



**Submission No 13**

**Review of Australia's Relationship with the  
Countries of Africa**

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**Submission to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs,  
Defence and Trade**

**Australia's relations with Africa: The Case of Monash University**

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**11 December 2009**

## **Background:**

The following is a brief about Monash University's engagement in Africa. In line with the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, the submission is arranged to address Monash's specific contribution concerning:

- cultural, scientific and educational relations and exchanges; and
- development assistance cooperation and capacity building.

It includes relevant background information, the current context, and recommendations for future opportunities.

Monash's assistance deliberately focuses on those areas where we are best able to make a difference. In particular, we target those areas where we have comparative advantage and experience, bringing pre-eminent global research capacities to bear on the key African development agendas. Those agendas in which Monash University has particular expertise include:

- Public health
- Accident and road safety
- Education and skills development
- Water, climate change and environmental sustainability
- Public and private governance models and capacity building

In partnership with other universities, the following critical agendas could also be advanced in the future:

- Agribusiness and food security
- Natural resource management and mining
- Human rights, restorative justice and post-conflict reconciliation
- Energy security policies

At Monash, we are conscious that our commitments in Africa contribute towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Australian Government has placed a commendable emphasis on increasing its assistance to Africa's progress against the MDGs. Monash looks forward to working in close partnership with the Government towards these goals, as consistent with the current Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) objectives in Sub-Saharan Africa, and as evidence of Australia's long-term commitment to Africa.

## **Monash and South Africa:**

The cornerstone of Monash's current engagement with Africa is its physical presence in South Africa. Monash University established a campus at Ruimsig, 25 km northwest of central Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2001. Since then, Monash South Africa (MSA) has grown in capacity and student enrolments, constituting a significant investment in the future of higher education in South Africa.

The campus draws its students from 45 countries around the globe, with core enrolment from the Sub-Saharan Africa region, and a growing South African student population. At present, MSA offers foundation (English language and university bridging) programs, and bachelors degrees in Arts, Business and Commerce, Commerce in Business Systems, and Computing. Bachelors degrees in

Public Health and Science, and research masters degrees in Arts, Business, Information Technology and Integrated Water Management are also proposed. In 2009, the majority of African students who studied at MSA were drawn from across the continent, including South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Kenya as well as many other countries. MSA attracts the majority of Monash's total student enrolment from African countries (in 2009, around 2,800 African students studied at a Monash campus). A large number of students studying at MSA receive financial assistance through various bursaries and scholarship programs.

MSA is developing its research and teaching strengths in-country in order to make a significant contribution to the higher education landscape in South Africa. MSA is a unique vehicle for interaction between Australia and South Africa: the South Africa campus can draw on its Australian roots, facilitate closer bonds and provide a base for Australian and South African researchers. Monash is committed to its campus in South Africa and continues to invest in its ongoing operation. Students are encouraged to study on campus in South Africa, and to return to their home communities to utilise the skills they have learned at MSA.

Monash is sensitive to the complexities of operating offshore as an Australian university. The challenges for the university and its campus in South Africa involve understanding and operating within the higher education systems of Australia and South Africa simultaneously. The associated constraints impinge on many aspects of MSA operations. Notwithstanding this challenge, the core aim of Monash in Africa remains focussed on capacity building for Africa. The University's physical presence and associated teaching and research programs represent a significant commitment to development in Africa.

MSA was established as a wholly owned subsidiary of Monash University Australia in 2001. Monash is currently pursuing, with relevant South African authorities, formal recognition under South African statutes as a South African university. Australian Government support for this objective has been appreciated.

## **1.0 Cultural, scientific and educational relations and exchanges:**

### **1.1 Cultural relations and exchanges**

- **South African Artists in Residence Program**

The South African Artists in Residence Program is a cultural project to complement and broaden Monash University's activities in South Africa. In 2007, Monash's Faculty of Art and Design established a residency program offering South African artists access to its extensive resources in Australia. It arose out of a wish to strengthen ties between South Africa and Australia, both academically and culturally, using Monash's art and design resources as a focus.

Applications have recently closed for the second round of the program, and two South African artists will commence their residency at Monash Australia in early 2010.

