to vending machines'* (Male, PhD Fellow). As a small country with no recent colonial presence in African countries, Denmark is not an obvious destination for young Africans – at least not as their first choice. For the individual researchers, after having searched for opportunities in various parts of the world and made applications without success a Danida funded PhD was often the only choice available. One interviewee mentioned university ranking. He was one of the current PhD Fellows and he had had several options for a PhD scholarship. For him, the high ranking of Danish universities

was an influencing factor. Other interviewees also talked in terms of hierarchies of universities both between the Global South and Global North and within the Global North itself. While language was seen as an obstacle when working in Denmark, the quality of Danish universities counted positively. For the majority of the interviewees, living and doing research in Denmark was not an active choice but rather his best opportunity available at the time.

Many of the interviewees did not talk about their research in terms of capacity building; for them it was simply just research. They found it difficult to talk about the modalities and how the capacity building project functioned. Some of them simply did not know. The interviewees accepted the funding because they wanted to do a PhD. This was because they were interested in doing research and not because they were particularly interested in doing capacity building. In other words, being part of research capacity building was a means to an end, not an end in itself. This is important to bear in mind for the rest of the report.

The most interesting findings

- Denmark was rarely the first choice but, as we will see, many were really pleased with their stay in Denmark and what they had learned in the course of doing their PhD.
- For the interviewees, research capacity building was not particularly interesting in itself. It was a means to an end, namely to do research, but it was not an end in itself. However, as the next sections will show, many made the most of the opportunities that being part of research capacity building offered.

4

Doing a Danida funded PhD



'Studying in Denmark has been one of the memorable experiences in my lifetime. From the close supervision to the friendly community, to the organised transport, facilitation and accommodation arrangements at DFC including internet connectivity which made it possible to interact with our families back home on daily basis, and the integration of intensive study with fun moments and opportunities which made it possible to endure the harsh cold seasons. It was an experience to behold and no regrets what so ever. I will forever remember Denmark and it is surely a nice place to be. My gratitude to DANIDA for offering me this opportunity of a lifetime' (Flores, e-mail after the interview).

What does doing a Danida supported PhD entail? For all but a few PhD Fellows from the first projects, it entailed spending some, but not all of their time in Denmark. Hence, it entails mobility and being exposed to a different academic environment as well as a different society in general. In this section, we explore the period of the PhD training.

Due to the different support modalities used over the 30 year period, the total time spent and the number of trips to Denmark varied from individual to individuals. On average, 47% of the PhD Fellows and Early Entry Danida Researchers spent 1-6

months in Denmark, 33% spent 7 -12 months, and 20% spent more than a year in Denmark. No differences in this pattern related to gender were found. In Figure 3, the difference between the PhD Fellows and Early Entry Danida Researchers is shown in order to illustrate the change over time.

The difference between the two groups is significant (P-value 0.025) indicating that the time spent in Denmark is declining over time as the PhD Fellows now spent less time in Denmark as compared with the Early Entry Danida Researchers who had finished their PhDs more than a year earlier. None

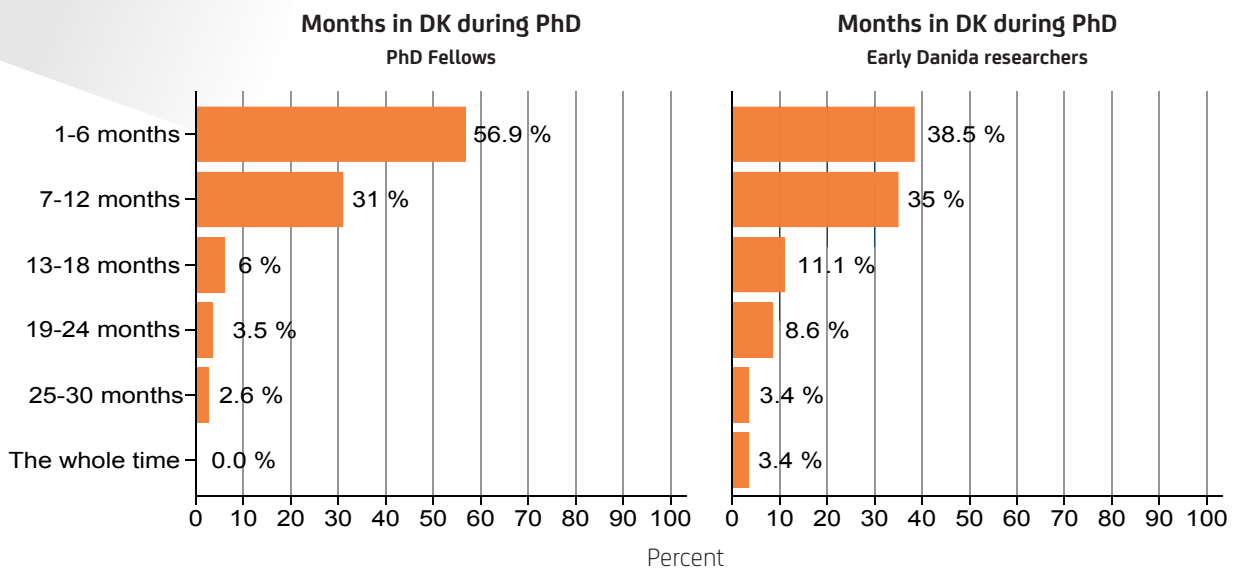


Figure 3. This shows the number of months spent in Denmark for PhD Fellows and Early Entry Danida Researchers (n in total: 234).

of the current PhD Fellows spent all of their time in Denmark. The significant difference may be due to the fact that the rules have been changed.

Making the most of being in two worlds

'Access to world class literature and strong supervision turned me inside out for the better in terms of intellectual development'
(Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

The questionnaire gave us an overview of the reasons for coming to Denmark and the reasons for staying in the home country (see Figure 4 and 5). During the qualitative interviews, this was elaborated further. Anthony explained that he had to come to Denmark during his PhD project in order to do his literature review because he did not have access to the relevant literature at his home university. Access to articles was difficult

in the mid-1990s because libraries had limited funds and could therefore only afford subscriptions to a limited number of relevant journals. While this has improved, especially with the digitisation of academic journals, finance is still an issue: *'it all boils down to finance,'* Anthony observed. He explained that journal subscriptions were very expensive which meant that the university where he worked was not as well equipped as the University of Copenhagen. It helped to have long term, transnational relationships. In Robert's case, the relationships that had been established through research capacity building, had developed into friendships. Robert told us that a collegial friendship had given him another option for acquiring articles: *'I write to Laurids [his Danish counterpart and friend] and he will send them to me.'* An interesting point is that the digitisation of journal articles (and to some extent books) has made these much more accessible to scholars at African universities despite

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the fact that many universities in the Global South cannot afford the subscriptions. It was only as a result of the friendship that he had developed in the course of a long-term research capacity building project that Robert had continued access to journals after the end of the project. Hence, being involved in research capacity building also involves developing friendships that can have academic importance as we will see in the next sections.

As we can see in Figure 4, access to physical facilities is an important reason for staying in Denmark during the PhD programme: 74%, 55% and 51% respectively indicate that libraries, laboratories and other facilities are very important. However, supervision is the most important reason: 84% indicate that it is very important and 99% as either important or very important. Attending PhD

courses and interacting with other scholars is also important. We did not find significant differences between the PhD Fellows and the Early Entry Danida Researchers that would indicate that the reasons have changed over time. We used the interviews to get an in-depth understanding of what their stays in Denmark had meant for the interviewees.

The reasons for staying in the home country are shown in Figure 5. Here, fieldwork is the most dominant reason as 95% indicated that this was very important. However, supervision is also important as 69% indicated that it was very important (97% when adding important and very important). Teaching is very important for 45% whereas 47% marked interaction with other scholars as being very important.

During the qualitative interviews, it became evident

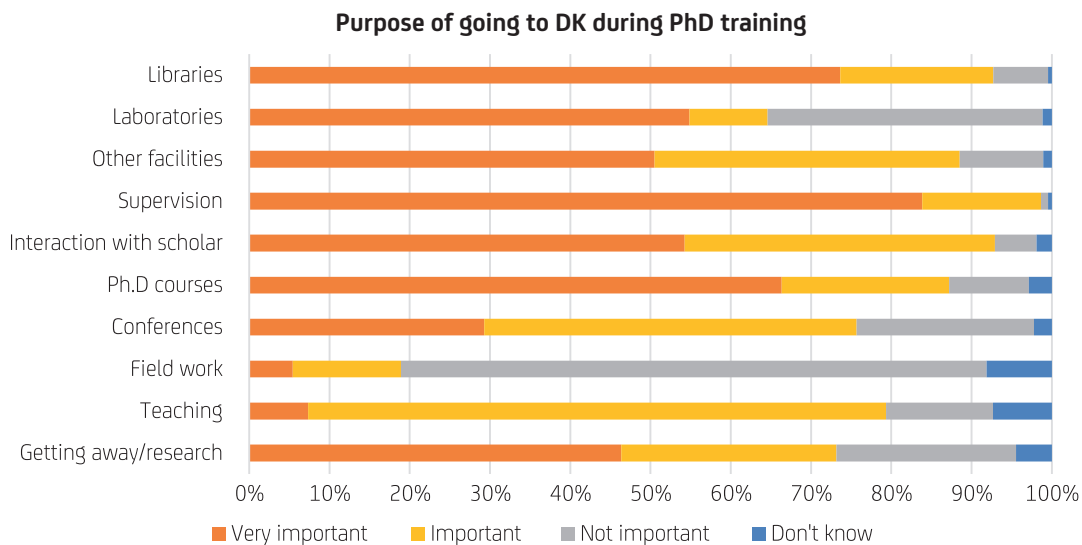


Figure 4. This shows the PhD Fellows' and Early Entry Danida Researchers' responses to the question: What was the purpose of going to Denmark during your PhD training? (n ranges from 148 to 223) No significant difference was found between PhD Fellows and Early Entry Danida Researchers. No significant gender differences were found except for the item Ph.D courses that was rated higher by women than by men.

