

**BUILDING  
STRONGER  
UNIVERSITIES**

**IN  
DEVELOPING  
COUNTRIES  
PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR  
CHANGE**





**Building Stronger Universities in  
Developing Countries –  
Partnerships for Change**

**Published by**

Universities Denmark  
Fiolstræde 44, 1th.  
DK-1171 Copenhagen K  
Denmark  
[www.dkuni.dk](http://www.dkuni.dk)

**Editorial team**

Christian Pilegaard Hansen,  
Rikke Skovgaard Andersen,  
Helen Rasmussen

**Design**

Kenneth Olsson Grafik

ISBN: 978-87-90470-48-7

Januar 2011

**Photo credits**

Mikkel Østergaard/Scanpix: Page 6  
IRIN News: Pages 2, 4, 6  
Jens Seeberg, AU: Page 2  
KU-LIFE: Page 7

# Foreword

The Building Stronger Universities in Developing Countries initiative is both a call and a proposal for further collaboration and partnership between universities and research institutions in developing countries and Denmark. This publication presents the idea of a partnership and how it could be organized. It further presents the scientific areas where the Danish universities have their strengths in relation to developing countries, and it may thus be particularly relevant to include these areas in a collaborative effort.

The publication should serve as a point of departure for a dialogue between partners in developing countries and in Denmark. It is the hope of Universities Denmark that this dialogue will develop into a long-term, mutually beneficial partnership between universities and research institutions in developing countries and Denmark. A partnership should be developed in line with the recommendations of the recent White Paper published by the European University Association entitled "Africa-Europe Higher Education Cooperation for Development: Meeting Regional and Global Challenges".

Danish universities have a long history of collaboration with research and higher education institutions in developing countries. The efficiency, relevance and impact of their contribution to strengthening capacity have been amply demonstrated through numerous international reviews and evaluations. The Danish universities remain committed to expanding such collaboration in building stronger research and higher education institutions in developing countries. In 2009, the Vice-Chancellors of the Danish universities appointed a working group which published a report

entitled "Building Stronger Universities in Developing Countries", with recommendations as to how the Danish university sector could further contribute to strengthening capacity in research and tertiary education in developing countries.

Parallel to this development, the Africa Commission presented its report "Realising the Potential of Africa's Youth" with recommendations as to how nations in Africa can benefit from globalization. These recommendations recognize the important role of research and tertiary education in development. This role is also reflected in the new Danish strategy for cooperation "Freedom from Poverty – Freedom to Change", which was adopted by the Danish parliament in May 2010.

This publication specifies the ideas presented in the 2009 report of Universities Denmark and reflects on recent policy developments. It is my sincere hope that partners in developing countries and Denmark can use it as a starting point for a dialogue to result in concrete action and activities that will strengthen universities in developing countries.

Copenhagen, October 2010

**Flemming Konradsen**

*Chairman of Universities Denmark  
Working Group on Capacity Strengthening within Research and Higher Education in Developing Countries*



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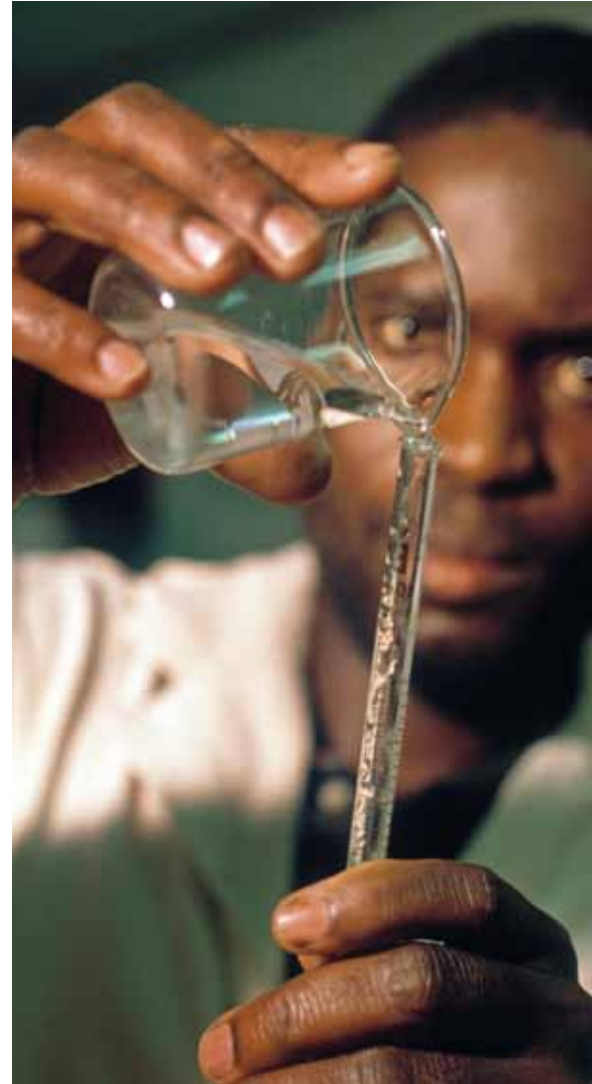
# Introduction

