

Odd Ragnar Hunnes
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STUDENT EXCHANGE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Report on a project

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PREFACE

The project 'SRS 105 Exchange for Development' was planned and carried out by five partner colleges: Chancellor College of University of Malawi and Lilongwe Teacher Training College in Malawi, Ongwediva College of Education and Windhoek College of Education in Namibia and Volda University College in Norway. The project was organized in cooperation with the Norwegian Peace Corps-Youth (FK-Youth) and is one of the projects with the highest number of participants in the new FK Youth program so far, with a total of 83 participants (39 from Norway, 24 from Malawi and 20 from Namibia).

A majority of the 83 participants are going to teach Social Studies in primary/secondary school as their future occupation in Norway (North), Namibia and Malawi (South). The essence of the project has been to prepare the participants for the important job as teachers and 'bridge builders' between partner institutions and partner countries.

For those of us who came up with the idea of an exchange project for teacher trainees and who have played key roles in its implementation, it is very important to offer a vote of thanks to everyone who in their various ways has contributed. Here we especially want to thank all the coordinators who have represented the four African partner institutions for their important role in the project, the evaluation included. They have contributed through written statements, discussions and interviews. Student participants have been giving their share of information through answering on a questionnaire and participating in group discussions and individual interviews. We have also been able to observe some of them teach their own students in their home countries.

The report is written by the two project coordinators at Volda University College. Norleif Vik has been the North coordinator and overall coordinator of the project while Odd Ragnar Hunnes has been the deputy North coordinator. We acknowledge that we have been very active participants in the project. This fact will most probably influence the selection of information presented in the report as well as the interpretation of it. We should probably be expected to give a positively skewed picture of the project. Nevertheless, we have tried to balance this as best we can, but are of course aware that this report should be read as a report *from* a project as well as a report *about* a project. As such we hope that the report may contribute to a high quality of possible projects of similar nature in the time to come.

It is our wish that the report will be read by many who are all hereby invited to communicate their response or reactions to us. This written report is supplied by a DVD-based report which has been planned, videotaped and edited by Jann-Robert Junker, and is included inside the back cover.

Volda University College, May 2010
Odd Ragnar Hunnes and Norleif Vik

COORDINATORS AND STUDENTS

A lot of staff members and students have in different ways been involved in the exchange project at the five partner colleges and at surrounding primary and secondary schools. Most of the planning and organizing of the project and different activities for the participants has however been done by a few people and in most cases by the coordinator at each college. The coordinators have had a close relationship to the participants and played a very important role in helping the FK-students during their stay in the host country. Of course each year the student participants have been at the centre of attention in the project. For these reasons this report starts with a photo presentation of coordinators and students.



Coordinators at the partner meeting in Lillehammer 2006.

From the left:

Suama Nantanga (Ongwediva College of Education), Goodson Kammodzi (Lilongwe Teacher Training College), Matthew N Chilambo (Chancellor College) Norleif Vik (Volda University College), Odd Ragnar Hunnes (VUC) and Tulip O'Connor (Windhoek College of Education)

Photo: Emma Kirchener



In Copenhagen during the FK Forum 2008. From the left: Matthew N Chilambo (CC), Tulip O'Connor (WCE), Suama Nantanga (OCE), Goodson Kamodzi (LTTC).

Photo: Norleif Vik

In September 2009 we received the shocking and saddening message that Tulip had suddenly passed away.



Most of the students of 2004 with some of the teachers in front of Kaarstadhuset, the main building for teacher training in Volda since 1922. From the left: Bjørn Tafford (teacher), Jennifer Nakale (OCE), Erastus Shikalepo (OCE), Petrina Hangero (WCE), Elisabeth Sande Arnevik (VUC), Lovemore Azele Mbewe (LTTC), Jerome Beukes (WCE), Odd Ragnar Hunnes (VUC), Ane Marte Botn Brattli (VUC), Norleif Vik (VUC), Lenai Wester Mkutumulu (LTTC), Jenipher Mbukwa (CC), Svein Arnesen (teacher VUC), Elin Roksvåg (VUC), Twambilile Mwangonde (CC). Not present on the picture: Hanna Knoff, Asgeir Røyarhus Olseth, Kristine Edith Morton, Cathrine Sjøholt Wirzèn.
Photo: Kristian Fuglseth.



All the students of 2005

Left hand row from front: Norleif Vik, Vigdis Heimdahl (VUC), Katrine Antonsen (VUC), Susan Kanyuka (CC), Carina Solberg Hillersøy (VUC), Christina Eide Strand (VUC).

Middle row: Jeanette Mari Grymyr (CC), Lexa Nalikata (CC), Solium Mwale (CC), Mari Johansen (VUC), Tove Uran (VUC).

Right hand row: Odd Ragnar Hunnes, Penelope Alufandica (CC), Claudio Nunda (WCE), Thomas Butiki Doeseb (WCE), Tomas Kalimbo (OCE), Nadja Yvonne Hartikkala (VUC), Emilia Hamutoko (OCE).

Photo: Kristian Fuglseth.



All the students of 2006

From the left: Hajira Blamu (CC), Christel Kroken Ebbestad (VUC), Kristine Billington (VUC), Marit Helen Skipnes (VUC), Tomas Fric (VUC), Anne Grethe Kjelling (VUC), Magdalena Kotti (OCE), Aloycia Hansen (WCE), Fabian van Wyk (WCE), Astrid Kvam Helset (VUC), Sililo Kebby (OCE), Gilbert Kaponda (CC), Oddbjørg Myklebust (VUC), Clara Simango (CC), Louise Frimannslund (VUC), Robert Matengula (CC).

Photo: Kristian Fuglseth.



All the students of 2007

*Front from the left: Anette Aune Hauge (VUC), Harriet Maona (CC), Fritz Gariseb (WCE), Steven Kamsiyamo (CC), Anne Birgit Aga (VUC), Matheus Mashina (OCE)
Back from the left: Kristin Bolstad (VUC), Linda Renate Åkre (VUC), Mari Aftret Mørtvedt (VUC), Linda Pereira (CC), Park Muhonda (CC), Georgina Mundia (OCE), Loveness Chidothi (LTTC), Silje Cathrin Holm (VUC), Alexinah Kamashungo (WCE), Rebecca Shirin Jafari (VUC), Christina Nkolokosa (LTTC), Christine Bildøy Asheim (VUC).*

Photo: Kristian Fuglseth.



All the students of 2008

*Front from the left: Sara Hatab (VUC), Åshild Hals (VUC), Katrina Hatutale (OCE)
 Standing from the left: Norleif Vik, Alexander Ngola (OCE), Kristin Dragsten (VUC),
 Idan Seth (WCE), Hanna Lindebæk (VUC) Statue of Henrik Kaarstad, the founder of
 the teacher training college in Volda in 1895, Janet Kasambala (CC) Torill Wiggen
 (VUC), Rernate Khoeses (WCE), Ancilla Nyirenda (CC), Nisbeth Khunga (LTTC).
 Sigrid W Buan (VUC), Oscar Lweya (CC), Timothy Banda (CC), Drinney Rabana
 (LTTC), Sanna Brattland (VUC).*

Photo: Kristian Fuglseth.

This Fredskorpset-Norway

By

Oscar Leweya¹

This Fredskorpset of equality, diversity and redemption,
For all peoples without a slight racial discrimination.
Of no exaggeration, intimidation or deception,
But poised for reciprocity, solidarity, and cultural integration.

This Fredskorpset breeds exchanges, jubilations and high expectations,
Promotes developmental visions, explorations and collaborations.
Wars with complacency, stereotyping and cultural assassinations,
Yet extremely rewarding to participants grounded in its missions.
To this Fredskorpset participants vehemently flood,
With craving for integration in the life changing experiences
So helpful and availing to young people traveling around
Committed to promoting harmony among all cultures around.

This Fredskorpset surely sets the ground
The ground so smooth for strolling around,
From South to North, North to South
And from the South to the South.

Participants exchange with boldness for there's nothing to worry about:
Fears, uncertainties, stereotypes dead and long forgotten,
Cultures integrated, misconceptions corrected,
Unity in cultural diversity a motto reincarnated.

This Fredskorpset; a force beneath transfer of expertise,
A craftsman of measures to reduce poverty,
Initiator of full involvement and capacity building.
This Fredskorpset surely suffices.

¹ Exchange student from Chancellor College, Malawi 2008

SOME VITAL CONCLUSIONS

Benefits for all

In this project the ideal has been for the cooperation to be on an equal footing between the partners. In the words of the principal of Lilongwe Teacher Training College (L TTC): ‘An exchange project should benefit all participating institutions as it also should develop the individual and the institution.’ With the North partner coordinating and Norway funding the project, the equality between the partners may always be questioned. Nevertheless there are several indications in this report that participating institutions as well as student participants have drawn substantial benefits from the project. This may be illustrated by a statement the principal of Windhoek College of Education (WCE) made after the project was terminated: ‘I have got a lot of better belief in exchange. We should make sure that this cooperation could continue in some way. It would be a shame if not. It takes a lot of time to establish the kind of trust [...] to make such exchanges work.’

Some ties between countries have been created. The dean of the Faculty of Education at Chancellor College (CC) in Malawi stated: ‘Norway became close to us. We started to be interested in anything that happened in Norway.’ And it has touched more than the intellectual part of the personality. Tomas, one of the student participants from Ongwediva College of Education (OCE) in Namibia told his class of learners that ‘I have a Norwegian flag in my room and every time I see it, I smile.’ The learning possibilities have been vast and different as one of the Volda University College (VUC) students explains: ‘The school has traditionally emphasized knowledge, but it has been a factor of minor importance to put knowledge into a meaningful relation. [...] As an example I can mention the time we spent visiting people who were affected by the flood [in northern Namibia]. That experience gave me more knowledge than any textbook could ever give me!’

The studies

The language barrier is one particular problem faced by international students in Norway. The language of instruction is normally Norwegian in schools and universities alike. The present project has managed to offer introductions to different subjects through some lessons where the African students were taught in English together with Norwegian students at VUC. However, for the most part they were given a specially adapted teaching program in English every day during their stay. This gave them the opportunity to openly discuss matters of doubt and interest in a small group of peers. If it for language reasons had been possible, they would have taken a more active part in mixed groups. That would have boosted integration and interaction with Norwegian students as well as given academic benefits.

The African participants had their knowledge and understanding assessed through written work and an oral examination before returning to Africa. The Norwegian students submitted a written project report for assessment and in addition they were subject to an oral exam in August. Since the project mainly involved the exchange of teacher trainees in Social Studies, there has been a special focus on gaining solid and relevant knowledge about the societies visited by the participants. It is registered that it is easy for misunderstandings to occur regarding the host nation, and the exchange students should not take such misinformation with them back to their respective countries. Therefore the question of what and how we teach about each other is a vital one.

Teaching and learning South-North

What should be taught about African countries like Malawi and Namibia in Norway has been a topic that the African and Norwegian exchange students have discussed at great length. Their conclusions have become apparent during their joint compulsory teaching practice in local schools in Volda and Ørsta over the five years. Some of the African students have pointed out that Norwegian learners often are presented with a negative picture of Africa because too much attention is given to the problems there. Africa has a lot of beauty and goodness and has an enormous positive potential that should also be given attention in the classroom. It has been interesting to note that when the African students teach about Norway they present a predominantly positive picture of the country, probably out of a combination of politeness and conviction. In this regard it should not be forgotten that also Norway has unresolved problems. In tutoring the two groups of students it has been important to make the point clear that many of the problems Norway is facing are the same as Africa. It must therefore be included in the teaching that we all, and especially our children, are sharing a common future in which we are dependent on each other in a great many ways.

Their evaluations show that the African teacher trainees have particularly registered the relationship between teachers and individual learners and classes in Norway. Even though they posed questions about discipline, the African students' main interest has been raised regarding how learner centered teaching methods and democracy can function and how education for learners with special needs can be taken care of. These are some of the areas in which they will attempt to influence their colleagues on their return to their daily routines in school back home in Africa. A main point is to create a friendly classroom where learners as well as teachers are active contributors. On the other hand, several of the Norwegian students have been impressed by the way some African teachers cope with crowded and modestly equipped classrooms as they manage to model good teaching. Some of the students report that this has inspired them to work hard on developing teaching methods that do not lean too much on more or less advanced teaching equipment, but rather to be creative and 'use yourself as a teacher.'

Based on their own experience, all the student teachers seem to have acquired a very positive opinion on excursions as a method of teaching and learning about a foreign society. Smaller and larger written assignments give them the opportunity to focus on a limited area and to go a bit deeper into the material than approaches where a more general view is applied. Several students thus found working on writing assignments to be a good method to learn about the host country in some depth. In addition comes a bonus, as this also seems to be a good way to meet people and get acquainted since information often is collected through interviews. At VUC the students have been taught to use computers in a number of ways, producing presentations and collecting information probably being the most important one. The availability of computers and fast internet accessibility has been very much cherished both for work, keeping in touch with family, friends and teachers as well as for entertainment and relaxation.

Information

The most vital information the participants in retrospect thought they needed before leaving their home country concerned the culture of the country they were going to and the expectations that were set to them from the project. This was the case for African and Norwegian participants alike. For the African students the climate stood out as number one, as this was one of the biggest surprises to them during the whole stay, and the need to be prepared for this, practically as well as mentally, was strong. The Norwegian students had

some special concerns about how to avoid diseases and how precautions to avoid crisis were taken care of during their stay abroad.

Having had responsibility for the project over a period of five years, it is good for the five partners to be able to register the fact that 83 participants have successfully completed a three-month exchange project between Malawi/Namibia and Norway without serious accidents or security problems. Fortunately there has been no need to make use of the emergency task force and the routines that were established in advance in the event of any problems arising. There is every reason to be grateful for this.

The need for the coordinators to keep in close contact especially during the exchanges is self-evident. Time and again difficulties arose, mainly for technical reasons. Regular mail was so slow and undependable that telephone (voice and SMS) and e-mail were mostly used. For an exchange project like this the fast development of mobile telephone services over the later years represents a revolution concerning immediate communication and security. This was especially noticeable in Africa where the system of telephone landlines often performed badly.

Making native friends

It is interesting that both African and Norwegian students have found it challenging to make native friends at the hosting college. It is on this point the participants' disappointment with what they have achieved through the program is the biggest. This especially appears to be the case for African participants. Differences in personalities have influenced the propensity to make friends, but there are also some distinct hindrances. In Norway, lacking knowledge and lacking the use of English on the Norwegian part represents a challenge. 'Reserved but trustworthy' may be a fair description of African students' impression of their Norwegian peers when it comes to making friends. In Africa, the suspicion that there is a hidden agenda for making Norwegian friends for the purpose of material gain causes some reluctance. The distinction between 'acquaintance' and 'friend' also seems to be interpreted differently by Africans and Norwegians, and this may add something to the understanding of some difficulties in establishing cross-cultural friendships. Nevertheless many friendships have been established and a winning formula seems to be to do things together, be it sports, music, work, church assemblies, social gatherings, or any other activity where there is a purpose and where the friends making is an indirect outcome rather than the sole aim. Thus the friendship comes as a bonus. This is probably how friendships best thrive: as a consequence rather than a purpose.

Integration of programs at partner colleges

The challenge of including the exchange project into their degree/diploma program, so that the project comes in as an integrated part of the partner institutions' regular program, is immense. A seamless integration in this respect is a tremendous contribution to the success of such a project. The present project did not find a good solution to this problem. After recurrent discussions over the first 2–3 years, the end result for the African students was that their studies at VUC were not integrated into their home institution's academic program, but came as something additional. They were given a diploma (vitnemål) documenting the completion of a study containing (level and size) 30 ECTS points. Having this diploma may help them in different connections, for instance when applying for jobs. But it seems obvious that an integration into the relevant academic programs would be a better solution and should be worked out if a similar project is to be launched for the future. The Norwegian students did

not have this problem since the 'SRS105 Exchange for Development' was planned as part of the academic program at VUC and as such may be included in Norwegian university degrees.

Another challenge of integration was one of logistics and was about adjusting the calendars of the different partners together. As this challenge was generally solved during the initial planning of the project, CC added one challenge along the way. At CC the starting date for the first semester after New Year's changed from year to year depending on unrest at the college prolonging previous semesters. This demanded changes in the program and an excursion to the northern parts of Malawi (Mzuzu area) was worked into the program the second year and was repeated every year thereafter. In the instances that this was not sufficient, further adjustments had to be made locally by the coordinator in Zomba.

Recruitment

A certain pattern may be seen in the recruitment to the project. Firstly, the African partners had many applicants for the exchange while VUC struggled to fill her quota. This may reflect the fact that VUC had a quota of eight students to send and the others two each (CC had four each year 2005–2008). It may also reflect that the exchange represented a more unique possibility to 'see the world' for African students compared to the Norwegians. Secondly, the African partners had no problems recruiting male and female students alike, while VUC was only able to recruit two male participants out of a total of 39. Thirdly, it turned out that the initial intention of this project, only to recruit participants among teacher training students at VUC, was unrealistic. This was met by taking VUC-students from other programs than teacher training, and by taking teacher training students from other Norwegian colleges. It seems like the latter option was preferable.

Teacher education is strategically important

During the years of cooperation between teachers, teacher educators and teacher trainees in Norway and in Africa, it seems reasonable to say that as a professional group cooperation has proved to be relatively easy. The most important reason for this is probably the fact that they have a common platform, namely teaching and learning. In other words, partnerships between teacher training institutions are fairly easy to establish and make them work. Naturally, it is an advantage when the coordinators share the same field of studies, as was the case in this instance, this being Social Studies with an emphasis on Geography. The cooperation between the five partners in this FK (Peace Corps) project has been positive in the form of a common understanding and joint efforts to achieve good results. All sorts of questions related to the project have been discussed over the telephone, by e-mail, round the table at partner meetings or in other contexts, and reasonably good solutions to problems and challenges have been worked out.

A centre of attention has been the FK and Norwegian development and aid policies. All the partners have understood that the FK is concerned about good information activities in the home country as an integrated part of an exchange project, and that FK Norway markets the UN Millennium Development Goals as an important part of Norwegian North-South policies. In that context teachers and teacher training institutions ought to play a key role. This has not only been understood, but also appreciated by partners and participants alike. It is not difficult to see that the students have benefited greatly from participating in a FK program, gaining relevant knowledge, working in the role of bridge-builders and in this way contributing to better understanding between South and North. In the present evaluation questions related to 15 goals that are especially relevant for FK have been asked (see appendix 1 and 5). The response from the participants shows that to their minds they have reached a very high degree

of achievement of these goals. On the question of whether these were relevant and important goals for the project, the answers have been just as positive.

Ripple effects

Since the project focused on learning about South and North societies, it was important that this learning should not be confined to a limited group of ‘insiders’ (student participants and coordinators) but be spread to as many as possible. There was a large group of people who in different ways played an important role and made the project both possible and worth while. They are students and staff members at the partner institutions and at the schools which the exchange students visited; they are people in businesses and at sites for excursions and social gatherings; they are people that in some formal or informal function came in touch with participants, coordinators and activities of the project. They all influenced the project and were influenced by it.

Several projects and activities have been initiated in the wake of this FK project. In other words, the project has produced ripple effects. FK Norway took the initiative to name Volda, the municipality where VUC is located, an International Municipality in May 2005, and the project coordinator played an active role in that context. A project on democracy in teacher training was run in partnership between CC and VUC during 2006 and 2007. Since 2006 VUC has taken three quota students from CC on scholarships of three years, where the students go for their Master’s degree in Special Education. It is worth noting that the exchange project actually became a starting point for CC to improve their focus and competence on special education as Jennipher Mbukwa, who was in the first group of exchange students also was the first quota student. She finished her studies and is now teaching special education at CC. This is the result of a plan that the dean of the Faculty of Education at CC made on the basis of his knowledge and support of the partnership between CC and VUC, which started with the exchange project. There have also been new North-South projects in which some exchange students play an active role.

Competence for long lasting careers

There could hardly be hope for anything more than knowledge, engagement and positive attitudes on the part of a large group of teachers of Social Studies from Norway and Africa as an outcome of this project. The participants have had a fantastic experience and they have taken back home a great deal of relevant knowledge and information which they can use as FK participants and Social Studies teachers in their native countries. This is important as the present project rests on the conviction that education for all is fundamental for a positive development in societies. The evaluation gives reason to believe that the exchange project that is presented in this report has created engagement among many people at the participating institutions and among the 83 participants. Accordingly, even though the project is now over, the participants are still concerned with what they have learnt and what the exchange project has given them. It is therefore very likely that they will use this enhanced competence in their daily work through their (hopefully) long lasting career as teachers.

PART 1

PRESENTATION

1.1 PLANNING

1.1.1 Introduction

Study program for understanding and bridge building between South and North

This document is a report from the project ‘SRS105 Exchange for Development’, how it was initiated and has functioned in relation to aims for exchange projects and the expectations on which the project was started. ‘SRS 105 Exchange for Development’ has been a half year study where all the participants have earned 30 study points (ECTS credits) in Social Studies at Volda University College (VUC). A main and integrated part of the study has been a three months’ exchange stay at one of five partner colleges abroad where the students have participated in a study program in Social Studies for Schools (SRS) with special focus on school and education in the host country. The idea has been to promote knowledge sharing, understanding and bridge building between South and North. This was mainly done through inviting teacher trainees to participate in the studies. Through their career as teachers they are expected to be motivated and be efficient proponents for spreading information and attitudes promoting understanding and bridge building.

The target groups for this report are the participants who have had and for the future will have a pivotal role in reaching the project aims, staff at FK Norway (The Norwegian Peace Corps), everyone who has had a hand in the project at the five partner institutions, and everyone who has contributed to the project in all sorts of ways. Important targets are also those who are interested in international student exchange and the role that such exchanges may play in the development of human welfare in general and education and cross cultural communication in particular.

Cost effective Peace Corps project

The FK Youth Project has represented a unique opportunity not just for African but also for Norwegian teacher trainees. The study program was planned with the aim of providing participants with special expertise in cooperation and bridge building between North and South. During the time period 2004–2008 VUC has received a grant of about NOK 1 million annually from FK Norway to implement the project. The figure was calculated according to the number of student participants each year, which was stipulated to be eight from Norway, four from Malawi and four from Namibia. The project has been able to finance a few more, so that a total of 83 students have taken part, and VUC has awarded all of them 30 ECTS credits in Social Studies for Schools. With more than 15 participants each year this has been a so-called fully-subscribed program, meaning that the larger part of the VUC coordinator’s salary was paid by FK Norway. He had a 100 % post in the Social Science Department. For FK Norway the cost has been roughly NOK 60,000 per participant. The cooperation between FK Norway and the teacher training institutions in Africa can in other words also be seen as a cost-effective way of building bridges between South and North.

Information and attitudes are key aims for a teacher of Social Studies

The good cooperation with FK Norway in Oslo has been vital. FK Norway has organized courses and network gatherings and the whole time provided feedback to those responsible for the day-to-day running of the project. In this manner it has been possible to focus on the Peace Corps aims which in brief can be said to be to provide information and form positive attitudes and mutual learning. These are very much in line with the aims of Social Studies as a school subject, and the combination of information and learning was an important reason for the application to be accepted under the umbrella of FK Norway. Here was the chance to combine a 3-month stay working for FK Norway with Social Studies and teacher training at one of the partner institutions. At VUC this was organized as a study program in Social Science for Schools worth 30 ECTS credits for participants from both South and North, and 83 candidates have successfully completed the SRS105 Exchange for Development program.

In addition to the 30 credits the students have received a participant's diploma from FK Norway. This specialized course has given these trainees a special expertise to work with topics related to South/North and environment/development issues as future teachers of Social Studies. They have learnt a great deal for their careers as teachers and as bridge-builders between developed and developing countries. The idea behind the stay abroad has been that it should be very useful and effective to combine teacher training and Peace Corps work in view of the joint aims and need for information. These coinciding aims imply that in our evaluation of the project the main focus has been to what extent the above mentioned goals have been achieved (see Appendix 1).

1.1.2 Background and idea for the project

Further development of the South-North engagement in teacher education in Volda

The idea of establishing an exchange project between teacher training institutions was a natural consequence of the fact that the two members of staff who took the initiative were both geographers with long experience from school and education in Africa. To initiate an exchange project based on external funding from FK Norway is therefore a dream that became reality. This project was to become part of the subject Social Science for Schools, offered to teacher trainees by the Social Science Department, and this study program had recently been revised and was easy to present to the Board of FK Norway. For Norwegian students this program incorporating an exchange stay was an alternative to the normal second 30-credit half-year course in social science. Teacher training staff in Volda had had contacts with school and education systems in African countries over a long period of time and this was naturally a great advantage for the planned project. Since as long ago as 1976 Teacher Training (TT) students of social science in Volda have taken part in excursions to Africa and established contact with friendship classes there. These have been trips of 2–4 weeks and have served to create an involvement. The FK Norway program gave an opportunity to further develop this North-South involvement. In fact it seemed no more than quite natural that VUC/TT should start an exchange project after around 30 years of focusing on teaching about Africa and developing countries.

A study offering knowledge and involvement

An important motive behind the application for financial support for the project was the desire to offer especially interested Norwegian students the opportunity to learn in some depth about the natural geography, social conditions, aid issues, schools and education in an African

country. The other main motive was to give some students from the relevant African countries a corresponding experience in Norway. This resulted in a 3-month stay abroad involving a carefully planned program of information. Far too few Norwegian teachers have relevant and updated knowledge about society in Africa, including school and education. Indications are that the exchange project with a 3-month stay in Africa involving close contact with African school environments has given the Norwegian participants valuable knowledge and insight. They seem to have developed a rather positive and nuanced picture of Africa as a result of experience, new knowledge and personal contact during their stay at a partner institution in a host country on the African continent. Something similar seems to have happened to the African students concerning Norway.

The idea behind the project is the belief that the exchange visits of teacher trainees can contribute to an effective spread of vital knowledge, engagement and positive attitudes with a view to global understanding and our common future. During a long professional career the future teachers of Social Studies who have taken part in the project will teach thousands of learners both in Africa and Norway. Many positive impressions and experiences from their stay abroad, together with relevant knowledge about peoples and societies, are likely to make them good bridge-builders between the South and the North. This is probably the most important goal of this FK project, to lay the foundations for future cooperation and understanding in a world with different cultures and with a very unequal sharing of resources.

Without the financial support from FK Norway, African teacher trainees from our partner institutions would not have had the chance to take part in such an exchange project, and the partner colleges are very interested in continuing to offer this unique opportunity to their gifted and engaged trainee teachers.

