

CHUSS-Gerda Henkel Foundation PhD Training Project Factsheet

Overview

This partnership is spelt out in three award letters, namely, the November 23, 2016, and May 15, 2017, letters that offered CHUSS funding to train 30 PhD Fellows. This was extended in a November 18, 2019, letter that offered support to train another 30 PhD Fellows. This means that when the project terminates in 2026, a total of 60 Fellows would have been supported. The partnership has empowered the college to experiment with the cohort model of PhD training, which has been confirmed to be an effective method of graduate training.

The Basis of the Partnership

The CHUSS-Gerda Henkel Foundation partnership sought to assist the college reclaim the tattered image of Historical Humanities and Humanistic Social Sciences in the public and private tertiary institutions in the region. This was by training the next generation of Humanities scholars to replenish the disciplines lest they die out. Thus, it has played an important role in equipping the next generation of Humanities scholars with intellectual and investigative skills that can be deployed in studying the human condition in their respective societies and disciplines to delineate the elusive concept of what it takes to ensure a good life.

Funding

The college received funding to support the training of 60 PhD Fellows for the duration of the project. These funds support four major cost items related to PhD training in Historical Humanities and Humanistic Social Sciences as shown below.

- a) Cohort related expenses such as tuition, stipend, medical insurance, laptop computer, books, travel to take up the fellowship, conference attendance and field work funds.¹
- b) The partnership also funds travel, personnel costs and research or PhD training costs such as buy-in-time for supervisors, research workshops, retooling seminars and the CHUSS symposium.

The Fellows' Progress

While some of the funded 60 PhD fellows have had challenges with their studies, most have to a large extent progressed successfully as noted below.

- a) All the 9 Fellows of the 2017 cohort did complete their studies and graduated during the 2021, 2022 and 2023 Makerere University Graduations Ceremonies.
- b) Similarly, 6 Fellows of the 2018 cohort did complete and graduated during the 2022 and 2023 Makerere University Graduation ceremonies.
- c) 2 Fellows, namely Ms. Patience Akampurira and Mr. Samuel Auchi have submitted their theses and await examination.

¹ Conference attendance funds and research field work expenses only apply to the 2020, 2021 and 2022 cohorts.

- d) 3 Fellows of the 2018 cohort, namely, Ms Cheromoi, Ms Bekele, and Mr Aturinde have failed to complete their studies in the stipulated time.
- e) It is only one fellow among the 2019 cohort, namely, Mr William Musamba who has submitted his thesis for examination. The remaining 9 have not yet completed their studies 6 months after the lapse of their fellowship.
- f) The poor completion rates among the 2018 and 2019 cohort are perhaps attributable to the impact of COVID-19 of their studies.
- g) Out of the 60 fellows, three have dropped out, namely, Ms. Betty Nangira of the 2017 cohort; Mr. Ligaye Nyanjom of the 2018 cohort; and Mr. Waisu Olorunlambe of the 2020 cohort.
- h) Two fellows, namely, Mr. Jumanne Kassim Ngohengo (2019 cohort) and Ms. Abdallah Laurene Manaa (2020) have had serious medical challenges that have affected their studies.

Physical Infrastructure Support

The funding has significantly supported a PhD cohort training infrastructure at Makerere University in the following ways. For example, the initial indicative budgetary component of USD 55,600 supported the college in procuring materials, equipment, as well as the renovations of important physical spaces in the college as indicated below.

- a) The college purchased desktop computers and printers for all the 15 departments in the college. It also purchased desktop computers and printers for the 5 schools in the college. Similarly, a computer and a printer were purchased for the coordinators, the Principal and the Deputy Principal of the college.
- b) The college procured furniture (assorted desks, office chairs and two boardroom tables) for the use of the Fellows. A 65-inch TV, whiteboard and two projectors were purchased.
- c) The college renovated office and study space. These include the PhD Fellows' study room and History Oral Documentation Centre. The funding also supported the renovation and procurement of office furniture for 4 college project offices. This infrastructure will continue to be utilised by the college long after the termination of the project.

Intellectual Infrastructure Support

The funding has also supported the college to innovate regarding an intellectual and/or scholarly infrastructure in the following ways.

- a) The funding has allowed the college to convene intellectual platforms such as the retooling seminars for cohort supervisors, introductory research workshops for joining Fellows, research and writing workshops each year for graduate students in the college and the CHUSS Symposium now renamed CHUSS Humanities Conference Series.
- b) The scholarly community of 60 full time PhD students has revived the intellectualism at the college and the university.

- c) The funding has also contributed to the internationalisation project of the college and Makerere University. For example, 23 of the current fellows come from different African countries.
- d) The project has contributed to solving the human resources challenges both at Makerere and other universities in the country as well as the region. For example, by 2026 the college would have trained 5 archaeologists.

Challenges

The last 6 years of the training partnership has not been plain sailing. The implementation of the project has faced many challenges which have been solved.

- a) However, the most outstanding challenge has been the adverse effects of COVID-19 on the scholarly progress of the Fellows. For example, the 2018 and 2019 cohorts were severely affected by COVID-19 disruptions, which perhaps explains why many have not completed their studies in the stipulated time.

Lessons Learnt and Sustainability after 2026

Despite the challenges listed above, this has been a highly successful project that has transformed CHUSS into a graduate training hub on the continent. It has offered us invaluable lessons, some of which are listed below.

- a) The college's potential as a site of graduate training in the Historical Humanities and Humanistic Social Sciences in Uganda and the region has been cemented.
- b) The funding has demonstrated that the cohort system is an important and effective mode of graduate training.
- c) Interdisciplinary research has produced high calibre Historical Humanities and Humanistic Social Scientists.
- d) The funding has demonstrated that a PhD can be completed in 3 years.