

Introduction

This paper underlines AUW's experience and role in the new millennium. It is divided into three sections. Section one is on the new role of universities. Section two reflects on AUW's role in the new millennium by providing information on AUW's structure, programmes, experiences and best practices. Furthermore, lessons learned are tackled. Section three is on the Humboldt-Ahfad link programme as a detailed example of the internationalization process that can contribute to the role of universities in the new millennium.

Section I: The New Role of Universities

A holistic conception of universities could be compared to the traditional role of the family. The family in traditional times was expected to socialize, educate, communicate with the community, establish contractual and reciprocal relations with several others, produce and reproduce for itself and the society.

The university's new role should encompass these components. Universities are not expected only to educate but also to socialize citizens into values needed in the new millennium. Values that have become global principles such as respecting the rights of others, tolerance, accepting diversity, values for a peaceful society, of resolving conflict through reconciliation and condemning terrorism. Universities are expected to contribute to training citizens in the conduct needed to aspire for and live in a democratic society, a market economy that needs discipline, ambition and dedication in work. The university is expected to reproduce skilled members for the labour market and to produce new knowledge. The roles of production and reproduction may be key to many universities. However, in many of our communities their roles may be only of reproduction for the market and of knowledge produced elsewhere. The socialization and communication roles may be deficient as well. Most universities do not include courses or programmes to build leadership skills and to instill needed values that would contribute to social change for a global world.

Moreover, their role of establishing links with community members and with wider society, to reciprocate to the taxpayers their contribution to university education, is lacking or insufficient. New universities are expected not only to be community oriented to serve the needs of their communities and societies but to create links at regional and international levels to exchange experiences, information and contribute to the internationalization of knowledge.

Universities are expected to establish both contractual and partner relations with the private sector, government and civil societies. In order to strengthen their reproduction and production roles they have to maintain close contractual relations with others that need their services and who also look at universities as main partners in processes of social change.

There are major challenges for universities' new roles. In many countries the civil society is still young and fragmented, and when specialized is largely led by university faculty. In such a context, universities need to play a leading role in socio-political change as well as in development activities. Furthermore, where most countries in our part of the world are lacking democracy and respect for fundamental

human rights principles, university students and faculty are looked at as the makers of social and political movements as well as think tanks for new political and development models.

Moreover, when poverty is prevailing and human development indicators are deteriorating, universities are also expected to contribute through research and outreach programmes to undertake awareness raising, to educate, to give services, and through their research to direct policy and advocate for achieving improvements in social indicators.

When problems of environmental degradation and population growth are peaking and threatening economic growth, universities need to respond because they have the human resources to address such issues and to instill new role models, attitudes and practices that can foster change to halt the threatening outbreak of population growth, environmental degradation and poverty.

When the additional threat of terrorism is believed to be led by educated youth, universities are expected to play a role both as the reproducer of teachers who will educate children at early ages into a culture of peace and love rather than a desire for revenge and hatred, as well as a site of human resources from different generations of students and staff who need to be coached away from terrorist values. These graduates are also leaders of political parties and will be in top government positions. Universities are expected to play a role towards producing ideologies that condemn dictatorship, fundamentalism and terrorism.

Universities with such diversified roles and outputs cannot be left on their own or to continue in their outdated roles of reproduction and production (reproducing the same old values and citizens mainly for the market, producing new scientific knowledge which is largely market-oriented or mainly in the applied and natural sciences). As indicated before, universities in the South are not engaged, although with some exceptions, in this production of knowledge to face the challenges of the millennium.

The issue of the university's role in creating knowledge, disseminating and imparting knowledge and the methodologies it should best use to undertake that role depends greatly on how its other partners and clients think of that knowledge. Hence, we need to raise the question: does the state, for instance, as one of the main partners and clients, respect universities' role in producing knowledge, approach them, give them facilities to do so? An atmosphere of selectivity and bias prevails in government attitudes, and universities may gradually lose their credibility, or be seen as a threat rather than a partner. Universities in countries of the South where authoritarian governments prevail cannot function positively and constantly for accumulative knowledge generation.

They face several challenges, of recognition for their value by the state and in some cases civil society members, whether political parties or NGOs, who may act in a similar way to the government. The divide is wide between universities and their possible clients and partners. The reasons may also lie in how knowledge is considered to be formulated, and which knowledge is respected. Is knowledge generated by universities conceived as a valuable source of information that can direct policy and the action of these clients?

Hence, the need to answer the primary questions of how knowledge is generated and who defines the role of universities is an issue that needs to be tackled by universities in the South before internationalization can be addressed, an issue that needs to be discussed internally and by Southern and Northern partners.

Moreover, universities are expected through their curricula and extra-curricular programmes to include components that create citizenship and help in nation building. A nation is built when members feel that all of them share common principles, shared values and goals, thereby all diverse groups have a sense of dignity in belonging and hope for a prosperous future that they can achieve without constraints, demotion, harassment or marginalization. A feeling of security, justice and freedom prevails amongst individuals, groups and communities regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, region or religion. A sense of responsibility, a commitment for participation, a vision for undertaking and accomplishment, a desire for giving and sharing, a tolerance for differences in cultural values prevail. Crossing localities and diverse boundaries with a minimum common agenda set by all groups could build a nation that all dream of living in, be part and proud of. Are universities prepared to play that role and what kind of curricula they will develop? Universities in countries of the South have to play a direct role through their curricula and for their primary clients, students on regular programmes for full degrees, distance education, continued education, postgraduate studies; all need to be addressed by programmes that will make them citizens in that nation and who contribute to building the nation.

