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**Interim evaluation report:
The NUFU-cooperation between Palestinian
institutions and Norwegian institutions**

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Summary

In this interim evaluation report, the focus is set on five programs in the NUFU-cooperation between Palestine and Norwegian universities. This is an interim report because it is only based on data collected and analyzed in Norway – it does not include data from sources in Palestine. For this reason, the analysis, conclusions and recommendations presented in this report should be considered as provisional. Initially, a fact finding and data collection visit to the universities in Palestine was planned as part of the evaluation, but this had to be postponed due to the intifadia in the autumn of 2000.

In the evaluation, the following programs were analyzed:

- PRO 63/96 – *Research/training in nutrition-related, non-communicable disease*, University of Oslo in cooperation with Birzeit University, cf. section 2.2 for a further description,
- PRO 64/96 – *Competence-building in special education*, University of Oslo in cooperation with An-Najah National University in Nabulus, cf. section 2.3 for a further description,
- PRO 65/96 – *Building competence in epidemiology in Palestine*, University of Oslo in cooperation with University of Hebron, cf. section 2.4 for a further description,
- PRO 10/97 - *Development of Master Degree Programme in Landscape Architecture at Birzeit University*, the Agricultural University of Norway in cooperation with the Birzeit University, cf. section 2.5 for a further description,
- PRO 02/98 - *The Lower Jordan River Basin Programme*, University of Bergen in cooperation with Birzeit University, cf. section 2.6 for a further description.

The general impression one gets from analyzing the programs in NUFU's Palestine-Norwegian cooperation is that they have been reasonably successful, however, their degree of success and the criteria of success are different in each program. All the programs have been delayed mainly due to interruptions and hindrances caused by the Palestine-Israeli conflict. One of the programs experienced startup difficulties that amplified this. In spite of the delays, all projects demonstrate aspects that indicate success or likelihood of success, even if some of these outcomes differ from the aims that were initially planned. Based on the material and data collected in Norway, the report makes the following tentative recommendation:

- The NUFU-programs should increase their focus on research.
- NUFU should encourage the programs to anticipate and adjust their plans if the progress is not satisfactory. In this, NUFU should provide the participants, in particular

the Norwegian coordinators, with the means to alter, restructure or rebalance their plans.

- NUFU should contribute more to paying for the costs that the programs incur on the Norwegian program coordinators and their host organizations.
- NUFU should initiate a process aimed at designing an administrative system which will lessen the administrative burdens for the coordinators and programs.
- In the future, NUFU should encourage the programs to recruit Palestine female researchers and Ph.D.-students.
- NUFU should encourage information activities aimed at audiences outside the programs in Palestine, such as the broad public or targeted key user groups.

Contents

1	Introduction	7
2	Description and analysis of the NUFU-cooperation between Palestine institutions and Norwegian institutions	11
2.1	Background for the Palestine-Norwegian cooperation.....	11
2.2	Research/Training in Nutrition-related, Non-Communicable Disease at Birzeit University - PRO 63/96.....	12
2.3	Competence-Building in Special Education - PRO 64/96	16
2.4	Building Competence in Epidemiology in Palestine - PRO 65/96	20
2.5	Development of Master Degree Programme in Landscape Architecture at Birzeit University - PRO 10/97	24
2.6	The Lower Jordan River Basin Programme - PRO 02/98.....	27
3	Some tentative conclusions and recommendations	31
3.1	General considerations	31
3.2	Organization and research management.....	32
3.3	Institutional development.....	35
3.4	Achievement of goals and effects	35
3.5	Sustainability	36
3.6	Gender	37
3.7	Transfer from NORAD to NUFU	37
3.8	Tentative recommendations	39
4	Remaining data collection tasks and areas of analysis	41
	Annex 1: Informants who have provided information in the evaluation.....	43
	Annex 2: List of documents and publications used in the evaluation	45
	Annex 3: Terms of reference for this evaluation	47

1 Introduction

Within the framework of the NUFU-programme, Norwegian and Palestine universities have established five joint, cooperative programmes. Formally, three of these programmes were started as NUFU-programmes in 1996, one in 1997 and the fifth in 1998. This report is an interim evaluation report of these five programmes, based on data collected and analysis undertaken mainly in October and early November 2000, in Norway. In 1991, the Norwegian Council of Universities established a “Committee for Development Research and Education”, which usually is referred to by its acronym, NUFU. NUFU serves as an organizing body for numerous research and educational programs involving Norwegian universities and similar institutions in developing nations, hence it is also called “the NUFU-programme”.

The main objective of the NUFU-programme is to contribute towards building up competence in developing countries through cooperation between universities, university colleges and research institutions in Norway and corresponding institutions in developing countries. Since 1995, the NUFU-programme has been funded by NORAD, the foreign aid organization of the Norwegian government, through an agreement with a duration of five years. NUFU is currently in a dialogue with NORAD for an extension of this agreement for another five years period. In this process, evaluation of the programmes in NUFU-programme is important.

In March 2000, the Norwegian Institute for Studies of Research and Higher Education (NIFU) signed a contract with NUFU, in which NIFU agreed to undertake an evaluation of these Norwegian-Palestinian cooperative programmes. According to the contract, work with the evaluation was to start in September 2000, with completion of an evaluation report by 1 December 2000. Due to the outbreak of a new intifadia in September 2000 in the Palestine territories, which coincided with the startup of this evaluation, a planned visit to the Palestine was postponed. During October 2000 it became evident that the new intifadia would persist, making an evaluation visit to the Palestine unrealistic. Thus an important, if not the most significant source of information for the evaluation became inaccessible. Faced with this case of *force majeure*, NIFU agreed with NUFU to a temporary freeze of the evaluation after completion of an interim evaluation report based on the data collected in Norway.

Apart from the Palestinian programmes, which this interim evaluation report will focus on, the Dutch organization NUFFIC presented an evaluation of all the other NUFU-

programmes, in March 2000. The final report¹ from the NUFFIC evaluation, which was published in August 2000, states that

“...NUFU can be regarded as a highly successful programme. It has produced impressive results considering the modest level of funding. Its achievements can be attributed to the personal commitment of the people involved and the decentralized and flexible way in which the programme is implemented. In our view, NUFU is in essence a programme for and of individual researchers, despite the claim that it is building relationships between institutions”. (p. 7-8)

In the report, this claim is thoroughly documented. Considering the fact that the Palestine-Norwegian cooperative programmes are structurally similar to the programmes evaluated by NUFFIC, and that some of the Norwegian institutions and researchers evaluated by NUFFIC are also involved in the Palestine programmes, the prospects for a similar conclusion should be reasonable. Still, it must be emphasized that the present interim evaluation report has been written based on data and analyses undertaken independently of the NUFFIC evaluation.

According to the “NUFU Programme Catalogue 1996-2000”², there are 98 programme titles in NUFU’s current programme portfolio. The programmes, of which many are multi-disciplinary, cover a broad range of academic disciplines. Outside Norway, the programmes are geographically concentrated to universities in developing countries in Africa, Central America, Asia and in the Palestine areas. Of the latter, there were five programmes in NUFU’s current portfolio, all of which will be presented and analyzed in this interim evaluation report. In terms of funding from NUFU, a total of NOK 11.238.000 were allocated to the Palestine-Norwegian joint cooperative programmes, allocations to the individual programmes being in the range of NOK 1.850.000 to NOK 2.500.000 – as will be explained more in detail in the next chapter. Thus, in NUFU’s programme portfolio, the Palestine-Norwegian programmes constitute a minority, however, in terms of funding, the programmes are in the mid-range compared to other programmes in NUFU’s portfolio.

Needless to say, the Israel-Palestine conflict is a distinct and significant background factor in the programmes. In effect, the conflict rules out Palestinian access to and collaboration with Israeli universities, higher education and R&D sector. The latter is large and of high quality, Israel being internationally recognized as an advanced nation in terms of education, science, R&D and technology. For various reasons, Palestinians do not participate in this knowledge community, in effect being blocked access to these highly valuable resources in their immediate vicinity and, according to Palestinians, in their own country.

¹ cf. *Evaluation of the NUFU Programme – Norwegian Council of Universities’ Programme for Development Research and Education*, Evaluation Report 5/2000, The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, September 2000.

² Source: <http://www.siu.no/vev.start/nufu++projects++progcatalog>. (Last revision 29 Feb 2000.)

