

Building and Sustaining Staff Capacity:

*Experiences from VLIR-UOS
Institutional University Cooperation
(IUC) with Jimma University, Ethiopia*

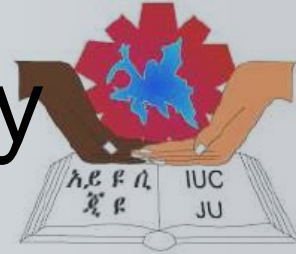
By Kora Tushune
Vice President, Jimma University, Ethiopia
Local Coordinator, JU-IUC Program

Outline of the Presentation

- Overview of Jimma University
- Background on Staff capacity building (SCB) in Jimma University
- SCB Experiences from VLIR-UOS Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) with Jimma University, Ethiopia
- Way forward



Overview of Jimma University



Where are we?

- Is located in historic town of Jimma in Oromia Regional State, south-western Ethiopia; 360km from Addis.
- Jimma is one of the most green and located in the wettest part of Ethiopia





Overview of Jimma University



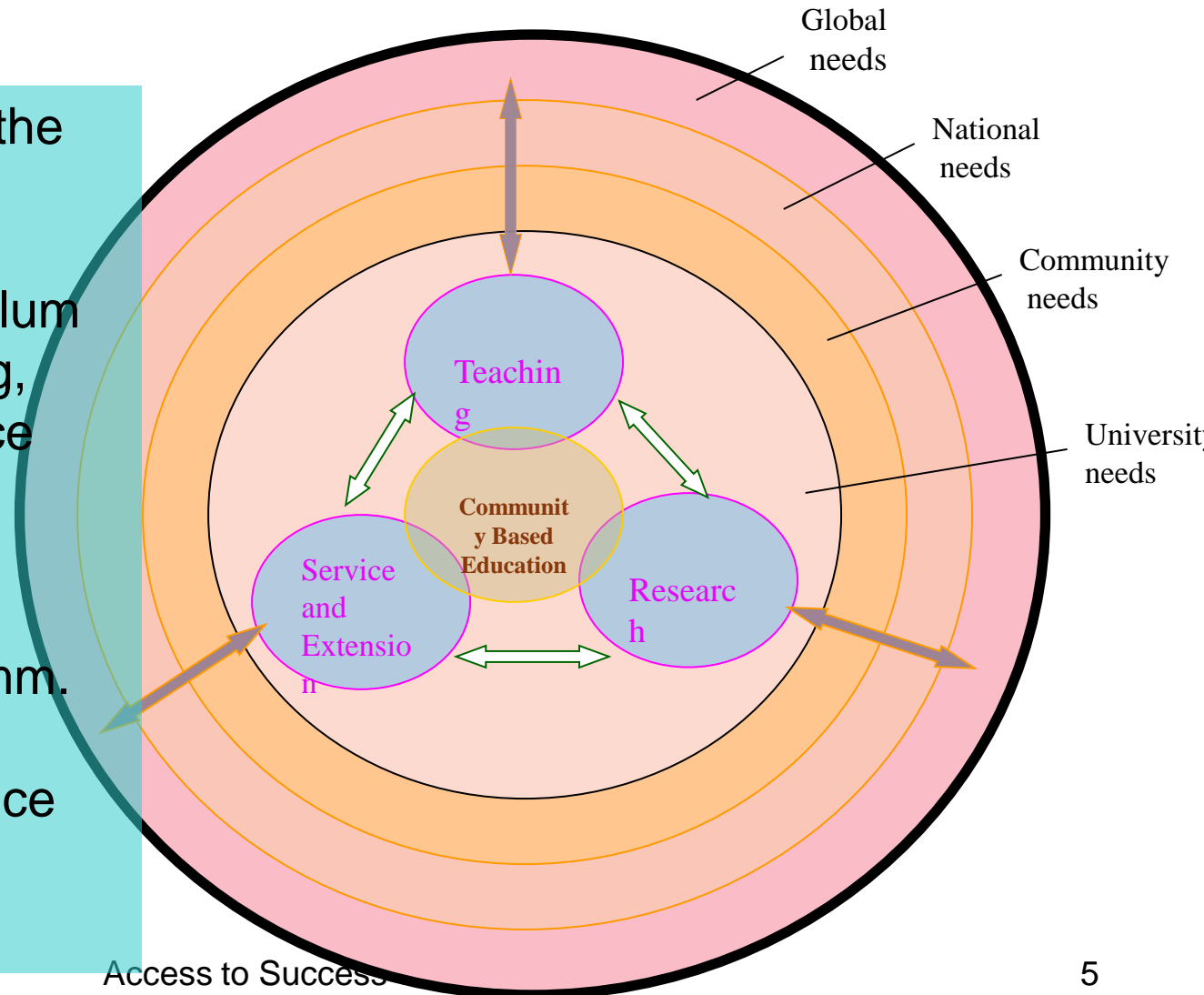
who are we?

