SPECIAL ISSUE

THE POLITICS OF PARTNERSHIP:
PERIL OR PROMISE

[Free on website:www.norrag.org from late December 2008]

Editor

KENNETH KING

Editorial Address

Kenneth King, Saltoun Hall, Pencaitland, East Lothian, Scotland UK EH34 5DS
Telephone: +44 1875 340 418
Emails: Kenneth.King@ed.ac.uk or P.King@ed.ac.uk

Co-ordination Address

Michel Carton, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID),
Post Box 136, Rue Rothschild 24, 1211 Geneva 21, Switzerland.
Telephone: +41 22) 908 43 24/23
Email: michel.carton@graduateinstitute.ch
Partnership has become the approved way to relate to the developing world whether as a donor, an NGO, or a researcher. We no longer have ‘donors’ in developing countries, but ‘development partners’, though we still seem a long way from the measured good sense about partnerships of Lester Pearson’s *Commission for International Development* (1969).1 Northern NGOs have long thought of those they support in the South as their partners. Finally, researchers from the North have frequently collaborated with their colleagues in the South, more or less symmetrically, in terms of design, data-gathering, data analysis, interpretation and publication. Nowadays, however, partnership is no longer a choice for Northern researchers wanting to work in the developing world; it has become a condition of their doing research in the South. Many agencies supporting ‘development research’ routinely expect Northern researchers – even graduate students – to have ‘partners’. Some Northern agencies expect the Southern institutions to take the lead in choosing their Northern partners. These new research ‘marriages’ have not been exposed to critical analysis, though a great deal of Northern research money is now conditional on partnership. This Special Issue looks at the history and philosophy of research partnership with the South: what are the assumptions of the many Northern agencies which support it? What do Southern researchers think about their involvement in this conditionality? How does partnership affect the practice and quality of research?

We are particularly interested in this Special Issue in the perspectives of Southern researchers and of ‘development partners’ who have experience of research collaborations, but equally in the views of Northern researchers who have worked on their own account or through partnership schemes with researchers in the South.

---

1 ‘It is natural, therefore, that aid-providers are particularly interested in whether recipients make sincere efforts to help themselves, or whether the resources put at their disposal are wasted. However, this interest, unless carefully limited and institutionalised, creates opportunities for friction, waste of energy, and mutual irritation. Any such relationship must involve advice, consultation, and persuasion, but there must be clear and accepted channels for this and an equally clear distinction between the responsibilities of the partners. The formation and execution of development policies must ultimately be the responsibility of the recipient alone, but the donors have a right to be heard and to be informed of major events and decisions’ (Commission on International Development 1969: 127).
The philosophy and politics of partnership  
Mark Mason, HKIED, Hong Kong  

Beyond disappointment: transforming ideology and practice in North-South research partnerships  
David Gutierrez, IHEID, Geneva  

North-South Research Partnerships: A Personal Viewpoint  
Noel McGinn, formerly NORRAG President, and Harvard.  

Partnership versus self-help  
David Ellerman, University of California at Riverside.  

North-South research partnerships: lessons from the literature  
Megan Bradley, St. Antony’s, Oxford.  

Politics of North-South Partnership in Education and Research  
Jolly Jose, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman  

New partnerships for EFA: almost 20 years on?  
Alexandra Draxler, consultant, Paris  

Research partnership: charity, brokerage, technology transfer or learning alliance?  
Birgit Habermann, Commission for Development Studies at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna  

The downside of North-South academic cooperation  
Sheldon Shaeffer, UNESCO, Bangkok.  

‘The whereabouts of power’ in partnerships  
Susan Robertson, University of Bristol and Toni Verger, University of Amsterdam  

The role of international NGOs in supporting sustainable local partnerships or vocational training  
Kathleen Collett, City & Guilds Centre for Skills Development, London  

Reflections on recent British attempts at educational partnerships  
Simon McGrath, University of Nottingham.  

**PARTNERSHIPS IN CONTEXT**  
Good friends in several successful partnerships  
Ernesto Schiefelbein, Alberto Hurtado University, Santiago  

Reflections on 40 years of partnership  
Joe Farrell, OISE, Toronto  

Whose knowledge, what expertise? Cross-national partnerships between universities in Europe and Andean America.  
Rosemary Preston, University of Warwick  

Partnership revisited  
Lennart Wohlgemuth, Gothenburg University
Developing quality partnerships for quality research
Kathryn Touré, IDRC, Dakar, formerly coordinator ERNWACA.

Effective research partnerships
Jon-Andri Lys, KFPE, Bern

Information asymmetrics in North-South development and research partnerships
Yasin Janjua, consultant, Islamabad

Triangular Asia-Africa partnerships via Japan
Nobu Sawamura, Hiroshima University, Hiroshima

Opportunity costs of partnerships

KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT VIA AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS?
Research partnerships of the European Union: a West African failure
Jean-Pierre Jacob, IHEID, Geneva.

Higher education and international capacity building: 25 years of the Higher Education Links Programme
David Stephens, University of Brighton.

A cautionary tale of an international educational partnership in Latin America
Chris Martin, London Institute of Education, formerly Ford Foundation (Mexico)

Perspectives on partnerships in DFID’s Education Research Consortia
David Levesque, DFID, London

Critical Reflections from a Partnership in Progress: the Case of EdQual
Angeline Barrett, University of Bristol with Jolly Rubagiza and Alphonse Uworwabayeho, Kigali Institute of Education

Symmetry and asymmetry in research partnerships: lessons from 20 years’ experience
Berit Olsson, formerly of SAREC, Sida, Stockholm.

The politics of partnerships: moving targets, changing tactics,
Ad Boeren, NUFFIC, The Hague.

Partnership in research programmes: a case study of Albanian-Swiss cooperation
Blendi Gerdoci, University of Tirana and Dieter Zürcher, KEK-CDC Consultants, Zurich.

Framing research between Africa and the UK
Jon Harle, Association of Commonwealth Universities, London

Unveiling partnerships: power relations in the Yemeni education sector
Robbert van der Waerdt, University of Amsterdam.
Partnerships for empowerment: Yemenis and development partners united for progress and change in the education sector
Maaike van Vliet, Embassy of the Netherlands, Sana’a.

Are recent development strategies really doing better? The new aid architecture for VET
Manfred Wallenborn, European Training Foundation, Turin.

ODI in partnership: leading the pack or one of the gang
John Young, ODI, London

PARTNERSHIP SEEN FROM THE SOUTH
One size doesn't fit all: insights from North-South academic partnerships in Africa,
Ama de-Graft Aikins, University of Cambridge.

Individual and institutional partnerships: some experiences
Beatrice Avalos, University of Chile, Santiago

Experience of partnerships from Kenya: North-South and South-South
Fatuma Chege, Kenyatta University, Nairobi.

The historical effect of partnerships in East African Affairs
David Court, consultant, Nairobi, formerly Rockefeller, East Africa.

Partnerships to improve disadvantaged youth transitions from education to work in Latin America
Claudia Jacinto, redEtis, IIEP, Buenos Aires

Engendering country-led partnership: the Ministry of Education as a cluster leader
Emefa Takyi-Amoako, St. Anne’s, Oxford University

Strengths and weaknesses in institutional partnerships between Northern and Southern academic institutions
Paschal Mihyo, OSSREA, Addis Ababa

Partnership in early childhood education?
Lyabwene Mtahabwa, University of Dodoma

NEWS ABOUT NORRAG & NORRAG NEWS & CONFERENCES
NORRAG’S Annual Strategy Meeting: a summary and a look at membership
Robert Palmer, NORRAG, Edinburgh and Stephanie Langstaff, Geneva.

First NORRAG Cluster Meeting in The Netherlands: A short report
Ad Boeren, NUFFIC, The Netherlands

GMR 2008 UKFIET Colloquium: Overcoming inequality: why governance matters
NORRAG/RECOUP/Nottingham Thematic Section at UKFIET (Oxford) Conference 2009
This has proven to be one of the most salient special issues we have covered. There are no less than 48 contributors, and there were many others who were just prevented by the rush of December deadlines from getting their contributions in before we had to close on December 9th. The title of this issue is the same as that of the Second NORRAG Cluster meeting in Geneva on December 12th 2008, for which no less than 40 people have already registered.

It has been such a key topic because it goes to the heart of what most of our Northern readers do – work regularly in the South – as agency personnel, consultants, NGOs or as researchers. And it has also appealed to many of Southern readers who have years of experience of being a partner in a Northern project.

A great deal of what is under the partnership umbrella has been described critically, and rightly so. Doubtless there is much that is even more critical but it can’t be written down because it would offend. But there is much reflection on what constitutes a genuine partnership, and there are fortunately some very powerful examples of partnership-in-practice, especially from Chile and Ghana. We are fortunate also to have some striking examples of people-as-partners. Surely many of us have worked intensively with colleagues and friends from the South for years without even using the partnership discourse.

Intriguingly, there is only one of the 48 articles actually written jointly between Northern and Southern partners, and another between the Western and Eastern partner. But as Noel McGinn (this issue) says: ‘Spoken communication across cultures is difficult enough; collaborative writing requires constructing new, shared metaphors, and often threatens the relationship.’

In our initiating blurb, we had said that these research marriages had not been analysed very much. But this special issue will prove useful for providing a very wide range of relevant literature on partnership and partenariat, both theoretical and more practical and evaluative.

In many ways the partnership literature is the flip side of that lengthy literature on technical assistance, experts and counterparts. Both of them have been more analysed from the North than the South. But what becomes clear, including in this special issue, is that most partnerships have more than two partners; in the North they have the funding and the academic partners, and in the South two there is the representative of the funding agency and the academic partner. This special issue has some examples of Northern
partners looking South from their different institutional perspectives, but we don't have all four perspectives on the same activity. Such triangulation – or quadrangulation – would be valuable.

We do carry just one or two examples of South-South networking, and particularly the example from Japan’s support to Asia-Africa partnership or ‘dialogue’. We had hoped to carry a discussion of China-Africa university collaboration – which is very widespread. This would be intriguing because China continues to perceive itself as a developing country; so its university partnerships are South-South in a way that is currently different from Japan.

We should mention to NORRAG readers that the theme of this special issue will also be a Thematic Section of the next UKFIET Oxford Conference, 15-17 September 2009, under the title: The New Politics of Aid Partnerships (see last article in this issue). NORRAG is being joined on this by the Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty (RECOUP) which is itself a research partnership. Indeed one of its core sub-themes is Partnerships. We are also being joined by the UNESCO Centre for Comparative Education Research at the University of Nottingham. The overall theme of the Oxford Conference is PPPs, no not public-private partnerships but Politics, Policies and Progress!

NORRAG NEWS has not carried an analysis of the EFA Global Monitoring Reports (GMRs), as a special issue. It is high time we did. In the meantime, NORRAG readers should know that the UKFIET (of which NORRAG is an institutional member) is organising a major colloquium on the newest GMR 2009 on the 26th January in London. See flyer at the end of this issue on Overcoming Inequality: Why Governance Matters.

Kenneth King
St. Pierre de Bressieux, France

10th December 2008
EDITORIAL

THE PROMISE AND PERIL OF PARTNERSHIP

Kenneth King, University of Edinburgh, and NORRAG.
Kenneth.King@ed.ac.uk

Who created the global partnership agenda?
In the original quotation from the Pearson Commission in the outline of this special issue, the discourse of ‘aid-providers’, ‘donors’ and ‘recipients’ was being used as well as ‘partners’. Nowadays, however, the term, ‘development partners’, has been widely adopted by the funding agencies to refer to themselves alone. This is a rather bizarre usage, and not least when the development partners meet separately from national government, as is still very often the case. The term, development partner, is seldom used to refer to national governments or sector ministries. This first asymmetry suggests that one side is planning development and the other side is being developed.

The idea that the donor community is fixing up development was given a great boost by the very honestly entitled OECD DAC report *Shaping the 21st Century: the Role of Development Cooperation* (OECD, 1996). That’s a straightforward message! The report itself is actually full of the rhetoric of country ownership, and of countries driving the action. Countries are to set their own targets and strategies:

> As a basic principle, locally-owned country development strategies and targets should emerge from an open and collaborative dialogue by local authorities with civil society and with external partners, about their shared objectives and their respective contributions to the common enterprise. (OECD, 1996, p. 14)

Despite the pervasive discourse of country ownership, with external aid only being a complement to country action, it is clearly from this particular Report that the new global agenda and architecture emerges in the form of the Six International Development Targets (IDTs), the same global goals for all developing countries.² The ‘external partners’ have certain responsibilities and the ‘developing partner countries’ others, but in the manner of such reports, the only elements which are remembered are those which became the 6 IDTs. All 6 targets apply principally to developing partner countries and only 1 of the 6 (on environment) to OECD countries. There is a great deal of excellent surrounding text, just as there would be in the Jomtien and Dakar statements and in the New York Millennium Declaration. But it was the targets and goals which became the ‘sacred text’. These were the key message, and they were developed at a key meeting of the OECD DAC where developing countries were not even present. The world’s aid agenda was thus constructed in Paris. The role of external partners would be to help

---
² The sixth target on environmental sustainability is the only one that could refer to developed and developing countries. Interestingly, it is the only one that doesn't have quantitative targets, just deadlines.
strengthen capacities in developing partner countries, - ‘to help them increase their capacities to do things for themselves’, -- things which had already been decided for them (OECD DAC 1996:12).

It was the IDTs which would substantially be turned into the Millennium Development Goals four years later. There were two more MDGs than there were IDTs, and one of these made into a Goal what was already there in 1996, the idea of a ‘global development partnership’. This became MDG Goal 8: ‘Develop the global partnership for development’. And it was full of really serious matters, such as tariff and quota free access for LDCs, access to essential drugs, the benefits of new technologies, and more generous aid flows. But this partnership goal was the only one of the eight which did not have quantitative targets. The precise phrasing of the MDGs was in fact carried out after world leaders had left New York. As one UN official commented critically at the time: ‘eight for them and one for us!’ This was a further asymmetry in what is often claimed to be the global aid architecture. (For what happens to the ‘terms of the development partnership’ eight years on, see Gore in this special issue.)

Enhancing country ownership of development is inseparable from the production of development knowledge. Yet as Gore and the Least Developed Countries Report 2008 argue, local knowledge is marginalised by the way development knowledge is currently produced. This development knowledge production is at the heart of most of the contributions in this special issue, and research partnerships between North and South are currently the preferred modality for creating this knowledge. Preferred, that is to say, by most development partners, on whose funding a good deal of this partnership enterprise depends.

Knowledge for Development via Research Partnerships?
Before we turn to look at North-South research partnerships, it is salutary to remind ourselves that the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA), meeting in Jomtien in 1990, felt that the most important expansion of partnerships for educational development should be in the developing world itself. This would imply partnerships amongst all sub-sectors and forms of education, partnerships between education and other governmental departments, and partnerships between government and non-governmental organisations, NGOs, the private sector, communities and families (WCEFA 1990: article 7). Jomtien did not prioritise or even mention North-South partnerships. It argued that ‘Ultimate responsibility rests within each nation to design and manage its own programmes to meet the learning needs of all its population’. A ‘strengthened knowledge base nourished by research findings and the lessons of experiments and innovations’ will be essential (WCEFA 1990: 16,19).

Partnerships with the North are not the only way to build that essential development knowledge base. For years from the early 1970s, the then unique, Canadian bilateral research agency, IDRC, made grants directly to developing country research centres, in government and in academia. It did not see Canadian partnerships as a precondition for building research capacity in the South.  

---

3 IDRC now has a Partnership and Business Development Division
If the key challenge is policy learning and knowledge sharing in the South (see Grootings in NN 38) rather than policy borrowing, policy replication and policy internalization from the North, then research partnerships or development partnerships more generally need to be organized around this goal. Too often, aid partnerships have been about policy borrowing and replication, from PRSPs, to NQFs, to CBTs and many, many more Northern fads and acronyms. This perhaps should not be surprising given the mission and mandate behind the massive globalization of development knowledge through multilateral and bilateral agencies, and their often changing certainties about their own aid priorities for the South.

Of course, the Accra Agenda for Action (August 2008), itself another indirect product from Paris, might be thought to temper that Northern agenda-setting; after all ‘Country ownership is key’. ‘We agreed in Paris that this would be our first priority’ (AAA 2008: 1, 2). But paradoxically achieving this new ownership ambition seems to involve donors in a much more invasive engagement with all the ‘development actors’ than the now much maligned project mode:

Donors will support efforts to increase the capacity of all development actors—parliaments, central and local governments, CSOs, research institutes, media and the private sector—to take an active role in dialogue on development policy and on the role of aid in contributing to countries’ development objectives. (Ibid. 2)

Although the Accra Agenda for Action states that the key is country ownership, it turns out equally to be about partnership: ‘Aid is about building partnerships for development’ (Ibid. 3). But just as donor ambitions are now to engage with all the above national development actors, the donor constituency now itself turns out to be a large and much more inclusive partnership:

Such partnerships are most effective when they fully harness the energy, skills and experience of all development actors—bilateral and multilateral donors, global funds, CSOs, and the private sector. (Ibid. 3)

How these more comprehensive ambitions of the development partners will work out in practice remains to be seen. But unlike Jomtien where partnership was exclusively used for the country level, Accra sees aid partnerships as being at the heart of development:

We are committed to eradicating poverty and promoting peace and prosperity by building stronger, more effective partnerships that enable developing countries to realise their development goals. (Ibid. 1)

**Partners in Research?**

When we turn from development partnerships to research collaboration, a large number of highly relevant issues are touched upon in the articles that follow, from both Northern and Southern perspectives, and also from South-South angles. But what makes an academic partnership work at 3000 miles distance between the institutions? Some of the answers are scattered across these articles.

