

# BENGT NILSSON SOME EXPERIENCES FROM MALMÖ UNIVERSITY

The Swedish Linnaeus-Palme Program



MALMÖ UNIVERSITY  
205 06 MALMÖ, SWEDEN  
PHONE +46 40 665 70 00, WWW.MAH.SE



THE SWEDISH LINNAEUS-PALME PROGRAM:  
SOME EXPERIENCES FROM MALMÖ UNIVERSITY



**BENGT NILSSON**  
**SOME EXPERIENCES FROM**  
**MALMÖ UNIVERSITY**

---

The Swedish Linnaeus-Palme Program

Malmö University, 2006



# Contents

1. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	7
2. ABOUT THE LINNAEUS-PALME PROGRAM . . . . .	8
3. SOME NOTES ABOUT MALMÖ UNIVERSITY . . . . .	11
4. MALMÖ UNIVERSITY'S PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM .	13
5. PURPOSE OF – AND METHOD FOR – THE REVIEW . . . .	15
6. THE REVIEW . . . . .	17
6.1 The Teacher's Perspective . . . . .	17
6.2 The Student's Perspective . . . . .	26
6.3 The University's Perspective . . . . .	30
7. CONCLUSIONS, REMARKS AND IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT . . . . .	33



# 1. Introduction

In March 2006, I was asked by the International Office at Malmö University to carry out a review of the Linnaeus-Palme Program, concentrating on its performance during the period 2002–2005, and perhaps to suggest some improvements to the Program inside the University. This review should not take the form of a full assessment but would instead be a pilot-study conducted as part of the University's ongoing evaluation of its internationalisation process. The review was carried out during March and April of this year.

This report is primarily aimed at staff and students at Malmö University and our foreign partners, but it may also be of wider interest, both nationally and internationally. For this reason, the report contains some brief notes about Malmö University, as well as an assessment of the Linnaeus-Palme Program. It will be presented to the European Association for International Education (EAIE) later this year.

## **About the reviewer and author of this report:**

I hold a PhD in Education from Lund University. In 1990, I was asked to set up, and act as Head of, an International Office at Lund University. In 1998, I left Lund to play a part in the establishment of Malmö University, where I was Vice-Rector for International Affairs until my retirement in 2004. In Malmö, I initiated and coordinated an international network based on the concept of 'Internationalisation at Home'. The IaH concept (how to give non-mobile students an international and intercultural dimension during their study-time) has been an important part of Malmö University's strategy for internationalisation.

The review is described in my own personal manner and should not be regarded as a scientific paper.

## 2. About the Linnaeus-Palme Program

### Some historical notes

In the 1990s, the Europeanization of higher education was the main issue for the Swedish universities and, as a member of the European Union, we were fully-occupied with programs like Erasmus, Tempus and Socrates. But the Swedish government, aware of the wider issues, reminded the universities of their global mission:

*“Operation in Europe must not be developed at the cost of other forms of international commitment and co-operation. Higher education has a great responsibility with regard to the broadening of knowledge and understanding of societies and cultures in other regions. This is particularly true with respect to developing countries, where more than 80 % of the world’s population is to be found. Universities and colleges must actively promote knowledge about the developing countries. They must also forcefully combat every form of xenophobia and racism.”*

*(Governmental Bill, January 1995)*

In 1998, the government commissioned the National Agency for Higher Education (Högskoleverket) to carry out a review of Swedish higher education and research in relation to countries outside Europe and North America. The Högskoleverket was asked to cooperate with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) during this process. Of the observations and proposals made as a result, the following merit attention:

- *There is a need for changes in perspective with regard to international co-operation and Sweden’s relationship with the rest of the world.*

- *International co-operation between institutions of higher education has increased rapidly since the early 1970s. There is, however, a very strong bias towards exchanges with Europe and North America. Only some 3 per cent of Swedish students have opted for Africa, Asia or Latin America.*
- *A new exchange program – Linnaeus – for student and teacher exchanges with countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America should be established. Funding for scholarships in such a program would come from Sida.*

### **The goals and organization of the Program**

Thus, the foundations for a new program were laid. The program was named ‘Linnaeus’ after the great Swedish botanist Carl von Linné (1707–1778), who sent his students all over the world to collect plants and gather information. ‘Palme’ was added later in memory of the former Swedish Prime minister Olof Palme, who took a keen interest in the conditions faced by developing countries and their opportunities for development.

The Program, administered by the International Program Office for Education and Training and financed by Sida, has two parts: Linnaeus Scholarships for Swedish teachers and students going abroad and Palme Scholarships for those coming to this country.

The Linnaeus-Palme Program is organized as an exchange program for teachers and students at undergraduate and master’s levels of higher education. Its aim is to strengthen co-operation between institutions of higher education in Sweden and the developing countries and thereby increase and deepen the global contacts between them. Another purpose is to promote long-term co-operation between the partners based on the principle of mutual benefit, in order to stimulate further global internationalisation of higher education in Sweden.