- JU was established in 1997 but the constituent institutions were 18 to 55 years old
- Currently JU is the second largest university in the country.
- organized into six colleges that have about 60 undergraduate and 35 graduate study programs
- has student population of 32600 and 1200 faculty and about 3000 administrative, support and health service staff
- It is the national pioneer in **Community Based Education (CBE)** approach that aimed at ensuring educational relevance.

Overview of Jimma University

The Community Based Education (CBE)

- Introduced early in the curriculum
- Spiral in nature
- ≈20% of the curriculum
- Permeates teaching, research and service
- Takes place in the community; empowerment and involvement of comm.
- Means of achieving educational relevance and our social accountability





Overview of Jimma University

Vision



It has a vision of becoming the premier public higher learning institution in the country, renowned in Africa and respected in the world for its academic excellence embedded in its educational philosophy of Community Based Education (The Transformation Agenda, Strategic Plan of JU).

Background on Staff Capacity Building (SCB) in Jimma University

National Context

- Massification and dramatic increase in enrolment (many new Universities, 10 more universities to come)
- Problems of attracting and retaining qualified staff
- Low motivation and performance
- Low remuneration
- High turnover of staff
- Limited faculty pool
- Efforts to put in place quality assurance mechanism
- HE funding reform (block grant and funding formula; promoting entrepreneurial spirit)

Institutional Context

- Issues related to ensuring quality and relevance of education and research (in the face of massive expansion and student enrolment)
- Institutional effectiveness issues
- Human resources capacity issues: size, qualification, skill, mix, attraction and retention and so on
- Financing (funding) issues: dependence on government funding
- Issues pertaining to maintaining relevance to government strategies and priorities societal needs: access, participation, gender, community engagement

Staff capacity building challenges in Jimma University

- **Limited local/national capacity** to meet capacity building needs of the University
- **Funding problems** to sponsor overseas training of staff
- **Low retention of trained staff** due to dissatisfaction with working environment, remuneration, opportunities for professional development
- Partners usually have **short term objectives** and are usually selective.
- Training **opportunities secured through individual efforts** usually do not reflect institutional priorities

Current efforts to cope with SCB challenges

- **Use of local HEIs** (but they have limited fields of study and admission capacity to address SCB demands)
- Trying to **forge overseas collaborations** to open opportunity for training.
- **Encouraging individual** to look for training and research opportunities.
- Encouraging staff to **engage in research and scholarships** activities
- Recruitment of **expat faculty**