---

4 Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, National Qualification Frameworks, Competency Based Training
Clearly ethics and values are critical. Trusting the other partner on commitment, effort, sources & evidence, and deadlines is vital. But these are more likely to be there if the partners have spent significant amounts of time in each other’s institutions, countries and company. But too often, both in the large-scale multi-institutional projects and in the much smaller bilateral arrangements, the typical stay in a so-called partner country, often not in the partner institution, is a week to ten days. The visitors stay in hotels or boarding houses; they don’t have an office in the partner institution, and get to know how it actually works. Time is too short for that. The partners come together to tackle reviews, coordination, data collection & analysis challenges, and future schedules. There is no time to get a feel for the research and consultancy environment in the wider institution. There is often no time to do research together; and hence there is more time spent on commenting on the others’ work than on joint writing.

A new division of research labour is associated with some of these research partnerships, whether large or small. Capacity building for Southern partners is an assumption built into the agency justification for many of these partnership schemes, and hence the Northern partners are often associated with planning, design, review of draft material, advice on literature and on research publication. They become research advisors or research managers. But the Northern partners often don’t actually do any substantial research in the South. Or if they do, it may just be for a week or ten days of policy interviews in the Southern capital.

Fieldwork for three months, six months or a year in the Southern partner country by the Northern partner is extremely rare nowadays. And conversely the only Southern partners who spend any real length of time in the North are those younger partners doing their doctorates, under the capacity building rubric. Yet without spending substantial joint research time in the South where the fieldwork sites normally are, there is little chance of understanding the crucial importance of the research culture in the partner institution. The constraints of time in the Northern institution mean that the Northern research visits are not very different from the time that Northern consultants spend in the South. The difference is that Northern consultants actually do both research and writing, very intensively.

A very great deal of my recent research and writing has been done jointly with masters students who then got PhDs, and then post-doctoral awards or research associateships. They were then self-standing colleagues. Their partnership status clearly changed over the 6-7 years of this ‘research apprenticeship’. But joint publication was taking place even at the masters’ stage. The intensity of these kinds of partnership interactions is almost impossible to replicate with the 3000 mile collaborations. For one thing, these latter are almost entirely dependent on external funding; so that at the end of the 1,2,or 3 years of funding, the relationship unfortunately ends.

The really big challenge is to assess whether and how these many different kinds of research partnerships really contribute to a more vibrant knowledge system in the South. How do they encourage development knowledge and knowledge sharing in the partner university, think tank or research institute? Like development partnerships, research
partnerships may have too much expected of them. The partnership may end up operating in a silo protected for a few years from the deteriorating research environments in so many Southern university systems. This might suggest that a realistic starting point for any ambitious partnership would be to review realistically the research environments on both sides of the proposed marriage, paying particular attention to the incentive systems for particular kinds of academic work.
HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, PERILS AND PROMISE OF PARTNERSHIP
IMPROVING THE TERMS OF DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

Charles Gore, UNCTAD, Geneva
Email: Charles.Gore@unctad.org

Keywords
Partnership, Development

Summary
Improving the terms of development partnership in favour of poor countries depends on enhanced country ownership of national development strategies. A necessary condition for this to occur is changes in the process of production of development knowledge.

The recent resurgence of the idea of development partnership is closely associated with the new approach to development cooperation which donors have adopted since 2000. The roots of the approach can be traced to the OECD’s report, *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation*, which was published in 1996. That report not only argued that aid should be focused on achieving a limited set of international poverty reduction and human development targets, a list which later formed the basis for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It also stated that the key to aid effectiveness was the establishment of development partnerships between donor and recipient Governments. On the one hand, recipient Governments should make a commitment to development and accountable governance. On the other hand, donor Governments should commit (i) to provide adequate resources, (ii) to improve coordination of assistance in support of nationally-owned development strategies, and (iii) achieve policy coherence between aid policies and other policies, such as trade policies, which affect development prospects and processes.

In poor countries, a major impetus to these proposals was provided when it was decided that qualification for debt relief under the Enhanced HIPC Initiative would be conditional upon a recipient country preparing a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). This was initially introduced as a mechanism to ensure that the additional financial resources released through reduction in debt repayments would be directed to poverty reduction. But this quickly morphed and the PRSP approach became the main operational instrument for implementing the key principles of the development partnership approach. As the OECD insightfully and succinctly put it in its *Development Cooperation Report 1999*: “The decision to place the implementation of the enhanced HIPC into the larger context of the new development partnership paradigm has in effect leveraged political support for debt relief into a reform of the whole concessional financing system” (p.21). The development partnership approach was further endorsed in the Monterrey Consensus in 2002, and the basic principles of approach - namely, country ownership of national development strategies, harmonization and alignment of aid with those strategies, results-
orientation and mutual accountability - were further codified and rendered monitorable through the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005 and the Accra Agenda for Action in 2008.

The idea of development partnership is very important as it recognizes that development aid - and development cooperation more broadly - is a relationship whose effectiveness depends on the practices of both parties. However, it would be simplistic to assume that all parties are equal. Amartya Sen, for example, has conceptualized the family as an active partnership of cooperative conflicts. Within this arena, there are many cooperative outcomes which are beneficial to all the parties compared with non-cooperation. But the different parties have conflicting interest in the choice among the set of mutually beneficial cooperative arrangements. In these circumstances, outcomes from the partnership depend on the relative bargaining power of the different parties. The bargaining power of women within the household partnership, according to Sen, is strongly affected by their ability to find remunerative employment outside the household, and thus to escape the confines of the family relationship, as well as the broader institutional arrangements within which the family is enmeshed, such as legal rights to property.

Implicit within the current approach to development partnership is the idea that aid and development work best when based on a genuine and balanced partnership of equals. But it is reasonable to ask: what are the terms of development partnership between donor and recipient countries when there are major inequalities between them in terms of resources, capabilities and power? How does partnership work when one party is highly indebted and dependent on debt relief from the other party or when it depends on aid from the other party for over fifty percent of the government budget? Moreover, given that everyone recognizes the importance of balanced partnerships, what practical policy measures can be introduced to promote greater balance and equality in development partnership?

UNCTAD addresses these issues in The Least Developed Countries Report 2008: Growth, Poverty and the Terms of Development Partnership. The study argues that enhancing country ownership of national development strategies is the key to improving the terms of the development partnership in the poorest countries. At present this is being undermined not simply by misalignment of aid with national strategies, but also through: (i) weak technical capacities together with strong incentives to anticipate and internalize donor priorities in policy formulation; and (ii) the prioritization of donor agendas in policy implementation through the working of policy conditionality, administrative guidance via monitoring indicators and selectivity in donor financing choices. In effect, most second-generation PRSPs in the LDCs are so broadly defined and so weakly embedded in a strategic choice that there is an ownership frontier within the PRSP. Part of the policy agenda is strongly owned by national Governments, part by donors, and in between there is a shifting zone of consensus policies.

Enhancing country ownership of national development strategies is a complex task. But the production of development knowledge is an essential element. Independent thought
rooted in local realities as well as local experimentation can provide the basis for policy pluralism and home-grown development solutions. Yet local knowledge and practices are marginalized by the current way in which development knowledge is produced. How donors and research financing bodies can support the evolution of stronger domestic knowledge systems and promote networking to share experiences is a vital question. In itself, this will not be enough to create a situation where national Governments can take the lead and freely choose the strategies and policies which they design and implement. But without a stronger domestic knowledge base, improvements in the terms of development partnership will remain an elusive goal.

0-0-0-0

THE PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS OF PARTNERSHIP

Mark Mason, Hong Kong Institute of Education
Email: mmason@ied.edu.hk

Keywords
Partnership, development, contemporary social theory

Summary
This article situates the philosophy and politics of partnership in development cooperation in the context of wider epistemological and axiological shifts in contemporary social theory, in order to contextualize the articles that follow in broader theoretical and practical perspective.

Ours is a period in which modesty becomes us. This is probably as true in development work as it is in any other context. Partnership in development cooperation, rather than, say, the imposition by Northern agencies of ‘established best practice’ in a local Southern context, in terms dictated by the former (see NORRAG News No. 39), is an expression of such modesty. Partnership has, since about the mid-eighties, become a central, if not the central, concept in the development field.

From a philosophical or social-theoretical perspective, it is no accident that this conceptual shift gained most momentum during the late eighties and has been sustained since then. It was in 1984 that Lyotard’s La condition postmoderne (1979) was published in English as The Postmodern Condition. The eminent contemporary social theorist, Zygmunt Bauman, suggests that an important aspect of the postmodern approach to knowledge lies in “the rejection of … the philosophical search for absolutes, universals and foundations in theory” (Bauman, 1993, p. 4). This rejection is partly a consequence of the perspectives that are typically associated with an increasingly globalized society: that ours is a plural world, with a diversity of claims to truth and goodness – hence the abandonment, or at least the softening, of the coercive and regulatory perspectives associated with modernity. While the thought and practice of modernity may have been,
to paraphrase Bauman, animated by the belief in the possibility of finding, through the exercise of reason and rationality, universal and non-ambivalent codes of practice and solutions to social problems, what is postmodern is the “disbelief in such a possibility” (Bauman, 1993, pp. 9, 10). The shifts in the development field from external imposition and prescription to partnerships in development cooperation reflect and contribute to these intellectual shifts in contemporary social theory.

One factor contributing to these shifts is of course the proliferation of information and communications technology. Access to ‘the best’ information is accordingly no longer the privilege of wealthy or powerful individuals or agencies in the North (and, after all, with our contemporary sensibilities, we are no longer convinced that it ever was ‘the best’ information). That these technologies have also enabled people to communicate with each other more directly has contributed to a flattening of hierarchies and an expansion of networks. More widely available access to and sharing of information have thus further entrenched partnership as the dominant motif in development cooperation.

But it would be naïve to assume that these shifts in perspective have been predicated solely on the processes associated with increasing rates of globalization and on the proliferation of information and communications technology. Our recognition of plurality, of diverse claims to what might be the right or the best course of action, is also a consequence of a scepticism consequent on what we have witnessed in the twentieth century. In an age of high modernity, when we had available to us the constitutional arrangements of liberalism and democracy, we have witnessed a scale of terror never seen before, made possible by the technology and bureaucracy of modernity, which allowed the rationally planned, large-scale executions and systematic destruction of lives in the Soviet Union under Stalin, in the genocide of Auschwitz and Birkenau, and in the engineering of an entire society along ethnic lines in apartheid South Africa. These are some of the factors that contributed to the ‘postmodern turn’, and to the concomitant scepticism towards such Enlightenment tenets as the view that our knowledge of society is holistic and cumulative, and that we can attain universal, objective and rational social scientific knowledge of society, upon which we can act to produce emancipation and social upliftment.

Such scepticism typified the development community as well. Since the fifties and sixties, when perhaps those in the North, or in the West, might have thought they had the answers to the problems faced by the developing world (US President Harry Truman’s perspectives and exhortations of 1949 are perhaps typical), we have, in truth, had to confront enormous disappointment in the failure of large amounts of international development assistance and aid. Lester Pearson’s report, commissioned by the World

---

5 “For the first time in history humanity possesses the knowledge and the skill to relieve the suffering of [the world’s poor]…. I believe that we should make available to peace-loving peoples the benefits of our store of technical knowledge in order to help them realize their aspirations for a better life…. What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair dealing…. Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge.” (Truman, H. [1949] in Escobar, A. [1995], p. 3)
Bank in 1969 to consider, in the face of the continuing poor performance of many developing countries, the sources of the growing doubt about the efficacy of development aid and, indeed, doubt about the very development aims upon which such aid was predicated, was in some ways to the field of development what Lyotard’s Report on Knowledge (the subtitle of his Postmodern Condition) was to the wider fields of sociology, philosophy and social theory. Pearson’s recommendations to establish better partnerships between agencies in the developed countries and institutions in developing countries reflected – and pre-figured – the epistemological shifts identified by Lyotard in our decreasing confidence in the universal efficacy of our ‘rationally-grounded’ solutions.

Recall that a key feature of the postmodern perspective is that in an era when the range of our epistemological, moral and practical choices and the consequences of our actions are more far-reaching than ever before, we are unable to rely on a universal epistemological or ethical code that would yield unambiguously good solutions. This is why we have so little faith in what we used to be certain was right, good and true. In our humility that followed our own collapse of faith, we have learned to become more sensitive to different ways of doing things. And if we now have so little faith in what we used to know to be the right thing to do, how much less faith do we have in the applicability of our (now more tenuously held) beliefs and practices in other economic, political, social and cultural contexts? The possibility of defending principles and solutions that have practical and normative reach across all such contexts – a question that ought to be seriously considered by any institute or agency associated with, say, UNESCO, EADI, the UNDP – was, to its credit, seriously considered by the World Bank back in 1969.

One of Pearson’s recommendations, reported by Richard Sack (1999, p. 9), was that

[i]t is necessary to create the building blocks towards mutual trust and respect and the establishment of better partnerships between the developed and developing countries. This requires dialogue about the ends and means, and the meaning of development. The Report raised process to the same level of importance as objectives, and recognized the importance of what we now call “ownership”.

Senegal’s President Abdou Diouf’s opening remarks to the 1997 meeting in Dakar of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) typify this approach:

In order to progress from the aid relationship to partnership, the first step lies in redefining the status and roles of those involved in a way that truly recognizes and accepts the equal dignity and responsibility of both partners, above and beyond differences in their cultures and levels of development. The type of partnership we should promote cannot be founded on a vertical relationship based on authority, constraint, the imposition of an imbalance of power, substituted sovereignty and the transposition of models, or, on the other side of the coin, paternalism and condescension. Instead, it should be founded on conditions such as authentic dialogue in a horizontal relationship in which the actors recognize each other as equals and participate in an exchange considered mutually useful and enriching by both parties…. This is necessary in order to achieve … a common understanding of development goals and strategies.
Such partnerships, with their shared sense of ‘ownership’, envisage not only shared rights on both sides, but also, as President Diouf indicated, shared responsibilities. That responsibility has, of course, to be shared in failure as much as in success. And it is, in part, in the face of some continuing failures, despite the dominance of a paradigm of partnership in development cooperation, that this issue of NORRAG News seeks to ask critical questions about those partnerships, and the ways in which we understand the very concept of partnership. If shared rights, shared ownership, shared development objectives and policies, shared responsibilities, shared decisions about where aid is targeted, and shared implementation strategies still leave us facing challenges in development as big as we have ever faced, is it time to consider the extent to which we have expanded the concept of partnership?

Modesty indeed becomes us in development cooperation, but false modesty, especially on the part of Northern agencies, donors, NGOs and researchers, is surely to be guarded against. There are very worthwhile principles to be found guiding much Northern development work: principles that, for example, espouse fairness, transparency, accountability, and the moral responsibility to target efforts at the poorest of the poor. To compromise, say, the latter, so as to allow some Southern governments to spend the development aid which they receive in budget support merely where it will make the most difference to their EFA numbers, rather than where it might be needed most (as Keith Lewin [2008] has recently described), is, to continue the metaphor, false modesty indeed on the part of Northern donors in partnership cooperation. Reticence on the part of the latter in demanding more moral accountability with regard to the spending of SWAp budgetary support is indeed unbecoming.

Also inappropriate is a complete shrinking from any notion of ‘best practice’ on the part of Northern agencies. It is no accident that this special issue of NORRAG News follows just two issues after an issue devoted to critical consideration of notions of ‘best practice in education and training’. I admit that I offered in that issue arguments challenging the degree of confidence we tend to have in ideas and ideals of universal best practice. But, at the same time, I acknowledged the worth, even if at a high level of generality, of claims such as “Best practice assumes the existence and enforcement of procedures to minimize corruption in any development work”, or, “Any development work should aim to maximize the life chances of those most at risk in the prevailing context”, or, “Teaching or training for learning by induction, from experiences familiar to the learner, is more likely to enhance concept formation and skills development than a deductively structured pedagogy”. If insistence on these ideals on the part of Northern agencies represents a skewing of the power relationships in any development cooperation partnership, then that is surely an appropriate imbalance of the scales.

In guarding against false modesty in development cooperation, Northern donors in particular should not shrink from the fact that, while the concept of partnership commonly implies an equal distribution of rights and responsibilities among those party to the arrangement, this need not necessarily be the case, and is indeed frequently not the case empirically either. It is no doubt hard to construct an equal partnership when one party, for example, controls the purse strings. The arguments in this domain have of
course been well rehearsed, whether they have to do with colonial histories and the moral obligations of restitution, the venal politics of aid when the real barriers to development lie in restrictions on trade, or with the construction and destruction of the Third World as argued by Escobar (1995). The truth, if it is to be found, of this most sensitive aspect of development assistance, probably lies, as it might do in other issues of partnership cooperation, not in the detail of a particular context, nor in the abstract ideals of perfect equality, but in both, and in the tensions between them – tensions which are explored further in the subsequent articles in this special issue.