that having access to physical facilities in Denmark and in the home country was valued differently by those involved. We have two examples of this. For Gideon (PhD Fellow in the health sector) being in Denmark gave access to advanced technologies that were not available at his home university. He conducted fieldwork and initial lab-work at home and then returned to Denmark for further lab-work and to do the advanced analysis essential for processing his research. Furthermore, access to advanced lab-technologies gave Gideon access to knowledge and knowledge production *on a par*

Denmark. Training in using the equipment also took place both places. Instead, being in Denmark gave Oliver the opportunity to share and discuss knowledge. He said that he came to Denmark: *'to bridge the gaps between the long conversation'*. He sees his relation to this Danish supervisors and colleagues as *'one long conversation'*. When he was in Denmark, he could interpret, discuss and share data, something that rarely happened at the university where he was employed. As he put it, *'[at home] the students are struggling on their own, but here [Denmark] you always have someone.'* Hence,

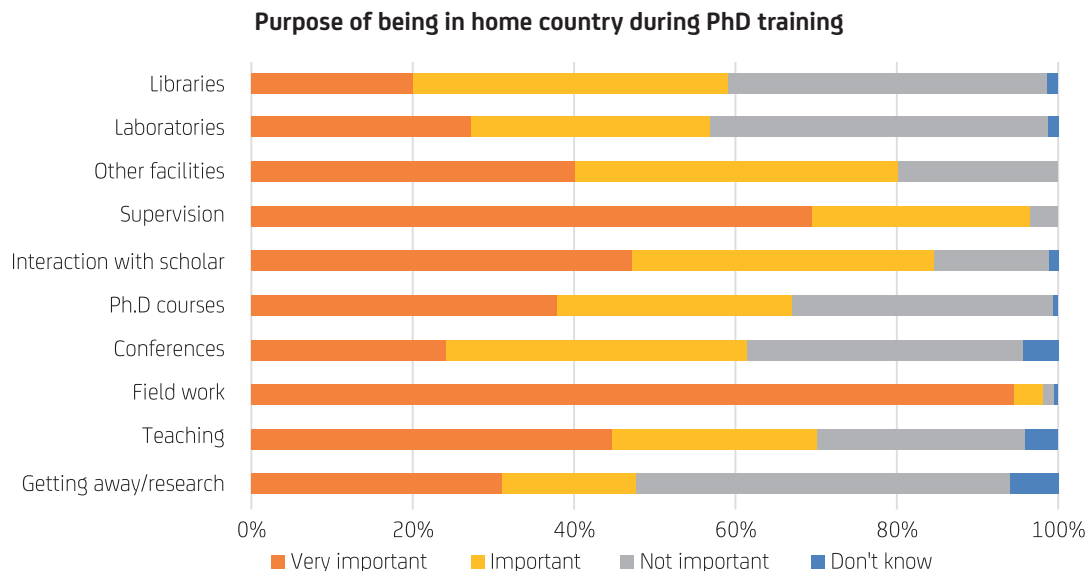


Figure 5. This shows the PhD Fellows' and Early Entry Danida Researchers' responses to the question: What was the purpose of being in your home country during your PhD training? (n ranges from 151 to 221) No significant differences were found between PhD Fellows and Early Entry Danida Researchers or between male and female respondents.

with his Danish colleagues. For Oliver (PhD Fellow in the natural sciences), on the other hand, being in Denmark was not about access to laboratories and other facilities. He also used equipment and advanced technologies in his research, but this was available both at his home university and in

in Oliver's case, access to the physical infrastructure for research is independent of place but place plays a significant role for access to knowledge and knowledge production.

Over the years, Danida has supported the

establishment of physical research facilities such as laboratories (mainly through equipment and staff training) in order to enhance research capacity at university level in different African countries. As this report focuses on the individual outcomes of Danida capacity building, we cannot tell how this has worked. However, some of the Early Entry Danida Researchers had been involved in this type of capacity building. Peter was one of the main participants in establishing a GIS laboratory. He described the significance of the project this way: *'Before the GIS lab, in order to build capacity locally, we were building capacity by sending people abroad. Having the GIS and remote sensing lab meant the facilities would benefit many staff and not only those who went abroad. It means, it would benefit those who did not get a scholarship to go abroad.'* In that respect, building facilities locally meant that many more benefitted and that the research capacity building was not tied to individuals, making it less vulnerable. *'People could move or die, but the facilities would remain,'* as Peter put it. He also observed that one of the benefits of sending people abroad was that it exposed them to other ways of working.

We have analysed the reasons for going abroad and the reasons for staying at home for the two groups, (the PhD Fellows and Early Entry Danida Researchers), to see whether there was any development over time. We did not find significant differences. This may be due to the data, as we do not have many respondents from the early years. Therefore, the best source of information is the qualitative interviews with those involved such as the interview with Peter mentioned above.

The qualitative interviews showed that the interviewees were conscious of making the most of being in the different places. The majority conducted fieldwork in their home country (see Figure 5) and many of their counterparts in the

Global North also conducted fieldwork in the same area. Hence, their supervisors and other Danish colleagues were also mobile. Gideon is an example of a PhD Fellow who travelled between his home country in Africa and Denmark and tried to make the most of being in two worlds. When reflecting on being a researcher in the Global South compared to being a researcher in the Global North, he says, *'in terms of capacity we cannot be the same. For example, working with some of the big diseases in the world, a researcher working in Africa is an expert in fieldwork but does not have access to cutting edge techniques but must rely on sending samples for analysis elsewhere.'* However, as we have shown above, some PhD Fellows found the physical facilities in their home country adequate. They came to Denmark for other reasons, mainly for supervision and to be part of a research environment.

Experiencing challenges and gaining new insights

'Many people don't do anything after their Master's, don't push themselves. In Denmark, we were encouraged to challenge the professors. I learned discipline, work ethics, critical thinking. We were on a first name basis, you learn to respect people' (Festo, interview).

'I discovered who I am and what is expected of me. I was empowered and because of that I am able to advance in my research and teaching' (Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

'Doing my PhD was like walking in the forest and discovering new plants, flowers, trees, animals etc. Sometimes it was challenging, but mostly it was interesting, stimulating, empowering and an important part of who I am today' (Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

At university in his home

country, Charles had learned to reproduce knowledge rather than create new knowledge. Soon after he arrived at the University of Copenhagen, he realised that the system was different. Being a good academic was closely related to questioning what was taken for granted even when it entailed questioning older professors. Charles explained that he appreciated a system where freedom of thought was highly valued, but it was a challenge to learn how to question colleagues and professors, especially while also learning to use a new working language (English) and new scientific methods within his field.

In the responses to the question about the words that best described their PhD journey (Table 4), 'intellectually stimulating' were the most frequent (90%). 'Personal development' (79%) and 'challenging' (69%) were also considered to be important as were 'interesting' (69%) and 'empowering' (64%). These findings in themselves are maybe not surprising. We would argue that doing a PhD can be described as challenging for many PhD students regardless of their institutional and cultural background. For many PhD fellows all over the world, the training is not either hard or interesting but both, as the following quotes show.

'It was sometimes great when plans progressed smoothly but it was also a bit overwhelming in a few instances. On the whole, all the ups and downs paid off and it was worth it'
(Female, PhD Fellow).

'As hard as the journey was, I enjoyed every bit of it'
(Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

However, the low rate of 'disappointing' (5%), hard (11%) and 'difficult' (14%) among the respondents might indicate that the organisation and the involved partners in Danida funded PhD

Which words do best describe the period of your PhD training	Female	Male	Total
Intellectually stimulating	57 83.82 %	155 92.26 %	212 89.83 %
Difficult	14 20.59 %	20 11.90 %	34 14.41 %
Challenging	42 61.76 %	120 71.43 %	162 68.64 %
Interesting	39 57.35 %	125 74.40 %	164 69.49 %
Empowerment	42 61.76 %	109 64.88 %	151 63.98 %
Hard	9 13.24 %	18 10.71 %	27 11.44 %
Great	29 42.65 %	79 47.02 %	108 45.76 %
Overwhelming	14 20.59 %	24 14.29 %	38 16.10 %
Disappointing	3 4.41 %	8 4.76 %	11 4.66 %
Fun	18 26.47 %	38 22.62 %	56 23.73 %
Personal development	52 76.47 %	135 80.36 %	187 79.24 %

Table 4. *This shows the number and percentage of respondents who answered the question, "Which words do best describe the period of your PhD training, pick as many as you want." There is a significant gender difference in the responses for the word 'Interesting' (P-value 0.01).*

programmes have found a format and a way of collaborating that work for the majority of the PhD fellows. It could also indicate that the conditions offered by Danida are relatively better than those offered by their home universities.