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It is of paramount importance to the success of poverty reduction strategies and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals that the capacity of research and tertiary education institutions in the developing world is strengthened. Flexible and well-managed universities are essential if low-income countries are to develop into modern knowledge societies. Economic growth and increased welfare require the availability of highly-skilled professionals and a capacity in society to innovate and to adapt technologies and knowledge in national contexts. Research and higher education institutions in developing countries need, therefore, to improve their ability to respond to current challenges and to the rapid transitions following changes in, for example, disease patterns, demography, economic and trade policies, climate, agricultural developments and urbanization. At the same time, in an increasingly interdependent and interconnected world, partners in the south and north need to work together to address challenges that are not confined to national borders.

Universities have a great potential to function as institutions that facilitate sustainable development socially, economically and ecologically. Universities are not only providers of competent and motivated graduates to fill key positions in society, but are also key players in innovation and knowledge production. By liaising and cooperating with partners and organizations from the private and public sectors and civil society, universities contribute to economic growth, increased welfare, democratization and environmental protection. Universities also provide the highly-skilled workforce needed for development of the private sector. The potential of young people in low-income countries can be realized through greater investment in local institutions of higher education.

For universities in developing countries to strengthen their role in sustainable development, they need to be able to undertake high-quality research and to provide relevant educations and courses using new learning methods. They also need to have adequate structures and infrastructure for governance, including access to state-of-the-art information technologies. North-south and north-south-south networks have proved to be an effective way of transferring knowledge and good practices to and between universities in developing countries. In this respect, universities in developing countries can benefit significantly from partnerships with research and higher education institutions from other countries. This is essentially what the Building Stronger Universities in Developing Countries initiative is about.



# Towards Networks of Excellence

The overall purpose of the Building Stronger Universities in Developing Countries initiative is to strengthen universities and research institutions in developing countries through the formation of networks of excellence, i.e. partnerships between universities in developing countries and in Denmark. The long-term goal is to make the participating institutions stronger in the sense that they:

- play an increasing role in the economic, social and political development of the societies in which they are located;
- function as nodes of innovation and knowledge production, providing solutions to local and global challenges;
- produce skilled and motivated graduates that can contribute to the further development of their societies and address the challenges they face.

As well as the long-term objective, the initiative has the immediate goal of strengthening the capacity of universities in developing countries to undertake research, education and dissemination of research results.



# Four Thematic Platforms

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The Danish universities have mapped Danish capacities and scientific strengths in relation to developing countries, including the track record and the extent of collaboration in research and tertiary education between Danish institutions and institutions in these countries. On the basis of this map, as well as further considerations as to where there appears to be an increasing demand for capacity-strengthening activities, the Danish universities propose the Building Stronger Universities initiative as a collaboration and partnership in four scientific areas:

- human health
- growth and employment
- environment and climate
- stability, democracy and rights.