References


0-0-0-0-0

**BEYOND DISAPPOINTMENT: TRANSFORMING IDEOLOGY AND PRACTICE IN NORTH-SOUTH RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS**

David Gutierrez
Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva
Email: david.gutierrez@graduateinstitute.ch
The early role played by science in North-South relations was obviously that of a domination instrument. Indeed, during the colonial era, the main Northern scientists’ tasks in the South were to chart the new territories to strategic ends, make an inventory of the natural resources for their exploitation and export towards the metropolises, and understand the cultures of the colonized populations in order to better control them (Gaillard, 1999).

However, as a reaction against the “former” power asymmetry between North and South, a new ideology spread through the international development field in the 1980s: the partnership and participation ideology (Hours, 1992; Kothari, 2001). Interestingly enough, it was during the same decade that the rise of the themes of partnership, cooperation, participation, communication and “enterprise culture” took place in the management field. One can sum up the paradigm common to both fields by the following watchwords: maximum hierarchy reduction; increase of the weakest actors’ agency; adoption of a win/win strategy based on a synergetic combination of the various actors’ resources (Crozier, 2000; Kothari, 2001).

But, given that the mere presence of the terms “North-South” in the expression “North-South research partnership” points to an appreciable inequality between two categories of scientists, it is possible to see a fundamental contradiction between this inequality and the partnership and participation ideology.

A first step to demonstrate this contradiction can be to look briefly into the current reality of African researchers. With regard to the resources provided by their academic institutions, these researchers experience a significant lack of access to high-quality scientific information and debate, time to do research, and remuneration – which often goes together with a lack of social recognition (Kouvouama & Tonda, 1992). Another important point is that many of them – longing for social recognition – are making a political career and/or carrying out consultancy activities – of which the main characteristics are high remuneration, short duration and unimaginative use of a constraining analytical framework (Gaillard, 2002). Furthermore, the African scientific field is particularly affected by the global “brain drain” phenomenon.

Adding to this empirical description a theoretical analysis using Bourdieu’s concepts of social field and capital (or resources) can be useful to show that “good will” is not enough to eradicate structural power asymmetries within North-South research partnerships. According to Bourdieu (1984), each social field (e.g., the scientific field, the religious field, etc.) possesses specific forms of capital (e.g., a specific cultural capital – consisting of knowledge and skills, inter alia –, a specific economic capital, etc.) that can
be converted into each other. And this is the total capital endowment of each field’s actor that determines necessarily his or her structural position and power within the field.

Thus, the main problem with the partnership and participation ideology is that it implies that it is possible to mitigate power asymmetries without first reducing capital endowment asymmetries.

And one can say that the North-South research partnership practice seems to be, especially in the case of partnerships with African researchers, less determined by the ethical content of this ideology than by structural asymmetries. One of the most visible sign of this hidden reproduction of the colonial domination is the actual and usual distribution of responsibilities between Northern and African partners: research agenda setting, activity planning, fund management, data interpretation, results dissemination (through publications and conferences) and basic research components are taken on by Northern researchers, while their Southern counterparts are in charge of data gathering\(^6\) and more applied research components (Maselli, Lys, et al., 2005; Rath & Smart, 2006).

Another perceptible sign of capital endowment asymmetries is the impossibility for some African researchers to meet the Northern researchers’ expectations as regards result production (Gaillard, 1994).

As far as African scientists are concerned, these contradictions between the ideology and practice of North-South research partnership are therefore likely to occasion disappointed empowerment hopes and a perception of low valorisation of one’s work by others.

Nevertheless, some ways can be imagined to go beyond disappointment in North-South research partnerships:

- recognising and evaluating the scientific capital asymmetry between Northern and Southern partners (Jentsch, 2004);
- distributing explicitly the responsibilities among them according to this asymmetry;
- focusing on capacity building even if it is to the detriment of result production;\(^7\)
- increasing the Southern researchers’ usual economic, informational and time resources;
- converting their knowledge and skills into scientific capital.

\(^6\) It is particularly regarding to this task that Houtondji (1993) considers that African researchers are the former illiterate informants’ heirs.

\(^7\) It is important to emphasise, however, that these three first “recommendations” are likely to be very difficult to apply with elder researchers who lack the appropriate scientific capital but cannot recognise this lack if they want to maintain their local and/or national prestige (within and outside the scientific field).

References


Crozier, M. (2000). La clé de la réussite américaine : le partenariat In M. Crozier (Ed.), *A
DECEMBER 2008 NORRAG NEWS 22


NORTH-SOUTH RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS: A PERSONAL VIEWPOINT

Noel McGinn
Formerly NORRAG President, and Harvard University
Email: nmcginn@igm.org

Keywords
Research partnership, North-South

Summary
This article reflects on several features of North-South research partnerships, noting that the very features that make such collaboration so rewarding are also those that make it difficult.

The very features that make North-South research collaboration so rewarding are also those that make it difficult, and therefore not common. The valuable differences in the knowledge and insights of colleagues in different societies too often result from unwanted differences in material conditions of living and education that impede forming a relationship characterized by a free and equal exchange of ideas. Language diversity supports a wide range of nuances in conceptualization, but also impedes communication.

In addition, however, there are institutional impediments. Many universities in the North place less value on collaborative research published in another language and on some other country’s problems. Researchers are discouraged from travel that absents them from their campus. Each institution demands the attention of its members, and disparage strong relationships outside their boundaries. Funding agencies often want research tailored to specifications that do not match the interests of a receiving country. National politicians have short time horizons while academic standards for research lengthen time to completion.

Through a providential set of circumstances beyond my control I suffered less from these constraints than many of my contemporaries. I was trained to a high level of expertise in social science research methods at a time when there was a high unsatisfied demand. My position in the university encouraged research in the South; for a number of years funding with few restrictions was relatively easy to obtain. Over 30 years I worked with colleagues in each of the major continents except Oceania. I acquired a high level of fluency in one major language of the South, which sensitized me to the difference between translation and interpretation.

Despite these privileges, however, I can count only four instances in which I was a partner in a genuine collaborative North-South relationship. One of these relationships continues today; the others, unfortunately, have ended. Each of these relationships developed in a country in which I lived with my family for a year or more. This time was important because the full benefits of collaboration are achieved when the partners trust each other enough to challenge each others’ values and insights. That level of trust is built up over time. I made good friends in a number of countries, but on return to my university promises to work together were set aside to handle immediate demands on my time.

A critical task in each of the relationships was joint writing about the research. The products included reports to clients, journal articles, and books. Spoken communication across cultures is difficult enough; collaborative writing requires constructing new, shared metaphors, and often threatens the relationship. Writing takes time, especially if the partners seek to discover something new in each other’s thinking.
Even successful partnerships can end if the partners’ institutions increase their demands for attention. Pressures may be greatest for younger partners who must struggle to make their place in their institution. Fortunately for me at each stage in my career I was paired with persons at a similar stage in their professional (and personal) lives. Given enough time, the relationships that developed were immensely important in my development; I learned a great deal from my colleagues, from what they gave me and in the process of sharing my knowledge with them. With time, the differences between us that impeded initial communication and trust became an enormous benefit.

0-0-0-0-0

**Partner Organizations and Unhelpful Help**

David Ellerman  
University of California at Riverside (formerly World Bank)  
Email: david@ellerman.org

**Keywords**
Partnership, World Bank, Unhelpful help

**Summary**
This article examines various forms of unhelpful help that can emerge from so-called ‘partnerships’. One form of unhelpful help with partner organizations is to treat them as repeater stations for the ‘correct messages’ being sent from the center rather than as potentially autonomous learning organizations. Another form of unhelpful help arises when a development agency wants to create a partner organization rather than partner with an existing organization with indigenous roots.

The setting is a development assistance agency such as the World Bank Institute (formerly EDI) working to develop the capacity of various partner organizations in developing countries. Often the most salient lessons are negative ones where the development assistance is actually a form of unhelpful help, i.e., assistance that does not increase and may even impair people’s ability to help themselves.

As an educational institution, the World Bank Institute (WBI) should, in theory, help its counterpart or partner organizations to become learning organizations with the capacity to learn on their own. While that may be the espoused theory, the actual theory-in-practice was largely to see partner organizations as repeater stations in the transmission of the “correct messages” from the center (e.g., the World Bank) to the developing or transition countries. Here is the language from the WBI describing to the Bank’s Board this process of going from the initial training courses given by WBI to their trainers in the partner institutions who will replicate the messages in wholesale training courses.

---

These relationships evolve as follows. The partner institutions send some of their faculty to attend the course that they propose to replicate. Then WBI trainers and partner staff work together in the design, joint delivery, and adaptation of the course. Initially, the partner institution receives strong support, followed by a gradual reduction over three years, by which time it is expected to take up full responsibility for program delivery. From this point on, WBI limits its role to supervision, monitoring quality, network facilitation, and updating training materials.

They learn to “replicate”; they don't learn to learn. To people from post-socialist countries, this is a COMINTERN transmission-belt style of operating but with the Bank’s partner institutions presumably parroting the Right Messages. Thus one form of unhelpful help with partner organizations is to treat them as repeater stations or missionary outposts for the Correct Messages being sent from the center rather than as potentially autonomous learning organizations.

Another form of unhelpful help arises when a development agency wants to create a partner organization (to show it made a difference) rather than partner with an existing organization with indigenous roots. This can even take the form of creating a “ghost” or “virtual” partner organization. One method was to relabel every individual who has attended a course as a “member” and every group that provided a classroom and coffee as a “partner organization” in the (virtual) “Agency Training Network” (insert name of the appropriate “Agency”). There is no actual funded and staffed partner organization; it is only a manner of speaking (like referring to all the people who ever attended a course on Underwater Basket-Weaving as the “Network of Underwater Basket-Weavers”). Every training course held by the agency can then be described as a “meeting” of the “Agency Training Network”.

Eventually some of the alumni-trainees can be hired as consultants to repeat the standard courses without a task manager from headquarters being present (a “remote control course” in agency argot!). Thus “local knowledge capacity” is created and leveraged by the “Agency Training Network” to broadcast the main messages on a wider scale in the client country (all paid for by the agency in competition with local training institutes trying to run their own courses on an local basis without foreign subsidies).

These games can also have quite an adverse effect on actual capacity building. Here is an example. In Russia during the 1990s, the Morozov Project had a national center in Moscow and had at its peak 65 staffed and self-supporting training centers franchised throughout Russia. The Project had some initial assistance from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and USAID but it was largely self-funding from user fees and local Russian funds. The Morozov Project was a natural partner for WBI (and the Bank as a whole) for training programs that would have impact all over Russia. Yet in the mid-1990s, when an attempt was made to hook up WBI (then EDI) with the Morozov Project, it was strongly (and successfully) resisted by task managers who wanted to continue “delivering” their own courses in Russia as before. The “argument” was that EDI had already built a “Training Network” in Russia; so there was
no need to support the “rival” of the Morozov network that was not built by EDI (being the result of largely Russian efforts). The EDI Training Network was just a way of speaking about all the people who attended and organizations that hosted the EDI courses; it was not an actual partner organization at all.

A related form of unhelpful help arises when a development agency creates and incubates an organization that is supposed to be eventually “kicked out of the nest” to become a genuine local organization. The foreign agency is to provide first stage funding for a new institute, think tank, or organization in the country where the domestic government may make a “matching contribution” of unused building space. The salaries in the organization are comparable to the international standard in order to attract the best and brightest of the local talent and thus to embellish the agency’s success story in the country. The public relations story is that here is a tangible result of the agency’s work in the country; it would not have otherwise happened. However, the agency’s clear sponsorship and “ownership” over the organization limits its influence in the domestic debates (imagine an EU, Russian, or Chinese-funded think tank in Washington churning out position papers on American political issues). Since the helper-agency was using its direct power and resources to “make things happen”, the resulting local organization has little domestic roots and less sustainability if weaned off the international funds.

The idea, of course, is that the external initiative of the “missionary outpost” will eventually be “internalized” in the country, will be funded through internal sources, and thus will be successful “local capacity building.” But years later, these organizations are still annually knocking at the door of the World Bank, or US, European, or Japanese foundations or agencies to fund their activities. Domestic funding would probably not provide anywhere near the expected “international” level of salaries and might have unacceptable strings attached. Any local private wealth would probably rather fund its own initiative. Rather than face up to taking a fundamentally wrong approach, the preferred approach of the international agencies is to redefine “sustainability” as meaning not moving to domestic funding but moving to co-funding by some other sources in the international sector. Thus the international agencies can take in each other’s laundry by picking up some second or third stage co-funding on each other’s projects and thereby show that their projects were “sustainable”.

0-0-0-0-0

NORTH-SOUTH RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS: LESSONS FROM THE LITERATURE

Megan Bradley, St Antony’s College, University of Oxford
Email: megan.bradley@sant.ox.ac.uk

Researching the research on development research partnerships may appear to flirt with absurdity. Yet making the most of the abundant and often insightful body of literature that has emerged on North-South research partnerships over the course of the
past three decades is essential to strengthening the practice of partnership, and the
generation of knowledge for development.

From donors and NGO advocates to professional researchers, many of the actors
involved in North-South development research projects often lament the lack of studies
on such partnerships to support critical reflection and the refining of approaches to
collaboration. However, an exploration of the partnership literature confirms that studies
and evaluations of collaborative research are both plentiful and instructive.9 The
challenge is to move beyond the model of learning ‘in the saddle’, and bring the lessons
from the literature to bear on the creation and implementation of new North-South
research partnerships. Equally, the partnership literature needs to continue to grow and
question the assumptions underpinning it, if it is to effectively inform practice. Above
all, this means questioning whether North-South partnerships should remain the dominant
modality for funding and carrying out development research.

The literature on North-South research cooperation is sharply focused on
improving the practice of partnership, and is replete with lessons for prospective partners,
drawn from past collaborations. As early as 1975, researchers have argued that
collaborative research frameworks were often inadequate and counter-productive. They
called for a reorientation of North-South partnerships so that collaborations could
strengthen Southern institutions while producing more policy-relevant, critical research.
Early calls were also raised in the literature for the creation of mutually beneficial
partnerships, supported with long-term, flexible and diversified funding. In varying
degrees, these prescriptions have matured into discernible trends, reflected in turn in the
more recent partnership literature. For example, the production of policy-oriented
research has emerged as a virtually uncontested goal, and partnerships are increasingly
seen as an opportunity for developing the capacity of Northern and Southern researchers
alike. Despite increased donor interest in multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder
development research, the literature underlines that creating successful multi-disciplinary
and multi-stakeholder partnerships remains a serious challenge as partners struggle to
overcome weighty bureaucracies and constantly shifting donor priorities, ensure regular,
open communication, and reconcile competing interests.

Perhaps the richest literature in the partnership canon is that focused on the ethics
of research collaboration. Much of this literature argues that asymmetry between partners
remains the principal obstacle to productive research collaboration. This asymmetry
manifests itself in the form of inequitable access to information, training, funding,
conferences and publishing opportunities, as well as the disproportionate influence of
Northern partners in project administration, budget management, and the development of
the research agenda. While asymmetry is a persistent challenge, the literature suggests
that conceptions of the success and impact of research partnerships are changing. The
literature reflects widespread scepticism regarding the utility of co-publication, the
traditional measure of the health and productivity of a research partnerships or
collaboration strategy. By the same token, it is increasingly well-recognised amongst
donors and researchers, if not university tenure review committees, that scientific

---

9 For one such review, see M. Bradley (2007) ‘North-South Research Partnerships: Challenges, Responses
and Trends—A Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography’, Working Paper 1, IDRC Canadian
FINAL.pdf.
advances are only one yardstick for the significance of a research partnership. Mutual capacity building and the translation of research results into policy interventions are more and more seen as important achievements and indicators of success.

What issues stand out for partnership scholars to grapple with in the future? First, while the approaches of donors such as Canada and the Netherlands are well-documented, the role of donors such as Japan and the United States merit examination in greater detail, as well as the part played by countries with increasingly robust national research communities, such as Brazil, India, China and South Africa. Second, more concerted efforts are required to explore some of the literature’s starkest tensions. For example, how does the mantra that partnerships should be mutually beneficial fit in with the oft-repeated view that they should prioritise Southern needs and agendas? Last, even a cursory glance at the partnership literature confirms that this work is predominantly produced by Northerners, and implicitly (or even explicitly) reflects their interest in the continuation of North-South partnerships as the predominant funding modality for development research. More abundant and diverse Southern perspectives are essential to identifying the real strategic benefit of advancing research through collaborative frameworks, and determining whether the North-South partnership modality should continue to trump other approaches to supporting research for development, such as South-South partnerships or direct support for Southern institutions.

POLITICS OF NORTH-SOUTH PARTNERSHIP IN EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Jolly Jose, Sultan Qaboos University, Muscat, Oman
Email: drjollyjose@yahoo.co.in

Keywords
Partnership, Education, Research, North-South

Summary
This article explores issues connected to the globalisation of research and research partnerships.

Knowledge is an essential ingredient for sustainable development. This growing reality in the globalised world has resulted in increasing co-operation between northern and southern nations and new research partnerships are getting established. The increased collaborations are also the result of the requirement of the market, which is playing both visible and invisible roles in governing today’s world. As a result, the research is increasingly getting privatised. The new research paradigms are often defined and
designed by the economic agenda. This has potential implications on governing mechanisms for the research as well as on setting the research agenda.

