

Higher
education
cooperation
for
sustainable
development
between

Ethiopia
and Flanders
(Belgium)

January 2024

Ethiopia is one of the key partner countries of VLIR-UOS. From 2003 to 2023 VLIR-UOS spent € 51.5 million in cooperation programmes with Ethiopia, including 5 long-term Institutional University Cooperation partnerships (IUC). The IUC's with Jimma University (JU) and Mekelle University (MU) were finalized, whereas still ongoing are the IUC's with Arba Minch University (AMU) and Bahir Dar University (BDU) and an institutional NETWORK project coordinated by Jimma University.



Higher education as a driving force for sustainable development

Through **more than 25 years of successful cooperation**, Ethiopia assured itself a special place in the VLIR-UOS portfolio as one of its main partner countries.

VLIR-UOS revised its country approach towards an 'Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development' centred approach. Moreover, VLIR-UOS wants to facilitate connections between different actors and projects present in a given country. With these objectives in mind, the Country Reference Framework (CRF) for Ethiopia supports teams of academics when identifying and formulating project proposals, by providing a context analysis focused on Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the higher education sector in Ethiopia, and by providing an overview of Belgian development actors active in Ethiopia, their ongoing projects and partners, in view of exploration of opportunities for synergy and complementarity.

The VLIR-UOS cooperation in Ethiopia fits in with the Ethiopian national strategy to give priority to strengthening of higher education and improving food security (agriculture, livestock production etc.) with attention for sustainability (water, soil, climate change impact) and (human and animal) health. All SDGs have been integrated in the priorities of Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan, which is in line with VLIR-UOS' objective of working towards Agenda 2030.

Institutional Partnerships

Results of long-term cooperation with Mekelle University and Jimma University

Between 2002 and 2013, the Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) with Mekelle University had as central objective **improving living conditions of the mainly farmers population** through intelligent use of land and water resources. As stated by the final evaluation, the programme has enabled communities to better use and manage ground and surface water resources and micro dams, to better manage land, to apply conservation agriculture, to cultivate apples and to catch fish and commercialize it, thus providing opportunities to improve their livelihood and to increase their income.

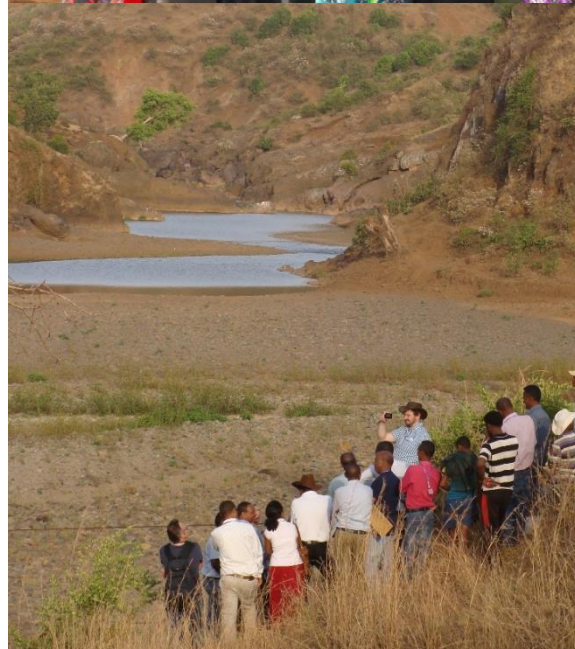
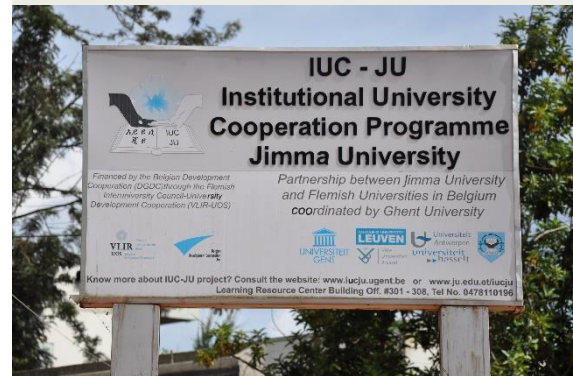
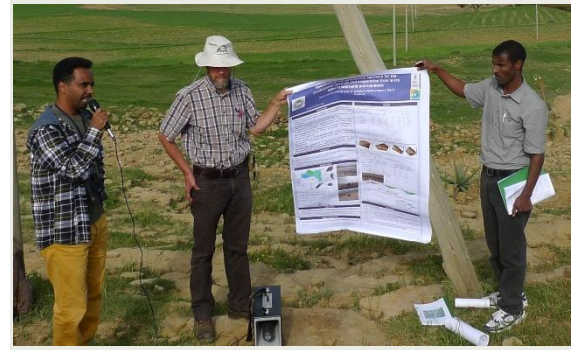
From 2007 to 2017, the IUC partnership with Jimma University focused on issues related to the **livelihood of local rural and urban communities**, for example through projects on child health and nutrition, zoonotic and animal diseases, environmental health and ecology, infectious diseases and soil fertility. Jimma University is a national pioneer in terms of **Community Based Education** benefits and it plays an important role in the Southern part of Ethiopia. Matters of institutional importance such as ICT & library, research coordination and statistical modelling were supported as well.

