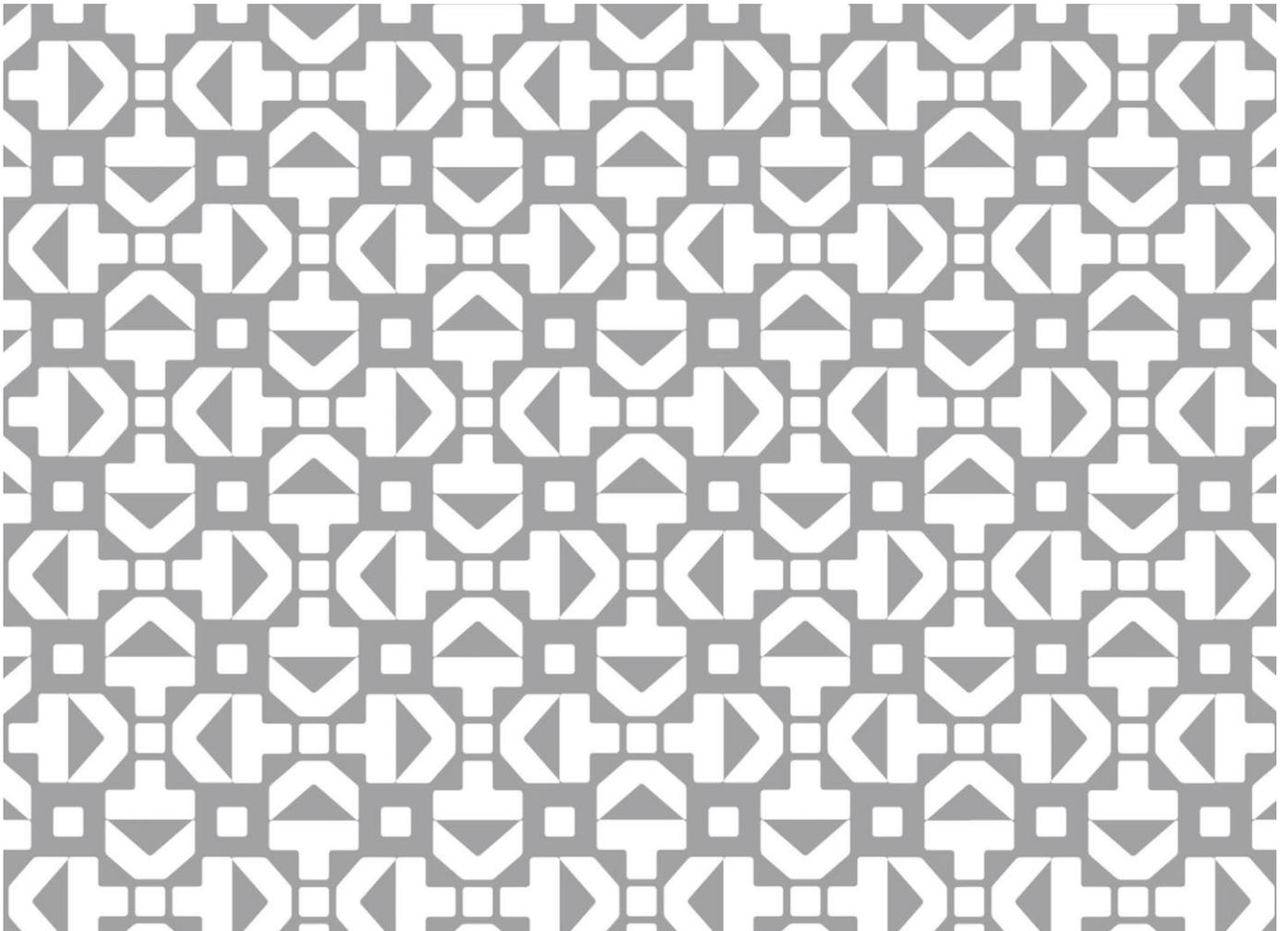


NORPART: The Norwegian Partnership Programme for Global Academic Cooperation

Annual report 2020



Executive summary

Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills (HK-dir) is pleased to present the annual report of the NORPART programme for 2020.

The former Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education, Diku, was merged into HK-dir from 01.07.2021. Here we still refer to Diku, as the project reports were written before the merge.

The report is based on information provided by the 46 ongoing NORPART projects through their annual progress reports for the year 2020 to Diku. By the end of 2020, 21 projects were in the fourth project year, and 25 projects were in the second project year. The reports for 2020 showed that most projects were on track and had established a well-functioning collaboration between partners; however, all projects had been severely impacted by the onset of COVID-19.

The introduction of travel restrictions in 2020 meant that student and staff mobilities were significantly reduced and many educational activities were postponed, resulting in an increased administrative burden. Consequently, many projects applied for a no cost extension to defer certain educational activities until 2021. Despite these significant setbacks, the pandemic has served as a catalyst for digitisation with several projects innovating and developing online activities in order to sustain collaboration. Several projects faced challenges with online education activities due to the poor IT enabling environments of partner institutions.

Diku undertook a significant review of NORPART in 2020 to better understand the operation and impact of the programme. An external evaluation completed by Ideas2evidence in December 2020 considered the design, administration, and results of the NORPART programme. A student survey was also commissioned as part of the evaluation which provided valuable insights into the student experience. Based on the results of the survey, a clear majority of students from both Norway (98.2%) and the Global South (96.1%) were satisfied or highly satisfied with their mobility experience.

In addition, a call for full degree master's scholarships was launched in March 2020. The call offered 53 scholarships for students from our partner institutions to study in Norway. The call was made available to existing NORPART project partners.

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Introduction

Background

The Norwegian Partnership Programme for Global Academic Cooperation, NORPART, was developed to meet new priorities and opportunities in higher education cooperation with countries in the Global South. Global challenges necessitate global responsibility and cooperation, joint development of new knowledge and up-to-date education, and mutual exchange of ideas and promising practices.

NORPART is funded through the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is administered by *Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills* (HK-dir). The programme addresses both higher education policy and development policy goals. NORPART responds to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4, Quality education, goal 17, Partnership for the goals, and goal 5, Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Other goals are also addressed through the thematic focus of the projects.

The programme is intended to be a flexible tool for academic partnerships and student mobility. NORPART aims to create synergies with other programmes that support cooperation within higher education and research between Norway and developing countries, be these national initiatives such as NORHED or international ones such as Erasmus+ Capacity Building in the field of Higher Education (CBHE).

The first call for applications was issued in in 2016 and the second in 2018. The first call received 114 applications from which 21 projects were selected (the NORPART 2017-21 project portfolio). The second call received 86 applications from which 25 projects were selected for funding (the NORPART 2019-23 project portfolio). The combined project portfolio of 46 projects covers 24 partner countries and extends across all academic disciplines. A total of 14 Norwegian higher education institutions are represented as coordinators, with NTNU, University of Oslo, University of Bergen and University of South-Eastern Norway hosting more than half of the projects. The projects have a five-year project period and can receive a maximum allocation of 5 million NOK.

Aim and objectives

The overall aim of NORPART is to enhance the quality of higher education in Norway and developing countries through academic cooperation and mutual student mobility.

To reach this overall aim, the programme shall fulfil four objectives:

- Strengthened partnerships for education and research between developing countries and Norway.
- Increased quality and internationalisation of academic programmes at participating institutions.
- Increased mobility of students from developing countries to Norway, including mobility in connection with work placements.
- Increased mobility of students from Norway to developing countries, including mobility in connection with work placements.

The project portfolio

Partner countries and institutions

Eligible NORPART partner countries outside Norway consist of 39 different countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America (see Appendix 1).

The 46 projects currently running are represented in all three continents. There is a concentration of NORPART projects in East Africa, with Ethiopia (12), Tanzania (7), Uganda (5) being the countries with the largest number of higher education institutions involved.

In addition, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam are the countries with the most project partners in Asia (see Figure 1 and Appendix 2).