Global governance of research is affected by two facts. First and the foremost is the changing landscape of the educational sector that has been a dominant player in research and knowledge generation. With the globalization of education, we argue that education has become increasingly seen as a commodity to be purchased by a consumer in order to build a “skill set” to be used in the marketplace or as a product to be bought and sold by multinational corporations. This has significant influence on the way in which academic institutions are involved in research. Secondly, research itself is moving out of academic settings to other international arrangements. Research takes place in the context of international networks consisting of corporations, researchers, donor agencies etc. For example, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations.

Globalisation of research and research partnerships are also influencing local research agendas – which are getting oriented towards the international research agenda, not necessarily reflecting local developmental priorities of southern nations. The international orientation may also cause research to get less embedded in the societal context of the south.

In such a situation it is likely that many priority issues connected to poverty and underdevelopment like environmental degradation, migration, loss of bio-diversity etc are likely to be ignored. We argue, therefore, that poverty development strategies should be the focus of international cooperation. This is so crucial today as we consider the power of research to support policy directions.

White Knight or Trojan Horse? The Private Sector and Education for All

Alexandra Draxler, consultant, Paris, formerly Prospects
Email: a.draxler@gmail.com

Keywords
Partnership, Private Sector, EFA

Summary
This article examines the role of public-private partnership in EFA. It examines the private sector’s potential role and the public sector’s responsibility in these types of partnerships where each partner contributes assets and/or resources towards a common goal, and shares both risks and benefits.

The White Knight of educational reform?
Seeking to expand the range of actors involved in contributing to the Education for All (EFA) goals is a logical response when resources are scarce and when classic development mechanisms encounter intractable problems. It is now conventional wisdom that that public-private partnerships for education\textsuperscript{11}, essentially aimed at increasing the contribution of business and civil society, should be able both to generate new resources and to enrich skills and experience available for educational reform. Indeed there is a degree of “irrational exuberance”, to borrow a prophetic term applied to the financial sector a few years ago, about the potential of partnerships to solve problems governments cannot solve alone. The UN has embraced public-private partnerships, as has the World Bank (Patrinos & Sosale, 2007, United Nations Global Compact, 2007).

Unfortunately, the dialogue on the question of public-private partnerships is clouded by both meaning and ideology. As this issue of NORRAG NEWS shows, the very concept of partnership means different things to different people and more importantly to different institutions and sectors. The term “public-private partnership” is used frequently, and according to this writer improperly, to describe the provision of public services by the private sector under contract, whether education, health or utilities. So, “partnership” is used by many practitioners (and authors) to refer to privatization, which is a highly ideological battle-ground on which evidence is wielded, disemboweled, disregarded or tried in kangaroo courts with extreme conviction and high emotion. The benefits of private schooling, privatization of part or all of educational services, are important but different issues, because scrutiny of privatization can in principle take place through existing legal mechanisms (parliaments, the legal system and so on).

What are “public-private partnerships”?  
The main focus in this short review is on the private sector’s potential role and the public sector’s responsibility in partnerships where each partner contributes assets and/or resources towards a common goal, and shares both risks and benefits. These can be complicated to achieve, often have higher transaction costs than single-sector initiatives, and are fairly marginal in terms of overall resources devoted to education. Documentation and research on the real outcomes of partnerships in education is relatively weak. The knotty part about “partnerships” is that they fall outside most legal and regulatory mechanisms.

Arguments in favor of public-private partnerships
Arguments for public-private partnership follow much the same reasoning as those in favor of more private sector involvement in provision of public services: the public sector cannot do it alone, the private sector is more efficient and effective, the private sector can provide greater choice, and often also that the involvement of the private sector will vastly increase the resource base. These arguments need to be examined carefully, and

\textsuperscript{11} Indeed, as a result of some negative connotations surrounding “public-private” partnerships, the term “multi-stakeholder partnerships” has come to be preferred by many international organizations and others.
this is not the place where this can be done. Suffice it to say that there is very little
evidence for the last argument, significant expansion of resources due to partnerships.\footnote{12}

A review of experience to date seems to indicate that there are considerable virtues of
PPPs in terms of innovation, experimentation, enhancing quality, learning, diversity of
provision and execution, and building alliances. Particularly in the realm of information
and communications technologies, the potential to experiment with the introduction of
technologies into the teaching and learning process by establishing partnerships can avoid
costly system-wide investment mistakes. None of these potential gains are negligible, but
they come with costs.

Why a Trojan horse?
The international community has spent a great deal of time and energy in defining and
codifying rights to education and in supporting ways in which governments can play their
role in supporting these rights. The notion of public-private partnerships has emerged as a
new, unregulated, tool that exists almost entirely outside these agreements. Because, in
principle, money does not change hands, regulatory mechanisms do not apply. Because,
in principle, these are informal arrangements, they fall outside national and international
planning mechanisms, indeed outside major recent agreements about donor and recipient
country coordination. They can both conflict with and deviate national plans, and incur
costs and consequences down the line for which no one is directly responsible but which
the national system has to assume. The pitfalls of partnerships are potentially high. Most
partnerships operate relatively informally, with a loose verbal or written agreement such
as a memorandum of understanding. As a consequence, normal tendering procedures are
often not followed. There is a potential (and often real) consequence of giving the private
sector partner or partners a competitive advantage for the provision of further lucrative
business. In the IT sector, for example, distribution of free equipment or software for a
pilot project with a governmental body can informally lock in the recipient for subsequent
system-wide use of the same goods, bypassing competition.

Building on experience for positive results
Most observers concur that a number of conditions need to be met in order that public-
private partnerships for education respond to clear needs and operate effectively,
efficiently and transparently. So far regulatory mechanisms do not exist or are weak,
empirical evidence about results is not widespread, and expectations about their potential
can be excessive.

Some lessons can be summarized here:

Principles and regulation
Multi-stakeholder partnerships for education bring together stakeholders from vastly
different origins and with fundamentally different operating principles. The economic
sector partners engaged in these partnerships are, legitimately, concerned with the long-
term profitability of their investment. From the point of view of governments and non-

\footnote{12} The provision of education by the private sector is another matter, and although private education is often lumped together with public-private partnerships, this is a misleading aggregation.
governmental organizations, there are fundamental human rights principles that must be upheld, based on intergovernmental conventions and agreements and the notion of education as a public good. Public sector partners also need to take care that basic principles of competition, transparency and accountability as well as adherence to commitments are respected. Needs and outcomes need to take precedence over inputs. This means fitting partnerships into overall development assistance trends as well as developing programmes in concert with those stakeholders closest to the end users.

**Costs**
Typically, partnerships have high transaction costs, generally underestimated at the outset. Participants assume that volunteerism and good will cover unforeseen costs. Initial agreements about how to cover costs generated by unforeseen events are necessary, as these otherwise will devolve to the public sector or result in poor outcomes. Longer term costs (replacement of equipment, upkeep and so-on) are often forgotten, and these always accrue to the public sector partners.

**Objectives**
The benefits of partnerships are potentially very high in terms of collective value-added from expanded resources, competencies and approaches. These benefits are factors that can be used for negotiation at the outset between stakeholders, including the end users, and should be articulated as part of the overall objectives. However, when partners come to an undertaking with objectives that are mutually incompatible, have not been scrutinized in relation to needs, or that can have hidden long-term consequences for stakeholders outside the partnership, trouble lies down the road. The preparation stage, involving consultation with those involved in implementation on the ground, with end users, and assessment of relative needs and priorities and how the particular partnership activity fits in, is essential.

**Risks**
The risks and difficulties of partnerships are often underestimated at the beginning. Because consequences for any one partner are, in general, not devastating, each partner can be tempted to assume that not much will be lost if the experiment does not work. Case studies typically dance around these problems. Commitment at the outset on the part of stakeholders to transparent reporting as part of on-going monitoring may be painful at the beginning but in the end will benefit all those involved.

**Conclusions**
In conclusion, to innovate is by definition to enter uncertain and sometimes uncharted territory. To innovate with education is to take responsibility for the learning experience and the future of individuals. Failure has direct consequences for people we know or should know. Success will benefit not only learners and those involved in education but all the institutions involved. Investment in planning, regulation, transparency, results and documentation of partnerships is not wasted. It is a duty and an asset.

**References**


---

**RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP: CHARITY, BROKERAGE, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER OR LEARNING ALLIANCE?**

Birgit Habermann,
Commission for Development Studies at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna
Email: Birgit.Habermann@oeaw.ac.at

**Keywords**
Research partnership, cooperation, power, agency

**Summary**
Research partnership has turned into both a panacea and a paradigm defining cooperation between Northern and Southern researchers in the last two decades. But due to its ambiguous connotations and the nature of the aid industry it has become a hotly debated term amongst donors and researchers alike.
Partnership has been used as a political and strategic term to re-define cooperation over the last few decades, however it is ‘in danger of remaining a “feel good” panacea for governance without obtaining a pragmatic grasp of the “why” and a clearer understanding of the “how” of partnerships’ (Brinkerhoff 2002:2). During many recent conferences, legitimate questions have been raised about the term itself: What is meant by partnership? Who are the partners? What are their roles? Who decides for whom and to what purpose a partnership is established? The level of frustration among Southern partners is high. However, Northern partners increasingly complain about partnership as well, as they start seeing it as something that is imposed on them by funding agencies. This inevitably leads to the establishment of ‘fake’ partnerships that exist more or less only on paper.

According to Maselli et al (2006: 13), research partnerships ‘comprise a combination of result-oriented research activities and capacity-building components at individual and institutional levels, or both levels simultaneously’, and they bring together individuals, institutions or groups of researchers from developing, transitional and industrialised countries (Maselli et al 2006). However, the authors also admit that most partnerships are designed in the North, even though especially the ‘agenda-setting process, when research projects or programmes are being designed’, is crucial for the implementation of such partnerships (Maselli et al 2006: 13).

Research partnerships between scientists in Northern and Southern countries too often involve a blending of roles of different actors with different agendas, and are shaped by the asymmetries between them. It is not only the asymmetry in financial resources, and infrastructure, it is increasingly an issue of power and agency that separates the partners to be. Brinkerhoff (2002) also points out that the intrinsic power relations in international development make it impossible to exclude power from partnership (Lister 2000 in Brinkerhoff 2002:177); hence the resistance against ‘partnership rhetoric’ (Brinkerhoff 2002:177).

Partnership in itself is a sensitive term, as it implies something personal, something that ought to have a connotation of sharing and trust. It is about a shared goal that partners are trying to achieve together. Yet, not having a shared goal is common, and leads to conflict and misunderstandings from the outset of such projects. There are many different reasons to engage in research partnerships. Northern partners are under pressure to involve partners in the South to get funding and research permits to do research in and with Southern countries. Southern researchers hope to benefit from the prestige, access to power and resources as well as networks that such partnerships promise to yield. Due to the high transaction costs and the enormous bureaucracy involved, this high demand for cooperation has indeed become a burden for Southern research institutions.

What makes so many institutions in the North so keen on cooperating with Southern partners? Why is there such an increase in interest in funding research cooperation on a global level? There seems to be more competition than ever between Northern actors for
partnership with the South. There is, of course, the obvious argument that globalisation has led to closer integration and more connectedness on a global level (Brinkerhoff 2002). Moreover, I would argue that from a donor’s viewpoint, this may also be an attempt to export Northern technologies and explore new markets, especially to transition economies, but increasingly also to the developing world. In other cases this may still be fuelled by an interest to access resources (e.g. mining, (bio)fuel production, carbon trading, and many others). Yet there are also other, more personal reasons for scientific cooperation between the North and South: some researchers simply like travelling and learning more about different socio-ecological environments.

In many European countries donors are currently re-thinking their approaches to research funding in cooperation with so-called developing countries. Austria is one of the few countries with a specific funding mechanism for research partnerships: the Commission for Development Studies at the Austrian Academy of Sciences (KEF) has been funding research partnerships since 1981. The board is constituted of Austrian scientists, representatives of different interest groups and NGOs as well as ministries. KEF has undergone major reforms since 2003/2004 and has developed its own list of criteria and indicators for funding research partnerships. KEF’s funding strategy has moved towards a more genuine partnership approach; however there are still many issues and major obstacles to overcome, that require more in-depth analysis.

**A notion of charity:** ‘Partnership is a European euphemism for charity’ (participant at the Science with Africa conference, Addis Ababa, March 2008): If a funding agency such as KEF requires Northern scientists to apply for funding together with Southern partners, but provides funding almost exclusively to Southern partners, then this partnership risks being perceived as an act of charity by both partners. Southern partners feel like the ‘beneficiaries’ of such cooperation. The benefits in terms of revenue for the Northern institutes become marginal. Hence, many scientists work in their spare time for such projects, and with little recognition from their own institutions. The allocation of funding by the donor agency to both partners is therefore a crucial determinant of the way partnership is perceived by the researchers.

**A notion of brokerage:** ‘Money rules...’ or ‘Deliver the work first, then I’ll pay.’ (Austrian project manager in a ‘partnership project’) Admittedly, a broker can assume a variety of roles. However, in research partnerships this role often has to do with money. It often happens that Northern researchers access the funds, and act as project managers, but don’t actually do any research. In the same way as many other funding agencies, KEF transfers the funds to the Austrian partners only. This is partly due to legal reasons, partly due to the fact that some Southern partner institutions are too small to administer the funds. An argument brought forth by Southern researchers is that many Southern institutions have started charging large overhead costs, leaving their own researchers with little money for actually doing research. Nevertheless, money is power – since however many benefits a broker may have, too often the power that comes with this role is used as a lever against partners when they don’t perform as
expected or agreed upon. A funding agency therefore needs to carefully look at its strategy in this respect.

A notion of technology transfer: ‘We give them our science, we put it in their heads and there it stays forever’ (Austrian scientist at a conference in 2008)
If partnership is connected to training and capacity development activities, then there is a risk that the Northern partners will perceive themselves as teachers rather than learners, and that this perception of ‘superiority’ will persist well into further follow-up research cooperations. If partnership is based on a previous supervisor-student relationship, then it is bound to fail in many cases. When a researcher gets involved in a project with a former supervisor, the topics, methods, the whole notion of science, the validation of what is scientifically sound and what is not, will most likely be framed by the supervisor’s epistemological basis and assumptions. In such cases, technologies developed in one part of the world are still imposed on a different part of the world. Even if adapted to local conditions, under such circumstances the project and the partnership are very likely to fail. Hence, a donor needs to make a clear structural distinction between capacity development and research cooperation. Power relations and asymmetries on an individual level may otherwise ruin any promising research partnership.

A notion of learning: ‘You people come here and ask so many questions. Then you leave and nothing changes.’ (Farmer in NWFP, Pakistan, 1998)
What is the point of research partnerships when there is only one partner with an interest in learning something from the project? If there is no alliance of scientists and local stakeholders both in the North and the South with a genuine interest in learning, then the whole effort is likely to be in vain. If the research project is not rooted in a local context, what will happen with the results? So many projects have failed because they failed to address what people needed and wanted. These are the reasons why KEF as a Northern funding agent would want to support research partnerships rather than just projects. However, the actual understanding of partnership, what it implies, and what roles partners can or should assume, needs to be analysed much more carefully. Partnership in a learning alliance needs to extend beyond the usual set of actors; it will have to reach out to the societies affected by its activities both in the North and the South, and it will have to apply methods that require skills beyond the usual training of scientists. That is why KEF asks partners to explain very clearly in their funding proposals why they start a research partnership, what it means to them, who the partners are, how they will involve other stakeholders, and who will benefit from this in what way.

As a funding agency, KEF is aware of the asymmetries, the often unclear objectives and ‘hidden’ agendas, and the unequal power distribution within the projects. However, the only way to ensure some sort of accountability to the poor and marginalised is to ‘impose’ the rule of partnership. Southern partners are in some way expected to represent the ‘voice of the South’, and even though this may not always be a legitimate assumption it seems a lot wiser than allocating this role to Northern research institutions.

References
THE DOWNSIDE OF NORTH-SOUTH ACADEMIC COOPERATION

Sheldon Shaeffer, UNESCO Bangkok
Email: s.shaeffer@unescobkk.org

Keywords
North-South, Academic cooperation

Summary
This article suggests a few ideas about what to look for when an examination of North-South cooperation takes place.

North-South cooperation, only slightly less than South-South and North-South-South cooperation, has become the fad of the moment – in fact, it has been so for many years, but the experiences shared are usually the best practices – and not the worst. And the downside of N-S cooperation has rarely been examined. A few ideas about what to look for when such an examination finally takes place:

• to what extent is the southern partner a token one, attached to the project for cosmetic purposes?
• to what extent has the southern partner been genuinely involved in the development of the joint proposal?
• as a total percentage of the total budget of the institution, how large is the share for the southern partner compared to the northern?
• to what extent are the benefits equal for both partners – or does the northern partner get desired research permits, visiting professor assignments, paid up foreign students, enhanced prestige for its external relations (or marketing) office, and a fat overhead; and the southern partner, a few scholarships, free trips for its administrators, and its name on the final publications? (E.g., how many southern partner professors get invited to lecture at its northern partner’s institution?)
• to what extent does the northern partner impose its research paradigm on the southern one or appreciate and absorb its, often quite different, paradigm?
• who gets ultimate credit for the final products – is it distributed according to the inputs made?
• and how lasting is the partnership itself and its supposed benefits to the partners? Or does the northern one take its benefits, as above, and run?