1.1.3 Cooperating institutions

Five partner institutions

Finding partners is an important part of the preparation for establishing a new Peace Corps project and the project received financing to do this preparatory work. During a journey to Malawi and Namibia contact was sought with various institutions there to put forward the idea of partnership and the exchange of students. In February 2003 the work of finding and choosing partners was done. There turned out to be great interest in becoming a partner institution in both countries. Four partner institutions, two in Malawi and two in Namibia were eventually invited to participate as South partners together with VUC as the initiator and North partner. The following gives a short presentation of the five partner institutions.

Chancellor College (CC)

CC is the largest among five campuses of the University of Malawi, located in the former capital Zomba. The impressive university complex was opened by former President Banda in 1965. The number of students at CC is approximately 2000. Out of these about 600 are trainee teachers at the Faculty of Education who plan to work in Junior Secondary School and Senior Secondary School. The teacher training program covers all the key school subjects, including Social Studies (Geography, History and Civics). Students from this latter group have been recruited to the exchange project. CC offers full board on campus. Teacher training here is a four-year program and can be compared to the corresponding program in Norway. A total of 18 participants in the exchange project had a background from social science studies at CC. Matthew N Chilambo was the coordinator at CC, assisted by Dr. Samson Mac Jessie-Mbewe except for the last year when the two changed roles.

Lilongwe Teacher Training College (LTTC)

LTTC was established in 1970 and is one of the largest teacher training colleges in Malawi where the education of teachers for primary school is normally a 2-year program. There is a serious lack of teachers in the country, which has initiated a crash program to educate teachers more quickly. Partly trained students are used as teachers between the courses they are taking at LTTC, which is a boarding school. A primary school for teaching practice has also been built on campus. With the help of funds from Germany the whole complex has been renovated and is ready to accept more students than earlier, so that numbers will reach one thousand. The project has had six participants from LTTC. Goodson Kammodzi was the coordinator at LTTC assisted by Benedina Safuli.

Ongwediva College of Education (OCE)

OCE lies in northern Namibia and is the largest of four TT institutions in the country, with a total of around 900 students who are training to teach in primary school and junior secondary school. This TT program is a 3-year full-time program after completing senior secondary school, resulting in the award of a Basic Education Teaching Diploma. Of the five departments at OCE the Social Studies Department which educates teachers in the social sciences has represented the college in the project. 10 students with this background have participated. Suama Nantanga was the coordinator at OCE assisted by Caroline Mbango.

Volda University College (VUC)

Volda University College offers pre-school and general teacher training along with practical pedagogical education and is a medium-sized college with between 2500 and 3000 students of which around 1000 are in teacher training. The exchange program is closely integrated in the study program Social Science for Schools, and most of those who have participated in the FK Youth project 'SRS105 Exchange for Development' have been earlier students of social science. 39 students from VUC have participated. Norleif Vik was the coordinator at VUC assisted by Odd Ragnar Hunnes.

Windhoek College of Education (WCE)

WCE is situated in the capital Windhoek and has roughly 650 students. The portfolio of study programs is basically the same as at the other colleges of education in Namibia. Pedagogy is a key subject, while Social Studies is one of several electives. Teaching practice is important and high demands are made on the students. WCE is a relatively new and modern building complex, with a large swimming pool, new library/reading room with AC, various computer rooms and other special facilities. In line with the other three African colleges, full board is offered on campus. Also here the project has been linked to the Social Studies Department and over the five years there have been 10 participants from WCE. Tulip O'Connor was the coordinator at WCE assisted by the principal Emma Kirchener.

In September 2009 Kirchener informed us that Tulip O'Connor had suddenly passed away. This hit all of the coordinators and the participating students connected to Namibia very hard. On behalf of the project and all the coordinators and assistants, Norleif Vik sent a letter of condolences to WCE.

The new Peace Corps

The Norwegian Peace Corps was established in 1963 as a separate unit under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shortly after Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation started in 1962. The Peace Corps offered idealistic youth the chance to work for development in poor partner countries. People with a background from the health service, agriculture and school/education were offered a job with the Peace Corps, where they could make a contribution in African nations such as Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana and Zambia. The usual length of contract was two years and many Norwegian aid workers started their careers by taking part in the Peace Corps in the 1960s and 1970s, or in various projects linked with Africa. New regulations were passed in 2000 and 2004. The general consensus at that time was that the Peace Corps had played out its role in the way it had functioned up until then. New overall aims and principles were now to form the basis of its activities, of which one important target was to establish exchange programs between equal partners in the South and North (partnership ideal).

The Peace Corps Youth (FK-Y) is a new offer to young people between 18 and 25 who are interested in issues on global understanding in view of the UN Millennium Development Goals. The exchange project emphasized the FK Norway aims. These are in line with aims for the primary and lower secondary school subject Social Studies and its teaching on the topic of North-South relations. This has facilitated cooperation with FK Norway in training dedicated teachers of the social sciences.

1.1.4 Main structure of the project

Figure 1 (next page) illustrates the logistics of the project for the South partners as well as the North partner. The time period October–December was time for evaluating the last exchange and planning the next. This included writing a proposal for FK Norway, doing PR-work and selecting student participants for the next exchange period.

February–May was the time period for exchange. Each group stayed abroad for three months, and in such a way that there was an overlap of one month in each country.

From June onwards both African and Norwegian students were set up to do information work. In the short time perspective this was about informing fellow students, schools in the near by area, using the media. In the long run, of course it is about teaching Social Studies and other relevant subjects where the competence acquired in the exchange project will be an important input for good and efficient teaching.

In February the Norwegian students came to Malawi/Namibia while the African exchange students were still in their home country. The African and Norwegian students therefore had the opportunity to share information and become friends. The idea was also that the African students should help the Norwegian students get acquainted with conditions at their host's institutions.

In May the African students were still in Norway as the Norwegian students returned from their stay abroad. The two groups cooperated on teaching about Malawi and Namibia in schools in the Volda area.

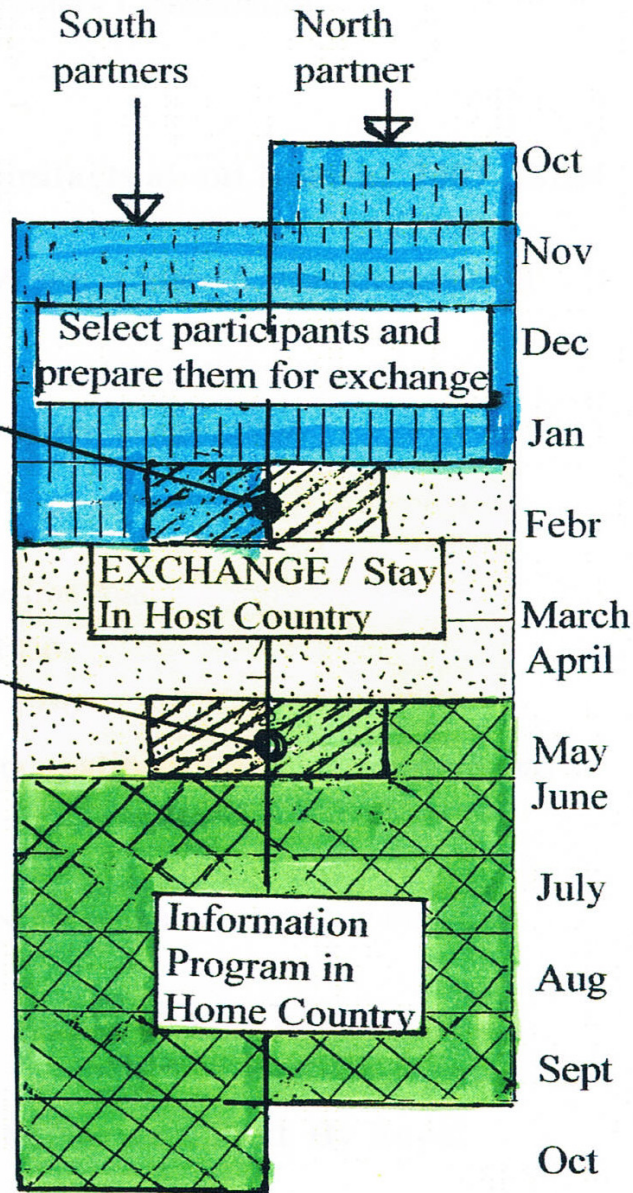


Figure 1: The logistics of the exchange for South and North partners

A study of society, environment and development with focus on school and education

Those chosen as the exchange program coordinators at the five institutions faced plenty of hard work in planning the details of the program, of which the first exchange was particularly demanding. The North coordinator functioned as head of the entire program and maintained contact with the partners in the South, as well as having the financial responsibility. Other exchange projects may not place such an emphasis on the teaching component during the exchange visit, but in the present case this was the backbone of the whole project.

1.1.5 Contact between the partners

During the exchange period there has been regular contact between the North coordinator and his counterparts in the South. There has especially been a great deal of e-mail contact during the exchange periods from January to June, but also during the rest of the year there has been frequent contact with regard to planning and administration. In addition, in the autumn, after each exchange of students, a partner meeting has been arranged to discuss and evaluate the year's program (see table 1).

Table 1: Place and participating colleges at partner meetings 2003–2008

Time	Place	Participants
2003 May	Volda, Norway	CC: 1, OCE: 1, LTTC: 1, VUC: 2, WCE: 1
2004 November	Zomba and Lake Malawi in Malawi	CC: 1, OCE: 1, LTTC: 1, VUC: 2, WCE: 1
2005 November	Windhoek, Otjivarango and Swakopmund in Namibia	CC: 2, OCE: 1, LTTC: 1, VUC: 2, WCE: 1
2006 September	Lillehammer, Norway	CC: 1, OCE: 1, LTTC: 1, VUC: 2, WCE: 2
2007 October	Livingston, Zambia	CC: 2, OCE: 2, LTTC: 1, VUC: 2, WCE: 1
2008 September	Røros, Norway	CC: 2, OCE: 1, LTTC: 1, VUC: 2, WCE: 1

An important basis for these discussions were conversations (debriefing) and feedback from the participants, and observations and experiences that were made during the exchange period. The partner meetings proved to be extremely useful and have resulted in certain adjustments of the project along the way both in the North and the South. However, there has been no need for any comprehensive amendments since the feedback from participants, coordinators and others involved has been predominantly positive. The role of the discussions during the partner meetings is given ample room in part 2.2 of this report.

Academic development as an important part of the annual partner meetings

In addition to further developing the project one of the aims of the partner meetings was to provide an opportunity for academic development for the coordinators. This has mainly been achieved by way of study trips in the area where the meeting took place. Since all but one of the coordinators were geographers, the main focus during these trips, both in Africa and in Norway, has been on the environment, resources and the exploitation of resources in the past and present:

- 1) The first meeting between the partners was at VUC in May 2003. The study trips during this meeting were a guided drive from Gardermoen to Volda and short trips around the Sunnmøre region. After the meeting there was a trip to Bergen, where the Norwegian Independence Day, May 17th, was celebrated, before continuing by train across the mountains to Oslo, where there were further visits.
- 2) Autumn 2004 the partner meeting in Malawi was combined with very informative trips to study the natural environment and communities along Lake Malawi.

- 3) During the partner meeting in Namibia autumn 2005 the journey went through the desert to the coast, where in particular the visits to Swakopmund and Walvis Bay were outstanding.
- 4) The partner meeting in 2006 was in Lillehammer after the FK-FORUM 06, where the principals of the partnership colleges also took part. In Lillehammer it was natural to spend time visiting Maihaugen open air museum.
- 5) In 2007 the venue was set in the heart of Africa at Victoria Falls, Livingstone, Zambia. In addition to a successful meeting this was a very special journey of study for the geographers who were offered the chance to experience the impressive Victoria Falls and the country of Zambia, situated as it is between Malawi and Namibia.
- 6) The final partner meeting was in Røros after participating at FK-FORUM 08 in Oslo. A guided tour through the boreal wooded landscape along the River Glomma in the Østerdalen valley and various aspects of the Røros community with ancient buildings (church included) and copper mines were focused on this occasion.

The project has thus provided the participating academic staff with a great deal of invaluable knowledge and aroused their enthusiasm. As teachers of Social Studies their teaching has particularly benefited, but the meetings and accompanying study trips have also represented a valuable impulse for the academic environments. Both the school subject Social Studies and the subject Didactics have also in this way played a key role in the exchange project.

1.1.6 Recruitment

Norwegian participants

There was agreement between the partners that the participants in the project had to be teacher trainees who were studying or had done Social Studies with a plan of becoming teachers of the subject. This would heighten the chances that they had the relevant academic background to secure maximum benefit. The 'SRS105 Exchange for Development' study program might thus be seen as a specialization of their qualifications in Social Studies, a specialization that would give them some special expertise as teachers of Social Studies and as Peace Corps participants with more long-term aims in mind.

Information on the study program given to Norwegian students emphasized among other things the following points with a view to motivate them to apply:

- to experience the meeting between various cultures in practice
- to learn about the environment and development and experience Africa
- to experience and understand why the UN Millennium Development Goals are so vital to the future of the African continent
- to learn about development aid and emergency aid in Africa
- to focus on and experience school and education in Africa
- to earn 30 ECTS credits in Social Studies
- to be awarded the FK participants' diploma and gain valuable experience from developing countries with a view to further involvement in Africa in humanitarian and aid work

The presentation of the project for prospective participants claimed that for those who wanted to gain genuine experience as teachers of Social Studies and as bridge builders, this study

program was invaluable. To have experienced what one is expected to teach about creates enthusiastic teachers and in turn enthusiastic learners. It has been said that knowledge + enthusiasm is necessary to be able to provide teaching that can change attitudes. The project provided a detailed academic program of studies with teaching at the host institution, study trips and school visits both in Africa and Norway. In other words, the project offered three very busy months abroad. Along with duties as hosts and the examination on returning home this was a project where the participants could learn and experience a great deal.

There is little to indicate that the program has been considered an 'easy' way of earning 30 ECTS credits. As an exchange student in Africa it would be inappropriate to demand high material living standards during the stay there. One could not expect to relax beside the swimming pool every day or enjoy living in a house of the standard one was used to in the western world. By adjusting as far as possible to local conditions one could hope to become integrated in the best possible way and be accepted by fellow students at the host institution. Material with information about the course including the exchange stay was available to potential applicants. In particular SRS-students at VUC were given information and invited to participate. Instead of choosing 15 + 15 credits on SRS102 and SRS104 in the spring semester, they could adopt for 30 credits by choosing the exchange program SRS105. A fair number of students chose this option, but there have not been sufficient numbers to fill VUC's annual quota of 8 places. The offer has therefore been made to other students with a relevant background and interest, and Social Studies students from Sør-Trøndelag University College in Trondheim have made up the biggest group of students that did not come directly from VUC's student body.

During planning with our partners in Africa it was agreed that participation was to be based on an equal number of either gender. VUC managed to recruit just a couple of males. With these two exceptions it has always been females who have applied to take part. These female students have in many cases had plans for some time to become involved in idealistic and humanitarian work, and it would appear that FK Youth is especially interesting for them, a point which has been made during the interviews of many of the applicants. The Norwegian participants have been offered the chance to travel in pairs to the same host institution, a gesture that has been well received.

African participants

The partners in Malawi and Namibia have been inundated with candidates interested in taking part in the exchange project. They have had no trouble in meeting the requirement of equal numbers of both genders since the demand to take part has been just as great from both males and females. Of course it is easier to recruit two participants which was what the African colleges should do, compared to eight from VUC. But then, as CC was allowed to recruit four students, they had no problem in doing so. The participants have been selected on the basis of interviews and academic qualifications in Social Studies. Very many highly qualified candidates have taken part in the project and many of them have been students with ability to communicate and adapt to a foreign environment. This ability has naturally varied among both the Norwegian and African participants, but is nevertheless an important prerequisite for successfully completing an exchange project.

1.2 PROGRAM AND APPROACH

1.2.1 Joint planning and preparations

At each of the partner institutions a project group was elected with a coordinator associated with Social Studies. The coordinator was responsible for the exchange project at her/his institution together with the project group. These coordinators met in Volda in May 2003 to draw up a joint project proposal. It was important that all five institutions were equal partners who shared common goals for the project. Out of the meeting came an application for support for a period of 3–5 years, which is the usual length of an FK project. The application containing the signatures of all the five institutions was sent to the FK Norway board. Great was the joy and anticipation when the application was approved, to begin with for a period of one year commencing in January 2004. There was reason to hope that the project would last for a total of five years, even though fresh applications would have to be made by the partners and accepted by FK every year. And this indeed proved to be the case.

During the preparation phase (prior to departure) at the various partner institutions, all the participants have been given an introduction to the key aims of the FK study project, some information on what will be expected of an FK-participant and other preparatory information about the exchange. Everyone had to sign a participation contract at their home institution before being allowed to travel to the host country (see participation contract appendix 3). During these weeks the Norwegian students underwent a preparatory course at VUC and a weeklong course with FK Norway prior to departure. The African students had a one week FK-course during their stay in Norway, while the information they were given about the FK at home institution was limited.

1.2.2 The study programs during the stay abroad

At the four institutions in Africa all the teaching is given in English, which made it easy for the Norwegian students to participate. The situation was quite different in Norway where the African teacher trainees had to be offered their own study program taught in English.

Classes at the college

A program of lectures was offered throughout the entire stay at VUC. The African students were given classes in a series of topics related to the Social Studies in Schools in Norway and the attendance was very good. It was a complex puzzle to set up a daily program of lectures taught in English. With good help from many colleagues and students at VUC, plus schools and other institutions outside VUC, there has been a varied program. The teaching program, excursions and syllabus have been the responsibility of the North coordinator who has also been responsible for most of the teaching. He reports that a comparative approach to circumstances in Africa and Norway seems to have been a motivating and fruitful teaching method. In a group of 8–10 African students the main emphasis has been on establishing as much dialogue as possible. Discussions on didactic issues and the distribution of useful teaching material (maps, statistics and brochures) have also been important components. The teaching has been characterized by an open and trusting relationship where the discussion has included a variety of issues related to subject matter, to homesickness, missing family and friends in Africa and how the students experienced their stay in Norway and the various Norwegians they met.

Social Studies and didactics

The African teacher trainees have learnt about climate and natural conditions, resources and their utilization, and they have been given an introduction to Norwegian history. They have learnt about the development of settlements, industrial and business life, about changes in the industrial structure of Norway and about Norway in a European and global perspective. It has also been natural to focus on family life, working life, school and society. The written assignments, oral presentations and exams showed that the exchange students have learnt a great deal from this teaching and it is vital for them to make use of this knowledge in their own teaching whenever this is natural.

The Norwegian students had the opportunity to use most of January for studying Africa and the host countries before traveling to Malawi/Namibia. This was an important part of the preparation course for North Participants. The Study Plan for SRS105 Exchange for Development (Appendix 4) gave information to the participants what they were expected to focus on as exchange students in Africa. Every year the South coordinators made a program for the exchange students. This program was a combination of lessons in Social Studies at the college, visits to schools in the surrounding area and a variety of excursions. In addition the Norwegian participants had the opportunity to spend time finding sources and collecting information for their project work (see appendix 2).

Excursions during the stay

In this report an excursion means a trip outside campus where learning something relevant to the goals of the project is the main purpose. Usually an excursion therefore has three phases: preparation, implementation and evaluation.

For the African students while in Norway the excursions included among other things the Week of Excitement for the physically disabled at the Bjorli Winter Sports Centre, farm visits in both Volda and Ørsta, industrial visits to the dairy in Ørsta and a shipbuilding yard in Ulsteinvik, to a fish farm at Vartdal, a trip to Fosnavåg and to the bird island of Runde including a boat trip where they experienced fishing and (usually) being seasick, a trip to Ålesund and its aquarium along with a guided tour of the town, skiing and tobogganing at Bondalseidet and annual participation on FK Norway courses in Mandal, Larvik or Kongsberg. During the latter course there were visits in Oslo to the Holmenkollen ski museum, Vigelandsanlegget with its magnificent outdoor sculptures, the Royal Palace with its guards, the main street Karl Johans gate and the national assembly Stortinget. Traveling on city trams, the underground and overnight express buses added to the excitement and were new learning experiences. On all these trips the participants made their own video recordings and took photographs. As part of the teaching the African teacher trainees have been on as many trips as possible to meet and learn from people at work.

For the Norwegian students in Namibia excursions included trips to Ovamboland to learn about land, people and culture. Several of the groups made a trip to Ruakana Falls/Kunene River and to Opuwo, which is the heartland of the Himba people with their characteristic culture. Visits were also made to Etosha National Park and a couple of groups made an interesting visit to Caprivi College of Education in Katima Mulilo. Some groups also made a journey to Victoria Falls as part of a joint program with Norwegian students coming from Malawi.

The students who stayed in Malawi spent the first couple of weeks as guests of Lilongwe Teacher Training College. They visited schools and other institutions in the Lilongwe and Mzuzu areas. Trips were also made to Lake Malawi, Lake Chilwa, the Zomba Plateau, the Blantyre area and the Mulanje Mountains. Some of the groups also made private trips to Mozambique and as mentioned above, a couple of groups went to Victoria Falls and met with the participants who stayed in Namibia. So the exchange project gave the Norwegian students an extraordinary opportunity to see Africa and especially the host country.

School visits

A number of local primary and secondary schools in the area round the teaching institutions in both Africa and Norway have functioned as contact schools for the exchange students over the five years. The efforts of the head teachers, teaching staff and classes at these schools have been crucial to the success of the project in the positive way that they have received the students and spent time talking and answering questions. The students have been able to introduce themselves and answer questions from the pupils and afterwards observe the teaching at various levels. A great many Norwegian primary and secondary pupils have been very keen to talk with the African teacher trainees both in and outside the classroom. The exchange students have really appreciated the contact with the pupils who speak English and can relate many amusing stories and episodes from their school visits. The same has been the case with the Norwegian teacher trainees in Malawi and Namibia.

How to organize school visits and classroom observation in the host country has been an important topic of discussion during the partner meetings. An observation form has been a useful tool for those who were to study how teaching and learning take place in an environment that is foreign to them. Visits to Norwegian kindergartens have also been part of the program for the African students.

1.2.3 Information program on return to home country

In this project there was a permanent focus on preparing the students for what is going to happen on their return home. In particular the teaching in tutorial groups has provided an opportunity to discuss how they will teach about Norway when they return to Africa. Everyone was constantly reminded that this is a vital part of the project and that they in the future will be in a position to teach about Norway and Europe in a very motivating way that will stimulate their audiences, whether they are teaching in a rural school or under more urban conditions in Africa. In the same way the Norwegian students have asked themselves how and what they will teach about Africa. They have also been able to try their hands at this type of teaching together with the African students during their visits to local schools in Volda and Ørsta.

Activity Guide

Right from the very start of the program FK Norway has had a special focus on the information phase that follows exchange visits. This is quite natural, since providing information to influence people's attitudes is permanently on FK Norway's agenda. On the basis of the feedback from the various projects, FK Youth have produced a so-called 'Activity Guide'. The present project is the only one that has included the exchange of teacher trainees, which means that there naturally has been a particular focus on the teaching part of the project, which is where the trainees' interest and competence lies. Many of the suggestions from this side were included in the guide. This may be taken as an illustration of how the exchange of teacher trainees is an effective way to organize information work. They have an

education aimed at providing information and instruction, and are concerned about how best this can be achieved.

Teaching

Most of the participants in the project were teacher trainees. A substantial part of information work was therefore done during the two week period of practice teaching in the Volda area in May. At that time the African and the Norwegian students cooperated in teaching about Malawi and Namibia to Norwegian primary and secondary school students. However, the most important information work for the participants is by far the teaching that they will be doing during their probably long lasting future career as teachers. Usually African teachers must manage with small resources in their daily work. It was therefore an aim to provide the exchange students with useful material with their future teaching about Norway in mind. Some of the most important elements are mentioned below.

Teaching file

In connection with the knowledge they have received about Norway, the exchange students have been given various types of materials such as e.g. maps, transparencies, illustrations and sketches. This is material that they have collected in a special file and which is suitable for use in many schools in Malawi and Namibia.

Album with photos from their stay in Norway

Many of the schools where they will teach after their time in Norway lack electricity. This meant that the students were concerned about taking back home suitable teaching materials. Pictures from the many phases of their stay in Norway have been copied and each student received her/his own copy of the album which also has space for them to add captions. During our school visits in Africa in 2008 we noticed that the album from Norway and VUC has been in frequent use.

Digital presentation program about Norway and their home country

In connection with their ICT-classes the participants have learnt how to use this medium to produce their own presentations, picture series, etc. They have produced an impressive set of presentations both about their own home countries for use in Norway and about Norway for use in schools in Africa. They have also taken back to Africa a variety of DVD-programs about Norway that have been purchased by the project. These are teaching aids that cannot be used in many places since they lack the necessary equipment. But we have seen that such equipment is usually available for presentations and teaching purposes at colleges and universities, and an ever-increasing number of schools, especially in urban areas, now have this equipment for use in the classroom.

Production of video programs / teaching DVDs about the stay in Norway

The project purchased two Sony Handcam video recorders and offered participants an introductory course in the production of video programs. Each year participants have recorded material during their stay, from various excursions and events, e.g. 17th May (Independence Day) in Volda and from Kolbein Ryste's farm in Ørsta, from ferry trips and a visit to the aquarium in Ålesund, in fact from more or less the whole time in Norway. Since he was a media student at VUC in 2005, Jann Robert Junker has put huge effort into editing these recordings with subtitles in English so that they can be used in Malawi and Namibia.

Teaching-DVD on Africa and the UN Millennium Development Goals

On the initiative of Windhoek College of Education, a video has been made of the teaching about Malawi and Namibia and the UN Millennium Development Goals which the Norwegian and African students have worked together on in schools in Volda and Ørsta. The participants have done the recording themselves and again it has been Jann-Robert Junker who has been responsible for the production and editing of these DVD-programs. The teaching has been given in both English and Norwegian from standard six upwards. On their return to their home countries the participants had to inform about what they have experienced and learnt, and discussions on teaching methods in the host country have naturally played a key role in this information phase.

Project report and newspaper articles

The Norwegian students wrote a relatively comprehensive report on a topic of their own choice related to their host country in Africa. The reports were mainly based on information that the students were supposed to collect during their stay in Africa. In this way they were able to get some in depth information about a part that interested them as they experienced field work under unknown conditions. This work has also provided them with important contacts in the host country. Appendix 2 provides an overview of the topics for specialization chosen by the Norwegian participants during their stay abroad. This report could serve as a base for their teaching and also for newspaper articles that the students were expected to publish in Norwegian newspapers as part of their information work.