In planning the evaluation, a visit to the participating Palestine institutions and researchers was considered essential. However, due to the intifadia, which flared up again in September 2000, this visit was postponed. As explained earlier, because of this *force majeure* situation, an agreement was made with SIU, the host organization of the NUFU programme, to write an interim evaluation report based on the data collected in Norway. The understanding in this agreement was that completion of the evaluation according to the original contract would be reconsidered when, and if, the political situation becomes normalized in the Palestine. For this reason, the present interim report is based on limited information, making it mandatory to treat the report accordingly, i.e. as just an interim report.

The structure of this interim report

The next chapter (chapter 2) will constitute the main body of this report. The chapter will present each programme. Following this, an analysis of the following aspects will be provided:

- organization and research management
- institutional development
- achievement of goals and effects
- sustainability
- gender

In addition to these points, for three of the programmes that were transferred from NORAD to NUFU in 1996, an analysis will be given focusing on this process of transfer.

Following this, chapter 3 will – within the limits of the data collected and analysis presented in chapter 2 – provide some tentative conclusions and recommendations.

Finally, chapter 4 will give a brief overview over the data collection tasks and areas of analysis that should be undertaken in order to make a more complete, comprehensive evaluation.

Annex 1 is a list of informants who have provided information to the evaluation.

Annex 2 is a list of documents and publications used in the evaluation.

Annex 3 is a copy of the terms of reference for this evaluation.

2 Description and analysis of the NUFU-cooperation between Palestine institutions and Norwegian institutions

2.1 Background for the Palestine-Norwegian cooperation

The main reason why the Palestinian programmes were established as part of the NUFU-portfolio may be explained in terms of Norwegian foreign policy and related diplomatic activities that emerged as a follow-up of the “Oslo agreement”, which was initially signed in August 1993. The agreement stipulated a substantial effort in reconstruction and development of the Palestinian areas, based on financial contributions from a group of 46 donor nations. Norway was given the chair of this group, a leadership role that the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) became strongly committed to.

In Norwegian developmental aid policy, the Palestine is not listed as one of the “priority” countries. Apart from the Palestinian programmes, NUFU’s programme portfolio is closely aligned to this list. However, subsequent to the Oslo agreement, the MFA became instrumental in a strategy of involving Norwegian universities and university colleges in competence building of Palestinian universities, R&D capability and higher education. For this purpose, the MFA arranged for visits of “university delegations” from Norwegian universities to universities in the Palestine – and complementary visits of Palestinian universities to universities in Norway. As a result of these visits, MoUs were signed, providing an institutional platform for initiating closer contact between some of the universities. In addition, the Norwegian universities were told that cooperative programmes with Palestinian universities would receive funding from sources that MFA controlled. Below, in the description of the programmes, the particulars of these will be explained and assessed.

2.2 Research/Training in Nutrition-related, Non-Communicable Disease at Birzeit University - PRO 63/96

Co-operating institutions

Birzeit University, Dept. of Community Health (from 1999: Institute of Community and Public Health)

University of Oslo, Dept. of General Practice and Community Medicine Research

Academic field

Medical Sciences (epidemiology, community medicine and public health)

Home Economics, Nutrition

Public Health

Co-ordinators

Gerd Holmboe-Ottesen

University of Oslo, Dept. of General Practice and Community Medicine, Section of Preventive Medicine and Epidemiology.

Tawfiq A. Nasser (1996 – 1997)/Rita Giacaman, Director

Birzeit University, Dept. of Community Health

Allocation

1997 – 2000: NOK 2.388.000

2.2.1 Description of the programme

The objective of the proposal was to establish a unit within the Dept. of Community Health at the Birzeit University, to undertake the task of research, training and health education programmes focusing on the modern, lifestyle-related diseases, i.e. the triad of diabetes, coronary heart disease and hypertension. These non-communicable diseases are associated with over-nutrition as well as malnutrition. Prior to this programme, very little research and training activity in the West Bank and Gaza had been undertaken in relation to non-communicable diseases, even though they were known to be primary causes of morbidity and mortality by the majority of physicians in the area. The major research work undertaken by this programme is a study of rural-urban differences focusing on the prevalence of diabetes and iron deficiency anaemia in two communities, one urban in Ramallah and one rural community. In conjunction with this research, two Palestinian Ph. D.-students are using the material for their thesis. In addition, two Palestinian students have completed a master degree related to the programme. The programme was instrumental in establishing diploma courses and a Master's programme in Public Health.

It has furthermore arranged seminars and workshops on diabetes and epidemiological subjects, and worked out curricula for diabetes teaching and training for health personnel, nurses and physicians. The results of the study have been published in international journals and otherwise disseminated to a broad audience.

2.2.2 Organization and research management

A general characteristic of this programme is high quality and thoroughness related to the research design, organization and management at all stages. In spite of a demanding data collection procedure, this has been successfully completed. Judging from the documentation from the programme, the management has been outstanding in terms of research method, research operation and, also, ethics.

2.2.3 Institutional development

The programme has been an important contribution towards strengthening the Institute of Community and Public Health at Birzeit University, as it was instrumental in the establishment of the Epidemiological Unit at the Department in 1997, as well as the Master's Programme in Public Health, which is now running successfully. This was reinforced by the activities related to dissemination of results from the programme to the Palestine public health policy-making community and practitioners. Simultaneously, the Epidemiological Unit became highly visible as a national center of expertise in epidemiology, which clearly marks an institutional achievement.

2.2.4 Achievement of goals and effects

The programme has been successful in attaining its goals in terms of:

- epidemiological research related to mapping and explaining the prevalence of diabetes 2 and related risk factors in Palestine, which is a significant type of knowledge in terms of health, welfare and economics,
- strengthen epidemiology as a discipline and expert profession, both of which are institutionally important,
- training and education of researchers in epidemiology – two Ph.D. degrees and two master degrees, of which the latter have been completed,
- gaining academic recognition of Birzeit University as a high quality research and training organization in epidemiology and community/public health, this by means of publication of results in international journals and various activities related to dissemination of results to targeted audiences.

For the Norwegian partners, the programme provided them with high quality data which is important in their own research, especially for comparative analyses in which cultural and socio-economic factors have a significant role in the hypotheses and explanations.

According to the Norwegian programme co-ordinator, the Palestine partners were “top notch”. Many of the articles and papers from the programme are co-authored with both Palestine and Norwegian researchers.

2.2.5 Sustainability

The programme has contributed significantly to the establishment of the Epidemiological Unit at the Birzeit University, by this contributing to a transition to a higher level of permanence and robustness in terms of establishing an institutional framework for epidemiological research and related activities. The programme has been instrumental in achieving the critical mass needed for creating a national epidemiological community, with increased awareness of the importance of this type of approach in public health policy and planning, for authorities and practitioners. Finally, the academic quality of the research undertaken is an asset in itself, which contributes to making Birzeit University attractive as a research organization. Still, the sustainability will depend on the funding climate – and, in more general, on political-economic factors important for funding of university research. However, even in a pessimistic scenario, the competence building achieved by the programme will probably have a potential which may be beneficial to society.

2.2.6 Gender

In this programme, special focus has been set on women in relation to iron deficiency anaemia as well as diabetes and its associated risk factors, such as obesity. It was hypothesized that the prevalence of diabetes and anaemia among women would be related to culturally gender defined life styles and to childbearing. Thus, the aspect of gender awareness in the research has been high and essential for the results. Furthermore, in terms of the gender aspect in the research management and in the programme team, the number of female researchers at all levels has been high. The director of the Institute of Community and Public Health is also female and has kept a gender focus all through her research carrier. In addition, one of the two Ph.D. candidates is female – and the two master degree students are also female. In sum, one may conclude that gender concerns have been well attended to in the programme.

2.2.7 Transfer from NORAD to NUFU

This program was initiated as a result of the visit made by a delegation from the University of Oslo to Palestine, as a follow-up promoted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs after the “Oslo Agreement” in 1993-94. One of the results of this visit was the signing of a cooperative agreement between the University of Oslo and the Birzeit University. The project coordinator was a member of this delegation. In the first years of the program, it received funding directly from NORAD, the foreign aid agency of the Norwegian government, and was one of the programs in NORAD’s portfolio. In 1996, the

responsibility of the program was transferred to NUFU. According to the Norwegian program coordinator, this transfer did not change or impact the program in any significant manner.