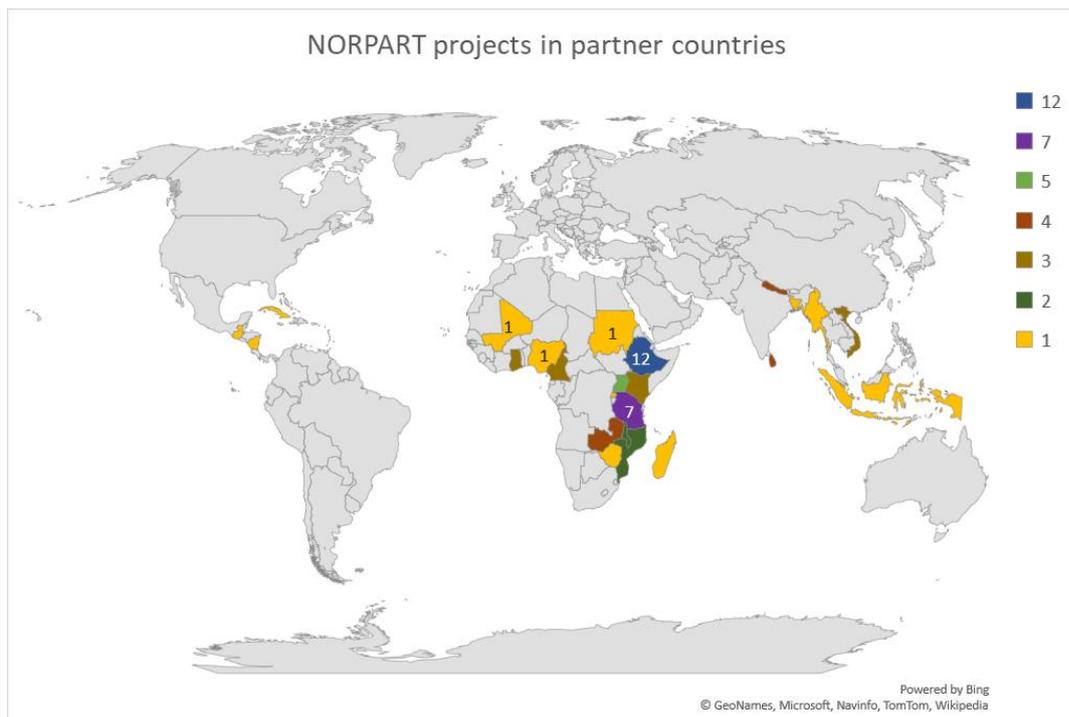


Figure 1: Shows number of NORPART projects with a higher education institution present per partner country outside Norway

The geographical concentration of projects is often related to a history of bilateral cooperation between Norway and the partner countries within capacity building programmes in higher education. Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia were countries frequently represented in programmes like NUFU (1991–2012)¹ and NOMA (2006–2014),² the Quota Scholarship Programme³ (1962–2016), as well as in NORHED (2013–).⁴ This is also the case for Nepal, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, the countries with the highest representation in Asia. Many of these countries have also been prioritized countries for Norwegian development aid for several decades, and some of them are still defined as prioritized partner countries for development support.⁵

The geographical concentration of projects in the current portfolio may also be related to the representation of large and acknowledged universities in these countries. Most frequently represented partner institutions outside of Norway in the

¹ Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU).

² Norad's Programme for Master Studies (NOMA).

³ The Quota Scholarship Programme 1962–2016.

⁴ The Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (2013–), administered by Norad.

⁵<https://www.regjeringen.no/no/tema/utenrikssaker/utviklingsamarbeid/partnerland/id2514932/>.

applications to NORPART are Makerere University (Uganda), Addis Ababa University (Ethiopia), and the University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania). However, there are many other institutions involved as well; a total of 114 institutions and organisations outside of Norway are involved in NORPART projects, as well as 38 different institutions and organisations in Norway.

Most NORPART partner countries, except for Burkina Faso, East Timor, and Haiti, have been represented in applications to the programme (36 of 39 countries; see Appendix 1). This may indicate that the *interest* for academic collaboration is not as concentrated as Figure 1 suggests.

The size and make-up of the partnerships vary from project to project. Some projects consist of two higher education institutions, while other projects involve several higher education institutions in more than one country. Some projects include other organisations and institutions in the network, in addition to higher education institutions. A broad range of network partners is involved to strengthen the collaboration, improve the quality of educational activities, and offer work placement opportunities for students. Network partners typically include research institutes, public agencies, private enterprises, hospitals, non-governmental organisations, and other associations.



Figure 2: Number of partner institutions/organisations per project

Academic disciplines

The current NORPART portfolio is diverse regarding academic disciplines. Some of the projects are multidisciplinary and could therefore be placed in more than one category. A rough breakdown of all the different NORPART projects according to academic disciplines is presented in figure 3. Social sciences comprises a third of

all the projects under the NORPART programme, while mathematics and natural sciences is the second largest discipline, with 20% of the projects. Education studies features prominently among social sciences. A significant majority of natural sciences are related to environmental sciences.

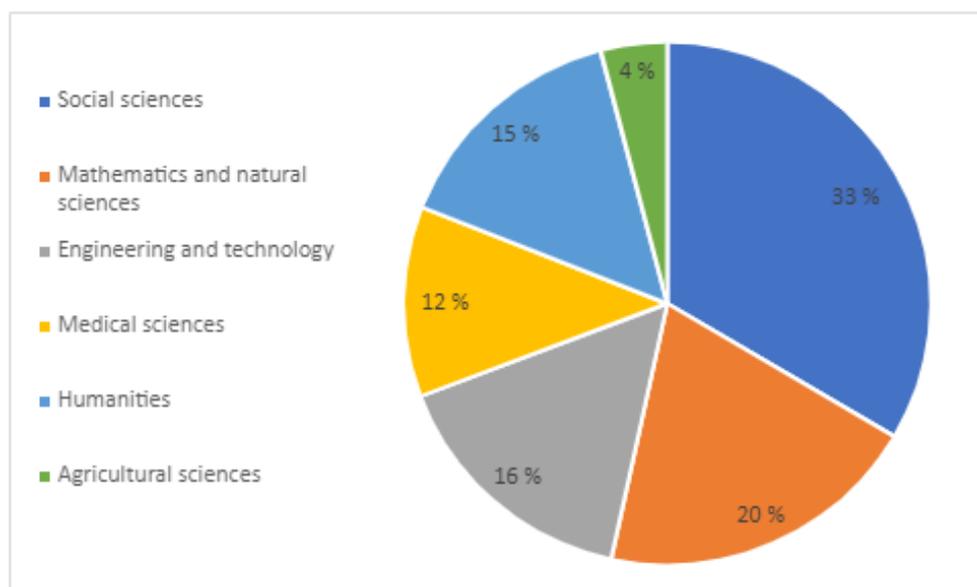


Figure 3: Academic disciplines; percentage.

Synergies with other funding programmes

Several of the NORPART partnerships are established as a continuation of or in synergy with projects funded by other programmes. Synergies with other programmes may improve the results and impact of the projects and contribute to the sustainability of institutional partnerships. They are also beneficial for the individual students involved. In the current project portfolio, there are projects that are interlinked with projects supported by NORHED, UTFORSK, Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility, the Eurasia Programme, and INTPART.

As an example, the NORPART-funded project *Education in the field of sustainable tourism and ecology in Norway and Guatemala* is closely related to a project with support from the Eurasia programme,⁶ and has also received support from Erasmus+ Global Mobility to strengthen the collaboration. The NORPART project is based on a long-term institutional and academic cooperation, and it is founded on strategies and priorities at the two partner institutions, University of South-Eastern Norway, and Universidad del Valle de Guatemala.

⁶ CPEA2015/10035 *Sustainable tourism: rural entrepreneurship and heritage. Educational cooperation between Kyrgyzstan, Georgia and Norway*

External programme evaluation

In 2020 DIKU contracted the social analysis agency Ideas2Evidence to complete an external evaluation of the NORPART programme.

The main purpose of the evaluation was to assess NORPART's programme model, administration, and achievements in relation to the overall aim and objectives of the programme. Furthermore, the review should make recommendations about further development and strengthening of the programme. This purpose relates to Diku's plan to develop a programme document as a stronger governing instrument for the programme before the next call for applications in early 2021.