If one visits China and reads the local English newspaper, almost every day some new agreement between a northern and a Chinese university is announced. The president of the northern institution (sometimes barely known among academics of the North) is shown, smiling, as he signs the agreement with his equally happy counterpart. It would be very interesting to know who is smiling most at the end of the agreement.

0-0-0-0-0

‘THE WHEREABOUTS OF POWER’ IN PARTNERSHIPS

Susan Robertson, University of Bristol and Toni Verger, University of Amsterdam
Emails: S.L.Robertson@bristol.ac.uk, tverger@gmail.com

Keywords
Partnership, Concept, Power

Summary
This article briefly examines the concept of partnership and asks what this very powerful idea is a solution to, as well as what it conceals. It highlights the importance of understanding the power dynamics of any partnership.

Given the ubiquity of the idea of partnership in characterising all kinds of governance arrangements around the globe—from research to the provision of education for all—it is important that we ask what this very powerful idea is a solution to, as well as what it conceals.

The notion of partnership is not new, though its various deployments and incarnations are. Stephen Linder (1999) argues that in the United States, at least, a key problem for the idea of partnership to solve was how to enable the 1980s privatisation agenda of public services to tactically continue. Viewed in this way, linking the public and private
interests together in a relationship called partnership is accommodationist; on the one hand it enlists support from more moderate elements opposed to whole-sale privatisation, whilst on the other it promises less state and more market to those in the neo-conservative and neo-liberal camps. Here the idea of partnership ties the ‘public’ and the ‘private’ together in a relationship of mutually-shared ambitions, projects, strategies and outcomes. The idea that risk might be asymmetrically shared, that private know-how is fetishized over public experience, or that money is to be made and careers advanced by this kind of management reform, is made absent. For the idea of partnership trades on the illusion that power, if not absent, is at the very least, shared. In other words, partnership is invoked as empowerment.

Similarly, if we look at research and learning partnerships that have become particularly fashionable at the current time, we would argue that locating the problem and the whereabouts of power enables us to ask why the partnership takes the form that it does, and to then see what the likely consequences might be in social justice terms. Take for instance the partnerships for teaching and research at Master’s level advanced by the European Commission under the Erasmus Mundus programme. Launched in 2003, Erasmus Mundus involves a group of European universities from the Member States to construct a partnership with a select number of universities outside of Europe – especially in developing countries. These are represented by the European Commission as partnerships shaped by the principles of cooperation, reciprocity and global citizenship. Partnership is thus constructed as a solution to the problems facing low-income countries; a way of advancing knowledge together. However scratch the surface and it becomes very evident that this is no symmetrical relation. Peel back the partnership discourse and we quickly see that this project is about bringing the talented to Europe to participate in Europe’s competitive knowledge-economy strategy, and not the reverse. Moreover, look at the knowledge that is being acquired in the context of these partnerships and this is no decolonised knowledge. It is the knowledge of the centre, and not the periphery. In fact, such centre-periphery research partnerships, constructed on the basis of an unequal exchange, have the potential to undermine certain logics of production of knowledge coming from the South, in turn promoting a world academic monoculture.

Now at this point we do not want to suggest that partnerships per se necessarily all operate in the same way, or with the same outcomes. It is just possible that the talented recruits will seize the opportunity to learn, to ask questions about the whereabouts of power, and to name it for what it is. It is equally possible that those involved in public private partnerships are able to navigate and negotiate a relationship that is mutually beneficial, open, and socially-just. In certain conditions, partnerships could also promote the introduction, or even better, the emergence of epistemologies and theoretical frameworks coming from the South in international research agendas. Nevertheless, this does not diminish the central idea of our argument and the importance of our claim; that in order to know quite what kind of partnership we are dealing with, we need to open up the black box, look inside, and to ask: ‘whereabouts is power’ (Allen, 2004)?

References
THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL NGOS IN SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Kathleen Collett, City & Guilds Centre for Skills Development, London
Email: kathleen.collett@cityandguilds.com

Keywords
Partnership, NGOs, vocational training/ TVET, India, Paraguay, Kenya

Summary
This paper gives examples from vocational training projects in India, Paraguay and Kenya, which show that partnerships between local organisations can help to establish genuinely responsive and sustainable training programmes, and that international NGOs can play an important role in facilitating, supporting and leveraging these partnerships.

There is growing awareness that international NGOs working in the field of vocational education and training need to draw on the knowledge and networks of local partners to ensure that training is relevant to local market and employment needs. This is particularly important in places in which employment opportunities are scarce and the resources for training are limited, as they are in many developing areas. The need for partnership is not restricted to relationships between international NGOs and local training providers, however. This paper gives examples from vocational training projects in India, Paraguay and Kenya, which show that partnerships between local organisations can be a key to establishing genuinely responsive and sustainable training programmes, and that international NGOs can play an important role in facilitating, supporting and leveraging these partnerships, maximising the impact of their own direct assistance.

The projects highlight the role of local partnerships in two different forms of vocational training. The projects in Paraguay and Kenya involve schools where technical skills and entrepreneurship skills are taught simultaneously by involving students in school-run income-generating enterprises. The profits from the school businesses can be re-invested into the educational process, with the prospect of ultimate self-sufficiency. The project in India involves training where income generation is not integrated into the teaching process, but the programmes are designed specially to meet the specific needs of local employers.

In both cases, close relationships between the educational facility and the community are needed to establish a positive education/production cycle where training that directly meets the needs of the region increases local production. This supports both employment and business opportunities and increases sources of local funding for training.\(^\text{14}\) Partnerships between educational and community bodies can help to ensure that training and local opportunities are complementary. Local partnerships are also well-placed to monitor the effectiveness of training and respond to changes in demand. Partnerships between local training providers can maximise local capacity to address shared challenges. These kinds of partnerships can enable locally-relevant training to become sustainable, as communities reap the benefits of this type of training, reinvest in it, and champion its development to meet emerging local needs.

However, community-led education initiatives also face a series of serious challenges. Firstly, although they may aim to be sustainable in the future, it may take a considerable investment to set such initiatives up, and this may be prohibitive for local organisations. Secondly, the local organisations may not have experience in managing funds or production facilities, and may need management support. Thirdly, in addition to resources for establishing training centres, these local initiatives may initially require technical knowledge and pedagogical resources to support their training.

Our case studies show that international NGOs can help local partnerships overcome these obstacles in a number of ways.

One example is the work that Teach a Man to Fish, an international NGO, has done to establish networks between training providers and other parties involved in enterprise-orientated training. In Paraguay and Kenya, for example, the Teach a Man to Fish network has enabled training centres to share problems and successful strategies, provided focused management training, improved the relationship of the training centres with local government, increased their direct access to funding, and, in Kenya, enabled the centres to take collective action to access more teacher training.

Such networks also play an important role in developing practical knowledge about enterprise-oriented education. As local initiatives which integrate production into learning are often experimental in nature, and developed in response to a specific opportunity and/or need, the gains that they make in devising successful schemes may be lost without some means of recording these gains, analysing and exploring them, and disseminating them to others who might benefit from them. The role of international NGOs in maintaining and developing these networks is therefore a valuable way of preserving and building on successful local initiatives.

A second example of how international NGOs can support local community relationships is the work that the City & guilds Centre for Skills Development (CSD) has done in

Hyderabad, in partnership with CfBT, which runs over 100 schools locally. CSD has helped the training providers connect their training with local opportunities in industry by addressing a skills supply issue in the area: many students lack awareness of job opportunities in industry and do not undertake relevant employability skills programmes, while local employers say that potential employees lack employability skills. CSD connected the providers with the Promise Foundation, a Bangalore-based NGO which specialises in careers guidance, and which undertook to train two teachers in guidance skills in an initial 10 schools. The Centre’s international experience in employer engagement has enabled it to involve employers in careers development at an early stage, and, by connecting local actors, it has been able to pilot an on-going mechanism for educating students about career paths, and meeting the skills needs of industry in the area.

These cases show how international NGOs can successfully support training organisations by creating local learning and support networks for similar organisations, and forming models for local employer engagement. By integrating organisations into such networks and by strengthening their management capacity, their capacity to directly access funding, and their ability to design appropriate teaching materials, international NGOs can help local training organisations gain operational independence, supported by sustainable local support networks which benefit from, but do not depend upon the continued involvement of, international NGOs.

REFLECTIONS ON RECENT BRITISH ATTEMPTS AT EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Simon McGrath
University of Nottingham
Email: Simon.Mcgrath@nottingham.ac.uk

Keywords
Educational Partnerships, UK, DFID, DIUS, EPA, ESRC, DelPHE

Summary
Since 2005, the UK Departments for International Development (DfID) and Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) have launched five new partnership programmes with a partial or complete focus on education. Based on a review of these programmes, this article asks some questions about the nature of “good practice” in education-for-development partnerships.

In NN 39 Ad Boeren reminded us of the long tradition of North-South partnership and the long-standing consensus that partnerships should be long-term and maximally symmetrical. In this piece I want to consider how recent British practice lives up to these ideals.
Since 2005, the Department for International Development (DfID) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) have launched five new partnership programmes with a partial or complete focus on education. The largest of these, the DfID Research Programme Consortia (RPC), has a five-year span and a minimum budget per consortium of £2.5 million, whilst the smallest, the Education Partnerships for Africa (EPA) offers a maximum of £60,000 and 12-15 months timescale. In between are EPA’s predecessor, England-Africa Partnerships (EAP), as well as three rounds of a DfID-Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) research competition and the Development Partnerships in Higher Education (DelPHE).

My intention is not to get into detailed analysis of these programmes but rather to use them to ask some questions about the nature of “good practice” in education-for-development partnerships.

A narrow development agenda?
There has been long-standing concern that the British Labour Government has sought tightly to focus university work in developing countries on a narrow pro-poor agenda. Certainly the thematic terms of reference for those bidding for the RPCs were very clearly set by DfID in this direction. This in itself is hardly surprising as the RPCs are effectively intended to be the bulk of official spending on education-for-development research. The other DfID programmes also show a strong pro-poor focus, although this has been drawn widely enough in practice to allow my colleagues in Nottingham to focus on genocide education in Rwanda and professional development in South Africa. However, it is striking that the DIUS programmes are not primarily poverty-oriented.

Indeed, the EPA programme is very explicitly about an international competitiveness agenda, with all projects to be focused on employability.

What partner countries?
Both DfID and DIUS programmes have sent fairly strong messages about which countries are priority ones – although they have not always been entirely consistent in their application of such prioritisation. For DfID, again, the focus has primarily been one of which are the poorest countries, although a strong Anglophone bias can be detected in both the prioritisation and the responses of research applicants. The DIUS programmes, however, have been outsourced to the British Council to manage, and the priority countries reflect the complex history of where the Council has offices. This is justified on the grounds that the Council wishes to be an active partner in the programmes, although this appears to be more aspiration than reality.

What is partnership?
With a five-year timescale and, indeed, grants to short-listed consortia for pre-application workshops, it is clear that the RPCs have been encouraged by DfID to take partnership seriously. Nonetheless, even in these programmes, it is inevitable that some tensions will surface as consortia try to balance process and product considerations. However, in the one-year EAP programme, there was clearly little time for process-driven partnership. Although one of the seven short-listed RPC consortia was led by the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa, it is only in DelPHE that the lead partner must be
Southern. DelPHE also has the rather curious tool of a matchmaking service through which the British Council helps institutions North and South to find new partners. Whether this is an innovative way of making new partnerships or simply a device to generate more applicants is in need of evaluation. What seems clear across the programmes is that there is a complex calculation to be made by the lead British institution (even if in DelPHE they are not officially the principal): how to balance the need to have partner(s) with existing capacity against how to avoid concentrating on the same narrow range of partners and countries.

Research or development?
 Whilst the RPC and DfID-ESRC programmes are clearly primarily research-oriented, DelPHE and the two DIUS programmes are much more focused on development activities. There is a case for balancing the two foci but it is worth considering what seem to be some of the unintended consequences of the two approaches. There is a clear weighting towards elite research universities in the more research-oriented programmes, whilst EAP (the one programme that has now finished) saw a far wider spread of institutions being involved. The larger funding available for the research programmes and the possibility of generating high status publications from them are clearly very important in the competitive higher education funding regime in Britain. In such an environment, it is much harder to motivate for participation in the shorter development-oriented programmes.

This is especially the case in the EPA programme, announced this September 2008. In this case, there is to be no funding for staff time of British academics. Already with EAP, it appears that many partnerships were highly personalised, built often on relationships that originated in graduate student supervisions or on past institutional affiliations. EPA makes no sense to research offices of research universities such as mine – it offers no money and little prospect of research publications. It may only be a small number of academics who will be able to participate in such programmes in the future.

Impact?
The RPCs and DfID-ESRC can be anticipated to have a significant research impact. The smaller programmes are intended to have a more direct development impact, although the short time scale of EAP-EPA may limit this in practice. However, it is striking that all this work has effectively been outsourced by the two Departments. Most of the administration is being done by the British Council or the ESRC, with the RPCs also doing a considerable amount of such work. It is worth considering what the effects of this outsourcing are. Does either Department have sufficient awareness of how their programmes are working and what is being learned about partnerships and education-for-development. More seriously, does either Department have the capacity to use the research generated?

Whilst the five programmes touched upon here have the merits, taken together, of presenting a varied portfolio of approaches, it is far from clear that there is any capacity (or indeed intention) to think systematically across DfID, DIUS and the British education-for-development constituency about what works and doesn’t work in these.
approaches and to locate this securely in the changing context of British higher education. Yet this is surely necessary if such work is to have its intended impact.

0-0-0-0-0
PARTNERSHIPS IN CONTEXT
GOOD FRIENDS IN SEVERAL SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Ernesto Schiefelbein, Alberto Hurtado University, Santiago
Email: mcgrossi@mi.cl

Keywords
Partnership, Education, Chile

Summary
Ernesto Schiefelbein recounts his partnership experiences in this article and identifies some common elements to all the experiences.

Serendipity seemed to generate each of my partnership experiences, but long term joint efforts eventually developed and some common elements to all experiences could be identified. By sheer luck in my university studies in Chile I had several foreign professors that forced me and my classmates to use relevant theory to analyze practice. E. Paternost (Italy), E. Cansado (Spain), J. Grunwald (USA) and R. Vekemans (Belgium) asked their students to read relevant research, look at real life problems, data and processes in order to understand them. That was a method rather different than the usual rote-learning prevailing in Latin America.

Therefore, in 1962, when Russell Davis from Harvard came to my office in the Development Corporation (CORFO) looking for studies on human resources we showed him our findings, and asked him for references and advice that helped our team to leap forward in the analysis of Chilean manpower problems. Later on Russell prepared a brilliant report on the economic demand for better educated workers and invited me to keep working in educational development and planning in his doctoral program in the CSED at Harvard.

Four years later I arrived in Cambridge, Mass. with lots of data and the problem I was facing in my new job: how to optimize the budget allocation to the different levels of the education system. Russell patiently showed me the relevant available models, discussed alternative approaches, and was instrumental in the design of a 700-equations model and in the debugging of puzzling results in daily printouts from the computer center. Eventually a practical simulation model was available for the Chilean planning process and later on the model was widely used in many other countries. The model proved that principals were reporting only half of the real number of repeaters generating the so called Type III Error for solving the wrong problem. A complex reform was implemented in Chile and in 1968 a national testing system started to measure achievement at the end of grade 8 to eventually evaluate the impact of such reform.

The evaluation of the 1965-1970 reform proved to be a major challenge and we looked for help. Good luck struck us when Joe Farrell accepted to become an “associated
“researcher” in the evaluation study and brought all the experience gathered in the preparation of the Coleman Report. He arrived in early 1970 and kept working with us in the analysis of factors associated with achievement for the next two decades and in many other projects later on. We were also lucky when we followed Arnold Anderson’s suggestion to collect data on “students’ textbook availability” that eventually was the alterable variable that better explained the variance in individual students’ scores. Mats Hultin read a draft of our report and convinced his World Bank colleagues to start lending money for distributing free textbooks in developing countries.

In 1971 the challenge was to finance a center targeted on education public polices and this time Noel McGinn, also from Harvard, brought the expertise and academic weight that convinced the Ford Foundation to give a generous grant to PIIE. Furthermore, he modeled the role of “applied researcher”, leading teams that looked for the achievement levels of textbooks, education topics discussed in the press or planning processes carried out during the 1965-1970 reform process. The 2-hour weekly staff meeting allowed the sharing of his impressive academic knowledge with the whole team. After his departure Noel continued advising members of the team for the next almost 40 years; analyzing the magnitude of repetition and its causes; preparing columns for local newspapers; improving teaching in a private university, or discussing issues on planning and research. We systematized some of the lessons from such a process in a book now being published by IBE-UNESCO.

In the mid-1970s I had the opportunity to systematically exchange research findings and experiences with all members of the Research Review and Advisory Group (RRAG) that Bob Myers created to encourage the diffusion of relevant knowledge on education and the design and implementation of key research. For example, the project sponsored the review of “education production function” studies. With John Simmons we summarized what had been learned in those studies and concluded that it was now the time to carry out experimental studies to isolate the effects of specific strategies. In fact writing this current text about what we learned in our partnership processes is a delayed consequence of the exchanges started by Bob and what I learned from his brilliant work as “networker”.