This goal is to be achieved by:

- *encouraging Swedish students to study for one or two semesters in another language and cultural area,*
- *giving students from developing countries an opportunity to study for one or two semesters in Sweden and gain greater depth in their knowledge of the subject,*
- *contributing to the development of specialist knowledge or language skills amongst the participating students,*

- *making it possible for Swedish and foreign teachers to teach in different languages and cultural areas,*
- *giving Swedish and foreign students opportunities to be taught by teachers in different languages and from different cultural areas.*

The program is organized in three different sections:

**Planning trips**, which prepare for future teacher and student exchanges through discussion and the provision of quality-assurance (Total: 3,830 Euro – 1,915 Euro per teacher)<sup>1</sup>.

**Teacher exchange** is intended for those teaching at undergraduate and master's levels. The exchange, involving full-time teaching, provides support for periods between 3–8 weeks (Linnaeus: Travel costs + equivalent to foreign daily allowance, Palme: Travel costs +66 Euro per day).

**Student exchange** aims to provide participating students with international experience, an understanding of different cultures and education to a high academic standard. The period of study should provide credit on return. (Linnaeus student: 2,735 Euro per term, Palme student: 4,923 Euro per term).

1. All figures are valid for 2005.

### 3. Some notes about Malmö University

Malmö University was founded in 1998 and is today Sweden's eighth-largest university with around 22,000 students, equivalent to 11,000 full-time students. Malmö University consists of six schools and faculties, of which the oldest was established in the 1950s. Located in the centre of the city, the University played a pivotal role in Malmö's transformation from an industrial town to a city of learning. Malmö is a cosmopolitan city. It is possible to find people from every corner of the world living here. More than 40 languages are spoken. Some 30 % of the people living in Malmö have immigrant backgrounds. More than 160 nationalities are represented.

Malmö University is an institution open to everyone, as well as to the dynamics of society, a university which is structured to cope with a changing world. The students can choose from a broad spectrum of programs, ranging from Education, through liberal arts like International Migration and Ethnic Relations, Human Rights, International Relations, Communication in English or Communication in Swedish, to the professions such as Dentistry, Nursing, Interaction Design, Engineering and Teaching. Programs have close links with professional and community life. The campaign to attract students without traditional academic backgrounds has been successful.

The University's six schools and faculties are the Faculty of Health and Society, the Faculty of Odontology, the School of Arts and Communication, the School of International Migration and Ethnic Relations (IMER), the School of Teacher Education, and the School of Technology and Society.

The internationalisation process at Malmö University is based on the concept of 'Internationalisation at Home' – an idea which was

developed within the institution in 1999. The University was ranked second-best of the Swedish universities in the 2004 evaluation of the internationalisation of higher education.

## 4. Malmö University's participation in the Program

Despite of the fact that Malmö University was a brand-new university without many international contacts, especially those with developing countries, the Program attracted considerable interest from teachers from the start in 2000. 6 applications were submitted for 2000–2001 and 5 were accepted.

*The years 2000 to 2006 provide the following statistics:*

Year	No. of applications	No. approved	Grants (SEK)
2000/01	6	5	536.200
2001/02	8	5	433.920
2002/03	15	7	621.248
2003/04	12	8	1.132.751
2004/05	12	9	1.522.880
2005/06	10	8	1.714.866
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>5.961.866</b>

*Of these 42 approvals, 13 are new projects and the rest (29) are prolongations of existing successful projects.*

We see a 67 % rate of success, which I regard as a good result for the University. The success-rates of the different schools vary greatly. The School of Technology has been most successful and boasts the highest participation of the schools with 5 projects, while IMER has 3, Arts and Communication and Teacher Education 2 each, Health and Society 1 and Odontology 0.

*Malmö University's partners are quite well-distributed over several continents, as can be seen from the following:*

<b>South America</b>	<b>Africa</b>	<b>Asia/Middle East</b>
Bolivia (2)	Botswana (2)	India (1)
Chile (1)	South Africa (2)	Sri Lanka (1)
Cuba (1)	Tanzania (1)	Lebanon (1)
Jamaica (1)		

*The numbers of teacher- and student exchanges have increased over the years, as can be seen from this table:*

	<b>Planning trips</b>	<b>Teacher exchange</b>	<b>Student exchange</b>
2000/01	15	9	–
2001/02	4	6	4
2002/03	6	10	6
2003/04	–	16	18
2004/05	4	16	26
2005/06	–	17	32
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>86</b>

*The total numbers of teacher and students are mirroring a very good reciprocity of about 50 % in- and outgoing teachers/students.*

## 5. Purpose of – and method for – the review

My task from the International Office in the review was to analyze how the Program has been working at Malmö University during 2002–2005, especially with reference to

- The value of the Program to teachers, students and universities at both partner universities involved in each exchange
- Opinions about the aims and administration of the Program
- The motives of teachers and students for participating in the Program
- Whether – and how – the pedagogical methods have been adapted to different teaching situations
- The co-operation between the Linnaeus teacher and the Palme teacher: advantages, problems and obstacles
- Dissemination of experiences to others
- Looking for an ‘Internationalisation at Home’ perspective within the Program
- Students’ assessments of their studies abroad
- Opinions and support from the University’s faculty Deans and the Vice-Chancellor

As I only had a short time to prepare the report, I had to focus the review on meetings with available coordinators or teachers and students on the different LP projects. My work has concentrated on:

- (1) Studies of available documents (applications, reports, etc),
- (2) 1–2 hour interviews with the Swedish coordinators and available incoming teachers,
- (3) E-mail contact with several foreign teachers/coordinators,
- (4) Meetings with available students

- (5) Follow-up meetings with the Deans of the Schools and the Vice-Chancellor of Malmö University.