Each of the scientific areas constitutes a platform. The partners in and activities of the individual platforms will be decided through a dialogue between the potential partners and will take their point of departure in the needs formulated by the partners in the south. Further, the proposed activities need to be coordinated to complement other national, regional and international initiatives supporting research and tertiary education in developing countries. There are many links between the four platforms. It is the intention to explore these links and to create synergies, collaboration and interaction across and between the platforms and the partners involved in their activities, as well as with other initiatives and efforts targeting research and tertiary education.

In the initial stages, the focus will be on strengthening of research capacities, educational capacities and dissemination of research results (outreach). Some examples of potential activity types are listed in table 1. Focus will be on individual (human) as well as institutional capacity building activities. It is envisaged that the collaboration will gradually expand to encompass also the strengthening of broader institutional capacities, i.e. activities that address general management and university governance and infrastructure improvements. Some examples of potential activities are listed in table 2. →





**Table 1. Possible activities in the initial stages of the initiative**

*The list is not exhaustive*

**STRENGTHENING OF RESEARCH CAPACITIES**

- Development of courses and programmes at PhD level
- Strengthening of research capacities within prioritized core areas
- Pursuit of new research agendas/frontiers
- Multidisciplinary research
- Application of new (state-of-the-art) research methods
- Strengthening of publication profile (increased impact factor/H-factor of participating researchers, both in the south and north)
- Business and industry collaboration and involvement in research programmes

**STRENGTHENING OF EDUCATIONAL CAPACITIES**

- Development of curricula and new courses
- Development of joint master programmes (south-south, south-north)
- Development of improved degree structures
- Enhanced student involvement in courses and education programmes
- Quality assurance and accreditation
- E-learning
- Didactics and innovative learning methods
- Bringing of research results into courses/curricula
- Linking of innovation and education
- Establishing of better links to labour markets (demand-driven educations)

**STRENGTHENING OF DISSEMINATION KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT/SHARING CAPACITIES**

- Communication channels (web, publication series, newsletters)
- Extension services (newsletter, training materials, guidelines, seminars, conferences, advisory services)
- Research-based advice to public authorities and decision-makers (research-based public sector services)

**Table 2. Possible additional activities in subsequent phases of the initiative**

*The list is not exhaustive*

**STRENGTHENING OF UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE**

- Role and function of university boards
- Performance-based management, performance contracts
- University leadership programmes
- Institutional strategy and action plans
- Financial planning, budgeting and monitoring systems
- Human resource management
- Public relations
- Project management
- Quality assurance mechanisms
- Business and industry collaboration
- Management of intellectual property rights
- Implementation of student management systems

**IMPROVEMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Buildings
- Library and library services
- Laboratories, equipment
- IT infrastructure (hardware, computer networks, internet access, homepage, journal and library system access)

## 1

## Platform for Human Health

Improving human health is vital to the implementation of a successful poverty reduction strategy and achievement of national targets for social and economic development in sub-Saharan Africa and other low-income regions of the world.

If universities are to contribute to improving health status, they will need to dramatically increase their capacity to train many more health professionals and to develop, innovate and adapt technologies and knowledge to address particularly relevant problems in national contexts. The starting point for any research and research capacity development activities undertaken by the Platform on Human Health will be the strategic plans and priorities and needs identified by the partners in the south, aligned with national priorities in the health care sector.

### **Collaboration between partners**

Collaboration will build on the strengths of existing partnerships and networks and will also be open to the inclusion of new partners. Although it is envisaged that the Platform on Human Health will have a core university partner in a given partner country, the capacity-building efforts and research activities will also draw on a network of research partners from other universities, ministerial institutions, the private sector, or other relevant institutions to form a consortium of partners addressing the aim.

Within the Platform on Human Health, collaboration between southern and Danish institutions will focus exclusively on areas in which Danish institutions are internationally competitive, with special emphasis on the prevention, control and management of major public health problems. Activities can be centred on the development of particular disciplines or could focus on health or system-specific areas of research. It is important, however, to emphasize

that collaboration is open to the inclusion of all disciplines relevant to health, with implementation usually taking the form of cross-disciplinary projects. It is foreseen that research will include an emphasis on the chronic and noncommunicable diseases that increasingly affect underprivileged societies, the infectious diseases that disproportionately affect low-income countries, and problems such as weak health systems, inadequate food safety and nutritional deficiencies as well as irrational drug use and cultural, societal, gender-based and environmental barriers to health. Likewise, reproductive and sexual health will be a strong focus area. National and international policies and governance structures influencing aid to the health sector will be important aspects of the collaboration, and the integration of IT technologies for health will be actively pursued. The particular areas for collaboration will, however, be based on the needs and demands identified by the partners in the south.