2.3 Competence-Building in Special Education - PRO 64/96

Cooperating institutions

An-Najah National University, The Department of Education and Sociology
University of Oslo, Department of Special Education

Coordinators

Siri Wormnæs

University of Oslo, Department of Special Education

Ali Habayeb

Maher Abu Zant

An-Najah National University, Dept. of Education

Allocation

1997 - 2000: NOK 1.850.000

2.3.1 Description of the programme

The main purpose of this programme was to strengthen the capacity and competence in research and education in the field of special education at the An-Najah National University in Nablus. This aim was elaborated as:

- to develop the field of special education at An-Najah National University, concerning degrees, research and teaching materials,
- to improve the knowledge, understanding and skills for helping persons with disabilities in the Northern part of the West Bank, Palestine,
- to increase cross-cultural understanding among students and staff of the involved universities in the fields of Special Education and rehabilitation.

For this purpose, the programme was designed with numerous activities aimed at increasing Palestine awareness of local integration and community based solutions as a sustainable strategy for special education of children with disabilities. Thus, the programme was partly based on an action research model aimed at involving the participants, particularly the staff at the An-Najah National University and community school teachers, in developing their own models and methods for teaching children with disabilities at normal schools. An important target group for the programme was Palestine teachers, because they are strategic for increasing the awareness of the possibilities for teaching children with disabilities. Thus, to provide teachers with skills and insights, and for teaching about children with disabilities, was stated as an important goal. The programme was also involved in educational activities at the collaborating universities.

2.3.2 Organization and research management

The ambition of this programme was demanding because it required a broad, fundamental shift of attitudes in terms of educational policies, educational principles and modes of teaching children with disabilities. As evident in the proposal, this was clearly recognized as a strategic challenge in the planning of the programme, which was designed in order to mobilize a large-scale participation and deep commitment from numerous Palestine partners. The idea was to embed the new approach based on a philosophy of inclusiveness in the local special educational context. In the period of 1996 to 1998, the An-Najah National University's response to these requirements was apparently inadequate in terms of providing the programme with the needed high level of commitment, proper leadership and dedication. However, there is reason to believe that this has changed to the better in the latter part of the programme, in 1999 and 2000, this due to new key personnel at the An-Najah National University who have shown an increased dedication to the program's aim. Needless to say, the difficulties encountered by the programme were amplified by the Palestine-Israeli conflict, which for long periods kept the university closed or on strike – or the city of Nablus closed, in additions to restrictions on travel and curfews. Due to the special requirements of the programme, it was also vulnerable. Ideally and with hindsight, this vulnerability should have been anticipated by the research management, and they should have made plans for finding alternative partners.

The program's participants from the University of Oslo are experienced researchers with a good track record in this type of research. In the programme, they have accomplished most of the tasks that they were responsible for, according to the plans presented in the proposal – with satisfactory results.

2.3.3 Institutional development

The program's goal of establishing the field of special education at An Najah National University was initially aimed at creating a BA-level degree in this field. This goal has not yet been achieved due to financial difficulties, however, An Najah National University is offering courses in special education for MA students in education and sociology. The An Najah National University has not been successful in providing MA students for training at the University of Oslo, and the research programmes aimed at surveying educational conditions for disabled children in the West Bank has not been undertaken in the scale initially planned. Thus, the programme has not achieved some of the specific goals that were initially planned as contributions to the institutional development of the field of special education at the An Najah National University. Still, one may claim that the programme has been successful in terms of creating a foundation and a climate of awareness for inclusiveness and local integration as an approach in special education. This is evident in the broad interest that educational authorities and educators have shown, and from the attendance at seminars and workshops held by the programme. This is also

supported by the popularity of the educational videos and booklets produced by the programme. Thus, the ideas of the programme have gained increasing number of followers – this diffusion, combined with An Najah National University's adjustment in 1999, should increase the likelihood of institutional development of special education in the future. From the perspective of University of Oslo, participation in the programme has contributed to its strategy of internationalization as this has a fit with the structure of the Department of Special Education's international activities related to research and teaching.

2.3.4 Achievement of goals and effects

As explained above, the programme has not succeeded in achieving the goals related to establishing the field of special education at the BA level and other goals that were specified in the proposal in terms of An Najah National University's own contribution to the programme. It seems, however, reasonable to believe that the prospects for achieving these goals have improved in 1999 and 2000, and that in an extension of the programme, the likelihood of success will increase. In the programme, three Norwegian MA students have successfully completed their degrees based on fieldwork in the Palestine. The results from a pilot survey of teachers' opinions about inclusion of disabled children in ordinary schools have been reported in two papers by the Norwegian senior researchers – one of these has been accepted for publication in a scientific journal. For the Norwegian researchers, the data underlying these studies provide them with a unique material that elucidate the influence of cultural and socio-political factors in special education reform strategies. The programme has also successfully contributed to an increased awareness of the importance of inclusiveness and local integration as an approach in special education. In this, the program's seminars and workshops have been particularly successful; the educational videos and booklets have also had a wide distribution and dissemination.

2.3.5 Sustainability

Judging from the achievements by the programme so far, the weakness of institutional development of special education at An Najah National University makes the question of sustainability uncertain. Still, recent developments at An Najah National University in infusing the programme with more dedication and dynamism has increased the likelihood that higher priority will be given to the programme and its objectives. This may be reinforced by external influences because evidently Palestine educational authorities at all levels, teachers and NGOs have shown an increasing interest in the objectives of the programme. This interest is logical because of the high rate of disabilities among children in Palestine,

2.3.6 Gender

An underlying, basic assumption in the programme plan has been to develop special education for disabled children in Palestine, regardless of their sex, however, taking the gender based segregation of the Palestine educational system which operates with separate boys' and girls' schools as given. As may be observed at many universities, An Najah National University's leadership and top management is male dominated, reflecting traditional attitudes which do not encourage women in research. More generally, this may also explain the initial inadequate level of leadership commitment and dedication to the programme. However, as pointed out earlier, this situation has changed during the latest two years.

2.3.7 Transfer from NORAD to NUFU.

The programme was initially planned in 1994, following a statement of intent of collaboration which was signed by the leaders of An Najah National University and the University of Oslo as the result of a dialogue which began in 1993. However, this coincided with the signing of the "Oslo-agreement" – and in the wake of this, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs wanted to fund a large scale collaboration between Norwegian universities and their Palestine counterparts. For this purpose, various university delegations were sent to the Palestine, however, in the meantime, the programme was postponed because Norwegian authorities wanted to make a concerted, coordinated effort. Thus funding for the programme was delayed for two years, to the middle of 1996. Initially, the funding was provided by NORAD, the foreign aid agency of the Norwegian government. From 1997, the programme funding and administration was transferred to NUFU. This transfer caused some administrative burdens because the programs had to report both to NORAD and to NUFU, but otherwise it did not effect the program.

During the first years of the programme, An Najah National University did not provide the programme with personnel having the necessary commitment and dedication. In addition, the terms provided by NUFU does not give the Norwegian programme leaders opportunities for long stays at the partner university of the developing country. This may be wise, but counterproductive when programmes are in an initial or critical phase, in need of direct intervention and hands on management. Because of financial constraints at the University of Oslo, the Department of Special Education was unable to give the Norwegian programme coordinator leaves of absence in order to attend to the programme the at An Najah National University.

2.4 Building Competence in Epidemiology in Palestine - PRO 65/96

Cooperating institutions

University of Hebron, The College of Science

University of Oslo, Dept. of Gen. Practice & Com. Medicine / National Institute of Occupational Health, Norway

Coordinators

Espen Bjertness

University of Oslo, Dept. of Gen. Practice & Com. Medicine

Awni Khatib

University of Hebron, College of Science

Allocation

1997 - 2000: NOK 2.300.000

2.4.1 Description of the programme

The main objective of this programme was epidemiological, i.e. to establish the occurrence of diseases and investigate possible causes and risk factors of selected diseases in Palestine and to improve the health in society. This program was initiated almost parallel to the other NUFU-program on epidemiology, the cooperation of University of Oslo with the Birzeit University (PRO 63/96) and has a close, overlapping cooperative relationship with this program. The coordinator and other personnel have served as counselors for both programs. Sub-objectives was:

- to build and strengthen competence and experience in epidemiology and occupational hygiene in Palestine,
- to encourage Palestinian researchers to plan and carry out epidemiological studies in Palestine,
- to stimulate Palestinian faculty members and health personnel/planners to make greater use of epidemiological data, concepts and methods in the preparation, updating, monitoring and evaluation of relevant activities,
- to motivate Palestinian faculty members and health personnel/planners to acknowledge epidemiology as a basis for building a rational Public Health sector.