It is positive that few people chose negative words when describing the PhD training, especially when taking into consideration that the majority had had supervisors in two countries and from two different academic systems. For some, however, this turned out to be difficult, as can be seen in the comments that they added to the questionnaire:

'The Danida PhD programme gave me an exposure especially during my stay in Denmark. I found the training there to be world class and that built my confidence in terms of competing with my peers from the rest of the world. I did not find any short change in terms of the quality of teaching and supervision in Denmark. I can sum that up as been an awesome experience. However, I found my stay home and relationship with my home supervisor very disappointing. There was no support of so whatever form and the home supervisor was disappointing. Unfortunately, as a result of that I had to drop out of the programme. I speak about my case has been peculiar and wish no PhD student goes through same. Nonetheless, I pick my few months stay in Denmark as a blessing and that helped me a lot afterwards' (Male, PhD Fellow).

The joint or double PhD is a new modality. 37% of the respondents are or have been enrolled in joint PhDs (n=257). Apparently, (and not surprisingly), being enrolled in joint PhDs is not without its problems.

'A joint PhD is very challenging mainly because I have to work with two different timelines with different milestones to be completed for the different institutions at the same/different times. I have had time to read a lot, however, which has been very important for my academic and personal development' (Male, Early Entry Danida Fellow).

'The double PhD has been more challenging than I initially thought it would be. The difficult aspect for me is having to implement two different schedules by the two different universities. Both universities demand different things at different and sometimes the same time which makes it more challenging at times. The research stay in Denmark was more intellectually revealing. I was at a course where the schedule was more practical than I had previously experienced which was very good for me. It was a different kind of educational and cultural experience' (Male, Early Entry Danida Fellow).

'In Denmark, everything went on smoothly but in my home country is where the training is very tough' (Male, PhD Fellow).

The questionnaire did not have specific questions about supervision, but a few respondents mentioned problems with supervisors in reply to the question about how research capacity building could be improved.

'Increased joint interaction between my Kenyan supervisors and my Danish supervisor' (Male, PhD Fellow).

'By making it possible for Danish supervisors to visit their students in Africa and experience for themselves local field conditions' (Male, PhD Fellow).

'There were incidences of conflicting instructions from the Danish supervisor and the Kenyan supervisors. This lead to some misunderstandings. It would be best to have clear objectives of the study' (Female, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

Generally, the answers to the open-ended questions were positive and many emphasised that they had experienced an intellectually stimulating environment in Denmark.

'My study was generally intellectually stimulating because of the opportunity to interact with many experienced scientist in the field and the many possibilities of uncovering new things in the field of microbiology. These were fascinating and interesting moments for me as scientist who had little or no access to modern laboratory facilities for research. The challenge was from the fact that I had to learn to do so many things, sometimes with complex equipments I had no previous experience with in a short time. In the end however, I developed my capacity as scientist with international recognition, and I feel empowered' (Male, Early Danida Researcher).

'The academic model in Denmark contrasted with the one I knew from Senegal. Danish create space for free thinking and initiative taking that is built on hard work and confidence. The supervisor was very respected but treated us with very high consideration. I learned interpersonal skills for taking up the challenges to address complexity without reference to the boss. Another dimension is the mutual trust. I was treated with the same consideration as my Danish peers. The humanization of professional relationship is very important for building career path'. (Male, Early Danida Researcher).

.....

'Research is a new experience for me. The input from my Danish supervisors was enormous. They criticized the substance of work done and made my write ups better. Courses I participated in brought new dimensions to me in research. This is an experience I will forever be grateful for' (Female, PhD Fellow).

.....

Likewise, in other parts of the empirical material, issues such as discussing and sharing knowledge, the relatively flat social hierarchies, and the focus on critical thinking and working independently were mentioned time and again. Hence, the respondents' replies to the question about their experiences and what they remembered about their stay in Denmark fall into three broad categories: 1. Discussing and sharing knowledge, 2. Flat social hierarchies 3. Critical thinking and working independently. These broad categories are often closely associated with the experiences of being in a research group and their relationship with their supervisor(s). This is something they bring back home, as we will see in the next section. Furthermore, several of the women said that they felt respected and that they found the working style and the way they were treated by their supervisors empowering.

In reply to the question, 'In hindsight, what was the most important outcome of your visit(s) to Denmark for your research product?' a respondent said,

'That was to learn how to operationalize what I discovered. I learned to be an independent thinker and a man of positive construction to advance science. I learned humility and open-mindedness. I strongly improved my writing skills for journal papers and proposal for funding. Another important aspect was to acquire skills for a transparent planning process and human resource management based on a collaborative and fair judgment for people's roles in a team.'

Here, learning to be an independent thinker is linked to a number of different academic skills. During the interview, Marshall talked about the informal, egalitarian society with relatively flat social hierarchies he experienced in Denmark: *'In Denmark a professor is riding a bike. During classes people are discussing issues, professors not imposing views on students. They are not wearing a tie to impose anything. The lack of hierarchy has always stayed with me. My supervisor was just so accessible, so approachable.'*

The observation that critical thinking, the relatively flat social hierarchies and having access to and sharing knowledge had impacted on the respondents' knowledge production permeates their responses. Gideon provided an example of this. He often helped his colleagues in various African universities with research papers (mainly with language issues) and in this process he had become aware of what he had learned from being in a research group in Denmark. Usually, Danish researchers aimed to get their articles published in high-impact journals and Gideon experienced Danish researchers as critical in the sense that it is more important to have one good paper published than generating a large number of papers: *'You don't publish anything where you have not publishable results,'* he said, adding, *'anything is publishable [in the African system], at home a paper could easily be split into many papers.'* This shows how

Gideon, through being involved in research capacity building, had learned and adopted another way of publishing, one based on quality rather than quantity – in his perception.

The most interesting findings

- Learning to be a critical thinker and to work independently as a researcher during their stay in Denmark comes out very strongly among all the respondents. Having a Danish supervisor and being part of a research group in Denmark is very important for this to happen.
- Being in Denmark gives access to advanced instruments and laboratories, to journals and other physical resources necessary for doing research. However, at the individual level, the need for and use of this access varies. For some it is essential for their research projects, for others it has little importance.
- Interaction and personal relationships with the Danish researchers involved play an important role in ensuring the successful outcome of the capacity building process. The result is often long-term relationships and joint publications and funding applications and these are important for the career of the researchers, an issue we will discuss in the next chapter.
- For the PhD Fellows, mobility between the Global South and the Global North is an important prerequisite for achieving the above-mentioned findings. The study period in the Global North can either be longer stays or multiple stays. Through these stays, the PhD fellows learn critical thinking, questioning the taken for granted, and the experience of relatively flat social hierarchies.

5

Being involved in Danida funded research after a PhD



'It is important to maintain the connections that can help pay for conferences and to participate in projects that can finance fieldwork and to do joint publications. Danida can help by funding research in the African countries' (Festo, interview).

Danida aims to build research capacity locally and therefore it is interesting to explore what happens after the PhD Fellows have obtained their degrees. Danida also supports researchers who received their PhDs from other countries. We have labelled them Late Entry Danida researchers to indicate that they came into contact with Danida later in their careers. In this section, we explore how research capacity building had affected their knowledge production, career and wider life circumstances to see whether their interaction with the Danish research environment had left a mark.

Firstly, we analysed where the respondents were employed after having received a Danida supported PhD. As shown in Table 3, the majority of those who had done a Danida supported PhD (Early Entry Danida Researchers) were currently employed at a university as their main occupation, namely 68%. Another 14% were employed in the public sector (14%), while 6% worked for an international donor, an NGO or a think tank. Only 1% was unemployed. Is it a problem that not all of those who had received Danida supported PhD scholarships worked at universities? Does this mean

that capacity building has been lost? The answer is no. From the qualitative interviews we know that some of those who worked in the public sector were still conducting research, and some of them were still involved in Danida programmes. Others were no longer involved in research but had important positions in society due to their academic and intellectual skills.

The knowledge and skills gained through their involvement in capacity building were also being used in other ways. The questionnaire showed that 89% of the Early Entry Danida Researchers were active in local development, 23% were active in politics in their home countries and 18% were active in international politics.

Which types of knowledge and can it be used back home?

Research capacity building aims at enhancing the knowledge, skills and competences of individuals in different ways. In the following, we will examine whether the new knowledge, skills and competences can be used at home. An important objective of Danida's support is to contribute to the solution of local problems. Therefore, we wanted to know whether the knowledge gained through Danida's research capacity building programme actually did make such a contribution. This seems to be the case.

In an open-ended answer, one of the male Early Entry Danida researchers wrote: *'I got insight into new ways of thinking about and researching local problems in a way that is relevant for local populations and local decision making. The courses I attended also enlightened me on interactive and problem solving approaches to learning, an approach that makes students more likely to engage in the learning process. This is very important for me in my current employment position.'*

In the questionnaire, we asked the respondents to what extent they agreed that capacity building projects could ignore local problems. Here, 1 % agreed, 11% agreed to some extent, whereas 85% disagreed (Figure 6).

Training in how to be a good academic is *implicit* in the idea of research capacity building and a core activity of the process of becoming a researcher. Mobility between places is important for this. When asked what he brought back home, Charles replied, *'Good collaboration and continuity in work efforts, organizational skills and humility. Good planning and ambition are central.'* The main thing, however, was the ability to produce new knowledge. Charles had been brought up in a system where the reproduction of knowledge was the ideal rather than the construction of new knowledge. For Charles, learning critical thinking and to question what is taken for granted was very important for his ability to construct new knowledge.