- **Monash South Africa (MSA) Community Engagement Program & Footy Wild**

The Monash South Africa (MSA) Community Engagement Program (formerly Saturday Program) is a collaborative program run in conjunction with Hope Worldwide. The Program provides educational support in mathematics, science and computer literacy to over 100 children of the Zandspruit informal

settlement near MSA in Ruimsig. Largely run by MSA student volunteers, the Community Engagement Program also includes a life-skills component and a chess group, which is funded by Nedbank Capital.

The Monash Foundation Board has recently awarded annual funding for the Community Engagement Program for the five-year period 2010-2014. With this increased support, MSA will be able to further engage more children from Zandspruit.

A recent addition to the Community Engagement Program is Footy Wild, a sports program similar to the Australian *AusKick*, which is run in conjunction with the Australian Football League – South Africa.

- **Campus Diversity**

Students who study at MSA, whether from Africa or elsewhere, will invariably be shaped by their experience studying with others from around the globe, and in an African context. The research and education programs are tailored to include local content, and contextualised with discussions relevant to Sub-Saharan Africa in particular. Students studying at MSA receive a Monash (Australian) degree on graduation, and as part of their studies have the option to spend a semester abroad in Australia, and/or at Monash's Sunway Campus in Malaysia, as well as other partner university campuses around the world. These are unique opportunities that the University provides for all students across its campuses.

Monash also hosts a significant number of full-time African students in Australia. In 2009, 350 African students were enrolled at one of Monash's six Australian campuses.

- **Collaboration 4 Change and South African Zulu Choir**

Monash University sponsored the South African Zulu Choir, who performed a series of concerts in Melbourne and other capitol cities from August to September, 2009. The South African Zulu Choir came to Australia as part of Collaboration 4 Change (C4C), a global movement that is creating positive social change through music. "Collaboration 4 Change: Australia" was an initiative of Key Change Music and The Oaktree Foundation.

## **1.2 Scientific exchanges and relations**

Monash researchers continuously seek active engagement with the respective communities in which they operate. Monash currently has over 60 researchers committed to South African research imperatives, as well as the wider African research agenda. Collaborative research projects are pursued in areas such as accident and medical research, economic modelling, endangered species, trade and industry, injury prevention and safety promotion, water, climate and energy studies, development informatics, global movements, sustainable development and transport studies. In time, these research strengths will expand and diversify.

- **Monash Africa Centre (MAC)**

The cornerstone of our research relations with Africa will be the establishment of the Monash Africa Centre (MAC) in 2010. MAC is designed as a unique facility exploiting Monash University's presence as a high-quality higher education facility in South Africa. Deriving from the quality of internationally supported, African-based partnership approaches, MAC's principle contribution will be the resolution of high priority African development needs.

MAC will provide a critical foundation upon which to build greater understanding, co-operation and collaboration between Australia, relevant international partners and the African continent. Research and teaching programs conducted through the initiative will make a direct and ongoing contribution to the development goals of Sub-Saharan Africa. It will act as the directorate to build on the existing areas of research, as detailed above.

To become a truly international initiative, MAC will, through a series of high level international forums, establish research projects in Sub-Saharan Africa, integrate research activities across Australia and build key links with international centres specialising in Africa. Researchers from Monash, Warwick University (UK), Johns Hopkins University (USA), Arizona State University (USA) and Sichuan University (PR China) who already have African experience and are involved in research on Africa will be invited to participate in MAC. The Centre's structure will provide new opportunities for collaborative networks across a range of disciplines.

MAC will be seeking substantial support for this initiative from the Australian Government, which will be consistent with the current Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) objectives in Sub-Saharan Africa. Partner universities and organisations would also be expected to provide sustained support for MAC.

- **Cassava Toxicity, Climate Change and Food Security in Africa**

Monash Faculty of Science researchers, in collaboration with researchers from the Australian National University and Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique, have discovered that when grown under elevated carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) levels, the tropical staple crop cassava (manioc, tapioca) produces toxic cyanide at concentrations twice those under current day CO<sub>2</sub> levels. With 45% of Sub-Saharan Africans alone depending on cassava as their primary food source, the increasing toxicity threatens the livelihood of more than 750 million people worldwide. Furthermore, recent research indicates that the yield of the edible tubers could be up to 80% less in a high CO<sub>2</sub> world, possibly resulting in food shortages. Cassava is one of 60% of all crops that release toxic cyanide when crushed or chewed. Consumption of cassava with high cyanide levels results in the development of cyanide-related diseases such as Konzo (which causes irreversible paralysis of the legs).