A partnership developed with Larry Wolff in the early 1990s while preparing several World Bank reports on the state of education in Latin America coupled with the need for accurate comparisons between alternative strategies detected in 1994 when I was Minister of Education in Chile involved us in the design of a Delphi study on cost-effectiveness of 40 strategies for primary education in Latin America. This approach provided a way to share subjective knowledge about impacts and implementation problems. For example, this study offered (for the first time) the specific suggestion to allocate the best reading teacher to grade one. We have finished a similar study for Anglophone Africa, are working on a new study for initial educational development in Chile, and probably we will keep replicating the approach in other regions.

There are other ongoing relevant international partnerships that should eventually provide further insights on these collaborative processes. With Winfried Böhm on the training of
teachers on the analysis of their practice; with Karl-Heinz Flechsig on models available for teaching and learning or with Luis Crouch on early evaluation of reading. In other opportunities I benefited from all her learning as in the case of working with Mary Jean Bowman in the analysis of the political economy of public support of higher education. There have also been partnerships with national colleagues (Patricio Cariola, Mario Leyton, Gabriel Castillo and Luis Naranjo) or Latin American colleagues (Juan Carlos Tedesco, Bernardo Toro, Claudio de Moura Castro or Luis Muñoz) that have some different characteristics.

All these processes seemed to occur with partners having somewhat different, but complementary, strengths as well as a common “permanent” interest in the topic. The joint effort enhanced human intellectual competences (bringing concrete benefits to the partners), suggested ways to reorganize the use of resources or brought about new products.

In summary, I have been lucky to participate in successful partnerships that eventually enabled the solution of relevant educational problems or created new ways to think about old problems; it was a process of continuously learning and developing professionally, and it also made me great long-term friends.

0-0-0-0

REFLECTIONS ON 40 YEARS OF PARTNERSHIP

Joe Farrell, OISE, Toronto
Email: jfarrell@oise.utoronto.ca

Keywords
Partnership, Chile, education

Summary
Joe Farrell reflects on 40 years of partnership with Ernesto Schiefelbein and provides pointers to why such “horizontal intellectual collaboration” has been so successful.

Ernesto Schiefelbein and I first met in the summer of 1969 at the University of Chicago. Bob Myers and Arnold Anderson had approached me earlier asking if I might be interested in serving for 18 months in Chile as an “advisor” in educational planning, under one part of a large USAID grant for education development in Chile. I told them that I was not at all interested in being an “advisor.” I was ideologically/morally opposed to such North/South advisor-advisee relationships, and in practical terms, what could I as a newly minted PhD possibly “advise” Ernesto about? They said they didn’t think Ernesto wanted that either. A day-long meeting was arranged for that summer at the U of Chicago. It was clear from the start that Ernesto also had no wish for an “advisor”. What he was looking for was someone who could work with his planning team in developing an evaluation of the massive educational reform over the previous six years in Chile, and
had funding to support the effort. He was looking for someone to help them learn the needed knowledge and skills to do that by working with them collaboratively in designing and carrying out the evaluation study. We would all learn from each other. I would not be called an “advisor” but an “associated researcher.” That was a role definition which attracted me, so we agreed, and on Jan. 1, 1970 I arrived in Santiago with my then-young family, and it all began.

The original intellectual/professional partnership grew quickly into personal/familial friendship, all of which has lasted to this day, obviously made easier by the advent of the internet. That original evaluation study went longitudinal, for close to ten years, by a collective combination of technical expertise, political expertise, and good luck, and became finally the largest, longest and most complex such study ever conducted anywhere, to my knowledge. The final publication from it was in 1986. It had a wide range of local and international policy and theory implications, and generated a large number of more detailed research studies in Chile, which have influenced educational policy there, and elsewhere, to this day. And from it there grew a much broader partnership—at one period for eight or so years in the 1980s we had, with IDRC and CIDA support, a team of some 30 OISE faculty and graduate students, and some 50 Chilean researchers, working collaboratively on a wide array of educational research and development efforts, in both nations, producing a long list of co-authored reports and publications in Spanish, English, and French.

And it still carries on. We most recently worked directly together in 2005 in Harvard and 2006 in Colombia, now focusing on a range of partnerships that grew out of that earlier work, with Vicky Colbert and her “Escuela Nueva team” in Colombia, Malak Zaalouk and the Community Schools program in Egypt, and many others around the world, where we are focusing on understanding how and why radically alternative forms of schooling on a large scale are having dramatic success in improving learning among the most marginalized young people in the world. Each connects to the previous partnership in complex ways. And here we are again.

How and why did this original and long-standing partnership with Ernesto work so well, and grow so many further partnerships? Clearly, Ernesto and I started out “on the same page” in terms of understanding what such partnerships should be, what I have come to refer to as “horizontal intellectual collaboration”, and we both worked hard to make that vision continue to happen; we have shared a common commitment to improving learning among the most marginalized peoples; and we were from the start “simpatico”. And I think we had both sought and found partners who sought and shared the same visions and values, even if we did not necessarily know it fully at the time. And we had immense good fortune, some manipulated and some entirely accidental. (My mother often said to me as I was growing up: “Good luck consists of being prepared to open the door when opportunity knocks”. ) Such I suppose is life. We have been deeply blessed. But it is still a mystery. Un abrazo, querido amigo.
WHOSE KNOWLEDGE, WHAT EXPERTISE?
CROSS-NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES IN EUROPE AND ANDEAN AMERICA\(^\text{15}\)

Rosemary Preston, University of Warwick
Email: r.a.preston@warwick.ac.uk

Keywords
Partnership, Latin America, Europe

Summary
This article examines the partnership experience of the Environmental Research Capacity Building Project (1998-2000) which linked three universities in Andean America to three in Europe.

The Environmental Research Capacity Building Project (ERCB) (1998-2000) was one of three in-depth case studies (supplemented by information from 15 others) in a CfBT funded study on the implications of the complexity of educational aid partnerships for communications, management and programme achievements.

With EU funding, six universities took part, one in each of six countries (three in Western Europe, three in Andean America). Interaction between cross-national teams was to enhance capacities to integrate interdisciplinary physical and social science approaches to environmental enquiry. Members of the six institutions were to work across disciplines at research sites in remote farming areas of the Andean countries. Interviews were held with 30 of the 40 people involved. They included funding agency representatives, team leaders, members of faculty, temporary junior staff, graduate and undergraduate students, short-term local consultants and community members. There was expertise in anthropology, botany, cartography, farming, geography, geomorphology, GIS, politics, soils, sociology, and so forth.

Achievements
There was considerable movement of people and finance between continents, countries institutions and field sites. Formal inter-team events included an inception meeting, an interim review and a large concluding conference. Policy makers were involved throughout. Progress was recorded in nearly 100 documents, among which were books and papers

\(^{15}\) From: Preston, R (2001) *Researching environmental sustainability: knowledge, expertise and cross-national university partnerships in Europe and Latin America*, Birmingham, paper presented to the annual conference of the Society for Latin American Studies, pp21, March. Copies are available from r.a.preston@warwick.ac.uk
since published and a number of theses. Significant personal and intellectual development was noted, with enhanced skill in comparative method, global planning and financial management. There was pleasure at working with esteemed colleagues from different countries. Modestly perceived success was noted in integrating the social and scientific objectives and developing policy as well. The Andean universities succeeded in creating new structures to manage international finance, while the project website was hailed as a key communications and teaching resource, profiling the studies and disseminating findings.

Challenges
Failure to anticipate swinging funding agency procedures, the scheme was implemented under severe financial pressure, following a pre-inception cut and a later reduction for delayed expenditure. Unable to cut teams, there was no elasticity and constant stress.

There was intra-team harmony, but historical departmental strife also replayed itself, with gendered tensions over pay and status between junior and more senior participants, and the loss of enthusiasm and eventual withdrawal of those unpaid. Inter-organisational relations revealed fundamental trust between those who had previously co-operated and sometimes open hostility towards the two new teams, thought ill-prepared at required levels. Such attitudes were reflected in imbalanced patterns of site visits and marked discrepancies in working conditions, disadvantaging vulnerable team members. Differing academic cultures caused transcontinental friction in styles of research, technological sophistication, responses to electronic communications and commentary on draft reports. A predilection for English angered non-fluent speakers, since all the Anglophones knew Spanish. An examination of publications reveals half to have been by single authors, mostly team leaders, mostly European. Very limited inter-team and interdisciplinary work appears, seemingly associated with the lack of time and money to build alliances and plan co-operatively. Anger was palpable as junior Andean researchers (mostly women) told of acting as tour guides for uninterested European undergraduates and contributing to the glory of established European scholars, without equivalent opportunity or esteem for their own research. The neo-colonialist suggestion that Europeans should coordinate the post-project publications left transatlantic colleagues speechless.

Reaching the poor
No informants mentioned how researcher presence affected local economies, through material and knowledge transfers. European postgraduates prioritised theses. Their Andean peers were demoralised at the lack of commitment to improving the well-being of the people who had given essential support, in communities, local universities and government offices and at the inattention to feed back findings. Although those more senior were acculturated to this systemic neglect, one used his
team’s observations as the basis of a nationally distributed secondary school text book.

PARTNERSHIP REVISITED

Lennart Wohlgemuth, Gothenburg University
Email: lennart.wohlgemuth@bredband.net

Keywords
Partnerships, Fads, Sweden

Summary
‘Partnership’ has been used for all kinds of new reforms pulling in many different directions. This article revisits the notion of partnership and argues that it is not the label itself but what you put into it that matters.

Fads come and go in the sphere of development cooperation as in all areas of societal behavior. Many of the fads relate to the nature of the aid relationship. This question is, according to studies and aid research undertaken during the past decades, central to achieving sustainable and effective development in the recipient countries (Carlsson, 2000). Aid without ownership is never going to be sustainable.

In the mid-1990s it was felt that the Swedish development cooperation had come to the end of the road and that there was time for a thorough re-evaluation of the entire basis of development cooperation. One of the major questions that had to be revisited was just the question of this aid relationship. The Nordic Africa Institute of which I was at that time the Director was requested to engage in research and dissemination in the form of a number of seminars with researchers and practitioners, mainly from Africa. The work was started with a seminar “Domination or Dialogue (Havnevik 1996) and followed by two more (Kifle, 1997 and Kayizzi-Mugerwa, 1998). The work fed into a Government working group report (MFA, 1997) which in turn led to a Government white paper on a Swedish Africa policy (MFA 1997/98).

Thus after serious consultations and contemplation a sustainable relationship between countries in the North (Sweden) and the South (Africa) - not only with regard to aid but an overall relationship - was carefully defined and given the label “partnership”. The relationship was seen both from a qualitative and a methodological aspect and is in detail described in my earlier article with NORRAG News 28 2001. It concerns both major geopolitical questions as well as the behavior in the day-to-day relationship when it comes to bilateral affairs. As regards the latter some very concrete proposals were made, some of them self-evident but so difficult to implement in practice, namely that all agreements between the parties in the north and the South should always be proceeded by a real negotiation where both parties give and take and one does not dictate to the other.
Thus the message was “Dialogue and not domination”. It also emphasizes that you cannot engage in partnership without sharing values; thereby limiting the countries with whom you engage. It was my view at that time that the implementation of this kind of partnership was a prerequisite for a continuation of aid in the future.

As with most good ideas, the label partnership was high-jacked by the actors in development cooperation and given many different meanings and contents. This however does not in any way belittle the importance of the suggested reforms in the Swedish Africa Policy of 1998. On the contrary. Today ten years later the issue is again high on the agenda based on the same underlying analysis and experiences. This time under new labels. The August 2008 meeting in Accra highlights the continuous discussion worldwide on the issue of ownership and partnership based on the Paris Declaration of 2005. The question of respecting the receiving partner in an aid relationship becomes perhaps even more important at a time with new actors on the scene (China, India, Russia and Brazil) with different attitudes towards the relationship with the poorer countries in the Developing World.

It is true that international tends and fads come and go. A cynic would stress this fact and see partnership of the Swedish model of 1998 or the Paris Declaration as another of these fads, which soon will have been left behind for new, and more brilliant, ideas. And this is something I have confirmed in my research. There is clear evidence that the issue of ownership in one form and another comes back cyclically again and again. But a development optimist would recommend taking advantage of the present fad and making the most of it. Many countries particularly in Asia have in the past benefited from such a proactive policy, by taking advantage of what is at that particular time possible. It is my sincere contention that the new aid architecture is an opportunity to grasp in order to start a process of putting the Africans themselves in the driver’s seat fully in charge of the controls of their own destiny. However further reform of the aid system is no doubt necessary. Although the label partnership has been used for all kinds of new reforms pulling in many different directions, the Swedish definitions of 1998 is well worth keeping in mind also in the reforms which will follow the Paris Declaration. It is not the label itself but what you put into it that matters.

References


Pertinent questions and sound methodologies are essential for quality research, as are quality partnerships. By what criteria do we select partners and how do we build meaningful partnerships that add value to our research efforts? And that contribute to improving the overall landscape for the development and use of research? We would like to propose several areas of concern for partnership development and management that many of us deal with on a daily basis and that might seem obvious but nonetheless merit repetition as we still do not integrate them fully into our work. Drawing on personal experience in a research network, this essay invites reflections from others in grappling with questions related to the development of quality partnerships for quality research.

We try to present here perspectives of research units, networks and institutions, including university-based ones, particularly in West and Central African contexts.

**Articulate where you’re going**
It is dangerous to enter into partnership when your institution does not have a clear vision of what it is trying to accomplish and how, articulated in a multi-year strategic action plan. Projecting the kind of world we envision is sometimes more useful than starting with a set of problems we hope to resolve. Effective institutional leadership and an action plan based on empirical evidence and developed with wide participation are essential ingredients for driving a research agenda.

**Map your institution’s current and desired partnership configuration**
To be strategic about partnership development, it can be advantageous to visualize an institution’s current and desired partnership situation. This can be done on a set of concentric circles called a “Partner map” (see Figure 1 below) that shows where different partners are currently. Those that are closest to the heart of the institution’s operations should be listed in the inner circle. Those important to the institution yet not intimately involved in determining strategic directions and in decision making should be listed in the second circle and those partners that are more peripheral in the outer circle. Partners not
involved with the institution but which should be involved should be listed “off” the map. Through this exercise we might realize that key stakeholders who should be in the inner circle are in the second circle and that donors who should be in the second circle are too close to the heart of everyday work. If the institutions’ governing bodies are in the peripheral circle, this would indicate institutional problems. So the next step, after this diagnosis, is to draw arrows indicating our “desired” partner map. Who “off” the map would we like to move into the peripheral circle or the second circle? Indicate the desired move with an arrow. We can subsequently develop strategies to make the moves possible. Visualizing the desired partner configuration is a first step to making it happen.

Figure 1: Partner map template, for visualizing current and desired institutional situation

Put in place a team responsible for partnership development and resource mobilization

Partnership development is a team responsibility. Create a team with a clear mandate and the opportunity to meet or discuss monthly, in person or virtually via technologies. Document lessons as you go and share them within the institution so as to develop an entrepreneurial culture of quality partnership development and management. Be wary of outside consultants. Try as much as possible to promote partnership development and management competencies within the organization. If outside consultants are used, ensure that there will be a veritable contribution accompanied by internal appropriation of their work.

Create opportunities to meet with targeted partners

Conferences provide opportunities to meet with targeted partners, as does inviting them to events your institution organizes. After an event, or piggybacking on an event organized by a partner, consider organizing a round table to present your institution’s strategic action plan. And be sure to follow up with institutions that expressed preliminary interest. Visits to partners you are most interested in attracting may be necessary. But go prepared, having researched the targeted partner’s areas of interest and specific approaches and prepared digestible documentation on your institution’s achievements. Partners will also inform themselves about your institution via internet, so make sure your web site is up to date.
Use concept notes and specific sums
Full blown proposals may sometimes be required when responding to calls for proposals, however letters of intent and concept notes are also useful in resource mobilization. Why invest many hours to develop a full blown proposal if we are not at least 60% sure that a partner will finance the project? Use a two-page concept note to initiate conversation with a partner and to obtain initial feedback that will inform and guide your next steps. And be sure to indicate the range of funds required for the proposed activity. On the other hand, if a partner responded negatively to a full blown proposal, adapt and submit it to another partner. And remember that even a negative response may also be a stepping stone toward a favorable one on another project if that partner is important for your institution.

Develop negotiation skills and document what each partner brings to a collaborative initiative
The quality of institutional relationships can be improved through frank communication and regular evaluation. This requires discussing and documenting from the outset the philosophical basis for the partnership as well as what each partner will bring to the table in terms of resources but also what each partner hopes to gain. This last aspect is often neglected but when made explicit can promote more mutual respect and transparency. Relations of power sometimes keep us from negotiating for the benefit of our institutions, yet it is just such negotiation that can contribute to changing the balance of power and constructing relationships of mutual learning. Sometimes we acquiesce too quickly when we have a responsibility to educate our financial and technical partners about our real challenges and aspirations.

Ensure strong governance structures and sharing of institutional reports
We need to inspire confidence among our partners by keeping them informed of meetings and major decisions of governance structures. The institution’s annual report with clear financial reporting in relation to the strategic action plan as well as by project and partner should be on file with pertinent national authorities and shared with each partner. But sharing the report is not sufficient. To ensure that major partners actually read it, consider soliciting feedback by email or phone or in person. This is an opportunity for letting your partners see how their contributions fit into the overall development of your institution and make your partner more committed not just to ensuring that specific project objectives are met but also that they contribute to achieving the vision articulated in your strategic action plan.

