

NUFU

EDUCATION AND RESEARCH PROJECT FOR THE NUFU PROGRAMME

CO-ORDINATORS FINAL REPORT

2001

1. Project number: PRO 28/96

2. Project title: African Languages Lexical Project

3. Grant period: 1996-2001

4. Name of the main co-operating institutions:

UiS: Name: University of Zimbabwe, African Languages Research Institute

UiN: Name: University of Oslo, Department of Scandinavian Studies and general literature

Other institutions taking part in the co-operation.

Name: University of Gothenburg, Department of Oriental and African Languages

5. Name of Project co-ordinators:

UiS: Name: (Dr.) Herbert Chimhundu

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6. ACTIVITIES

The following activities have taken place in the cooperation project: (tick off)

Joint research

Education of Ph. D. candidates

Education of Master candidates

Student exchange

Development of Ph.D programme

Development of Ph.D course

Development of Master programme

Development of Master course

Investment in infrastructure and scientific apparatus

Development of text books and teaching material

Summing up conference for the project

Others

(Please specify):

1. Creation of research centre for African languages at UZ (African Languages Research Institute) from 1.1.2000.
2. 10 Guest researcherships (2 UZ team members á 3 months at UiO pr year)

3. Production and publication of general purpose language tools for research and education in African languages (2 electronic corpora, 2 dictionary databases and 2 morphological parsers; 2 paper dictionaries, published June 2001).

7. SCIENTIFIC REPORT

7A. To what extent have project activities been implemented in accordance to the Programme Agreement

completely largely to some extent not at all

7B. To what extent have results been achieved accordance to the planned activities

completely **largely** to some extent not at all

7C. Please explain the reasons for discrepancies and possible delays.

The ALLEX Project plan 1996-2001 was very ambitious, comprising a number of smaller products (terminology lists, specialised dictionaries) in addition to the main project tasks. These smaller products are begun but not completed before the end of the project period. The reasons for discrepancies are the following:

1. The main project tasks became bigger and took more work and time than originally planned
2. Infrastructure difficulties at UZ (lack of space, insufficient technical assistance, time-consuming communication routines (no personal email) etc
3. Increasing difficulties with local additional funding (SIDA pulled out of UZ in the course of 2000)

7E. Provide an evaluation of progress, use of resources and results achieved within the project.

1. Contact between the three institutions has varied with project intensity, but progress has been monitored closely throughout. Through intensive self reporting and partly through database supervision, delays in main project tasks have been noted, dealt with and caught up.
2. Use of resources (funding) has been ascetic and tied up to reaching chief project aims. The ALLEX Project has spent all it had and managed to do what the project teams had promised to do, despite an increasingly difficult situation financially at UZ (and in Zimbabwe) from 1997 onwards.
3. All main project tasks have been accomplished as detailed in original NUFU application, i. e. creation (production) of corpora and dictionaries, institutionalisation of discipline at UZ, progress of Ph. D. candidates.
4. The cooperation with the University of Gothenburg and the system of annual guest researcherships from UZ at UiO have been essential to project progress.
5. The task sharing between GU, UZ and UiO has worked well and been strictly adhered to.
6. The local input at GU, UZ and UiO has been considerable. Special mention should be

given to the following:

- UZ has taken the cost of the institutionalisation process, including 8 academic and 3 technical staff appointments plus 4 staff development fellowships for training at UZ at M.Phil/D.Phil level starting in 2002.
- UZ has managed to get outside funding for nearly all fieldwork required in connection with the project (never budgeted within the ALLEX Project)
- GU has maintained its project participation at the planned level despite the loss of SIDA funding (owing to changed policy decisions for SIDA re UZ from 2000 onwards)
- INL/UiO has contributed heavily to project management and integration of UZ ALLEX team members in the general academic environment
- The Arts Faculty at UiO has provided supervision and training to 3 UZ ALLEX Ph. D. scholars.

7F. Management of the project:

a) How effective has project management been?

good fair poor

b) Which factors have influenced the management effectiveness of the project?

1. Detailed annual work plan
2. Detailed annual budget
3. Tight follow-up of plans and budgets
4. Thorough integration of project in local academic plans, priorities and administrative systems at all participating institutions
5. Frequent personal contact (email, phone) between project administrators and between project members at all institutions, and emphasis on openness and good human relations
6. An open management system at all institutions where project effort and use of resources can be checked by all who are interested
7. Strict attention to correct local management procedures (decision taking, personnel policy, budget and accounts)

7G. Has the project had impact on appointments to scientific positions or other positions for the researchers and coordinators **Yes** No

If yes, please specify:

UZ: Through the ALLEX Project Phase 2 (1996-2001), computational lexicography and corpus linguistics have been institutionalised as disciplines at the University of Zimbabwe. This has led to the creation of 8 academic and 3 administrative posts. The academic posts are:

1 director (professor level) (5-year term) (filled by the UZ Project coordinator, Dr. Herbert Chimhundu)

5 research fellowships

3 junior (trainee) research positions

The technical/administrative posts are:

2 data entry operators

1 secretary

All posts are filled with staff who have helped initiate or have been recruited through the ALLEX Project (1991-2001)

UiO: No (both Christian-Emil Ore and Oddrun Grønvik hold the positions they had in 1996. Minor changes have not been related to the ALLEX Project)

GU: Yes. Dr. Daniel Ridings left the university proper in 1999 in order to found and lead a company owned by the university's "Holding Company". This was done with the university's blessing. Swedish universities are encouraged, even required, to establish links with the private sector. One way of doing this is to establish companies that they university owns and that are based on research results that are mature enough to be commercialized. This kind of activity turned out to be something the university was not very interested in. The policy was forced on the university by political will from above, the Swedish parliament. That being the case, the Holding Company that owned the university-based companies received no support from GU and eventually it was forced to dismantle the majority of its holdings. In the process of establishing Lexilogik, the company that Dr. Ridings founded, he resigned from his position. When Lexilogik, the company in question, was dismantled, he was simply out of a job. He was subsequently offered a special situation with the faculty in general and job as senior lecturer at the Dept. of Linguistics. It is his opinion that the success and good reputation of work that was done with ALLEX together with the universities of Oslo and Zimbabwe played a significant role in this positive development. Even if ALLEX was not wholly responsible for Dr. Ridings regaining his former academic status, his association with ALLEX was not without significance.

7H. Please describe impact of the project with relation to the departments in cooperation.

ALRI and ALL, UZ:

1. Significant contribution to the documentation, standardisation and development of Shona and Ndebele through ICT-based language analysis.
2. Training of researchers at MA and PhD levels.
3. Building and organisation of corpus collections in the two main languages of Zimbabwe both for further research and as a national resource.
4. Building a critical mass of local expertise that will be required to sustain the divers research programme of the new institute (ALRI).
5. Acceptance and recognition of ALRI as a centre of excellence in the field of corpus linguistics and lexicography.

INL, UiO:

1. Increased awareness on the general aspects of mother tongue study and research, especially within language typology and categorisation, standardisation and development.
2. Testing and improvement of linguistic research tools and techniques, especially in

relation to lexicography

3. Increased experience in the management of international collaborative research projects.

DokPro - etter, UiO:

The unit has among others, the objectives to develop and implement ICT based methods and tools for the lexicographical groups at INL, UiO. In the ALLEX the objectives have been all most the same. Through ALLEX project the unit has had the possibility to test out the new methods and tools, and in parallel study the effects in two rather different research groups with respect to tradition and background. This has given our unit an very valuable experience and been beneficial for the introduction of ICT based methods both at UZ and UIO.

GU:

1. One graduate student, Pernilla Danielsson, was able to widen her horizons when it comes to concrete knowledge of languages outside the European context. She completed her doctorate in April 2001 and was financially connected to the project for about 20% of her study period.

2. Daniel Ridings was able to strengthen his contacts with other countries in the region, in particular Mozambique, Tanzania and South Africa. His academic interest is turning more and more to Bantu languages in connection with computational linguistics. This would not have happened without the project. The ALLEX project is a major factor in the language situation of southern Africa. Even if other countries like South Africa tend to be reserved when it comes to creating and maintaining formal contacts with ALLEX, the reservation can be explained more by intellectual patriotism than ALLEX:s significance. This is not the case for all countries. Mozambique and Tanzania are looking carefully at the results and methods that have been used in ALLEX. This can be seen in 1) an existing project in Tanzania that has been financed by SAREC attending ALLEX workshops and striving to carbon-copy the process in their own country and 2) researchers in Monzambique approaching GU to help write project proposals to Swedish donor agencies like SAREC and SIDA for their own projects.

3. Gothenburg has been able to observe how a project can be run successfully under the University of Oslo's leadership. We have experience in many international projects, mostly at the EU level, and none of them have been as productive and successful as this one. To sum it up: we've learned a lot about project management and the importance of defining, establishing and maintaining common goals.

71. To what extent have the result of the project benefited the target groups outside the institutions?

Zimbabwe: Judging by the comments and inquiries that ALRI has been getting from the targeted users in the Shona and Ndebele language communities, the combined research team in this collaborative venture has already contributed significantly to the standardisation and development of these two languages and to enhancing their national status. The ALRI dictionaries have been well received, they are selling well and they are being widely used. Awareness of possibilities in the development of indigenous African languages has increased tremendously in various language communities in Zimbabwe, including a number of minority languages whose speakers are now also looking up to ALRI to assist in the initiation and coordination of similar work in their own communities. General policy on language in education and in the media is being reviewed and the advisory role of the institute in this process is being recognised.