My sources were:

Interviews with 10 Swedish coordinators/teachers and 2 incoming teachers who were available in Malmö, opinions communicated via e-mail from 4 incoming coordinators/teachers, meetings with 4 Deans of Schools and the Vice-Chancellor. I met 12 students (3 Linnaeus students who had just returned from their studies at a partner university and 9 Palme students studying in Malmö). The domestic coordinators/teachers received (in advance) a rather comprehensive questionnaire as a basis for the interview and also provided feedback to my notes. The questions for the incoming teachers and the Deans were not as comprehensive. I met the students for an hour, partly for discussions and partly so they could fill in a questionnaire. They willingly obliged with the questionnaire, for which they were later rewarded with dinner!

It follows that the material I have gathered provides an inadequate basis for generalizations. Most of the information and opinions were garnered from Malmö University teachers/coordinators. Two of these are only co-ordinating the project and have yet not taught at – or even visited – the partner university.

We must also remember that the Program is more or less fully-financed with Swedish money. This may influence the responses from our partner universities, even if I believe that most answers have been straight and honest.

In order to throw more light on the responses from those who contributed to the review, I have decided to quote a number of answers.

**A few guidelines on terminology:** I use the terms ‘incoming teacher’ and ‘outgoing teacher’ even if the person is both coordinator and exchange teacher within the project. Consequently, for participating students, I use the terms ‘incoming student’ and ‘outgoing student’. If required, to simplify the text I use the terms ‘Swedish teacher’ and ‘Swedish student’ and sometimes ‘Linnaeus- and Palme-teacher’.

## 6. The review

### 6.1 The teacher's perspective

Opinions about the goals of the Linnaeus-Palme Program and the motives for participating in it

The overall aims of the Program (described in chapter 2) are fully accepted by the *Swedish teachers*. It is very clear to me that these teachers are very committed to internationalisation and co-operation with universities in developing countries. Some have an international background, with experience of universities worldwide, others have worked in developing countries and one was even born in a developing country. They regard the Program as a very important counter-balance to the 'Europeanization' of higher education. Here are some of their quotations on their motives for joining the Program:

*"I was very happy to take over the co-ordination of the Linnaeus-Palme Program. This may give me and my students a greater knowledge of cultural values and norms, differences and similarities, as well as a greater insight into my own culture."*

*"My motive was at the beginning rather egoistic or you may call it adventure-loving, as I had earlier been working abroad. But in my soul, I have always had an engagement with developing countries."*

*"I was inspired by a colleague who had worked for several years in Africa and she made me very enthusiastic for the Program."*

It comes as no surprise that the *incoming teachers* were overwhelmingly enthusiastic and grateful to be taking part in the Program, finding its aims and activities to be highly compatible.

Opinions about the organization,  
administration and financing of the Program

*The organization*, with its planning trips and teacher and student exchange, is for the most part appreciated by the teachers. Shorter advance trips are important to check on the compatibility of the respective curricula and to confirm that other conditions are satisfied. Opinion is divided on the length of the teacher exchange: the Swedish teachers prefer a shorter time, while the incoming teachers usually want to stay for the whole period.

All contributors to this review were very satisfied with the way in which the International Programme Office is handling the *administration* with applications, decisions and reporting. The minimal bureaucracy, accessibility and rapid responses were appreciated.

Even the *local administration* – carried out by the International Office within the University – is seen as efficient and the Office as service-minded. The Office is there to help the Swedish teachers with applications and to arrange introductory courses and accommodation for incoming students. It also ranks the applications for the Vice Chancellor on an internal basis before they are delivered to the International Programme Office. The Office's two roles – in steering and servicing – may seem rather difficult to separate. However, I cannot see another way to carry out these tasks without increasing the bureaucracy, as the International Office has the best knowledge of the Program within the University.

On the whole, incoming teachers and students have found the financing of the Program to be satisfactory, although some students have complained about the high prices of food and accommodation. Some of the Swedish teachers are a little dissatisfied with the situation and report that they sometimes have to pay expenses out of their own pockets. More serious, however, are the complaints about the lack of complementary local resources (see 6.3).