When trained in the Global North, researchers become accustomed to the working conditions (e.g. academic freedom), infrastructure, working styles and organisational cultures abroad. Returning to their home universities, where working conditions for teaching and research can be difficult, and politics not an uncommon factor in reward and promotion, researchers can end up being pessimistic about their future career development. There have been examples of this in the empirical material. One interviewee, for instance, had preferred employment in an international organisation in order to avoid the politics involved in getting a promotion at his former university. Another interviewee told us about the difficulties arising from being the kind of academic he had learned to be in Denmark. However, there were also examples showing that this was changing. During the workshop, the participants argued that with the increasing



number of African researchers being trained abroad, other ways of behaving as an academic were being accepted. Festo, one of the interviewees, first arrived in Denmark in 1992 and gained his PhD from a Danish university in 1996. He was now close to retirement and could look back at how he had used the skills and abilities he had gained in Denmark: *'In Denmark I found that with the lecturer encouraged us to express ourselves and to even challenge the professors. So this is something that I have tried also to do. I have brought it in my classes and I encourage my students [to challenge me].'* He went on to explain how he used these approaches with his students; he tried to teach them the discipline, work ethics and critical thinking that he had learned in Denmark. Some things, however, were hard to use at his local university: *'There was a challenge. Colleagues don't accept open book exams.'* Likewise, he found it difficult to change the social hierarchy.

Marshall, another interviewee who first came to Denmark in the early 1990s, looked back at his time in Denmark as very important: *'Because of the training I'm able to publish, to interact, build the confidence. It shaped how I look at the world.'* Marshall no longer worked in research, but in international development in the same field as he did his PhD. He has a profound admiration for Denmark and the way Denmark approaches development work: *'Bottom up-development, listening to individuals, anthropological work.'* These were important issues in his current position.

In the questionnaire, replies to the question 'How would you describe capacity building - what is it, what does it do?' showed that the majority of the respondents focused on building the capacity of individuals:

'[It is] to empower a person to be able to do things differently and in a better way'
(Female, PhD Fellow).

Some also mentioned building the capacity of organisations but very few only mentioned organisations. The majority emphasized scientific knowledge. Some referred to specific technical skills as well as other ways of conducting research within the field while others also mentioned teaching, learning and the wider functioning of the university:

'Capacity building is part of life to all academician like me. I started this program of capacity building since 2008 when I engage myself with research activities in the University, we have a number of collaborations with other institutions together with Danida whereby we get an opportunity to learn and share experiences between countries in terms of researches and as well as academic issues in the universities. This help to improve Quality of education and as well as the services provided by the graduates are of good standard'
(Female, Late Entry Danida Researcher).

Others go beyond academia:

'Capacity building is developing and implementing learning systems for action. It includes aspects of knowledge translation for various uses and dynamic engagement with stakeholders. Capacity building goes beyond academia and embraces development of skills and abilities for community of practices'
(Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher)

The respondent goes on to explain what is required for the knowledge to be useful back home:

'The point here is to redefine the tools and frameworks for addressing universality of knowledge without using it as the explorer did to address external agenda that are not relevant to local communities'
(Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

Through our interviews, the questionnaire and our previous research, we found that, for analytical purposes, the knowledge, skills and competences gained through research capacity building can be

divided into five interconnecting areas: 1. Scientific knowledge and, for some, specific technical skills as well as other ways of conducting research within the field; 2. More general academic skills such as critical thinking including questioning the taken for granted, writing publications, presenting findings and applying for funding; 3. New ways of teaching and learning; 4. Research ethics, working styles including questioning professors and supervisors, organisational culture including a different social hierarchy and behaviour in academia; 5. Knowledge about a different country and culture, learning to behave and function in a new context. When we talked to the participants, it was evident that research capacity building entailed all these different areas of knowledge, skills and competences. In general, however, the answers from the senior researchers (Early and Late Entry Danida Researchers) were longer and much more elaborate with emphasis on the different types of knowledge, while the PhD fellows talked more about types 1 and 2. It is not surprising that it takes time to see what one has learned and how it has been put to use. We would argue that it is important to see all five as important outcomes, as former Danida alumni Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has shown. He is presently the WHO Director-General and in his acceptance speech for winning the Danida Alumni Prize 2017, Dr Ghebreyesus provided a brilliant example of the last type of knowledge mentioned above (knowledge about a different country and culture):

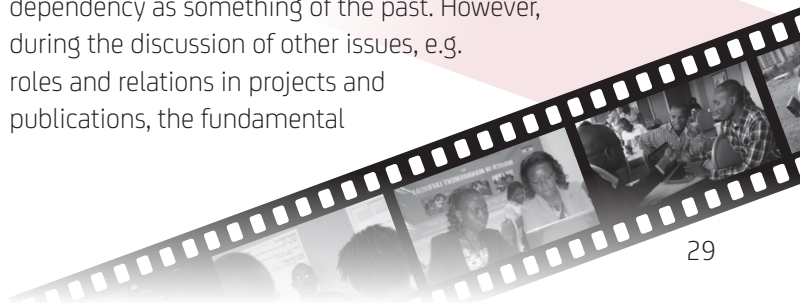
'In fact, it was here in Copenhagen that I had my first experience of universal health coverage, before I really knew what it was. Because it was here in Denmark that I had health insurance for the first time in my life. The peace of mind that gave me made a lasting impression on me.'

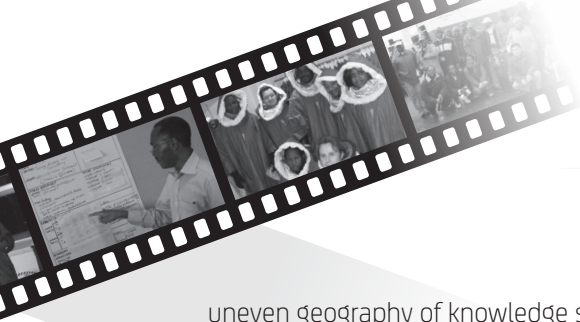
Experiences and reflections of African researchers involved in Danida funded research capacity building 1989-2019

What can research capacity building lead to?

When studying more broadly what research capacity building can lead to from the African participants' point of view, we were very concerned about being open to both the negative and the positive aspects. In our earlier research within the field, we engaged in the critical analysis of the concept of research capacity building and had numerous discussions with partners in capacity building in both the Global North and Global South. Following the 2015 Rhodes Must Fall movement in South Africa and its spread to universities across the world, there has been an increased focus on the geo-politics of knowledge and academic cooperation. A number of academic conferences have been devoted to discussing the 'whiteness' of knowledge and how to decolonise the academy. While the discourse of knowledge decolonisation may be new, some of the debates and arguments are not. They point to the uneven relations between the Global North and the Global South, relations that are present also in research capacity building. We were interested in how the participants perceived this. Therefore, we have addressed these issues in different ways in the interviews, the questionnaire and during the workshop.

Interestingly, only a few found the discussion about decolonisation and dependency relevant today. Michael is a case in point: he uses the slavery metaphor for students travelling abroad and talks about the sense of inferiority that they learn in their home country. *'Everybody getting the chance would want to go outside because we have been made to believe that it is better out there.'* In contrast to Michael, the majority of the interviewees saw dependency as something of the past. However, during the discussion of other issues, e.g. roles and relations in projects and publications, the fundamental





uneven geography of knowledge surfaced. This quote from the questionnaire is a case in point:

'The concept of capacity building must include the dimensions of capacity mobilization. That is to me a consolidation of knowledge systems based on the reliance of domestic scientists. Capacity building is not a static process of information flow from knowledge systems to users of knowledge, it is a continuous process of iteration between users and providers of knowledge and should be based on principle of co-design and co-implementation of science for planning and addressing sustainable development challenges. In any capacity building process the management of the power relationships is key. Any top-down approaches will be detrimental to the need of trusts and collaboration' (Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

In general, universities in African countries are not very well funded and the funding for research in particular is limited. Therefore, you have to find somebody else to fund it, if you want to have a career in research. Festo explained this very well. He argued that if you were able to maintain the Danish and other international connections and keep getting involved in research (capacity building) projects, it meant that you could get the money necessary for conducting research in Africa *'instead of looking for opportunities to go outside the country.'* He continued, *'So participating in those projects enabled me to get money for fieldwork for research, for going to conferences and so on.'* The funding from the projects helped him conduct research, attend international conferences and publish, which meant that getting promotion was not a problem. Festo stressed that it was important to continue supporting African researchers after they had graduated with their PhD and collaborating with them otherwise there was a risk that African academics would look for 'greener pastures' elsewhere in order to build their research career. International funding is very important for

African researchers' ability to be part of the wider academic community. Charles pointed out that in return it is the international organisations, or more precisely the donor community, that determine the research politics in African states rather than the governments in these states. Hence, African countries become dependent on the topics that are in vogue in the Global North. This often means that there is an emphasis on applied research focusing on local issues which seems like the best way to spend limited research resources. However, this also means that African researchers rarely get the chance to be involved in basic research. We see indications of this in the material for this study, e.g. few report that they are involved in building theory.