The project has been funded by the Finkel Foundation, AusAID, and Monash. The research aims to address questions relating to staple food security in a high CO<sub>2</sub> world, regions of the world that are most at threat, and the effects of other climate change aspects, such as drought, on cyanide production in staple crops.

- **The International Water Centre (IWC)**

The International Water Centre (IWC) is a joint venture partnership of Monash University, The University of Queensland, The University of Western Australia and Griffith University. IWC focuses on education, research and consultancy to build capacity in integrated water management. With its capital in Brisbane, the IWC specialises in the practical application of holistic water management approaches at local, national and global scales. The Africa Water Research Node at MSA, together with the IWC, will contribute new capacity and novel approaches towards the sustainable management and governance of water.

- **Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC)**

Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC), formed in 1987, is Australia's largest multi-disciplinary research centre specialising in the study of injury and injury prevention. The Centre

undertakes applied research contracts for government and industry clients throughout Australia and internationally. MUARC has strong research collaboration with South Africa. MUARC has provided core support to Victoria Police who established a consortium of road safety agencies to advise the KwaZulu (KZN) provincial government in South Africa regarding road traffic safety initiatives. MUARC assisted the University of Natal Interdisciplinary Accident Research Centre (UNIARC) in the development of a report on their proposed future directions and an initial work program of the Centre. MUARC also provide skills transfer activities for the new Centre involving a series of exchange activities during its initial years and provided evaluation expertise on the mass media programs and road safety research activities of UNIARC.

MSA now hosts a research node of MUARC at which the health work of the centre is the main focus – research in injury and trauma studies, road safety, and child health (where Monash is currently developing collaboration involving South African partners). In addition, through the Australian-based Monash Law Centre for Regulatory Studies, the Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion node are developing regulatory (law) studies of nanotechnology, and the public health and occupational health and safety handling of nanomaterials.

MSA's MUARC node was recently awarded a \$450,000 ZAR (\$63,640 AUD) grant from the Namibian Government to carry out the first stage of research on injuries and trauma resulting from road accidents in Namibia. The government will use this data to ultimately improve road safety, with plans to fund further stages of research in this area in the future.

- **Public Health Education in a Globalised World**

A tri-lateral collaboration exists between Monash, University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) and Kings College London which focuses on the challenges for higher education and research training for public health and allied professionals. The context of the collaboration is the developmental challenges faced by Africa: HIV/AIDS, the rising epidemic of non-communicable diseases, loss of nurses and doctors to other countries, and lack of allied and mid-level health workers. It also recognises that new developments in training and educational priorities and new technologies that enhance communication and enable curriculum to be shared also require new kinds of collaboration and networks – in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific – between low, middle and high income countries.

Monash is also a member of the Consortium for Advanced Research and Training in Africa (CARTA), which is an African-led consortium of 20 institutions from Africa, USA, Australia, Switzerland, and the UK. With an award of £3.4 million from the Wellcome Trust, the African Population and Health Research Centre in Kenya will be responsible for leading CARTA. The initiative aims to build a critical mass of sustainable local research and capacity across Africa through strengthening African universities and research institutions.

- **Monash Centre of Policy Studies (CoPS)**

The Centre of Policy Studies (CoPS) within the Faculty of Business and Economics has conducted a series of collaborations with South Africa since 1993; first with the Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa (part of the Trade Ministry) and more recently with other government ministries and the University of Pretoria. On average, CoPS staff have visited South Africa once or twice a year during the last decade, with a similar number of reciprocal visits. Currently, there are two South African PhD students enrolled at CoPS. Most years CoPS has run a week-long training course in South Africa. Several computable general equilibrium (CGE) models have been constructed and applied to South Africa.