The Program and each teacher's personal development

The Swedish teachers – especially those who have had little previous experience of collaboration with universities in developing countries

– are reporting that the Program has given them insight into a new and rather unfamiliar world. The following quotations serve to illustrate this point:

*“I have got greater insight into the big differences between developing and industrialized countries and their tasks and organizations. We have no monopoly on knowledge and culture and sometimes find it hard to appreciate that cultures are created by human beings and that human beings create cultures from different social, climatic and political conditions.”*

*“It has been very enlightening for me and for my family, who have shared in the benefits from my contacts and from my traveling.”*

*“I have obtained new knowledge which will certainly broaden my views and have an influence on the content of my teaching.”*

The incoming teachers express similar opinions to those highlighted above, but place more emphasis on academic values:

*“I certainly benefited immensely from my new experiences, drawing inspiration from the different cultures of the students who attended my course.”*

*“When you come across a new cultural context, you have to adapt your way of teaching. This broadens your experience.”*

*“I believe that the LP project with Malmö University is a great opportunity to get to know the way Swedish and Cubans think, especially about solving their educational, technical, environmental and social problems.”*

According to the interviews, there can be no doubt that the exchanges have enriched the lives of the participating teachers, influencing each one’s personal development in a different way. I regard this as one of the most important results of the Program.

Have the Program and the exchanges had any influence on teaching methods ?

I attempted to focus on this important question in the interviews, as it raises an issue relevant to all types of international programs and exchanges. There are several international reports describing the perspectives of teaching in an international classroom, some of which set out to paint a picture of ‘the ideal teacher’ for such a class. Discussions have centered on matters such as teaching in a non-native language, dealing with cultural differences, styles of teaching and learning and so on. The classroom has often been packed with international students from many different countries and cultures, which serves to heighten the teacher’s awareness of the importance of intercultural competence.

Within the Linnaeus-Palme Program, the teacher exchange has usually involved teaching in a foreign language in a foreign environment to a disparate group of students at the partner university. The composition of each class differs from faculty to faculty. Both our incoming and outgoing teachers are sometimes teaching in a classroom filled with both domestic and exchange-students from many different countries and they must be aware of this fact.

I was a little surprised that both the Swedish and foreign teachers reported encountering so few problems during their teaching period at the partner university.

Some Swedish teachers place emphasis on the fact that they were often teaching very large classes, using very traditional methods, which proved difficult to change. However, the general opinion was that the effect on their ways of teaching was negligible, although variations emerge between schools and subjects. Some quotations may throw light on this point:

*“At the beginning of the exchange, it was hard work and I felt alone, without proper support from the partner university. But when I returned for the second year, I felt more and more part of the daily life of the department and was able to discuss the content and methods of the teaching. I was also very impressed by the way they examined the students and how their exam projects were presented to the public and to those in the industrial sector.”*

*“I have been given a real chance to introduce my teaching methods to small groups, which was greatly appreciated by the students.”*

*“My teaching methods have not changed, but the contents of my courses have gained new perspectives.”*

*“The quality of the education at the partner university is high – and highly regarded – and the professors are pedagogically skilful – I have a lot to learn!”*

*“Through taking part in other kinds of teaching, I also develop my own.”*

*“I picked up many new ideas when I taught at the partner university. For example, I learnt how to introduce students to the world of an engineer.”*

Opinions are therefore divided among the Swedish teachers. From the interviews, I gained the impression that the exchanges have not prompted many alterations in teaching methods, although there are exceptions. There are two possible reasons for this: one is that the exchange periods are rather short and the second is that teachers have to adapt to the situations at the partner university. But most Swedish teachers are reporting that they have acquired new knowledge and ideas for changing the content.

The *incoming teachers* paint a different picture. They seem very satisfied with the teaching models in Malmö, singling out much smaller groups, more time for discussion and highly-motivated students for special praise:

*“The Malmö students behave completely differently to those in South Africa. I found them very mature and focused compared to South African students, who generally come from a Third World background.”*

*“The Swedish teachers were able to convey pedagogical ideas to us and increase our knowledge about pedagogical practice, mentoring and related matters.”*

*“It is wonderful to work in smaller groups. At home, we sometimes have more than 300 students in the classroom. This gives me much more opportunity to interact with the students.”*

*“At Malmö University, there is a multi-disciplinary approach to the subject of Human Rights, which has taught me many new approaches to the content of my teaching.”*

Teaching in a foreign language does not seem to have presented a serious problem to the incoming teachers or those venturing abroad. This is explained by the fact that lessons are taught in English at most partner universities. Problems only arose in the collaborations with partners in Latin America. At those universities, interpreters were sometimes needed.

The incoming teachers seem to have shown greater enthusiasm – and have enjoyed more opportunities – for finding fresh ideas in teaching and learning. They are usually here for the whole 5-week period and have more time to study different teaching styles. I will describe at a later stage the students’ viewpoints on teaching and learning, as well as ideas about how to improve one’s ability to teach in a multilingual and multicultural classroom.

The co-operation between the incoming and outgoing teachers: advantages, problems and obstacles

The interviews reveal the importance of finding partners with similar ideas on teaching and classroom experience and a shared interest in international co-operation. The many differences in organization between the Swedish universities and their partners have sometimes caused problems. Some of our incoming teachers speak of stifling bureaucracy in their home universities. Several are selected for the Program by a Dean or even by a Vice-Chancellor, while the Swedish teacher is very often the instigator of the collaboration and so experiences very few similar administrative difficulties. This has caused problems, as the coordinator must sometimes accept that he knows little or nothing about a person selected as an exchange teacher. But the majority of collaborations have taken place between two colleagues who met at conferences or via e-mail and such projects seem to have run more smoothly.

