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SLUSE an innovative fieldbased learning and research approach

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Introduction

This paper discusses the implementation and experiences of an academic capacity building programme at universities in Denmark, southern Africa and South-East Asia for the promotion of sustainable land use and natural resource management. In 1998 three Danish universities (see table 1) received funding from the Danish Government for the establishment of the Danish University Consortium for Environment and Development on Sustainable Land Use and Natural Resource Management (DUCED SLUSE).

During 1999 and 2000 consortia were established in Malaysia (MUCED SLUSE) and Thailand (TUCED SLUSE), and in late 2001 funding was given for the implementation of a collaboration between four southern African universities: SACUDE SLUSE (see Table 1). After end funding (in 2007) collaboration has additionally been established with universities in Cambodia and Indonesia.

SLUSE Objectives

- to promote joint education and research across institutions, regions and disciplines.
- to develop interdisciplinary environmental postgraduate curricula at universities in Denmark (see Figure 1), Malaysia, Thailand and southern Africa;
- to assist in the empowerment of communities through the teaching and research activities as well as fostering partnerships with a range of stakeholders.
- to enhance the human capacity within participating countries in the above areas.



Students measuring farmer's field size in South Africa and Sarawak, Malaysia.



Students interviewing villagers in South Africa and longhouse residents in Sarawak, Malaysia.



Student group work at University of Natal/Pietermaritzburg and during field work in South Africa.

Activities and Collaboration

The SLUSE consortia have several main points of collaboration:

- The development of a three week field course jointly organized by the different consortia during which interdisciplinary groups of students from all three Danish Universities visit southern Africa, Malaysia or Thailand and work together in the field with groups of African or Asian students. Between the four consortia, over 1000 Master students have registered for SLUSE degrees.
- Joint teaching and curriculum development by staff from the different consortia universities;
- Development of joint research projects. As a direct result of SLUSE 8 research projects in SE Asia and southern Africa have been developed and funded. These projects investigated sustainable land use and natural resource management issues through interdisciplinary and problem-oriented approaches.

The SLUSE framework

The basic premise for the approach implemented by the SLUSE consortia is the acknowledgement that natural resource management cannot be adequately studied and understood from a mono-disciplinary point of view. Furthermore, the practical knowledge obtained from field experiences can, at the same time, educate and qualify researchers and benefit recipient communities. The synergy of practical and theoretical knowledge can produce both academic qualifications and practical solutions that will enhance sustainable land use, as illustrated in the SLUSE model (see Figure 2).

Figure 1

Structure of Danish Master's education and the SLUSE programme

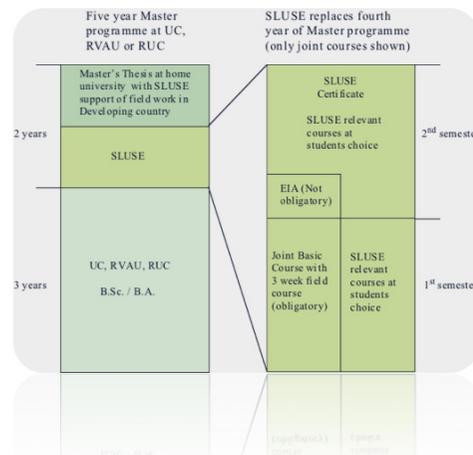
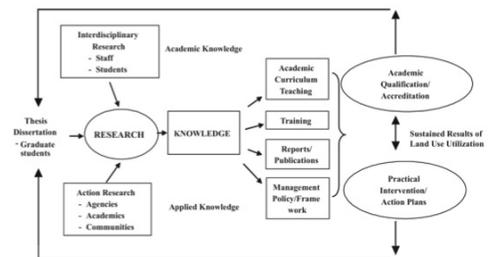


Table 1
University Partners in SLUSE

DUCED SLUSE (Denmark)	University of Copenhagen (UC)
	Roskilde University Centre (RUC)
	Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University (RVAU), Now Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Copenhagen
MUCED SLUSE (Malaysia)	University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)
TUCED SLUSE (Thailand)	Kasetsart University
	Chiang Mai University
	Maejo University
SACUDE SLUSE (southern Africa)	University of Natal/ Pietermaritzburg
	University Durban Westville
	University of Swaziland
	University of Botswana

Figure 2

Diagram developed jointly by SLUSE consortia partners



For further information on the SLUSE initiative see

www.sluse.dk