- **Research Directorate of MSA**

In addition to these ventures, MSA has established a research directorate to develop and maintain a high-quality research management infrastructure and foster a vibrant research culture on the campus. The directorate is rolling out higher degrees by research across the academic disciplines at MSA, including the new Master of Philosophy program, and draws from Monash Australia's research and supervision capacity. To secure PhD enrolments into the future, the directorate has implemented a graduate assistantship development programme across all disciplines at the campus. Fifteen graduate assistants will be given an opportunity to also receive scholarships to pursue a higher degree by research while establishing an academic career at MSA.

### **1.3 Educational engagement**

- **Scholarships and Bursaries**

Monash has sought to facilitate access for students to higher education through bursary and scholarship programs, as well as links with government, business and industry. Many students at MSA, therefore, receive financial support from their local government, private donors, businesses, and Monash. A total of 31 students from Africa undertook higher degrees by research at a Monash campus in 2009. Many received sponsorship by a faculty or discipline of Monash to undertake their studies.

In 2009, Monash South Africa awarded 51 scholarships on the basis of academic merit that provided for a 50% reduction in course fees for each recipient. An additional 38 bursaries were also offered in 2009 to applicants who met the academic entry requirements for their degree, but where their financial circumstances precluded them from study. Bursaries cover part or full reduction in tuition fees, and are assessed on academic merit and individual financial circumstances.

Monash has noted the Australian Government's intention to increase funding to Africa over the next four years through various initiatives including the Australian Development Scholarships and Australia-Africa Partnerships Facility. While it is understood that 51% of study must be undertaken in Australia for scholarship recipients, MSA and Monash University Australia would be an obvious combination of institutions to see many of these scholarships deployed in.

- **Monash University Fund for Education in South Africa (MUFESA)**

In 2007, the Monash University Fund for Education in South Africa (MUFESA) was established, and the University sought and received contributions from business and industry in South Africa and Australia. The fund is growing, and is an important element in Monash's larger, long-term commitment to South Africa. MUFESA aims to accelerate MSA's impact and ensure support for disadvantaged students in the region. In seeking financial support for the Fund, Monash will encourage Australians with an interest and history in South Africa. At the same time, MUFESA provides a means by which expatriate South African community members can make a difference to higher learning and development in South Africa.

MUFESA will create higher education scholarships for disadvantaged South African students who are committed to creating positive change for the future of South Africa. While MUFESA is part of the University's overall Gift Fund, all funds raised through the MUFESA initiative will be used exclusively to support education and training in South Africa for southern Africans.



- **Student Mobility**

Monash encourages and provides financial incentives for all of its students to complete an exchange semester or year at any Monash campus. In doing so, Monash expects students to build intercultural awareness and an appreciation of development issues. While the mobility numbers between campuses have been relatively low, they are expected to increase in coming years with increased funding and promotion across all campuses. Students from the Australian and Malaysian campuses have the choice of completing a period of study at MSA, supported by University travel grants and Australian Government loans schemes. Respectively, students studying at MSA can access the same University travel grants to study in Australia or Malaysia.

Monash facilitates shorter study tours to promote understanding, engagement and knowledge transfer to its students. The School of Geography and Environmental Science at Monash Australia undertakes a biennial field studies program in regional sustainability in the Mpumalanga Province, South Africa. Topics that students can study there include the effects of commercial agriculture on soil and water quality; trans-national water-sharing and flood management; ecotourism and conservation in nature parks; urbanisation, transportation and migration in environment-industry corridors; and environmental education, health, and local ecological management. The University is examining the expansion of community-based fieldwork at its campuses.

Within a broader framework of work on victimology, Monash has had particular success with a short course that explores the history and current implications of genocide. *After Atrocity: the Holocaust, South Africa and Rwanda* is a unit that brings students from Monash campuses in Australia and South Africa together in Rwanda, and MSA. Over three weeks, students learn about the contemporary histories of post-genocide and post-conflict societies through three specific cases: European Jews after the Holocaust; the South African approach after apartheid; and local and global responses to the Rwandan genocide.

Monash's mobility programs create a small but steady flow of Australian and African students between each continent. Since 2006, 35 Australian students have studied at MSA on exchange or short term study programs, while in the same time period, 29 African students from the MSA campus have undertaken a semester exchange at one of the University's Australian campuses.

