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**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
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Sandwich models

for education and research collaboration:

Some experiences in our Network of Theology and Religious Studies

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The term ‘sandwich’ is increasingly being used in academic, institutional collaboration. We all know the original meaning of the term: a ‘sandwich’ consists of two or more slices of bread with a layer of meat or cheese between. The term is then, more and more, being used to describe joint enterprises, for example in education and research. The student or researcher operating in a programme structured as a ‘sandwich’ is then to be likened with the meat or cheese in between two or more slices of bread, that is two or more academic institutions, hopefully benefiting from both.

Within our Network of Theology and Religious Studies, we have seen several examples of collaborative projects structured as a ‘sandwich’. As the following survey will demonstrate, collaborative, institutional structures enable students to do parts of their training in one of our network institutions and parts in another. Let it first, however, be acknowledged that a survey like the following, once more demonstrates the lack of South>South collaboration within our network. Collaboration with regard to education and research is as we all know very much a question of funding, and throughout our nearly ten years of networking history, it has proved easier to find funding for collaboration of the South>North and North>South types, than of a South>South type. The result is that our network has been and still is dominated by an axis between Africa and Norway, rather than between Madagascar and Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia, or South Africa and Cameroon. This is very unfortunate, and we all have a responsibility to look for possibilities for more South>South collaboration.

Nevertheless, our Network of Theology and Religious Studies does have quite a number of examples of projects that are more or less structured as a ‘sandwich’, and in the following there will first be a survey of such projects, and then an interview some of those who have participated in the projects.

Structures for Bachelor and Master ‘sandwich’ collaboration

On the level of Bachelor and Master, we have seen several examples of exchange with more or less ‘sandwich’ features:

- *North>South*: As part of the interaction between the MHS School of Mission and Theology (Norway) and its African network partners, two sets of North>South ‘sandwich’ collaboration programmes have been developed. One concentrates on Makerere University (Uganda), which receives a class of 10-15 first year students from Stavanger every year, as part of Stavanger’s BA in Religion and Intercultural Communication. Another is of a more general nature, encouraging students in Stavanger to spend one to three months – on Bachelor or Master’s level – in one of the other network institutions.
- *South>North*: The MHS School of Mission and Theology (Norway) each year invites five or six candidates from network institutions to come to Stavanger to do a Master’s degree in theology or in global studies. The project is funded by the Norwegian State Quota Programme, which means that the students have to follow the regulations of this programme, which includes doing the complete Master’s in Stavanger. As such it is not a real ‘sandwich’.

Structures for Ph.D. ‘sandwich’ collaboration

On the level of Ph.D., we have till now seen ten projects in our network collaboration. The first was the ‘Africanization of Biblical Studies Project’, from 2002 to 2006. Three Ph.D. students – from Uganda, Tanzania and Madagascar – spent three to four months per year in Norway (three times) and South Africa (one time) for library research and supervision, and then the rest of the year in their home institutions. Whereas African Ph.D. students often spend most of their time in Western contexts, the ‘Africanization’ project aimed to let as much as possible of the research take place in the home institutions of the Ph.D. students.

The experiences from the ‘Africanization’ project have later been analyzed, and several projects with a similar structure have been developed. The scope and profile of the projects may vary, but they have in common a close interaction between two universities or university colleges, and students who spend three to four months per year in a

Western research context – mostly in the MHS School of Mission and Theology (Norway) – and the rest of the year in their home institutions. One is a project on re-integration of former child soldiers in Northern Uganda’, a project with three Ph.D. students, from Makerere University (Uganda) and Makumira University College (Tanzania). Another is a project on mission history in South Africa, with one Ph.D. student from the Lutheran Theological Institute / University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa). A third is a project on New Testament studies, with one Ph.D. student from Institut Luthérien de Theologie (Cameroon). And a fourth is a project in biblical studies, with two Ph.D. students from the Lutheran Graduate School of Theology (Madagascar).

Some student experiences

Even prior to the formal launching of our network back in November 2000, there were examples of student exchange between the seven institutions that form the network. In many ways, the establishing of the network was a formalizing of – at least in some cases – many years of informal collaboration. Historically speaking, we remember that the first South African and Malagasy students came to Stavanger in the 1860s and 1880s, respectively. In our own time, there were students in Stavanger visiting Makumira and Fiananrantsoa back in the 1980s and 90s, and from the mid 1990s, the Norwegian State Quota Program has enabled approximately one hundred B.A./B.Th. graduates from the network partners to do a Master’s degree in Stavanger.

Let the following two students verbalize some of our sandwich experiences.

Nkabala Helen Nambalirwa (Uganda) completed a B.A. (Arts) majoring in Religious Studies at Makerere University in Kampala in 2002, and a M.Th. in Stavanger in 2004. From 2007 to 2011 she is a Ph.D. student in Stavanger, in a joint project between the School of Mission and Theology and Makerere University.

- How was it to come from Kampala to do a Master’s in Stavanger? It was rewarding, because I got the opportunity to complete my Master’s in two years. I was able to concentrate and had no extra responsibilities. I spent two periods of ten months in Norway, and in the summer in between I did my field work in Uganda.