### **Relevance for Danish development assistance**

For the aims outlined in the new Danish strategy for international development assistance to be achieved, improvements in health indicators will be a precondition for reducing poverty and fostering social development. The strategic focus areas for Danish assistance related to climate change and vulnerable states include a significant need for research and capacity development in the health sector to respond to current and future needs. The Platform on Human Health will also directly support the objectives outlined for Danish assistance to reproductive health, population policies and HIV/AIDS.

### **PARTICIPATING DANISH INSTITUTIONS**

#### **University of Copenhagen**

Faculty of Health Sciences  
Faculty of Humanities  
Faculty of Life Sciences  
Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences  
Faculty of Science  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
Faculty of Theology

#### **Aarhus University**

Aarhus Faculty of Arts  
Aarhus Faculty of Health Sciences

#### **University of Southern Denmark**

Faculty of Health Sciences

#### **Roskilde University**

Department of Communication, Business and Information Technologies  
Department of Society and Globalisation

#### **Aalborg University**

Faculty of Medicine

#### **Technical University of Denmark**

National Food Institute

#### **The Danish Research Network for International Health (Enreca Health)**

#### **Skejby Hospital – Aarhus University Hospital**

#### **Rigshospitalet – Copenhagen University Hospital**

#### **Odense University Hospital**

#### **Hvidovre Hospital**

#### **Statens Serum Institut**

#### **Steno Diabetes Centre**

## Platform for Growth and Employment

Both the Africa Commission and the Danish strategy "Freedom from Poverty – Freedom to Change" emphasize the need to focus on promoting growth and employment in developing countries. Poverty can only be reduced through long-term economic growth which is both socially and environmentally sustainable and creates employment.

In partnership with universities in the south, the Platform for Growth and Employment will address this challenge through capacity-building and research in three areas:

- management and leadership
- economic development
- agribusiness.

These three clusters of knowledge have been formed based on two criteria: (i) the significant demand for capacity-building in the south, and (ii) the existence of relevant high-quality knowledge and experience in the Danish university sector.

### **Economic development**

Economic development is the field of social enquiry that studies how sound human development can be fostered through effective policy choices. This cluster will strive to (i) establish a better understanding of the critical constraints and drivers of development, and (ii) get more fully to grips with the many intricate links between ecosystems and human well-being. The former involves economic research into the potential roles of the different sources of employment, growth and development, while the latter includes in-depth analysis of the complex interplay between poverty, the environment and development outcomes in country contexts.

### **Management and leadership**

There is a shortage of skilled management and leadership capacity in both the private and the public sectors in many developing countries. To take a leadership position requires not only skills in the specific professional discipline but also management qualifications as well as innovative and entrepreneurial abilities. The sustainable solution to the shortage includes continued capacity-building at universities and business schools of management and leadership research and education.

### **Agribusiness**

Production and management chains provide a useful framework for addressing the challenges faced by the agricultural sector in developing countries. The chains range from input (including technology) and primary production through post-harvest handling, processing and marketing to the end user. They include industries supporting the sector and sector policy frameworks where the exchange of commodities and services could take place.

The Platform for Growth and Employment, which covers both disciplinary and interdisciplinary analyses and studies, will work towards the shared goal of developing equal and innovative partnerships between universities in the south and in Denmark and thereby strengthen capacity-building.