Balance short term and long term commitments
Every partnership has a cost and we need to ensure that the efforts we put into developing and maintaining the partnership merit what the institution obtains in return. Multi-year partnerships that allow us to deepen expertise and contributions in specific areas are most often preferable to shorter term contracts with high administrative costs. However, there may be specific reasons for accepting shorter term contracts, for example to get to know a new partner, to launch into and learn a new area of work, or to complement resources from another partner in an ongoing area of concern.

Conclusion
Partnerships, ill chosen and badly managed, can promote dependency and destroy rather than develop. Reflection, planning and teamwork can help us develop and deepen partnerships that serve the medium and long term aspirations of our organization and begin to improve the landscape in which we conduct research in West and Central Africa.

Resources
Resources on strategic partnership development and resource mobilization are available from the IDRC Partnership and Business Development Division (PBDD) at www.idrc.ca/en/ev-96648-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html.


Further comments and discussion are welcome via Nicole Généreux, IDRC Partnership Officer, at ngenereux@idrc.org.sn, phone: 221 33 864 0000, fax 221 33 825 3255.

EFFECTIVE RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Jon-Andri Lys, KFPE, the Commission for Research Partnership with Developing Countries, Bern & Marcel Tanner, Director of the Swiss Tropical Institute, Basel, & KFPE

Email: kfpe@scnat.ch

Keywords
Research partnerships

Summary
Successful partnerships are based on mutual interests and a shared vision and not on dependencies and aid-driven concepts. The strength lies in clearly identified roles and responsibilities in order to live the process of mutual learning for change harmoniously, with equitably shared risks and benefits.

Genuine research partnerships are effective if they are based on mutual interest and priority setting, trust, sharing of responsibilities, and a two-way learning process – these are pre-requisites for success. They provide various forms of added value, compared to non-collaborative research, if carried out in a balanced way (RAWOO 2001 & KFPE 2006). These include mutual learning and training opportunities, mutual cultural exchange, and complementarities of expertise. In addition, research partnerships are considered a «door opener» whose primary comparative advantages include (KFPE 2006):
• Increased visibility and attractiveness, particularly for local actors
• Better access to new fields of research
• Reduced scientific isolation, including easier access to international scientific outreach, e.g. in peer-reviewed journals, and easier acquisition of international funding
• Easier access to communities and policymakers
• Better opportunities to give voice to delicate issues, in particular through external (independent) partners.

In reality, research partnerships still have a series of hurdles to overcome, particularly with regard to the problem of asymmetries – the lack of balance between Northern and Southern partners (RAWOO 2001, KFPE 2006, Bradley 2008). Built-in asymmetries in research partnerships are seen at the level of funding, available capacities, public recognition, and support from own government and local or global networks. Such unequal power relations can make it difficult to build up trust – which in turn impacts on the most important aspect of partnerships, the equitable sharing of roles, responsibilities and benefits.

Effective and equitable research partnerships greatly depend on awareness of the asymmetric situation and on the willingness of partners to achieve a more balanced situation. Experience shows that this is a long-term development. Very often it is possible only after a number of years to have a research partnership that is based on mutual trust and that responds to and takes account of the different and sometimes conflicting expectations and goals of the partners, and also fosters capacity development. This experience contrasts with the fact that funding of research projects is often limited to 2-3 years and the fact that there is a lack of general funding resources for potential partners to explore before the project, which is especially important for collaboration among new partners.

According to Bradley (2008), North-South research and other partnerships are shaped foremost by the structure of the development funding system, and by the pressure and demands of donors for concrete and immediate results in terms of development relevance (Hatton and Schroeder 2007). Southern researchers emphasised in interviews (Bradley 2008) the need for partnerships that engage in more independent and theoretically demanding research. This is important for the evolution and independence of strong research institutions in the South. Clearly, research partnerships should not be part of the development framework alone, but need to be based on the scientific and technical cooperation that is in principle guided by ministries of science & technology in the North and South. This is the mayor way forward that guarantees an effective process of mutual learning for change without a great risk of being affected by wrong and/or wrongly perceived dependences.

Strong capacities are essential and should be the central aim when working with weaker partners. This requires training, further education, and development of curricula. Yet these elements are frequently possible only after years and, in particular, they also require political engagement at the local level. For example, the National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South – “Research Partnerships for Mitigating Syndromes of
Global Change”, a broad and long-term Swiss research partnership programme begun in 2002, has a very positive impact on capacity strengthening and development, particularly in places where institutional cooperation already existed and could be enhanced through specific projects\(^{16}\). Developing sustainable capacities always entails individual and institutional components and is closely guided by the principle that research sites need to be given the possibility – through partnership – to grow into internationally recognized centres (Withworth et al. 2008\(^{17}\)).

To promote and support the development of genuine research partnerships, the KFPE developed 11 principles (1998\(^{18}\)) and a list of different parameters and corresponding questions, which support equitable approaches (KFPE 2006). These 11 KFPE principles have proven to be – through their wide applications in many contexts – a fundamental prerequisite, not only for allowing mutually beneficial research partnerships, but also generating beneficial, measurable outcomes or impacts as shown by a recent analysis performed by different organisations (KFPE 2006).

North-South research partnerships are challenging. They are no longer a concept but a viable reality, despite the fact that they need time to install and develop as well as to integrate capacity strengthening and local commitment. Moreover, North-South research partnerships have developed distinct features that allow them to integrate effectively into the continuum from basic research and innovation to validation and implementation.

Successful partnerships are based on mutual interest and a shared vision and not on dependencies and aid-driven concepts. They are driven by mutual understanding of need-based, shared objectives. Finally their strength lies in arrangements with clearly identified roles and responsibilities, thus allowing a process of mutual learning for change in an equitable manner.

**References**


\(^{16}\) (http://www.north-south.unibe.ch)


Yasin Janjua, Consultant, Islamabad
Email: yasin.janjua@gmail.com

The quest for bridging the development gap between North and South stirred up the need for continuous dialogue through development collaborations which cover almost all spheres of life. The premise behind this new essential relationship is summed up by Jean-Philippe Thérien (2004) in these words: “the countries of the North, with only 15% of the world’s population, control 80% of global wealth, while nearly three billion people live on less than two dollars a day.” Given the North-South resource gap, collaborations in the form of assistance in development work, research partnerships, advocacy for reform, and policy formulation have been implemented since the 1960s. Under rules of engagement set forth by the funding agencies, the North tries to create symmetry in the collaborative arrangements; however, the relationships are wedged between asymmetries which have not been adequately documented in the literature that emerged recently on this topic. These relationships are governed by the following visible or invisible asymmetries: asymmetry in resources; asymmetry in socio-political acceptance; asymmetry in research tools; asymmetry in knowledge generating systems, and asymmetry in information. Most collaborative arrangements pay attention to these disparities by allocating resources for capacity building through training, sharing of research tools and codified knowledge, necessary software and hardware, opportunities for Southern partners to publish in collaboration with Northern partners, and deployment of effective communication strategies. While there is a general consensus among Northern partners, along with socio-political backing from their communities, that these partnerships are beneficial for bridging development gaps between development poles, yet in some Southern countries these partnerships are viewed with suspicion by the governments and society at large. Whether these qualms are resolved overtime largely depends on two factors: a) if the outcomes of the partnership help bridge or worsen the development gap; and b) if the communication strategies are fully deployed to communicate outcomes in the South or not.

In its worst form, asymmetry of information undermines the collaborative relationship in many ways which has not been documented. The theory of information asymmetries is fully applicable to North-South collaborative research relationships. Before, understanding the nature of information asymmetries one must understand the nature of relationships and the environments in which these are worked out. Research partnerships have recently emerged as a form of requirement rather than a necessity. In order to fulfil this requirement the North has to find suitable partners in the South and vice versa. While utmost care is taken in selecting partners, the distribution of information between Northern and Southern partners is asymmetric which subsequently gives rise to adverse selection and a possible moral hazard ensues. In case of research partnerships, in an ideal setting, the North enters the relationship with an altruistic motive to help the South in filling research gaps for policy making with an ultimate objective of bridging the North-South divide. There is also a desire to gain insight into social, economic, political, moral, as well as ethnocentric and anthropological relationships that weave and govern the

19 See Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (2002)
South’s behaviour and its outcomes. The analysis of these outcomes is not only limited to the decision making processes but also covers their wider influence on ways in which South acquires knowledge, lives, acts, produces, and spends. It also helps them to get access to geographic areas for conducting research where North cannot so easily reach. The latter on the other hand enters the relationship with the intent to; bridge its resource gap; learn from the North’s experiences; benefit from large scale communication and publication opportunities; gain access to capacity building opportunities; and of course to build its own profile. Sometimes, these altruistic motives are overcome by human passions and the outcomes of the partnership are found to be less than ideal.

The Northern partners receive their funding from their government’s bilateral donor agency or a multilateral organization. Recently, the funding agencies pledged to increase coordination among them for aid effectiveness under the Paris declaration; however, similar to information asymmetries between North–South, an information asymmetry exists among the funding agencies in the North as well. At times, one agency may try to acquire a prominent place among its peers. If it decides to bid for a top funding slot in a developing country and increase its aid commitment. This triggers adverse selection and a possible moral hazard in the form of an undue competition among Northern funding agencies who vie for more leverage in policy influence in a developing country. This may not only undermine the spirit of the Paris declaration but also the quality of input. As funding agencies compete with each other they may select the wrong partner in the South under the influence of information asymmetries. It must be noted that due to lack of capacity there are very few agents in South who are capable of delivering in a partnership while crooks are popping up all the time (the reverse may also be true; however, here the discussion is limited to Southern partner). Once adverse selection of an agent occurs, the moral hazard can start. If the Southern partner does not fully institutionalize the terms and conditions of the partnerships, the arrangement and its purpose fail which is not in the interest of either party. This deficiency in the arrangement emerges from information asymmetries which are not realized at the time of initiating a partnership. Some funding agencies therefore consider the quality of partnership rather than its size or the amount of funding involved.

The NGOs in South were created due to the fact that government did not deliver; hence, civil society stepped in to fill the gap. However, realizing the size of foreign funding involved and lucrative terms and conditions of foreign travel and training, many NGOs have been created by the government or by ex-bureaucrats. Hence, the culture of red tape, suppression of voice and accountability, and lack of transparency prevail even in those NGOs which were supposed to support these ideals. In some instances, labour laws and individual rights have been violated. For example, the donor agency evaluations have revealed that several major NGOs in Pakistan repeatedly failed on gender mainstreaming. Therefore, some funding agencies have made it binding on the Southern partner to provide health insurance, maternity and paternity leaves, gender mainstreaming, and opportunities for capacity building to their employees. It is also possible that the institution in South selected for the partnership did have the ability to deliver and was already in a North–South collaborative arrangement. It did not have the capacity to undertake a new partnership and subsequently deliver the results. In case other Northern
agencies, under the influence of information asymmetries, also open up their wallets for the same Southern institution without realizing its capacity, the new partnership may fail. It is worthwhile to point out the inability of Southern NGOs rapidly to expand in contrast to the public sector which on the other hand operates on a very large scale. The inability of NGOs to expand emanates from the fact that most of them are personality driven while the government is not. In the past when trainings and capacity building were done in public institutions the government was able to retain its staff up to a certain period of time. However, in case of collaborative partnerships in the private sector the personnel either do not return after training in foreign universities or head off for better opportunities in multilateral organizations. Lack of staff retaining mechanism and policies in NGOs is also a primary factor in this respect. Therefore, capacity building is not achieved in the real sense and a contradiction remains. It is worthwhile to note that the high level corruption which was hallmark of most public sector organizations has crept into not-for-profit NGOs as well. Most Southern NGOs thrive on foreign funding. Neither do they have their own resources nor do they receive funding from their own governments or private philanthropy at home. In order to build a sound financial backbone they might resort to over-invoicing, false expenditure reports, and wrong exchange rates for budgeting. Unfortunately, the funds are channelled away from the project which is of course not in the interest of the principal partner. This is another form of moral hazard against which there are no checks if the Northern partner does not conduct a regular audit. Usually, this happens if Northern partners have a limitation to conduct an audit in another country. As donors coordinate among themselves while funding the public sector, they should also adopt a similar strategy for the NGOs. The funding agencies must require full financial audit of all NGO projects in their partner institutions.

Bibliography:


0-0-0-0-0

TRIANGULAR AFRICA-ASIA UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS VIA JAPAN

Norihiro Kuroda and Nobuhide Sawamura, CICE, Hiroshima University
Emails: kuroda@hiroshima-u.ac.jp; nsawamur@hiroshima-u.ac.jp
Keywords
University Partnership, Japan, Africa, Asia

Summary
This article provides a case study of a university partnership approach, the Africa-Asia University Dialogue for Basic Education Development, which appears to have been quite successful.

[Editor's note: see also the article by Fatuma Chege, this issue, which includes discussion on the Africa-Asia University Dialogue for Basic Education Development]

The Africa-Asia University Dialogue for Basic Education Development (A-A Dialogue) project is a joint research endeavor by African and Asian universities to contribute to achieving the international commitment to EFA. This project was implemented between 2004 and 2007 in cooperation with UNESCO, UNU and JICA with the Center for the Study of International Cooperation in Education (CICE), Hiroshima University functioning as the secretariat. As to the activities organized under this project, there were three components: (1) Study mission to Asia for African university-based education experts with officials from the central education administration; (2) national-level research in African countries; and, (3) Reflective dialogue meetings.

This project was based on the critical view about universities that while international educational cooperation has long been focused on basic education, universities, particularly those in Africa, seem to have had a limited say in the development of the education sector in general and basic education in particular. The basic idea of the project therefore was that by being the apex of research and knowledge, universities should play a crucial role in influencing change and development of basic education through identifying the really important issues in EFA and researching them, thus becoming able to suggest possible solutions.

This project also reflected the philosophy of NEPAD, which emphasizes a more self-reliant approach and effort by and for African countries. Making self-help efforts is also widely embedded in Japanese culture. In the context of this project, the self-reliant approach means on the one hand, the project was expected to provide useful research results so that African countries can take a self-reliant approach to tackle challenges in education, while on the other hand it was intended that African universities would take initiative in designing and implementing their research, as well as in analyzing and reporting the results. In other words, research themes should be identified by the local researchers of the country where educational challenges exist, and the research itself should be conducted by them. Unlike many cases that have occurred with African universities, this is neither research commissioned by international organizations or aid donors nor is it research assistance for Northern researchers.
Another important feature of this project is dialogue between African and Asian universities. This was meant to promote experience-sharing and peer-learning between them. It was expected that Asian experiences in basic education development and the role played by universities in it might be useful for Africa particularly in terms of a self-reliant approach.

A number of papers have also been produced by African, Asian and Japanese collaborative teams. Many of the research topics dealt with quality of education. Nevertheless there are several things which we should take into consideration for further improvement and development. Some of our reflections and comments on the project implementation include: (1) relatively low involvement of Japanese/Asian universities in doing research in Africa; (2) funding mechanism in supporting individual research, and (3) setting common research topics and doing comparative studies.

We do hope that the research findings reflect the real issues and challenges that basic education in Africa is faced with. The collaborative research we are carrying out will be an initial attempt towards more positive contribution by African universities towards basic education development. Building this triangular partnership is not straightforward; indeed it is very challenging for Japan’s international cooperation. But on the basis of the four-year project implementation, we are now making progress towards the second phase starting in 2009.

0-0-0-0-0

THE OPPORTUNITY COSTS OF PARTNERSHIPS

Email: roycarrhill@yahoo.com

Keywords
Research Partners, North, South

Summary
This article asks how the pressure on researchers in the North to become involved in the process of partnership with researchers in the South fits with the other systems of assessing research and with the financial pressures from their institutions on researchers in both North and South to take on consultancies.

Partly through the Paris Declaration, partly as a result of more robust ‘clients’/interlocuteurs, and partly through the adoption of SWAPs/General Budget Support, the term ‘development partner’ has become the only politically correct term to use in development discourse, when referring to the other side of the table. Never mind the asymmetry and the often surface appearance of partnership (Carr-Hill, 2004); we are all partners now, never more fittingly displayed than in the global economic collapse.
Like many other fashionable terms, the term begins to be adopted in many other contexts. So we now have research partnerships where a researcher in the North is twinned - or has to be twinned in order to get a grant - with a researcher in the South. It all sounds very laudable but we all know that developing and maintaining a successful collaboration takes effort and time; so there are questions to be asked: how does the pressure on researchers in the North to become involved in the process of partnership with researchers in the South fit with the other systems of assessing research and with the financial pressures from their institutions on researchers in both North and South to take on consultancy?

**Research Assessment in the North**

In the North, in several countries, there are now formalised systems of measuring research effort and research success. The UK version is the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) with a premium on publishing academic articles in the ‘best’ journals rather than books or applied research monographs etc., but there are similar systems in many other countries in the North. Like all performance indicator systems, this encourages a myopic concentration (Carr-Hill et al, 1999) on the thing that is being measured (articles in the best journals) rather than necessarily a real contribution to knowledge and definitely not making the effort to collaborate with and sometime mentor ‘partners’ in the South. This may appear to be a concern limited to ‘development’ researchers (probably should be called ‘partnership researchers’ these days), but one should remember that many research grant schemes within the UK set a premium on stakeholder involvement etc. which can be equally time-consuming.