The major activities undertaken in this programme were a research project on occupational and environmental hazards due to chemical compounds in the shoe manufacturing industry

in the Hebron area, and training courses on how to plan and conduct epidemiological surveys. Hebron is well known for its shoe industry, and the chemicals in use are mainly similar to those used in Western countries. Many of these chemicals are classified as carcinogenic, neurotoxic and suspected to affect the reproduction, however, the use of protective equipment and measures by workers in Hebron are almost negligible.

2.4.2 Organization and research management

A salient feature of this programme was building competence in epidemiology with a focus on occupational health and hazards in industrial working environment. In comparison with the other NUFU-programme having an epidemiological approach with a focus on diabetes (PRO 63/96), this programme put more emphasis on basic training and education in epidemiological methodology from an occupational health and safety perspective, however, both programs have maintained a close relationship to each other and shared resources. The scope of this program (PRO 65/96 – University of Oslo/University of Hebron cooperation) was ambitious, because it aimed at providing intensive training for a large number of people. For various reasons that were exterior to the programme, the implementation of this was delayed, which explains why the attendance was lower than initially planned. In spite of this, the programme has successfully completed three courses in which approximately 90 persons have attended and received credits or diplomas. The research component of the programme has been important, but less pronounced, as this has mainly been undertaken by a Ph. D. student. This research has had a satisfactory progression. Thus, in terms of the goals that were set in the programme proposal, the programme has been successful, which reflects favourably on the management of the programme. Still, given the goals of the programme, which were ambitious considering the tense situation in Palestine, one may ask why NUFU approved the programme without asking the programme leaders to design an alternative plan in event of difficulties.

2.4.3 Institutional development

The most visible achievement with regard to institutional development has been the establishment in April 1998 of the OSHT-P (Occupational Safety and Health Team – Palestine), at the University of Hebron. It seems fair to attribute this to the activities generated by the programme. OSHT-P aims at becoming a national center for expertise on occupational and safety matters, and to become an educational institution for training people for work in this field. Simultaneously, the University of Hebron and the OSHT-P have established cooperative relationships to other universities, both in the Palestine and outside the country. This will contribute to the robustness of the institutional framework for occupational health and safety. The program has also contributed to the institutionalization of the epidemiological program at the Birzeit University because of its close cooperative relationship to the activities undertaken in the program (PRO 63/96). The programme attempted to introduce the Scandinavian system of occupational safety ombudsmen in

Palestine industry. The results of this are difficult to evaluate, however, a spin-off of this activity has been the establishment of an industrial labour union in Hebron, which is important for this kind of effort.

2.4.4 Achievement of goals and effects

The programme has been important in providing many persons in Palestine with basic understanding and skills related to an epidemiological approach to occupational health and safety, in particular in relationship to the hazards and long term damage imposed by toxic and chemical environment at work. This may be attributed to the training courses arranged by the programme and to the dissemination of results from the research. The idea of introducing a Scandinavian occupational safety and health model with the role of a safety ombudsman may seem ambitious, however, it has not been possible to assess this. Its probability of success is small, because the Scandinavian model is based on strong labour unions combined with a national legal regime and complementary institutions that work in concert. Still, the programme has contributed to an increased awareness and competence in the area of occupational health and safety, because of the number of people who have attended the courses and activities (seminars, workshops, etc.). Thus new areas, such as the use of pesticides in Palestine agriculture, have been opened. The establishment of OSHT-P (cf. above) is definitely a promising achievement. As pointed out earlier, the program has also cooperated closely with PRO 63/96 and thus contributed to the establishment of epidemiology as an academic discipline at the Birzeit University.

The Norwegian programme leader claims that the programme has given them access to data that are unique because of the extremeness of workers' exposure to toxic and hazardous working conditions, and because modern, advanced measurement techniques (gas chromatography) used by the researchers provides data measuring complex working environmental conditions. The Ph.D.-student who has worked with this material has had a satisfactory progression with completing his thesis.

2.4.5 Sustainability

The long-term prospects of establishing permanent epidemiological disciplines related to occupational health and safety should be fair considering the significance of this towards safeguarding health and welfare in a society. In this perspective, the results of the programme may be considered as an important contribution towards getting started. However, establishing the institutions necessary for achieving a satisfactory standard of occupational health and safety would require a large-scale investment and political commitment. The programme has contributed towards this. The future of OSHT-P will, like most organizations, depend on stable funding and a favourable political climate, however, one may claim that the programme has created a reservoir of knowledge and skills which has a potential future benefit independent of its institutional platform or alignment.

2.4.6 Gender

This is a male dominated programme because most of the researchers and other participants have been male, and because the occupational safety and health concerns of the programme stem from worksites that are predominantly male, which reflects the culturally defined division of labour in Palestine society. Still, one may claim that the aims of this programme could potentially benefit both sexes because the programme has established a platform of expertise which may be used in occupations and settings where women also work, e.g. agriculture. In addition, the aims of the programme, which is reduction of damages caused by occupational hazards, will benefit all members of a society, in which case the question of gender becomes less relevant. The program is now planning a follow-up activity for a M.Sc-study focusing on the impact of female farmers' exposure to pesticides during pregnancy ("Time to pregnancy"), in which the gender perspective will dominate.

2.4.7 Transfer from NORAD to NUFU

This program was also initiated as a result of the visit made by a delegation from the University of Oslo to Palestine, as a follow-up promoted by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs after the "Oslo Agreement" in 1993-94. The project coordinator was a member of this delegation.³ In the first years of the program, it received funding directly from NORAD, the foreign aid agency of the Norwegian government, and was one of the programs in NORAD's portfolio. In 1996, the responsibility of the program was transferred to NUFU. According to the Norwegian program coordinator, this transfer did not change or impact the program in any significant manner, however, in 1996, the program had to send reports both to NORAD and NUFU, a task which was time consuming.

³ cf. Lucy Smith and Espen Bjertness, "A challenge to the Lancet readers", *Lancet*, 1995, p 346.

2.5 Development of Master Degree Programme in Landscape Architecture at Birzeit University - PRO 10/97

Cooperating institutions

Agricultural University of Norway, Department of Land Use and Planning
Birzeit University, Department of Architecture

Coordinators

Karsten Jørgensen

Agricultural University of Norway, Department of Land Use and Landscape Planning

Wael Hashlamoun

Birzeit University, Faculty of Engineering

Allocation

1997 - 2001: NOK 2.200.000

2.5.1 Description of the programme

The aim of the programme was to provide post-graduate training at Birzeit University in the area of landscape architecture for students, employees from municipalities, ministries and councils, NGOs and from the private sector in Palestine. The ambition of the programme was to address target groups at local, regional and national level. Also, it aimed at increasing the capacity and competence of staff at the Department of Architecture at Birzeit University with respect to landscape planning and design issues. This involved upgrading the curriculum in landscape planning at graduate level and initiating joint research programmes focusing on sustainable development of the Palestinian territories. The most visible activity of the program has been educating Palestine students in landscape architecture and landscape planning on an advanced level – to attaining M.Sc.-degrees and Ph.D.-degrees. The two research programmes described in the proposal were programmes that are undertaken in conjunction with the Ph.D.-program. Both the M.Sc.-programs and the Ph.D.-programs have been carried out according to a sandwich model, i.e. the students having divided their time between Agricultural University of Norway and Birzeit University, some of the students taking courses at still other universities.

2.5.2 Organization and research management

This is a straightforward programme in terms of clearly defined educational goals closely aligned to AUN's mainstream activity. Thus, apart from the delays caused by the first two Palestine Ph.D.-students who withdrew from the programme (they were replaced by two others), the programme has had satisfactory progress. This reflects favourably on both Agricultural University of Norway and Birzeit University in terms of organization and management. The research activities have been undertaken in conjunction with the two Ph.D.-projects – and both have had a satisfactory progression.

2.5.3 Institutional development

Early in the programme, in 1999, Birzeit University established a concentration in landscape architecture as part of the existing B.Sc.-degree in architecture. The ambition was to expand this to a M.Sc-program in landscape architecture, however this has been postponed until after 2001, because Birzeit University still feels it lacks adequate teaching capability, i.e. personnel with the required level of competence. Two of the M.Sc-students who successfully graduated from Agricultural University of Norway in 2000 now work with teaching at Birzeit University; the third works at the Islamic University of Gaza. The Ph.D.-students are in the pipeline, their progression is satisfactory. They will, after completion of their Ph.D., become members of the faculty at Birzeit University. Thus, the likelihood of attaining the institutional aims of the programme in terms of personnel who in the future will have the required academic qualifications appear to be fair.