Do our universities recognize their responsibilities in building the nation through their curricula or are their curricula anomalous and following the pattern of universities in the North where issues of nation building are assumed to have been accomplished? Countries of the North with transmigration that has brought with it diversity of values, principles and beliefs face a challenge of nation building. Claims or demands of integration, assimilation and globalization cannot meet the challenges of multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-religious states of the West. Hence, the issue of nation building is challenging them as well but maybe in a different way. How far universities in both North and South address this issue needs to be the subject of dialogue.

Universities in the South have to include as part of their university degree requirements programmes and courses that can instil the above-mentioned values and principles. Other indirect means of contributing to nation building through research, conferences, policy dialogue, or through various students, staff and personnel outreach activities and exchange programmes, need to be not only developed but articulated as part of universities' mission and vision. Further, funds have to be allocated and a conducive context at university, national and international level guaranteed so that universities can effectively play a role in nation building.

Consequently, there are many factors that hamper universities' capacities to reproduce other than the traditional. Their human products, then, are traditional in value systems, attributes and practices as well as weak in the international competitive labor market. The end result is that our universities are very low at all levels.

Universities in the Western world may also have their problems in addressing all these different functions. However, they also face the challenge of how to contribute as partners to help other universities in our part of the world. How can they address

third world problems as partners together with their government, political parties and civil society, and play a leading role to bridge the gap between the countries of the North and South? Universities in the North have not substantially played that leading role as development and political interventions are outside their regime. Universities in the South did not and could not afford to play all these roles without a positive conducive context. Thus how can internationalization with partnership between universities take place when the goals and expectation of each partner differ? Internationalization without institutionalization and bringing other political and development actors on board can not address the challenges facing universities' new roles in the new millennium.

AUW has a humble experience to share with others in attempting to have a holistic concept of what universities' roles are. Maybe because it is a family-led university, it brought with it a vision for a university with different roles from that which a family in a traditional society is expected to play. However, the founders of the AUW are not normal in their vision and zeal for achievement, which, influenced by their traditions and international exposure has led them to articulate a holistic role for AUW, modest as it is, but ambitious to encompass all the functions of a new university for the 21st century.

AUW is one of those universities that has acknowledged its role in instilling the above-mentioned values through different university requirement courses as well as through its extracurricular activities. It emphasizes that role more than its role in the creation of knowledge that can be part of courses, except in a few of the courses which instil the above values and skills (e.g. Women and Gender Studies, Population Education, Rural Extension). Moreover, in the recent link programme it has started to strengthen that component.

There is a need to exchange experience on how universities in the South contribute to the creation of knowledge that can be integrated into courses, knowledge for all their clients, and how they contribute directly to developing programmes for nation building, mainly towards creating citizens' sense of belonging and contributing to promoting their nation. Nation building in the new millennium can not be done in isolation but is part of a greater internationalization project. This is what makes AUW a believer in linking with the international community.

Section II: The Role of Ahfad University for Women in the New Millennium

AUW is a pioneer non-governmental higher education institution in Sudan whose philosophy is women's education, development and empowerment. It was established in 1966 with two schools: Family Sciences and Language and Secretariat. Currently, there are six academic schools: the School of Family Sciences, School of Psychology and Preschool Education, School of Management Sciences, School of Rural Extension Education and Development (REED), School of Medicine, and the School of Pharmacy.

In addition, specialised units and institute have been established. These are the Institute of Women, Gender and Development Studies, Nutrition Centre for Training and Research, Ahfad Centre for Science and Technology, Documentation Unit, Teachers' Research and Resources Unit, English Language Unit, Early Childhood Development Centre, Ahfad Reproductive Health Centre, Computer Science Unit, and Al-Hafeed Library.

AUW offers MSc and PhD programmes in Human Nutrition, Gender and Development, Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development. AUW has more than 5,000 students from all parts of Sudan, neighbouring countries and around the world.

AUW Philosophy

The goals and philosophy of AUW are to prepare women to assume responsible roles in families, communities, and in the nation using a combination of well-articulated academic courses, on-the-job training, individual research, and community extension activities. Sudanization of knowledge, serving different partners and establishing regional and international links are seen as the means to achieve these goals.

AUW Vision

AUW's vision is to create proactive women, agents of change and leaders from all parts of Sudan who can participate actively in the development of their families, communities and society.

AUW Mission

AUW's mission is to provide quality education for women to strengthen their roles in national development, and in seeking equity for themselves and their fellow women in all facets of Sudanese society

AUW Structure

1. The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is the highest authority in the University. Under its name, all the assets and property of the University are registered and it has full and final legal representation and authority on all transactions of the university. Its responsibilities include: setting the general policies of the University and raising funds for it; overseeing the implementation of policies; approving the final financial statement and estimated budget for each academic year; and final approval of employment contracts. It is formed from recognized Sudanese figures who can contribute personally in general and in fundraising for its development for infrastructure and budget.

2. The University Council

The University Council oversees the administration of the University. It has the authority to review, approve and implement the recommendations of the Academic Council, and to review and approve the annual report presented by the President of the University, deans of the schools and other bodies of the University. The Council also reviews and approves the annual budget prior to its consideration by the Board of Trustees. It is formed mostly from the alumni of Ahfad Schools (established in 1930) who are willing to give support for its sustainability and those holding decision-making positions in the University.

3. The Academic Council

Membership of the Academic Council (AC) includes the President of the University, his deputies, deans of schools, heads of centres and institutes and the University Librarian, all professors of the University and at least ten outstanding academics from outside AUW who are renowned for their excellent experience in leadership of academic institutions and their firm commitment to excellence in higher education as well as their contribution to the development of AUW curricula and schools.

The Academic council oversees all matters pertaining to the academic affairs of the University.

4. Postgraduate Studies Committee

This is a sub-committee of the Academic Council which deals with postgraduate studies in the university. Matters pertaining to postgraduate studies are raised to the Academic Council through this committee.