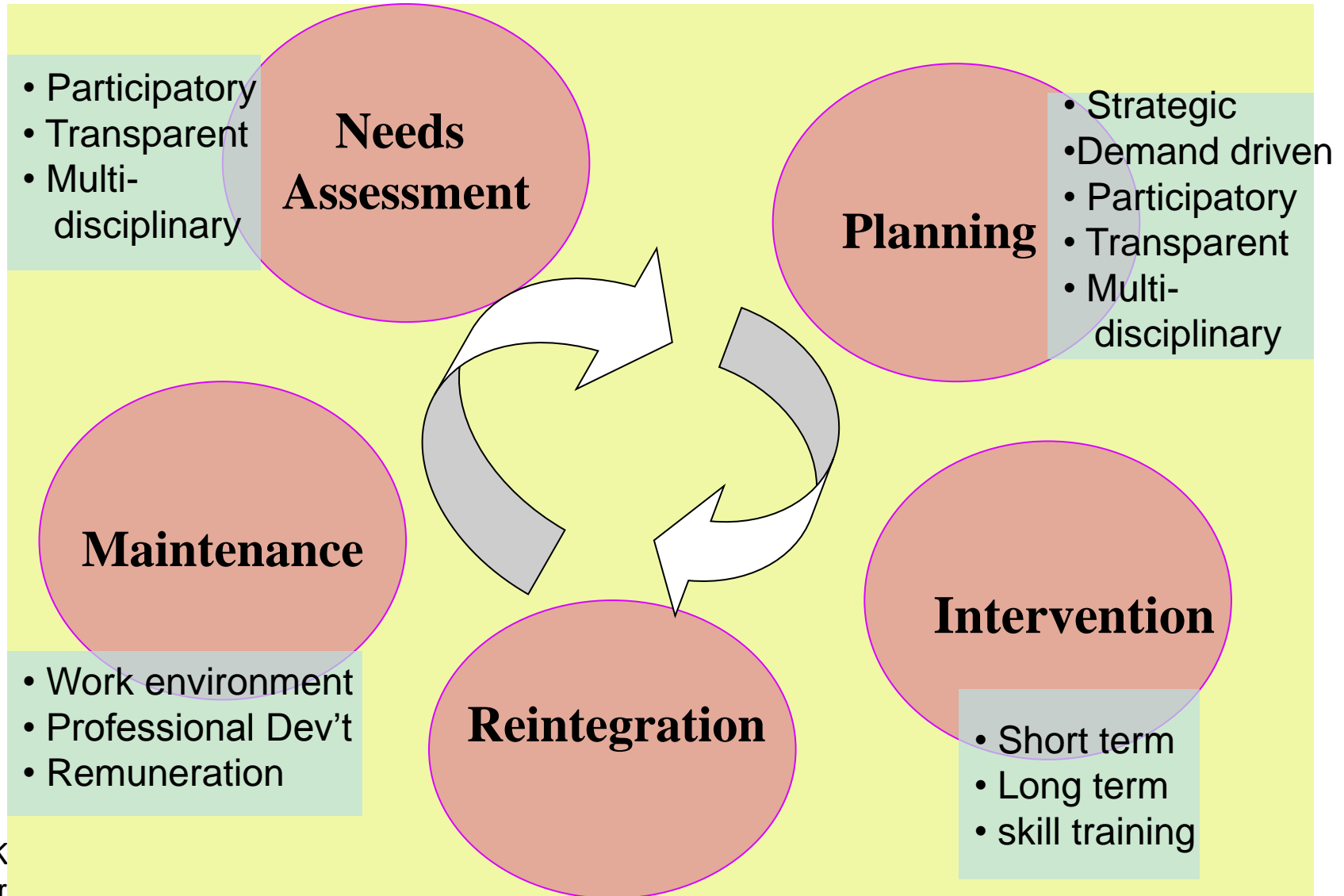
Important observations about SCB

- It is a process **not one shot effort**. Sustainability is crucial.
- SCB requires **strong ownership and commitment** of the institution.
- SCB has strong **connection with other aspects of capacity building**: institutional, infrastructural, management, and other capacity
- SCB has **vicious and virtuous circles**. It can lead to more capacity and/or increase vulnerability to attrition.