2.5.4 Achievement of goals and effects

In the initial plan of 1997, the main objective of the programme was stated as to develop and provide a post-graduate training program (master degree level) at Birzeit University in the area of landscape architecture by year 2001. Later, in the annual report of 1999, this target was postponed – the initial target of 2001 being declared as “unrealistic”, with no new date set. Still, significant milestones from the proposal have been achieved, but at slower pace, mainly due to the delays caused by the two Palestine Ph.D.-students who withdrew. Thus, the prospects of completing the goals of the programme are fair. Furthermore, because the students who completed their M.Sc-degree at Agricultural University of Norway are employed in relevant positions related to landscape architecture at Birzeit University and the Islamic University of Gaza, they are also contributing to attaining the planned goals. On the Agricultural University of Norway's side of the programme there has been no research activities as yet. However, the Norwegian researchers in the programme claim that the programme contributes favourably to Agricultural University of Norway's goal of increased internationalization of its activities and that it contributes to a long-term network building that is essential for future research.

2.5.5 Sustainability

In the proposal, the demand for the knowledge, expertise and skills in landscape architecture and landscape planning was defined as urgent due to various developmental factors which are putting heavy strains on Palestine landscapes and natural resources. This justification for strengthening a weak, almost absent level of competence in the Palestine will depend on building a professional base and community of landscape architects and landscape planners. The aim of the programme is to become a cornerstone in this, with a center at Birzeit University. Judging from the progress of the programme, the prospects for succeeding appear to be fair.

2.5.6 Gender

The gender aspect of landscape architecture and landscape planning is generally not strong. Still, the Palestine side of the programme has been male dominated, because most of the participants have been male. The implication of this is that if Birzeit University succeeds in its ambition of establishing a M.Sc.-study in landscape architecture and landscape planning, the programme has contributed towards the establishment of a male dominated teaching staff. If the programme is to be extended for another NUFU-period, this imbalance may be neutralized by giving potential female Ph.D.-students special encouragement and incentives.

2.6 The Lower Jordan River Basin Programme - PRO 02/98

Cooperating institutions

Birzeit University, Department of Geography, History and Political Science

University of Bergen, Department of Social Anthropology

Coordinators

Leif Manger

University of Bergen, Department of Social Anthropology

Kamal Abdelfattah

Birzeit University, Department of Geography, History and Political Science.

Allocation

1998 - 2000: NOK 2.500.000

2.6.1 Description of the programme

The Lower Jordan River Basin Programme has as its main goal to build up research and competency among Palestinians and Norwegians with regard to the culture history and human ecology of the Lower Jordan Basin of Palestine and Jordan, especially as it pertains to current development issues in the basin. According to the proposal, the programme had two major goals:

- to foster cumulative research on problems which are of relevance to the sustainable development of the area,
- to foster collaborative research on such problems by students and scholars from Norway and Birzeit University.

The goals of the programme were planned in two phases. The first phase of two years consisted of cooperative research activities at the Birzeit University, in the Dept. of Geography, History and Political Science and the Palestinian Institute of Archaeology, and at the University of Bergen, in the Depts. of Anthropology and Archaeology and Centre for Development Studies. The subsequent second phase of two years consisted of activities having a focus on education and training of researchers. These would be implemented by having promising Birzeit students being admitted and sponsored toward graduate degrees at Univ. of Bergen departments, and Univ. of Bergen graduate students carrying out field programmes in connection with the cooperative research programme. It also aims at helping to develop academic capacity, contributing to graduate programmes and resource management research center. Within this framework, disciplinary components were defined:

- Short-term objectives for geography/history/ political science component: Cooperative research on the recent past of human resources management in the Jordan River Basin.

- Medium and long-term objectives: Education and training of researchers and building towards a resource management center and possible graduate programmes in related fields. Short-term objectives of Archaeology component: Cooperative research on the past ten millennia of natural resources management of the Jordan River Basin.
- Medium and long-term objectives: Education and training of researchers and building toward development of academic competence capacity.

The program has completed its first phase and is now in the middle of its second phase. The level of activity in the program is high because it has successfully attracted participation of researchers and students who are not financed by the NUFU-program.

2.6.2 Organization and research management

A salient feature of this programme is complexity in numerous dimensions, in spite of a clear-cut objective of building up research and competency among Palestinians and Norwegians with regard to the culture history and human ecology of the Lower Jordan Basin of Palestine and Jordan. This complexity is evident in terms of numerous distinct research foci – ranging from a deep, diachronic perspectives to contemporary factors related to water management and ownership issues along the Jordan Basin. The thematic complexity reflects a comprehensive approach relevant for the knowledge foundation needed for the program's long-term institutional aims. In a research management perspective, the programme may be considered as an umbrella for numerous sub-programmes, each being distinct due to different academic disciplinary approaches. In addition, the archeological activities in the programme poses a managerial challenge due to seasonal requirements. The programme involves numerous researchers in addition to the researchers in the Birzeit University – University of Bergen axis in its network, and it has attracted Ph.D.-students who are funded from outside the NUFU-system. In spite of this complexity, the programme is well planned and managed, which explains its ability so far to achieve the goals that were initially set.

2.6.3 Institutional development

In terms of institutional development, this programme will, if successful, contribute to Birzeit University's long-term objective, which now is stated as establishment of a Resource Management Center and a MA-program at the Department of Archeology, both at the Birzeit University. University of Bergen's motive for participation in the programme is to develop its own competence in Middle East studies, which also will depend on being closely linked with research institutions in the region. This institutional interdependence provides incentives for a dedication and commitment which is beneficial for both. Looking more closely at the program's mode of operation, it is characterized by an intense, close cooperation of all the researchers, in particular in Palestine, in the field and at Birzeit

University. This, combined with satisfactory progress of the research, makes the prospects for institutional development good. In addition, the programme benefits from having close ties to Birzeit University's top management and leaders, who are supportive of the program's goals.

2.6.4 Achievement of goals and effects

The initial main goal of the programme was stated as to build up research and competence among Palestinians and Norwegians with regard to culture history and human ecology of the Lower Jordan Basin of Palestine and Jordan. The programme had at the time of this interim evaluation completed approximately 2/3 of its time, i.e. it was entering into the finalization and harvesting period. Thus, it is still too early to assess to what extent the program's final, overall goals will be achieved. However, according to the annual reports and information from the management, the work is progressing according to plans, which, needless to say, makes achievement of the program's goals more likely.

2.6.5 Sustainability

This aspect is closely linked to the question of institutional development on the one side, and, on the other side, to society's perceived need for the type of research, expertise and knowledge which the programme aims at building up. The knowledge base and competence that the programme aims at has a clear political motivation and role in the Palestine nation building effort. Thus, an important factor for giving this field of work high priority in the future should be present. Within this framework of justification, sustainability will depend on to what extent the programme will be able to service the political expectations, without compromising professional, academic standards of quality. The first aspect, the political expectations, are critical for the Palestine support; the second is critical for the researchers' long-term academic reputation and credibility. Judging from the reception of the programme and the response to its early results, the programme appears to have a fair degree of sustainability.

2.6.6 Gender

The majority of the researchers in this programme are male; there are five female researchers or Ph.D.-students affiliated or employed in the programme, however, none of these come from Birzeit University. Two of the sub-projects (Ph.D.-projects) have an explicit gender focus: One with a focus on women in Palestine agriculture and one on Palestine women's relationship to and conception of water. Seen from the outside, the contribution of these two are significant and may be considered an asset to the programme. If the programme is extended into the next NUFU-period, the programme leaders and managers should encourage larger participation of Palestine female researchers from Birzeit University and otherwise promote a gender perspective in the research because this is a promising perspective.

3 Some tentative conclusions and recommendations

3.1 General considerations

The general impression one gets from analyzing the programs in NUFU's Palestine-Norwegian cooperation is that they have been reasonably successful, however, their degree of success and the criteria of success are different in each program, as explained in the previous chapter. All the programs have been delayed mainly due to interruptions and hindrances caused by the Palestine-Israeli conflict. One of the programs experienced startup difficulties that amplified this. In spite of the delays, all projects demonstrate aspects that indicate success or likelihood of success, even if some of these outcomes differ from the aims that were initially planned. However, there are aspects related to the overall factors governing the programs that should be discussed, as will be done in the following.