### **PARTICIPATING DANISH INSTITUTIONS**

#### **University of Copenhagen**

Faculty of Life Sciences  
Faculty of Science  
Faculty of Social Sciences

#### **Aarhus University**

Aarhus Faculty of Science and Technology  
Aarhus School of Business and Social Sciences

#### **University of Southern Denmark**

Faculty of Social Sciences  
Faculty of Engineering

#### **Roskilde University**

Department of Society and Globalisation

#### **Aalborg University**

Faculty of Social Sciences  
Faculty of Engineering and Science

#### **Technical University of Denmark**

National Food Institute  
National Veterinary Institute  
National Institute of Aquatic Resources

#### **Copenhagen Business School**

Centre for Business and Development Studies

#### **Danish Development Research Network**

#### **Danish Institute of International Studies**

## 3

## Platform for Environment and Climate

Environment and climate is one of the five political priorities in the new DANIDA development strategy (2010). Africa and other developing regions face substantial challenges but also potentially value-adding opportunities regarding the sustainable management of waste, land, water, biodiversity and other resources. To support universities in developing countries in delivering to their societies the tools to meet these challenges and to exploit the possible opportunities, it is necessary to transfer technology and competences, develop capacity, undertake collaborative research projects and collaborate in education.

This platform will develop a leading network on environment and climate in developing countries, which will be rooted in Africa but with strong collaborative south-south and north-south links. The network will focus on holistic and cross-disciplinary approaches to capacity development in research and research-based education, applied research and its dissemination and application, as well as local engagement and participation.

The research, capacity-building and research-based education will use holistic and cross-disciplinary approaches. Some examples of broad research areas grouped under the five headings in the new DANIDA development strategy for the environment and climate are given below.

### **Ambitious global targets for sustainable development**

- Climate change mitigation and adaptation measures and strategies.
- Strategies for sustainable transition to a low carbon economy and sustainable management of natural resources.

### **Increased access to sustainable energy**

- Renewable energy systems, bio-energy and bio-refineries.
- Increased efficiency in use of energy and resources.

### **Strengthened environment and climate effort in developing countries**

- Environmental and climate modelling.
- Sustainable urban development, land-use and water-resource planning, waste-water management, waste handling.
- Sustainable agriculture, forestry and fisheries.
- Enhancement of ecosystem resilience.

### **Sustainable management of natural resources**

- Soil, land, forest, water, nutrients and biodiversity at local, landscape and regional levels.
- Counteracting of deforestation and forest degradation.
- Linkages between land-use planning and water management practices.
- Effectiveness, efficiency and equity issues of strategies for ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation.
- Monitoring and awareness-raising for natural conservation by use of information and communications technology.

### **Limiting of the humanitarian consequences of natural disasters**

- Limiting of the ecological and human consequences of droughts, floods and storms.
- Greening of information and communications technology services and sustainable and smart infrastructures and early warning systems.

### **PARTICIPATING DANISH INSTITUTIONS**

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Faculty of Science

#### **Aarhus University**

Aarhus Faculty of Science and Technology

#### **University of Southern Denmark**

Faculty of Science  
Faculty of Engineering

#### **Roskilde University**

Department of Environmental, Social and Spatial Change  
Department of Society and Globalisation

#### **Aalborg University**

Faculty of Engineering  
Faculty of Science  
Faculty of Medicine

#### **Technical University of Denmark**

Department of Environmental Engineering  
Department of Management Engineering  
National Laboratory for Sustainable Energy

#### **Copenhagen Business School**

Department of Organization

#### **IT University of Copenhagen**

#### **Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts**

School of Architecture

#### **Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland**

#### **Danish Hydraulic Institute**

#### **National History Museum of Denmark**

#### **Danish Metrological Institute**

#### **Global Biodiversity Information Facility**

#### **Danish Development Research Network**

#### **Danish Water Forum**

#### **COWI**

## Platform for Stability, Democracy and Rights

Development processes involve more than technological input and achievements. Populations constituting specific societies form social and cultural structures as well as processes and resources capable of initiating or hindering societal change. Examples of such structures include the educational system that manages the transfer of knowledge and formal education from generation to generation; political structures and governance practices that organize and manage legislation, regulation and flows of resources; local and national media and communication services that enable the transmission of information and knowledge and facilitate opinion-forming, civil society and the building of democracy; the formation of national, ethnic and other group identities that may serve as political platforms and as a resource base for those who belong to them; and faith-based organizations that may influence or determine developmental capacities and directions at various levels from village council to the state. The interpretation of such structures in the context of international economic flows also has an impact on national development.