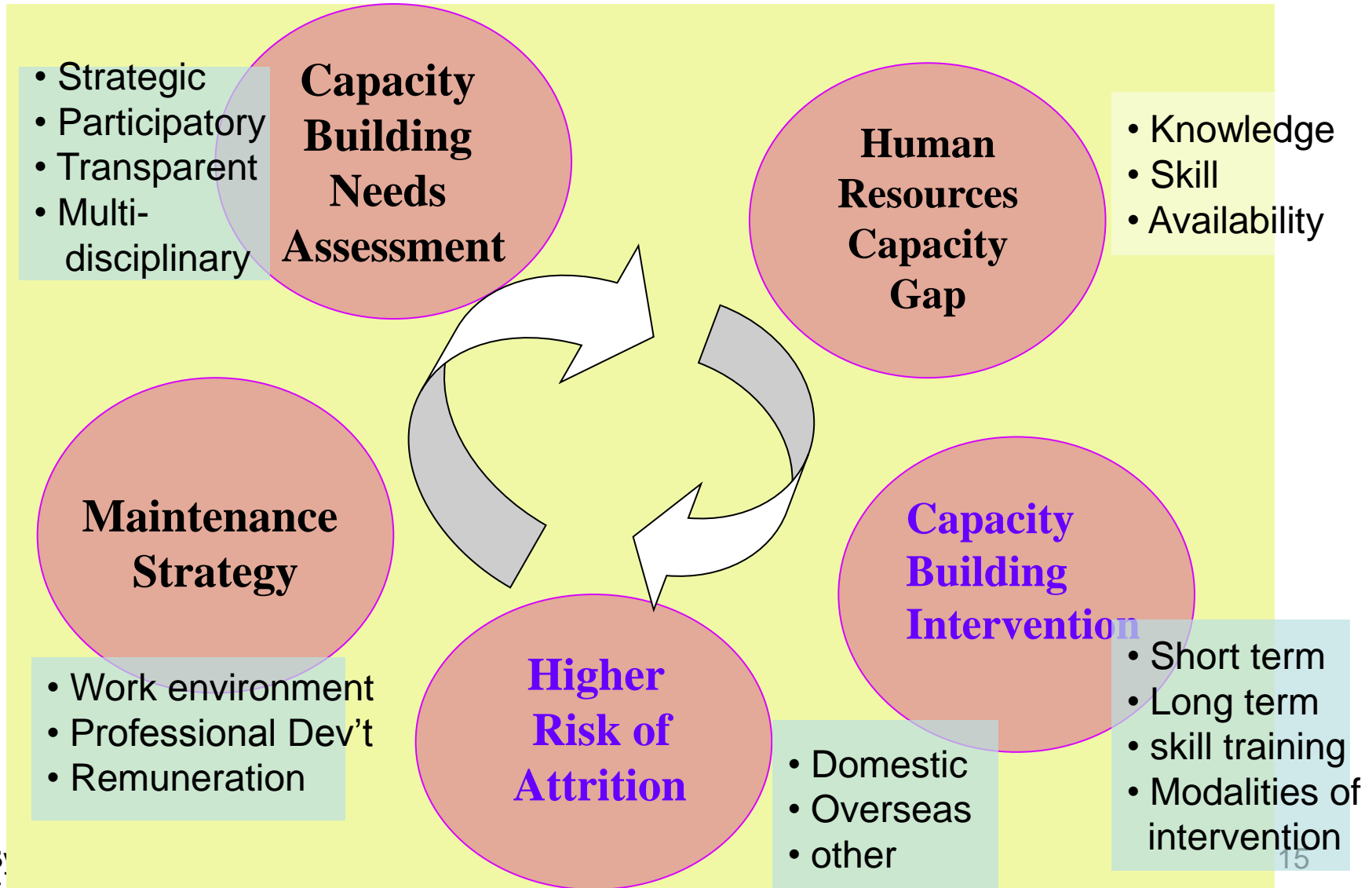
Vicious and Virtuous Circles of SCB

- **Improved staff capacity leads to improved attainment** of institutional vision, mission, goals and objectives (virtuous circle)
- Increased staff **capacity can also result in more attrition** (CB add more value to qualification, skill and knowledge, demands more capacity, more facilities and improved work environment, opens up new opportunities: contacts, publications and networking). **Attrition can worsen under some methods of staff CB**, e.g., full-time overseas PhD training

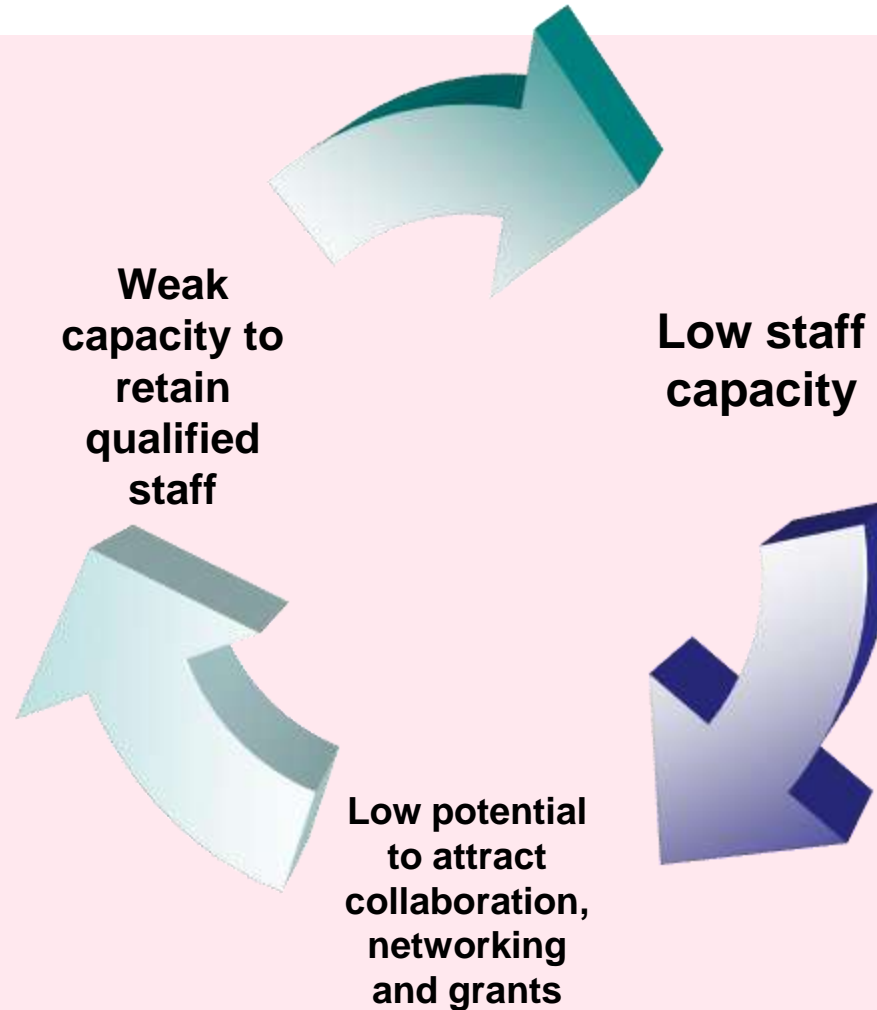
Capacity Building Cycle: Important Steps