I can tell the difference between those collaborations which are

organized by teachers coordinating their own exchanges and those that are not. The former are easier to administer and there is almost always very good communication between the parties involved. The same cannot always be said for the latter. Other difficulties have arisen when coordinators were changed during the lifetime of the collaboration, when information was scarce and when partners failed to communicate. These problems, which sometimes delayed the exchanges, had their most adverse effects on the students.

As mentioned before, careful planning is essential for these projects. It is important that all parties involved are kept fully-informed of developments before and during the exchanges. At some institutions, the schedules are rather rigid, often decided half a year before the semester starts, creating problems for incoming teachers and students. Greater flexibility is needed here.

Continuity within the Program is important, especially in its impact on co-operation between the teachers. A number of the projects have been running for quite some time and it is clear how this has improved co-operation between the parties involved. To quote one of the foreign teachers:

*“This is my third trip to Malmö and I now feel very comfortable and know the people well here. Of course, this facilitates my teaching to the Swedish students and means that the exchanges work very well.”*

One important issue for the Program is how long each collaboration should be kept running and how much money should be retained for new projects.

Are all teachers working on ‘equal terms’ or do the Swedish teachers tend to dominate the collaborations? When I raised this subject during the interviews, people gave me surprised and angry looks, as if to say “Why are you asking such a ridiculous question?”. All participating teachers emphatically replied that everyone was working on equal terms:

*“The collaboration works extremely well and certainly on equal terms. We Swedes have a lot to learn from our partners.”*

*“Sweden has much to learn from the way in which development of low cost local networks and participatory design may be deployed to great effect within an Indian context.”*

*“We have had a mutual exchange of knowledge, ideas and experiences. But, as the collaboration depends on Swedish money, maybe there exists some gratefulness in the hearts of our incoming teachers.”*

*“My visit to Malmö Högskola was, without doubt, a very enlightening and worthwhile experience for me. I wish to express my deep and sincere gratitude to everyone.”*

#### Dissemination of the experiences to others within the institution

This issue is very important for the future of the Linnaeus-Palme Program and for the internationalisation process as a whole. How does the Program stimulate other teachers and students to participate in the project and to become involved with the international work? What kind of feedback are the teachers giving to colleagues and Deans?

On the whole, the Swedish teachers report that virtually no dissemination takes place, leaving many with guilty consciences:

*“Ensuring the dissemination of international experience is proving to be very difficult in my School where we have so many teachers and students. We have tried to arrange seminars with homecoming teachers and guest teachers, but these have attracted very small attendances. People never seem to have enough time!”*

*“Because my School is rather small, we have tried to encourage informal dissemination of information. But we can improve on this and make better use of our exchange teachers.”*

*“I find it really embarrassing that so few of my colleagues in the School know anything about my experiences and about the Program. My colleagues and my Dean have shown very little interest in the Program.”*

The position of our partner universities on this issue is unclear. Some of them are due to report soon to the Dean and the department – or to the Vice-Chancellor's management group. As yet, we have no indication about how much information is disseminated at those universities to colleagues by those who have participated in the Program.

The results here are expected and well-known. The dissemination process is difficult, especially within an institution which is growing as rapidly as Malmö University. The internationalisation work has to compete with so many other activities. I believe it is particularly important for the survival of this Program within the University that new teachers are inspired and encouraged to apply for new projects. I note that some of the Swedish co-ordinators are saying that they plan to leave the Program after five years to make way for new people. This makes it even more important to create effective models for dissemination of experiences.

#### Looking for an 'Internationalisation at Home' (IaH)-perspective within the Program

Most of the Swedish teachers agreed that the Program may be an effective mean when enhancing the IaH concept in the ongoing process of reforming the education. The incoming teachers put new and broadened perspectives into the curricula, making these more international. The education can be given a more comparative approach. The language of instruction changes from Swedish to English in the courses taught by them. Both the Swedish and incoming teachers have to teach in English in these classes which sometimes include domestic students. The incoming LP-students contribute to make the Malmö Campus more international although more integrative actions between incoming and domestic students must be implemented.

These processes are not specific for the Linnaeus/Palme Program – all international exchange has or should have the same purposes. What makes the Program so special is the fact that it gives new and other perspectives to the Swedish staff and students - perspectives from the world outside the OECD-area describing conditions and realities of life that are very different from those at home. This makes the presence of the Program, which gives good opportunities to collaborate with universities on other continents, so very important and necessary for the IaH-process at Malmö University.

Will the co-operation survive without money from the Linnaeus-Palme Program?

The answer is a unanimous “No” from both Swedish and incoming teachers. But there are one or two other possible avenues to explore:

*“If the LP program should stop for whatever reason, our co-operation could only survive on the Internet.”*

*“If there is no Program, I can honestly say that it would be impossible to continue, something which I deeply regret. This funding represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our students.”*

*“The result anticipated for the future is that more tangible year-round academic links will be formed, making use, via the Internet, of each other’s academic expertise. We hope to demonstrate to our universities that these links are well-worth maintaining after Linnaeus-Palme funding expires.”*

There can be no doubt about what the participants think. I believe it is vital that the partners agree as soon as possible that the Program will not continue forever and at that stage open discussions about what co-operation is possible in the future.