5. University administration

This is composed of the President of the University, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Financial and Administrative Affairs, Vice President for Admissions and Student Affairs, and the heads of the schools and specialized units at the University.

6. Ahfad University for Women Research Committee

This is a central committee to promote research in the University and provide policies and regulations for research.

This structure suits a non-governmental university to guarantee its academic excellence, its sustainability, and links to society and decision-makers while maintaining its independence.

Programmes at Ahfad University for Women

- Teaching and curriculum development
- Research
- Training and outreach activities
- Links
- Advocacy and awareness raising
- Production and promotion of educational materials
- Services
- Projects that target specific groups and issues.

□ **Teaching and curriculum development**

AUW excels in providing community-oriented curricula in line with international standards and national goals and needs. Furthermore, AUW has required courses to be taken by all students registered for bachelor's degrees at AUW. These include Rural Extension, Population Studies, Reproductive Health, Environmental Studies, Women and Gender Studies, Career Development, Research Methodology, talent promotion and introduction to behavioural sciences. Issues of gender, democracy, poverty, population and human rights have been integrated in the undergraduate courses as well as the postgraduate courses. The aim from these university required courses is to instil in students values of love, tolerance, cooperation etc., as well to train them to think in an integrated way, be analytical, ethical and oriented to help others and work with them.

□ **Research**

AUW conducts research through its staff, through students as a partial requirement of the academic degree at AUW, and commissioned research for other local, regional and international organizations. AUW participates in international, regional and national meetings on population, gender, peace, human rights, democracy and good governance as well as issues pertaining to the mainstream specializations of its different schools. AUW carries out many of the leading research studies in these fields. Examples of research studies which have been undertaken by AUW are:

- Five integrated research studies: Sudanese Women's Survival Strategies, conducted by AUW in collaboration with Humboldt University
- Inter-communal Tribal Conflict and Mechanisms of Resolution, conducted by AUW and sponsored by NOVIB, Netherlands
- Muslim Women and Development Action, research project conducted by IWGDS in collaboration with KIT-Netherlands, 2001
- A multi-country project on laws on adolescent rights and gender-based violence: case study on Sudan conducted by IWGDS and sponsored by UNFPA, October 2002
- Sudanese Women's Health and Development Profile. Conducted by IWGDS, School of Family Sciences and sponsored by WHO, 2003.
- Sudanese Men and Women's Knowledge and Attitudes Towards CEDAW, 2002.
- Female Genital Mutilation in Sudan, sponsored by UNICEF, 2001-2002
- Violence Against Women, 2000

□ **Training programme**

AUW excels in providing training services targeting different groups; women, youth, community leaders, policy makers, health personnel and others. Three types of training are offered by AUW:

- ◆ In-service training courses offered to Ahfad staff;
- ◆ Regular; and
- ◆ Tailored courses provided to government institutions (e.g. Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Welfare, etc.), personnel of international and regional organizations in Sudan, and local NGOs.

Training courses offered by Ahfad University for Women include:

- Gender Mainstreaming in Universities
- Gender Sensitive Planning, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Gender Mainstreaming and Quality of Care of Reproductive Health Services
- Women's Empowerment
- Women in Armed Conflicts
- Women's Rights in Islam and International Conventions
- Eradication of FGM for Health Cadre, Religious Leaders and Youth Groups
- Mainstreaming Peace Culture and Civic Education into RH Context
- Regional Training course on Gender and Reproductive Health and Rights
- Advanced Research Methodology course for postgraduate studies

□ **Community outreach activities**

AUW has been offering community-oriented activities within its curricula and extra-curricular activities. The community-oriented activities within AUW curricula include:

- Rural Extension Programme: started in 1973, involves annual field trips to rural areas by fourth-year students across all specializations.
- Family attachment program in School of Medicine: students are attached to families in areas neighbouring the university and other underserved rural areas.
- Student attachment programme in School of REED. Students are attached to organizations and projects in both rural and urban areas.
- Student attachment programme in the School of Psychology: students are attached to prisons, health centres, and underprivileged schools
- Field attachment with NGOs and ministries as part of the MSc GAD program requirement.
- Some compulsory university courses, such as environmental studies, women and gender studies require fieldwork. This improves the capacities and skills of the students in these issues.

Community-oriented extra-curricular activities include:

- Ahfad annual Women's Week
- International Day Celebrations: AUW celebrates occasions and events related to its mission. Among the events that AUW celebrates are Women's Day, Population Day, and World Food Day. AUW celebrates International Women's Day through the University annual Women's Week. The themes of the women's week are related to the International Conference on Population Development (ICPD), gender equality and women's empowerment issues, and peace. Students formulate sub-themes for which they plan and perform activities including drama, music, choral, etc. The celebration of Population and Food days, which has been organized separately, mainly aims at raising awareness among students, government and communities of food and population issues. In addition students perform different activities to deliver messages tackling issues of hunger, poverty, reproductive health, etc.

- University Student Associations: students form and join different societies at the university such as drama, sports, and music associations. They also join ethnic associations and student leagues. There are other forms of association which have been formed by the staff and are open to students' families and the community such as the Elders Society and the Friends of Deaf and Mutes Association.
- AUW outreach arms: These are voluntary organizations formed through the initiative of AUW including one hosted within the university campus, namely the Babiker Badri Scientific Association for Women's Studies (BBSAWS). Along with the Community Animators Friendly Association (CAFA), and the Sudanese American Foundation for Education (SAFE), it carries out outreach programs including training, awareness raising, networking, research activities and provision of references and text books to universities, mainly donations of books from American universities to AUW and other Sudanese universities through SAFE.

University reproduction of knowledge: AUW's commitments towards women's studies support the production of two journals:

*Ahfad Journal is an outlet for national, regional and international links, analyzing issues affecting women in Sudan and in other developing countries.