In December 2020 Ideas2evidence presented a 76-page report on the NORPART programme which considered the programme's design, administration, and results to date. The full report is available here: [Strengthening partnerships with HEIs in the Global South: An evaluation of the NORPART programme 2015/16-2020.](#)

The report is based on the following dataset: a) a desk study of relevant background documents related to the programme and annual reports from the existing project portfolio up to 2019, b) interviews with stakeholders and c) three case studies. A student survey was also commissioned as part of the evaluation.

The evaluation report found that Diku, in collaboration with the MFA, the MER and Norad, has done a good job of designing a programme expected to meet multiple, partly conflicting policy aims. The report outlines a programme theory with the relationship between conditions, input, activities, output, outcome and impact of NORPART.

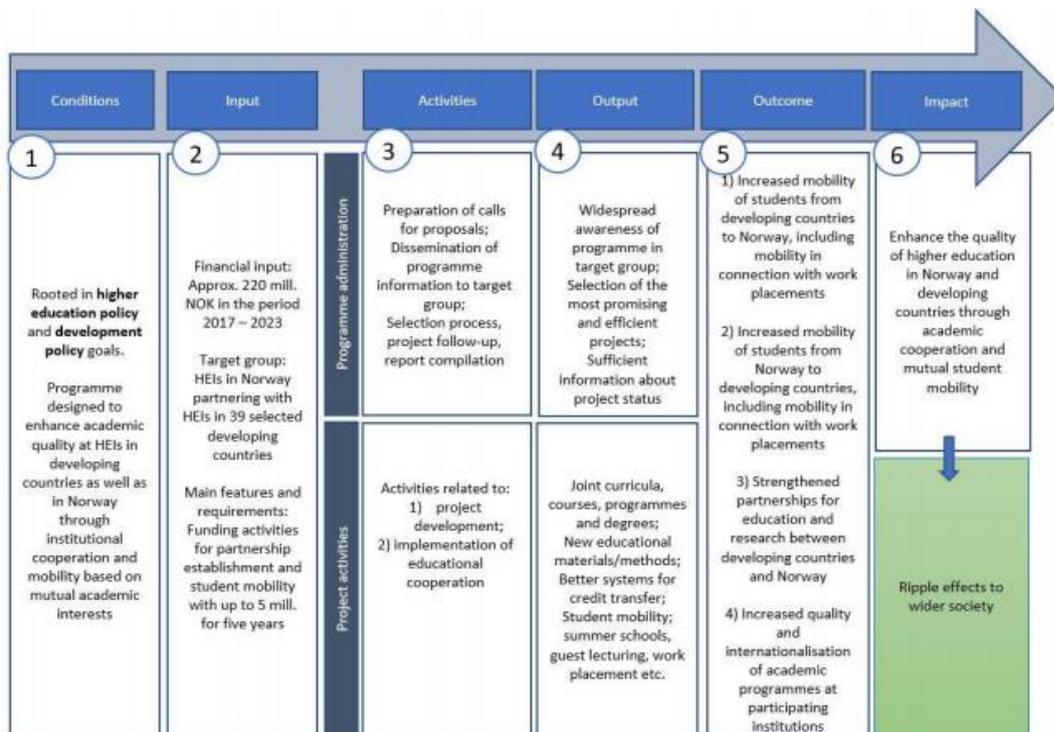


Figure 4: Programme theory of NORPART as designed by ideas2evidence.

A review of the programme design concludes that NORPART is innovative in applying a partnership model to collaboration with HEIs in the Global South. However, Ideas2Evidence recommends that the existing goals for the Programme be amended to become more measurable and achievable.

The external evaluation found that the call for applications contains sufficient and relevant information about the programme aims, its regulations and eligible activities. Most project coordinators also find the information in the calls to be sufficient and the application process to be streamlined and efficient.

Many projects that succeeded in the 2016 and 2018 selection processes were based on partnerships through other similar efforts. The reporting requirements were evaluated to be reasonable by most project coordinators and the evaluation recommended that the current system for reporting and follow-up be continued.

In addition, the report states that NORPART is making valuable contributions to the goals of strengthening partnerships and enhancing education quality, particularly in the Global South. The evaluation found that the incoming students to Norway benefit greatly from their stay and that many have shared their experiences upon return to their home institution, contributing in this manner to internationalization at home. Outgoing students from Norway are very satisfied with their stay, although many emphasize the cultural rather than the academic benefits.

The evaluation finds no systematic differences in self-reported benefits between shorter and longer stays. Many projects reported difficulties recruiting Norwegian students for study programmes in the Global South, which restricts outgoing student mobility. Partner institutions and project coordinators reported high levels of satisfaction with the current systems for project reporting and follow-up.

A student survey was commissioned as part of the evaluation which provided valuable insights into the student experience. The survey indicates a clear majority of students from both Norway (98.2%) and the Global South (96.1%) were either satisfied (35.9% from the Global South and 38.0% from Norway) or highly satisfied (60.2% for both Norway and the Global South) with their mobility experience. Language barriers, cultural barriers and differences in academic systems were common challenges identified by students, while only a few of the students experienced such problems to a large or very large degree, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 11: "During your stay, did you experience any problems with the following:" (percent, N = 231)

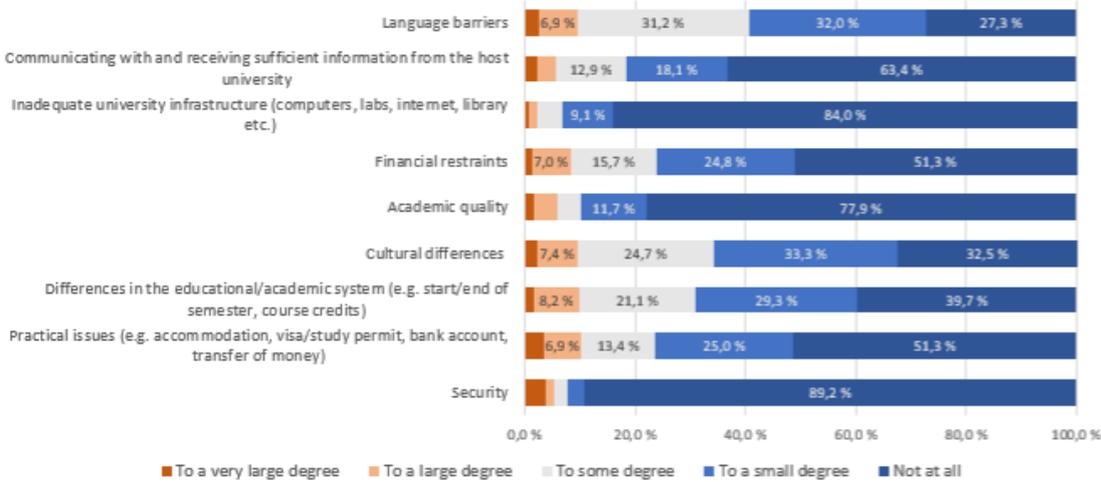


Figure 4: Survey of problems during student mobility experience

The report provides valuable insights and analysis not only for Diku and the NORPART programme, but also for the different actors in the field of international higher education collaboration and partnership programmes. The results and recommendations listed in the final part of the report are factors that needs to be balanced with the political and overall demands that make the fundament for the NORPART programme.

Programme objectives – Results in 2020

As mentioned in section 1.2, the NORPART programme has four objectives: Strengthened partnerships for education and research, increased quality and internationalisation of academic programmes, and student mobility to and from Norway. In the following, we outline how the projects have sought to meet these objectives so far, and reflect on challenges that have been identified as well as potential solutions. These observations are primarily based on the annual project reports provided by the project coordinators.

Strengthened partnerships for education and research

Strengthened partnerships for education and research is an independent objective of NORPART, but partnerships also serve as a framework for student mobility and quality enhancement in higher education. Educational cooperation facilitates knowledge sharing, professional networking and the direct improvement of academic programmes. The objective of strengthened partnerships is therefore strongly intertwined with the objective of enhanced quality in education. It is useful to consider the two goals separately; therefore, this section will mainly address partners at the institutional level, while 3.2 below will address internationalisation and student learning.