Norway: There are no direct target groups, i.e. users of the end products (very few speakers of Shona or Ndebele) except for researchers interested in African Languages. A good deal of interest in the software (databases, corpus programme, parsers) has been expressed in various contexts. Indirect target groups outside research institutions are all who take an interest in language standardisation and development. These have been reached through articles, lectures, seminars etc, and through the media, cf publication list. The initiative has nearly always come from outside, which reflects the high level of language consciousness in Norway.

The coordinator for the ALLEX Project at UiO has been in dialogue with NORAD with a view to bringing the issue of language in education more strongly into focus in development policies for education, especially primary school level.

Sweden: There are no direct target groups but Swedish universities are required to keep the public informed and to disseminate research results to the non-academic community. When it comes to the academic world, there has been an increased interest for the online corpora that have been produced by the project. These are used by many departments and individual researchers ranging from academics at Cambridge University to private individuals working with translation projects and Shona in Canada in North America. It has been rewarding to apply the experience and know-how has been gathered over the years in Gothenburg to this endeavor.

A strong attempt has been made to awaken the interest of international companies based in the North, Ericsson, Volvo, SKF among others, to take an interest in African languages in general. This has not met with much success since the business world still feels that English is the economically viable language and that the cultural aspects should be relegated to donor agencies.

This is very unfortunate because quite a number of the donor agencies are losing interest in southern Africa for various reasons. The political situation is not encouraging and the glamour of supporting a movement to majority rule, in the case of South Africa, is no longer a magnet attracting those who want to flout their self-righteousness. Africa still needs all the help and support it can get even in the more mundane tasks of transforming itself into a modern society, with dignity. Language policy is what can create and maintain a feeling of pride in one's own culture.

8. SUSTAINABILITY:

8A. Importance of project for further research, education, and development within the field:

important moderate limited

8B. Will project activities continue when NUFU support is terminated:

Yes No

If yes, which activities?

At UZ, ALRI has been created in order to continue the description and standardisation of the African Languages of Zimbabwe, and the production of essential language tools in electronic and paper form, such as general and terminological dictionaries, parsers, grammars. In the future, ALRI will also contribute to training researchers and other staff in ICT-based language analysis.

At UiO and GU, copies of the ALLEX language collections and language tools will be stored for future use, which

- a) will facilitate the study of Bantu languages in the future,
- b) has given GU and UiO team members the opportunity to generalise skills in language analysis and production of research tools for language analysis.

9. CANDIDATES

Number of candidates supported by NUFU:

- a) Ph.D : 3
- b) Master : 12

An overview of candidate(s) registered by NUFU is enclosed. Please update the information by filling in the separate Report Form or by updating the list.

c) Number of candidates supported from other sources. Please list:

The Norwegian Research Council :

The Quota Programme	: 3
Others	:

10 PUBLICATION/ DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

Please register in the list below the number of publications/dissemination of research arranged according to type over the Project Period:

Publications:	Numbers:
Articles in international academic journals	:2
Articles in other academic journals and anthologies	:7
Books (monographies, text books, anthologies (ed))	:15
Published papers from international meetings/conferences	:6
Other activities (including unpublished conference papers)	:57
Dissemination of research:	
Dissemination activities aimed at the gen.public (popular scientific articles/hearings/exhib.)	:6
Dissemination activities aimed at endusers (meetings, seminars in Ministries, industry, org.)	:3
Articles/information on the cooperation in mass media: Norway 5-10, Zimbabwe to many to count	

Please also include planned publications in the list.

An overview of publications/dissemination of research registered by NUFU is enclosed. Please update the information by filling in the separate Report Form.

Attachment:

Appendix 1: Full Financial Report / Statement of Accounts (UiN & UiS) 2001

Appendix 2: UiN - Financial Report / Statement of Account 2001

Appendix 3: UiS - Financial Report / Statement of Account 2001

Appendix 4: Publications and dissemination of research

Appendix 5: Report Form - Candidates for Master / Ph.D / Other

11. SIGNATURE FORM

NUFU id.no.:

Name/title:

The signatories confirm that the Final Project Report 2001
has been jointly produced.

	Place and Date:	Signatures:
UiS Coordinator: Name in print:	Herbert Chimhundu	
UiN Coordinator: Name in print:	Oddrun Grønvik	

The signatories confirm that the Final Project Report 2001
has been presented.

	Place and Date:	Signatures:
UiS Head of Department: Name in print:	xx	
UiN Head of Department: Name in print:	Hans H. Skei	