1.2.4 Completion of the project

The project 'SRS105 Exchange for development' started with the introductory travel to find partners in Malawi and Namibia to help realize our dreams. This journey led to the five institutions finding together, making the necessary plans, receiving acceptance of the plans within the FK Youth program and carrying through the first exchange in 2004. The project actually received funding for five years which meant that the last exchange was made in the spring semester 2008. Thus the partner meeting August 2008 marked the most official termination of the project as this was the last time the project's coordinators were gathered.

During this partner meeting there was discussed a plan for finishing the project in a way that included more people than the ones gathered at the partner meeting. The main idea was to finish the project in a manner that could strengthen the engagement and obligation for continued work for bridge building between South and North. The discussion concluded that the two of us who are writing this report should make another travel to all the four partner institutions in the South. This was done in October/November 2008, and the motivation for doing this was:

- to follow up the student participants and give them an opportunity to debriefing activities
- to strengthen the student participants', the coordinators' and institutions' leaders' attachment to the project and their determination to further work for fulfilling the project's aims
- to make sure that the leadership of the participating institutions were informed about the tremendously important job their local coordinator had been doing and that all the coordinators have been extremely valuable representatives for their home institutions all through the project

- to invite the student participants, coordinators and institutions' leaders to voice their views and feelings about the project, its aims, the way it was run, the costs and benefits for their college and thus influence the way the history of this project is written
- to represent a worthy finish and conclusion of the cooperation that had lasted for six years (the preparation stage included). Considering the importance with which Africans in general regard relations, we believed that such a concluding journey would be an important contribution for this project to go into history as well completed
- to collect information for this report
- to prepare a foundation for possible future partner projects between the five cooperating teacher training institutions

During this journey we met all the South coordinators except Tulip O'Connor (WCE), each at their home institution. In addition to the thrill of meeting these, who are our colleagues as well as friends, it naturally was important to meet the South exchange students a final time in this connection. We organized a gathering in Lilongwe for all the students who were from Malawi. The second gathering was organized in Ongwediva for the students from northern Namibia and the third in Windhoek for the students who belong in southern Namibia. During these gatherings the exchange project was discussed and evaluated with a particular focus on the students' experiences and their views.

Finally, we will mention that we visited eight of the earlier exchange students in the schools where they at that time were teachers. These visits had, as far as we could recognize, several effects:

- We were of course very happy to have this opportunity to strengthen the ties that had been established during their stay in Norway. This came out very clear in the way they greeted the North coordinator, Norleif Vik, the one who had been their daily contact with the project during their stay.
- Certainly it was an inspiration for the students to observe that the leadership of the project was still interested in their well being and to seek for traces or 'results' of the project after some time had passed.
- The participants were reminded of and reinforced in their understanding of the ideas behind the project and it was obvious that the gatherings also reinforced their engagement for these ideas and their motivation to be even more active in spreading information in the future.
- In the classrooms where we were able to observe teaching about Norway, we were also able to act as resource persons and supply with information to the learners. Such a greeting from the foreign world seemed to be taken as a very welcome contribution to the lessons on the learners' side.
- In some cases there were organized assemblies in connection with our visit. Then the project was presented (obviously not for the first time) for the learners and teachers of the school alike. It would not be surprising if such visits and presentations have positive ripple effects.
- We were able to talk to the leaders of the different schools where our exchange students at that time were teaching. We were assured that their experiences in Norway had had a positive influence on the exchange students' attitudes and teaching skills.

- Africans regard having visitors a blessing. Therefore the former exchange student has been instrumental for bringing blessing to the school through our visit. This will also boost the former exchange student's prestige at her/his working place, which may be a valuable input for a relatively newly arrived employee. This may in its turn be conducive for the spread of information about Norway and bridge building between richer and poorer countries. This is probably so within the particular school and also for schools in the area around, at least this is what one of the principals told us.

As part of all the motives mentioned above which this concluding journey should serve, it gave us an excellent opportunity to gather information about how representatives of the participating institutions and student participants evaluated the project in retrospect. Jann Robert Junker joined us and his main job was to videotape as much as possible from the journey. Later he edited a DVD-based report, which is included as a supplement to this written report. In this way we established a foundation for the present report, which thus will be the fourth and final ending of this project. The total series of concluding activities for this project are

- the final exchange in 2008
- the final partner meeting in August 2008
- the journey to Malawi and Namibia October/November 2008
- the present report from the project of May 2010

1.3 RIPPLE EFFECTS

Since the project focused on learning about South and North societies, it was important that this learning should not be confined to a limited group of 'insiders' (student participants and coordinators) but be spread to as many as possible and feasible. There was a large group of people who in different ways played an important role and made the project both possible and worth while. Here this is presented as ripple effects of the project.

1.3.1 Friendly contact on and off campus

A considerable problem facing the FK students from Malawi and Namibia on their three-month exchange visit was that they met a language barrier. In Norway the dominating language is Norwegian, and English is not even a second language in schools in the way these students are used to in their home countries. For many Norwegians it does not always come naturally to address people who do not understand Norwegian. Fortunately many English-speaking Norwegians understood this and took contact. It means a great deal for those in a foreign environment to have regular contact with people they meet in the corridors, in the classroom, in the canteen, on the streets, in church etc.

In connection with excursions and in various contexts among people in the Norwegian society the FK students have met many sociable and inclusive persons whose friendship they have greatly appreciated. This naturally also includes many of their fellow students on the VUC campus. Many of the participants from Africa have been offered a warm welcome to the various Christian fellowships that exist in Volda and Ørsta and to taking part in the KRIK sports (Norwegian chapter of Christian Sports Contact – CHRISC) and outdoor activities at VUC. International Office and Pangaia at VUC have played an important role in making their stay enjoyable. The ROKKEN Student Union environment has also become more and more important for the FK students as the project period has progressed. We received a lot of positive comments from participants during our visit to Malawi and Namibia in October/November 2008 and quite a number expressed the wish to return to Norway and VUC.

1.3.2 Involvement in the project

In the South

The interest for the project in the staffs of the South colleges has been marked. Different lecturers have received the Norwegian students with enthusiasm as the latter have expressed a wish to join their classes. There are also examples where colleagues of the college coordinators stepped in and helped out when needed. This could be in the case of low capacity or in the absence of the coordinator.

The very positive and friendly reception when college coordinators visited a partner college was also striking and can hardly be taken to be only as a reflex of general African politeness and hospitality, but most probably also as an illustration of sincere involvement and enthusiasm for the project.

The principals of LTTC and WCE and the college registrar at CC participated in the FK-Forum in Oslo in 2006. Here they received a lot of information on the FK-program along with very good and updated information on development policies in general and of Norwegian development policies. Their inclusion in the 'FK-family' and enhanced knowledge probably was important for their strong support of the project.

In the North

The African FK students had the chance to share the Norwegian teacher trainees' lectures and teaching in a number of subjects. Many lecturers have been positive towards making a special effort without any extra remuneration. They have no doubt considered it important to include this valuable element of African culture in their own lectures, and many students have received their visitors from abroad positively. The African teacher trainees have in various ways got to know teacher education in Norway by sharing lectures with their Norwegian counterparts. The same applies to Norwegian exchange students in Africa, who can also explain about teacher training as it is done in Malawi or Namibia after having experienced it at first hand there.

Social Studies is the subject in which the African students have been given teaching in English on a daily basis, and the development of Norwegian schools with pedagogy and didactics has had its natural place there. They have naturally enough also shown great interest in other subjects that are part of teacher education at VUC, and they have been given a brief introduction by the lecturer in charge and been present during a number of lectures. It is difficult to include the names of everybody involved over a period of five years, but they are teaching arts and crafts, drama, English, music, physical education and Social Studies. The project was met with a positive attitude and help from the administration of the Faculty of Education at VUC. It has been important for the overseas FK participants to be given special treatment by the college administration, and as these students returned the good treatment the administrators were also positively influenced by the project.

Throughout the entire VUC stay, ICT has played a key role in the teaching of the African participants. They have developed basic knowledge or had the chance to update their previous knowledge in this field. To be offered unlimited access to a computer and the Internet has been considered as a huge privilege compared to the situation back home. They have spent a great deal of their study time and their leisure hours in front of computers at VUC, and in this manner they have also learnt a lot about Norway and life in a rich country. A couple of them have made use of this knowledge to produce both videograms and picture series with commentaries, music etc. about farming in Malawi over the period of a year after their return to the country in June 2008. This is an exciting follow-up project with a view to teaching about Malawi.

In connection with the Week of Excitement at Bjorli the FK students have been given a particularly good reception and have been very well looked after by physical education staff and instructors. This Week of Excitement is a special event where disabled youth get to experience snow and skiing. Spending time with the mentally disadvantaged in winter Norway has been one of the really memorable experiences during the whole stay for the African students. The impression is that the mentally disabled also enjoyed the African students very much.

The first two years the FK students had board and lodging at the Møre Folk High School in Ørsta, which involved commuting every day to VUC. The staff in Ørsta was very helpful and showed great interest in the project. The African students took part in a variety of activities at the Folk High School. Asbjørn and Inger Tove Simonnes were helpful and popular hosts during the last three years when the FK students were accommodated in Forbundsheimen in Volda. The evaluation shows that the FK students greatly appreciated their living conditions both in Volda and Ørsta. Contact with other international students was an important factor that contributed to the enjoyment of their stay in Ørsta. The same applies to the contact with

the various students and other Africans that have gradually become a regular feature on the campus in Volda.

1.3.3 Projects and programs

Several other projects and programs have been initiated in the wake of establishing this FK project at VUC. FK Norway has also regarded this as interesting and important. In other words, the project has produced ripple effects and some examples are mentioned below.

Volda named an International Municipality in May 2005

It is FK Norway under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who take the initiative to establish whether there are grounds for awarding a municipality the honorary title as International Municipality and it is FK Norway that is responsible for the work and the events associated with this award. They wish in this way to emphasize to these municipalities the important responsibilities they have undertaken with regard to immigration, refugees and asylum seekers in the context of a colorful fellowship. The FK project at VUC with the exchange of teacher trainees between VUC and educational institutions in Africa had just been started in 2004. The project coordinator was contacted by FK Norway during the spring/summer of 2004 on the topic of Volda as an international municipality and he was positive to the idea. FK Norway wanted assistance in carrying out the necessary surveys and preparatory work. Together with representatives from Volda municipality Norleif Vik took part in the planning and implementation of the program of events that marked the naming of Volda as an international municipality. They were memorable days that demonstrated the international environment in the town for a week in May 2005 and the municipality received a great deal of PR. The group of African exchange students took part by showing various aspects of their local culture and by teaching about the UN Millennium Development Goals in local secondary schools, an activity that has continued to be a regular part of their program throughout the five years of the project.

Not only international students joined the colorful fellowship that was demonstrated during these memorable days, but it also showed how Volda municipality represented a positive approach to immigration and asylum policies and many of the municipal staff was involved in this work. It was important for the exchange students to experience that it was not only the VUC environment, but the entire community of Volda was pleased to be awarded the honorary title of international municipality.

Quota students to VUC from CC from 2006

Many of the participants in the exchange project have wished to return to Volda and Norway, and three students (see picture next page) from one of the partners in Malawi, Chancellor College (CC), have so far become quota students as participants in three-year study programs at VUC financed by NORAD (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation). The first year they study Norwegian language and society before starting on a Master's degree program in Special Education. This is a field of studies for which there is a great need to develop in Malawi and it is interesting to see how the exchange project actually became a starting point for CC to improve their focus and competence on special education. Jennipher Mbukwa was in the first group of exchange students. She was also the first quota student from CC to VUC, where she acquired a master's degree in special education in 2009. The dean of Faculty of Education saw a special potential for CC in this connection because the college wanted to enhance its competence on special education, but people with this competence were in short supply in the country. Therefore he encouraged Jennipher Mbukwa to go for that particular Master's degree and indicated that the university might be interested in employing her as a

teacher in this particular field. By March 2010 she is teaching special education at Chancellor College. It is fair to say that this would most probably not have happened without the FK Norway program.



Masterstudents Twambilele Mwangonde, Hajira Blamu and Jennipher Mbukwa, all former students of Chancellor College, at HVO Campus. Photo: Kristian Fuglseth.

Master students in School and Education

Three Norwegian FK-participants have also started their Master-studies related to school and education in Malawi (see picture next page). Two of them (Hanna Lindebæk and Aashild Hals) did their field work in Malawi during October/November 2009.



On their way to Mulanje Mountains in Malawi during their exchange stay in 2008: Aashild Hals, Hanna Lindebæk and Sanna Brattland, all of them are master students Social Studies at HiST/NTNU in Norway. Photo: Torill Wiggen.

A project on democracy in partnership between CC and VUC 2006–2007

Two key individuals on the FK Norway project, coordinator Matthew Chilambo at CC and Odd Ragnar Hunnes at VUC were the leaders of a joint project between the Education Departments of the two institutions. The project focused on strengthening the democracy perspective in teacher education and in schools. As many as 20 members of staff at the two university colleges took part in the project which among other things published the book *Learning Democracy – a resource book* (Chilambo & Hunnes 2007). The project had a didactic approach and was in 2008 awarded the prize for ‘Outstanding Quality in Education’ at VUC. This was yet another project financed by NORAD and it helped to realize the project goal that mentioned the establishment of close contact between the academic and educational environments at VUC and CC: ‘The institutions (partners): establish long term educational links between the colleges with special focus on social science education’ (Appendix 1).

New North-South projects in which exchange students play an active role

Exciting reports show that a number of projects have been established as a result of the FK participation. Several of the Norwegian and African participants have already had important roles in a variety of North-South events after completing the FK project, and many of them, both Norwegian and African wish to return to their host country. Several Norwegians wish to become involved in development aid. After three months stay they have learnt a lot about Africa and how they function in a foreign natural and cultural environment. This is valuable developing country experience, as it is called in the trade.

The African participants claim that the project has given them increased self-confidence and awareness. Several of them have applied for further education studies after the exchange program and many want to return to Volda University College as Master students.

1.3.4 Long lasting careers

The project should be ideally suited to provide positive ripple effects in both the short and long term, since the participants come into contact with so many young people in their work as teachers. They reach out with information to a large group, not just immediately after their stay abroad, but during their career as teachers for many years to come. Therefore the project has considerable ripple effects in various parts of Malawi, Namibia and Norway. The photograph below is an example of the huge group of children and youth that the project participants will meet in Africa.



Lovemore Mbewe (to the extreme left in the photo) took part in the programme in 2004. Since then he has been teaching Social Studies at Mbirira Community Day Secondary School in Malawi. In his job he comes into contact with many “new” young people every single year.

PART 2

EVALUATION

2.1 METHOD

Two main approaches have been used in the evaluation of this project: program evaluation (formative) and final evaluation (summative). The formative evaluation has partly been performed sporadically and according to what may be called look-close-as-the-need-becomes-apparent-principle. However, most of the evaluation has been planned and performed rather systematically during the whole project period. At this point we have been relying on the principles and way of thinking associated with action learning and action research (Carr & Kemmis 1986, Møller 1998, Tiller 1999).

The summative evaluation has been made after the termination of the project and is partly founded on documentations from the formative evaluation, mainly reports from the partner meetings, and partly on the information which was gathered after the project was terminated. It may be argued that to base a summative evaluation on information which is gathered the same year as the project was terminated does not give the 'results' time to ripen. Thus short term results will come forth in such an evaluation, while we would rather like to see the more long range results (Moyo; 44–45). The main reason for gathering the information in the way mentioned is that it was gathered during the journey to all the cooperating institutions in Africa as the final and concluding activity of the project (see 1.2.4). Short ranged as this information obviously may be, we just had to take advantage of that unique possibility to gather a variety of information for the report. Concerning the time range, our hope is that the present report may serve as a useful baseline if someone else would like to evaluate the longer time consequences (results) of the project after a suitable span of time.

The formative evaluation

During the second half of every year there was organized a partner meeting where the last year's exchange was evaluated. The program was discussed to some detail and positive as well as negative sides were commented upon. On the basis of these discussions, changes and adjustments were made for the following years' exchanges. In addition to the experiences that the coordinators, who were attending the partner meetings, had made during the previous exchanges, the discussions were mainly based on the following information:

- At the end of every exchange, there were discussions with students individually and in groups about the stay abroad. These discussions focused on academic, social as well as practical aspects of the exchange. These talks involved the African students just before leaving Norway and as they returned home, and the Norwegian students towards the end of the semester, that is to say after they had returned home from their stay abroad and after they had completed information and teaching assignments in cooperation with the African students.
- At least three times during their stay abroad, the students were obliged to report in writing to their home coordinator. The idea was that these reports should uncover possible problems and give the coordinators a chance to help solve them. This happened in some instances.

- Concerning the academic sides of this scheme, these were given special attention through the written assignments during the stay abroad and during oral exam at the end. This was the case for the African as well as the Norwegian students.

Every year a report was submitted to FK Norway from these annual discussions at the partner meetings, after which FK Norway provided comments and suggestions with regard to the next stage of the project.

The summative evaluation

During the partner meeting in 2008 there was developed a questionnaire through thorough discussion where the South coordinators played an important role (appendix 5). The questionnaire was later piloted by three former exchange students who during the fall 2008 were quota students at Volda University College. The questionnaire was then distributed to all the student participants from Malawi and Namibia in order to acquaint them with the content ahead of time. The plan was that they should answer the questions during the reunion gatherings that we invited them to during October/November. When that time came, we found that several of the students had drafted their answers ahead of the gathering. They completed their final version of their answers after listening to the information on the questionnaire that one of us gave. There were three such gatherings, one in Malawi and two in Namibia. Each time one of us (the same one) gave a thorough orientation about how each question was meant to be understood. Then the student participants filled out their questionnaire while they were in the same room. This way the students had the opportunity to ask if there was something that they did not understand and we made sure that all the present students turned in their finished questionnaire at the end of this exercise. Each student wrote her/his answers on a PC and the answers were stored on a memory stick.

This way to organize the survey had three advantages. Firstly, the respondents had ample time to think through the questions ahead of the reunion gathering. Secondly, we had the opportunity to explain how the questions were meant to be understood. Thirdly, we made sure that all the students that were present at the gathering turned in their answers. 23 questionnaires were handed in during the reunion gatherings, while 4 were handed in from students who did not attend. In this way 27 out of a total of 44 (61 %) responded to the questionnaire and we have no doubt that the response would have been markedly lower or taken a lot more effort on our part if we had not collected the finished questionnaires during the reunion gatherings.

It may be argued that through our thorough orientation on all the questions we may have influenced the respondents' answers. It is not unlikely that they wanted to answer in ways that pleased us. After all, we had been instrumental for them to experience three months abroad which is something that only few, if any, of their friends have been even close to. As we made sure that they saw how the questions were meant to be understood, that might give them the impression that we wanted them to answer in some particular way. This comes on top of what seems to be a general inclination for Africans who: 'as often as not, [...] will tell you what he thinks you want to hear rather than risk offending you with an opposing view' (Lamb 1987: 235). We will therefore be aware of positive answers and not necessarily take them at face value.

As mentioned above, 23 out of 44 student participants attended one of the reunion gatherings (52 %). There may be a lot of different reasons why people did not come. We know that some were abroad at that time, some were sick and some were occupied differently and could not

come. Finally there are some who did not show up for reasons we do not know. We are not certain that the information about the gatherings reached all 44. It is clear that the respondents in this survey were not chosen randomly and it should be expected that those who were able to make it, and found it worth while to respond would generally be more positive to the project than the ones who did not. However, in the answers we note quite a number of critical remarks and this may indicate that the student participants also had critical opinions and dared to voice them.

A total evaluation of the quality (reliability) of the information from the survey, points in the direction that the information may be positively skewed. Especially prone to this weakness are probably the questions where the students were invited to grade different aspects of the project on a scale 1–10. The averages here are very high (all above 7). Therefore, the information from the survey appears as statistics only in one table. The survey-gathered information is mostly used in a qualitative manner for instance by making direct use of citations from the open questions. However, we must admit that the high scores on the scaled answers may have influenced us to think that the students generally found their participation in the project more helpful for their personal and professional development than actually was the case. Even so, we are confident that the students' overall picture clearly is on the positive side – but how far is difficult to say.

After having collected the finished questionnaires we organized a group discussion / group interview for those present at the reunion gathering. Here the participants were encouraged to comment more in depth on some of the questions that they had answered in writing. With some variation, these group discussions followed a similar pattern. They all started with an open question on their experiences with the project: 'Is there something on your minds that you would like to comment upon? Is there something you would like to highlight?' This way the participants were invited to set the agenda as they were asked to speak their minds before we posed our prepared questions. The latter focused on the following themes:

- To get Norwegian friends
- Expectations that they had before they left their home country and to which degree these expectations were met
- Unexpected experiences during their time as exchange students
- Accommodation and food, the food regime included
- Main differences between their home country and Norway
- Did they expect to make a difference during their stay abroad?
- A possible peak experience during the stay abroad

After the first group discussion, we became aware that there were some important aspects that were not given sufficient room. These concerned church life and the students' participation in Christian organizations and the student activity house in Volda called Rokken. We made sure to invite the students to comment on these aspects during the remaining discussions.

The group discussions served as debriefing for the participants and with respect to the project this was the main reason for performing these interviews (see 1.2.4). Using group interviews was a way of establishing a 'social memory' of what they had experienced (Crang 2001). Such a social memory has its advantages as the individual's impressions are filtered through the peers' recognition and criticism and thus appear more balanced and trustworthy compared to individuals' stories. As Crang puts it: 'If there were a dominant view it was reached

through discussion' (2001: 230). Crang also points at the group interviews' potential for bringing out the 'history from below' as a way of balancing the researcher's tendency to impose her/his interpretation on the information that is gathered. Finally Crang comments on the rhetorical strategy where the researcher includes 'authentic voices' in the report in order to strengthen the credibility, something in the same vein as citing references. He concludes: 'However, even knowing this, it was important to hear things in these people's own words' (2001: 229). Therefore we have included a number of such quotes in this report. Incidentally, such quotes have not only been taken from the discussions / group interviews, but also from open questions in the questionnaire and from interviews and observations. It is clear that in addition to serving as a forum for debriefing the students, the group discussions also offer a substantial mass of information for the present report.

During the journey to Malawi and Namibia we performed 6 individual interviews with active participants in the project, 2 students and 4 leaders at the participating institutions. In addition we interviewed the principal of four schools where former exchange students were teaching. Finally, we observed 8 lessons where different African exchange students were teaching their students a topic that was relevant for their stay in Norway.

All the interviews and most lesson-observations were video-recorded after we had obtained permission to do so. Being able to go back and check information that came out in the different talks is a strong support for the memory and improves the quality of the information that this report is built upon. Our former exchange students as well as the learners were certainly influenced by our presence in the classroom and even more so by our videotaping the lessons. The situation was unusual or even artificial. But our purpose, which was to observe our former exchange students teach about project relevant topics, could hardly be badly hurt by the videotaping. We were able to see what kind of learning and teaching methods that were chosen, what and how our former students chose to present the topic and through answers that the learners gave, we got an impression of what they had already learned about Norway or the project-relevant topic at hand, and this was our main interest.

In middle 2008 The FK Norway distributed a questionnaire about youth, exchange and development to all the partner institutions in their program 'FK-Youth exchange'. We have been given access to the answers given by the leadership of Chancellor College and Windhoek College of Education and use these as part of our information base for the present report.

A comparison between the information from South and North

The information that we have collected for the formative evaluation is pretty much the same for South and North. This information was mainly collected during the students' stay abroad through writing assignments and discussions with the host coordinator, and from the debriefing sessions towards the end of the stay and upon arrival at home institution. This information was mainly taken to the partner meetings, discussed there and on this basis relevant adjustments were made for the following exchanges.

When it comes to the summative evaluation, the information from the North is not so extensive and also not collected in such systematic ways as from the South. We tried to reach all the South participants and invited them to answer our questionnaire and 27 did so. We also conducted some interviews with South participants, visited some of their workplaces, observed some of them teach, talked to their principals and also had the group interviews / group discussions where 23 of them participated. Only the last year's Norwegian students

(2008) were invited to answer the same questionnaire as the African students, and all of the seven responded. The Norwegian students the previous years (2004–2007) mainly gave their final evaluation inputs during debriefing discussions towards the end of the semester. During the years we, and mainly Norleif Vik, have been sporadically in touch with former exchange students in Norway and in that way have been receiving information on how they regard their experiences as some time has gone by. This kind of information naturally has had some influence as part of our ‘total knowledge’ about the project. But the present report is mainly built on information that the Norwegian students gave during and shortly after their stay abroad. On the South participants’ side the time span between exchange and response is more varying. The report is built on information that they supplied during our encounter with them in October/November 2008 which was around a half, one and a half, two and a half, three and a half, or four and a half years after their stay abroad, depending on which year they were at VUC.

As usual our available resources for information gathering were limited. We therefore decided to prioritize collecting information in the South. This was feasible to combine with the journey that we made to Malawi and Namibia as a conclusion of the project. We also found it conducive of the project aims to secure a more solid information base in the South since we are from the North ourselves and that therefore misconceptions and misunderstandings are more likely to appear when describing and evaluating the South side of the project. Finally, and to our minds the most important, this was a partnership project between North and South where the North had the upper hand. The main coordinator was from the North, the funding was from the North, the terms of reference for the project was from the North and this final report is written by the two coordinators from the North. In short, the North played a leading role (Shutt 2006: 154). Therefore it should be reasonable to dedicate more time and effort to collect information in the South – and consequently also give more room for their perspectives in the report.

Combining methods

As may be gathered from above, a lot of varied information is available for this report. We find this very useful in our attempts to strike a balance through combining the information that comes forth in different ways. Thus information that is gathered through the questionnaire may be compared with the information that is gathered in other ways, for instance from interviews, group discussions and observations (Punch 2001: 175–177). Through such combinations pieces of information may be weakened or strengthened depending on contradictory or supporting information that is surfacing. As stated above, we suspect that information in the survey is overemphasizing positive aspects in the project. Since we have been combining methods of information gathering for this report, we dare present our evaluation of the project after pointing out the limitations of the information that this report is founded on.

Limitations of the information

The following limitations to the information that this report is based upon should be pointed out:

- The information is uneven especially in the way that we have more information from the South compared to the North, which is discussed above.
- The information is mainly subjective. We depend very much on statements from people who have been involved in the project in one way or another. It is difficult to know in which ways this influences the information. Active participation may incline

a person to exaggerate the positive aspects of the project, but the opposite is also possible.

