

University cooperation for development between Kenya and Flanders (Belgium)

October 2020



Kenya is an important partner country of VLIR-UOS. From 2003 to 2019 VLIR-UOS spent around € 29,5 million in cooperation with Kenya, including a long-term Institutional University Co-operation (IUC) Programme with the University of Nairobi and Moi University.

The IUC programme with Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology which started in 2017 is the cornerstone of the Kenya country programme.

Higher education as a driving force for sustainable development

VLIR-UOS has a **longstanding history of cooperation** with higher education institutions in Kenya, especially in the fields of marine sciences, reproductive health and computer sciences.

The Kenya **Country Strategy** fits with the role put forward for universities in the Kenya Vision 2030 by developing the necessary human resource base for achieving its goals. This is translated in the country strategy by means of 3 central themes: '**health**', '**natural resource management and development**' and '**food security**'. The theme of '**ICT development and statistics**' has been put forward as a crosscutting theme that is relevant for all VLIR-UOS activities.

VLIR-UOS supports interventions that **strengthen higher education institutions** in their role as actor of change by improving education, research and extension of new knowledge, applications and services in various domains. This is in line with the **Joint Strategic Framework for Kenya**, which was developed in 2016 by the Belgian Non-Governmental Actors active in Kenya. More synergy and complementarity with other Belgian actors in Kenya will be sought for.

Institutional Capacity Building

Results of long-term cooperation with the University of Nairobi

The institutional university cooperation (IUC) programme cooperation with the University of Nairobi (UoN) started in 1998. The programme worked in the field of marine sciences, reproductive health and computer sciences. As stated by the final evaluation in 2009, the programme contributed to **capacity building and institutional development** of UoN through academic human resource development, training of support staff, improvement of the research and teaching infrastructure, introduction of distance learning courses, stimulation of joint research and installation of an ICT network infrastructure with the necessary human resources to run and maintain it.

IUC with Moi University

The IUC programme with Moi University (MU-K) started in 2007 and is now finalised. The mid and end term reviews (2018-2019) already identified the major role of the IUC programme in **enhancing the teaching and research capacity** of MU-K. Existing programmes were revised and new ones developed and a better learning environment was created. The research activities have considerably contributed to the knowledge base of the institution and it is likely to inform national policy in a number of areas.

IUC with Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

In 2016, a new IUC programme was elaborated with Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). This programme aims at establishing an interdepartmental and interdisciplinary Legume **Centre of Excellence** for Food and Nutrition Security. The programme will focus on different stages along the **value chain** of legumes, from **agricultural production** over postharvest **storage** and **food processing** to human **consumption** and its impact on **human health**. This will strengthen the role of JKUAT in agricultural development and strengthen its linkage with **target stakeholders** from government, community and industry.



Gender as a transversal theme

Gender mainstreaming has been a particular success of the IUC Programme with MU-K. They established an institutional policy on gender and integrated gender modules into programmes across the university. They worked on increasing women's participation and leadership in university management structures. As a result, departments had new female members hired and the number of female heads of departments increased.

VLIR-UOS partnerships

The IUC programme with JKUAT is based on a partnership between the local university and two Flemish universities. The goal of these partnerships is capacity building based on long term investments in human capital and building up networks.



Focus on country-strategic themes

TEAM and South Initiative (SI) projects are mutually reinforcing projects that aim to strengthen the research and education capacity and to bring into service this capacity to find sustainable solutions to local and global development challenges.

Natural resource management & development

A recent SI project worked on improving the quality of training programmes at Kenyatta University related to natural resource management. Students were enabled to have professional competences through adoption of **improved soil fertility management, water conservation** and better **marketing practices**. To strengthen the necessary analytical and practical skills of students, **hands-on-training** and **field exposure** were introduced to the training programmes. The project also worked on improving the link between research and training, by integrating research methods and research results in course contents and learning materials.



Food security

In order to reduce the level of protein-energy **malnutrition** in Kenya, a TEAM project with Jomo Kenyatta University worked on improving the utilization and storage of **hard-to-cook beans**. They investigated the storage stability of beans and developed bean derived food products (e.g. a cake which contains 50% cooked beans). The project organised annual exhibitions to present these products and the research results. In this way, researchers were brought into contact with the local communities and development partners as to promote the uptake by these stakeholders.

Agents of change



Three former VLIR-UOS scholars from Kenya organised a role modelling event on bee keeping and honey for 34 women, after following a short training at a Flemish university on this topic. They have become agents of change by implementing the newly acquired knowledge and skills in the professional context of their country of origin.

Health

An ongoing TEAM project of VLIR-UOS wants to support **policy** and **management** of dominant **public health challenges** in Kenya (HIV, malaria, cancer) by increasing the teaching and research capacity & quality in **biostatistics**. The central approach is scientific **innovation, collaboration** and **hands-on application** of statistical methodology through real-life datasets. The project will create a **network** between 9 Kenyan and 3 Flemish universities and 1 Kenyan research institute.

Scholarships

Scholarships are powerful tools. It allows Kenyan 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 a Kenya institution and create close ties.

Main elements of the country strategy for Kenya

Health: reproductive health (HIV, HPV, ...), public health, phytomedicine, disease surveillance, etc.

Natural resource management and development: water resources, biodiversity, textile, oil and gas exploitation, etc.

Food security: food production (agriculture, aquaculture, animal husbandry), fisheries, food processing and marketing, food safety, etc.

Crosscutting support theme:

ICT development and statistics: ICT in education, ICT in lab practice, virtual networks, ICT infrastructure, data analysis, biostatistics, etc.

About the country strategy

During the reform of non-governmental development cooperation in 2016, VLIR-UOS updated its list of 20 partner countries, hereby reconfirming Kenya as a partner country. For each partner country VLIR-UOS elaborated a country strategy, to serve as a road map for cooperation going forward.

A country strategy reflects the opportunities for university cooperation for development between the country in question and Belgium/Flanders. A country strategy serves as a reference framework for programming, leading to strategy based calls for proposals.

More information:

vliruos.be/kenya

Total budget Kenya 2003-2020 (in €)	
Projects	€ 17 451 563
Individual scholars	€ 12 082 542
Total	€ 29.534.105

Scholars from Kenya in the context of VLIR-UOS cooperation (2003-2019)	
PhD*	19
Short Term*	183
Study/Master*	243
Total	445

* Only scholarships outside projects and programmes are shown; a lot of scholarships are included in projects or programmes.

In addition to Kenyan scholars coming to Belgium, 254 Belgian scholars were granted a travel grant (short term) to Kenya 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 colleges in Flanders (Belgium) and the South looking for innovative responses to global and local challenges.

VLIR-UOS funds cooperation projects between professors, researchers and teachers. VLIR-UOS also awards scholarships to students and professionals in Flanders and the South. Lastly, VLIR-UOS helps to strengthen higher education in the South and the globalisation of higher education in Flanders.

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

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