IUC with Arba Minch University

The first phase of the IUC with Arba Minch University (AMU) targeted capacity development in teaching and research to empower AMU and its graduates to design sustainable solutions answering the region's considerable challenges. For example, the partnership contributes to an improvement of agricultural productivity, socio-economic and health status and reversing land degradation which is key to sustaining local livelihoods. The second phase of the IUC started in September 2022 builds on the objectives of the first phase while adding two crucial components targeting the dissemination of the research findings and focusing much more on outreach, and introducing gender mainstreaming and the LNOB principle at transversal level.

IUC with Bahir Dar University

The IUC with Bahir Dar University (BDU), titled 'Wisdom at the source of the Blue Nile: Bahir Dar University spearheads Climate Resilient Green Economy research in northwest Ethiopia', aims to contribute to the **Climate Resilient Green Economy** strategy in northwest Ethiopia through research geared towards the solution of bottlenecks related to the environment, water, food security, health and economical and social development. After a transition stage due to the national internal conflict situation, a Phase 2 started in September 2023.





Network IQ GEAR – partners join forces

The Network University Cooperation project in Ethiopia is an institutional network, coordinated by Jimma University. Whereas Phase 1 focused on university collaboration with a focus on community health, Phase 2 aims to establish an international interuniversity collaboration between Flemish and selected Ethiopian universities that transforms both post graduate education and research quality and that becomes a driver of sustainable and equitable development in Ethiopia. The NETWORK 'Interuniversity collaboration for Quality Graduate Education And Research in Ethiopia (IQ-GEAR)' involves locally Addis Ababa University, Ambo University, Hawassa University and Jimma University



Focus on sustainable development priorities

TEAM projects and Short Initiatives (SI) projects aim to strengthen the research and education capacity, exploring and building capacity given creating sustainable solutions to local and global development challenges.

Food security and environment

Several projects deal with the link between food security and the sustainable management of natural resources (soil, water,...). Several projects contribute to an improvement of agricultural productivity, socio-economic and health status and reversing land degradation which is key to sustaining local livelihoods in different regions of the country.



Gender

The objective of a finalising VLIR-UOS JOINT project is to develop a **gender sensitive academic culture** in Ethiopia by increasing the number and improving the skills of young (female) researchers. This is done by organizing **Joint Doctoral Summer Schools**, aimed at both novice male and female promising researchers, belonging to the academic staff, with a consortium of three Ethiopian universities, a Belgian university and a South African university.



Scholarships

Scholarships are powerful tools. It allows Ethiopian students to broaden their horizon, learn to look at problems from the perspective of multiple disciplines and to grow into a skilful researcher. Also Flemish students spend time in an Ethiopian institution and create close ties.

About the Country Reference Frameworks

VLIR-UOS **Country Reference Frameworks** (CRF) support teams of academics when identifying and formulating project proposals, by providing a context analysis focused on Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and the higher education sector in a given country, and by providing an overview of Belgian development actors, their ongoing projects and partners in that country in view of exploration of opportunities for synergy and complementarity within the Joint Strategic Framework of Belgian Non-Governmental Actors active in Ethiopia. On the other hand Belgian HE and Science actors joined in a thematic Joint Strategic Framework (JSF) on HES4SD.

The country reference frameworks consist of three components: (i) overview of VLIR-UOS projects in the country; (ii) context analysis focused on the Agenda 2030 framework and the higher education sector; (iii) overview of Belgian development actors (ANGCs involved in thematic or geographic JSFs & Enabel), their local partners and their regional/thematic focus.

More information:

vliruos.be/ethiopia



Total budget Ethiopia 2003-2023 (in €)

Projects	€ 31.378.381
Individual scholars	€ 20.121.424
Total	€ 51.499.805

Scholars from Ethiopia in the context of VLIR-UOS cooperation (2003-20)

PhD*	79 (approx. 73 in projects)
Short Term*	508
Study/Master*	586 (=539 (individual)+ 47 in projects)
Total	1173

*A lot of scholarships are embedded in a project context, numbers to be attributed as direct support are approximative

In addition to Ethiopian scholars coming to Belgium, 294 Belgian scholars were granted a travel grant (short term) to Ethiopia and another 8 were granted a sandwich Ph.D. scholarship. More information on the scholarships of VLIR-UOS: www.vliruos.be/scholarships.

About VLIR-UOS

VLIR-UOS supports partnerships between universities and university of applied sciences and arts in Flanders (Belgium) and partner countries looking for innovative responses to global and local sustainable development challenges.

VLIR-UOS is part of the Flemish Interuniversity Council and receives funding from the Belgian Development Cooperation. www.vliruos.be

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