In the questionnaire, we presented 10 statements about what capacity building can lead to, both positive and negative, and asked the participants to rate to what extent they agreed with the statements. The results can be seen in Figure 6 on page 31.

In Figure 6 it can be seen that 97% of the Early Entry Danida Researchers and Late Entry Danida Researchers agree that capacity building can enhance the research capacity of the beneficiary, 84% that it can lead to empowerment, and 80% that it can enhance critical thinking. For 61% it can lead to long lasting relationships. 72% agree, or agree to some extent, that capacity building can enhance the research capacity of the donor. Few think that capacity building ignores local knowledge and makes African researchers ill-suited to work with local problems. However, 30% of the respondents agree, or agree to some extent, that capacity building can be based on an uneven division of labour between the Global North and Global South and 34% that capacity building can make African universities more dependent on the Global North. These replies surprised us because we find the dependency quite evident as also Charles

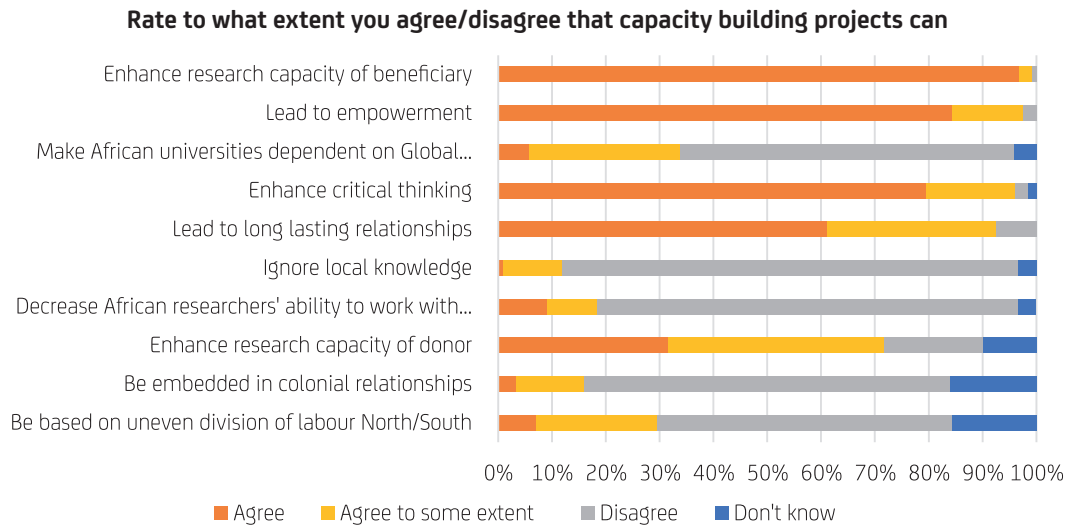


Figure 6. This shows the percentage of Early Entry Danida Researchers and Late Entry Danida Researchers who have indicated the extent of their agreement to 10 statements about research capacity building projects (n ranges from 115-127).

pointed out above. This dependency can also be seen in the extent of African researchers' regional collaboration as shown in the questionnaire. More than half of the Early Entry and Late Entry Danida Researchers collaborated with Europe, while one-third collaborated with other African colleagues. Surprisingly, only 8% collaborated with North America. This may be due to the fact that the questionnaire was sent to researchers who were involved in or had been involved in Danish research capacity building. Nonetheless, there seems to be room for more regional collaboration as one could also expect that some issues are similar in a region, e.g. the fight against malaria and other tropical diseases. The questionnaire also showed that 16% of the respondents were not involved in any African networks and 24% only to a small extent. During the interviews, Charles argued in favour of more regional collaboration as a Danida requirement. Universities in the African countries are part of the global hierarchies of universities.

By including demands for sharing and discussing the outcomes of involvement in research capacity building projects with other universities in the region, Danida's support could multiply. This would lead to regional cooperation instead of competition. Demands could be for organizing workshops, sharing equipment's, train PhD students from other universities in the region, with the purpose of reducing the gap between universities within Africa. As the system functions now, there are tendencies to deepen the gap between universities in Africa, because high-ranking universities often are preferred from the Danish side.

Returning to figure 6, there is a significant difference between Early Entry Danida Researchers and Late Entry Danida Researchers in their answers to two items. Early Entry Danida Researchers agree to a greater extent that capacity building can lead to long lasting relationships (P-value 0.007) and agree less that it is embedded in colonial (or highly

unequal) relationships (P-value 0.007). However, the number of respondents was less than five in some of the categories. This difference between Early and Late Entry Danida Researchers could indicate that long term relations are important for reducing the unequal relationships inherent in North-South collaboration. There is a significant gender difference for the item 'decrease African researchers' ability to work with local problems', where men disagree significantly more than women (P-value 0.037).

When Early Entry Danida Researchers and Late Entry Danida Researcher are asked about the outcome of capacity building on a personal level, the importance of new skills (93%) and personal development (91%) comes out strongly (Figure 7). Also co-authoring publications (76%) and long-term

relationships (72%) come out strongly. Interestingly, solving local problems comes out with a lower score, 52%. For two items (funding and mutual North-South understanding) there is a significant difference between Early Entry Danida Researchers and Late Entry Danida Researchers (P-value 0.000 and P-value 0.012 respectively). However, there are less than five respondents in some of the categories. The numbers indicate that funding is of more importance for Early Entry Danida Researcher, which is in line with the difference for funding found in Figure 7. Mutual North-South understanding is more important for Late Entry Danida Researchers. No significant gender differences were found except for the item 'more attractive C.V.' which is 'very important' to significantly more women than men (P-value 0.045).

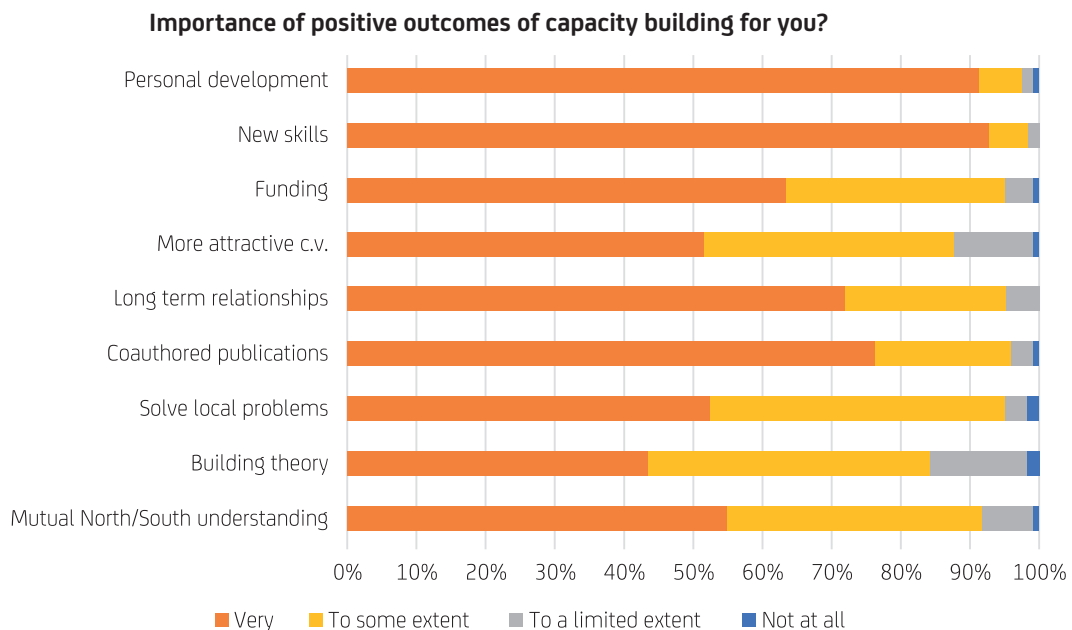


Figure 7. This shows the percentage of Early Entry Danida Researchers and Late Entry Danida Researchers who attached importance to each bullet in answering the question, "The following bullets can be outcomes of capacity building. How important are they to you personally?" (in ranges from 115-126).

The questionnaire included an open-ended question about worst experiences. Surprisingly 66 respondents out of 177 wrote 'none', 'nothing' or 'I only had good experience'. This was an open-ended question where respondents did not have to write anything and therefore the large number of 'no bad experience' surprised us. Open-ended answers are more difficult to classify than predetermined categories, but one very consistent reply was the Danish weather. About 20 respondents noted the weather as their worst experience and some remarked how Danes were more closed during the winter. Seven respondents mentioned racist incidents and there were probably more, but these were not stated as the worst experience. Some of the other replies have been included in the sections where they are relevant such as struggling with two supervisors. A few replies related to roles and relations which we will address now.

Roles and relations in research capacity building

'My worst experience is doing all the data collection and the Danish researchers owning it and taking charge of publishing it when it comes to authorship' (Female, Late Entry Danida Researcher).

'Being used for sample collection from the field by the collaborators for their own benefit' (Male, Early Danida Researcher).