*Promising Half is for students and by students. It includes articles on women's and gender issues and concerns of the students.

□ Links

AUW has several links at the national, regional and international levels. These links include: capacity building for the staff (PhD and MSc), conducting summer schools, student and staff exchange programmes, and research as well as institutional strengthening.

- Links at the national level with Sudanese universities, such as the Universities of Khartoum, Gezira, Sudan, Juba, Al-Azhari, Shandi, Kassala, and Al Obeid, aims at strengthening capacity of the universities' staff, joint research and curriculum development.
 - Links at the regional level; AUW is an Anchor Institute for the Visionary Leadership Programme (VLP), a partner of the Centre of African Family Studies (CAFS) (Kenya), and WHO EMRO. Activities include conducting joint courses, capacity building for AUW staff, other NGOs and university staff.
 - International level: linkages with Manchester, Reading, Iowa State University, Humboldt University, Bielefeld University, Bonn University, Free University, Maastricht, Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Leiden and Amsterdam Universities, Cape Town University, University of Western Cape, South Africa, Suez Canal University, American universities in Beirut and Cairo, and others in Africa, USA, Asia and the Middle East. The link includes staff training, curriculum development, research and summer schools.
 - Bilateral and multilateral links: these include support from foreign governments and UN agencies to AUW infrastructure, institutional strengthening and funding for staff capacity building and projects.

□ **Advocacy and awareness raising**

AUW in collaboration with national and international organizations conducts and/or organizes conferences on issues of gender, human rights and reproductive health. The purpose is to formulate policy recommendations, advocate for these issues and raise awareness.

- AUW in collaboration with the Khartoum Centre for Human Rights and Environmental Development and with the support of the Sudan Organization against Torture (SOAT) developed and led a conference on Human Rights Education during the period 15th-18th December 2003.
- A conference entitled Sudanese Women's Situation: Challenges and Prospects were conducted on January 2004 by AUW supported by the Netherlands Embassy.
- A regional conference on violence against women was conducted in September 2004 by AUW in collaboration with BBSAWS and the Institute for Human Rights, Geneva.

□ **Production and promotion of IEC and educational materials for awareness raising**

□ AUW produces training manuals, research reports, video tapes, cassettes and booklets on issues of gender, women empowerment, human rights, the culture of peace and conflict resolution, population and reproductive health issues, and democracy.

- Service provision: AUW has experience in provision of integrated services and projects to its staff, labourers, students and neighbouring areas. Those services include:
 - Ahfad reproductive health (RH) center, established in 1994 with the support of UNFPA, serves its staff, students and neighbouring areas in the Ahfad vicinity. It offers a wide range of RH services including ANC, FP, nutrition & health education, and counselling services.
 - AUW provides income-generating activities (IGA) via revolving funds to underserved women in Umbadda area west of AUW, the main residential area for many AUW activities.
 - Dar Al Salam project assists internally displaced persons.
 - A peacebuilding and conflict resolution project aims to offer training and counseling.
 - A girls' education project aims to help poor girls receive primary education and promote schools' environment in peripheral areas.
 - AUW has a wealth of experience in implementing projects funded by international agencies such as the WHO, UNFPA, UNICEF, British Council, Packard Foundation and foreign governments such as the Netherlands and Germany.

Best Practices at AUW

- Creation of knowledge through research integrated into curricula, which has led to localizing international knowledge through Sudanese knowledge for university curricula. Examples are the development of curricula on agricultural finance and

feminism from a South/North perspective developed jointly with Humboldt and Free University in Berlin.

- ❑ Creation of knowledge through research to influence policy. This aim was made clear by tackling issues of female genital mutilation, family planning, peace, women's and adolescents' rights, violence against women, women and work, and women's health.
- ❑ Creation of knowledge by simplifying international knowledge to reach other partners through developing various training manuals, readers and booklets.
- ❑ Creation of knowledge appropriate to grassroots communities through producing information, education and communication materials and songs.
- ❑ Directly sensitizing local communities through university outreach activities and celebrating international days.
- ❑ Directly engaging in capacity building for other partners, universities, non-governmental organizations and political parties through training courses.
- ❑ Forming other outreach arms for more local, national and international links, e.g. the Community Animators Friendly Association (CAFA), the Babiker Badri Scientific Association, and the students' association.
- ❑ Strengthening AUW's capacity through staff promotion and linking with other regional and international universities.
- ❑ Engaging in sensitization and advocacy activities through media, workshops, , production of journals.
- ❑ Sharing experiences and knowledge with other national and international universities and institutions through workshops, conferences and establishing links programmes.
- ❑ Building the capacity of students to compete in the labour market through the curriculum and training.
- ❑ Linking university students with grassroots communities and socializing students to have positive attitudes toward respecting human rights and acceptance of diversity through the curriculum (compulsory courses) and outreach activities.
- ❑ Fundraising, mainly locally and from alumni, for sustainability, while maintaining its independence and uniqueness.
- ❑ Maintaining academic excellence while avoiding bureaucracy and having a social justice ethos to provide education to disadvantaged areas and students.
- ❑ Internationalization of the university through student and staff exchanges.

AUW is endeavouring to contribute to knowledge creation through research, to nation building thorough different programmes and to internationalization through its links at regional and international levels. The current AUW-Humboldt link programme is an example of how universities should meet their challenges to serve their varied clients and for a new role in the new millennium.