Most of the projects in NORPART are based on long standing partnerships within education and research, while a few of the partnerships have been established more recently. The partnerships are based on mutual academic interests and formalised commitment to project implementation. Among the selection criteria for the two calls for applications were the following: quality of the partnership (including complementarity), experience and expertise of the project team, level of formalized commitment, potential for long-term collaboration between the partners, and the degree to which the partnership is based on mutual academic interests and capacity within relevant academic programmes.

Several partnerships have signed bilateral Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), which strengthens the formal commitment between the partners. Another indicator of the degree of strengthened commitment and complementarity is the numbers of joint courses and programmes that have been developed during the project period. Joint courses and programmes may contribute to internationalisation for all, thereby also reaching students who for various reasons do not travel abroad.

The Project to Strengthen Health Economics Capacity is a collaboration between the University of Bergen (UiB) and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) in Tanzania. In 2020 a new master programme in Health Economics and Policy was launched at MUHAS. The new programme is the culmination of curriculum harmonisation activities taking place between the two institutions since the project launched in 2017. A total of 31 students were selected to participate in the maiden year of the programme from a pool of 40 applicants. A new collaborative course *Equity and Fairness in Health: An Applied Approach* was also launched at UiB in 2020.

The introduction of pandemic-related travel restrictions reduced student and staff mobility throughout 2020. Consequently, the joint development of academic programmes became central to continued collaboration in 2020.

Many projects have developed joint courses and degrees at the Master or Ph.D. level, and *139 courses are reported as having started by 2020*. The courses differ in length, volume, and level of formalized institutional frames: short courses, intensive courses, summer school courses, and modular courses which are integrated into a master or Ph.D. programme, as well as whole degrees.

The courses and degrees differ from 0 to 120 ECTS, although most courses award between 5 and 10 ECTS. Course development is often closely linked to plans for increasing student mobility to Norway, where students from Norway and partner countries attend the courses together.

Figure 5 shows the course development at Norwegian institutions versus institutions in the partner countries. The number of joint courses developed and offered at both institutions, in and outside of Norway, reveals that the institutions involved are committed and see the relevance of the partnership to improving education.

The majority of the courses developed within the frames of the NORPART projects is established and offered at the partner country institutions, which is also the case for most of the master's degree programmes that will be or are already developed. This indicates that the need for new courses and capacity building is larger in the partner countries.

However, the number of courses established at Norwegian institutions is also high, which shows that there are mutual benefits of the collaboration.

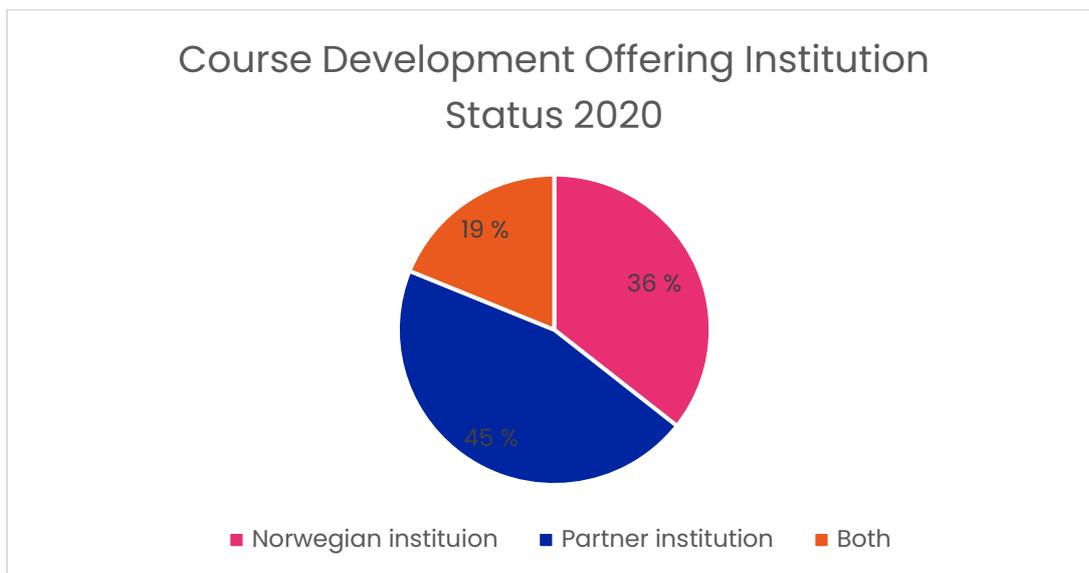


Figure 5: Courses started 2017–2020, offering institution

To facilitate collaboration and course development, NORPART supports staff exchange of both academic and administrative personnel. As Figure 6 demonstrates below, a significant portion of mobilities relate to project meetings, course development and attendance at workshops, seminars and conferences.⁷ The purpose of mobility differs between outgoing and incoming staff.

A substantially higher number of outgoing staff from Norway travel to serve as guest lecturers and to participate in summer schools due to comparatively lower levels of teaching resources at partner institutions.

Conversely, more staff from partner institutions participate in training related mobility to Norway due to a greater need for capacity building at partner institutions. There is slightly more staff mobility from Norway than from partner institutions.

⁷ Please note that staff visits may have multiple purposes, but only one can be reported in Diku’s online report.

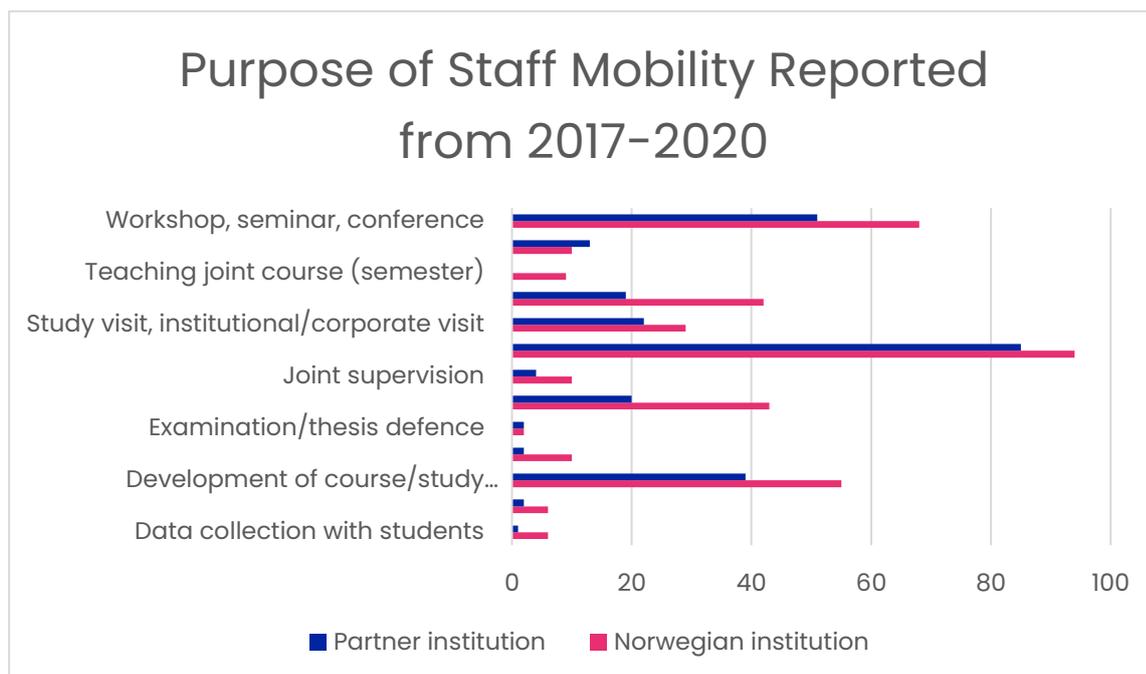


Figure 6: Purpose of staff mobility stays (reported for the period 2017-2020)

Sustainable institutional partnerships require commitment from the leadership at the faculty or institutional level, both in Norway and in the partner country. For a few of the NORPART projects this backing has been limited, which has caused challenges with implementation. Partnerships that depend solely on individual faculty members without any proper institutional commitment are less resilient, whereas robust institutional support increases the chances of achieving good results. For all partnership programmes, Diku seeks to support projects, which can demonstrate both commitment and sound management.