- The respondents to the survey were not randomly chosen. This may have influenced the information from the South most and painted a more positive picture than otherwise would have been, as discussed above. This may especially be the case on the questions where the evaluation is given on a scale 1–10. Therefore this information does not appear directly but a few times in the report.
- The fact that the authors of this report also were the two North coordinators of the project has several implications. It will most probably influence the selection of information as well as the interpretation of it. We should most probably be expected to give a positively skewed presentation of the project. We have tried to balance this as best we can, but are of course aware that this report should be read as a report *from* a project as well as a report *about* a project.
- The videotaping of interviews, group interviews / group discussions, and teaching lessons will most probably have influenced the respondents and the situation in a limiting way so that the information may have come out more polished than otherwise would have been the case.

This report is based on quite a lot of information that is gathered in a number of ways. Through combining the different pieces we have balanced this evaluation of the project to the best of our ability. Even so, we are aware that there are many reasons to treat the information, reflections and conclusions in this report with some caution. Therefore it may be soothing to know that the report is mainly meant as a contribution to a summary of experiences that active participants of the project have made, and which hopefully may be useful for possible future projects of similar nature.

2.2 FROM THE PARTNER MEETINGS

2.2.1 Coordinators and colleagues

There were held partner meetings every year. The first one was in May 2003 as the project proposal was worked out. The following years the agenda was to evaluate the previous exchange and planning for the next, including a new proposal to the FK Youth.

The meetings also offered an arena for learning about each other's colleges, teacher education and countries. Therefore the meetings circulated so that the partners took turns being host, which has contributed to the good cooperation and a feeling of equality between the partners (see 1.1.5). Very importantly, the partner meetings made it possible for the coordinators to get acquainted, to build a foundation of trust and fellowship. This has also helped to establish a South-South cooperation that has been an important aspect of the partnership. So when problems arose, which ever so often happened, the coordinators knew some of each other's stronger and weaker sides. But more than that, they knew each other as persons of good will and therefore acceptable decisions more easily could be reached. An example may illustrate this. Because of problems with accommodation at LTTC and a mismatch between the LTTC program and the exchange calendar, it was decided by the partner meeting 2004 to limit LTTC's recruitment of students for exchange. This implied that LTTC should not send students in 2005 and before recruiting someone for later years a plan to mend the mentioned mismatch of programs had to be presented for the partner meeting. Since Malawi had a quota of four, CC was allowed to recruit all. This was considered reasonable since CC also was receiving four due to the fact that LTTC was not taking any. Without further notice, without presenting a plan and therefore also without the consent of the partner meeting, the LTTC representatives went ahead and recruited students for the exchange in 2007. This became a problem since CC at that time already had recruited four student participants based on the previous year's agreement. So at the partner meeting 2006, it was decided to try to squeeze in six (two extra) students from Malawi for the 2007 exchange. FK Youth agreed to this plan and increased their funding some and the North coordinator accepted the increased number of students with the expanded responsibility and work that came with it. This instance may serve as an example of the collective spirit that characterized the project and how problems were solved in an attitude of trust and solidarity.

Such familiarity and friendship between the coordinators may also challenge the ability to make hard decisions because they may cause problems or may not be liked by your friends. One may wonder if that was the case since the mentioned solution made precedence so that Malawi recruited six students in 2008 as well. Since that was the last year of the project, this could be done. It is however not obvious that it would be fair for Malawi to have the increased quota prolonged indefinitely if the project was to continue.

2.2.2 Items discussed in partner meetings

2003 was the meeting where the whole project was planned, combined with a special focus on the first exchange in 2004. Most energy was put into the project application including time period (3–5 years), briefing and debriefing of participating students, social integration of the students while abroad, discipline and emergency plan. On the academic side, the study plan was given a lot of attention with content, literature, how to organize the learning processes where excursions and school visits would be very important, project work, portfolio, student assessment etc. Practical challenges were accommodation and food, travel arrangements, economy and administrative procedures and routines.

The meetings in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 evaluated the previous year's exchange and combined it with planning for the next year. Some issues were discussed at every partner meeting these years since they were continuously important to the project. Then there were issues that did not regularly appear on the agenda. They were discussed as something happened in the project that needed to be looked in to, and usually they were jointly decided upon by the partners. The meeting in 2008 worked mainly on evaluation of the whole project although it had a special focus on the 2008 exchange.

The reports from the partner meetings describe how changes were made during the project period as experiences were made. Improvements were implemented based on reports from the students, ideas and needs that the coordinators became aware of and solutions that were developed as the need for improvements were recognized.

Accommodation

Accommodation was fundamental and discussed every time. Here we start with a comment on VUC. The first year the African students were staying in Møre Folk High School, a boarding school in Ørsta, a neighboring town 10 km from Volda. The students had to ride a bus in order to come to the college. This travel did not cost the students any money since they were given an economy pass for the bus. The students also reported to actually enjoy the bus ride. In Ørsta the students were given prepared meals three times a day, breakfast, a hot meal around 3 PM and an evening meal. The students appreciated this service so much that they made sure to be present when food was served. This meant, however, that they left the college quite early in the afternoon, inhibiting their social contact with other students at VUC in the afternoons and evenings. On the other hand, they made their acquaintance with students at the boarding school. Even so, the report from the partner meeting 2004 reads: 'Experiences from 2004 indicate that the socialization of the exchange students with the local students is more important than first recognized. That means staying as close to campus as possible.' The project was not able to find a more suitable accommodation for 2005, but from 2006 the students stayed in a students' boarding house in Volda only about one hundred meters from the VUC campus. There the students were accommodated two to each room and had access to fully equipped kitchen. This meant that the students would have to prepare their own food, which certainly proved to be a challenging learning experience, especially for the male students. The fact that 'food' was on the agenda of the partner meetings both in 2006 and 2007, indicates that it took a lot of effort to work out a food regime that could be satisfactory. The partner meeting found that the experience of handling money and food on their own (after an initial period where the North coordinator helped them getting started) was an important way of being a student in the Norwegian way. Other students lived in the same complex and thus represented a social potential. Closeness to campus implied free access to computers and the internet, which was something the students appreciated very much. From the discussions in the partner meetings it is obvious that the coordinators saw both pros and cons for this option compared to Ørsta. However, the conclusion was clear enough: 'Based on the total experience of 2006, we will use the same accommodation for 2007'.

A similar process appeared in Zomba. For security reasons the students did not stay in a student boarding on campus. The fact that the coordinator's swift action once helped the students to evade a riot on campus illustrates this point. The two first years the exchange students stayed in Annie's Lodge. Even though the hosts were very hospitable and helpful, this was not an ideal solution since the cost was quite high and the students could not easily socialize with the African students outside class. It was not until the third year that the project was able to work out a better option. At that time the coordinator was able to find a four room

apartment that answered to all wishes: roomy, reasonable rent, self contained, safe and within 10 minutes walking distance from the campus. This was on the compound where the Anglican Church had a seminar (boarding included) for students of theology that were preparing for pastoral service within their church.

In Lilongwe the project was not able to find a suitable solution for accommodation. Even though some project money was spent to upgrade an apartment on campus, security and transport was regarded to be insufficient. Combined with an academic program that did not fit in with the project's calendar, this led to the conclusion that Norwegian students should not stay at LTTC. They would visit LTTC for about a week at the beginning of their stay in Malawi, but otherwise all four of them were to join Chancellor College in Zomba.

In Ongwediva the students stayed in a house outside campus the first year. Walking and riding their bicycles made it possible for the Norwegian students to attend extracurricular activities like volleyball and other sports on campus. Already the next year the coordinator managed to find a room within campus, not more than five minutes walk from the boys' and girls' hostels. Belonging to the teacher resource centre (TRC) it was described as of a similar standard as the student hostels, reasonable cost, satisfying security and with internet available on campus. A supermarket and a public park with a swimming pool within walking distance added to the quality of this solution. This arrangement worked out well in 2005 and was therefore prolonged for the rest of the project period.

In Windhoek it was problematic to find appropriate housing on the college campus. Distance to the college was a challenge the two first years and this prohibited social integration with the Namibian students at the college. Otherwise this lodging was all right. The following year the Norwegian students were lodged in a self contained outbuilding (used to be servants lodging) and owned by a lecturer at the college. This was within walking distance to the college, but still a bit far, and an amenity like a shower was problematic to access. The fourth year they were accommodated privately at the coordinator's home. This induced a very good and close contact between the students and the WCE-coordinator, but the contact with fellow students still came some short. In retrospect one could wish for the students to be accommodated in one of the student boarding houses on campus in order to enhance social integration that the project wished for. The last year the students mostly stayed in the north, so there was no need for a permanent place for them in Windhoek that year.

Application to FK Youth for next year's exchange

Even though the project was accepted by FK Youth for a period of 3–5 years, the procedures were that there should be submitted a project proposal for every year. The proposal for the following year was therefore a standard issue in the partner meetings. Building on the experiences and lessons learned from the previous exchange(s) adjustments and improvements were made from one year to the other. One important aspect that was adjusted was about the Participation Contract that FK Youth demanded that the North participants should acquaint themselves with and sign. This is actually a contract between the participant and the home institution and regulates the relationship between the two parties. As the south coordinators learned to know the Participation Contract, they also started using it towards their own participants (appendix 3).

Calendar and daily program for next year's exchange

For each year there had to be worked out a specific calendar for the exchange. Naturally this included the dates for leaving from and arriving at the home country. But it also had to take into account opening and closing dates for the receiving colleges. Such changes were mainly made at CC, where spells of unrest among students and faculty members at a couple of occasions led to postponed semester start. Usually postponed semester starts were known at the time of the partner meeting so that optional activities for the students could be planned. In Malawi the combination of the wish to make the Norwegian students acquainted with LTTC and postponed semester start at CC in 2004 came out with a special program for the students that they appreciated very much. This program therefore was followed every year afterwards and included a couple of weeks spent in Lilongwe and the area in and around Mzuzu north of Lilongwe.

The local coordinator was responsible for the student's program during their stay at the hosting college. During the years this program was changed and improved partly through discussions in the partner meetings and partly on initiatives from the students and the coordinators. School visits and excursions were given much attention since they were regarded very important parts of the program's academic and social content and much time was spent discussing these activities.

Coordinators' role

Each of the five partner institutions appointed a coordinator to take responsibility on behalf of their institution. This meant that they should take care of a lot of administrative tasks including insurance, partnership agreement, concept document, participation contract etc. They were expected to coordinate the program for the visiting students and this often meant organizing the program, inviting different people to teach or taking care of the teaching on their own, organizing excursions etc. They were responsible for practical sides like accommodation, food arrangements, transport etc. They should see to the students that they had a reasonable introduction to the local culture, encourage them to integrate socially, that they were reasonably safe at all times, including being 'on call' in cases of need. They were also responsible for the part of the economy that was connected with their college's activities in the project. The North coordinator was the leader of the whole project and he had this as his main job. For the others this was just something that was added to the other tasks and responsibilities that they had to deal with at the college. They had an administrative allowance for this job of some hundred US dollars per year.

As the project evolved, it was experienced that at peak times, the coordinators had so much work to do (with all other chores resting on their shoulders) that they had problems with serving the students the way they wanted (and should). All the colleges therefore named an assistant coordinator that should be prepared to fill in on duties etc. for the coordinator (see 1.3.3).

Communication between coordinators

A lot of important information between the five coordinators was exchanged during the partner meetings. An example is information about the students who were recruited for exchange. This information would mainly be about academic background, helping the host coordinator to suggest an interesting teaching program for the visiting students. When it came to special health and personal conditions, it was the policy of the project that the students were asked to give information on needs they might have for special treatment during their

stay abroad. This could include diabetes, allergic conditions, asthma and other chronic health conditions etc. The host coordinator should be informed about this voluntarily from the participants. That way the students were left to decide what and how much to tell. This could be done as the students were invited to tell about themselves in writing early during their stay abroad: 'My personal history'. Here they could mention problems they had had, what kind of activities they used to engage in, family background etc. Of course it was agreed that such information stayed with the coordinator as a matter of trust.

The communication between the five coordinators was regularly discussed, mainly on basis of last year's experience. Time and again difficulties arose, mainly for technical reasons. Regular mail was so slow and undependable that telephone (voice and SMS) and e-mail were mostly used. For an exchange project like this the fast development of mobile telephone services the later years represents a revolution concerning immediate communication and security. This is especially noticeable in Africa where the system of telephone landlines often performed badly (and still does). When e-mail problems occurred at OCE and LTTC the necessary contact was facilitated by using the relevant coordinators' private e-mail, of course supplied by private mobile telephones.

The North coordinator was the 'primus inter pares' among the coordinators and as such responsible for the communication with FK Youth including proposals, economy and a lot of formalities. It is therefore not surprising that much communication in the project had to go via him. But even so, the project represented a possibility to build bridges and strengthen ties between the partners in the South. During the project period the direct communication between the South coordinators and the South partners seems to have increased some. In addition to being good for performance in the project, such direct contact would also be good for building capacity more in general in the South (see 2.5.1 College benefits).

Communication between students and coordinators

An important part of the communication between students and coordinators concerned the information that the participants needed for application procedures and the preparation for the stay abroad for those who were selected to go. There was made a long list of issues to inform about, documents to deliver and actions to take. Formalities like acquiring passports, visa, health check ups and health insurance were also important and took a lot of effort to handle on all sides. Economic arrangements seem to have represented a special challenge to explain and understand for both African and Norwegian students. The nature of money makes economy difficult to handle and this seems to be the case also in this project even though it appears to have been quite favorable for the students economically. In addition comes reminding the students of being sensitive to local traditions and culture in host country (for instance dress code); that they should be ready to take initiatives and responsibility (like something worth while when for instance the program for the day is changed, teaching is called off etc.); the visiting students should be prepared to teach about own country to peer students in host country (make sure to bring material that they may use for this purpose).

During the stay abroad the students were supposed to, and mostly did as it seems, keep in touch with their home coordinator at least on a weekly basis, and of course if special problems occurred. Part of this information flow consisted of three reports on selected activities in the program that the students were obliged to write.

The hosting coordinator was also keeping in constant touch with the visiting students during their stay. Much of this communication was on the weekly program, the selection of activities,

information on program changes etc. It was also about getting acquainted with the local culture, how to behave, food, things to do etc. And it was about security. There were lots and lots to communicate on, and overall it seems to have functioned reasonably well. But there were instances where difficulties surfaced.

It was for instance about attendance in class. This issue was discussed already in 2004 where the report points to the difference in culture in Africa and Norway: In Norway students are used to choosing on their own whether they will join classes or not. (At least this was the case in Social Studies, if not necessarily in all subjects). To balance this, the Norwegians often get writing assignments. So the Norwegian students may not want to have a lot of classes while in Africa. During their stay in Norway the African students may not be getting as many organized classes as they were used to from home college. It was important that the students and coordinators knew this and acted accordingly. For instance, it was important that these differences were explained to the students. The project did not seem to come fully to grip with this issue since in 2007 it was reported that the Norwegian students at CC did not attend classes according to the planned program that year. The report emphasizes that it is very important that the students are informed very well about their obligations to attend classes in order to receive a passing grade. It is also important that the time table the students are expected to follow is made clear to them in good time and it may be a good idea that the lessons are discussed during the weekly meetings with the local coordinator. Since this was an issue that took a lot of concern throughout the project period, it is interesting to observe that the report from the meeting in 2008 states that the students at CC participated in the program that was developed for them with interest and that they profited a lot from this. Ironically, because of strike at CC the semester start was delayed that year and the students were only able to attend regular classes for a few weeks. This was compensated for through several school visits, excursions and a special focus on the students' project reports. The students' positive involvement made it also possible for them to influence their own program, something they were very happy about. At OCE attendance was also good. The coordinator discussed the possible program week by week. Sometimes the students took initiatives themselves in order to get into special classes.

One difficult issue was about the Norwegian students making travels on their own. Early in the project period the need to set some 'ground rules' in this respect became clear. The students were allowed to go for a trip on their own for as much as one week during their stay abroad. Travels in addition to this should be excursions agreed upon by the South coordinator. Weekends were excluded from this counting. Trips should be planned ahead of time preferably in cooperation with the local coordinator, or at least the local coordinator should be informed in sufficient time ahead. Thus the coordinator might be able to combine school visits and collecting information for project reports with personal trips. Security was also an issue in this context and personal trips should be personally paid. In this connection it may be noted that there are big differences between Malawi and Namibia when it comes to transport. Public transport in Malawi is not well developed, vehicles are often not well kept and accidents are frequent. In Namibia public transport is well developed: easily accessed, secure and not expensive. The report from 2007 states that the Norwegian students had access to funding from parents and government loans and this made them able to travel more than the African students could do while abroad. It is said to be very important that the African students appreciate the difference in this respect so that they do not overstretch the comparison between students from South and North.

There were instances where the information system between hosting coordinator and the visiting students did not work well. The mobile phone and e-mail are fantastic tools – when they work, which they apparently did not always do. And sometimes people were not available. In order to find ways to communicate good enough and not in a too time consuming way, from the beginning there was tried to establish a system of meetings between host coordinator and the visiting students. The idea was to schedule sessions once a week, for instance every Friday. Typical topics during these meetings would be the program since last time: what has been good (and why), what has not been good (and why), what has made you wonder (and should be explained more closely). The participants could also take this opportunity to discuss important issues in reasonable depth. This was also thought to be a good time for informing each other about plans for the coming days and possible discussions about the program for next week. This system of sharing information appeared in the discussion at several partner meetings, indicating that even if the idea seemed to be agreeable it is difficult to say to what extent the system was put into practice. However, it is clear that it was implemented in some instances.

The host institution organized debriefing sessions right before the participants left their host institution and also had debriefing sessions after their own students arrived back home. The students were to sum up their experiences abroad and how they will teach about the country they had visited after returning home. During the first week after the students' return home, the home coordinator should arrange a session where the students were invited to describe their experiences abroad and discuss their integration back to the program at home college. It was important that the students got a chance to share both joys and frustrations connected with the exchange program. During this debriefing, the home coordinator was expected to ask the students whether they had experienced / seen something during their stay that the home institution as a teacher training institution should learn from.

Information work done by students

During the stay abroad it was organized for the students to teach about their home country, especially through school visits, but also through presentations for peer students. In the time period after the Norwegian students had returned home and before the African students left, the students were grouped: Namibians and Norwegians who had visited Namibia formed two groups and Malawians and Norwegians who had visited Malawi formed two groups. These groups made school visits and taught about Malawi/Namibia. This was an important part of their information work in a short time perspective.

It was understood that FK had very high expectations concerning the information work of the participants. Therefore it was found to be an obligation for the project collectively and everybody who was engaged in the project individually to follow suit. Time and again it was pointed out that the participants were a little special since most of them were teacher training students. They will be doing information work all through their work as teachers. Even so, they were expected to do their fair share of information work both during their stay abroad and upon immediate return home. In addition to school visits and teaching about own country for peer students at host institution, each student should perform more information activities based on the new FK 'Activity Guide' (see 1.2.3). All students were expected to make a plan for their information work and present it for their home coordinator. The home coordinator gave the students feedback on their plans, discussed and helped the students to come up with a realistic and viable plan. Finally the plan had to be approved by the home coordinator. Each student should make a short report on information work once this was performed. The home coordinators were also expected to make sure that the participants did their information work

and handed in their reports. The coordinator should not agree to present written proofs / diplomas (vitnemål) for the SRS105 Exchange for Development study before they were satisfied with the information work that the student in question had completed. This was all about the compulsory information work immediately upon the arrival back home. The information work that the participant will perform as a teacher comes in addition to this part.

Economy

A report on the money that was spent the previous year and the budget for next year's exchange were recurrent discussions. On these issues it comes out clearly that even though the grants from FK Youth were quite good, the partner institutions also chipped into the project a lot of resources, mainly in the form of infrastructure and personnel. The discussions also were much about administrative routines concerning managing money (and managing without money). For instance, it is reported that the administration allowance should not be used to cover fuel expenses for private transport for the students or incidental transport. There should be an amount of money put to the disposal of the local coordinator for this kind of purpose. In 2006 the students brought 4000 NOK each (out of their own pocket). This should be used to cover costs for the excursions planned by the local coordinator etc. and should be given the national coordinator upon arrival to host country. The South coordinators' administrative allowance of 1 500 NOK pr. student was transferred from VUC to each of the South partners' accounts directly.

One issue that was discussed most years concerned the fact that while some of the schools that the Norwegian students visited actually had no specific material needs, others lacked most of teaching material. It would therefore be appropriate for the students to bring a gift to the schools they visited, when the school was badly equipped. Topographic maps are in great need, other teaching material would also be welcomed. On the other hand, several reports state: 'we should be careful to "teach" the schools to expect gifts when they receive white visitors'. Therefore, if gifts were brought, they should be small. And gifts could go both ways.

In 2008 the reluctance on gifts that is described above had faded as it was reported that one of the Norwegian students before she joined the project had been instrumental as a school in Trondheim (Sjetnemarka school) had collected some money for an African school. She went to northern Namibia and there she made acquaintance with the class that Tomas, one of the former student participants from Namibia, now was teaching at Onathing Combined School. The money that was received made the school able to buy equipment for the volleyball court and a new computer for the teachers to use in their daily work. With the help of the coordinator at OCE some school material had already been given and there was more assistance to come. The contact between these schools in Namibia and Norway was followed up by exchange of letters and drawings and additional gifts. It is interesting to note that this contact happened spontaneously and was not something that the coordinators were actively engaged in.

Contacts between primary schools in Norway and in Malawi / Namibia may be helped by project coordinators as a spin off activity of the project. If money is involved, the helper needs to sit down and discuss what the money is to be spent for. So the meeting decided to encourage previous students to promote the idea of establishing partnerships between African and Norwegian schools. And if they choose to do so, coordinators may help to identify relevant schools, establish contact and also clarify the terms of the partnership.

Study plan

The exchange program was included in the academic program at VUC. Therefore VUC needed to have the final say on formalities, literature and assessment of the students. It would be good if the South coordinators also could join in on the assessment. That way the participating institutions could learn from each other through the coordinators. But the practical costs (time for sending documents back and forth, telephone calls etc.) most probably would be larger than the benefits, so it was decided to leave final assessment of the students for the SRS105 Exchange for Development study to VUC.

Project work

The Norwegian students were making a comprehensive project for which they were invited to collect information during the stay abroad. The students should bring from VUC possible ideas about what their project report should focus on. But of course the students were allowed to change topic after coming to their host country. Possibly this could be something that had caught their interest. At the same time it was pointed out that changing topic could be an 'easy' solution with the effect of postponing the 'real' work on the project. There were examples of students who did very little on their project work during their stay in Africa. Most probably this had a negative effect on their stay abroad as well as their homecoming. While in Africa some of the students reported that they did not have enough to do, while upon return to Norway the situation was the opposite. The partner meetings suggested that the coordinators should try to help the students on this point. The project report was followed up through an oral exam during the month of August and in combination the two (report and oral exam) determined the grade that the Norwegian student received for this study.

The African students wrote several short reports each on a selected topic, for instance teaching disabled students. The final assignment was to write a document to sum up their experiences in Norway and how they will teach about Norway after returning home. This report was assessed and completed through an oral exam at VUC. In combination, the two (report and oral exam) determined the grade that the African student received for this study.

Portfolio

The reports that the African students made, were included in a portfolio that each student established. The portfolio also included different types of teaching material for their own use as teachers; transparencies, power point presentations, short stories, sheets of facts, own reflections on experiences etc. This part really seemed to be a good idea. At the end of their stay, the African students also were given an album of pictures from their stay prepared by the North coordinator. Finally it should be mentioned that the students were taught to use a video camera that was left to their disposal during their stay in Norway. Their recordings were later edited by Mr. Junker and copied into a videocassette (2004, 2005) and later into a DVD (2006, 2007, 2008). The Norwegian students should also have their portfolio in which they collected a variety of documents that they produced during their stay abroad.

Integration upon return home

A dominating question in the partner discussions was how the exchange could be arranged in such a way that the students were not disadvantaged when coming back home. The first couple of years the African students brought home a study mark reading 'Pass'. This caused some problems as many African colleges do not know how to interpret this (What is 'Pass' equivalent to?) Therefore the scale was changed to A–E with F for failure, a system that

should easily be transferred into the marking system of home institution, or at least understood all over.

Again and again the question was also being asked: What subjects does the learning in Norway apply to at home institution? The question has been worked on through dialogue between the home coordinator and the lecturers who taught the courses that the exchange students came back to. The coordinator was expected to explain the content of the program that the exchange students had been exposed to while in Norway. It seems like this practice continued throughout the project. Even so, not all lecturers accepted the academic content of the stay in Norway as sufficient and not all the institutions were able (or willing?) to introduce policies that took care of this challenge. Some of the students were therefore obliged to compensate for their absence through courses and exams upon return home. The partner meetings found this practice to be unfortunate.

In order to ease the integration of the exchange experience into the academic program at home institution a couple of additional strategies were also planned. The first concerned the assignments that the African students wrote while in Norway. The idea was that these should be sent to the home institution so that the relevant lecturers there could mark these documents in the light of the curriculum and program within own institution. The second implied that the South coordinator should inform the North coordinator which subjects the exchange students took at home so that information within these subjects could be included in the program while in Norway. During the discussions both strategies probably seemed sound, but indications are that they were implemented only sporadically.

In 2006 the partner meeting seems to realize that the problem of integrating the Norwegian experience into the program that led to a diploma or bachelor degree at home institution was still not solved. Therefore it was accepted that the Norwegian experience was not to be integrated into the African program, but rather should come as something additional to this one. This meant that the recruitment of student participants moved towards candidates who had finished their diploma or bachelor degree by the time they left for Norway. The sending institution thus solved the problem of integration, but lost something on the information part. Since these participants were no longer students at the sending college, this college had given away a link into the project and a chance to strengthen their international profile. However, this should not limit the information work that the homecoming participant should do.

The challenge of including the exchange project into their degree/diploma program, so that the project comes in as an integrated part of the partner institutions' regular program, is immense. Without a seamless integration in this respect, it is difficult to succeed. The student exchange project found a way around this problem. Having a diploma like the one the African students were getting from the exchange project (30 ECTS credits for SRS105 Exchange for Development), may help them in different connections, for instance when applying for jobs. But it seems obvious that an integration of the academic programs would be a better solution and should be worked out if a similar project is to be launched for the future.