These two answers to the question about their worst experience are unusual in the material. We include them because they reveal the uneven power relations there can be between researchers from the Global South and the Global North. These uneven relations, where the Global South becomes a place for collecting empirical material and the Global North a place for theorising, have been pointed out in scholarly literature. With this division follows the division of labour as pointed out in

the quote. However, few of our respondents spoke explicitly about the uneven power relations and even fewer used a discourse emphasising a colonial relationship and North-South relations. Nonetheless, these issues can be seen in the roles and relations in research capacity building. The following quote from the questionnaire highlights some of the problems:

'Many organization used capacity building concept to set systems of fulfilling their own knowledge agenda. Local scientists are used as data collectors only, resulting to domination and dependence [on] developed countries. At times, the role of the local researchers is reduced to that of a tourist guide: they help negotiate and open up the physical and cultural terrain rather than conceive of projects or contribute equally. These local researchers, too, accept this role, perhaps because the resources/facilities at their disposal don't always allow them to rectify the imbalances of privilege. For them, thus, the choice is between being the last author on a paper versus not being an author at all. There are many good recommendations, hopefully some of them will be implemented with unrelenting diligence! I can go on and on, but the point here is to redefine the tools and frameworks for addressing the universality of knowledge without using it as the explorer did to address external agenda that are not relevant to local communities' (Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

In the questionnaire, we also asked about the participants' roles in their current or previous capacity building project. It turned out that 55% were principle investigators, which is interesting as it indicates that a large number of projects are South-driven. On the other hand, South-driven projects are not necessarily a sign of more even power relations. As Paul explained, it may sound as a great, more equal way of cooperating that projects are South-driven, but accounting and auditing are



still based on the rules, regulations and templates of the Global North. Paul was employed at a fairly high ranking African university with multiple partnerships with universities in different countries in the Global North. For them, the increased focus on South-driven projects meant that they needed to spend a lot of time and money on the administration of these projects because the countries in the Global North all had different ways of accounting and auditing and they all required Paul's university to use the individual donor's system and not its own national system for accounting and auditing. Paul argued that South-driven projects did not change the power relations: he saw them as window-dressing as the standards were still being set in the Global North. Instead, he preferred North-driven projects because they would spend less time and money on administration.

Returning to the question about the participants' roles in their current or previous capacity building project, it turned out that writing publications was the most common (50%), while doing analyses (43%) and collecting empirical material (36%) also seemed to be common. Developing theory on the other hand was not that common (15%). There were no significant differences between the Early Entry Danida Researchers and Late Entry Danida Researchers except for the category "writing publications". The Early Entry Danida Fellows were involved in writing publications (54%) to a significantly higher degree than the Late Entry Danida Fellows (27%) (P-value 0.021). This indicates that long term relations are important for writing joint publications, an observation that we will return to later. There was no significant gender difference.

In one of the open-ended questions in the questionnaire we asked, "What are the differences and similarities between being involved in research funded by Denmark and by other countries?" Many of the respondents who answered this question

indicated that they did not see any differences, but instead saw many similarities between the funding from different countries. For the respondents who described a difference, it seems that funding from Denmark was perceived to be strict but flexible:

'The Danish cooperation is very strict, but at the same time they respect collaborators [...]. This was similar to Finland and Sweden. Many other countries had a strong top-down approach. The Danish do not oppress the collaborators and give room for co-leadership' (Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

'Danida grants are flexible. Scientists from Denmark are dedicated and interested in helping the third world scientists to develop true competencies and self-confidence' (Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

Others participants focused on their experiences of the more collaborative and equal relationship made possible in the funding:

'Danish projects have more inputs to capacity building, are more collaborative, big budget and of long duration' (Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

'The Danish funding mainly addresses local problems and there is always a possibility of having lead PI to come from the South. This include the research idea' (Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

'Funding by Denmark allows you to develop your own project ideas. Other countries bring their own agenda and lets you fits in' (Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

Finally, a few commented on the reporting:

'Difference is more on reporting mechanisms to the funder. DANIDA funding was less bureaucratic' (Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

'No major differences other than reporting mechanisms which were more flexible for Denmark' (Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

'Research themes have usually been different. Research relations and requirements are different across research funders' (Female, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

The last quote points to the issue raised above that having the lead of research capacity building projects in the Global South might create a situation where the African universities spend resources on fitting into many different donor systems.

In the questionnaire, we asked Early Entry Danida Researchers and Late Entry Danida Researchers if they had collaborated with researchers in other countries by writing joint publications. 84% had done so, while 85% had collaborated on joint research projects. Interestingly, it is only in regard to fundraising collaboration that there is a significant difference between the two groups: There is a

significantly (P-value 0.049) higher number of Early Entry Danida Researchers (73%) than Late Entry Danida Researchers (50%) who had collaborated in fundraising with researchers outside their country of residence. This may point to the importance of long term relations. Now let us look into the issue of joint publications in more detail.

Publications and co-authoring

'You know, there is "a publish or perish" dictum at the universities' (Festo, interview).

As Festo observed, publishing is a very important aspect of doing research and of having a research career. Danida's research capacity building should help participants get their findings published for instance through North-South co-authorship. This makes it relevant to look at the extent to which the participants had published, and through which channels.

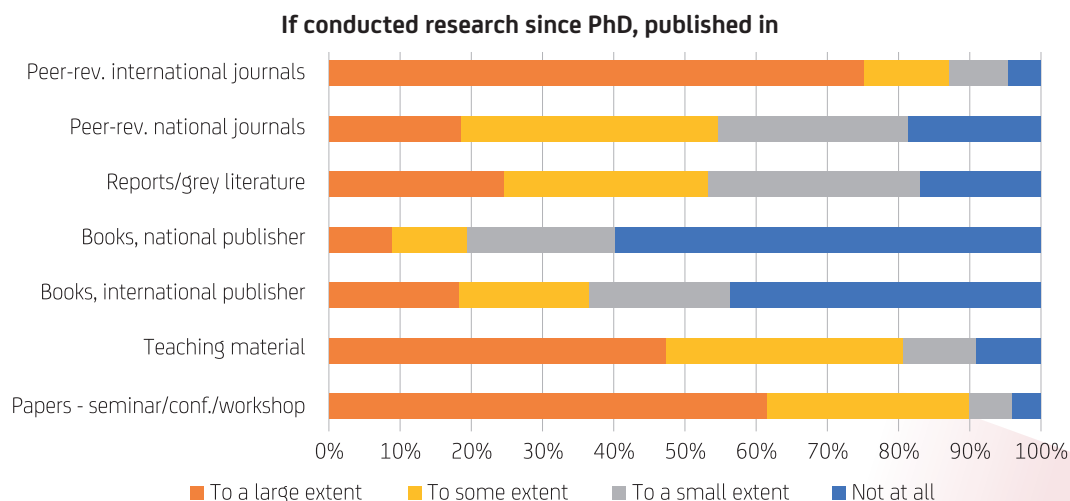


Figure 8. This shows to what degree Early Entry Danida Researchers had published their research results in various types of publications (n ranges from 67 to 109). There were no significant gender differences.

Since completing their PhDs, 75% of the Early Entry Danida Researchers had published in peer-reviewed international publications to a large extent. This can be seen in Figure 8, which also shows that as far as peer-reviewed national journals were concerned the figure was 19%. When it came to publishing papers for seminars/conferences/workshops to a large extent the figure was 62%, while 47% had published teaching material to a large extent.

If we look at the publications co-authored with people in the Danish research environment (Figure 9), the highest percentage (53%) was in international peer-reviewed publications and 36% had co-authored papers for seminar/conferences/workshops. There seems to be very little co-authorships for the other types of publications.

Publications were also mentioned in some of the replies to the open-ended questions. For instance in reply to the most important outcome of visits to Denmark:

'Joint publication & finding opportunity for training for other young researchers' (Female, Late Entry Danida Researcher).

'Co-publication, mutual understanding, long-term cooperation and collaboration' (Male, Late Entry Danida Researcher).

'Many recent publications' (Male, Late Entry Danida Researcher).

'The characterisation and identification of [The content of the research]; publication of five papers; defending my PhD and my own promotion at scientific level' (Female, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

'Personal development. New skills, establishment of long term relationships. Co-authored publications. More attractive CV, solving local problems' (Female, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

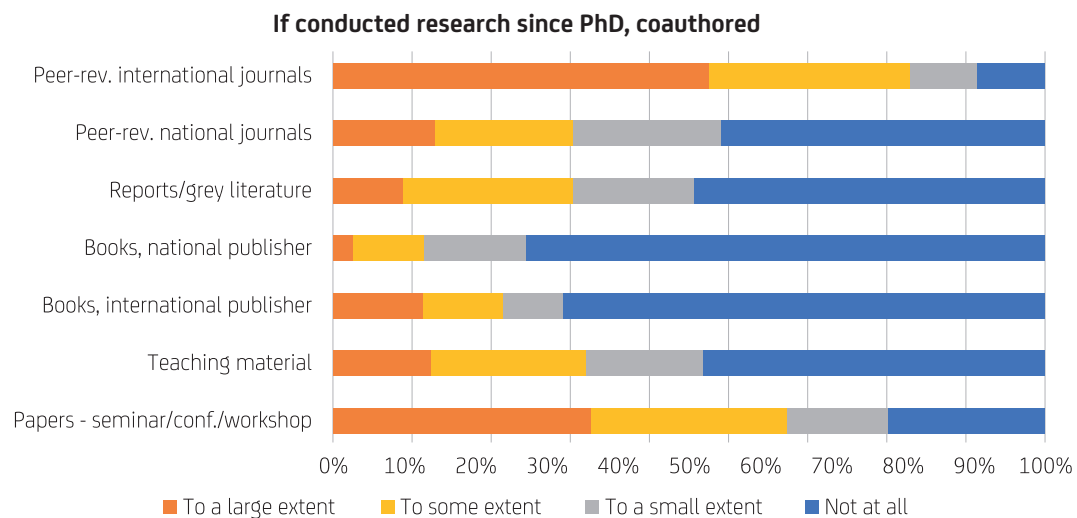


Figure 9. This shows to what degree Early Entry Danida Researchers have co-authored different types of publications with people in the Danish research environment (n ranges from 70 to 105). A significant gender difference is found for the items "Reports/grey literature" and "Books, national publisher", where more women than men had published. However, the number of respondents were less than five in some of the categories, which means that the test of significance might be flawed.