Compared to most other large research programs, a salient feature of the NUFU-program is the *absence* of a top-level research agenda or research objective. Furthermore, there are no links between the priorities set in national research agendas and the agenda in the programs of NUFU. NORAD, the foreign aid agency which funds NUFU, has given NUFU autonomy in making the specific research priorities - NORAD decides which country will receive aid. This sets the framework for NUFU's strategy. In this, institutional development is a focal point; the primary goal is to promote development of universities as institutions and their role as educators and researchers, which is intended to reflect the needs of the developing country. Within this framework, NUFU maintains that the research activities should be generated by a "bottom-up" process in which the proposals are forwarded through an institutional level, i.e. an agreement made between the Norwegian university or university college and a complementary organization in the "South".

In evaluating research, trying to understand *why* research is proposed and why a project or program is undertaken is basic. In evaluating NUFU's Palestine-Norwegian cooperation, the institutional and political justifications for undertaking the programs are obvious and coherent in terms of a foreign aid strategy. It is also easy to understand why Palestine universities welcome the funds and cooperative opportunities presented by the program. Although equity is stated as an ideal, the NUFU-cooperation is based on an asymmetry between the two partners who cooperate in a program: On the one side, the "rich" Norwegian university which has the advantage of being close to the funding sources, and, on the other hand, its partner in the developing country, who lacks most of everything apart from the *potential* in human capital. In particular, the human capital platform at many

universities in Palestine, as in most other developing countries, is absent or negligible, i.e. the critical mass in terms of adequate number of qualified personnel having the range of expertise needed for establishing an academic discipline capable of educating others and doing its own research.

However, trying to understand why Norwegian researchers and the organizations that they work at want to participate is less obvious. This question is important because the idea of the NUFU-cooperation requires dedication and commitment from Norwegian researchers for a prolonged period. Of course, idealistic and altruistic factors may contribute to this. In all the programs in NUFU's Palestine-Norwegian cooperation, the educational objectives are present. In the cooperation between the Birzeit University and the Agricultural University of Norway on landscape architecture, the educational aim is paramount – what is termed research in this is the research undertaken by the Palestine Ph.D.-students in the program. In the other programs in the NUFU's Palestine-Norwegian programs, Norwegian researchers undertake more research, however, their main role is to serve as educators, counselors and coordinators and administrators for Palestine students and researchers. Although NUFU's aim is to contribute to the institutional development of universities and research in developing countries, and by this, to their institutional sustainability, this aim is based on an assumption of a high level of patience, commitment and dedication from senior Norwegian researchers. When asked why they involved themselves in this, they usually justify this as a long-term investment, i.e. that the cooperation will give them a network of research opportunities that may become more fully developed in the future. However, this aspect of senior Norwegian researchers' opportunities for pursuing their own research interests needs careful attention from NUFU, because this aspect is crucial for the long-term viability of the NUFU-arrangement. For this reason, in the future, NUFU should put more emphasis on research – education should play a minor role.

3.2 Organization and research management

Within the framework and terms that NUFU provides, one may claim that the Palestine-Norwegian cooperative programs are reasonably well organized and managed. This may be attributed to the generally high quality of personnel in key positions, especially the senior researchers who have had an operational responsibility in the programs. However, some of the programs show a better performance than others, which indicates a potential for improvement. Furthermore, there are structural aspects in the NUFU-system which are not optimal in terms of organization and management, and thus in need for improvement, however, these solutions are not obvious. Below, various aspects related to this will be discussed.

In the NUFFIC evaluation of NUFU, it was observed that the programs may be characterized as academic cooperation by means of a decentralized model, in which the programs enjoy a high level of autonomy. This is supported by the observation that there are many different modalities of project management.⁴ These observations are generally valid for the Palestine-Norwegian cooperative programs, however, because of the emphasis on education in most of the programs, the degree of autonomy is in reality defined by educational requirements and structure.

Delays

In all the programs one may observe delays due to interruptions caused by various incidents of the Israeli-Palestine conflict. Needless to say, in a political and social climate of hostility and conflicts, the working conditions for “normal” progression of work is not favourable. In this perspective, the flexibility in how programs are organized and their ability to adjust, i.e. their organizational agility, has been an advantage and asset for the Palestine partners. In spite of this, all the projects have been delayed – in these delays the Palestine-Israeli conflict has been the main cause. The ultimate implication of interruptions and hindrances is usually increase of costs of a program, or alternatively, that activities that were originally planned must be reduced or abandoned. This may be observed in all the programs.

Structural aspects

In terms of organizational structure, the cooperative programs involve at least five groups of actors:

- the organizational unit at the Palestine university undertaking the program and its program coordinator, in close cooperation with,
- the organizational unit at the Norwegian university which provides the academic resources and its program coordinator,
- the management and administrative structure of the Palestine university,
- the management and administrative structure of the Norwegian university,
- the NUFU-secretariat in Norway.

If the program cooperates with others, this complexity increases, such as seen in the Lower Jordan River Basin Programme in which numerous “outsiders” cooperate with the core group consisting of representatives from the Birzeit University and the University of Bergen. According to the Norwegian coordinators, they must relate themselves to three different sets of superiors:

- the management and administrative structure of the Palestine university,
- the management and administrative structure of the Norwegian university,
- the NUFU-secretariat in Norway.

⁴ cf. op.cit. p 27

Each of these superiors imply different standards of communications, information requests and formats, and rules and regulations. In the management of the financial resources and accounts, which is strategic in a number of ways, this may pose a burden on the program coordinators, particularly if the system is large. In addition, in the university culture, the standards of project management are different, usually more informal than in streamlined R&D-organizations. Because of this, the level of routinization of research management is low as compared to industrial R&D management systems. In order to cope with this, all the Norwegian program coordinators state that they have designed their own system for keeping track of the financial status of the programs. Needless to say, this also is an additional burden, however, all the coordinators claim that their own “shadow accounts” are indispensable. These aspects indicate a need for improving the system in terms of simplifying and/or standardization of the administrative procedures and related modes of communication and information processing. The key question may be, what are the requirements in terms of information needed by NUFU’s administration and board for its accountability and need for monitoring and assessment of the status of the various programs? This question is probably difficult to answer because of the following:

- NUFU’s administration is dedicated, efficient, well-organized and flexible, having all the attributes of a high quality, dynamic organization,
- NUFU’s external relationship is open – NUFU and its personnel are easily accessible, its organization and functions are transparent to the outside world,
- NUFU is closely integrated in the university cultures of Norway and enjoys a high level of legitimacy in this, however, it has its own *modus operandi*.

A closely related question is, how should NUFU intervene if a project encounters difficulties? Usually, problems in a project may be solved by making changes. However, the NUFU-system does not seem to have this type of troubleshooting capability, flexibility or authority, apart from denying further funding. One obvious solution would be to provide the program coordinators with the needed funding in order to implement changes. The implication of this may be that NUFU’s policy in terms of administrative costs reimbursement to the Norwegian coordinators should be more flexible, reflecting the particular needs of each program. The present level of reimbursement to the Norwegian organization is low and does not cover the real costs of participation in the NUFU-programs. This implies that Norwegian university personnel, in particular the coordinators, are doing work for free or at highly subsidized rates for NUFU. In the long run, NUFU will suffer from this policy, because NUFU will have to compete with other activities at the universities and the economic aspect is becoming important in this.

3.3 Institutional development

It seems fair to claim that the programs have contributed to the institutional development of university based research and educational capacity building at the Palestine universities. Some of the programs have achieved this more rapidly and in a more systematic manner than others – the “slow-paced” may be explained due to start-up problems and the inevitable delays caused by the Israeli-Palestine conflicts. However, the contribution of the programs must be appreciated in two perspectives: On the one hand, the demand and need for institutional development and capability building, which is considerable in Palestine. In a macroscopic context, the NUFU-programs in Palestine may seem small. On the other hand, in view of the limited resources expended, the achievements are satisfactory; in some of the programs the achievements are remarkable, indicating an optimal combination of resource allocation and deployment, dedication, commitment, talent and skills.