## **6.2 The student’s perspective**

Motives for participation in the Program

Most of the students, both incoming and outgoing, present similar reasons for joining the Program, motives you would expect from any international student:

*“I hope to get a good opportunity to meet other students around the world and experience the Swedish culture, but also to get a new academic approach (Tanzania).”*

*“I did not choose myself – I was asked by the coordinator if I would like to go to Sweden to study, with a grant. This was great surprise for me. Guess if I was happy! (South Africa).”*

*“It was a great opportunity to be able to study outside Europe and the LP Program provided me with both administrative help and money (Sweden).”*

### Student recruitment and academic quality

*Swedish students* seem to have little trouble obtaining an LP grant. On the contrary, several teachers talk about the struggle to interest students in studying at a partner university. One reason for this may be the recent trend amongst students not to study abroad. Such a malaise is blighting all European programs and has not afflicted the LP program alone. Because the teaching language in partner universities in South America is Spanish, specific problems have arisen when attempting to recruit students to attend those institutions.

Another (unsubstantiated) reason could be the perception among Swedish students that education standards are lower at universities in developing countries. To avoid such misconceptions, it is very important that teachers and coordinators use planning trips and early teacher exchanges to check whether the partner university in question is suitable for their students. I also believe that students would be attracted by better information and more inspiring marketing.

Students at partner universities report no such problems. Is it a mistake to assume that standards of teaching at Swedish universities are always very good? Students’ opinions on such standards were mostly – but not unanimously – positive:

*“I just finished my first course here: I learned so much, had great teachers and really enjoyed it (Bolivia).”*

*“If I rate the quality of teaching from 1-10 – 10, of course ! (Bolivia).”*

*“The teaching has a less rigid/more interactive academic approach and I enjoyed the lively discussions between the students and the teacher - much more than at home (South Africa).”*

*“The quality went from bad to very bad. There is too little action and too much discussion (South Africa).”*

The Swedish students were rather more reticent:

*“I met some excellent professors and some not so good. The shortage of new books has been the main problem.”*

*“The quality of the teaching was rather poor, mostly due to the massive numbers of students in class, which made discussion or any kind of dialogue almost impossible. But do remember: the whole experience cannot be rated on the courses, but on what happens outside the classroom.”*

Little light has been shed on the question of *recognitions of studies* by the home universities. Those indications I have received from teachers suggest that the close cooperation between educators has prevented this becoming a serious problem.

Internships and exposure to society and industry have been greatly appreciated by both incoming and outgoing students. Those students who found that language problems hindered participation in class have been given the opportunity to practice their skills in community schools, volunteer corps and other social institutions.

#### Social aspects and integration with other students

The students I met in Malmö in April gave me the impression that they were very satisfied with their studies at the partner universities. On the whole, incoming and outgoing students spoke warmly of the social life they had experienced:

*“I had the opportunity to bond with people from completely different backgrounds (Sweden).”*

*“I have met and got to know so many students from so many different countries. This has been an enriching experience (Bolivia).”*

*“Being integrated with people and friends from all over the world, sharing their culture and customs, has been the best experience of my life (Tanzania).”*

*“BLUES NIGHTS at the Hornet (a pub) and trying to understand the culture of the people in this country (South Africa).”*

However, a large cloud hangs over integration between students visiting Malmö University from partner universities and domestic students. Most incoming students say they integrated very well with other exchange students but less well with the domestic students. A coordinator told me that:

*“One of our Bolivian students returned home with a full knowledge of Ireland but knowing little about Sweden, because she had lived next door to an Irish student.”*

The living conditions for exchange students in Malmö (and in many other university cities) are not conducive to integration with their domestic counterparts. They often live in mixed student accommodations with only few Swedish students. One of the aims of the Program is for students to learn about the people, living conditions and culture of the countries visited. It follows that Malmö University should provide better opportunities for incoming students to live and mix with Swedish students. This is a familiar problem for many universities in Sweden and abroad.

The outgoing students describe a different set of experiences at the partner universities. It seems they have been living together with both domestic and international students.

Students' perceived problems during their stays at the partner universities

The few problems encountered by incoming students visiting Malmö University were those which typically confront international students in Sweden, such as the weather, high rents which lead to financial problems, expensive books and food and (for Spanish-speaking students) the language.

The Swedish students reported different problems:

*“Always to be the centre of attention and feeling restricted and somewhat caged-in on campus, as it was not ‘safe’ to go out alone.”*

*“The administration was complicated and bureaucratic.”*

*“How different the universities are in terms of organization.”*

Would you advise other students to join the Program?

This question received a unanimous “Yes” from the students:

*“I would definitely recommend it! A priceless opportunity to broaden your horizons!”*

*“I would certainly recommend it. The social life was beautiful, people were poor but ‘happy’ and culturally there was a lot to learn and compare to Sweden.”*

*“Yes, of course ! I have been so enriched by it and I am sure that other Bolivians would benefit so much from it.”*

*“Yes – and I am saying so because the Program is so nice and important in the contemporary world where there is no peace.”*

No-one can doubt the enthusiasm shown for the Program by both incoming and outgoing students. This must inspire the universities and those teaching in them to encourage participation in the Program.