Social integration of exchange students while abroad

Social integration was frequently discussed in the partner meetings. The first year's African students in Volda had some complaints on their ability to integrate with people of own age. Due to improved accommodation and the atmosphere in the group, this was better in 2005, but it was still regarded a problem that the students were accommodated in Ørsta. The hope that this would be changed once the students were accommodated in a student home close to

campus in Volda, does not seem to be fulfilled as social integration remained a challenge all through the project period. An intention of organizing a few host families where one or two students could be invited to visit, possibly stay for a weekend or so, in order to ease integration is recorded several times. But this policy was not systematically implemented.

The students' participation in community and cultural activities was always appreciated. The declared attitude was that every effort should be made by the partners to ensure that participants in the best possible ways were socially integrated into host country culture. The idea was that this would help them acquire a broad understanding of the country. It was also pointed out that there is a need to be aware of local culture in the way visiting students behave with a special concern for the relationship between male and female students. In the same line of thought comes the statement that social integration should be encouraged, but the host coordinator should also be aware and advise the students so that they not unknowingly got involved in connections that could become harmful to them and to social integration. For instance, indications were that bonded relationships between visiting students might put off social contact between visiting and home students.

Weekend activity was also a matter of concern and the attitude amongst the coordinators generally was that the host coordinator should know where the visiting students were during the weekend if they were away from home. The students should know that a white visitor in Malawi/Namibia is always noticed from any point of view.

An early evaluation of the project

In 2004 FK Youth engaged two researchers, Borchgrevink and Skard (B&S) to evaluate some of their ongoing projects as part of their monitoring and evaluations. The present partnership project was selected for study and the report from this study was issued December 2004 (Borchgrevink & Skard 2004). At that time, the project had run one student exchange.

The partner meeting 2005 discussed this report quite extensively and started out expressing that B&S's report conveyed some valuable contributions with the continuation of the project in mind. Even so, the partner representatives did not quite recognize the situation that B&S describe in their report. The partner meeting found that the report did not sufficiently take into account that the project was based only on the first year's exchange. This was regarded as especially important since the partners felt that B&S had not really understood the idea of the project. At least B&S seemed to understand it differently than the participants of the partner meeting. The meeting therefore partly supplemented and partly spoke against some of the views that were presented in the B&S's report.

As an example of the latter, the minutes from the partner meeting points to the following of B&S's conclusions: 'The conceptualization and implementation of the program were dominated by the North and a fundamental challenge was the adjustment of the program to the partner institutions in the South.' The partner meeting then comments: 'The partner meeting wishes to state that the conceptualization of the program was done in cooperation at the workshop in Volda May 2003. The partners agreed on the total program with its modalities. The South partners brought the agreements back to their colleges and discussed what was agreed upon and received confirmation from the college leadership / authorities.'

The B&S's report also had the following passage 'Though the activities mainly were planned according to the set-up and interests of the North partner the only indication of activities in the South was "same as North partner"'. The partner meeting made the following comment:

‘This passage indicates that North is dominating the set-up, which is not in accordance with the way the South partners understand the situation. The partner meeting wants to state that the project is worked out in cooperation between the partners, and the phrase “same as North partner” should be read as a signal of equality between partners rather than dominance/inequality. The latter seems to be Skard’s interpretation.’

There were also examples that the partner meeting found B&S’s observations to be correct and therefore helpful. Examples of this were the statement that the selection criteria were not applied strictly the first year and that not all the Norwegian exchange students participated in the briefing session at VUC before going abroad. The partner meeting acknowledged the need to strengthen the procedures on points like these.

Referring to the B&S’s report, the question was also raised why people from VUC come to Africa to hand over the diplomas while South coordinators do not go to Norway to hand over diplomas to the Norwegian students. The report from the meeting informs that the VUC representatives explained this in the following way: ‘First it should be made clear that the VUC representatives do not go to Africa in order to hand out diplomas. However, we have thought it suitable to organize the handing over ceremony at a time when someone from VUC is visiting a partner institution for other reasons. So far this has been convenient on several occasions, but not always. Secondly, it is VUC which is issuing the diplomas on the basis of exams that have been passed and study points [ECTS credits] that are given by VUC. Therefore it would seem a bit out of place that VUC should [...] bring in from Africa a partner representative to hand out the diplomas to their Norwegian students. Thirdly, the Norwegian students do not receive a separate diploma like the African students do, since the course ‘Exchange for Development’ is an integrated part of their bachelor degree.’

Recruitment of students

The partner meetings observed a pattern on recruitment to the project. The first point is that the African partners had many applicants for the exchange while VUC struggled to fill her quota. This may reflect the fact that Volda had a quota of eight students to send and the others two each (CC had four in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008). It is likely that it also reflects that the exchange represented a more unique possibility to ‘see the world’ for African students compared to the Norwegians. The second observation was that the African partners had no problems recruiting male and female students alike while VUC was only able to recruit two male participants out of a total of 39. It could be interesting to speculate on reasons for this, but that will not be done in this report. Finally, it also turned out that the initial intention of this project, only to recruit participants among teacher training students at VUC, was unrealistic. There were two possible ways to meet this situation: a) to take VUC-students from other programs than teacher training, and b) to take teacher training students from other Norwegian colleges. Both options were tried. It seems like the partner meetings were more happy with alternative b than a.

Evaluation of the whole project

The partner meeting discussed the design of a summative evaluation of the project and spent quite some time to further develop the questionnaire that was to be used for the African students during the Norwegian coordinators’ travel to Malawi and Namibia during October/November 2008. The partner meeting also agreed to the proposed design of the evaluation which is presented in this report.

2.3 FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE AFRICAN STUDENTS

The participating students from Malawi and Namibia were invited to report on their views on and experiences with the project. This was done in a variety of ways as explained above (2.1), and this chapter contains a presentation based on a combination of this information.

2.3.1 Preparations

An interesting question concerning the preparations for the exchange is what the participants considered to be the most vital information they needed before going to the host country as an exchange student. Since the respondents answered this question in the survey and interviews after having returned home, they answered on the basis of their total Norway experience. Based on this experience they selected what kind of information they found especially important to have before the exchange. This does not necessarily mean that the exchange program's information on the issues that are pointed out was insufficient. However, since the issues that are mentioned stand out in the students' view, this may indicate that the information in these particular fields could have been better. In any case the points that are being made may be taken as good advices for possible future exchanges.

Climate and culture

In the students' answers two fields are most frequently mentioned: climate and the Norwegian culture. These may be the two fields where the differences from their home society are most striking. Most of the students were taken aback by the climate as they arrived. Temperatures affected them to a larger degree than they had anticipated, and the snow appeared much different in real life compared to their imagination before leaving home. In this perspective it is interesting to note that during a group interview one student commented that she was better prepared for the coldness that dominated the first part than the warmer climate that developed towards the end of her stay. She did not bring sufficient clothes for the latter. The changing length of daylight in Norway is not really part of the climate, but by many associated with it. The growing length of daylight from beginning of March when they arrived to the end of May when they left was observed with quite a lot of astonishment. Some of the students reported to have difficulties going to sleep in the evening since switching off the electric light was not enough to create the accustomed darkness for sleeping.

To a certain degree climate and culture are intertwined since the climate issue is very much linked to questions of clothing (what to bring and what to wear). According to one student the norms of the culture in the host country concern 'language, mode of dress, type of food found and eaten and code of conduct'. This definition of 'culture' seems to be very much in line with Mitchells 'total way of life' (2001: 13)². A couple of respondents mention that they would like to have known some basics on the Norwegian language and two should also like to have known more about Norway in general. Another explains the motivation for being well prepared for this: '... you will feel at home and easy to interact with people around you without disrespecting them or violating their culture'. One respondent touches upon much of the same thing: 'I felt lonely most of the time because most of the Norwegians were so closed up and it was a culture shock as I am not used to such kind of life.' The term 'culture shock' is used by several and the following story illustrates what not knowing the dos and don'ts

² Mitchell (2001: 14) also refers to Nelson et. al. (1992: 5) where the following explanation of the concept is given: 'culture is understood both as a way of life – encompassing ideas, attitudes, languages, practices, institutions, and structures of power – and a whole range of cultural practices: artistic forms, texts, canons, architecture, mass-produced commodities, and so forth.'

within a foreign culture may lead to: 'I did not know that giving a compliment such as "you are very fat" is offensive in Norway. I gave such a comment to a student at Vikemarka Primary school and the girl got offended, a thing which would not happen if we were sensitized on some of these things. In Malawi, telling somebody that s/he is getting fat is something to be proud of.' Having some fundamental knowledge may be helpful in avoiding such awkward situations and also in understanding more. One writes: 'You also need to know the people's culture. This helps to fit into the society better. Norwegians are quieter and more reserved and good timekeepers than most Malawians so without knowing this you may easily misjudge quietness or shyness for racism or offend other people with not keeping time. It also helps you to adjust and not to be judgmental or offensive to people's way of life.' The point about keeping time is often mentioned. Lessons at school that start on time and busses that leave according to the time table seem to have surprised the larger part of the exchange students.

The program and expectations to the participants

The second most frequently mentioned group of answers concerning preparations are about 'knowledge of the exchange program' and 'expectations to me'. The students find it very important to know in some detail what the exchange program is actually about. This includes especially the FK Youth as an organization and what the major objects of the program are. For many of the students these questions are also connected with the wish to know what was expected of them as participants, what tasks they should be prepared for. A few also mentioned that they should like to know more about their own country, mainly to be prepared for the information work that they were supposed to do while abroad. This probably illustrates a combination of the wish and ambition to do a good job as a participant and an uneasy excitement for the unknown. The latter also comes forth as security and access to medical assistance in case of need are mentioned by some. Security may also be connected with money. One student writes: 'One must also understand his/her security including that of the property and the insurance cover and the benefits his/her family are going to have if an eventuality happens while traveling and in the foreign country'. Money is also touched upon by some more answers, for instance the need to know ahead of time who pays for communication expenses and the opinion that the money they had was not enough. We will comment upon this question in the following.

2.3.2 Practical questions

Accommodation

As mentioned above (2.2.2 Accommodation) the two first groups stayed on the premises of Møre Folkehøgskule in Ørsta ten kilometers from VUC. There they made friends and found it to be a good place to stay in most respects. They even liked the daily travels back and forth to Volda by bus. They found this experience educational as it taught them to keep time. The three last groups were put up in a student boarding house about a hundred meters from the VUC campus. The combination of closeness and availability of computers day and night was pointed out as an important asset with the latter location: One student told the group that he took comfort in the computers at night when he could not sleep. From what was said during interview both the accommodation in Ørsta and Volda were appreciated by the relevant students.

At both these locations, the exchange students stayed in shared rooms and they seemed to appreciate this. Usually a Malawian and a Namibian shared a room and they reported to learn a lot from each other. During the group discussion differing views were presented as to

whether it would be a good idea to share a room with a Norwegian student. If this worked out well it would improve integration, but if the relationship between the roommates went sour the end result could be more loneliness. The compromise seemed to be that Africans could share rooms but be room neighbors with Norwegians in the same building.

The groups that stayed in Ørsta had all their meals at Møre Folkehøgskule. The groups in Volda had a different food regime. The North coordinator bought food for the first couple of weeks. Thereafter the students were given money for food and were given the task to buy and prepare the food themselves. The students could have a hard time in the beginning: 'To buy our own food is a good idea. But starting with Vik [the North coordinator] taking care in the beginning was good.' With time they found ways to cope: 'Then we found that we [Malawians and Namibians] liked different food. So after we started to prepare food separately it was fine.'

Money

The students had a certain focus on money both in the survey and the interviews. Africans who are visiting Europe/North America are often expected to bring gifts home. The amount of money the students were told they were to receive may appear to be quite a lot when converted to African currency, especially since expenses for travels, food and accommodation were already covered by the project. It is therefore not surprising that some of the students thought that they would be able to bring home a positive balance. But the cost of living in Norway is high and the students had to handle with care the money they were given. For some of them this probably meant that there were items that they were used to buy when at home which they could not afford while in Norway. Others took the opportunity to acquire a surplus to bring home. This may be indicated by the following remark: 'We wanted to keep some money instead of spending it on food.' This utterance indicates a delicate balance which needed to be struck. Namely the balance of securing that the exchange students were eating properly and at the same time give them the opportunity and challenge to prioritize the resources that the project allocated to them. This was meant to be part of the learning experience: to balance between tasty and health food, gifts to take home, merchandise to take home (clothes, electronic devices etc.), save money to take home, entertainment (social gatherings) etc. In the words of one of the students: 'We also need to learn to budget.'

In addition to the question of how to organize the payment of the food (which the project should cover) came the challenge to determine what amount the students should be given as pocket money. As stated above, some of them thought they were given too little. The budget of the project presupposed sobriety and at the same time it was a vital intention that the African students should be able to live like an average student at VUC. The exchange students acted differently amongst themselves in this respect. They also proved to be quite flexible as they managed well with less as well as with more as the amount was adjusted through discussions between the coordinator and the group. The bottom line is of course that there is no objective norm for what may pass as 'enough'.

2.3.3 Professional benefits

Enhanced professional growth

The students were asked what they had learned from the lessons at VUC, the excursions, the school visits and the writing assignments during the exchange. They were also asked how the exchange project already has or will influence their work as teachers. The response was generally very positive and may in short be summed up in the phrase 'I have experienced enhanced professional growth'. The general attitude that is revealed in the comments on academic benefits should be interpreted in the light of how the questions were asked in the questionnaire (appendix 5). The students were invited to report on their benefits from the learning methods that are mentioned above. That is exactly what they seem to have done in their answers in the survey, not giving possible disappointments much attention. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the same impression came forth through the group discussions where the participants also were encouraged to point at negative sides of their stay. We group this information in two categories: subject knowledge and didactics.

Subject knowledge

Most students report that they have gained a lot of subject knowledge which they regard as crucial for their work as teachers because it will help them to 'tackle some topics competently'. The subject field that most students mention as beneficial in this context is Geography, which for the most part was about Norway, but also about Europe and the whole world. This learning was about landscape, climate, people, economy, living conditions, development, politics and culture. The learning about Norway included the history of the country. Economic development on different geographical levels (national and world) was important as the relationship between South and North was given much attention. One student writes: 'It has really revolutionized my world view'. Another connects in a comment to the slogan of thinking globally and acting locally.

Digital knowledge (ICT) comes second among the appreciated fields of learning about which some relevant statements follow: 'I was computer illiterate. But at VUC just within a week, I managed to learn a lot that I could do a power point presentation without help'; 'I learned to use the internet more as a tool for accessing information'; 'I think this was one of the classes (lessons) I enjoyed the most. I learnt a great deal about computers from the introductory phase [...] and was also introduced to a lot of websites for educational subjects as well as for making friends.' English and creative arts are also mentioned among the major subject knowledge gains.

Many of the participants were teaching while we were in Malawi and Namibia in October/ November 2008 and we were able to observe the teaching by eight of them, some in primary and some in secondary school. We asked them to teach a subject that would be relevant to their project experience and several taught about Norway while topics like aid, development, population and water were the other topics. It was quite clear that these young teachers had acquired a lot of knowledge about Norway. It was also obvious through the learners' answers that they also have some knowledge which is far beyond what should be expected about a country the size of Norway which is situated in the northern hemisphere. This is a convincing indication that the learners have been taught quite a lot about Norway. And there is little doubt of the reasons. One is surely that the project participants have complied with the expectation from the project that they should be active in spreading information about Norway through their teaching career. Another is the self confidence that they have developed

on this point which is expressed in one of the interviews: ‘My teaching will be different [from those who have not been in Norway]. I will tell the students stories about the country. And the students will ask questions. It creates more interest in the class because you tell about something that you have gone through. So there will be a difference. I will teach better because I have been there. I will also have more content to put into the theme on Norway and Europe. I also use Norway as examples when I teach different topics.’ It is also interesting to note that this focus on Norway not only boosts the participants’ confidence as a teacher of Social Studies (includes Geography, History and Civics), it also helps them in keeping memories close and alive: ‘After five years it is still not distant, even though it is not as present as in the beginning. Keeping up the teaching is reminding me all the time.’

One may ask why the African learners should know so much about a small, far away country of limited importance to them. Has Norway through this project embarked on an ethnocentric ego trip, trying to spread information to boost her importance? Firstly, we should note that the partner countries have a similar chance to spread information to Norwegian teachers and learners through the project, so this information boost should work both ways. Secondly, if we look at this in the perspective of an exemplary approach to learning³, learning about Norway for Africans and about Malawi or Namibia for Norwegians may be a good approach to learning about a different people, culture and continent than their own.

Didactics

Didactics is about the what, why and how on teaching and learning. The African students met this in a number of ways among which their visits to different schools were described as ‘very productive’. They appreciated being exposed to what they seem to find as an overwhelming mass of teaching resources that are found in Norwegian classrooms: ‘The availability of many teaching and learning materials in Norwegian schools observed and the effective use of the same in the teaching and learning process further inspired me ...’. The album each of the students was given with pictures from their stay in Norway (see 1.2.3 Teaching) was reported to be of big help in the classroom at home. Something similar is the case for the learner centered approach in the methods used. This was an observation which several commented upon. One student writes: ‘Apart from all that, [which was learned of subject matters] I acquired more knowledge during teaching on how to make my lessons more interesting for learners [...], how to integrate computer science in my teaching [...] using power point. All this enhanced my professional growth.’

This professional growth was not limited to methods, it was also about attitudes. The relationship between teacher and learner, which many found to be close and informal, is commented upon with surprise: ‘Learners and their teachers are just good friends, learners call their teachers by their first name not with the title Ms, Mrs. or Mr.’ This influences the whole atmosphere in the classroom: ‘They were free to openly express their opinions, suggestions and lines of thoughts on topics.’ One reports that this experience has influenced her/his approach to teaching: ‘In the classes students were given a lot of freedom which is different from what used to be in Malawi. This has helped me to be more accommodating and give my students time to express themselves without fear of being punished. I believe it has helped me a lot since students are happy whenever I am around. As such it increases their chances of passing the exams.’ Comments also indicate that the students found this kind of relationship between teacher and student to be good for their own learning as ‘class

³ This is one of the oldest methodical principles in teaching (Imsen 2006: 275) where the learners are exposed to one or more examples that should help them grasp general principles or knowledge that is or could be made more general.

discussions enabled me to understand the Norwegian culture'. It also influenced the view of the teacher's role in the learning process: 'It has also taught me to come down to the level of students like Norwegian teachers relate with their students rather than to think of myself as the only source of knowledge in order to foster better student teacher relations [and] promote active participation that is not hindered by formalities.' The differences in attitude compared to their home situation also come out in this student's comment: 'I noticed that students in Norway are more liberal – they do not put on a uniform, they can take food while the teacher is teaching and they can have any kind of hair style they want. Also on the part of the teachers, they did not scold the students much when they were misbehaving.' However, the attitude of freedom was not found all positive: 'I think one of the disappointing things was that the teachers there don't have much control over the learners in terms of discipline.' So it seems to be somewhat divided: an atmosphere of freedom is appreciated, but the 'Norwegian' discipline is not necessarily desirable. It is interesting to note that some of the students connect the discipline with the student/teacher ratio which may be around 20:1 in Norway while 40+:1 in Malawi: 'Firstly and probably the most important for me is the teacher-learner ratio at some schools especially the primary schools [...]. Enabled by the teacher-learner ratio there is sufficient individual attention given to each learner. Discipline is done mainly through talking to the learners and no corporal punishment is applied.'

Several respondents point to organizational skills as something their visits in Norwegian classrooms have made them more aware of: 'It has also helped me to improve the way I plan and organize my lessons.' Punctuality, respect for time ('... all of them [the learners] were having wrist watches') and critical thinking are positively commented upon by several respondents. Other comments point at group work as a learning method 'which was used a lot'; some advanced methods of teaching; how to apply some of the teaching materials into their own lessons as teachers; use of audio-visual and real objects in the teaching and learning processes. A few of the students also appreciated to learn about the Norwegian educational system, including the national curriculum and what is done to make everybody literate.

After the Norwegian exchange students had returned home, the Africans were still staying for 3–4 more weeks (see 1.1.4). During two of these weeks all the participants were cooperating on teaching about Malawi and Namibia in schools in the vicinity of VUC. Namibians and Norwegians who had visited Namibia formed two groups while Malawians and Norwegians who had visited Malawi formed two groups. This cooperation was very much appreciated: 'I especially loved the team spirit'. It was also an educational experience: 'In fact, it was during this time that I learnt a lot about the social, education, cultural and economic aspects of Norway in more practical and detailed terms. We were able to interact and share practical experiences, challenges and possible solutions to the challenges faced. For example, they had the information about the South after being there for three months while we also had some information about Norway, our interaction in this connection meant a lot because we were able to consolidate our knowledge and fill gaps.' The notion that this activity was very educational corresponds with the conviction that dialogue is a good method for learning. The reciprocity in dialogue underscores human dignity and depends on trust, hope and love (Freire 1974: 65–66), and has a potential for building positive relations while learning. Good learning and good relations is a strong combination and this is reflected in a remark from one of the students: '[I] am not happy with the time we worked together because it was very short.'

The discussions between African and Norwegian students were important for more than remembering. To adjust and correct the information proved to be one positive outcome and at the same time the discussions offered an opportunity to find ways to reach consensus on

matters where disagreement was the starting point: ‘Despite the fact that the presentation went so well, we however had some disagreements in the beginning, because we felt that our colleagues were just focusing on the negative aspects of Africa and did not have much of good things to show on it and so we talked it through and so the problem was rectified and we then reached a consensus.’ It is interesting to note that while the African students predominantly seem to emphasize positive information on their hosting country, some of the Norwegians did the opposite.

Excursions

The program included a number of excursions (see 1.2.2). The participants were asked to comment on these, both as a learning method more in general and as to what they had learnt this way personally. The following is a mildly edited medley of their comments in these respects:

- Excursions are very important as one can learn a lot more through observation. It was an excellent approach. It enabled me to learn more about Norway: countryside, geography and people. I enjoyed looking at panoramic landscapes, stunning fjords and the beautiful forests of Norway. It is very important because not only do you familiarize yourself with the theoretical information about a topic but you also see things clearly.
- The excursion to Bjorli was very important to me. It helped me a lot in experiencing and understanding clearly about differences and characteristics of continental and maritime climate.
- Excursions give the opportunity to have first hand experience. This is very important as it stimulates more senses rather than just reading and listening and relying on imagination and pictures to understand concepts. People remember more what they have personally experienced as all senses are stimulated during an excursion thereby increasing the chances of remembering and storing more information in the long term memory. Thus learning is greatly enhanced as experiences and learning become more personal.
- Excursions help pupils to experiment and think critically with understanding whereby they will also learn to share ideas or information by talking to each other and find solutions to their problems, in other words they will learn to be problem solvers and decision makers. It does also help them to familiarize themselves with actual life situations.
- If I am told to write a book on all the excursions I had in Norway, I can win an Oscar award for it because I remember all the details just like yesterday. Seeing creates deeper understanding and promotes longer memories.
- Excursions create a sense of reality to the learners and arouse their interest and motivation.
- Excursions may also bring to the students some kind of appreciation of the environment and therefore instill in them the need to protect and care for their environment.

This last comment is interesting as it is not unusual that students regard spending school time outside the classroom partly as leisure and one can sense the amazement behind the following comment: ‘We went to the mountains with them [the learners] and [spent] some hours there just to appreciate the nature’. On their hand, some teachers may find time in nature to be a

waste of time that is devoted to learning. The last student comment above is interesting on this background because it suggests that such an activity may have substantial learning benefits.

Writing assignments

The African students had four writing assignments where they should present a paper on different topics that were relevant to their stay in Norway. The students reported that their assignments ‘provided a good basis for learning more about Norway’. Several described this as an efficient method for them to gain some in depth knowledge about the country. The reflections on their assignments also disclose a perspective on learning more in general: ‘The written assignments during my stay abroad were of paramount importance in that they were more of lessons than tests. As such the assignments made me focus on important strategies and techniques to be used when discharging my daily duties.’

Interestingly, the work with the assignments also opened for opportunities to develop social interaction: ‘The projects [assignments] we had also helped me to explore more about Norway and interact with many Norwegian friends in the process of getting some of the required information.’ The aspect of social integration will be dealt with under the headline ‘Making Norwegian Friends’ (2.3.6).

The following quote from one of the participants may indicate some of the important didactic benefits for the African students: ‘What I learned from all this experience was that if you want your teaching to be a success, as a teacher you should make sure that your classroom is more friendly where everyone can feel free to try and say what they feel, involve all learners and make sure you let the learners research on the topic before you present it so that by the time you are presenting they have an idea as to what you are talking about.’

2.3.4 Goal statements

There was established a set of goal statements for the program which for this project was coined in 15 statements that were relevant for the student participants. These were organized in three groups and presented as follows.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES

The partner institutions:

Establish long term educational links between the colleges with special focus on social science education.

The student teacher participants:

- 1) Acquire knowledge about and understanding of societies of different continents with special focus on host country.
- 2) Interact and share their teaching and learning experiences and thereby enhancing their professional growth.

OBJECTIVES OF INFORMATION ACTIVITIES

- 3) Convey updated information about the host country with special focus on adolescence and education, natural resources, culture, society and cross cultural communication.
- 4) Founded on theoretical knowledge, personal experience and engagement the information should create positive attitudes for justice, development and cooperation in the relationship between the North and the South.

NORTH AND SOUTH PARTICIPANTS

During the stay:

- 5) Take personal initiatives in order to acquire knowledge and attitudes in accord with the general objectives of this program.
- 6) Share educational experiences with others.
- 7) When possible, prepare a presentation on some areas of general interest.
- 8) Abide by rules and regulations of host institution.
- 9) Participate in the activities prepared by host institution.
- 10) Prepare and present information about home country to fellow students and to primary / secondary schools in nearby area.
- 11) Inform the students from host institutions who are chosen for exchange stay at home college about home country, home town/city and home college.
- 12) Report to local coordinator at home college regularly.

During the follow-up phase:

- 13) Inform about the program and inspire other future teachers to join the program.
- 14) Present information from exchange stay for students at the college and at schools in nearby area.
- 15) Teach for future students. All through their future work as teachers of Geography/Social Studies, the students will convey information and attitudes among other things on the basis of the exchange stay.

In the questionnaire (appendix 5) the student participants were asked to assess to which degree on a scale 1–10 each of them thought s/he had achieved each of these goals. The students rate themselves at a score between an average of 9.7 and 7.8, which is quite high by any standards, see table 2.

Table 2: Student participants' assessment of own achievement of project goals on a scale 1–10, average scores.