This platform aims – on the basis of dialogue – to strengthen university capacity in research, education and dissemination with a focus on analysing social dynamics and their positive and negative impact on development processes. The partnership includes researchers from the social sciences and humanities as well as disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, political science, development studies, global studies, gender studies, communication studies, education research, history and language studies. It brings together researchers from the south and north in sustainable

milieus that work with research relating to the themes of "Stability and fragility", "Gender equality" and "Freedom, democracy and rights" described in the strategy for Denmark's development cooperation. Priority is given to the development of capacity and to research and educational activities based on local needs in the specific countries in collaboration.

The platform will combine long-term engagement with core partners and thematic research in prioritised fields. It will be open to collaboration with universities and research institutions other than universities in other developing countries. Research activities are developed jointly by researchers in the south and north and focus on issues such as fragilities in state and civil society, social inclusion/exclusion, gender inequalities, access to education and other social sectors, and local ideas of democracy or rights. It will contribute important knowledge about dimensions of social life such as inequality, migration, education, citizenship, employment, welfare and security. Thus, the platform will strive to build strong academic environments within the humanities and social sciences required to provide societies with core knowledge about their social dynamics, history and culture.

### PARTICIPATING DANISH INSTITUTIONS

#### **University of Copenhagen**

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Faculty of Law  
Faculty of Life Sciences  
Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences  
Faculty of Social Sciences  
Faculty of Theology

#### **Aarhus University**

Aarhus Faculty of Arts  
Aarhus School of Business and Social Sciences

#### **University of Southern Denmark**

Faculty of Humanities  
Faculty of Social Sciences

#### **Roskilde University**

Department of Communication, Business and Information Technologies  
Department of Culture and Identity  
Department of Environmental, Social and Spatial Change  
Department of Psychology and Educational Studies  
Department of Society and Globalisation

#### **Aalborg University**

Faculty of Humanities  
Faculty of Social Sciences

#### **Technical University of Denmark**

Department of Management Engineering

#### **Copenhagen Business School**

Department of Intercultural Communication and Management  
Department of International Culture and Communication Studies  
Law Department  
Centre for Business and Development Studies

#### **Danish Development Research Network**

#### **Danish NGO Education Network**

#### **Danish Research Network for International Health (Enreca Health)**

#### **Danish Institute of International Studies**

#### **Danish Institute of Human Rights**

# Funding

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It is envisaged that the Building Stronger Universities initiative will be funded from three sources:

- the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs/DANIDA (core funding)
- partner contributions (co-financing)
- external funding.

The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs/DANIDA is expected to provide funding from early 2011 through a contract between the Ministry and Universities Denmark. This will be considered core funding to be used for the general organization, management and administration of the initiative, and to provide for a basic level of activity. The partners involved in the Building Stronger Universities initiative in developing countries and in Denmark will contribute co-financing in the form of staff time, equipment and infrastructure.

The core funding and co-funding will not provide for the level and scope of activities envisaged under the Building Stronger Universities initiative. External funding will be required for these. There will, however, already be a portfolio of externally-funded projects that can be integrated into the initiative when it begins. It is an explicit goal of the initiative to use the intended partnership actively in seeking additional external funding for activities; this may be applied for by single partners, a sub-set of partners in a platform, all partners in a platform, or partners across two or more platforms. Potential funding agencies for the initiative include the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Competitive Research Fund, Danish embassies in partner countries (sector programmes), the European Union, international or regional development banks and private foundations. As mentioned above, the goals of the Building Stronger Universities initiative will also be achieved through collaboration with other programmes and initiatives.