### **6.3 The University’s perspective**

The views of the faculty Deans

After my interviews with the teachers involved in the LP Program, I met four of their five faculty Deans. The Deans were asked:

- How much do you know about the LP program ?
- How much do you value the teachers’ involvement in co-operation with developing countries ? Is this an important part of the School’s activities ?
- What kind of support (moral, financial, etc) do you give the teacher involved ?
- Did you meet the incoming exchange-teachers while they were at the School ?
- How much information has the LP teacher given you about the exchange ?

The answers I received from the teachers and the Deans revealed a variety of opinions. As I mentioned earlier, some teachers complained about a lack of management interest in the Program, as well as the absence of complementary local resources.

Of the five schools participating in the Program, two seem to be very good in the way they support both teachers and students. These are the School of International Migration and Ethnic Relations (IMER) and the School of Arts and Communication. The Deans at both these schools seem to be strong advocates of the internationalisation of higher education and see the Program as playing a very important part in this work. The teachers and coordinators in these schools say they are very satisfied with the moral and financial support they receive. It appears that they are fully compensated by Malmö University for the hours they put in when teaching at partner universities. The Deans support their teachers' work within the Program, follow its progress and make a point of meeting the incoming teachers and students. In terms of education and research, IMER views the Program as an important part of its activities, as something dear to its heart. The Deans of both these schools are fully aware that a more effective dissemination process is required to attract greater numbers of staff and students.

The Vice-Dean of the School of Teacher Education expressed his regret that he has not had the time to monitor the Program within his department, blaming a heavy expansion of students and the reforms in teacher education carried out over the last few years. Before the advent of the European programs which have dominated student exchanges in recent years, this School made a point of prioritizing collaboration with universities in developing countries. The Vice-Dean relies heavily on international coordinators and, as the School puts aside around 1 million SEK for international work, it should be possible to use part of this money for the Program. It is up to each unit to decide if teachers are to be compensated for working abroad. The Vice-Dean insists he is trying to meet the incoming teachers on a regular basis, but suggests that it is hard to ensure an effective dissemination process in a School with 400 teachers and 5,000 students.

The Head of the Department of Social Work at the Faculty of Health and Society regards the Program as a marginal and specialist activity. He suggests that he can only provide moral support if he is kept properly informed about the Program's operation, which has not been the case. The Head believes that the Program should compensate teachers for their work abroad. However, the Department is now planning a closer collaboration with universities in Bolivia, Chile and Cuba. If this is to happen, the Program must play a central role.

The Dean of the School of Technology showed no interest in giving an interview and has not made himself available for one, which gives me a fair indication of what the Program meant to him. It is from this School – which oddly enough has had the most LP-activities within the University – where I have got the most negative responses from participating teachers and coordinators about the interest of the program from the management.

#### The Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor of Malmö University admits that he does not know a great deal about the Linnaeus-Palme Program, explaining that it is impossible for him to be well-informed on every project at such a large university. However, he strongly supports the process of internationalizing the university as a whole. In his opinion, helping developing countries by capacity building through education is essential, as long as no ‘brain-drain’ is triggered as a result. The Vice-Chancellor believes that the Program can contribute to this process, one in which Malmö University must play its part. If, in the future, Swedish universities get legal permission to charge overseas students tuition fees, he insists that we must find a stipend system – like the Program – to support these students.

He regards the problems with recognition of teaching at partner universities as rather absurd and believes this must be solved within the Schools themselves. Unfortunately, internationalisation issues are rarely discussed at meetings with Deans and management. The Vice-Chancellor is very amenable to changing this state of affairs, but he needs more vociferous support from the International Office. He feels a great affection for the Program and for co-operation with universities in developing countries and is willing to support such work both morally and financially.

## 7. Conclusions, remarks and ideas for improvement

In this last chapter, I will summarize the observations I have made during my report, assess the problems and obstacles faced and suggest some ideas for improvement. It is important to remember, that the experiences are collected only from the conditions within Malmö University and that the results may have been otherwise at another university.

- The Linnaeus-Palme Program plays a very important role in the internationalisation of higher education in Sweden and, as far as I know, there are very few similar international programs in Europe. The present budget from SIDA of around 40 million SEK per year is a valuable contribution to the internationalisation process within the universities and gives them excellent opportunities to strengthen their international contacts.
- The strongest impression I gained from the teachers and students is of their overwhelming satisfaction with the Linnaeus-Palme Program and the opportunities it has given them. Both incoming and outgoing teachers and students expressed their gratitude for these ‘once in a lifetime’ opportunities. This point must be borne in mind when one considers my remarks and suggestions for future improvements.
- Co-ordinators and teachers spoke well of the central and local administration of the Program. The only difficulty identified was that of accommodation for incoming teachers and students. The view was expressed that incoming students should be lodged with domestic students to improve the chances of integration. This is a pro-

blem common to all international programs involving teacher- and student- exchange and must soon be solved.