Increased quality and internationalisation of academic programmes

One way to achieve increased quality in education and in the academic programmes is to strive for research-based, student-active, and internationally oriented education (cf. Meld. St. 16). For the NORPART programme, this may include jointly reviewed curricula, development of new educational tools and methodologies, and the involvement of students in international research collaborations.

Joint development and revision of courses and programmes, together with other forms of educational cooperation, can scale the impact of NORPART by enabling

the broader student community to benefit from activities, rather than just mobile students. Increased quality and internationalisation of academic programmes introduce incoming and outgoing students to alternate perspectives and build capacity at all partner institutions.

Connection between education and research

As mentioned above, one way to achieve increased quality in education and in the academic programmes is to strive for research-based education. Many of the NORPART projects develop new courses around research collaboration and allow students to participate in research projects. Many projects also use funding to enable joint supervision of research projects for master and Ph.D. students. These activities are good examples of how projects achieve internationalisation at the home institution. Guest lectures delivered by Norwegian academics at partner institutions also contribute to internationalisation and quality enhancement in the Global South.

Many projects report that master and Ph.D. students are involved in activities related to research projects and disseminations, such as conferences, seminars, and workshops, as part of the NORPART project. Research collaborations in NORPART projects have so far resulted in several journal articles, papers, and other research publications, as well as development of teaching curricula.

Education / work

Several projects cooperate with industry, government, civil society groups and other organisations. Many projects also facilitate work placements while students are participating in mobility programmes, at for instance schools or hospitals as part of their student mobility stays in a partner country. Some students also do field work in the partner country as part of their master or Ph.D. theses.

Collaboration between education and work can take various forms. The long-term aim of the project *Intercultural historical studies*,⁸ a partnership project between the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and University of Cape Coast and two other universities in Ghana, is to improve the employability of students of historical studies. Therefore, internships, fieldwork, and joint workshops are among the project's main activities. Under the support of the NORPART project, a master's programme has been established at the University of Education in Winneba, and master students have been sent on exchange studies to NTNU, which included work placement at Trondheim Science Museum. For incoming

⁸ NORPART 2016/10009 *Intercultural historical studies*.

master students on exchange studies from Ghana, NTNU has also established a master's course in master thesis project design.

Higher Education and Research Collaboration on Nanomaterials for Clean Energy Technologies (HRNCET) is a collaboration in renewable energy technologies between the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL) and the University of Jaffna (UoJ) in Sri Lanka. Both HVL and UoJ have identified renewable energy technologies as a priority research area for their respective institutions. Since the project's inception, a total of 10 academic articles have been published in reputable international journals. Prior to the onset of COVID-19, the project hosted a clean energy seminar together with representatives from the Norwegian Embassy in Colombo and inaugurated Sri Lanka's first floating solar PV plant with support from the Norwegian private company Current Solar. The HVL/UoJ Clean Energy Research Lab (CERL), built with the support of the Norwegian Embassy, is frequently used to train students and staff from other universities in Sri Lanka. Two Sri Lankan students studying at HVL were unable to attend scheduled field studies due to the pandemic, but fortunately were able to collect research data through digital means.

Student mobility

All NORPART projects support student mobility stays of longer or shorter durations, both to and from Norway. Scholarships for students from partner countries to study at higher education institutions in Norway constitute core elements of each NORPART funded project, and consequently a large share of scholarships is awarded to incoming students to Norway. The purpose of the stays varies, and includes semester mobility, supervision, fieldwork, summer schools, research activities, and work placements (see figure 10). Both incoming and outgoing students will in many cases attend courses on topics not given at their home institutions. In addition to the academic output, the mobile students gain international understanding, intercultural competences, and access to international networks. When returning, the students bring new experiences and international perspectives that may contribute to internationalisation at their

home institution, thereby benefiting students who are unable to participate in an international mobility programme.

Mobility in numbers

A total of 809 students have been on an exchange stay in Norway or in a partner country with support from NORPART by 2020. Of these, 517 have been incoming students to Norway, and 292 have travelled from Norway to a partner country. The figure below demonstrates that incoming students typically stay for more than 3 months, whereas outgoing students typically stay for less than 3 months. Some projects with multiple partners also support exchange stays between partner countries (South-South mobility), which are typically shorter stays for summer schools or short courses and seminars.

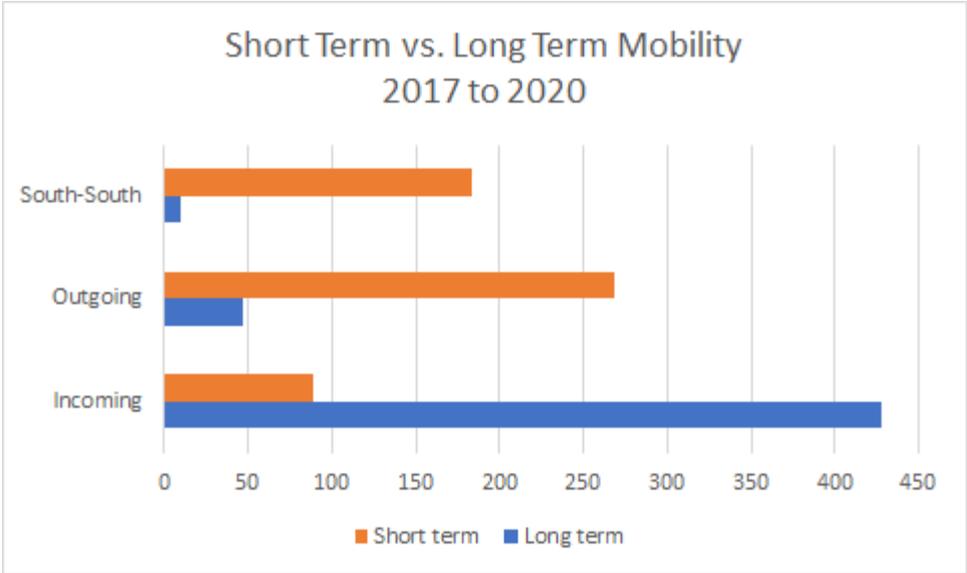


Figure 7: Short Term vs. Long Term Mobility 2017 to 2020

As Figure 8 demonstrates, student mobility has been increasing steadily year on year; however, the emergence of COVID-19 in 2020 has significantly restricted travel movements resulting in the lowest student mobility numbers since 2017. All forms of mobility were negatively impacted, although South-South collaboration was not as severely impacted as incoming and outgoing mobility. Difficulties with recruitment, underbudgeting, political turmoil, and other unforeseen obstacles have required some projects to reduce mobility numbers below target.

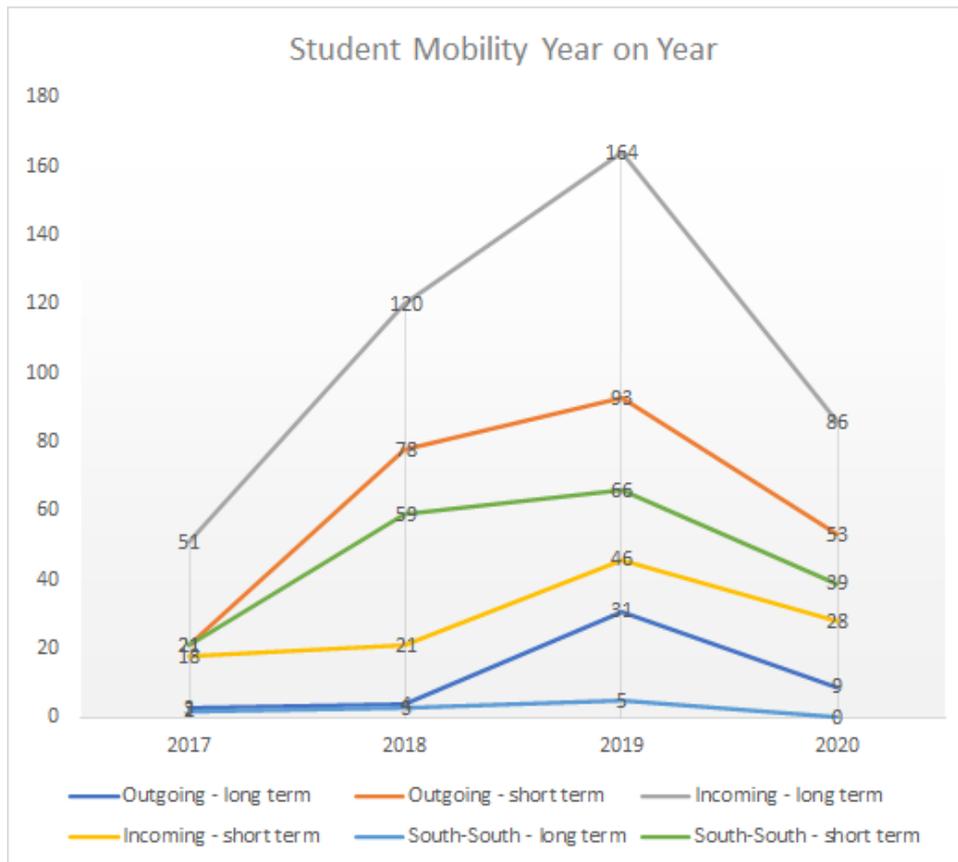


Figure 8: Student mobility per year. Long term= 3 months or more, short term= Less than 3 months duration.