<i>Goal statement</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>
Average score	9.1	9.4	8.3	8.1	8.5	9.2	9.3	9.7

<i>Goal statement</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	
Average score	9.2	9.7	7.9	9	7.8	8.8	9	

The average scores on the overall goal statements (1, 2) indicate that the students are quite comfortable with their performance on a general level. Goal statements 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 are all about following up activities in the project. Their high scores here indicate that they profit from their obedience to the 'system' and the authority of the project organizers. The high score on statement 12 may be taken as reflecting loyalty to the home coordinator or the 'system' since the students were obliged to communicate with the home coordinator on a weekly basis. High activity on this point (12) may also be motivated out of the students' own interest to keep in touch as a security valve in an exciting and somewhat threatening situation far away from home. The participants also seem to have grasped the important idea in this project, that they are expected through their teaching to keep conveying information and attitudes on the basis of their exchange stay (statement 15).

Their efforts to inform about the project and help those who were chosen to participate are rated lowest but are still given quite a good average score of almost 8 (11, 13). It was part of the plan that students in the South who were chosen for participation should act as some sort of hosts for the Norwegian students who arrived in Malawi / Namibia in February (see 1.1.4). The African students did not leave for Norway until March and were therefore expected to help the Norwegians with important information and help them feel generally welcome. The South participants were not as satisfied with their performance on this point compared to other aspects. One reason for this may be that in the case of Malawi, the first two to three weeks the Norwegian students were visiting the Mzuzu area in the northern part of the country while the African students either were at home or at the college in Zomba at that time. This being the case, one may wonder how the score has averaged as high as 7.9. It is difficult to avoid the notion that the student participants are inclined to overrate their own performance in the project. And this will probably not only be so in this case but the goal achievements more in general. Probably this is partly influenced by a wish to tell us what we want to hear, as mentioned above (2.1).

2.3.5 Bridge builders

The term 'bridge builder' has often been used to characterize the role which the project aims for the participants to play. Building bridges is about connecting different sides and all but one of the students report that they consider them selves to be good bridge builders.

They regard knowledge about Norway as the main basis for their bridge building, and this comes clearly out in many statements, of which the following is one: '... this [participating in the exchange project] has enabled me to gain knowledge about and understanding of societies of different continents or for Malawi and Norway ...' From the notion that knowledge is important, some of the participants seem to have deduced that bridge building mainly consists of filling the information gap that exist between South and North: 'I have gathered much information about the two sides as opposed to those who have never been there. [...] With this information, knowledge gaps that may have existed before can be filled hence bridges built.' It is important to point out that this knowledge gap is not limited to facts like number of inhabitants, square kilometers of countries, winter temperatures etc. It is also about processes and relations between nature and society and between different parts of the world: 'I consider my self as having an important role to play in developing a better understanding of the north-south relations to these who did not have a chance to participate in an exchange such as this. For example, I will integrate in my teaching, the knowledge, skills and experiences which I have acquired from the exchange so as to develop understanding of the relationship between north and south amongst my pupils.'

This acquired knowledge, skills and experiences influence their professional as well as their social life: '... whenever I am teaching, say, Geography for example, there are several examples where Norway can be used as an example e.g. weather and climate, effects of revolution etc. When I am chatting with friends the issue about Norway comes in spontaneously and in so doing, many people are brought into awareness about what Norway is all about.'

As pointed out above (subject matters), the learning is not all about Norway, but for instance also about democratic ways and attitudes that apply to the relationship between teachers and learners: 'I have also made several attempts to talk to my fellow teachers on the importance of being democratic to the students if we are to reduce the number of school drop outs.' This

should be looked upon as relevant to bridge building since questions of democratic governance play such a vital part in relations between South and North.

Even though most of the participants seem to regard their exchange experience as something of the past, some of them also state that their contact with Norway is an ongoing experience: 'Moreover, I will have constant contacts with other FK participants both in the south and in the north to allow for the exchange of experiences and knowledge in academic as well as in social aspects. This will ensure continued understanding of one another.'

In the answers from the students a couple of examples indicate that some of the participants may overestimate the knowledge they have gained during their exchange of three months: 'I have a sound knowledge about North and South in all life aspects, be it social, economical and politics of Norway.' 'I fully consider myself a successful "bridge builder" between south and north. I can educate people about the cultures of people in the north compared to their cultures. I feel well equipped with experience and knowledge of both sides. What I have learned is enough to tell others as to how life is on the other side of the world and what those people are doing to remain a developed country. The exposure was enough and meaningful, I feel I can transfer knowledge of what I learned to my fellow students and the community at large.' The teaching during the exchange as well as the debriefings both before leaving Norway and upon arrival home should make sure that the students develop a balanced view of their competence and we may wonder to which degree this actually happened. But all this lies in the past. To the extent that the exchange is in fact an ongoing experience, the continued contact with Norway and fellow participants in the project may serve such a balancing end. This may not be very far off as the following quote seems to sum up what bridge building is about for several of the students: 'I have shared and am continuing sharing the experience, knowledge and information that I have gained in Norway. I still keep in touch with my contacts that I made in Norway ...'.

2.3.6 Making Norwegian friends

About half the respondents found it easy to make friends with Norwegians, while the other half either generally found it hard or hard in the beginning. Several participants explain their success or lack of the same with their own social abilities: 'I am one that cannot make friends easily because I [...] am shy'; 'I did not find it difficult to make friends with Norwegians because I am an extrovert and make friends very easily...'

It seems to be a general impression among the African students that Norwegians tend to be shy. In an interview one participant describes this as if Norwegians have a 'protective thing about them'. Most of the students seem to think that this has something to do with a reluctance to speak English. Reluctance may also come from uncertainty or fear: 'Maybe people are scared of Africans since they hear that we are often disease ridden and they are scared of contracting a contagious disease.' And along a similar line of thought: 'We may be confused with refugees from Liberia.' A couple of comments concerns time: Norwegians seem to be very busy and in order to be a friend you have to compromise some time, so many Norwegians do not want to take upon the responsibility that comes with friendship: spending time. Climate was mentioned as a possible explanatory factor: 'It is very cold and people are used to be by them selves at home'. Another suggestion was that people are so well off economically that they do not have to depend on others for their daily needs. Need as a motivation for friendship may also shine through in the observation made by one that many of the people who were friendly and asked about Africa were planning to go there themselves and therefore needed information.

Nevertheless, it seems like several of the exchange students experienced that as they took initiative and showed some consistency in their efforts, it paid off: 'Making Norwegian friends may seem hard in the first place but at the same time Norwegians make good and trustworthy friends.'

During one of the group discussions a student reflected upon how the definition of 'a friend' influences our experience. She pointed out that the definition of a friend is different in Norway and in the South: 'Here, when you meet a person the first time, you may call this person a friend. In the North they take this definition in a deeper sense.' She continued to state that the Norwegians distinguish between an acquaintance and a friend. Therefore it would not be right to expect them to be friendlier from the beginning since they do not consider you a friend. On this point she concluded: 'We tend to expect a lot from the first encounter.' And she claimed that: 'if you get a real friend in Norway, they are really loyal friends.'

Activities rather than words

The most obvious way to promote integration would be to have the exchange students join regular classes with Norwegian students. This was actually occasionally done in Social science, English and Arts and Crafts. But for the most part the exchange students had their classes separately. Language of instruction was the main reason for this since Norwegian is the language that normally is used during instructions at VUC. The content of the teaching was another reason for designing a tailor made course for the exchange students. As we have seen, the content was much appreciated. However, the aim of socializing between African and Norwegian students clearly has been compromised in favor of academic content.

Since Norwegians do not seem to open up for strangers very easily through talking, an often successful strategy was to join activities of some kind outside the classroom. Such activities were sports, private parties, the internet and the student union's meetings at Rokken. The latter was found so important that the project paid for the membership card the two last years of exchange. Excursions where Norwegians also were participating for instance the Week of Excitement in Bjorli was very successful also in this respect. There everybody was away from home and thus an efficient arena for social interaction was created.

During the 2008 exchange the Norwegian students stayed in the same boarding house as the African students in Volda for two weeks. This was after they had returned from their stay in Africa and while all the students were cooperating on joint presentations on Malawi or Namibia which they were giving at school visits. Both living together and working together had a positive effect on their social integration. In the words of one of the African participants: 'At first point, we strengthened our friendship by staying with them with plenty of time in the same house, taking meals together, taking walks together as well as going out for clubbing or to any concert together. All those indirectly attached us together and we became like one family. After all, we have then started going for teaching together, and I am recalling the whole process that it went well. We actually planned together, supporting and helping one another and this resulted in a great work that we have done after the whole teaching came to an end. By that, we have also used the platform to share ideas about our countries, through asking each other questions and so on.'

The international club Pangaia also offered an arena for socializing with other students, the draw-back being that there are mostly foreign students who go there. Some of the students report that they more easily have made friends with African students and other foreign students compared with Norwegian ones. Interacting with other foreign students is of

important value, but still not quite what the project had hoped for, which was to create ties between African and Norwegian students. In hindsight perhaps, one of the participants suggested that asking foreign students for advice on how to make friends with Norwegians could be a good idea.

Church also offered a fellowship that several of the students found rewarding: 'It was this one place that nobody looked at you as being different, apart from being a foreigner which was obviously noticeable; they had this way of making you feel truly welcome as though we were one in the religious sense of the word. We had one common interest or subject to discuss or talk about and it made it very interesting and exciting. It was a subject of which we had almost the same amount of knowledge or familiarity making it easy and comfortable to discuss at ease knowing that nobody expects you to know something that you don't.' And even though the language barrier caused difficulties, the attitude of inclusion was recognized: 'The first time I went to VOKS [the Christian student union] when I was invited by a friend, I could not even hear when they said amen. But one thing for sure is that I like the religion in Norway. As a visitor in a place you expect to be recognised the first day and the next time you are no more a visitor. Which is what I experienced. I remember just like yesterday, one man said in the house of the Lord we are all family and we are visitors on earth because our place is in heaven. Most of the times I felt at home because I told a friend that during gatherings there should be a person who can interpret for some of us who do not understand and they did that.'

2.3.7 Expectations and surprises

Expectations are built on a mix of previous knowledge, information from different instances, dreams and hopes of what may happen of bad, but mainly good. The flipside of expectations is surprises. The participants were asked what kinds of expectations they had for their stay abroad and they reported on expectations as well as surprises.

The most frequently mentioned expectation, which incidentally was not met, concerned getting friends: 'I am used to meet people with a hug or a handshake. That did not really happen in Norway.' The question of making Norwegian friends has been dealt with in some detail above and is therefore only mentioned here.

In one of the group discussions one participant stated that his main expectation was to see some of the big wild animals of Norway like bear, moose etc. but this did not happen. The VUC representatives took this opportunity to explain that this kind of wild life is very scarce in Norway and neither of them had seen a bear outside a zoo in Norway.

Some of the participants had an expectation that this exchange was the first step that would be followed up by being offered a scholarship through the quota program at VUC (see 1.3.3). This expectation was mainly among students from CC, the university from which VUC started taking quota students in 2006. Even though there was no direct link between the exchange project and the quota program, some of the same persons were involved at both institutions and all the three students from CC that have received this scholarship, are former exchange students. The expectation of the exchange project being the first step to a more extensive scholarship should therefore not be surprising. This is even more so since it was claimed that one of the participants at one point in time was promised to be the next in line for the scholarship. But when the selection was made, he was not chosen as the third quota student from CC. Considerable disappointment was voiced on behalf of this student during the group discussion in Malawi. There was some frustration on the criteria that were used. It

was said that the students were selected on merit and some took merit to mean academic marks and found flaws on that ground. Others thought that merit could include more like the kind of things that come out in a job interview. One trusted the people that made the choice and found it not fruitful to discuss the matter since there was nobody (staff at CC) that could inform the group what the criteria were. On behalf of VUC it was pointed out that the selection was and also should be left in the hands of the faculty at CC, for reasons not to patronize the South partner. Some students indicated that some criteria should be set by the North partner since otherwise having contacts could pave the way for individuals that objectively should not be at the top of the list. This discussion should be a reminder of the importance of maintaining a high standard on the information given especially in cases where connections between different projects are encouraged.

A couple of interesting surprises concerning the way Norwegians live and socialize were mentioned. They were left without comments more in depth and we do the same. The first one was the observation that there is substantial freedom in families. Even rather young people in Norway are quite independent from their parents. The other was that generally you do not see fights. From this the conclusion was drawn that Norwegians are peace loving people.

It appeared that on the basis of the information given in some instances at the home institution some students were left with the impression that they would receive more money during their stay in Norway than in fact they were getting. Fortunately this information came after they had accepted the offer of participating in the project, so nobody was misled into the project on failing economic promises. During one of the group interviews the students were asked if they at any stage were given the expectation that they should be given more gifts (money, clothes etc) while in Norway and no one said so.

During the group interview in Ongwediva one student said: 'I expected to find richer people.' This statement is not surprising since statistics from 2007 show that Norway's GNP per capita is ranked number five in the world with 53 433 US \$ per capita compared to Namibia's number 107 with 5 155 US \$ per capita (UNDP 2009: 171–175). Knowledge of these statistics led the participant to anticipate that the richness should show more. What he probably did not know, but observed an indication of, was that the wealth is much more evenly distributed in Norway compared with Namibia. The Gini index is an indicator of wealth distribution in a country and lies between 0 and 100 where a value of 0 means absolute equality and 100 absolute inequality. In 2007 Norway is reported to have a Gini index of 25.8 while Namibia has one of 74.3 (ibid: 194–198). In addition comes that the Volda region in Norway wealth is probably more evenly distributed than in Norway as a whole. There are few jobless people in that area, a large number of the jobs are in civil service (the municipality, VUC, the hospital etc) which are secure but on an average not very well paid, and few jobs are in industry and big business. Moreover, there has long been a strong equality ethos generally in Norway (Aase 2005, Repstad 2005) and this definitely includes the West coast where Volda is located. This ethos has decreased some during the last decades but still influences people not to show extraordinary wealth if they possess it. Finally it should be mentioned that Norway is an affluent society and the cost of living is high. This means that the purchasing power of a US dollar is less in Norway than in most African countries. Therefore the statistics may be deceiving. So it is interesting, but not very surprising, that this student did not find many rich people during his stay abroad.

Malawi is rated number 174 with 761 US \$ per capita and a Gini index of 39 (ibid: 171–175; 194–198). According to these statistics Malawi is poorer but more equal compared to

Namibia. Even so, one student from Malawi revealed his opinion on the standard of living in his home country: There are two extremes: very rich and poor. While in Norway he thought that people are more equal. The statistics referred to above support this view.

2.3.8 Development

Based on the participants' observations of and the teaching about the Norwegian society it is interesting to hear their reflections on the present living standards in Norway and their thoughts about how Norway has developed to this situation. They seem to have come to the conclusion that: 'It is not easy to get everything you need. People need to work hard. Richness does not come out of the blue one has to work hard like the Norwegian people are doing.'

Some quotes from the interviews underline this general idea:

- 'Living standard: you have to be committed in order to succeed.'
- 'All people in the world are the same. We have to work for your fortune.'
- 'We need to distribute our natural resources as evenly as possible.'
- 'Why is Norway rich? Time keeping, good governance (accountability, less corruption). I teach my students this.'

It is interesting to note the students' ability to connect observations of the Norwegian society and her history with what needs to be done to further the development of their own country: 'We learned a lot from this and hopefully our students will learn from us and may be some day they will go there.' In an interview one student said that she wants to encourage people in Namibia to go to school because she thinks that is the only way for Namibians to improve. 'And as you go to school', she said, 'you do not have time for crime etc. Education is the key to a bright future.'

2.3.9 Coming home

Generally speaking the African students experienced a more affluent society during their stay in Norway compared to their home country. It could therefore be expected that being exposed to this could arise the desire to immigrate to Norway. For some individuals this is certainly true and the wish to return to Norway for further studies seems to have been common among them. On the other hand there are indications that the stay in Norway has been an eye-opener for qualities in their home country that they cherish very much. This sentiment is quite well described by one of the Namibian students in an individual interview: 'To come back was good. No place like home. After a week I wanted to go back. But it is ok. Coming back was as good as going. The stay in Norway has not taken anything away from me. I would not like to leave for staying. I would have taken the opportunity to go away to Europe to study, but after a few years I would like to come home to help my country, do something constructive for my country. You go there and learn and return and share.'

2.4 FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE NORWEGIAN STUDENTS

The questionnaire in appendix 5 is the main source of information on how the Norwegian students evaluate the project. Only the Norwegian students of 2008 were invited to use this questionnaire since this was the year it was developed. Even so, Norwegian students have answered similar questions towards the end of their project period every year. Therefore it is our notion that this chapter captures the main sentiments of the Norwegian students. The presentation in this chapter relies directly mainly on some of the questions in the questionnaire supplied with notes from answers and discussions with Norwegian students in the period 2004–2008.

2.4.1 Information

The preparations for the stay abroad are naturally very important and a lot of effort was every year put into this through a course during three weeks at VUC and a one week course organized by the FK-Youth. On the question of how they rate the information on practical issues, on the FK-Youth project, and on South-North issues they end up between 8 and 10 on a 1–10 scale. Through signing the participation contract (appendix 3) and making themselves acquainted with the FK-Youth check-list the students took responsibility for acquiring relevant information about the project. In addition they were obliged to study the 900 pages of curriculum literature for their final exam. The most important information they think that they needed before going abroad is commented upon below.

During the project period it came out clear that the Norwegian students generally were more accustomed to travel to places far away from their home country compared to the African students. The former were not so focused on items like climate and physical environment, even though they absolutely point to knowledge within these areas as important parts of their preparations. Information on health issues like vaccination program, how to avoid malaria, food poisoning and other health problems were appreciated. The question of clothing is not only connected with climate, but also culture. Several of the Norwegian students point to dress code as well as code of conduct more generally as something they need to know so that they may act accordingly and not appear disrespectful to people in the hosting country. General information about land and people is also mentioned as a feasible foundation to have when entering a foreign country. ‘When we find ourselves in an unfamiliar setting we must be aware that there are many differences’, one of them writes and thus signals the wish to be well prepared. Another agrees and adds something more: ‘I think good, practical information is the most important information to get. This should be about what the coordinators are expecting from you and about the customs of the host country’. It is of vital importance that the students have sufficient knowledge about the project they participate in. The students find it good that the preparatory course ahead of going abroad focused on goals, ways and means of the project. The participants think that they need to know what is expected of them while abroad and they need time to prepare for this ahead of time. An example that is mentioned, concerns the teaching about Norway that they were expected to do in African schools. They appreciated the time they were given to prepare for this activity since not only a presentation of their home country was expected, but also that they were able to answer different sorts of questions that the African students (and teachers) might ask.

2.4.2 Practical questions

Accommodation

To the Norwegian students the question of accommodation was vital. While they for one thing demanded sufficient safety and standards they also wanted to accept accommodation that was considered at par with African college standards. If it practically could be done, several of the students would prefer to live in student lodges on campus along with their African peers. However, they did not want to push any of the African students out of their lodging. So actually none of them stayed in student dormitories on campus. In Ongwediva the students were accommodated in the boarding belonging to the Teachers Resource Centre (TRC) which is located on campus, but not meant for regular students. Overall the students were happy about the accommodation, especially at the TRC in Ongwediva and in the compound of the seminary for the Anglican Church in Zomba (see 2.2.2 Accommodation).

Crisis precautions

Several of the Norwegian students mention that they were aware of their need to have a net of contacts for general communication that also might be useful in case of difficult situations. The students brought their mobile phones and this was an important mode of general communication to family and friends and also between the students and the North coordinator. In a couple of instances this proved to be of great help. Fortunately it was not necessary to implement the crisis precautions that were planned for, but the students were very conscious of the need for this to be in place.

Economy

Generally speaking, money was not so much an issue among the Norwegian students. This is not surprising since a contribution from the project combined with money from the Norwegian Loan Fund (Lånekassen) covered travel, room and board while abroad. From Lånekassen the students also received money to pay tuition-fee at the host college. Most of this tuition fee was spent on excursions, while privately organized travels, gifts etc. were paid privately. The feed back from the students show clearly that they were very much satisfied with the economic conditions for the participants even though in some instances misunderstandings led to some critical comments on how money was spent by the hosting college and to questions for more money from the project. This was mostly connected with travels during the stay abroad. The students were able to make several excursions and travels and in many instances the South coordinator was very helpful in guiding them and the hosting college used a lot of resources for such excursions. The participants were aware of this and appreciated these inputs very much.

In many cases the Norwegian students wanted to give African students and schools gifts. They were advised to be modest about this since the project had quite different goals for the partnership than presenting gifts (see 2.2.2 Economy). Even so, quite a bit of nice presents like sporting equipment and teaching material were given during the project period.

Responses from the Norwegian students indicate that they gained more insight in the economy of countries like Malawi and Namibia during their stay there. To a certain degree they were also confronted with poverty in these countries, which opened their eyes to different aspects related to this problem.

2.4.3 Professional benefits

College lessons

The curriculum in the study plan of course represents a substantial part of the subject content for the students and a presentation of this is made available in appendix 4. Another part was the teaching at the host college during the stay abroad. Fortunately for the Norwegian students the language of instruction in all the African host colleges is English. This is fortunate because it means that the Norwegian students for language reasons were able to join any lesson at the hosting college and understand what was going on. Some joined classes like drama and journalism while abroad, but most of them stuck to Social Sciences, which was also the idea of the project. Some report that they had limited benefit from the teaching at their hosting college while others engaged actively in the lessons and found this rewarding. Their satisfaction with different teachers varies naturally, but the overall impression is that it has been a good learning experience to be taught by an African teacher along with African students. We bring some positive comments from students of 2008:

- 'I think that a lot of the methods that were used are similar to what I am used to here in Norway. Some lessons were mainly teacher centered while others were student centered (group work, presentations and so on). In one of the History lessons I attended they were working on the theme slavery. The way the teacher presented it for the class intrigued me. She had a lot of knowledge about the subject and a really reflected way of presenting it. You really get a different perspective on things when you hear that your classmates have ancestors that have been affected'.
- 'The professor in History was very enthusiastic and a good storyteller. This combination made the lessons very interesting and his enthusiasm had a positive affect on us so we also became a bit enthusiastic. I feel I learned a lot from these lessons, especially about African history. I think this is knowledge that is important and relevant [...] and it created a bit more understanding of why things are like they are in countries like Malawi'.
- '... especially History was of importance. Here they focused on the history of Africa, and went through the different schools of development and their effect on African countries. This was very relevant for our curriculum, and I really wish that we would have been able to go to more of those classes'.

Excursions

Excursions were an important part of the program and this is described in 1.2.2 above. Written as well as oral feedback on excursions indicate that this part of the program has been very much appreciated. Here learning by experience (Hunnes 2007) has been realized to a great degree and the students look forward to using this method of teaching and learning in their future jobs as teachers. In the words of three of them:

- 'I think it [excursions] is really important because then you can experience things yourself instead of just reading some facts in a book. When you go on excursions you have the opportunity to use your senses as well. You can smell, you can hear the sounds surrounding you, you can see it with your own eyes, and you can also taste, if that is possible. If you experience all these things I think it will be easier for you to get the learners' attention, and the lesson will be so much more interesting. If you take the learners on an excursion it is even better, because then they have the same opportunity to use their senses'.

- ‘The school has traditionally emphasized knowledge, but it has been a factor of minor importance to put knowledge into a meaningful relation. If knowledge is put into a significant relation it becomes more meaningful and easy to remember. As an example I can mention the time we spent visiting people who were affected by the flood. That experience gave me more knowledge than any textbook could ever give me!’
- ‘The day in the village gave me a real perspective about how life really is in Malawi. We got to meet people who represent most of Malawians. It would have been even more interesting if we had stayed two days and spent the night together with them. Then we had got an even more realistic picture of life in Malawi. But [it was a] very interesting and nice day!’

Project

The Norwegian students spent a lot of time and effort on their project reports for which they could collect information while in Africa. In this phase of information collection they had the opportunity to be assisted by the South coordinator at their hosting college. Appendix 2 has information on what the project was about and what expectations that should be met through the project report. The students of 2008 give the project work the very best rating when it comes to learning about the host country. Many reports built on interviews with key informants and in many cases the South coordinator was very helpful in selecting informants and organizing for the students to meet them. The project work gave the students a chance to learn something about a limited area concerning the host country and this was found to be an efficient method to come ‘under the surface’ and get some interesting insights that do not present themselves at first sight. Appendix 2 presents the headlines of the Norwegian students’ reports.

School visits

During their stay abroad the Norwegian students made school visits and generally they found that such visits gave many good experiences and one wrote that ‘it was very interesting to see what school life is like for both pupils and teachers in a foreign country’.

The Norwegian students observed with great interest the teaching in African classrooms. During school visits the students were expected to start with teaching about Norway including answering questions. In addition to give the learners some input about a country far away, this teaching was also a means for our students to get acquainted with the learners. It is worth mentioning that the Norwegian students found the learners to be both active and interested during their teaching about Norway. This was important for the second part of the school visits which was for the exchange students to observe regular teaching by the African teacher. Naturally the students automatically compared with schools in their home country.

The most striking observation was the difference in number of learners in the classroom, the learning material and teaching aids that were available. Learners were many while learning material and teaching aids were few compared to Norway. There are also marked differences within the hosting countries, between some well equipped schools and many classrooms where the learners were crowded into little space, sitting on the floor lacking most of elementary learning material. On this point the students have observed something that to them comes out as a pattern: the urban schools are generally better equipped than the rural ones. This observation was made in Malawi and Namibia alike.

A situation with 60–70 learners and one teacher in one classroom was noted by the Norwegian students as probably the biggest challenge for the learning process. The main

question was: how is it possible to teach effectively in such a situation? They express admiration for the African teachers who according to their observations actually often cope rather well. In the words of one of them: ‘First of all I have to say that I am impressed when I think about the teachers at the schools in Namibia. Comparing to the teachers here in Norway they have no teaching-aids except from the blackboard and a chalk, and they have more learners to take care of and to teach. I think the most important thing that I learned from the school visits is that you actually don’t need a lot of teaching-aids to be a good teacher. As long as you know the subjects you are teaching, and as long as you manage to keep the learners concentrated you will get far. Of course it is better if you have more teaching-aids because the teaching will be more varied, but I saw that it is not necessary for teaching.’ The able teacher managed to organize teaching and learning methods that are suitable in crowded, under equipped classrooms. Even learner centered methods like group work and the like were used – and appreciated by the Norwegian students.