- Although there have been complaints from a few teachers and students about it, I regard *the financing* from the International Programme Office as adequate. Nowadays, the coordinators get extra money to cover administrative costs. But the real problems arise for those Swedish teachers who – on returning home – are not compensated for hours spent teaching abroad. These matters must be discussed within the relevant Schools to find solutions. Otherwise, these difficulties will discourage teachers from participating in the Program.
- There is little to suggest that teachers have adapted their *teaching methods* to meet the challenge of working in a different language and in international classrooms with students from various countries and cultures. This surprises me, as a number of studies have revealed that teachers need to acquire extra knowledge when teaching international students. I suggest that the University should give serious thought to holding seminars or courses for teachers who are going to teach in a multi-cultural classroom. IMER may be responsible for making the necessary arrangements.
- I must emphasize the *need for careful planning* before starting teacher and student exchanges. Many projects within the Erasmus Program failed because of inadequate preparations and because the student exchange started before the teachers had met to compare curricula, discuss recognition of the studies and so on. The Linnaeus-Palme Program has a built-in mechanism to prevent such mistakes. It is also important that there is no change of coordinator during the lifetime of the project. Such changes have disrupted a number of teacher and student exchanges.
- The issues surrounding *the dissemination of experiences* cause problems for the University which may affect the very future of the Program. The results of my interviews with both teachers and Deans are depressing. The Program cannot exist as ‘a one man/woman show’. Many more people within the University must become involved and engaged. It is essential for the University, through its

Schools and Departments, to look for new ways to disseminate experiences. The coordinators and teachers must be assisted in this search by the Information Office, the International Office, the International Coordinators in the various Schools and other stakeholders. It may be that more use should be made of the internet, homepages, newsletters and other forms of dissemination.

- Better ways must be found to communicate *information about the Program to the students*. The teacher's role is vital here. The old expression 'If you don't get the teacher on the international train, the train will never leave the station' is very appropriate when applied to the Linnaeus-Palme Program. The Swedish teacher must take every opportunity to inform colleagues about the Program and ask for their help in spreading knowledge about the experiences awaiting any student who becomes involved. However, it is no secret that students are very receptive to new ideas when they hear other students talk about them. The coordinators and the International Office should work harder to make sure that domestic students meet both incoming foreign students and those Swedish students returning from abroad.
- *The role of the Deans* of the Schools is very important. The co-ordinators and teachers must be more persistent in keeping the Deans abreast of developments, introducing them to incoming teachers and students and inviting them to seminars and meetings. And why not invite them to go on planning trips to partner universities?
- *The Vice-Chancellor's support* for co-operation with developing countries universities bodes well for the future of the Program within Malmö University.
- *The structure of the Linnaeus-Palme Program* wins strong approval from participants. Nevertheless, two points are ripe for future discussion. The first concerns continuity within the Program. For how long should a project be kept going? Today, a project may continue for a maximum of five years. This principle is now under review. One must bear in mind both the need for continuity and the importance of giving new projects a chance. The coordinators were divided on the issue, with approval being expressed for both conti-

nunity and the need for new blood. Personally, I would prefer to see new people offered a chance. More university teachers and students must be given the opportunity to experience what the Program can offer and to return to Malmö enriched with the new ideas and attitudes we note in those we welcome home.

- The second point concerns possible *reform of the Program's structure*. Some of those interviewed suggested that the Program should be more flexible. The past few years have seen the emergence of many new forms of international education, including 'distance education' via the internet and 'the global classroom', which combines use of the internet with face-to-face meetings between teachers and students. I think it would be worthwhile to test out such new educational methods. This should be a task for the International Programme Office in Stockholm and its reference groups.
- The Program can contribute highly to the realisation of the IaH-concept within the University by giving new and different perspectives to the ongoing reforms of the curricula in order to make these more internationalized.

Finally, I certainly hope that the Linnaeus-Palme Program will survive, even if financial problems arise. I regard this Program as a necessary counterbalance to the concentration of international academic cooperation in the OECD countries. It has been most interesting and rewarding for me to meet and talk to staff and students involved in the Program, even though one month has been too short a time for a comprehensive analysis of all the opinions, ideas and attitudes expressed. I have been involved in the process of internationalising higher education for more than 15 years and my greatest reward has been to meet the students returning from their experiences and observe the changes in their thinking and – above all – in their hearts. Let me finish this report by quoting one of our homecoming Malmö students:

*“The best part of my studies at Malmö University was the semester I spent in Dar-Es-Salaam!”*

This is in no way meant as a comment on the quality of the education at Malmö University!

PUBLISHER Malmö University, Knut Bergknut

Printed by Prinfo in Malmö 2006.

© Bengt Nilsson, Malmö University 2006

COVERPHOTO Karin Oddner

COVER PAGE Dr. Khoti Kamanga from *Faculty of Law, University of Dar es Salaam*, Tanzania – Linnaeus-Palme exchange teacher at Malmö University, the School of International Migration and Ethnic Relations (IMER) within the Human Rights programme 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Eva Franzén, student at the School of IMER and Linnaeus-Palme exchange student in Tanzania, University of Dar es Salaam during spring semester 2005.