

Queen Maud University College (QMUC) Action Plan for increased cooperation with Educational Institutions in Africa

2023-25

In an effort to strengthen the ongoing collaboration with African partners, the QMUC Africa group and the rector agreed on the 23rd February 2022 that there is a need for an action plan. A resource team consisting of the Africa group and the international department was established to examine the current status of the Africa-collaboration and develop the new action plan. The action plan was presented for the QMUC board on 24. March 2023.

It is with this foundation that the Africa group presents the action plan consisting of suggestions and tools to expand DMMHs research and educational collaborations, focusing on partnerships with institutions in African countries.

This action plan is consistent with Queen Maud University College's (QMUCs) goals to achieve the objectives of being a leading institution in the provision of high quality education and research in the field of early childhood education and care (ECEC), nationally and globally.

Over several decades, QMUC has cooperated with ECEC teacher institutions in Southern and Eastern Africa, such as South Africa, Eswatini, Mozambique, Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya and Namibia. QMUC wish to strengthen the long-lasting collaboration with African institutions, as well as expand and establish new strategic partnerships. Strengthened collaboration with partners in Africa will provide students and lecturers with opportunities

- for critical thinking and hand-on knowledge about children, childhood and Early Childhood Education and Care in a range of diverse contexts
- to engage in research as well as educational activities fostering cultural diversity and global citizenship
- to promote sustainable development relating the prioritized UNSDG goals of the QMUC strategic plan: inclusive, equitable and life-long learning for all (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), peace, justice and strong institutions, and global partnerships for sustainable development (SDG 17).

As per today, our priority countries are South Africa, Eswatini, Tanzania, and Mozambique. Academic collaboration with institutions outside the priority countries are, however, encouraged and supported. To ensure mutual commitment and viable partnerships, new collaboration and partnership agreements should be demand-driven and based on a history of interaction between educators/researchers at both institutions.

The Action Plan plays a crucial role by serving as a working tool and guidance to strengthen academic collaboration with educational institutions in Africa. The plan complements QMUC's strategic plan and internationalization strategy. The strategy reflects the Norwegian Higher Education Strategy for internationalization, as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasizes global partnership and collaboration for meeting the goals.

Greater collaboration with African institutions will support QMUC's strategic plan to address the needs and rights of children and highlight the perspectives of children around the world. In addition, international collaborations will offer researchers, students and staff a platform to acquire skills that add value to cultural diversity within the field of ECEC.

This Action Plan for Africa Collaboration will contribute to prioritisation of efforts to strengthen collaboration between QMUC and institutions of education in African countries in 2023-25.

Objective	Increased international educational and research collaboration at QMUC focusing on African Countries		
Targets (T)	T 1: To strengthen collaboration with educational institutions in African countries	T 2: Facilitate interdisciplinary Africa-collaboration	T 3: Contribute to increased international competency
Measures (M)	<p>M 1: <i>Develop and revitalise collaboration with select partners</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - update MoUs - pursue existing and new partners (visits) - arrange online workshops/seminars about collaborations regarding ECEC - Participate in networks that promote North-South collaboration in education and research. 	<p>M 2: <i>Establish an interdisciplinary forum for Africa-collaborations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - contact and invite interested professionals and students, internally and externally - arrange seminars/meetings regarding research and educational collaboration in African countries, "Open Africa Seminars" - Initiate research collaboration and project development with selected partners 	<p>M 3: <i>Facilitate increased mobility between QMUC and partners in African countries</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - establish an "Africa fond/stipend/scholarship" to increase possibilities for exchanges - Secure that practical matters regarding an exchange stay are looked after/taken care of - Develop mobility opportunities for students at the Master programs