#### **1.4 Major Educational Partnerships in Africa**

In addition to these key education links, there are Monash's major partnerships with African universities and research centres:

- **University of Botswana**

Monash University has a significant history of academic collaboration with the University of Botswana (UB). This history predates the establishment of MSA, with a university-wide agreement for academic collaboration signed with the University of Botswana in 2000, which was replaced with faculty specific agreements with the Monash Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences. Monash University campuses have Botswana Student Associations, UB staff have visited Monash South Africa and taken part in the Research Supervision Training courses offered at MSA and in 2008, Australia-based Arts Faculty staff visited UB.

- **University of South Africa (UNISA)**

The University of South Africa (UNISA) is Africa's premier distance learning institution. It offers internationally accredited qualifications and has world-class resources that inspire students to create

meaningful futures on their own terms. Monash and UNISA have a strong partnership. Both institutions have combined their expertise to collaborate across a broad range of areas, including accident research and public health.

- **The University of Johannesburg**

Following a major restructure by the Department of Education in South Africa, The University of Johannesburg (UJ) was established as the result of a merger between three South African institutions in 2005. Monash University established a Memorandum of Understanding with UJ in March 2009 to explore research collaborations in mutual areas of interest including water, and injury prevention and safety promotion, and also participate in research staff exchanges, workshops, and capacity building programs.

- **Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (UEM)**

Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (UEM) was founded in 1962 as the General Studies University of Mozambique. It was officially accredited as a university in 1968 and remained Mozambique's only university for many years. After mid-2008, the growing relationship between Monash and UEM has been grounded in the research project on climate change and cassava toxicity, based at the Monash School of Biological Sciences. One of the key collaborations in this project is Australian Dr Julie Cliff, a Monash alumnus who is based at UEM. UEM is a well-resourced institution with good leadership, which is focussed on capacity building and regional capabilities, and is interested in meaningful collaboration with Monash.

- **Vaal University of Technology**

Established as a *technikon* in South Africa in 1966, Vaal University of Technology (VUT) officially became a university in 2004. In May 2009, MSA established a Memorandum of Understanding with VUT. The scope of collaboration on academic and research activities includes joint supervision of students, research supervision training, use of respective libraries, and joint research programs.

- **Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA)**

Headquartered in Dakar, Senegal, the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) was established in 1973 as an independent Pan-African research organisation with a primary focus on the social sciences. It is recognised not only as the pioneer African social research organisation but also as the apex non-governmental centre of social knowledge production on the continent. MSA has established a Memorandum of Understanding with CODESRIA which bolsters an active partnership between the two. The scope of collaboration on academic and research activities includes joint supervision of students, research supervision training, use of respective libraries, and joint research programs. Although the different training activities undertaken by the Council are tailored to serve the needs of specific sections of the social research community, they also constitute an important element in the effort to mobilise all the social research constituencies active on the continent.

- **Medical Research Council (MRC)**

Monash has established an active partnership with the Medical Research Council (MRC) in South Africa. The collaboration aims to improve the nation's health and quality of life through promoting and conducting relevant and responsive health research. Our collaborative efforts in research cover areas including HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, cancer, nutrition, crime, violence and injury, and maternal and child health.

## **2.0 Development assistance co-operation and capacity building:**

- **African Think Tank (ATT) African Leadership Program**

The African Think Tank (ATT) is a Melbourne-based Non-Governmental Organisation that works with African Australian communities in Victoria. In 2009, the African Think Tank obtained a grant from the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), matched by Monash University, to deliver a leadership training program to 20 African community leaders in and around Melbourne.

The project has been designed specifically to meet a key outcome from the 2007 Settlement Conference run by ATT, which confirmed a widely supported recommendation that, 'government and service agencies deliver on their shared responsibility to actively assist African leaders to develop community structures that enhance their community self determination.' In particular, African community organisations are seeking support for training in key areas of governance, planning, running effective organisations, financial management, legal compliance, and the management of staff and volunteers.

The project is in the development stage and will be delivered over the course of eight workshops starting in early 2010. Monash University is represented on the project's Steering Committee.