The Ahfad-Humboldt Link Programme

Origins of the link

The story of this link started with the personal curiosity of Professor Lornzel of Humboldt University. On his visit to Sudan as part of regional market research, he noticed that on his way to the Islamic University, a partner in that research, there were female students in the streets who seemed to have a different dress style from the Islamic one. He learned that there was a university exclusively for girls. On his way

back to Germany, sitting next to him on the plane was a young staff member from AUW who had won a DAAD scholarship to study in Germany at Bielefeld University. The conversation led to Professor Lornzel becoming interested in knowing more about this university and creating links with it. His first visit to AUW was in early 1998; he then negotiated the possibilities for establishing a partnership with Prof. Balghis Badri, and in November 1999 the link programme started with the full support of DAAD to whom we are grateful. Currently the link is on its second cycle of four years, which will end in 2007.

AUW and Humboldt Universities

Humboldt University is known as an old prestigious university with an international history of linking to third world countries, from where many scholars have graduated including several Sudanese. The Faculty of Agriculture with whom we are currently linked not only has a record of over forty link programmes, but also a diversity that makes the Faculty interdisciplinary, bringing the natural, applied and social sciences and rural development together with gender as a cross-cutting theme in its diverse disciplines for students. Moreover, this will bring gender to the forefront of university research and summer school activities.

The similarity with AUW is in this uniqueness. AUW's history goes back to 1907 when the first school for girls was opened by the pioneer Babiker Badri who established the Ahfad schools in 1930. In 1966 Yousif Badri established Ahfad university college for women as the first non-governmental higher education institute in Sudan. It started with two schools, and through its gradual steady development it now has six schools, one institute on women, gender and development studies, two centres, and several units, with a total student population of 5000, and 270 staff of whom 70% are female. In 1995 Ahfad was given the status of a full-fledged university, paving the road for non-governmental efforts to enter into higher education which now make up a total of 24 out of the 40 higher education institutes in Sudan (26 are governmental).

AUW's mission is to empower women by training them as change agents and providing them with skills for the labour market. Its goal is to close the gender gap in higher education. Its vision is that university should be community-oriented and it emphasizes problem-based learning and interdisciplinarity as necessary approaches in higher education. AUW has found a strong partner similar in orientation and hence the link has continued with enthusiasm, bringing on board several scholars and universities as it has evolved and progressed.

This link programme includes four main components:

- 1- Research
- 2- Student exchanges
- 3- Summer schools
- 4- Staff exchanges for curriculum development

Research

Sudanese Women: Challenges and Prospects

The idea of this research project was to be interdisciplinary, policy and action-oriented, based on the theme of Sudanese women's lives. Five topics were chosen to encompass the totality of Sudanese women's lives in Khartoum state, where Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, lies. The sites of studies were mainly rural women in two villages, urban markets and farms. Women who are engaged in business, whether in the market, farms or at home were studied, as well as women within the boundaries of their household space. The research used both quantitative and qualitative methods, with both inductive and deductive approaches to the problems under investigation.

The research started in March 2001 with the participation of a total of ten university staff from AUW, Humboldt and Free universities. As one of the main aims of the research is capacity building for junior AUW staff, another seven junior staff from AUW were involved in both data collection and analysis.

The titles of the research topics were:

- Engendered spaces in a village at the edge of the capital: a case study of Al Gharaza
- Women in urban markets, strategies and challenges: a case study of Khartoum state businesswomen
- Sudanese women and finance
- Urban agriculture: its dynamics, challenges and prospects
- Women's survival strategies for food security: the changing pattern of food habits

The diversity of the topics is intended to produce data integrated into one research project to grasp the life of Sudanese women, the challenges they face and their future prospects. This was the first integrated research of its type and magnitude on Sudanese women.

The research was undertaken by three schools and one institute at AUW, and two German institutes, one in Humboldt, namely the Institute of Social Science, and one at the Free University in Berlin, namely the Institute of Sociology of Development. Informants were from the two villages Al Gharaza and Sanahier, four markets in Khartoum, urban farms and several others, including decision makers. The mayor of Omdurman province was amongst those who showed enthusiasm, looking forward to the findings and recommendations of the research.

This is a pioneering research study that will be informative for those who want to know about an important sector of the Sudanese people's life and the factors that influence them and how they manage to deal with the details of everyday life, interacting with these different forces. The research brought to the forefront important policy recommendations, particularly on the areas of credit, in agriculture and promotion of business as well as how education is the main force for social change in villages rather than political ideology.

Some secondary data and background information on Sudan as a country, and the socio-cultural and geopolitical contexts is also provided in these studies.

The process of developing the contextual framework of these studies and collecting the necessary background information engaged the research team and established a collective partnership and ownership. The uniqueness of bringing scholars from the North and South, males and females (5 of each gender), from five different disciplines (agriculture, economics, social anthropology, management and sociology) enriched not only the analysis but also the methods of research and conceptual framework used.

The research development was done in close partnership, with equality and commonality of vision. This led to intimate relationships at the personal level and a commitment for the research output to lead to the betterment of the life of Sudanese women in the research sites and to make of the findings a resource for teaching, influencing policy and designing development projects.

The research is now in its final stages of printing. Another unique characteristic of this research is that its findings are integrated as part of the curricula of the following courses at AUW:

- The masters courses on women and economy and gender challenges in the 21st century.
- The small business management course at the school of business administration.
- The course on Horticulture in the school of Rural Development.
- The course on Food Security for the MSc in Human Nutrition.

When it is finalized in a published form it will be an important reference for courses taught in both universities.

This research is also unique for its low cost, as staff from both universities carried it out on their own with no research budget. DAAD contributed funding for staff exchange visits for developing the research framework and writing up. AUW contributed local transport for fieldwork. Moreover, both universities contributed with staff time and other facilities, mainly computers and communications.

The lessons learnt from this process encouraged us to engage in similar research, and led to more insights into the type of data that can be collected and analyzed from the perceptions of native and foreign researchers. Some of these insights are related to concepts of time, credit and profit, details of which would have been missed if not for the joint nature of the research. Interdisciplinary research is possible and internationalization of research projects is beneficial.