The future prospects for institutional development in the five Palestine-Norwegian cooperative programs depend on numerous factors working in concert, of which each program constitute only one. Still, this factor is crucial – without the human capital platform and knowledge base which the programs are aimed at building, the prospects for institutional development are small. Another complementary factor is funding – which is scarce and uncertain in Palestine due to a number of reasons. However, having a human capital platform and knowledge base increases the potential for institutional survival because in the competition for funding, this is the most precious asset. This contributes in two important ways: To increase the legitimacy and perceived need for the institution in the national context, and, if academic and scientific recognition is achieved, contribute to a positive image of Palestine as a society with a potential for doing interesting research. Secondly, success breeds success: Having a good academic reputation attracts international funding and cooperation, reinforcing the institutional position in important networks of knowledge production and research. There are clear sign that some of the programs are in process of entering this positive spiral of development.

3.4 Achievement of goals and effects

All the projects have in common that they are delayed in terms of the schedules and milestones that were set in the proposals and initial plans. For this reason some of the goals set in these plans that should have been reached by now, have not yet been achieved. As explained earlier, the delays may to a large extent be explained in terms of the interruptions and hindrances due to the Israeli-Palestine conflict, i.e. what is usually classified as a state of *force majeure*. Thus, in evaluating the performance of the programs, attention has been given to the prospects of the various activities in terms of achieving their goals in spite of the delays, i.e. to what extent these indicate a satisfactory progress which will increase the probability of goals being attained. Apart from the initial problems

encountered in the An-Najah National University and University of Oslo's cooperative program on special education, most of the goals appear to be within reach. This claim is supported by the fact that in most programs, important milestones and sub-goals have been attained with satisfactory results.

In terms of effects, this factor has been difficult to evaluate at distance, from Norway. However, in this, a distinction should be made between effects that may be assessed in terms of disciplinary criteria relevant for the cooperating universities, and external, societal effects. In the former, the question of effects is also closely related to achievements of academic goals. One may claim that with the exception of the cooperative program at Birzeit University and Agricultural University of Norway on education in landscape architecture in which the anticipated results are mainly internal to the universities, the other programs have also had broad, societal aims outside the universities. A salient feature of these programs is that they have been extrovert in their activities by arranging workshops, seminars, educational courses, etc., aimed at dissemination of research results and increasing public awareness, knowledge and interests in their fields of work. Their success in this may be measured by the favourable response from the outside world in these effort. Needless to say, this also contributes favourably to the institutional aims of the programs. Thus, the programs should be commended for these activities and encouraged to continue with this. The academic disciplinary effects of the programs are closely related to the question of academic goals being attained, which seem probable, as explained above.

3.5 Sustainability

In most developing nations, it is difficult to make predictions on sustainability because this, just as with institutional development, is closely related to factors outside the universities in the programs. However, as with institutional development, a human capital platform and knowledge base is an absolute prerequisite for a sustainable development. One may even claim that even if the institutional goals of the programs fail, the programs may still have created sustainability because the human capital developed may be utilized for the benefit of other purposes and may contribute significantly to alternative goals that are important to society. Thus, the epidemiological expertise that two of the programs have developed has a broad range of applications outside the universities and even outside epidemiology. Similar potentials exist in the other programs. This makes the question of sustainability elusive, however, it also indicates that in terms of research and education, i.e. the development of human capital platforms and knowledge base, the level of risk is lower compared to institutional development because sustainability may materialize in a number of different ways.

As pointed out in the section above, the programs have been successful in disseminating their results and expertise to a broad range of audiences in the public world outside the universities. As this contributes to an informed opinion and formation of interests in the issues and disciplines representing the expertise in the various academic fields, it seems fair to claim that this also contributes to the sustainability of the programs and their institutional goals.

3.6 Gender

With the exception of the cooperative program on research/training in nutrition-related, non-communicable disease (diabetes) at Birzeit University and University of Oslo, the other four Palestine-Norwegian cooperative programs are male dominated, especially on the Palestine side of these programs. Palestine, being predominantly Islamic, has a cultural tradition in which the division of labour and related roles exclude or discourage women from work and arenas that men define as theirs. The contemporary Western ideals of gender equality has a comparatively short history, and one must point to the fact that there is still a divide between these ideals and the realities of most academic institutions in Europe and USA, in which male dominance is still prevalent. Thus, on the whole, even if the Palestine programs are imbalanced in terms of gender, this type of imbalance may be observed at most universities and R&D-organizations in the West. A long-term strategy for correcting this imbalance would be to encourage Palestine women researchers to apply for Ph.-D.-studies in order to set them on a science career track. In spite of the male dominance of personnel in the programs, this dominance is not so strong in the research perspectives of the programs. As shown in the descriptions of the programs, there are several projects that focus on various issues related to women. One may even claim that in some the male dominated programs will eventually produce results that will benefit women, such as the programs on epidemiology and special education.

3.7 Transfer from NORAD to NUFU

Three of the programs in NUFU's Palestine-Norwegian cooperation were initially, prior to 1996, programs in NORAD's portfolio. In 1996, these were transferred to NUFU and became part of NUFU's portfolio. Prior to this, NUFU did not have any programs in Palestine. All three programs involved University of Oslo as the Norwegian partner, the programs being:

- PRO 63/96 – Research/training in nutrition-related, non-communicable disease, with Birzeit University, cf. section 2.2 above,
- PRO 64/96 – Competence-building in special education, with An-Najah National University in Nablus, cf. section 2.3 above,

- PRO 65/96 – Building competence in epidemiology in Palestine, with University of Hebron, cf. section 2.4 above.

The background for these three programs is closely linked to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' activities following the "Oslo-agreement" in 1993/94, as explained earlier, cf. section 2.1. In order to encourage research collaboration between Norwegian and Palestine universities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave the University of Oslo with funding for this purpose. Subsequently, professor Lucy Smith, who was chancellor of the University of Oslo at that time, led a high-profile delegation of scientists and university executives to visit the Palestine universities. In this process, the university contracted a Danish consultancy firm to evaluate the ideas that emerged and to work out a comprehensive proposal for a national program, with budgets. The proposed program consisted of a broad range of projects, with a total annual budget of NOK 43 millions. The University of Oslo had a leading role in the proposal. The size of the proposal may be explained in terms of numerous projects being proposed, but also because of the real costs were included in the budgets, i.e. the costs of the contribution from the Norwegian universities for their own involvement in the proposed research collaboration. These costs were included in the proposal because of signals given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; they told the universities to budget the proposals as ordinary foreign aid projects.

As events evolved, the total Norwegian aid allocation to Palestine turned out to be in the order of NOK 100 million, and NORAD, which had administrative responsibility for this budget, had to adjust the plan accordingly, i.e., to downsize its framework to 1/10 of its original size. In this process, some projects were excluded – those that were retained, were asked to cut their costs, in particular, those costs related to the universities own contribution and overhead expenses.

Needless to say, this was a time consuming process, doomed to create disappointments because of the initially high expectations, and, more significant, delays for those projects that had to adjust their plans. This process may have been amplified by a "culture clash" between the institutions involved and authorities. However, in 1996, administrative responsibility for the programs that were still NORAD's administrative responsibility (some of the programs were already completed by 1996) of the University of Oslo programs in Palestine were transferred to NUFU. The reason for this was to provide the programs with stability in terms of funding. The logic of this transfer seems obvious because these programs are indeed similar to most other programs in NUFU's portfolio. According to the Norwegian program coordinators of these three programs, the transfer had no real impact on their programs. However, they recall 1996 as the year of the "papermill" because they had to submit completion reports to NORAD according to their format, and, simultaneously, the ordinary annual progress reports to NUFU, this according to NUFU's format and criteria.

3.8 Tentative recommendations

The following recommendations are based on data collected and analyzed in Norway only. Thus, the perspective is narrow and should be treated accordingly, i.e. as recommendations which may be altered and extended if a broader base of data from Palestine is provided. For this reason, the number of recommendations are also limited.

