

SOUTH AFRICA – SWEDEN UNIVERSITY FORUM

Planning meeting, Pretoria – October 2-3 2017

Position paper for the first research seminar in Pretoria, XXX 2018

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| *Topic/Challenge Headline*  **Transforming Higher Education Curricula: the nexus between academia and society** |
| *Description of challenge*  A key challenge to education within the frame of internationalisation begins with the fact that while our globalised world economy requires international exchange and collaboration, the uneven and unequal forms of that global economy also mitigate against free movement and a true cosmopolitanism.  There are other mitigating factors emerging from the two national contexts of this project: South Africa’s apartheid and colonial history and its current problems with poverty and unequal distribution of wealth means that education has been the reserve of the privileged few. Sweden, too, is facing new challenges regarding fair and equal access to education as new stratification patterns, both ethnic and socio-economic, are leading to worrying trends in the higher education sector. Furthermore, increasing securitisation globally is complicating international mobilisation and of academics and researchers.  It is in this context that we prompt questions about the role of curriculum in transforming education towards both internationalisation and indigenisation. We see these processes, outwards and inwards, as complementary in transforming curricula across the globe. For these reasons, we see local movements and concerns, such as the #feesmustfall and decolonise-the-curricula movements, as highly relevant in an international frame. If we can connect student experiences with unfeasibly high fees from Germany to Brazil, from South Africa to Sweden, then we may find international answers to very local challenges. |
| *Key research questions*   * How do we reconcile processes of internationalisation, Africanisation and Decolonisation? * What would it mean to transform the curriculum, from both indigenous and international angles, across all disciplines? * How do we initiate the social transformation of local communities through Higher Education curriculum? * What kinds of ways can we transform the curriculum to counter the dominance of the English language as the medium of research and education? * How does the curriculum foster the complex interrelationships between government, industry and higher educations? * How do we include the historical perspective of understanding how curricula, world wide, have been developed? * How can sustainable capacity development be initiated and consolidated in a south-north partnership? * How can we harness current technology in this work of transformation? |
| ***Research areas/keywords***  Higher Education; Internationalisation; Curriculum; Transformation; Social cohesion; Partnerships |
| *Researchers in Academic Advisory Committee (AAC) (including Chair) (2 SE+ 2 SA)*  *1. Ashleigh Harris (Uppsala University) /*  *2. Per Assmo (University West)*  *3. Lavern Samuels (Durban University of Technology)*  *4. Tobias Hübinette (Karlstad Univeristy)*  *5. Lynda Gichanda Spencer (Rhodes University)*  *Dates for next meeting AAC:* |

**DAY 2**

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| *Description of possible surrounding activities across South Africa (for instance, innovation & industry seminar, outreach activities, guest lectures, capacity development of young researchers, academic workshops etc.)*  Suggested surrounding activities for ‘Transforming Higher Education Curricula: the nexus between academia and society’   1. Best practices in inter-disciplinary research and research infrastructure. 2. Small presentations on all campuses, in which other universities both within SA and Sweden present examples of their most successful and innovative interdisciplinary research as well as the infrastrutures supporting that research (interdisciplinary insistutes, for example, or graduate schools where interdisciplinary research is encouraged). 3. Aim Day on Transformation of the Curriculum: the aim day would bring together government, universities, business and industry and community based interests and organisations to discuss the importance and future of the curriculum. 4. Workshop on the intersection between libraries and the transformation of the curriculum. Themes: Sustainable archives; the politics of language in the curriculum and the library (Contact people: Prof Sibusiso Moyo (DUT); Nordic Africa Institute and Uppsala University Library; Prof Daisy Selematsela (UNISA).   Suggested surrounding activities for the entire project:   1. Meeting and discussion of the challenges and sharing of strategies in creating an inclusive professoriate. 2. Best practices in community outreach: excursions to share information on community outreach 3. Plenary meeting in which all 6 research strands are considered in relation to ‘Quality of Life’. 4. A social event sharing South African and Swedish cultures (food, music, arts, literature, or even games). |
| *Please describe any ideas for how the interactive platform can be utilized in the surrounding activities:*   1. Match up platform for doctoral students and supervisors: presentations of research proposals can be shared online in advance of a meeting at the Research and Innovation Week to match up potential doctoral candidates and supervisors from different universities in and between both countries. Creating supervision and co-supervision collaborations is a good way of sustaining these research links beyond the funded three-year period. The video presentations would also be part of a larger database of research within the project. 2. The platform could be used as a feedback mechanism for students, doctoral candidates, and researchers. Emerging researchers could receive feedback on everything from their teaching or presentational style to the content of their research (WIP seminars online), and established researchers could sound out new ideas and receive feedback from a larger network of experts across both countries. This feedback platform could also help develop supervision capacity, since new supervisors could get help and feedback on supervision questions. 3. More obviously, the platform could operate as a space for a wide distribution of lectures and seminars by experts in the field. We noted concerns about intellectual property in this respect. |