Capacity building included not only our junior researchers at AUW, but also assisted two staff to prepare their PhD at Humboldt University; one has already graduated and the other is about to finish. Moreover, two staff of AUW registered at the Institute for Women, Gender and Development Studies (IWGDS), selecting topics on the theme of the research. Another German student became motivated to select the topic for her doctoral degree from the research themes. These became further assets for continuing the link and promoting the quality of education at AUW.

The research outputs will be produced in different forms:

- A Humboldt monograph;
- A special issue of AUW's Ahfad Journal;
- Institute publications in the form of a series of booklets for each of the research studies;
- Finally, a reference book will also be produced.

The process has already started. The Sudanization of knowledge and the contribution to international knowledge is one of the key outputs that will help fulfil the new role of universities as partners.

The Summer Schools

The philosophy behind the Summer Schools is to bring into focus gender issues and international debates of interest in each country. Moreover, they are intended to lead to further capacity building, information sharing, knowledge creation, strengthening links and achieving internationalization. The realization of such ambitious aims has made a success story of this link programme.

The summer schools are designed to be implemented alternately one year in Berlin and the following year in Sudan at AUW.

The themes of previous summer schools are as follows:

| <i>Summer School Theme</i> | <i>Place</i> | <i>Year</i> |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| Women in International Rural Development and Gender, conference and course on "Issues of Gender and Traditional Knowledge in University Curricula". ¹ | Berlin | 2000 |
| Gender Research and Analysis | Omdurman | 2001 |
| Debating gender, differences and identities in Muslim countries | Berlin | 2002 |
| Undertaking Qualitative Interdisciplinary Research in Rural Areas | Omdurman | 2003 |
| Transmigration and Trends Gender Aspects in the Globalization Process | Berlin | 2004 |
| Land Tenure and Women's Rights | Omdurman | 2005 |
| Gender Research in an inter- and trans-disciplinary context | Berlin | 2006 |
| Women's Space in national, regional and international organizations in Sudan | Omdurman | 2007 |

The topics selected in 2000, 2002 and 2004 for the German audience in Berlin were oriented towards their interests, mainly on the topics of the experiences and future of gender studies in Europe and in countries of the South. The use of traditional knowledge in teaching and its integration in university curricula in the experience of

¹ The audience was Humboldt finalist students. The experience of joint teaching by Sudanese and German staff was illuminating and deserves replication.

southern universities, was the first summer school that exposed staff from AUW to teaching graduate students at Humboldt. The experience of AUW in teaching women and gender studies is old, unique and highly committed and could be replicated at German universities. The second summer school on trans-national issues highlighted Muslim women's diverse identities and experiences in countries of the South and North – namely in Sudan, Nigeria, Iran, Malaysia, Germany and England. Participants were drawn from these countries to exchange experiences and discuss the diverse realities of Muslim women. The summer school integrated training and information about conflict in Sudan and training on conflict resolution skills given by Sudanese staff to German NGOs.

The third summer school, on the theme of transmigration and trans-locality, focused on migrants' experiences and histories. That summer school was also unique in comparing the experience of migrants in Germany and their struggle for integration despite being European to that of local Sudanese migrants who face similar problems in integrating with the capital's citizens despite years of migration and efforts to integrate.

The similarities as well as diversity of the experiences covered in the summer schools, whether of migrants, Muslim women, conflict causes, or teaching gender studies, reflect the richness of our human capacities and experiences. The outputs of these summer schools deserve documentation and publication. The paper presented in the second summer school is in the process of preparation for publication.

Another important experience from the summer school is bringing together universities, NGOs, parliamentarians, politicians, students, museum organizations, radio, institutes and village people to be part of these summer schools programmes. However, more publicity and better documentation were needed, a matter that will be taken care of in the next summer schools.

The issues discussed in the summer schools in Germany were interrelated, covering trans-national and global issues of religion, identity, mobility and knowledge sharing.

The summer schools in Germany made it possible to extend links not only between universities such as Bielefeld, Free University, Bremen, Institute of Oriental Studies in Berlin and a few others, but also with NGOs, a photographic museum of migration, media and parliamentarians committed to the empowerment of women. Universities in England, Tehran and NGOs from the above-mentioned countries of the South were also involved. The Sudanese participants who also attended them represented universities, NGOs and political feminists.

The summer schools in Sudan in 2001 and 2003 focused on promoting the skills of university staff, researchers and NGOs on project design for rural areas using qualitative rural appraisal methods, and, in the second school, developing skills on qualitative research methodology and design of PhD proposals, targeting junior university staff.

The link programmes were able to extend through these summer schools to include three German universities, one university in the UK and ten Sudanese universities from Khartoum State and three other states, namely Gazira, Nyala in Darfur and

Shendi. Amongst the six universities in Khartoum, one is a Southern Sudanese university based originally in Juba but transferred temporarily to Khartoum because of the long standing war.

The immediate outputs of the summer schools outputs were two training manuals that resulted from the Sudan-based summer schools and a book under preparation from the second summer school in Berlin, while papers presented in the third will be published in the Ahfad University Journal.

The success of the idea of the summer schools encouraged us to look for other German donors to fund extra summer schools on issues where both the German and Sudanese target groups showed interest and demand. These were on the topics of Advanced Research Methodology, and Feminism and Islam: International Dialogue. Developing the proposals for these summer schools and making contacts regionally and in Germany was possible through previous links established through the summer school programme. A future South-South link was made possible between AUW and Tehran University as well as with universities in South Africa and Nigeria which will both participate in our future summer school. The experience we gained from establishing links in an international context encouraged us to build one with the American university at Cairo, whereby AUW hosted an international research programme meeting on Reconstruction in Post Conflict Countries. This has extended our links to more African, Middle Eastern and American Universities. The internationalization process is both spilling out and trickling down.