1. In the future, the NUFU-programs should increase its focus on research – the educational activities at graduate or under-graduate level should be avoided or play a minor role. Educational activities related to Ph.D.-degrees may be justified because in the university system, the research undertaken in conjunction with Ph.D.-programs play an important role. By amplifying research activities, this will increase the attractiveness of the programs, not only for Norwegian researchers, but also to a broader international scientific community, as evident in the Lower Jordan Basin Program and in the program of research/training in nutrition-related, non-communicable disease, both at Birzeit University. In the future, this may become critical for the long-term sustainability and quality of the NUFU-program at Norwegian universities. Most Norwegian universities are increasing their international research activities because of an increase in opportunities and demand from an international R&D market. In this, NUFU will be forced to compete with other programs in terms of research attractiveness.
2. NUFU should encourage the programs to anticipate and adjust their plans if the progress is not satisfactory. In this, NUFU should provide the participants, in particular the Norwegian coordinators, with the means to alter, restructure or rebalance their plans. In spite of NUFU being based on decentralized model in which flexibility and autonomy should thrive, this type of maneuverability seems to be absent because of lack of funds in the programs.
3. NUFU should recognize and to a greater extent contribute to paying the costs that the programs incur on the Norwegian program coordinators and their host organizations. It seems obvious that NUFU benefits from an “invisible” subsidy, i.e. that NUFU’s success and economy is based on a burden carried by the coordinators and the organizational unit in which they work. In the long run, this is not tenable for a number of reasons and may be detrimental to NUFU’s mission
4. NUFU should initiate a process aimed at designing an administrative system which will lessen the administrative burdens for the coordinators. Admittedly, this will be a difficult task because no solutions are obvious. As described earlier, the NUFU-secretariat is efficient and well run, having all the attributes of a high quality organization. However, the NUFU-system is complex and demanding because numerous actors and locations are involved. In EU’s R&D programs, similar

difficulties may be observed for the same reasons – NUFU is not unique. Thus an effort should be made to simplify or standardize communication, information requirements and decision making. It is, however, recognized that the idiosyncrasies of various university systems makes this recommendation particularly challenging. Still, as none of the programs use ICT-based project management tools, introduction of these may be a venue that should be explored.

5. In the future, NUFU should encourage the programs to recruit Palestine female researchers and Ph.D.-students. Apart from increasing compliance with gender equality ideals, research with a focus on women and their perspectives has a great potential, as evident in some of the activities in the programs.
6. NUFU should endorse, even amplify their encouragement of activities in the program that are aimed at audiences outside the programs in Palestine, such as the broad public or targeted key user groups, i.e. government officials, teachers, local authorities, NGOs, professional groups, etc. These activities are essential for securing legitimacy, which in turn contributes favourably to institutional development and sustainability. In line with this, action oriented research strategies should be encouraged if these are appropriate, because these have a potential of mobilizing a large number of participants to research projects. Because action oriented research strategies are demanding and vulnerable, NUFU should be prepared to recognize the risks involved.

4 Remaining data collection tasks and areas of analysis

As explained in chapter 1, this evaluation became victim of the Israeli-Palestine conflict when a new intifadia began in September 2000, at the time when the evaluation started. For this reason, a visit to Palestine in October was postponed. The present report is written without this vital source of information. More specifically, compared with the original plan, the following elements of the evaluation have not been undertaken:

- interviews with the program coordinators in Palestine,
- interviews with the Palestine university administration and management involved in the program,
- interviews with researchers who have worked in the programs, in Palestine,
- interviews with non-university user groups and partners in Palestine,
- systematic collection of information related to external activities of the programs in Palestine, i.e. workshops, seminars, conferences, consultancies, educational courses, interaction with authorities at various levels of the government, NGOs, etc
- overview of deliverables from the programs, in particular publications in Arabic
- impact-analysis of the programs in Palestine

Annex 1: Informants who have provided information in the evaluation.

Karsten Jørgensen, Agricultural University of Norway

Collin Murphy, Agricultural University of Norway

Espen Bjertness, University of Oslo

Gerd Holmboe Ottesen, University of Oslo

Siri Wormnæs, University of Oslo

Mette Topnes, University of Oslo

Leif Manger, University of Bergen

Ove Stoknes, University of Bergen

Kjell G. Pettersen, University of Bergen

Reidun Roald, NORAD

Paul Manger, NUFU

Gerd Skeie, NUFU

Annex 2: List of documents and publications used in the evaluation

From each program, all the document in the files at NUFU have been studied, more specifically:

- the annual reports from the programs, i.e. from 1996 to 1999
- the proposals
- institutional assessments
- programme agreements and plan of operation
- annual accounts/balance for each program

- *Evaluation of the NUFU Programme – Norwegian Council of Universities' Programme for Development Research and Education*, Evaluation Report 5/2000, The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, September 2000

- NUFU annual report 1999 (draft)

- 43 academic articles, papers, dissertations, etc from the programs

- annual reports and web-sites form:
 - University of Oslo
 - University of Bergen
 - Agricultural University of Norway
 - Birzeit University
 - An Najah National University
 - University of Hebron

Annex 3: Terms of reference for this evaluation

TERMS OF REFERENCE

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION OF THE NUFU-COOPERATION BETWEEN PALESTINIAN INSTITUTIONS AND NORWEGIAN INSTITUTIONS

Background and Purpose

The Norwegian Council of Universities Committee for Development Research and Education (NUFU) was set up in 1988 with representatives from all Norwegian universities and university colleges. NUFU's role is to advocate the case for development research and education, to serve as a forum for such debates and to coordinate university commitment in the field.

In 1991 the Norwegian Council of Universities entered a five-year agreement with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to finance institutional cooperation between universities and university colleges in Norway and developing countries. A second five-year agreement was signed by the parties in October 1995, now also including participation from Norwegian research institutes. The administration of the programme is taken over by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) by 1 October 1999.

The main objective of the NUFU programme is to contribute towards building up competence in developing countries through cooperation between universities, university colleges and research institutions in Norway and corresponding institutions in developing countries.

Objectives

The overall objective of the evaluation is to assess the performance of the cooperation in terms of meeting its objectives, i.e. results and impact as relates to the overall purpose of the NUFU-programme.

The evaluation should highlight knowledge and experience that can lead to a qualitative improvement of ongoing and future activities. At the same time the evaluation is to provide a basis for assessing the results of the projects. This touches on the question of whether resources are being used to produce the desired effect, i.e. that the project and programme goals are being achieved. Such an evaluation must also include an assessment of cost efficiency and matters related to the accomplishment of the projects, as well as of intended and any unintended effects of the project.

Implementation

In general, the evaluation is to be based on the agreement between the Norwegian Council of Universities and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), the NUFU-programme's strategy and on the goals that have been set for the programme.

The following issues are to be given particular attention:

1. *Organisation*

Division of responsibility between the cooperating parties, equality in cooperation, and the degree of participation on the Palestinian side at both institutional and departmental levels. Organisational attachment of the projects on both the Norwegian side and on Palestinian side.

2. *Institutional development*

The contribution made by the projects to the development of the academic discipline at the Palestinian institutions by the projects, and more generally, the expansion of competence on both sides.

3. *Achievement of goals and effects*

The degree to which the goals of the project been realised or whether this can be expected. In this connection, positive and negative, expected and unexpected consequences are to be examined.

4. *Sustainability*

Over and above goal achievement, the evaluation is also to assess whether any positive effects will continue once external support is no longer available. The sustainability of the projects are to be assessed in a long-term perspective.

5. *Gender*

All NUFU-cooperations should aim at integrating gender aspects. The evaluation should look into how this aspect is taken care of in the NUFU-cooperation between Norwegian and Palestinian institutions.

6. *Transfer from NORAD to NUFU in 1995*

The projects between the University of Oslo and three institutions in Palestine were transferred from NORAD to NUFU in 1995. The evaluation should go through this process of transfer and examine how the projects are adjusted to the strategy of the NUFU-cooperation today.

Conclusions and recommendations

The evaluation should present responses to all the above elements. In addition, any suggestions for adjustments and improvements in connection with an extension of the institutional cooperation with Palestinian institutions are to be reported.

Method

The evaluation is to be carried out with the help of documentary analyses and consultations with responsible Norwegian institutions and project coordinators. In addition, visits are to be made to the Palestinian participating institutions with a view to interviewing relevant participants and collecting data in order to perform the evaluation in accordance with the guidelines.

Report

The evaluator is to prepare and present a final report on this work. The report is to be written in English. It is to include a summary of the main conclusions from each project in addition to general conclusions. Those parts of the report that concern the individual institutions are to be sent to these for comments before the final report is written.

The report is to be prepared in one copy. In addition, the report is to be submitted on diskette in Word format. The NUFU-secretariat at the Centre for International University Cooperation (SIU) will assist the evaluation group through dialogues throughout the process and in case of need.

Time frame

The final report is to be completed and submitted to the Secretariat by 1 December 2000.