Capacity Building Cycle: the Paradox



Capacity Building Cycle: the vicious circle



Staff Capacity Building Experiences from VLIR-UOS Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) with Jimma University, Ethiopia



The Theme of the Program

Investigating the Impact of Gilgel Gibe Dam: A Multidisciplinary Approach towards Capacity Building



Jimma University (JU)

Institutional University Cooperation (IUC)



Funded by:

VLIR-UOS

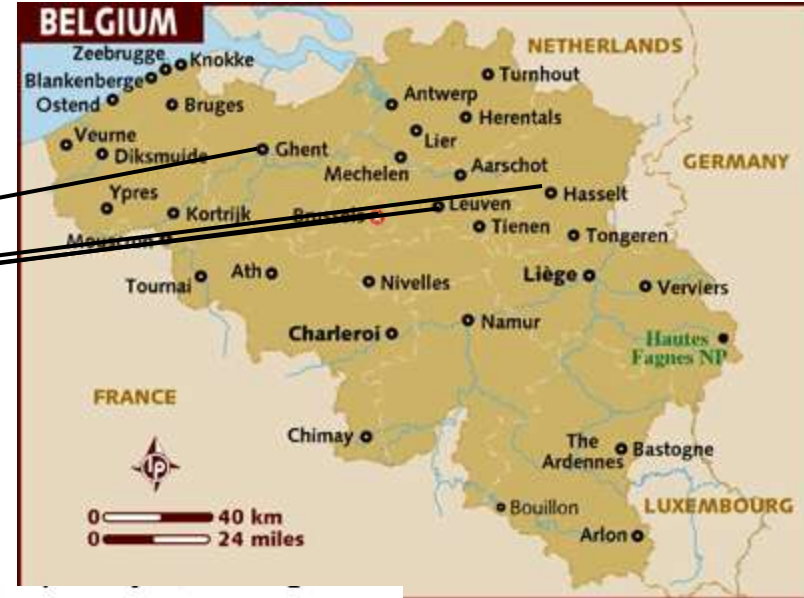
University Development
Cooperation



IUC-JU Collaborators



JU-IUC Coordinating and partner universities



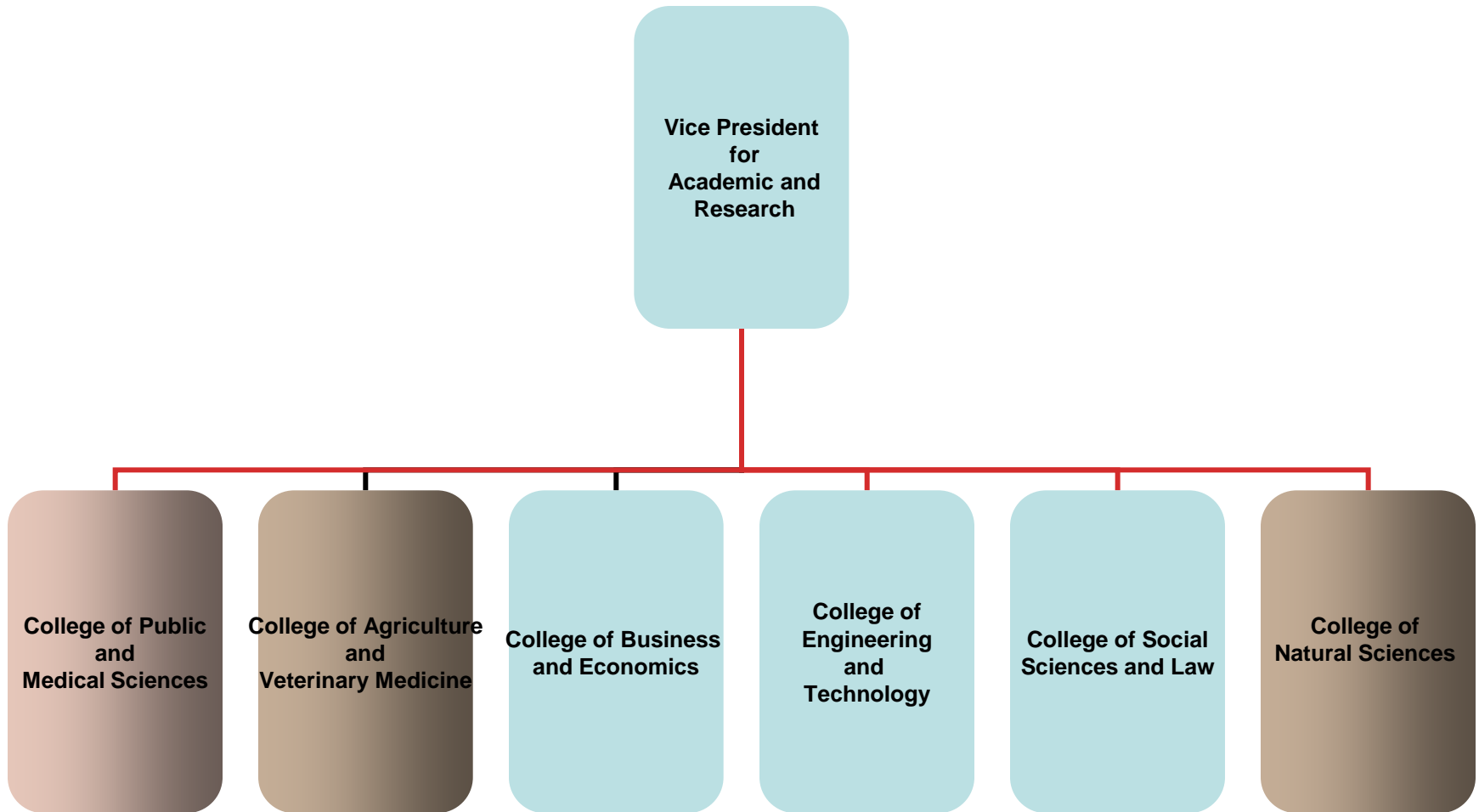
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Investigating the impact of the Gilgel Gibe dam.