At the university level both in Sudan and Germany, the organization of these international summer schools brought in the collaboration of several others including students, NGOs, government officials and other administrative personnel. The voluntarism and enthusiasm of all those committed to make them a success need to be appreciated. Further, it raised the skills of the staff who were directly involved in organizing international summer schools. This experience gave us confidence not only to organize other international events but also to request from the WHO that AUW become the regional centre for the Middle East WHO regional training course on Gender Mainstreaming of Health Systems. The request materialized and the first course will be held from 21st November to 2nd December of this year.

The spilling out impact is uncountable. On the research side, the link encouraged both ourselves and other German universities who learned about the link to request our partnership for joint research. Requests came from Bonn and Bremen universities to jointly develop proposals for the Volkswagen research competition programme on Africa for this year.

Moreover, the experience of both research and summer schools, of living together, sharing and discussing ideas, thoughts, dreams and worries created an intimacy of relations between the team members that is far beyond a time-bound link program and which will sustain itself for a lifelong bond of commitment to maintain the long-term objectives of this link.

This sustainability will be guaranteed through the intergenerational component of the link that is the student exchange programme.

The student exchange

The link programme considered that student exchanges are the future for the internationalization of universities. A total number of ten Sudanese students since 2000 have visited Germany and a total of eight from Humboldt and twelve from the Free University have visited Sudan. The link was extended beyond AUW and Humboldt to other German and Sudanese universities. The story of the student exchange is the most exciting to document. Our students gained experience, new information and skills. The most important thing learnt was how to value time and respect it. They were astonished at how farmers work very long hours while they have to struggle to do the same. Most students, with their weak, slim bodies and lack of experience handling animal farms, driving a tractor and eating typical German meals for five weeks, managed to cope. Discipline and abidance by regulations were added values and patterns of conduct that they needed to cope with, coming from a culture where relaxation and elasticity is the rule of life where everything can be done at any time, with delays, overruling regulations through kinship networks, etc.

The mode of life pattern of a non-disciplined non-western style is a common characteristic of Sudanese life and students needed to change. The value of social welcoming and warmth from everybody, even strangers, was something the students missed. They learnt that friendships needed to be established first, then every support could be gained.

Many of the students mentioned that a great change in personality occurred and they gained maturity in the short time of the three-month extensive programme coping with a farm life, university system, new language and culture. They needed to prove themselves in all fields, farming, researching in the library, attending classes and living with German families or students. Organizing all that needed skills, patience and parental attention from the link staff in Germany, which they extended with enthusiasm to make the exchange a success. The students have great memories of enjoyment and excitement but sometimes frustration and the desire to cry occurred.

The German students had a similar but different experience, coping with a hot climate, diseases in an unclean environment, a culture of relaxation and a simple village life where more children and small animals than adults attend public lectures given by students. Sleeping in the courtyard, the unnamed roads and bus-stops, the lack of need for a watch to mark time for transport, visits or meals was a new phenomena for them. The classroom organization, the big classes and lecture style using Arabic and English as the medium of education, and learning few words of Arabic were all new experiences. They enjoyed both the warmth of the climate and its people as well as the tropical rain that spoils roads and houses.

They learnt how to cope with the new culture and environment and to organize their visit and make the maximum use of it by themselves. The Sudanese culture, a mixture of Arab and African, the wealth of traditional knowledge as a viable source of information people rely on for medication, farming and explanation of various aspects of life was the most important thing that they learnt.

Friendships created and maintained through a system of sharing a residence with the families of each student in her turn in Germany and Sudan extended the knowledge

and friendship to some of the families. Moreover, living with a Christian family in Germany, with a Muslim family in Omdurman made students and their families realize the commonality of a family life, its universality despite different religions. The tolerance for diversity in religion was seen as the least problematic. The issue of culture needed more coping. Details of everyday life are cultural rather than influenced by religion. Despite an Islamic state, the students found it easy to enjoy their life with Sudanese colleagues and adapt to a new way of enjoying time without a nightlife. The enthusiasm of the students was witnessed when several of the students became involved in helping during the summer schools held in Humboldt in Berlin and Omdurman at AUW.

The experience deserves to be well documented from their trip reports and to be continued, and a means for following up and maintaining relations needs to be investigated. The alumni of DAAD scholarship recipients newly established in Khartoum should be encouraged to include them as well.

The students from both sides indicated their hope to return for research in Sudan from the German side and for further studies from the Sudanese side. Two students started learning German after their visit and one student won the prize for the best research, comparing farming in a German village with farming in a southern Sudanese village. The success of the link encourages us to organize it in a better way every time as we take into account the students' oral and written reports on their visit which they submit to the staff of the link and communicate to colleagues.

We are learning all the time as staff how to strengthen the programme, increase the students' benefits, and lessen the possible problems they may face. One important lesson learnt is the networking between our students who went previously to coach the newcomers on what to expect and how to cope. Another is joint activities by the students who are part of the exchange and the newcomers who will undertake the visit from both sides. This has led to quick adaptation and friendship. A poster and leaflet on the student exchange was produced.

The main bottleneck facing Sudanese students is the language barrier, in order to make use of the courses taught at undergraduate level at Humboldt. The German students face a mobility barrier for travel inside Sudan, whereby permission is needed in areas where insecurity is dominant or expected. However AUW helps them to visit rural areas with AUW students.

Staff exchange for curriculum development

The last but not least component is the development of two courses to be part of the university curriculum. The first is on microfinance for agriculture, using two approaches in developing it. One is researching on the topic within the Sudanese context. A staff member of AUW registered at Humboldt University for a doctoral degree and supervised by link programme staff researched on the topic while simultaneously through workshops at AUW developing a course appropriate to our context, benefiting from a similar one taught at Humboldt. Graduate doctoral students currently teach the course. This experience has led to the Sudanization of knowledge and contributed to the internationalization of the curriculum.