'I had the opportunity to co-author an article for publication. I also had access to resources to complete my research on time. Due to these, I completed the programme on schedule' (Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

While these statements show the prominence of publications along with a number of other things as the most important outcome of their visits to Denmark, others mentioned publications in relation to how collaboration with Danish researchers could have been improved:

'There is need to seriously plan and agree on ownership of data/research findings and authoring publications right from the start. We should work as equal partners' (Female, Late Early Danida Researcher).

'My interaction with Danish researchers was really exciting and equipping. The only challenge at times is the assumption on the part of the Danish researchers that being a PhD student I was totally equipped and able to do some "simple" things like publishing. I realised it was frustrating for them when I could not get it initially. So in the midst of the programme, they arranged for a two-day training on publication. This helped' (Female, PhD Fellow).

As the following quote shows, the joint activities including joint publications did help improve a project:

'The collaboration of Danish researchers have been improved by the funding and implementing a joint research projects, exchange visits, joint conference organisation, joint publications, technical assistance, laboratories facilities and training' (Female, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

As the introductory quote for this section shows, publications are important in the academic world. They are a source of both frustration and pride, as

the following answers to the question about best experience show:

'Co-publishing' (Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

'The publication of my first paper in an international journal and my first participation to an international big conference' (Female, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

'My paper published in an international journal' (Female, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

'Having the chance to disseminate my research findings to international audience through conference presentation and policy briefs besides the everyday journal article publications' (Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

'Exposure to the global scene of research and publication' (Male, Early Entry Danida Researcher).

There is no doubt that research capacity building should include training in how to write and publish in international peer-reviewed journals and that co-authored publications are an important element for the perception of a successful project amongst African participants. Nonetheless, we would like to add that it is important also to make sure that research is disseminated in ways that are relevant for the local context in the different African countries.

Long term relations and continued contact with Denmark

Elisabeth had been involved in research projects with the same group of researchers from both the Global South and Global North for 10 years. When asked, 'Do you think that this plays a role in the results you get?' she replied, 'It means a

lot!’ And Elisabeth continued, ‘Working with people together for a long time, you get to know each other. You know, we are all different in many ways and especially it has to do with making a research team, of course it is not so easy. These dynamics of the teams, it is not so easy, so if you work with people for a long time you know each other, you know the strength and the weakness. Life becomes much easier and the work outputs becomes even much, much better.’ When asked if she could provide examples of this, Elisabeth mentioned complementarity and group dynamics. ‘When you are working with others you are learning a lot. I would not have been the same if I had only worked with researchers in Tanzania.’ In her description, it is evident that the long-term relationship is important. This is something that Danish researchers involved in capacity building also have illustrated and argued for (see Further Reading).

Looking at their contact with the Danish research environment (illustrated in Figure 10), 47% of the Early Entry Danida Researchers indicated that they had a formal research collaboration with the

research environment in Denmark. Many also had a personal relationship with their supervisor (77%) and with others in the research environment (44%). Some 22% had an informal research collaboration while 20% indicated that they had contact with the Danish research environment through supervision. A significantly higher number of men than women answered that they had personal relations with others in the Danish research environment (P-value 0.021).

As far as relations with regard to specific PhD disciplines are concerned, there is a significant difference (P-value 0.004) for the item ‘formal research collaboration’: a significantly higher number of respondents within the natural sciences and health indicated that they had a formal research collaboration than respondents within the social sciences. However, as there were very few responses for each of the three disciplines (45, 23, 28), this can only be treated as an indicative conclusion.

In the questionnaire, we asked the open-ended question, ‘In hindsight, what was the most important outcome of your visit(s) to Denmark for

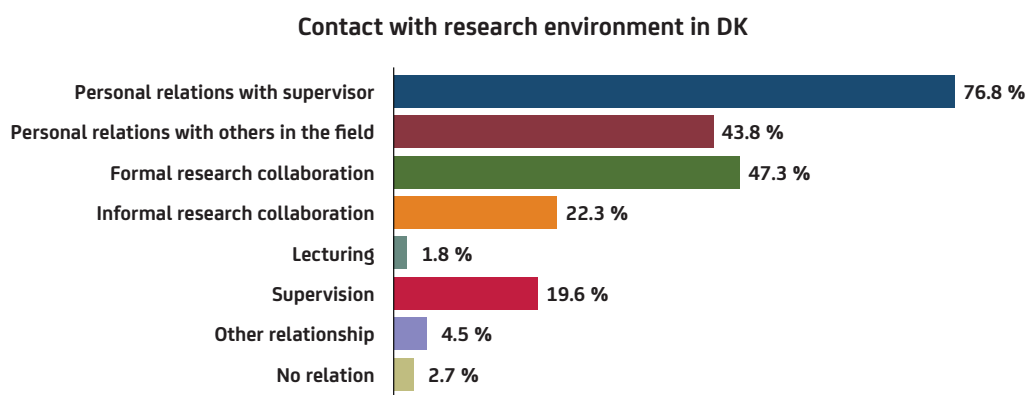


Figure 10. This shows the percentage of Early Entry Danida Researchers who answered the question, ‘In what ways do you have contact with the research environment in Denmark, where your PhD work was attached (several options possible, n=112).

your research production?” The answers provide valuable insight into the importance of this contact for the participants.

‘Long term relationship with my supervisor which has resulted in further research collaborations’
(Female, Early Entry Researcher).

Their contact with the Danish research environment was not necessarily linked to visits to Denmark. As Figure 11 shows, 64% indicated that they had not been to Denmark since their PhD training. However, this does not mean that they did not have relations with the Danish research environment.

The Early Entry Danida Researchers who had been to Denmark the most often had come here not only because of their research projects but also to attend conferences. A small number indicated they had come to Denmark for private reasons.

While only a few had come for private reasons, there is no doubt that many of the research partnerships had grown into something more personal and that these more personal relationships

in turn were important for maintaining long-term relations. Festo explained how his introduction to Danish culture and his investment in relationships in Denmark were important for creating continued relations with the Danish research environment:

‘To get a network first of all you have to know the psyche of your hosts. For instance, a lot of my colleagues from [his home country] who have maybe spent 2 years doing masters in Norway and 4 years PhD in Sweden. But then you find that they kept to themselves. You know they will keep to the [home country] network. So that way you will never get to know the psyche of your host. In my case I was very, very lucky because... If I came to Denmark and just kept to [my home country] network I would never get to know the Danish psyche. So I was very, very happy that I knew a Dane [name of the academic] from [my home country] and she helped me to navigate the Danish lifestyle. So that makes the life much easier. It’s easier to make friends and it’s easier to maintain friends. She received me at Kastrup Airport one cold February morning. And she coached me about the does and don’ts in the

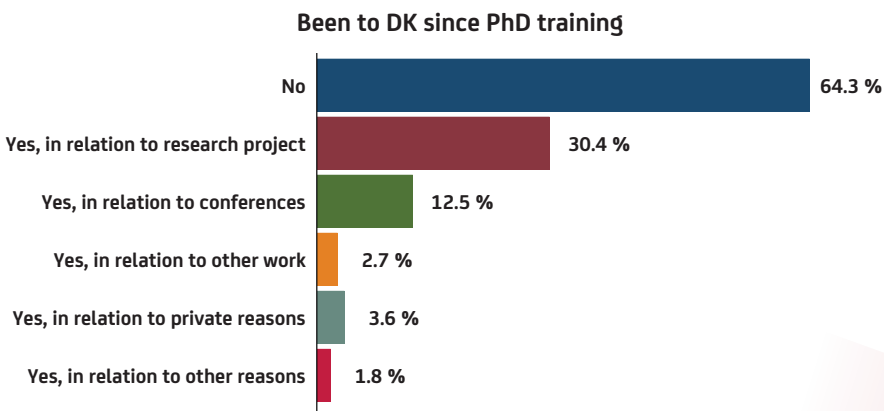


Figure 11. This shows the reasons for going to Denmark since the PhD training for Early Entry Danida Researchers (n=112). There are no significant gender differences or differences between PhD disciplines.



Danish society. When you are invited for dinner you don't just go empty handed. You maybe buy a bottle of wine for your host or a bucket of flowers. A lot of things that we don't know you know when you are coming from Africa.'

For many African researchers, maintaining the connections they have made abroad are vital for making a research career when they come back home. Connections can help you gain access to research funding e.g. through capacity building projects. As some of the previous sections have shown, long term relations lead to a perception of more equal power relations.