- **Volunteering and Community Outreach**

Over 500 students are involved in volunteer programs at MSA, and most activities relate to improving the educational facilities and opportunities of the local community. MSA staff and students volunteer their time and expertise toward a variety of projects in local schools. The volunteer program has been active in other ways, running support programs for young children and 'maintenance days' to improve local community facilities, such as schools.

Alongside volunteering initiatives, MSA has arranged other community outreach initiatives. Several local provincial schools use MSA facilities on a weekly basis for teaching mathematics and science. MSA also hosts and co-sponsors the annual International Training in Communication program which teaches public speaking and leadership skills to 150 grade 11 students from the Gauteng Province.

- **The Monash – Oaktree Foundation Partnership**

Monash actively provides support to The Oaktree Foundation, a youth-led aid and development organisation active in South Africa. In 2007, Oaktree launched 'Schools for Schools' (S4S) in partnership with 'Generation of Leaders Discovered' (GoLD), a peer education model designed to operate within a development context. S4S is a program that partners schools in Australia with schools in the developing world. The program's aim is to teach Australian students about issues facing the developing world, and to foster relationships between students. In 2007, 11 schools in Melbourne were partnered with 12 schools in KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa. Fundraising by the Australian schools provided extra-curricular programs for students in partner schools that aimed to empower students to be leaders in their community whilst addressing issues such as unemployment, crime and violence, and HIV/AIDS.

In 2008, financial support from Monash University enabled the S4S program to expand into a further seven underprivileged schools in Mpumalanga Province. Over a three-year period, the program aims to develop leadership skills in 120 students who, it is hoped, will then apply their practical leadership skills for the benefit of the broader community. The program facilitates access for students from a poor or disadvantaged background to MUFESA scholarships at Monash South Africa. The S4S partnership will

allow Monash staff and students to visit the schools in the province for research and education purposes. The Oaktree partnership does not bring any financial returns to the University, but provides promotional benefits and the chance to develop future leaders of Africa.

- **ENKE – Africa Youth Leadership Forum**

ENKE is the youth leadership forum which seeks to unite and empower the next generation of regional leadership in Africa. In July 2009, the highly successful inaugural ENKE African Youth Leadership Forum was hosted by Monash South Africa. Mentors were selected from MSA and the Alan Gray Orbis Foundation (Wits and UJ), and received specific training in the lead-up to the Forum. Over 60 youth leaders from across southern Africa came to participate. There were also non-governmental organisations present and youth mentors from the UK and Australia.

- **Monash – Oxfam Australia Partnership**

In October 2008, Monash University and Oxfam Australia signed an agreement to strengthen ties between the two internationally-focussed organisations. This Memorandum of Understanding is the first between Oxfam and an Australian university and it aims at creating a number of new collaboration opportunities across a wide range of area from staff exchanges to procurement policies, plus voluntary and pro-bono work opportunities for students.

In January 2009, Monash sent the first group of seven student interns to work with Oxfam partner organisations in South Africa, and the second group of 12 students have recently been announced for 2010. The program has been an overwhelming success and is very popular amongst students.

- **Monash – World Vision (Australia) Partnership**

Monash University and international aid agency World Vision (Australia) recently signed an agreement to create new partnership opportunities including collaboration on joint research projects, volunteering and internship opportunities for students in World Vision activities, graduate placement and curriculum development.

The two institutions will work together in five key areas: sustainability and climate change, global poverty, child labour and human trafficking, development and public health. Over the next 12 months the focus will be on climate change.

The agreement was part of a University strategy to work more closely with key Australian and international non-government organisations. Monash will use its strengths to complement World Vision's ongoing work throughout Africa.

- **Teaching the Teachers**

Monash University Faculty of Education staff are working in conjunction with colleagues at MSA to implement a Teacher Capacity Development Program in South Africa. The Teacher Capacity Development Program will provide a series of professional development courses and workshops aimed at creating opportunities for teachers to acquire the necessary expertise to teach maths and science effectively. The key aim of the Program is to enhance the capacity of teacher training practitioners and practicing secondary teachers in the southern Africa region and to create lasting, sustainable education outcomes for teachers and students.

