Activities and achievements in 2016

The International Science Programme (ISP), at Uppsala University, Sweden, assists low-income countries to build and strengthen their domestic research capacity and postgraduate education in the basic sciences chemistry, mathematics and physics. ISP aims to contribute to the growth of scientific knowledge in low-income countries, by engaging in long term collaboration with institutionally based research groups and regional scientific networks in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The main funding of ISP is from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The Faculty of Science and Technology at Uppsala University, and the Faculty of Science at Stockholm University provide additional support. This is a summary of the achievements of ISP and supported activities in 2016.

SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES

In 2016, ISP provided support to 40 research groups and 19 regional networks. The research groups are located in twelve countries in Asia and Africa; Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Laos, Mali, Myanmar, Rwanda, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The regional networks are coordinated from countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Groups and networks together utilized about 24 million SEK.

NUMBER OF STUDENTS

Active. In 2016, 1,031 postgraduate students were reported as active in ISP supported groups and networks, 432 students on the PhD level (26% female) and 599 students on the MSc, MPhil or Licentiate level (31% female). About 26% of the PhD students and 2% of the other postgraduate degree students were trained on a sandwich basis, spending part of their research training at home and part at a host university abroad. The remaining students pursued their postgraduate studies in local programs at universities in their home countries.

Graduated. Supported groups and networks graduated 268 students during the year, 80 PhD students (33% female), and 188 MSc, MPhil and Licentiate students (28% female).

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DISSEMINATION

In 2016, the supported groups and networks published 295 papers in international journals out of which 39% were in high impact journals, listed with Thomson Reuter (TR) impact factors. Group and network members gave 323 conference contributions out of which 148 were in Africa, 122 in Asia, 43 in Europe and 10 in the Americas. They arranged 650 scientific meetings, attracting in total approximately 5,500 participants.

EXAMPLES OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, USE AND INFLUENCE IN POLICIES AND PRACTISES

Zimbabwe. A farmer from Shangani approached the chemistry group (ZIM:01) at University of Harare, because fish was dying in his dam. The group analyzed water and sediment samples and found high levels of cyanide and mercury residues. As a result, the farmer moved the fish to an unpolluted location while working on a remediation plan.

Kenya. The physics group (KEN:01/2) at University of Nairobi gave a presentation on air quality at the Kenya Resident Association Seminar, which lead to inclusion of an urban air quality section in the Nairobi Integrated Urban Plan of the City County.

Zambia. The physics research group (ZAM:01) at University of Zambia was awarded a consultancy by the Rural Electrification Authority to review the operations of Mpanta Solar Mini-grid in the Samfya District. The group also developed a sustainable business model for the operations of the Solar Mini-grids in the area.

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES IN 2016

Sida. ISP’s coordination assignment in the Sida bilateral research programs in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda continued. ISP paid subsistence allowances to students from Bolivia, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda, while in Sweden.

ABU. ISP continued to coordinate Uppsala University’s cooperation with Al Baha University, Saudi Arabia. During 2016, a new PhD student in Information Technology was admitted to Uppsala University.

TRF/TICA. The first fellow of the TRF/TICA/Sida/ISP-fellowship program successfully commenced her PhD at the Suranee University of Technology, Thailand.

NMC. The cooperation with the National Mathematics Center in Abuja, Nigeria, was concluded when NMC staff member Olufunminiyi Abiri received his PhD degree from Luleå University of Technology, Sweden.

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