- How do you experience your Ph.D. studies, a joint project between the School of Mission and Theology and Makerere University? A sandwich programme is good because I spend three to four months per year in Stavanger, and then the rest of the year in Kampala. This gives me the opportunity to make use of the library services in Stavanger, and – again – I am able to concentrate fully on my research. Some people back in Uganda ask me how it is to relate to two universities, both Makerere and the School of Mission and Theology, and my answer is that it is a good thing. My work is all the time being read by both Ugandan and Norwegian scholars, and this gives me confidence.

Ragnhild Lakang Due (Norway) is presently doing a M.Th. at the School of Mission and Theology. As a B.Th. student – back in 2006 – she spent one semester at Makumira University College in Tanzania.

- What did you do at Makumira? I was doing a B.Th., and as such I followed theology classes. I took some church history, with particular focus on African church history. I also studied African Traditional Religion. Besides these ‘African’ subjects, I also did classes in Old Testament and New Testament studies, as well as in Christian Education.
- How did you experience your ‘sandwich’ studies, doing as much as one sixth of a three years bachelor in another institution? I experienced my studies at Makumira as scholarly and culturally challenging. It was exciting to meet fellow theology student living under completely different circumstances. I also learned a lot from a society where life is lived in a more moderate tempo than what I am used to in Norway.
- Would you recommend it to others? Certainly, my experiences from Makumira have meant a lot to me.

Network of Theology and Religious Studies

Textbook Program 2010

Context and content

The network consultation in Stavanger in November 2000 pointed out the current textbook situation for theology and religious studies in Africa as a major challenge. As a response to this, a couple of attempts were made to establish a textbook program, based – on the one hand – on the general lack of textbooks relevant to the individual institution (language, context, price etc.), and – on the other hand – on the valuable experience many senior academic staff members have in teaching their subjects. Two books – a monograph and a conference volume – came out of these attempts to establish a textbook program.

In September 2008, the Network of Theology and Religious Studies approached the Norwegian Mission Society, applying for funding of a re-establishing of a textbook program. The response was positive, and an annual sum of NOK 55.000 (approximately US\$ 7.000) has been granted for this purpose for 2009, 2010 and 2011. The grant from the Norwegian Mission Society enables the Network of Theology and Religious Studies – in collaboration with the MHS School of Mission and Theology – to launch a textbook program for 2009, 2010 and 2011. The 2009 scholarship was awarded Dr Jean Koulagna, Institut Luthérienne de Théologie, Meiganga, Cameroun, and his textbook project: *Narrativité et histoire dans l'Ancien Testament*.

Now, here follows an announcement of the 2010 scholarship. Senior academic staff members within the network institutions are invited to apply for scholarships enabling them to spend periods of three months in the Research Library, MHS School of Mission and Theology, with the purpose of writing a textbook that reflect the demands of their institutional context.

Application

There is no special application form. The application is expected to be a project proposal of two to three pages, which should include:

- A presentation of the demand: institutional priority of the textbook project, current textbook situation in this field.
- A presentation of the background of the applicant: academic degrees, teaching experiences.
- A presentation of the content of the textbook project: table of contents – with comments, e.g. on the number of pages of the finished work, and further the academic level and pedagogical approach of the project.
- A presentation of the status of the project: what has been done till now, and what will be done from now until the period of the scholarship, in order to secure a satisfactory finishing of the project within the three months of the scholarship.
- A presentation of the infrastructure of the textbook project: (i) the number of students who are supposed to follow the course(s) / buy the book each year, (ii) printing costs for e.g. 300 copies, each on e.g. 120 pages.
- Decisive criteria for a successful application will be the local needs, and then the relevance, practicability, and economy of the project.

Conditions

The scholarship includes:

- Travel to/from Stavanger: cheapest air flight.
- Housing: MHS School of Mission and Theology.
- Library services and a working place with a PC: Research Library, MHS School of Mission and Theology
- An economic grant related to extra living expenses: approx. US\$ 800 per month.
- Printing subsidies for the book: US\$ 1.000-1.500.

The receiver of the scholarship should:

- Complete a textbook manuscript within the three months period in Stavanger, so that it is ready for printing.
- Send a report from the project and ten copies of the published book to the General Network Coordinator, Network of Theology and Religious Studies, within six months after the period in Stavanger.

Procedure

The Dean/Rector of each network institution is asked:

- To make the textbook scholarship known amongst the faculty.
- To encourage senior academic staff members to develop projects.
- To send one or several (then: prioritized) project proposals to: General Network Coordinator, Network of Theology and Religious Studies, MHS School of Mission and Theology, Misjonsmarka 12, N-4024 Stavanger, Norway; fax: +47 5151 6225, e-mail: post@mhs.no

The project proposal(s) for **2010** should be received by the General Network Coordinator by **October 1, 2009**. The project proposals will be scrutinized by the Research Committee (MHS School of Mission and Theology), and the final decision will be taken by **December 1, 2009** by the General Network Coordinator together with the regional network coordinators.

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