 A multidisciplinary approach towards capacity building.

Background on the JU-IUC program

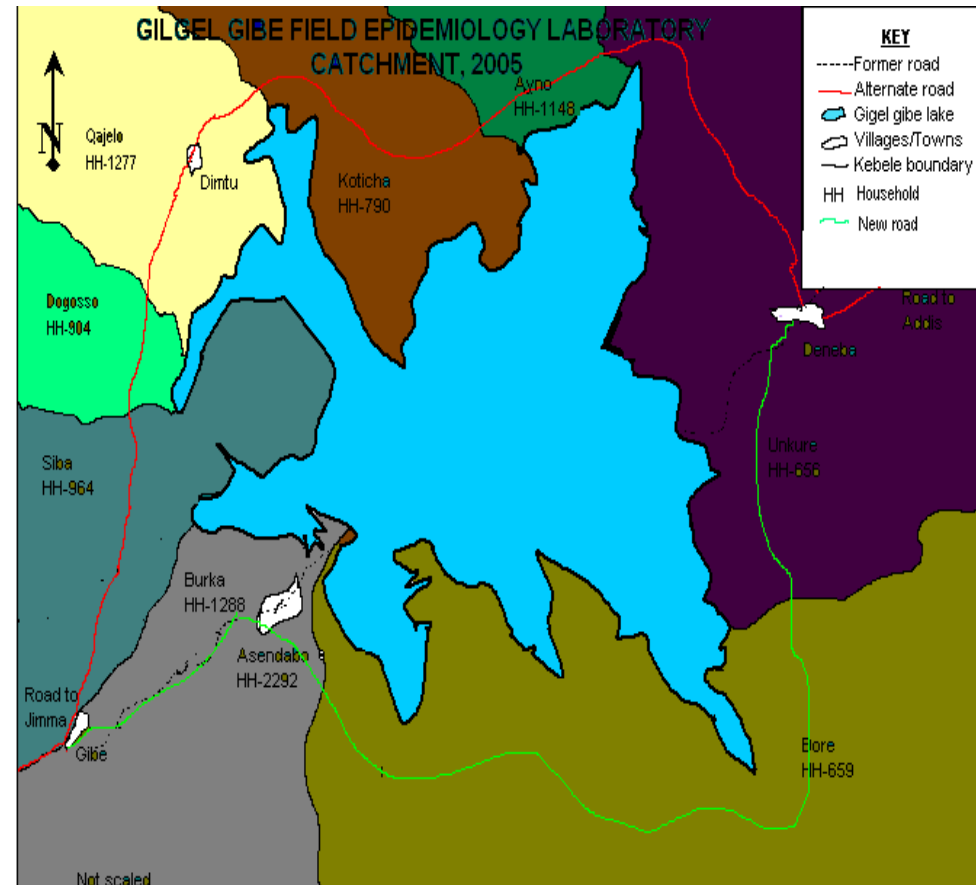
- Formally launched in Sept. 2007
- It went through call application, evaluation, selection, matchmaking, formulation, pre-partner program and partner program and annual program developments
- Phase I Partner Programme (2007-2012)-five years
 - Yearly activity programmes (AP) (for five years)
 - Funding level is €745,000
- Phase II Partner Programme (20013-2017)
 - Yearly activity programmes (AP) (for five years)
 - Gradually decreasing funding
- Exit Phase (beyond 2017)
 - Research projects in competition with other IUCs