The second course on Feminist and Gender Studies is taught separately at AUW and Free University. The idea is to develop a joint course that could be accredited by both, and the exchange students could benefit from attending during their visits. The approach is to develop the course jointly, then teach it together at AUW and the Free University.

The experiment in joint teaching is intended to promote the course development, fill in gaps and make it appropriate to both students. The experiment started in June 2004 and needs another two years to be finalized. However, the course outline and reading materials have already been developed and the co-teaching will start at AUW in August 2005. The interesting and unique aspect of the course is that it has been developed from the perspective of western and third world scholars. It hence covered issues of African feminism, Islam and feminism as well as sexuality issues, whereas the first two were not part of the previous Free University course and the last was not part of the AUW course. The need for African feminism, Islam and feminism became clear from our summer school experience.

The process of developing this has led both partners to go beyond the DAAD-supported link components to undertake further summer school courses that will ultimately lead to curriculum development to be integrated in our courses and to develop new ones which are needed in several universities.

The course on advanced research methodology for students registered for their doctoral degrees started at AUW in 2003. It led to our development of an integrated course together with the Free University and Manchester University in UK. The developed course will be announced as an international course to be taught by German and Sudanese staff.

Conclusion

The link programme with its four interrelated components is meant to address the new roles of universities in this millennium. Internationalization takes place through joint research, curriculum development, exchanges of staff and students, and sharing of experiences. The creation of new knowledge from the perspective of western and southern scholars of multidisciplinary specializations has proved fruitful, and the dissemination of such knowledge is crucial.

The participatory methods and equal partnership that characterized the link have raised confidence between both and in each partner that crossing the boundaries of national culture and using an interdisciplinary approach are not only possible but worth sustaining, and their output has far-reaching results for enriching universities and strengthening international relations.

Concluding remarks

The AUW-Humboldt link as a model to meet the new role of universities in the new millennium:

From the above discussion of the three areas which we considered as challenges facing the new role of universities, we could conclude that the link programme contributed to them as follows:

1. The traditional role of internationalization of universities was done through scholarship and access programmes for students from different countries to study in a certain western country. The scholars from western countries came to undertake research in countries of the South and rarely vice versa. The new role based on partnership meant a change whereby research would be undertaken jointly, and that is the model the link used. Further, where research is carried out for the award of degrees, it stems from issues of relevance to the joint research projects, and is hence grounded in what is relevant and institutionally based rather than completely based on the interest of supervisors in the West. The latter model of individual interest de-links southern students from their institutions, while the new model links staff of both institutions and the students.
2. Moreover, the traditional pattern was that courses from the universities of the North were imported to universities in the South and were rarely nationalized or saw knowledge from the South integrated into that of the northern universities. The new model meant a joint venture of articulating courses jointly, teaching them in both countries of the North and South, and that is what our link programme started to undertake.
3. The traditional model of universities was that students came from South to North for study, and in rare cases students from the North went to the South for undergraduate studies.

The new model emphasized that internationalization would best take place by an equitable exchange of undergraduate students. Although the link programme is modest in this aspect, the principle deserves commending and should encourage us to increase the numbers and frequency of exchange.

The institutionalization of this experiment, whereby students could benefit academically from their stay through accredited courses, deserves to be strengthened. This can only be achieved if mindsets are changed to realize that students from the West can benefit from courses taught in southern universities. When joint courses are developed, joint research undertaken and students integrated into it, the exchange will be more than just an exchange for learning about a new country and culture, to become a true road to the internationalization of universities, rather than the current trans-nationalization of universities.

4. The fourth challenge universities face is to bring on board others outside the academia in their conferences, and workshops to link with other partners. This is the summer schools' approach to link universities with NGOs, INGOs, parliamentarians and other politicians and media. The summer schools linked the academic with the practical and training to serve the needs of different partners whose interests the new universities are bound to meet.

5. The new role of universities in serving communities is a component that this link did not include, but it has not ignored integrating it, as was stated above.
6. The link served the new role of universities in nation building through the two summer schools discussing the global issues threatening nation building – these are the diversity of identities based on religion, and transmigration and trans-locality. Moreover, land rights as crucial issues causing conflict in African countries and driving people away from building the nation, as well as the role of civil society in countries of the South in nation building, will be the themes for the next summer schools in Sudan. Hence, the summer school themes are chosen with a clear vision of the role of universities in contributing to nation building.

In conclusion, this link programme is articulated to bring together the experience of both universities in how they visualize internationalization and the new roles of universities in the new millennium.

AUW in particular, as a small university compared to Humboldt, managed to have direct benefits from the link in the following areas:

- Research fed into courses.
- Equipment – a learning computer lab to enhance the Sustainable Development MSc programme.
- Two doctoral students at Humboldt and two doctoral students at AUW researching the same themes.
- The link enabled us to make further links in Germany, both with universities, institutions, organizations and donors, such as the Volkswagen Foundation and Henrich Boll foundation.
- Moreover, links at national level were strengthened by offering these universities, a total of ten opportunities to join the summer school courses.

This cooperation encouraged us to seek the support of the World Bank Institute to undertake more capacity building for Sudanese universities, through short training courses specifically for gender mainstreaming in Sudanese universities that started in October 2004.

Hence, the door is opened wide to AUW for further capacity and institutional building. AUW's commitment to be part of a global world, contributing to it and benefiting from it, is a long-standing one.

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) needs to be greatly commended not only for its funding to the link, but, moreover to its continual support and sustenance by different means. All the staff of the DAAD deserve our special gratitude and appreciation for their input, whether technical or material. We hope that the outputs of the link will give them pride in supporting us and a desire to continue to do so.