In teaching and learning situations discipline is important. Many of the Norwegian students found African teachers to be very strict on their learners and at the same time they understood that under the prevailing conditions plain discipline is necessary: ‘The key word to achieve these goals is discipline. I was rather interested to hear how they defined discipline. According to some, discipline is authority which makes distinct what is acceptable behavior and what is not. Discipline creates some clear boundaries and possibilities so that the teachers can concentrate on doing what they first set out to do: conveying their knowledge, values and charity.’ The strict regime of a crowded classroom seems to lead to a more distant relationship between teacher and learner according to the Norwegian students’ reflections, even though they found that many African teachers were trusted and liked as well as respected by their learners: ‘Some of the teachers we met at the schools were dedicated and passionate about creating relations that could encourage professional and personal development.’

Two of the students sum up some important lessons that they took home based on their observations in schools:

- ‘Still, without all of these remedies, it is possible to have an interesting and instructive class, just by using your self as a teacher. Creativeness and the quality of daring to be your self are very important to bring with you into the classroom, as a teacher. [...] The technical remedies can never take the place of a good teacher.’
- ‘I was amazed to see the challenges the teachers, especially in rural areas, had to face and the way many of them were able to do a good job despite the lack of books and other materials and with so many pupils. This really motivated me to do my best as a teacher here in Norway and I feel that I learned a lot from them. They gave me ideas on how to handle a big crowd of pupils in an efficient way, and when I start teaching I would like to try out their methods.’

2.4.4 Bridge builders

The concept of bridge building was thoroughly discussed during the preparation before leaving Norway where the important role of future teachers was given due attention. In the UN report ‘Our Common Future’ (1987) chairman of the commission, Gro Harlem Brundtland, in the introduction points out that it is of utmost importance to spread knowledge about ecology and development to the peoples in the world and that teachers are pivotal in this process: ‘In particular, the Commission is addressing the young. The world’s teachers will have a crucial role to play in bringing this report to them’. These aspects are later

followed up for instance by establishing the UN Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of actions to promote human development accordingly.

The Norwegian students have been very positive to these ideas and challenges and their own role in this respect. During their stay abroad, they have met students, teachers and have been exposed to education on primary, secondary as well as tertiary level. All this has been contributing to their increased awareness of their role as bridge builders.

2.4.5 Making African friends

The Norwegian students wanted to make friends with their student peers and others that they were in touch with while abroad, and when this happened they found it quite rewarding: ‘We learned so much by interacting with people with different backgrounds. I had many interesting conversations with people about culture, religion, education, politics, sports [...]. Our stay would not in a million years be the same if it weren't for all the lovely people we met!’

Rewarding as the students generally found it to be, it was not always easy to get acquainted. They found that it took effort as well as time to get ‘on line’ with African peers. Not surprising they found spending time doing things together to be a good recipe. Several students point to sports, choir, debate club and the like as good arenas for making friends. The students that stayed in Ongwediva lived on campus. Some therefore decided to have their meals in the dining hall with the other students. This proved to be very successful as a way of making friends as this action also seemed to surprise many African students at the college. A similar experience was made in Zomba where the students lived in the boarding for a seminar for pastors in the Anglican Church. In 2008 the Norwegian students not only played football and volleyball with the pastors-to-be, but they also participated in the harvesting of maize along with the others at the boarding. Unexpected as this participation was, it certainly opened doors of contact and friendship. The ‘trick’ most probably was that eating and working together indicated that the Norwegian students did not consider themselves ‘above’ the African students’ everyday ways and chores. And of course they also had something ‘down to earth’ to start the conversation on.

In 2008 there was a strike on the CC campus and for that reason the exchange students were not included into regular teaching and contact with peer students at the college until the last few weeks of their stay. This gave them the opportunity to visit many schools, from which they benefited a lot. But this also gave them a problem as far as making friends at CC: ‘We did have some contact with Malawians when we were there, but not as much as we expected before we went on the trip (due to the strike). We made good friends within the theological campus where we lived and we had frequently visitors over in the evenings. We also made friends among the teachers in the schools we visited and among previous participants of this project. All of us felt a bit sad because we missed out on the social part at Chancellor College and I think it would have been very different if the school had been up running.’

The project plans were such that during February the African and Norwegian teacher trainees should have a chance to meet as the African participants were expected to help the newly arrived Norwegian students to get acquainted with the new place. We do not have information to which degree this actually worked according to the plan, but the following quote from one of the students may indicate that at least in some cases it worked out quite well: ‘I shall forever remain thankful for the way in which Alex and Kathrin greeted us when we arrived at Ongwediva College’. For the students who went to Malawi two adjustments in the program

were made which were hampering such contact. Firstly, it was decided that the Norwegian students should spend the first couple of weeks in the country as guests of Lilongwe Teacher Training College and also visiting schools, villages etc. in the northern part of the country. Consequently they arrived at Chancellor College (CC) only a short time before the Malawi participants that year left for Norway. Secondly, for reasons of academic integration (see 2.2 Integration upon return home) in 2006 it was decided only to nominate students from CC that were about to finish their bachelor degree. Therefore the previous years' exchange students had finished their degree and left CC at the time of the Norwegian students' arrival. In May the African and Norwegian students were assembled in Norway and cooperated on visits to some schools in the vicinity of VUC and this activity was a good basis for making friends, which to some extent also is reported to happen (see 2.3.6 Activities rather than words).

In quite a number of instances close friendships developed and several report that they keep in touch mainly on e-mail. Some have also been back in the host country and visited friends they made during their exchange stay. There are also examples of longer stays: 'Actually, my best friend from the College is coming to Norway in August, and he is going to study here for 4 years. I can't wait to meet him again, and show him Norway and my city, like he showed us his'.

All but two of the Norwegian participants were female and one of them comments that their friends were mostly boys since the girls seemed more shy than the boys. This analysis is absolutely not out of place concerning Africa where girls often are expected to keep somewhat in the background. However, given the age of the participants (18 – 25 years) the attraction of the two genders should also not be left out as a partial explanation in this connection.

It is not obvious what it means 'to become friends'. As discussed above (2.3.6), it may be fruitful to distinguish between 'acquaintances' and 'friendships'. Several of the Norwegian students reported that they sometimes were a bit uncomfortable while socializing with African peers. They found it hard to know who actually wanted to establish a friendship and who was mostly after taking advantage of them and their money. It is therefore interesting to note that several of the Norwegian participants found it quite difficult to make friends at their hosting college. On the surface of it there is little doubt that the African social behavior appears more open and 'friendly': they greet, smile and shake hands, while many Norwegians appear withdrawn and distant at the first encounter. However, as the first contact is made, a general impression is that the African students find their Norwegian counterparts as being both interested and trustworthy. On the other hand, there were instances where Norwegian students had the nagging feeling that some of the Africans actually were more interested in what advantage they might gain from naming the Norwegian a 'friend' than just being a friend with no hidden agenda of material gain. Partly this may be about different ways of distinguishing between 'acquaintance' and 'friendship'. And partly it may go much deeper and touch upon the very difficult question of knowing peoples' motivations for making friends in general and which role the prospects of securing material gains from friendships may play. To understand this is even more complicated in a comparison between Malawi/Namibia and Norway since African societies are known for their people's dependence on relations (extended family, friends and neighbors) (Calderisi 2007: 77–99, Lamb 1987: 33–34, 261–162) while Norwegians to a larger degree depend on the established and well developed welfare state for security and well being.

2.5 FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF AFRICAN COLLEGE LEADERS

2.5.1 Responses from interviews

We interviewed the dean of Faculty of Education at Chancellor College and the head of the Department of Education Foundation in the same faculty (part of the time period of the project), and the principals of Lilongwe Teacher Training College (LTTC) and Windhoek College of Education (CE). These interviews focused on their experience and views on the exchange project. They did not expose much critical views that they might have had. To a certain degree this may be out of politeness as discussed above (2.1) and also in an acknowledgement of their institutions being partners in the project. Even so, we take it to be true that their opinions are predominantly positive.

A couple of them mentioned some personal benefits from the project. One stated that the Norwegian students' visits to his office often led to interesting discussions. One of the principals pointed out that her participation in a FK Norway conference in Oslo 2006 with very good speakers made a difference in her life. She will never forget it. It meant a lot also because she could better understand the project and what she could do to support it as she also knew that the principals are important persons for a project like this.

Students' benefits

The leaders' impression of the impact that the exchange has made on the student participants was wide-ranging. One pointed out that the benefits could not be quantified or qualified at that time since it may still be unfolding. In the following we have been combining and editing some of the leaders' statements about their students:

- The students have gained knowledge about another continent and country. They did not just read, but they physically visited, socially interacted, emotionally engaged with the people, the youth of Norway. This has been a unique experience and represents far more than reading books. Many of the students come from a very poor background. For some of them just to travel within the country gives them surprises. Some of the students at WCE who come from the north of Namibia have never seen the ocean. So the journey abroad was about expanding their horizon and after independence it is important to break through the isolation of the nation. This way they may also appreciate more their life in Namibia since they have created a better understanding of the rest of the world. This may help understand each other and work towards a more peaceful world, living democratically together.
- The students came back as different people with a different understanding of issues. Some of them only wanted to go back because Norway is such a fine place. Others are happy to be back and appreciate their own country and they have learned to take pride in it. Before they have taken many things for granted. Some have even developed their interest in volunteering their services to the society, to extra curriculum activities. They have been good ambassadors for the faculty and the country.
- Upon their return home they took their studies very seriously, they performed very well, passed with credit and above. They have taken interest in teaching, and their teaching has been more of the interacting kind. They have learned to value and respect their students, and that is something that should be a possible foundation for teaching in any context.

- They have learnt tremendously. In Norway they had to cope without the support of the extended family. They met with a college culture where students have a lot of responsibility for their own studies. And they learn to rely more on themselves. Taking part in the project has given some of them confidence and ambition. Just the fact of being chosen gave them confidence that they are able to manage even more. This may also be a good background if they in the future will get a chance to go abroad for studies and for any activity or situation in life.
- The whole project is about planting a seed in the students. Through the interactions we may not know how this will grow and develop and have positive impact on people as years go by. You never can tell where this will lead them. Sometime, somewhere someone may tell about Norway. I am sure that one day it will come out. They will make a difference in the classroom. Maybe through giving examples. They are tapping from a wider experience as they are helping the learners in the classrooms. Because they have been there they may inspire their students: work hard, one day you may be able to go to Norway, I have been there, and I am from a village like yourself. It will be passed on: the enthusiasm but also the knowledge. So I believe that it is not in vain.

The Norwegian students are described in one of the interviews as a group interested to learn. The local coordinator let them suggest activities: visiting and teaching in schools, visiting villages where they played with the children. Everybody was impressed with them and as they were sharing experiences, they learned a lot. One of the principals underlines that they invited students and not guests and that there is a difference. The students are invited to find out what society is like. The learning potential is vast as ‘your way of doing things is not necessarily the only way and the right way.’ The dean (at CC) describes the students from Norway as excellent students and exemplifies this by saying: ‘They were able to adjust and were part of us. They would come to my office any time, or stop me on the way and I found that to be very interesting.’

College benefits

Some commented on how the colleges as teacher training institutions have profited from the exchange. One pointed out that student exchange is OK, but he let it shine through that he would rather have teacher exchange as he said: ‘I am for teacher exchange. We can learn new teaching methods. Participatory methods need to be started in a small group with enough teaching material. They will be accustomed and can then bring them home with them. And teachers from the North may learn to appreciate the difficulties that teachers in the South face with big classes and little teaching materials.’ Another took this differently. He finds that most projects focus on staff exchange while this one looked at students who were doing education. According to him the students were grateful for this. So through its student focus the project may have challenged the view of the teacher-student relation of the African colleges. The more equal relationship between teacher and student, which is typical of Norway, has also been illustrated through the student centered teaching and learning that the African students were exposed to and brought back. One of the principals said: ‘Learner centered practices are not so easy for us to model. This they have met in Norway and when they come home they say that learner centered approaches work.’ In this connection it is also interesting to note a comment from the dean which is about the exchange students’ performance also as teachers: ‘[It is] enriching for us to hear the students, to hear from their head teachers how well they are doing in their schools.’

One statement shows a positive attitude to the exchange as it has potential for spreading knowledge also among college staff, but according to her this potential has not been fully

realized. The staff has been exposed to Norway through the coordinator at the college and the returning students as they have described their experiences. But this leader is not very sure that many of the staff could identify themselves with the project. The spread effect in this college staff did not meet her hopes.

One comment indicates that the cooperation with other colleges, international cooperation included, has represented a mirror in which the college leadership had an opportunity to see their own institution. This may be about the college at large: 'The colleges may not be as developed as the student exchange.' Or it may be more specific, for example about the academic standard: 'I wish that my own students had been a bit higher academically. My students were perhaps not quite on level with what they were met with.' If this is to take as an inspiration to develop into better quality, it is all good. But to the degree that it feeds a possible inferiority complex, it should be addressed separately. To our knowledge nothing was specifically done in that respect in the project.

The project encouraged cooperation between colleges in the same country, like in the case of Namibia. The principal at WCE reported that she and the coordinator did not think that staying in Windhoek all the time was enough for the Norwegian students. They therefore always tried to partner with colleagues in the north of the country (at OCE): 'It was cooperation. This way we had the opportunity to interact with other colleges in the South.' On this basis she expressed the wish of having a South – South exchange also in the future, including partnerships across country boundaries. And she expanded this thought even further as she said: 'I have got a lot of better belief in exchange. We should make sure that this cooperation [between the partner institutions] could continue in some way. It would be a shame if not. It takes a lot of time to establish the kind of trust and all to make such exchanges work.'

Further ripple effect

The dean at CC pointed to one of the ripple effects of the exchange project, the democracy project where CC and VUC were partners. He said that as a faculty they have learned a number of things from the democracy project, for instance the need to collaborate across disciplines. People may come from different disciplines and come together with different interests and focus and still be able to work together. In the democracy project educational psychologists, geographers, historians, language specialists, sociologists, and theologians were able to understand and look at democracy from different perspectives and work together as a team (Hunnes 2008: 89–99).

In the democracy project the good working relationship that VUC had with the schools was noticed. For instance school teachers were invited to take part in the workshops. This has inspired the dean to want to develop and cultivate a relationship between the university and the schools. This will especially be done in the new primary teacher education. He explained: 'During their school visits our students are asked to identify with a problem that they have seen during their time in the schools, and then address how it should be dealt with. We have invited teachers from the schools to hear the students present these and we will discuss these topics.' He finished this part of the interview by telling that they are starting to see the value of such a relationship and possibly will start working with the schools on the topic democracy.

2.5.2 Excerpts from a survey

In middle 2008 the FK Norway distributed a questionnaire about youth, exchange and development to all the partner institutions in their program 'FK-Youth exchange'. This was just as the last exchange in the present project was finished, and before the last partner meeting was held. We have received the answers that were given by two participating institutions, CC and WCE. In the following, we present an edited and commented version of the answers on the three questions that we regard as especially relevant for this report:

- What role does the project play in my institution?
- How does the project contribute to change in the South and North?
- How can we ensure that the participants' competence is used after homecoming?

What role does the project play in my institution?

The didactic aspect of the project comes out clear as both colleges point out that in this project the exchange students become aware of what is taught about the South (Namibia and Malawi) in the North (Norway), and what is taught about the North in the South. They interact and share their teaching and learning experiences, they share lecturing and teaching methods/approaches used by lecturers in the North and South, and acquire knowledge and understanding of the Norwegian, Malawian and Namibian societies.

One of the colleges also describes how initiatives are taken to involve the fellow students who did not travel abroad. On their return from the North, the exchange students give presentations to their co-student teachers about conditions of growing up in Norway, Norwegian schooling, natural resources, culture and society. This information is then incorporated in the college curriculum as case studies, and they are encouraged to incorporate this information in the school curricula, when they complete their studies at the college.

How does the project contribute to change in the South and North?

Since the first question in the survey asked the respondents to define the term 'development' we here take 'change' to mean development. The participating colleges train teachers. Therefore the answer to this question focuses on education, which is 'crucial for development'. It is generally accepted that education is one of the most important vehicles for development and there is also substantial support for this in literature. A most striking illustration of this is that education is one of three indicators in the UN's Human Development Index which is presented yearly in the Human Development Reports (i.e. HDR 2009). In his book *Social Reconstruction of Africa*, Stein Villumstad (2000: 131) writes that 'True education gives people increased opportunities and options', which he in effect takes to be the core of development. And this important role of education for development is taken to be important on individual as well as national level (Cooksey et. al 1995: 201) as education has an important role in shaping society (Peil & Oyeneye 1998: 151).

The colleges focus on training students to teach and this project allows the youth of the South to acquire the necessary skills to play their part as teachers to uplift and improve the local community and enhance their professional growth. By participating in the exchange project, student teachers are better equipped for the task of building bridges between South and North. By promoting dialogue, partnership and sharing of experiences, long term educational links are established among the exchange partners. Exchange students experience and reflect on trans-cultural communication and didactics, namely what and how we teach about the North and the South in schools and communities.

Education is crucial for development, and this project makes participants aware of the skills and knowledge needed for this. The professional growth of the exchange students is enhanced through the project. Their horizons and mental maps are broadened and they respond to new challenges of teaching in general. Some of their experiences include to reflect upon what stage of development the host country is, different perspectives and ideas on teacher education with regard to context and methodology, the nature, culture and economy of the host country, and how and what the South and North learn about each other to improve the quality of life in the South. Thus they help make education relevant for developing the country.

How can we ensure that the participants' competence is used after homecoming?

There are obviously two stages to this challenge. The first is during the remaining time at the college where the participants are expected to inform about the program and inspire other student teachers to join and support the project's goals, present information from the stay abroad to students at the college and at nearby schools, and convey information and attitudes, among other things, on the basis of the exchange stay.

The second stage is the time after having finished at the college and during the (hopefully long time) period of teaching school. The colleges are aware that if they do not have a system in place to maintain and support the objectives of the exchange project a reduction in momentum is inevitable. Collaboration is important in this respect. Exchange students from various programs should work together on new projects based on their experiences from the North. Such projects can impact directly upon the quality of teaching and learning, not only for their fellow students, but for teachers and learners also at the schools where they are posted after graduation. This can influence others towards improved educational practice. Teacher training is an on-going and continuous acquisition of knowledge and new skills. When teachers and student teachers share good practice and learn together, the possibility of better quality teaching and learning is increased.

We take this as an expression of the intention of establishing such a support system as mentioned above since the need to set aside time for building networks and opportunities for continuous professional development is acknowledged. The contact must be maintained among the exchange students once they qualify. There should be created the opportunity once a year for the exchange students to demonstrate how they use their experiences from the North in their lessons in the classrooms. Alumni Associations could play a crucial role in maintaining contact among participants and the rest of the college community, past and present. Ensuring that participants' competence is used after homecoming, can lead to even bigger success for our educational practices.

Clearly the ideas are there. The challenge is to put them into lasting action. The Norwegian coordinators' 'concluding journey' to all the participating colleges in Africa as accounted for above (1.2.4), may be seen as one initial action in this respect.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1

**GOAL STATEMENTS OF THE "FREDSKORPSET – YOUTH" EXCHANGE
PROJECT between
Volda University College
Chancellor College / University of Malawi
Lilongwe Teacher Training College, Malawi
Ongwediva College of Education, Namibia
Windhoek College of Education, Namibia**

OVERALL OBJECTIVES:

The student teachers (participants):

- 1) Acquire knowledge about and understanding of societies of different continents with special focus on host country
- 2) Interact and share their teaching and learning experiences and thereby enhancing their professional growth

The institutions (partners):

Establish long term educational links between the colleges with special focus on social science education

OBJECTIVES OF INFORMATION ACTIVITIES:

- 3) Convey updated information about the host country with special focus on adolescence and education, natural resources, culture, society and transcultural communication.
- 4) Founded on theoretical knowledge, personal experience and engagement the information should create positive attitudes for justice, development and cooperation in the relationship between the "North and the South".

NORTH AND SOUTH PARTICIPANTS

During the stay:

- 5) take personal initiatives in order to acquire knowledge and attitudes in accord with the (general) overall objectives of this programme
- 6) Share educational experiences with others
- 7) when possible, prepare a presentation on some areas of general interest
- 8) abide by rules and regulations of host institution
- 9) participate in the activities prepared by host institution
- 10) prepare and present information about you exchange in nearby area in home country and to fellow students in primary / secondary schools in nearby area.
- 11) inform the students from host institutions who are chosen for exchange stay at home college about home country, home town/city and home college
- 12) report to local coordinator at home college regularly

During the follow-up phase:

- 13) inform about the programme and inspire other future teachers to join the programme
- 14) present information from exchange stay for students at the college and at schools in nearby area
- 15) teach for future students. All through their future work as teachers of Geography/ Social Studies, the students will convey information and attitudes among other things on the basis of the exchange stay

Appendix 2

PROJECT WORK SRS 105

Organisation

All students on this course are required to work on a project that leads to a final written report. The project is to be carried out either individually or in pairs.

Length

In the plan for the course about five (5) weeks of full-time project work have been allotted to each student this semester (about 200 working hours). This includes work on all the phases (cf handout with overview of project work).

It is impossible to suggest a framework of a set number of pages for such a project report. One page can vary from less than one hour's to several days' work. But as a rough guideline, we can suggest the following:

Individual work: the report should be about 20 – 25 A4 pages of text (+ diagrams/illustrations etc.)

Work in pairs: the report should be about 25 – 30 A4 pages of text (+diagrams/illustrations etc.)

The report should be concluded with an easily readable abstract / summary and a conclusion of approx. 1 – 2 pages. This could easily be adapted as a newspaper article on your return to Norway. Such a summary may be included in the number of pages in the report.

Topic

The topic for the project work is to be from the host country (Namibia or Malawi). The student him/herself draws up a thesis statement. It is natural that material from the project may be used in the teaching about Namibia/Malawi during the information phase in Norway (and later in your own teaching). It ought to focus on a social issue of current interest in a poor African country.

Information

In principle all students will have access to much the same information; written sources, the media, well-informed persons, own observations (e.g. in the classroom). The assessment of the project will take into account the information that has been available to the student(s), which will vary according to the choice of topic/thesis statement.

Response

The tutor/project co-ordinator is to approve the thesis statement, which the student(s) should mail to nv@hivolda.no (not later than 1st of March) after having discussed the topic/thesis statement with the South Coordinator. The next phase is to mail a rough outline of 1-2 pages to the North Co-ordinator (not later than 30th of March 07). This outline should include the main content of the project, a brief description of the methods to be used including sources of information etc. (response document). The outline should suggest the various chapters/headings and the content of each chapter. The tutor/project coordinator will provide a response to the document at the earliest possible opportunity. The South Coordinator will be available for consultations and assistance on the project during the stay abroad. Response from tutor/project coordinator may be given at any time during the project period to 15th of June.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. Choice of thesis statement

The student should justify the choice of thesis statement, either in the introduction or elsewhere in the report as appropriate, and ideally formulate a number of questions that he/she aims to answer in the course of the project work.

2. Method / gathering of information

The student should explain his/her choice of method(s) for gathering information, either early in the report or elsewhere that is appropriate. It is positive if the report also includes an evaluation of how reliable this information is considered to be.

3. Draft, structure, overall form and content

Is the draft clear and easy to understand, is there a logical connection between the various sections of the report? These are normal questions at this stage. If the report has been written by more than one student, it is an important point that it reads as an integrated whole and not as a collection of loosely linked parts.

4. Knowledge and understanding

Does the report document the student's knowledge and understanding of the topic? Furthermore, the willingness and ability to discuss and analyze will be rewarded. Likewise, whether the final report provides an answer to thesis statement or the issues raised.

4. Language

Is the use of language such that it clearly and explicitly communicates the subject content? Short, precise sentences are an advantage here. Is the report easy to read?

5. Layout

The report should have a neat layout with a left-hand margin and paragraphs. Use spacing 1.5, write the actual text with a 12-point type. The answer should include a brief introduction (up to half a page), a main section of body paragraphs and a short conclusion. The conclusion should attempt to summarize the key points and provide answers inherent in the thesis statement.

6. Documenting sources

The final report must be the student's own independent work and students are encouraged to make use of a variety of sources. Direct quotations must be marked with quotation marks: Such quotations must also cite the source in brackets e.g. (Karlsen, 1996: 121). The report should contain a complete alphabetic list of sources at the back, e.g. Brock-Utne, Birgit (2002): Education and Development: A Developing Theme. International Review of Education. Vol.48.No 1/2, pp.45 – 65.

The bibliography/list of sources does not count among the number of A4 pages required. Apart from written sources, naturally all oral sources/informant(s) must also be stated and what is known as own observations that have been used in the written work.

7. Summary in English.

If the report is written in Norwegian language, the abstract/summary of 1-2 pages must be translated into English, and sent to North and South Coordinator as an attachment to a mail.

8. Deadline. Two paper-reports must be handed in (or mailed) to Høgskulen I Volda, Studieadministrasjonen, Eksamenskontoret, Postboks 500, 6101 Volda within the deadline which is 1st of July 2007 at 1400. A well-argued application for postponing this deadline must be received by the tutor at the latest 48 hours prior to the deadline.

PROSJEKTARBEID UTFØRT AV NORSKE UTVEKSLINGSSTUDENTAR I MALAWI OG NAMIBIA I SAMBAND MED FREDSKORPS-STUDIET OG OPPHALD I AFRIKA.

2004:

Hanna Knoff og **Asgeir Røyarhus Olseth** (WCE): Human Rights, Ethnicity and Education in Namibia. Challenges in a multicultural education system.

Elisabeth Sande Arnevik og **Kristine Morton** (OCE): HIV og Aids i Namibia.

Ane Marte Botn Brattli (CC): Problem ved utvikling av demokrati-overgang frå diktatur til Demokrati.

Elin Roksvåg (CC): Theatre for Development in Malawi.
What might be important factors to succeed in Theatre for Development.

Rita Bogholm Knutsen (CC): Jenter og utdanning I u-land/Utdanning for Utvikrling-
En studie av hvorfor det er spesielt viktig å utdanne jenter utviklingsland.

Cathrine Sjøholt Wirzen (CC): Jenters utdanningsvilkår i Malawi.. Undersøkelse og drøfting av hvorfor færre jenter enn gutter fullfører skolegang og utdannelse.

2005:

Mari Johansen og **Nadja Hartikkala** (WCE): Education for all? On Educationally Marginalized children in Namibia (Referring to children or students from San and Himba).

Vigdis Heimdal og **Janette Mary Grymyr** (OCE): Hvilken utdanning får kvinner i Namibia?
Hvorfor er kvinners kunnskaper, evner og ideer viktige for utvikling av samfunnet og for å nå FNs Tusenårs mål?