Figure 9 below shows the number of students coming to Norway from the different partner countries outside Norway, the majority being from Zambia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Ghana, Ethiopia, and Vietnam. Students from Zambia come to Norway through three projects related to teacher education, health, and agriculture. The students from Sri Lanka come to Norway through three projects related to nanotechnology, human rights studies, and aquaculture. All the students from Bangladesh are related to only one NORPART-funded project within policy and governance studies, and this project has been very successful in terms of recruitment and implementation of student mobility to Norway.

As Tanzania and Ethiopia are the two countries with the most NORPART projects (cf. figure 1), one could expect that most incoming students originated from these partner countries. Per 2020 this is, however, not the case, which can be explained by the fact that most of these projects belong to the 2019–23 portfolio, and many have planned to start student mobility activities in 2020. The political situation in Ethiopia has also been an obstacle for student mobility for a few of the projects in the 2016 portfolio.

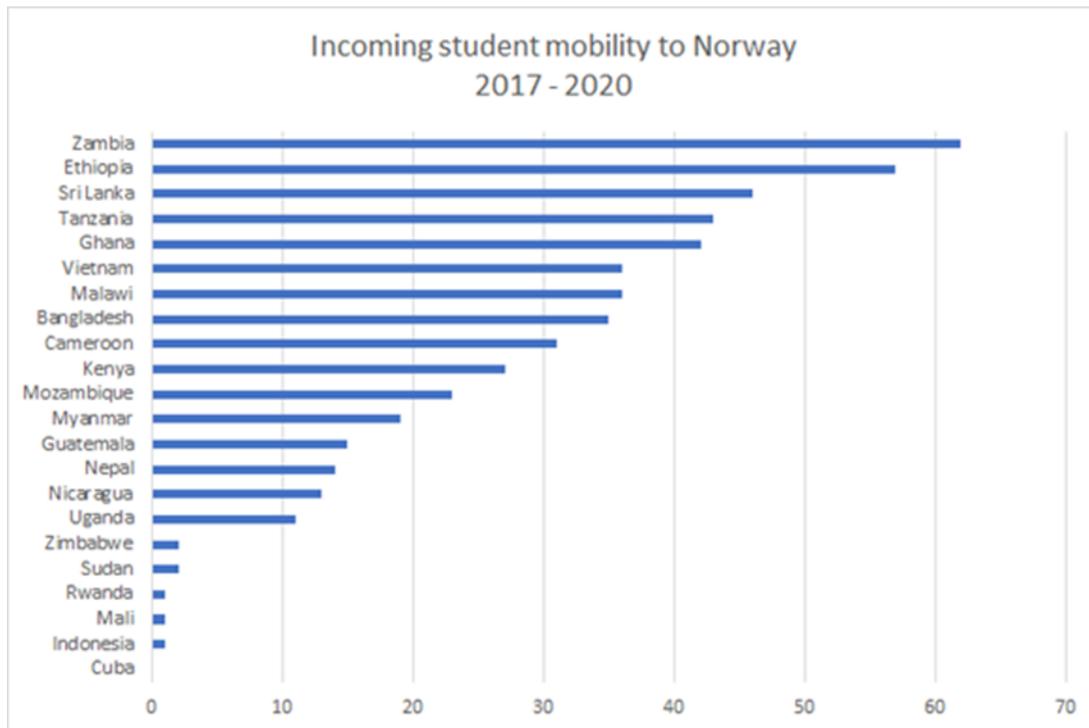


Figure 9: Incoming students to Norway by sending country for the period 2017- 2020.

Most students travelling from Norway stay in Ghana, Malawi, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Guatemala (see Figure 10). As the figures demonstrate below, most outgoing students from Norway stay for a short period of time, on average approximately one month per exchange.

NORPART greatly emphasizes the support for long term exchanges for incoming students to Norway and this is reflected in the NORPART programme design and calls. For outgoing students, the emphasis on long term stays has not been as strong in the calls for applications in NORPART. The modest number of long-term exchanges for outgoing students could also be related to availability of courses for exchange students, difficulties in establishment of credit transfer systems and differences in academic calendars. Outgoing students mainly travel to attend joint courses and for data collection (ref Figure 10). Only a few students stay for a whole semester. NORPART project coordinators and the recent evaluation completed by Ideas2evidence reported difficulties in recruiting Norwegian students to travel to their partner institutions outside Norway. Sometimes this is explained by students' reluctance to travel to the Global South or practical barriers to travel. Other times it is due to the academic interests of the student.

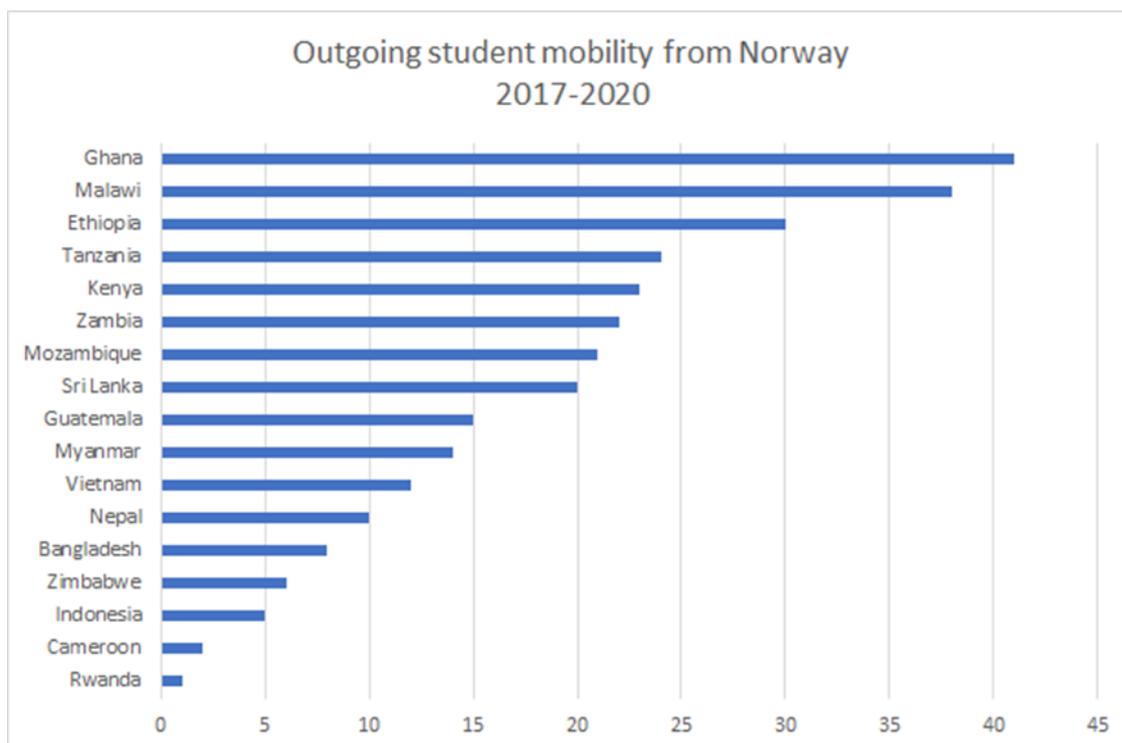


Figure 10: Host country of outgoing students from Norway (reported for the period 2017-2020).

