

Notes on HERE Study Visit

“Capacity Building in Doctoral Education (Quality assurance and building doctoral schools)”

The study visit has been organised by SPHERE in the university of Malmo Sweden, on May 31-June 1, about building capacity in doctoral education with a particular focus on quality assurance (QA) and building doctoral schools. This study visit occurs in a critical period of the development of doctoral studies within the Lebanese Higher Education (LHE) system. Actually, after issuing the decree on organizing doctoral studies several universities have started or are envisaging to start programmes and/or schools at the doctoral level. This have been felt by the HEREs team that organised a thematic seminar about the “organization and Profile of Doctoral Studies” on March 2013 at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik. The study visit in Malmo offered the advantage of observing in situ the organisation of doctoral studies in a relatively young higher education institution. The present document enumerates briefly the major take home ideas relevant, according to the authors, to the LHE:

- **Salzburg principles** remain to a large extent the principal reference to be considered when organizing quality doctoral studies;
- High quality **Research Environment** is absolutely necessary to assure that a doctoral study, and in particular its core research part, is developing in a conducive and supportive environment;
- **Supervision** is also a critical aspect to consider while building doctoral programmes/schools. The example of Malmo University shows the need for a strong supervisor constellation and the minimal number of supervisors is set to two;
- **Financing doctoral studies** must be considered with care, PhD candidates are considered as employees in the field of research;
- **Recruitment of PhD candidates** shall also follow a precise process aiming at attracting and selecting the best students;
- **Follow up** process shall be in place. In Malmo University an individual study plan is defined and updated on a yearly basis. This leads towards an informed management of the programme;
- **Open doctoral programme** to peer national and international programmes allowing mobility and exchange of students is a must. Several examples presented witness the benefits of such exchange of period of research and studies;
- When doctoral programmes respond to issues and plans of **local, regional and national interest** stronger support is expected to be assured;

- **Quality assurance**, both internal and external, permits continuous improvement. In depth discussions about this process especially matters relative to fitness of purpose, criteria, evaluation have been held.

More details about the conference (presentations, ...) can be found at <http://supporthere.org/malmo-2016>.