IUC Coverage: Institutional

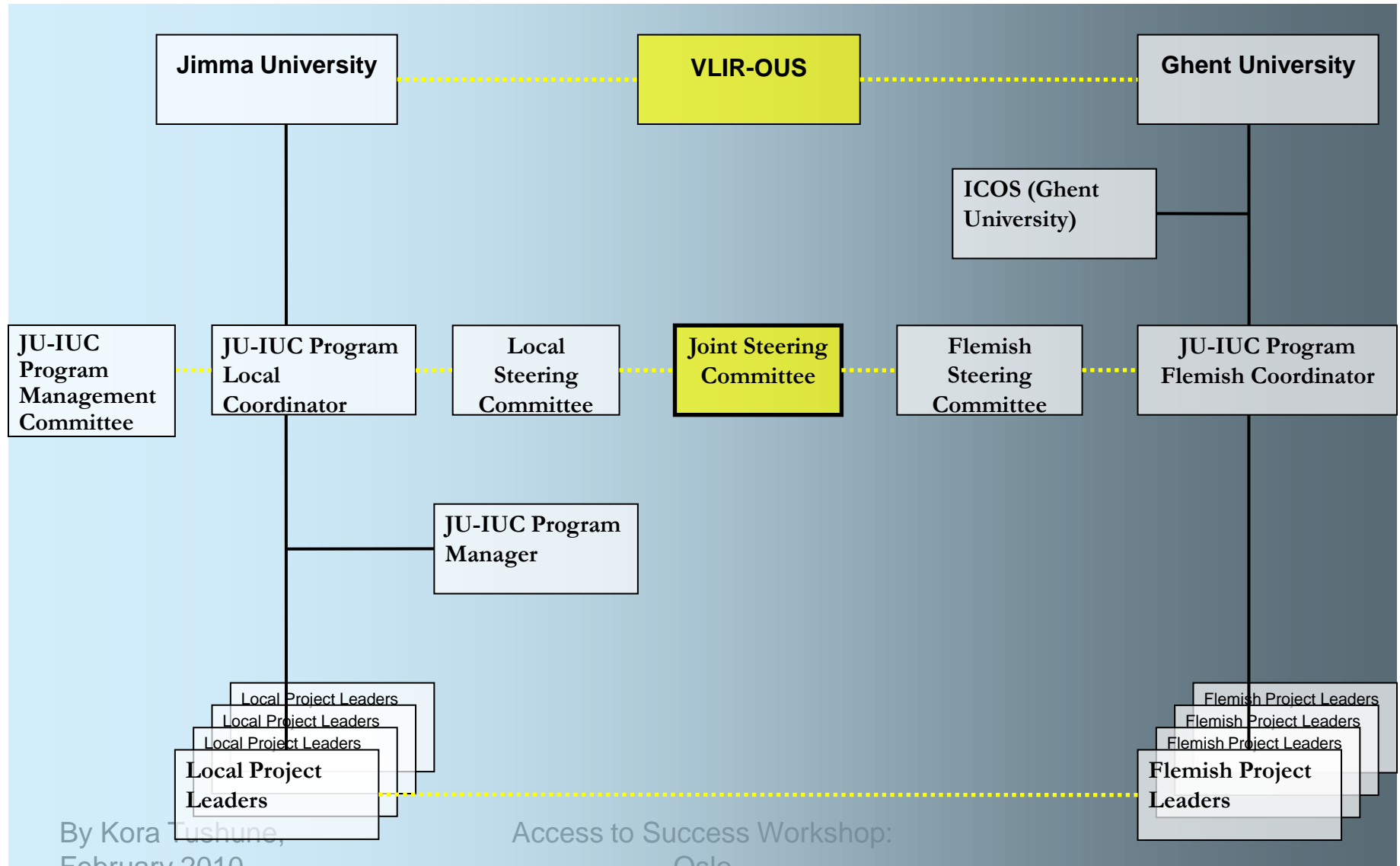


IUC Coverage: Geographic

- Jimma Zone of Oromia
- Four woredas (districts)
- 100000 population
- 20000 households
- There is also a permanent demographic survey site in the area.
- JU is also establishing other sites through out Ethiopia in collaboration with public universities and CDC



The Management Structure of JU IUC Partnership Program



Achievements of the Program

In spite of its short life the program has already a number of achievements:

- **Research projects** are ongoing in **five thematic areas** and 39 topics (Animal health and Zoonotic diseases, Child Health and Nutrition, Environmental Health and Ecology, Infectious Diseases Epidemiology and Modeling, and Soil Fertility)

Achievements...

- About 160 staff are **members** in research projects and 28 of them are pursuing **PhD studies** on sandwich basis, 2 completed **masters** study in Flanders and an other 2 attending masters study locally
- 32 research project related **short courses**, 5 short course ICT training, and 3 short courses in library; 16 short courses organized in Jimma University for not only JU staff but also for Ethiopian and African IUC institutions

Achievements...

- **3 Conferences/workshops** and **6 publications** accepted and 8 submitted
- **Networking and synergy** (NSS collaboration: Ethiopian HEIs, Moi University, synergy with research grants such as TDR projects)
- Supporting **graduate program** expansion including opening new graduate programs (e.g., MSc in Biostatistics through north-south-south collaboration fund from VILR).

Achievements...

- Contribution to **institutional capacity development** efforts:
 - **ICT and library** capacity development (Network administration, Web based services, University email system, University portal, Bandwidth management, Database (mysql, ...), Wireless internet, e-learning, library automation (WEBLIS, ABCD, ...), ICT cross-cutting initiatives, e-journals/books...

Achievements...

- Infrastructural support:
 - **Procurement** of Servers, PCs, laptops, Lab equipments, machines, chemicals, and Vehicles
 - Establishment of excellence **centers**:
Molecular lab, Nutrition and Psychomotor research centers, and TB/HIV laboratory

Key Features of JU-IUC Program Development

- Institutional collaboration
- Alignment and harmonization with JU priorities
- Ownership by JU
- In-built sustainability mechanism
- Networking, Collaboration and partnership