# Organization and Governance

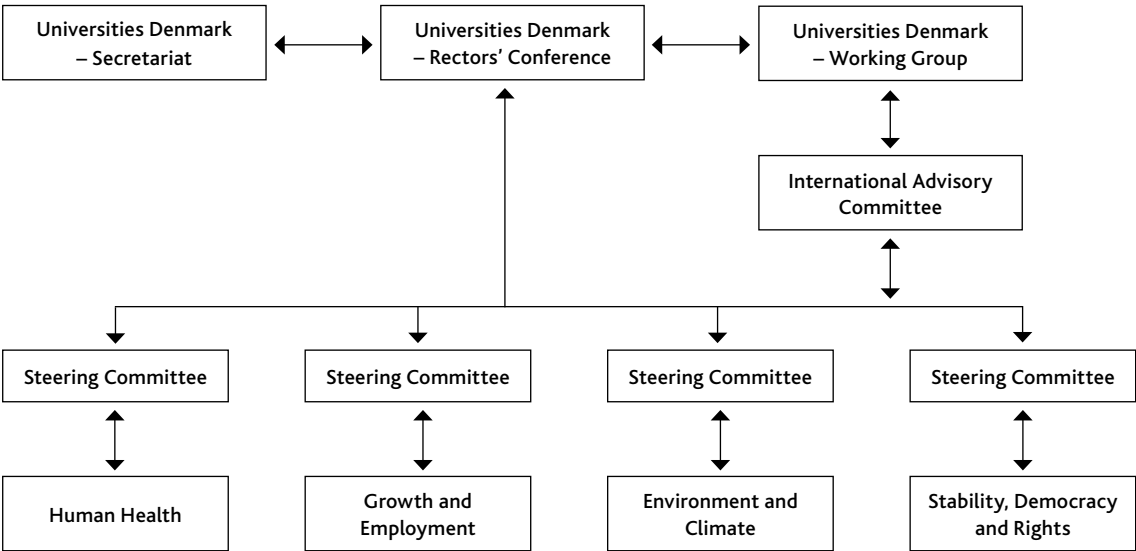
The governance structures of the initiative will be developed jointly by the partners.

From the Danish side, an interim organization has been established with a Steering Committee for each of the four platforms to co-ordinate the activities between the participating Danish institutions. An International Advisory Committee is envisaged to review the activities of the platforms and give advice and recommendations as to further activities and directions of the initiative. The International Advisory Committee will include representatives of partner institutions and regional and international organizations.

The Rectors' Conference of Universities Denmark will oversee the implementation of the initiative and will have overall responsibility for the appropriate use and reporting of the core funding to be received from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs/DANIDA.



**ORGANIZATION OF THE BUILDING STRONGER UNIVERSITIES INITIATIVE (INTERIM)**



## Contact Information

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Universities Denmark  
Fiolstræde 44, 1. th.  
1171 Copenhagen K  
Denmark

Telephone: +45 3392 5405  
Fax: +45 3392 5075  
E-mail: [dkuni@dkuni.dk](mailto:dkuni@dkuni.dk)  
[www.buildingstrongeruniversities.org](http://www.buildingstrongeruniversities.org)

### Platform for Human Health

Chairman of Steering Committee:  
Flemming Konradsen, Professor,  
University of Copenhagen  
Coordinator: Bjørg Elvekjær,  
University of Copenhagen,  
[belv@sund.ku.dk](mailto:belv@sund.ku.dk)  
[www.humanhealth.dk](http://www.humanhealth.dk)

### Platform for Growth and Employment

Chairman of Steering Committee:  
Christian Pilegaard Hansen,  
International Coordinator,  
University of Copenhagen  
Coordinator: To be appointed  
[cph@life.ku.dk](mailto:cph@life.ku.dk)  
[www.growthandemployment.org](http://www.growthandemployment.org)

### Platform for Environment and Climate

Chairman of Steering Committee:  
Erik Jeppesen, Professor,  
Aarhus University  
Coordinator: Susanne Lildal Amsinck,  
Aarhus University  
[sla@dmu.dk](mailto:sla@dmu.dk)  
[www.environmentandclimate.dk](http://www.environmentandclimate.dk)

### Platform for Stability, Democracy and Rights

Chairman of Steering Committee:  
Jens Seeberg, Associate Professor,  
Aarhus University  
Coordinator: Pia Margrethe Larsen,  
Aarhus University  
[etnpml@hum.au.dk](mailto:etnpml@hum.au.dk)  
[www.stability-democracy-rights.dk](http://www.stability-democracy-rights.dk)