Christina Eide Strand og **Tove Uran** (CC): Hva slags oppvekstvilkår har barn og unge i Malawi?

Katrine Antonsen (CC): Hiv-virusets påvirkning på Barn og Unge i Utdanning, med fokus på Malawi. Om spredning av Hiv og AIDS blant unge i Malawi og hva som må gjøres.

Carina Solberg Hillersøy (CC): Kvinner og utdanning. Om kvinners utdanningssituasjon i Malawi.

2006:

Astrid Kvam Helset (WCE): Kunnskapsnivå i "Social Studies". Ei samanlikning mellom skular i Windhoek og i Lesja/Dovre . Kva lærer vi t.d. om kvarandre ?

Kristine Billington (WCE) Lærer-elev-relasjoner i Namibia. Hvordan virker streng disiplin inn på forholdet lærer –elev. Er språket og store skoleklasser med på å skape distanse mellom lærer og elev/klasse.

Kristel Kroken Ebbestad og Louise Frimannslund (OCE): The educational situation for the blind and visually impaired in Namibia with focus on the challenges in providing such education. Challenges of special education versus mainstream education.

Marit Helen Skipnes (CC): Utvikling I Malawi- med focus på hva slags rolle utdanning kan spille for utvikling. Rostows utviklingsfaser og utdanning og utdanning.

Anne Grethe Kjelling (CC): Fra diktatur til et demokratisk klasserom - Om demokrati i det malawiske klasserom -

Oddbjørg Myklebust og Tomas Fric (CC): Gender based violence. The situation in Malawi and how does it influence on children's education.

2007:

Anette Aune Hauge og Christine Bildøy Asheim(WCE): Motivasjon og lærerrolle i Namibia. Hva skaper motivasjon hos samfunnsfaglærere ?

Silje Cathrin Holm(OCE): Traditional roles of women in Ovamboland and how the situation has changed after independence, with focus on education.

Mary Aftret Mørtvedt (OCE): To what extent are the students at three different Colleges of Education using media as a way to participate in democratic society of Namibia.

Rebecca Shirin Jafari (CC): How is the orphan situation in Malawi currently being handled? AIDS is an important reason why 14 % of all children in Malawi are orphans.

Kristin Bolstad og Anne Birgit Aga (CC): Student democracy in Malawi and Norway. Do the student Unions establish and appear the conception of how democracy works in an organisation?

Linda Renate Aakre (CC): The Education system in primary and secondary school in Malawi with focus on the selection proceeding.

2008:

Sigrd Buan, Kristin Dragsten og Sara Hatab (WCE/OCE): EFUNDJA.- En nasjonal katastrofe. Studium av hydrografien i Ovamboland og flomkatastrofen i 2008.

Sanna Brattland (CC): Education for all. A critical discussion based on the resource situation concerning school and education in Malawi 2008.

Torill Wiggen (CC): Om selvbergingsjordbruk I Malawi. Fordeler, ulemper og utfordringer for selvbergingsbønder / småbrukere (som er en veldig stor gruppe i Afrika og Malawi).

Hanna Lindebæk og Åshild Hals (CC): Tilgang på rent vann. Legger regjeringen opp til holdbare vannstrategier ?

Appendix 3



VOLDA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE | Faculty of Education

P.O.Box	500	N-	6101
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PARTICIPANT CONTRACT

for

FREDSKORPSET - YOUTH - EXCHANGE PROGRAMME between

North-partner :Volda University College and **South Partners:** Chancellor College/
University of Malawi, Lilongwe T.T.College, Malawi, Ongwediva College of Education,
Namibia and Windhoek College of Education, Namibia.

Information about the programme in Study Plan : **SRS 105 Exchange for Development.**

The exchange is taking place between Malawi / Namibia and Norway

Exchange period is 3 months: North-participants: February - May 2008

South-participants: March - June 2008

Name of host College:

Information about participant:

Name:.....Sex: F / M

Passport number:.....and ID-number(11 numbers).....

Home address:.....

E-mail address:..... Mobile phone no:

Father / mother /other family member:

Name:.....Address...

.....

Telephone no (home):.....Work:.....Mobile phone no:.....

E-mail address:.....

Economy: Expenses for travel t/r host country, excursions, board and lodging abroad is covered by the project /and other grants

Insurance: The participants are insured during the travel and the stay abroad. The North as well as South participants are insured by the Fredskorpset-Youth Project in Norway(North Participants) and in Malawi/Namibia (South Participants). The South Participants need insurance to get visa into Norway because of the new European Schengen-agreement. The North-participants maintain their membership in "Folketrygda" during their stay in Namibia or Malawi. The economic responsibility of the Fredskorpset-Youth exchange programme vis-avis participants is limited to what is covered by the insurance.

Responsibilities of the project: The Project Coordinator at the Partner Colleges (North/South) in cooperation with the local project-committee, is responsible for implementing and monitoring the programme at his/her College according to the Partnership Agreement and the Study Plan, where the main goals of Fredskorpset-Youth are included such as principles, values and a joint understanding. All important information must be given to the participants before the contract is signed. Participants must have knowledge about health –and security precautions and crisis preparedness.

Responsibilities of the Participants: Implementation of the programme requires each participant to sign this contract with their “home” Partner College. Before this contract is signed, the participant must know his responsibilities and obligations according to the Partnership Agreement and the Study Plan. Rights and responsibilities of the participants are at any time in accordance with laws and regulations of the country where he/she is staying.

Termination of contract : Both parties may take the initiative to terminate this contract between the participant and the Fredskorpset – Youth project. This must be done on written notice where the reason(s) is explained. Reasons for termination may be lack of security, health problems, social unrest, war etc and unacceptable behavior by the participant for instance by breaking of rules and regulations at hosting institution, crime etc. In case of termination, the project committee will have to determine if and how much of assigned project funds must be returned.

Signatories:

This Participant Contract is signed in 2(two) copies, one to be kept by the participant and one to be kept by his/her “Home” Partner College.

I have read and understood what is expected from me as a Fredskorpset-Youth participant during the different phases of the programme. I have also studied useful documents about emergency situations and crises preparedness. I want to meet the expectations to be a Fredskorpset – Youth - exchange participant.

Place/ Date.....

Place/ Date.....

Signatory of participant

North/South Coordinator

Signatory on behalf of the College

Appendix 4

STUDY PLAN: EXCHANGE FOR DEVELOPMENT (SRS105)

This course is the result of a partnership agreement between Volda University College (VUC) and teacher training institutions in Africa. The partnership agreement includes student exchange where VUC-students stay for a definite period at a partnership institution in Africa. Likewise, students from partnership institutions in Africa will spend a period at VUC. The program does not require that the number of students in the North and the South has to be the same.

Our intention is that both the Norwegian and the African students will be enrolled at VUC. This plan therefore consists of two parts: part one concerns the Norwegian students and part 2 concerns the African students.

PART 1: CONCERNING THE NORWEGIAN STUDENTS

Type of study: This is a half-year course and is a part of the Fredskorpset – Youth Program that the Peace Corps of Norway organizes. Fredskorpset – Youth covers the expenses for travel, room and board connected with the students' stay in Africa.

Level: 100

Extent: 30 ECTS-credits

Enrollment: The students must write an application in English, present two persons as reference and appear for a personal interview. As a starting point, there is room for maximum 8 persons in the age group 18 – 25. At a later stage this number may be changed.

Recommended requirements: 30 ECTS-credits in Social Studies, i.e. SRS101 and SRS103 or the equivalent. Other requirement / background may be considered.

Semester to be accomplished: Spring (January – middle June)

Competence

This course may be included as an optional part of the four-year teacher education program, part of a bachelor degree when this is complemented with a course in practical pedagogical education (PPU), and as further education for teachers. In addition to teaching competence within Social Studies, this course will increase one's knowledge about Africa, which may be further developed and be relevant in other fields of work related to this continent.

Goals

The main goal of this course is for the students to acquire knowledge about and understanding of African societies, culture and nature with special focus on Malawi or Namibia. Founded on theoretical knowledge, experience and engagement it is an objective to create positive attitudes to justice, development and cooperation in the relationship between the North and the South. Furthermore, it is important for the students to experience and reflect on trans-cultural communication and didactics: what we teach and how we teach about each other in the North and the South.

Contents

A central part of the course is the period spent at a college/university which educates teachers in Malawi or Namibia, where the students, among other things, will engage in Social Studies at the host institution. With this as our starting point, the contents is divided into four: preparations, the period of mutual exchange, follow-up work, hosting- and information work.

The preparation will mainly include teaching of central topics within the social sciences, such as natural resources, history, economy/politics, health, religion and aid in Africa / Malawi - Namibia. The students will also participate in a preparatory course run by Fredskorpset – Youth before going abroad.

The exchange stay. During the stay the students will engage in specially arranged studies at the host institution. The students will study the host country with particular focus on childhood and education, natural resources, culture and society. They will make themselves acquainted with different types of plans for the basic, compulsory school, textbooks and methods of instruction/didactics for Geography/Social Studies. Furthermore, they will encounter everyday life in African schools through observation and practice teaching. There will be arranged excursions and short-range study trips especially focusing on the geographical area in which the host institution is located. The students are also supposed to inform about Norway, especially to the students from the partner institution that are selected to go abroad for a stay at VUC.

Follow-up work means finishing the project report and final exam.

Hosting- and information work Since this course is part of an exchange program between VUC and teacher training institutions in Malawi and Namibia, students from our partner institutions will complete a stay at VUC. Our students will be given certain duties as hosts for our visiting students during May - June after returning from their own stay abroad.

The following fall the students will have to present information in various formal and informal settings. Throughout their future work as teachers of Geography/Social Studies the students will convey information and attitudes most likely also based on their personal experiences and observation during their stay in Africa.

Organizing and methods of work

The preparation will mainly take place during the month of January, but introductory information and clarification will be carried out during the fall before going abroad. The introductory information will be divided into two groups: one part, which all the students need to get acquainted with, and one part where the individual student may focus on a subject area of special interest. This particular in-depth work will be accomplished within the frame of project organization and will be part of the student's project work during the stay abroad.

The exchange stay will take place during February, March and April

Hosting duties will be carried out during May - June

The follow-up work will be accomplished during May - June

The information work will mainly be accomplished during the following fall and during the future work as teacher

Relevant methods of work are studying literature, lectures, seminars, group work, counseling, observation, practice teaching, study trips, excursions and project with report.

Obligatory attendance

Study trips, excursions and the preparatory course organized by VUC and Fredskorpset – Youth are compulsory. The same is the case for host- and information duties.

Assessment and exams

The final assessment of this course will be based on assessment of the project report adjusted through an oral exam. The oral exam will have the project report as its starting point, but will also include questions concerning other parts of the syllabus. The assessment scale runs from A to E.

Evaluation and quality assurance

A committee of teachers and students will be established to ensure high quality of studies. During the study year this group will meet on a regular basis in order to discuss questions concerning the quality of the course. Relevant issues may be how to prioritize within the plan of the course, organization and methods of work, the relationship between plenary teaching and individual work, and procedures for assessment and quality work. The Fredskorpset – Youth – program also emphasizes a close following up of the students during their staying abroad.

Literature for the Norwegian participants

Core syllabus/curriculum 900 pages :

- approx 500 pages at VUC to cover main issues related to the exchange program
- at least 100 pages from host country's textbooks in Geography/Social Studies for Sec Sch
- 300 pages can be chosen by the student as written sources for the project work.

Vilby, Knud (2002): Den Globale Reisen. Universitetsforlaget 2.utg. Kap. 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-10-11-12-13-14-20. (les forord og innledning og vær obs på internettadr s 402-407)220 p
Øyvind Dahl: Kommunikasjon over kulturgrensene. Foredrag kurs for bistandsarb1989....10 p
Klausen, Arne Martin: Kultur-variasjon og sammenheng. Oslo 1970. Utdrag s.7-34 /...27p
Gr.arbeidsopp. Brev 1. v/Liv Vold Klausen s.7-13.
Stenseth, N (red): AFRIKA-natur, samfunn og bistand. Ad Notam Gyldendal 1995: / . .80 p
Kap 1.6. Historisk tilbakeblikk ved Randi Rønning Balsvik. S.179- 197 (18 s.)
Kap 1.7 Det kulturelle mangfoldet ved Helge Rønning s.199-213 (14s)
Kap 2.3 Landbruket ved Johan Helland. S.279-296. (18 s)
Kap 4.3 Menneskerettigheter og bistanden v B.A.Andreassen s.539-559 (20s)
Kap 4.7 Kulturkontakten v Thomas Hylland Eriksen s.605-616 (10 s)

NORADs årsrapport 2006. Norsk bistand og bistandspolitikk .(gå gjennom på kurset)
Den Globale fattigdommen: Afrika som eksempel (Art. v/ Tore Linne Eriksen. s.45-60..15s
Den tredje verda og forholdet Nord – Sør. Nystad-Solerød. Gyldendal 1997. /.....21 s
Hunnes, Odd Ragnar (2007): Ekskursjon til framandkulturelt land. Kvifor, kva og litt om korleis.17s. HVO 06
Vik, Norleif (2000): AFRIKA – naturressursar og miljø. Studiehefte i naturgeografi. HVO-ALU / 2000.
Vik, Norleif : NAMIBIA-Studiehefte for utvekslingsstudentar. HVO-ALU 2005 ...50 s
Vik, Norleif (2001): Skule og Utdanning i Afrika og Tanzania og norsk bistand til utdanning. 29s
Vilby, Knud (1997): Det Sydlige Afrika I kort og tal. (utdelt og kommentert)
Forord og Innledning / Syd-Afrika / Malawi
Nervi, Luciano: MALAWI-Flames in the African sky. Editrice VELAR, Gorle 1994.....50 s

Utdelt stoff om Utdanning og Utvikling i Afrika.

For å lære om skole, utdanning og utvikling i Afrika, er det viktig å ha med til Afrika noe relevant litteratur (også på norsk) som studentene kan lese og diskutere med hverandre. Dette er ikke minst viktig når en skal velge prosjektarbeid der skole og utdanning vil ha en sentral plass.

Brock-Utne, Birgit: Utdanning i Afrika. Særtrykk i "Kirke og kultur". Universitetsforlaget 2000 (10 sider som blir delt ut til alle.) Forfatteren har bodd lenge i Tanzania og utført en rekke studier også i andre afrikanske land (Namibia). Hun har fokus på språkets betydning og at mange land har engelsk som undervisningsspråk / "Medium of instruction". Det gjelder for eksempel Namibia/Malawi.

Brock-Utne, Birgit and Holmarsdottir, Halla B.: The choice of English as medium of instruction and its effects on the African languages in Namibia. *International Review of Education* 47(3-4) 2001. Halla B.H. er i gang med videre studier av dette temaet som er svært aktuelt for studenter som drar til Namibia.

Haslie, A m/fl (red): Kunnskap. Makt og frigjøring. Tekster om utdanning og utvikling. Solidaritet forlag 2003. Hver studentgruppe får med et eks. av denne boka som inneholder 300 sider med artikler etc. om "education" i sør – omsatt til norsk.

Palmberg, Pia (2000): Afrikabild før partnerskap. Uppsala. ISBN 91-7106-451-6 (Utdrag 40 sider blir utdelt til alle). Dette er en analyse av svenske lærebøker med fokus på undervisning om land i Afrika, fordommer, rasisme / våre holdninger.

Vik, Norleif (2001): Skule og Utdanning i Afrika og Tanzania og norsk bistand til "Education". HVO-ALU 2001. (32 sider + vedlegg om miljø- kurs for lærarar i Tanzania). Her finn du først litt om historia når det gjeld utdanning i Afrika, så litt om situasjonen i Tanzania med vekt på ulike utdanningsnivå: Primary, Secondary, Høgre utdanning / Lærarutdanning. Er t.d. miljøundervisning viktig? Kva med Namibia og Malawi? Norsk bistand har hatt Tanzania som viktig samarbeidsland, og no blir det satsa sterkt på education der med støtte frå NORAD.

UNDP 2004/5/6/7/8: SAMMENDRAG Human Development Report.

PART 2: CONCERNING THE AFRICAN STUDENTS

Type of study: This is a half-year course and is a part of the Fredskorpset – Youth Program that the Peace Corps of Norway organizes. Fredskorpset – Youth covers the expenses for travel, room and board that are directly connected with the students' stay in Norway.

Level: 100

Extent: 30 ECTS-credits

Enrollment: The partner institution will organize the enrollment and the participants will either be well established as teacher training students or have just finished their teacher

training. At the starting point, there is room for maximum 8 persons in the age group 18 – 25 years of age. At a later stage this number may be changed.

Recommended requirements: The student should have started / finished studies in Geography / Social Studies in teacher training in their home country.

Semester to be accomplished: Spring

Competence

Depending on the partner institution, the study may be included as part of the students' teacher training in their home country, or be a further education as teacher.

Goals

The main goal of this course is for the students to acquire knowledge about and understanding of European societies, culture and nature with special focus on Norway. Founded on theoretical knowledge, experience and engagement it is an objective to create positive attitudes to justice, development and cooperation in the relationship between the North and the South. Furthermore, it is important for the students to experience and reflect on trans-cultural communication and didactics: what we teach and how we teach about each other in the North and the South.

Contents

A central part of the course is the period of three months spent at Volda University College, where the students, among other things, will engage in Social Studies. With this as our starting point, the contents is divided into three: preparations, the period of mutual exchange and follow-up / information work.

The preparation will mainly include teaching central topics within the Social Studies like natural resources, history, economy/politics, health, religion and aid in Norway. The students will also have some duties as hosts for the visiting students from VUC during their first weeks at their African partner institution.

The exchange stay. During the stay the students will engage in specially arranged studies at the host institution. The students will study the host country with particular focus on childhood and education, natural resources, culture and society. They will make themselves acquainted with different types of plans for the basic, compulsory school, textbooks and methods of instruction/didactics for Geography/Social Studies. Furthermore, they will encounter everyday life in Norwegian schools mainly through observation. There will be arranged excursions and short-range study trips especially focusing on the geographical area in which the host institution is located. The students are also supposed to inform about their home country. The students will make a project with report and complete a final exam.

Follow up / information work Right after their return and during the following fall the students will have to present information in various formal and informal settings. Throughout their future work as teachers of Geography/Social Studies the students will convey information and attitudes most likely also based on their personal experiences and observation during their stay in Norway.

Organizing and methods of work

The preparation will mainly take place during the period January – middle of March. The introductory information will be divided into two groups: one part, which all the students need to get acquainted with, and one part where the individual student may focus on a subject area of special interest. This particular in-depth work will be accomplished within the frame of project organization and will be part of the student's project work during the stay abroad.

The exchange stay will take place from the middle of March to the middle of June.

Hosting duties will be carried out during February – middle of March.

The follow up / information work will be accomplished during June and the following fall.

Relevant methods of work are studying literature, lectures, seminars, group work, counseling, observation, practice teaching, study trips, excursions and project with report.

Obligatory attendance

Study trips and excursions, host- and information duties are compulsory.

Assessment and exam

The final assessment for this study will be based on assessment of the project report adjusted through an oral exam. The oral exam will have the project report as its starting point, but will also include questions concerning other parts of the syllabus. The assessment scale for the African Participants / students runs from A to E.

Evaluation and quality assurance

During their stay in Norway, all students will be invited to meet on a regular basis in order to discuss questions concerning the quality of the course. The Fredskorpset – Youth – program is also emphasizes a close following up of the students while staying abroad.

Literature for the Norwegian participants

Literature / handouts / maps /pictures etc. for the African participants file.
To be used for teaching/information work when back in Africa.

Literature / Booklets / Handouts about Norway for visiting students from Malawi and Namibia. To be used for project work and as teachers in Namibia / Malawi.

It is difficult to find one textbook (or a few textbooks) to cover an introductory course about Norway in English. Most of the small books /booklets in the list below has been sent to me by people I have contacted, people who have understood the situation and willingly assisted by sending it to Volda University College, fk-Norway, exchange project for free, and for distribution to the visiting African students. All of them have deserved a big thank you on behalf of the African exchange participants. In addition the project has given some books and a lot of handouts to the students every year. Most of the literature for studies and assessments at VUC are taken from the following list.

To study Geography / natural resources and environment.

Utenriksdepartementet (Norw.Min.of Foreign Affairs): **Minifacts about Norway 2007**. ISBN 82-7177-701-7
Sømme, Axel (ed.): **A Geography of NORDEN**. Chapter 4.Climate / Wallen Chapter 5. Plant Geography.

Enquist / Chapter 6. Population and Settlement.

Ryvarden, L.: **Norway-Geography, Flora and Fauna**. By The Royal Norw.Min of For. Affairs 1998.

Bateman/Rowles: **Examining GCSE Geography**. Ch. 5 Weather Processes. London 1994.

To study History:

Stenersen/Libæk: **The History of Norway**. From the Ice Age to the Iron Age. Oslo 2003

The Viking Age 800-1030, Norway the Free 1905-1940, War and Occupation 1940-45

Literature and Culture

Aarnes, Sigurd: **Literature from Norway**. Produced by Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Notaker / Stødberg / Kjersem: **A taste of NORWAY**. Prod. By Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs /
Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture
Pedersen/ Stødberg / Kjersem: **Bunads from every corner of Norway**. Prod. By Royal Norwegian Ministry of
Foreign Affairs

Fisheries, agriculture, environment. (Booklets used in connection with studies and excursions).

Ministry of Fisheries: Facts about the NORWEGIAN FISHERIES INDUSTRY 2003.
Nordic Council of Ministers: The Fishing Industry in The Nordic Countries. 2003
Nordic Council of Ministers: Fish Quotas. From surveys to recommendations. 2003
Federation of Norwegian Agriculture Cooperation: Norwegian Agricultural Statistics. 2003.
Ministry of Agriculture: Multifunctional Agriculture the case of Norway. 2002
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Environmental Technology. Solutions for Sustainable Development. 10
/ 2003.

To study School and Education in Norway and in general.

(Preparing for school visits and class observation in Norway).

Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs: **Education in Norway**. Oslo 2001

Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs: **THE CURRICULUM FOR THE 10-YEAR
COMPULSORY SCHOOL IN NORWAY**.

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: **EDUCATION - JOB NUMBER 1**. Norwegian Strategy for Delivering
Education for All by 2015. Oslo 2003.

Vik, Norleif (editor): **Teacher Assistance Course**. Unit 1. Stimulus and Variety. Unit 2. Memory and Attention
Span. Unit 3. Lesson Planning.

UN, NORAD and fk-Norway

To study and discuss North-South issues, Development Aid, Norwegian NGOs etc.

UNDP: **Human Development Report 2003/4/5/6/7 and Millennium Development Goals**

NORAD/Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation: **Annual Report 2003/4/5/6/7** (25 pages)

Tourist brochures:

Innovation Norway: **Norway. Facts and Information**. The official catalogue for Norway 2005. (60 pages)

The Worlds Most Beautiful Voyage 2004. www.hurtigruten.com

Fjord Norway - travel guide 2006. www.fjordnorway.com

Volda January 4th 2008

Norleif Vik (Project Coordinator Fredskorpset –Youth)

Appendix 5

EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Fk-y-project at VUC 'Exchange for Development' 2004-2008

Year of participation: [] Male [] Female []

THIS IS AN INDIVIDUAL WRITTEN EVALUATION AFTER HAVING PARTICIPATED IN THE PROGRAMME.

Please try to answer the following questions. The answers will be important information for the final report about the project. The answers will be used in an anonymous way in the report.

For many questions you are asked to express your opinion on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10) is the best and (1) is the least good.

PHASE ONE

Preparation at home college before going abroad

1. Did the preparation in home country sufficiently prepare you for the three months abroad?

a) Practical information []

b) Information about the fk-y project []

c) Academically (information about host country, North/South issues etc) []

d) How do you rate the information week given by fk-Norway? []

2. What do you consider to be the most important information you need before you go to the host country as an exchange student?

Please write 100 – 150 words on this issue.

PHASE TWO

During the stay at Volda University College

3. How successful do you consider your participation in the lectures at VUC? []

4. What do you consider to be the most important you learned from the teaching at VUC?
Please write 100 – 150 words on this issue.

5. According to your opinion, which were the three best excursions during your stay? Please name them and rate them on the scale 1 – 10.

- a) []
b) []
c) []

6. Explain more in detail why excursions are important in the teaching of a certain topic.
Please write 100 – 150 words on this issue.

7. How satisfied were you with the preparations for the school visits? []

8. Explain about the school visits and the observations you participated in, including what you learned from them. Please write 100 – 150 words on this issue.

9. According to your impression, how did pupils / students in Norway like your presentation about your country? []

10. What did you learn about Norway from working on the written assignments given during your stay abroad? Please write 100 – 150 words on this issue.

11. How do you rate the information week given by fk-Norway? []

12. Please explain briefly what you have experienced and learnt from using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at VUC.

13. In what ways did you have contact with friends and family at home and with home coordinator during your stay in Norway?

14. How did you succeed in getting Norwegian friends? []

15. Please write 100 – 150 words on making Norwegian friends and include what you think about your contacts with students and other persons there. If you have had little contact with Norwegian people, explain why.

16. To what extent do you consider yourself a successful ‘bridge builder’ between South and North? []
Please write 100 – 150 words on this issue.

17. How do you rate the activities during the joint programme after the Norwegian students' return to Volda (for instance planning of teaching and teaching in different Norwegian schools)? []
 Please write 100 – 150 words on this issue.

PHASE TREE

Follow-up activities (after the stay abroad)

18. Have you worked as a teacher after exchange experience? [] Yes [] No

19. If yes on 18, in which ways does your exchange experience influence your work as a teacher?
 Please write 100-150 words on this issue.

20. If no on 18, in which ways do you think your experience will influence your future work as a teacher?
 Please write 100-150 words on this issue.

21. Have you taken part in any follow up activity in addition to what has been done connected with school? ... [] Yes [] No

22. If yes on 21, please write 100-150 words on this issue (what kinds of activities, how often etc.)

23. The 'Exchange for Development Goal Statements'
 Read through the Goal Statements on page 6 and write one or a few sentences about what you have experienced related to each goal. Then rate (on a scale 1-10) to what extent you consider each goal to be realistic, relevant and to what extent you yourself have achieved each goal during your participation in this project.

Goal no	My personal experience related to this goal / objective	Realistic	Relevant	Goal achievement
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				

24. Looking back, name what you today consider to be the most important outcomes of your participation in the exchange programme. Please comment briefly.

25. Are there any negative outcomes that you would like to highlight? If so please comment briefly.

26. Would you recommend a similar project to be launched for future students?

Yes [] No [] Not sure []

Thank you for your help and cooperation!