- Result orientation (capacity building of the partner university in the south)

Strengths We Observed in VLIR JU-IUC Program

- **Participatory** development of collaborative program with the spirit of partnership
- It is based on **demand and identified gaps** in the strategic plan of the University
- The **sandwich** mode staff training reduces attrition and is more cost effective
- Funding is available upon the existence of an **active collaboration** between south and north which enhances the sharing of expertise and transfer of skill and technology
- Relatively **long term**: funding in two phases of five years each and additional 7 years opportunity for competitive research funding.

Strengths We Observed ...

- A number of **complementary funding opportunities** (cross-cutting and NSS collaboration) and alliances (INASP, CTG, IFS, etc) to support staff and institutional capacity building in the areas of ICT, library, research and teaching.
- Involvement of **many universities** from the north in the consortium expands opportunity for capacity building (JU has access to five universities in Flanders)
- It is **extensive in coverage** while maintaining the focus: covered three colleges and about 40 depts.
- Encouragement of **networking and NSS collaboration**

Challenges we face in the Program

- The partnership model **requires closely working together** between south and north at program, project and subproject levels.
- Assumes that there is **balance between south and north**. However, this balance may have to be compromised due to difference in capacity.
- Has to **operate within other aspects of capacity challenges**: institutional, infrastructural and technical.
- **No specific strategy to retain** staff after training programs at master and PhD levels

Way forward

- **Collaboration and networking** with NSS emphasis
- **Building capacity of the south** step by step to handle SCB activities locally in the future
- SCB programs should think go **beyond training and development of individual staff** but also cover measures that need to be taken to retain them once they are qualified.
- **Strategic** collaboration (long term) should be encouraged

Way forward ...

- University collaborations and SCB should be **part of global development aid dialogue**
- **Broader networking and collaboration** expands opportunity for SCB and enable partners institutions to effectively utilize limited resources
- Northern collaborators should **harmonize their approach and coordinate** their support