In other partnership programmes administered by Diku, student mobility is mainly short term, both for incoming and outgoing students. Evidence from project reports, in for example UTFORSK and NORPART, is that often, the short-term exchanges facilitate a close link between education and research.

For example, students often attend joint field courses in collaboration with students from the host country, as well as data collection and/or research activities related to ongoing research collaboration between the partner countries. Both for long-term and short-term exchanges this could be highly beneficial to student learning.

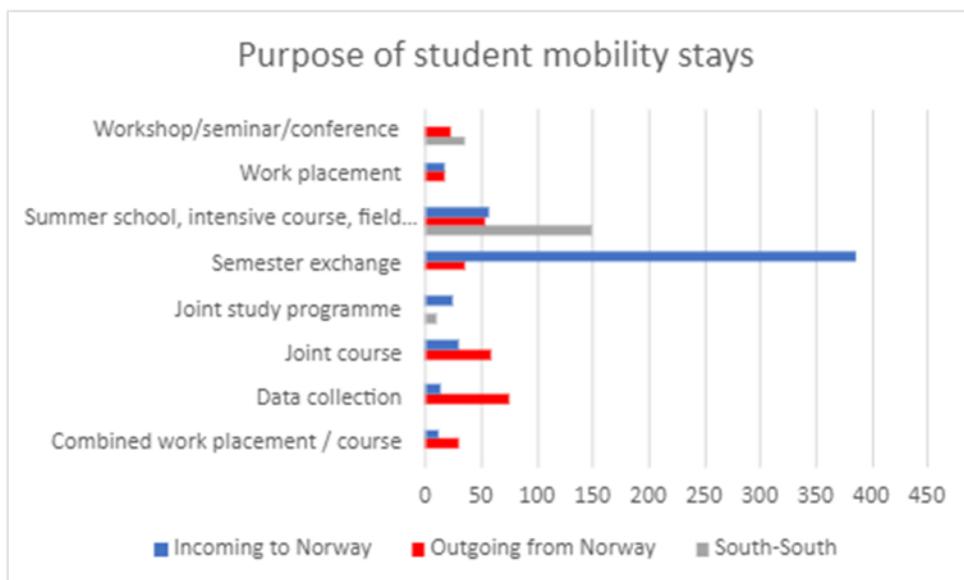


Figure 11: Purpose of student mobility stays reported for the period 2017–2019

Promoting gender equality

The projects' ability to recruit an equal share of female and male students greatly differs between the projects. Some projects have previously reported that they have made great efforts to secure gender equality among students offered an opportunity to study abroad. This is particularly so in subject fields where the student body is already either male or female dominated. The numbers reported on gender representation among scholarship holders in NORPART shows that the balance is not yet at 50 per cent. This suggests that a continuous emphasis is needed to facilitate equal opportunities and benefits for male and female students.

NORPART projects should make every effort to recruit at least 50 percent female students for mobility in all directions under the framework of the partnership. This is in line with Norway's gender equality efforts and the Action Plan for Women's Rights and Gender Equality in Foreign and Development Policy 2016–2020. Under objective one of the Action Plan it is stated that Norway will promote equal opportunities for vocational training and higher education through channels that receive Norwegian funding, for example through university cooperation.

Inclusive practices towards indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable or marginalised groups of society has also been emphasised in the quality assessment of NORPART applications. This has, however, not been reported on so far in the projects.

Figure 12 below shows the percentage of female and male students financed by NORPART for mobility stays from 2017-20. It shows that 56 per cent of incoming students to Norway are male students. For outgoing students, the share is opposite, with 57 per cent female students. The greatest gender gap is for South-South student mobility, where 61 per cent are male students. Please note, however, that as South-South mobility is not emphasised in NORPART, the numbers are relatively low compared to incoming/outgoing students (194 students in total, mainly short-term mobility for a summer school in Ghana).

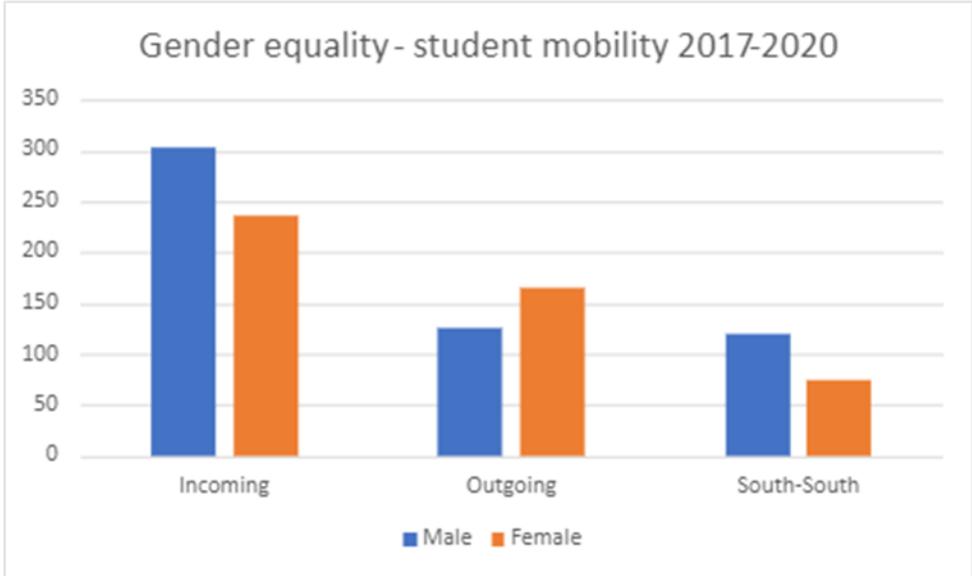


Figure 12: Share of male and female students 2017-2020

Full degree master scholarships

In 2020 the Norwegian government allocated NOK 16 million to strengthen the NORPART programme. The funds were a contribution from the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

The funds were available from 2020 and onwards to support student mobility from countries in the Global South to Norway, making it possible for these students to complete a full master’s degree at a Norwegian higher education institution under the framework of the NORPART programme. To be eligible, students from partner countries must be admitted to an international master’s programme attended by Norwegian students.

In March 2020, NORPART opened a call for full degree master’s scholarships in Norway. The call was only open to existing NORPART projects.

Diku received applications from 34 of the 46 projects in the NORPART portfolio. In total, the projects applied for 138 full degree master scholarships. In the end, Diku granted 53 scholarships distributed to 13 institutions, with NTNU, UiB and UiO receiving 28 scholarships for their master programmes.

Due to the ongoing pandemic the majority of the master candidate's uptake is postponed to 2021/22.

Challenges and follow-up

Challenges in project implementation

The individual annual reports for 2020 show that NORPART has endured its most challenging year since the programme's inception. The implementation of travel restrictions in 2020 meant that many education activities in 2020 were cancelled or postponed.

COVID-19 travel restrictions

The most significant impact from COVID-19 relates to the cancellation of student mobility activities due to the widespread implementation of travel restrictions.

Much of the student mobility in 2020 occurred prior to the pandemic. In some instances, long term mobility from the Global South to Norway was possible during the pandemic; however, COVID-19 severely restricted short-term mobility and Norwegian mobility to the Global South.

Several projects noted that exchange programmes were terminated early due to the pandemic.

The Ghana-Norway Collaboration in Medical Physics and Radiography Education has established cooperation between the Norwegian University of Science (NTNU) and a consortium of Ghanaian universities in the fields of medical physics, radiation protection and radiography. The Student Exchange Programme allows students from Ghana to spend one or two terms at NTNU throughout their master degree. Throughout the exchange students undertake regular courses and work on their master thesis. Four master-level students and one PhD student were undertaking exchange at NTNU at the onset of COVID-19. Due to the circumstances, all five students were recalled back to Ghana by their home institutions, but Master students were able to continue working on their thesis projects back in Ghana. Supervisors from NTNU continued to supervise their work via email and online meetings. Fortunately, all master students successfully submitted their thesis during the 2020 calendar year.