The most interesting findings

- After finishing their Danida funded PhD, the majority of the Early Entry Danida Researchers returned to universities in various African countries. For those who worked in the public sector or in international donor/aid organisations/NGOs, the training was still very valuable. They used their critical thinking skills and their knowledge about questioning the taken for granted and sharing knowledge, all competences of good use in other sectors.
- The knowledge, skills, and competences can be used back home. Danida's policies require projects to focus on solving local problems. This is probably the reason why participants felt that they had become better at doing precisely that.
- The majority of Early Entry Danida Researchers had published in peer-reviewed international publications after gaining their PhDs. No information on the ranking of these publications has been collected. As far as co-authoring with researchers from the Danish research environment, articles published in peer-reviewed international publication predominate. Getting the skills and the procedures for publishing is an important result of their stay in Denmark and their subsequent collaboration with the Danish research groups.
- Research capacity building entails much more than just building scientific knowledge and acquiring specific technical skills. It takes time to understand what you have learned by being abroad and how this has affected you as a person. Many emphasised social relations and relatively flat social hierarchies as something positive.
- Participants brought home 'Danish' notions of what it takes to be a good academic as well as what are considered to be good teaching practices and the African researchers tried to implement them. For some these notions also include ideals about how and where to publish.
- Being involved in donor funded research and capacity building was often the only possibility that existed for the respondents to do research at their universities in their home countries. Therefore, maintaining personal relations with the Danish (or other international) research environment was very important for their ability to have an international research career. This study indicates that having long-term relations makes it easier to get access to funding and thus to maintain a research career as a university employee in Africa.
- While the unequal power relations between the Global North and the Global South were mentioned, it was usually implicit. Very few talked about research capacity building as embedded in colonial relations or used the discourse about the decolonisation of the academy.

6 Conclusion



In this section, we draw our conclusions about the experiences and reflections of the African participants in Danida funded support for research capacity building. We share their ideas about ways to improve research capacity building. It is our hope that these voices can be used in future discussions of Danish support to research capacity building in African countries.

- Even though the majority did not have a particular wish to come to Denmark, the participants all had very positive feelings about Denmark (apart from the Danish weather) after having been here.
- The researchers educated through the projects were useful to their countries. The majority (82%) of Early Entry Danida Researchers were employed either at universities or in the public sector, and some of those working in the public sector were still conducting research. Only 1% were unemployed. Others were no longer involved in research, but had important

positions in society due to their academic and intellectual skills.

- The PhD Fellows were making the most of their stays in both Denmark and in their home countries. The most important advantage of studying in Denmark was considered to be supervision and having the opportunity to share and discuss knowledge in the research group. Access to libraries, laboratories, and other facilities were also considered to be very important. Conducting fieldwork and being supervised were the most important aspects of their stays in their home countries. Less than 5% were disappointed with their PhD training.
- The vast majority of the African researchers who were in Denmark as part of their PhD programmes considered their stay in Denmark to have been intellectually stimulating, adding to their personal development and empowerment. They emphasized that they appreciated being able to discuss and share



knowledge with their Danish colleagues, the relatively high level of social equality and flat social hierarchies in Denmark, and that they had learned critical thinking and to work independently. This shows the importance of physical mobility, of actually being in Denmark.

- Even though many had not been to Denmark since they had finished their PhD studies, they remained in contact with their supervisors and other people in Denmark.
- After finishing their PhDs, the majority continued their research and published at international level. As for those not working in the research environment, the value of being trained as a critical thinker, to work independently and to share knowledge was not lost. They continued to apply all of these competences in their new positions. Almost all of the researchers were active in local development, and some were active in politics at home and/or internationally.
- Due to the limited local funding for research, it is vital for researchers at African universities to have access to international funding, for example via Danida's research capacity building programme. Supporting PhD programmes is not enough; it is through opportunities for research collaboration and support, e.g. for fieldwork and conference participation, that African scholars can build a research career.
- When the African researchers leave Denmark, they bring back 'Danish' notions of what it entails to be a good academic as well as other 'Danish' values. Hence, they act as ambassadors for Denmark. This is particularly interesting at this point in time where many other international academics leave Denmark disappointed.
- The fact that the commitment of Danish researchers goes way beyond purely research collaboration is much appreciated by the African researchers as this becomes the basis for the long-term relationships.
- Time is key in order to allow many of the benefits of research capacity building to come to fruition. Through long-term collaboration in the course of the projects, (and often in the course of a number of projects), the participants build up constructive working relations where uneven power relations between the Global North and the Global South become less pronounced. Establishing these partnerships is important for writing joint publications and for getting further funding.

We will end by noting that we were quite surprised by the positive perception of research capacity building amongst the African participants. We have both worked in the field as practitioners and researchers for quite a few years and after having followed the debate about the decolonisation of universities and the critique of the power and politics of knowledge, we were prepared for critique. We asked for it and about it, but it seldom came across. While we find the critique relevant, it does not have a prominent position in this report because the report gives voice to the views, perceptions and experiences of the African researchers. We have done our best to do so in a loyal and balanced way.

7

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Appendix 1

Danish support for building research capacity in Africa

By Bente Ilsøe, Danida Fellowship Centre



Danida Fellowship Centre saw a need for providing a long-term perspective on the results of the individual research capacity enhancement, which the Danida research support has resulted in. This is intended to be a supplement to an ongoing evaluation of the support to research in the past decade. We limited the study to cover only the projects with partners in Africa.

Support for development research partnerships and research capacity development has been an element of Danish development cooperation in different forms for three decades. Through different support forms, the main objective of the support has been to contribute to the solution of developing countries' problems, both in terms of new research results and in the building of research capacity.

Inspired by the initiatives taken by other Scandinavian donor organisations, Danida started the Enhancement of Research Capacity (ENRECA) programme in 1989. It supported research partnerships that were managed by a Danish partner, aiming at building the research capacity at partner institutions in Danida priority countries

through cooperation on research activities. The partnership cooperation was carefully balanced and the projects covered the planning and implementation of locally rooted research activities and PhD and master's degree programmes for the partner country's researchers. The themes of the projects were open, as long as it was relevant for the development of the partner countries. The applications were evaluated by scientist and approved by Danida, and managed by the Danish partners. Well performing ENRECA partnerships were supported for several project phases, some for a total of up to 15 years.

The main driving force behind the partnership projects has always been the professional interest and enthusiasm of the involved researchers from Denmark and from the partner countries. This has been appreciated in various evaluation reports (see Further Reading). In 2003, the ENRECA programme was replaced by support prioritised through the Consultative Research Committee for Development Research (FFU). The support are now given in the form of five year partnership projects managed by research institutions in Denmark, Ghana, Nepal, Tanzania and Vietnam, (Nepal and Vietnam have now been phased out), within selected research themes aligned with Danida's priorities over the years. The research projects are selected through

Experiences and reflections of African researchers involved in Danida funded research capacity building 1989-2019

a competitive process involving FFU, Innovation Fund Denmark and National Screening Committees in Ghana and Tanzania. The themes of the applications are fixed, selected by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The present aim of the Danida support to research (as stated in the 2019 Finance Act) is to generate new knowledge that contributes to the fulfilment of the UN Development Goals as well as to the strengthening of the research capacity in the partner countries and the application of the research results. Information about the projects can be found at the Danida Research Portal (<http://drp.dfcentre.com/>). Danish support to research and capacity building now works through three implementation modalities in the Danida partner countries: the Building Stronger Universities programme (BSU) that supports the research capacity building of universities in Uganda, Tanzania and Ghana, and two types of FFU partnership projects - 'Window 1' projects for research institutions in Denmark and their partners in the Danida priority countries and managed by the partners in Denmark, Ghana or Tanzania, and 'Window 2' projects for partners in the growth and transition countries managed by the Danish partners.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs sets the policy and strategic directions for the support to research and, since 2008, Danida Fellowship Centre has handled the management of the application rounds and project and programme grants and has also promoted the communication of research results.

More information can be found at <https://dfcentre.com/research/> and the projects supported in the last decade is described at Danida Research Portal at <http://drp.dfcentre.com/>

Some facts which may further explain some of the observations of this report: In the first ENRECA projects, it was possible to stay in Denmark for the

duration of the entire PhD programme, but this changed into most PhD students being enrolled at a university in their home country in 'sandwich' type programmes with study stays in Denmark. Since 2008, enrolment at a university in the region or in Denmark has been accepted only in exceptional cases. Since 2010, double or multiple PhD degrees have been allowed. Some projects have also included support to master's students enrolled at the partner universities in Africa. Master's students have only been supported in limited numbers. In all projects, the travel and stay of the Danish supervisors to their partner countries are supported. The so-called South Driven projects were started in 2008, managed from Tanzania and Vietnam, now from Ghana and Tanzania only.

In 1989, the annual amount allocated for development research was DKK 62 million. The amount peaked at around DKK 300 million at the turn of the millennium and it is currently (2019) DKK 200 million. Since the first Danida supported research partnerships started, around a thousand researchers from the partner countries have earned a PhD degree through the projects, and about half of them are from Africa.

It is a pleasure to be able to follow the further careers of the respondents and to learn that 99% have made good use of their education and are useful to their countries. The observations and statements from the respondents and interviewees do not come as a surprise for us who have been part of managing the projects over the years. Not only that the PhD students learned critical thinking, working independently, observed flat social hierarchies and got access to knowledge in Denmark, but also that the cooperation and friendships created have outlasted the project's lifespans. We may add that the partnerships and friendships also have had a significant impact on the Danish researchers.

The fulfilment of the
**Sustainable
Development Goals**
is highly dependent on
research,
lifelong equitable
quality education
and **partnerships**
between
governments,
the **private sector**
and **civil society.**

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