

University cooperation for development between Suriname and Flanders (Belgium)

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Suriname is an important partner country of VLIR-UOS. From 2003 to 2020 VLIR-UOS spent almost € 9 million in cooperation programmes with Suriname, including 1 ongoing long-term Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) programme with Anton de Kom Universiteit. Currently the Country Programme with Suriname is outphasing and will end in 2021.

Higher education as a driving force for sustainable development

There is a **longstanding history of cooperation** between Suriname and Flemish higher education institutions. The shared language and the fact that education system in Suriname is based on the European system, as one of the few countries in the region, has created strong ties between institutions.

The overall objective of the VLIR-UOS Country Strategy for Suriname is to contribute to the **sustainable development** of the country, with following main themes: **public health, social development**, sustainable management of **natural resources** and **education**. Good governance, institutional management, internationalization and supporting the threefold task of higher education institutions were identified as **transversal themes**.

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.

Institutional Capacity Building

The **Anton De Kom Universiteit** (Adekus) is located in Paramaribo and is the only university in the country. Adekus is convinced that the institutional university cooperation (IUC) programme can contribute significantly to its **institutional development** in the evolution from a bachelor to a master university, the strengthening of its management and research structures, and the confirmation of its role as a **driving force** in the Surinamese society. The general theme of **sustainable development** was chosen as crucial for the university and its environment.

Two projects had been designed with a focus on **institutional strengthening** of educational quality, research capacities and the professionalization of the internal organization. Three projects are faculty-wide projects and aim at upgrading the university from an essentially bachelor to master orientated research and education university. The faculty wide projects supported **3 Master programmes**, being a Master in Education and Research in Sustainable Development, a Master in Sustainable Research in Natural Resources and a Master in Physiotherapy.

Short term projects

South Initiative 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. Two SI projects with the **Institute for the Education of Teachers** have worked on **speech language therapy** (SLT), ranging from **curriculum development** to **health care provision**. A sensitization campaign in 8 regions to inform Suriname society about SLT and specific health care provision was set up.

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

Contact:  wannes.verbeeck@vliruos.be  + 32 2 550 19 68



VLIR-UOS partnerships

The IUC is based on a partnership between a Suriname university and three Flemish universities. The goal of these partnerships is **capacity building** based on long term investments in human capital and **building up networks**.