Increased administrative burden

Each year, projects report administrative burden due to the labour-intensive nature of delivering education partnerships in the Global South. In 2020 some projects reported an increased administrative burden due to the uncertainty presented by COVID-19. Many mobility activities were postponed which necessitated travel cancellations, re-bookings, and refunds.

Digitisation

In many instances the pandemic has served as a catalyst for accelerating digital collaboration and several projects implemented digital teaching and supervision in direct response to COVID-19. Despite this progress, some projects noted that unstable internet connections and poor video conferencing facilities made it difficult to pivot cooperation towards digital solutions. In some instances, NORPART funding was redirected to support improve IT infrastructure at partner institutions.

The Higher Education Collaboration in Mental Health between Nepal and Norway is a collaboration between the University of Oslo, the University of Bergen, UIT the Arctic University of Norway, Tribhuvan University and the Institute of Medicine in Nepal. The project had a diverse programme of conferences, seminars, guest lectures and mobility programmes planned for 2020; however, the onset of COVID-19 meant that many of these programmes were cancelled or postponed. Recognising deficiencies in the digital enabling environment of Nepali partner institutions, the project decided to redirect some funding to improve local IT infrastructure. This allowed mobility to be replaced with digital courses such as a new global mental health unit. An annual conference scheduled for Kathmandu was replaced with a COVID-19 themed webinar. The challenges presented by COVID-19 meant that the project spent more on salaries and administration expenses relative to previous years.

Political issues

Political unrest in Myanmar, Palestine and Nicaragua negatively impacted collaboration and student mobility in 2020. The political environment in these nations will likely disrupt projects into the future. Political issues are a perennial concern for NORPART, although the widespread disruption of outgoing mobility for Norwegian students due to COVID-19 reduced the risk profile of political issues in 2020.

Follow-up by Diku

Diku typically monitors progress through annual reporting and project visits, as well as through continuous dialogue with projects that experience different challenges. The emergence of COVID-19 meant that Diku was unable to

participate in site visits for much of 2020, which increased the importance of reporting and regular dialogue.

In response to the widespread disruption caused by COVID-19, Diku provided existing project partners with the opportunity to apply for a one-year no cost extension. So far, a total of 18 projects have been granted a no-cost extension of the project period. The no-cost extension process became an important ad hoc reporting mechanism for understanding the impact of COVID-19 on projects.

The Ideas2evidence report also provides an important strategic overview of NORPART's progress. Diku is still considering the recommendations from this report and will consider making minor reforms to the programme goals and administration in the 2021 programme cycle.

Appendix

List of eligible countries

Afghanistan	Angola
Bangladesh	Bolivia
Burkina Faso	Cameroon
Colombia	Cuba
Dem. Republic of the Congo	East Timor
Egypt	Ethiopia
Ghana	Guatemala
Haiti	Indonesia
Kenya	Liberia
Madagascar	Malawi
Mali	Mozambique
Myanmar	Nepal
Nicaragua	Niger
Pakistan	Palestine
Peru	Rwanda
Somalia	South Sudan
Sri Lanka	Sudan
Tanzania	Uganda
Vietnam	Zambia
Zimbabwe	

Project per country

The list shows number of projects represented by a higher education institution per country. Please note that several projects are represented in more than one country.

Country	Projects represented
Ethiopia	12
Tanzania	7
Uganda	5
Nepal	4
Zambia	4
Sri Lanka	4
Cameroon	3
Vietnam	3
Kenya	3
Ghana	3
Malawi	2
Mozambique	2
Bangladesh	1
Cuba	1

Guatemala	1
Indonesia	1
Madagascar	1
Mali	1
Myanmar	1
Nicaragua	1
Occupied Palestinian Territories	1
Rwanda	1
Sudan	1
Zimbabwe	1

List of projects

Project	Project title
NORPART-2016/10003	Master in English Education
NORPART-2016/10009	Intercultural historical studies
NORPART-2016/10013	Collaborative learning in biodiversity, excellence in education through two-way North-South mobility
NORPART-2016/10014	Partnership Program Norway - Vietnam (paproNoVi)
NORPART-2016/10023	Norway-Vietnam Industry and Infrastructure Safety Consortium
NORPART-2016/10026	LEMS - Literacy Education in Multilingual Settings
NORPART-2016/10063	KeNoMo - Kenya-Norway Mobility Programme for Computer Science Education
NORPART-2016/10072	Cooperation on Religious Studies in Myanmar - CORSIM
NORPART-2016/10074	The VISCAM project - Visual Anthropology at the universities of Maroua, Ngaoundere and Tromsø
NORPART-2016/10134	ExTending Health Informatics Capacity (ETHIC)
NORPART-2016/10213	EXCEL SMART-Exceeding Learning through Strategic Mobility and Academic Partnership
NORPART-2016/10237	Higher education and Research collaboration on Nanomaterials for Clean Energy Technologies (HRNCET)
NORPART-2016/10239	Human rights and reconciliation in a post conflict multicultural society
NORPART-2016/10255	Education in the field of sustainable tourism and ecology in Norway and Guatemala
NORPART-2016/10285	Policy and Governance Studies (PGS) in South Asia
NORPART-2016/10380	BERGUNZA-SHINE - Strengthening health systems and health care implementation
NORPART-2016/10387	Mozambique/Norway Accessibility Partnership (MAP)
NORPART-2016/10470	Ghana-Norway Collaboration in Medical Physics and Radiography Education
NORPART-2016/10471	Enhancing Norway–Ethiopia relations in Journalism and Communication education and research
NORPART-2016/10480	Project to Strengthen Health Economics Capacity at Bergen and Muhimbili Universities (SHEC)

NORPART-2016/10498	Academic cooperation on sustainable, climate-smart agriculture between Zambia and Norway
NORPART-2018/10001	UDSM-NTNU Mobility Program in Energy Technology
NORPART-2018/10005	Cuban and Nordic Welfare
NORPART-2018/10032	Striving for Excellence through Action Research and Capacity building in eHealth (SEARCH)
NORPART-2018/10039	Collaboration in Higher Education in Mental Health between Nepal and Norway
NORPART-2018/10045	NOR-LANKA BLUE - innovative network in fisheries, aquaculture and aquatic science
NORPART-2018/10048	Strengthening Education and Research in Conservation biology
NORPART-2018/10052	Adverse childhood experiences.
NORPART-2018/10068	AAU-NTNU Partnership to Promote Knowledge on Children and Sustainable Development
NORPART-2018/10074	SUSTAIN
NORPART-2018/10082	Transdisciplinary Education for a Sustainable Society (SAMAJ)
NORPART-2018/10091	IPDM NORPART Project: Indigenous, Peace and Diversity Management Programs
NORPART-2018/10121	Enhancing Quality and Internationalisation of Study Programmes Through Mobile Transformative Pedagogy (EQIP)
NORPART-2018/10149	MA Programme in social anthropology – NTNU – Wollo University collaborative project
NORPART-2018/10166	Developing the Teacher Education in Pedagogy
NORPART-2018/10178	Malawi-Norway Mobility Programme in Mathematics and Mathematics Education (MaNoMME)
NORPART-2018/10182	Academic Partnership and Student Mobility to Foster Evidence-based Practice, Innovation and Quality in Health Sciences Education
NORPART-2018/10198	Citizen Engagement and Natural Resource Governance Education (CitRes-Edu)
NORPART-2018/10207	Muhimbili-Bergen University Partnership to Enhance Pharmacy Education and Research (PEPER)
NORPART-2018/10213	Fostering quality graduate and postgraduate training and research (FORTECASE-PROJECT)
NORPART-2018/10254	ANTENNA: Norwegian – African network for training a new generation of entomologists in DNA-based molecular methods
NORPART-2018/10260	UDBS - UiA-SBL: Entrepreneurship Facing Global Competition
NORPART-2018/10277	Establishment of joint research-based education in dentistry in Norway and East Africa
NORPART-2018/10296	NORCAM Exchange
NORPART-2018/10298	Capacity building for joint education and research in applied ecology
NORPART-2018/10304	Collaborative Action for Strengthening Training Capacities in Climate Risk and Natural Resource management (CoSTClim)