But suppose this partner dimension were to be taken seriously by the assessment authorities. Apart from the obvious difficulties of assessing the quality of the partnerships, the micro-managing required to monitor the hundreds and thousands of partnerships (and levels of stakeholder involvement within them) would be horrendous. Yet – in our measured and monitored society - this is the implication; and, of course, individual performance reviews often include an element of assessing the extent of a person’s networking.

**Research Partnership or Consultancies in the South**

In the South, where there are very few such formalised systems for assessing research effort and success, apart sometimes from demonstrating that the PhD has led to a publication, the conundrum is rather different. Collaboration with a Northern ‘partner’ on a research project may mean that one’s name gets included on a publication but all too often, the Southern researcher will find themselves buried in the ‘et. al.’ with very small career value. Instead, many researchers in the South have turned to the consultancy game, partly because of the pressure to earn money because university salaries are usually low, partly because they are equally or more likely to be recognised and have policy influence through a project with, for example, the World Bank or a major donor than through research (with or without a Northern partner).

The obvious consequence is the difficulty Northern researchers will face in identifying a willing – essentially unpaid - partner in the South. But, by an ironic twist, this situation
has led, in some cases, to stronger partnerships developing within the South because, faced with the competition for consultancy contracts from each other and from consultants based in the North, individual consultants in developing countries have effectively cartelised themselves into national associations or partnerships in order to maintain a reasonably high fee rate. So, partnerships can pay off!

**References**


0-0-0-0-0-0-0
KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT VIA AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS?

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: A WEST AFRICAN FAILURE

Jean-Pierre Jacob, IHEID, Geneva
Keywords

Summary
This article highlights why one North-South research partnership, the CLAIMS programme (Changes in Land Access, Institutions and Markets) in West Africa, proved to be a failure.

The CLAIMS programme (Changes in Land Access, Institutions and Markets in West Africa) was financed by the European Union (Directorate general for Research) for three years (2002-2005), with complementary contributions from the DFID and the AFD.

The project involved four West African countries and mobilised four Northern and four Southern institutions. The researchers from the Northern as well as the Southern institutions were all senior, some of whom had over twenty years of research experience. The consortium was managed by an European organisation. Each institution was allocated equal funds (approximately 130,000 Euros), with emphasis on different areas (more personnel costs in Europe, more funds for publications and workshops in the South).

Throughout the research, the representation of the Southern partners was insufficient and the dialogue with them very difficult. The final workshop of the research project, which took place in Ouagadougou at the beginning of 2005, was a failure. Two of the four Southern institutions were not present and did not deliver any results. One of the institutions that participated did not present any report. They explained that all their data were stored on the USB stick of a senior researcher that happened not to be there at the time. The final report presenting results was written by the Northern researchers only.

One can give two principal explanations for this disappointing situation:

- the failure of the project as a system of constraint over collective action. The Directorate General for Research of the European Union contracts with each partner and leaves the research coordination with no power over the production of the researchers.

- the working environment and practices of the African researchers, which we will attempt to describe in a more detailed manner below.

This environment is characterised by four phenomena:

- a low-level of support for research on the part of national institutions.

- a teaching overload linked to a massive increase in the number of students, an effect of the democratisation of education in West African nations. There is now
commonly an average of 2000 students beginning sociology at a given West African university, while the means remain what they were ten years ago, when the students were ten times less.

- a shortage of capacities. The brightest scholars gravitate towards expertise or politics, where opportunities are hard to resist due to the low wages earned in public institutions. These activities overwhelmingly dominate the researchers’ time and energy resources.

- a huge number of external projects in search of national partners each year. The machine is well oiled now, and everyone knows that no project can be completed and expect funding if it doesn’t show some kind of alliance with a Southern institution or at least with some Southern researchers. The Northern promoters scramble to choose the most promising persons, always the same “happy few” in countries that don’t provide many advanced scholars in a given field. At this stage, nobody makes sure that these scholars are really going to be available once the job starts. The decision concerning the funding is still far away and no one feels really engaged when the projects are sent.

It is generally when the dead line closes in, as the CLAIMS experiment shows, that the Northern partners realise that the Southern counterparts are not going to contribute greatly to the actual project’s production of knowledge. Their priorities are obviously elsewhere, imposed by the local socio-political environment, their survival strategies and the completion of former engagements. The idealized representation of black and white researchers working alongside to increase the pool of common knowledge once again fails to become a reality. This is a situation that arises regularly because there are no institutional incentives to reflect on the inequality of the scholars’ positions.

0-0-0-0-0

HIGHER EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING: 25 YEARS OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION LINKS PROGRAMME

David Stephens, University of Brighton
Email: d.stephens@brighton.ac.uk

Keywords
Partnership, British Council, Higher Education Links Programme, HEL

Summary

---

In 2006 the British Council’s Higher Education Links Programme (HEL) celebrated its 25\textsuperscript{th} anniversary. This article looks at higher education partnership over the past quarter of a century and identifies five lessons that we should learn.

In 2006 the British Council’s Higher Education Links Programme (HEL) celebrated its 25\textsuperscript{th} anniversary. To mark this event it seemed appropriate to produce a book that critically examined the experience of academics and researchers involved in these and other links.

A particular aim of the book was to address the theme of capacity building, through a series of chapters focusing upon different issues and contexts. Some but not all illustrative material drew upon the British Council Higher Education Links archive of case studies. The contributors for each chapter had worked in a particular field (e.g. Education, Human Rights, Conserving the Natural Environment) and have had extensive experience of one or more links.

A little background on the nature of the Links Programme:

In an average year e.g. 2003-04, 384 links were supported in 49 countries. Over 15,000 people were trained or attended dissemination workshops and 500+ modules and courses were developed at overseas higher education institutions. In that year a total of around 1,700 visits took place, facilitating professional and practical skills development as well as enhancing mutual understanding.

These link arrangements were supported, for an average of 3 years, covered a wide range of activities: the up-skilling of staff, the development of new courses, the publication of research or teaching publications, and the organisation of workshops or seminars. The distribution of Link projects was weighted towards partner countries with more HE capacity (and higher per capita income) than is Department for International Development’s (DFID) budget generally. This partnership scheme cost the UK an estimated £10m plus per year. DFID’s £3m per year budget met only a proportion of the costs however. Other costs were met by UK and partner HEIs and the British Council.

Standing back and looking at the landscape of co-operation and partnership over the past quarter of a century, five lessons can be identified:

1. Higher Education Partnerships and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
As with much UN rhetoric, statements dealing with the MDGs fall short in terms of detailed strategic directions Higher Education partnerships should take if the MDGs are to be achieved. It is clear, too, that by focussing upon the achievement of the MDGs, Higher Education institutions will lose much of their autonomy to critique such a focus or to suggest other more nuanced priorities. For example, the MDGs focus much more upon access to schooling rather than issues of quality, with little recognition of the harmful effects of the imposition of Western forms of schooling upon Southern communities.
Equally the MDGs say little about the impact of globalisation and privatisation upon the control and delivery of education and health services.

2. Higher Education Partnerships and the furtherance of Democracy
The 1998 UNESCO Higher Education Conference noted the important role Higher Education institutions play in preserving their critical functions in the interests of democracy. Many of the Link programmes reviewed here call for Links to promote good governance and human rights; they expose the tension that exists between the values that lie behind many co-operation programmes and the less than democratic contexts in which Links often have to work.

3. Gender Mainstreaming and Higher Education Partnerships
At issue is the extent to which Link activities, from design through to evaluation, mainstream gender. In terms of Link projects with Southern partners this means that everything from the composition of Link management committees through to Link priorities and activities on the ground. One way forward would be to insist that before a link is approved both Higher Education partners provide evidence that their respective institution has taken steps to address issues of patriarchy within their respective college or university. Easier said than done.

4. Resourcing and sustaining Link Partnerships
All the contributors to this volume provide evidence of the ingenious and creative ways in which funds to support link activities have been acquired and sustained. The increasing role of private capital and the globalisation of the market-place, particularly of higher education opportunities raise questions about the positioning of new Links and Partnerships. Though there is always a case for targeting partnership programmes upon Southern partners (DfID’s 25 focus-countries for example), serious consideration needs to be given to the inequalities in terms of resources that are brought to the Links.

Another question concerns the sustainability of Link activity once the HEL or other such funding ceases. Will a Southern or Northern partner institution earmark funds from its own budget to continue and sustain what has been started? Sustainability is also a matter of the effect link activities have upon broader questions concerning the ‘carbon footprint’ left behind as a result of academics flying from partner to partner? Is this the time to insist that new Link proposals build in measures such as carbon off-setting and increased use of video-conferencing?

5. Link outcomes and impacts upon Policy
Evidence indicates that Links, particularly the new Development Partnerships in Higher Education (DelPHE) links which are a successor to HEL, be positioned clearly within the framework of DfID’s comprehensive strategy for the host country, with linkages established early on between the host government and its agencies responsible for policy formulation and implementation, on the one hand, and DfID’s and NGO country strategies, on the other. Partnership, in other words needs to be interpreted to embrace both the relationship between Higher Education institutions North and South, and their respective policy masters. Though some would argue that closer links between research
outcomes and policy-making bodies will compromise the independence and autonomy of the Academy, there is compelling evidence from the HEL Links Programme that greater attention could have been given to the production and dissemination of the Links findings and outputs to the policy communities.

A CAUTIONARY TALE OF AN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP IN LATIN AMERICA

Christopher Martin, London Institute of Education
Email: cmartinlemarchant@gmail.com

Keywords
Partnership, Education, Latin America, Mexico, Ford Foundation

Summary
At the beginning of this millennium, following a steady rise in its funds, the Ford Foundation launched two large educational programmes in its overseas offices: the International Fellowship Programme and the Pathways to Higher Education programme. This article reflects on the partnerships created by, and connected to, these programmes.

At the beginning of this millennium, following a steady rise in its funds, the Ford Foundation launched two large educational programmes in its overseas offices. They are still active. One is a postgraduate scholarship programme aimed at underprivileged students, the International Fellowship Programme (IFP); the other complementing it, Pathways to Higher Education (PHE), is directed at making higher education institutions (HEIs) more responsive to the needs of underprivileged students.

This “big bet” as it is termed in the Foundation received very large amounts of funding, the IFP being the largest single programme ever created by the Foundation. The programmes were entrusted to the field offices rather than centrally directed since the Foundation considered that collaborating with local partners gave them the best chance of taking root and becoming sustainable. The PHE offered particularly fruitful opportunities for collaboration since it was directed at institutions rather than individuals receiving a one-off scholarship.

The Mexico and Central America office focussed both programmes at the historically marginalized indigenous population. In Central America it supported a variety of HEIs. But in Mexico, it found an organization that could co-ordinate all its projects – a national association of HEIs, ANUIES. In spite of its representing most of Mexico’s HEIs it is institutionally weak, teetering between the government and the academia, and often caught in the cross fire between the two. It is dependent on the former for its funds but the latter are its associates, its raison d’être. The PHE gave ANUIES the chance to spread its wings a little by being independently funded to run its own pioneer initiative in
educational affirmative action in Mexico. Fortunately the under-ministry of Higher Education (SESIC) was working in the same direction, through its own scholarship program and, along with other government departments, an innovative program of “intercultural” awards and scholarships directed particularly at the indigenous population.

By 2006, a critical mass of educational programmes, including the SESIC, Ford-ANUIES efforts had been formed. This harmonious relationship between the various agencies helped put affirmative action on the national agenda but also drew the attention of the World Bank to the PHE as a potential model for combating educational inefficiency in HE.

A non-refundable loan was allocated to develop and replicate the PHE model in many more HEIs than the Foundation could have managed. All seemed well. However, once the loan was made, inexplicable delays occurred in getting the money out of the treasury via SESIC and through to ANUIES to match Foundation funds that had been assigned to activities needing to be coordinated with those of the Bank. It soon became apparent that old rivalries had surfaced again within and between agencies. In particular, SESIC was keen to retain some Bank funds, earmarked for PHE, to help support some of its own programmes, SESIC considering that as the official recipient of Bank funds, it could exercise its discretion over funds that were after all for HE affirmative action in which SESIC was just as involved as ANUIES-Ford. After a long and tense period of uncertainty, funds were indeed divided up between the SESIC programmes and ANUIES. The Foundation and the Bank, unwilling to enter the fray, stood somewhat frustrated on the sidelines.

At face value, of the particular agendas of the partners, the Mexican national ones would seem to have been the most self-interested and the most distanced from purely educational concerns by political in-fighting. This is often how international funders tend to characterize deviations from their apparently altruistic intentions. This view is deceptive. Donors do not stand outside history and politics as disinterested empowering agencies. The World Bank is championing its educational efficiency cause and the Ford Foundation, its prized cultural asset, affirmative action. The Mexican partners accepted both because they brought funds into the educational system and were compatible with their own aims. Nevertheless, neither the Bank’s nor the Foundation’s agenda were government priorities. Indeed the affirmative action agenda was occasionally seen as a rival to the intercultural approach the Mexican administration was taking at the time. Looked at closely, the Mexican partners were no more self-interested than the international ones. ANUIES was fighting to retain leadership of an external programme that it had taken to its heart, and SESIC was struggling to give coherence to the most enlightened policy of educational inclusion ever seen in Mexico and an example to the rest of the continent.

The winner in the end was Mexican higher education that benefited from the coming together of various forces to promote the neglected area of equal opportunity. This partnership created a momentum that eventually transcended particular interests and institutional agendas.
PARTNERSHIPS IN DFID’S EDUCATION RESEARCH CONSORTIA

David Levesque, DFID, London
Email: D-Levesque@dfid.gov.uk

Keywords
Partnering, DFID, RPCs, Education Research Consortia

Summary
DFID is funding three education research consortia looking at access, quality and education outcomes. It was a contract requirement that each consortium work with partners from a number of developing counties. This article raises some partnership issues connected to these consortia.

Partnership, what a wonderfully elastic concept, with expected strands of equality and shared ownership and threads of equal access to money, power and recognition! In practice of course there are all kinds of development partnerships. I have previously used examples of a cricket team, a marriage and two people climbing a mountain on a rope to illustrate relationships between DFID and country partners.

It is all very well saying the other partner is in the driving seat but who holds the map, who puts the petrol in the car, and who pays the driver (are they just the chauffeur?)?

DFID is funding three education research consortia looking at access, quality and education outcomes. It was a contract requirement that each consortium work with partners from a number of developing counties with the aim of capacity building.

This set a framework for the type of partnerships. How far does a contractual capacity building relationship allow for shared ownership and strong research partnerships? To win an international competitive bidding process there was a perception that it was necessary to select the strongest partners rather than ones who may benefit most from capacity development.

Time spent on building capacity can detract from the need to produce high quality internationally recognised research. The quality of the research data collection and reports can vary considerably between countries and institutions, leading to debates on standards and publishing. Issues arise over who controls the money, who undertakes quality assurance and who owns the intellectual property rights.

Research partnerships have flourished under the consortia but relationships between the partners and their understanding of roles and responsibilities has varied amongst
countries, institutions and consortia. Evidence suggests that normative frameworks of ‘best partnership practice’ may not be the best way to proceed. Effective research partnerships tend to evolve over time and are based largely on commitment and relationships between individuals.

CRITICAL REFLECTIONS FROM A PARTNERSHIP IN PROGRESS: THE CASE OF EDQUAL

Angeline M. Barrett, University of Bristol (Angeline.Barrett@bris.ac.uk) With Jolly Rubagiza, Kigali Institute of Education (rubagiza@yahoo.com) and Alphonse Uworwabayeho, Kigali Institute of Education (rwabayeho@yahoo.fr).

Keywords
Research Partnership, DFID RPC, EdQual

Summary
This article examines EdQual - one of three Research Programme Consortia funded by DFID – and highlights some of the issues and challenges thrown up by this model of partnership.

EdQual is one of three Research Programme Consortia funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID). It researches the implementation of education quality in low income countries, with a particular focus on the quality of basic education for disadvantaged learners in sub-Saharan Africa. Whilst it is an example of a North-South collaboration funded from the North to study education in the South, the consortium aimed from its inception to develop project leadership capacity amongst African partners through decentralisation of project design and management to Southern partners and to specifically encourage forms of South-South collaboration. The article will highlight some of the issues and challenges thrown up by this model of partnership.

In September 2008, at the end of the third year of the five year programme, EdQual researchers, members of our advisory group, an administrator and a representative from DFID shared their reflections on EdQual research processes. This article draws primarily on experiences shared in this meeting. The reflections meeting was held in Kigali and so the contributions of team members from Kigali Institute of Education (KIE) are more fully represented then any other partner institute along with those of the director and research coordinator based at the University of Bristol, the lead institution in UK.

Four out of five of EdQual’s core projects are led by a partner in sub-Saharan Africa and involve cross-national comparison with one other African country and in the case of three of the projects with Pakistan and Chile. Each project is supported by two or three UK-based researchers, who have become known as ‘resource people’, indicating their availability to advise on research conceptualisation and design, facilitate training in
research methods and support writing for publication; each project also has an associate partner in South Asia or Latin America. This structure allows for South-South and South-North learning and is dependent on a strong commitment to capacity building. Leading projects means that African partners were responsible for conceptualising and designing projects from the outset, including writing project proposals. It was at this point that the historical legacy of Northern-led projects became apparent as a set of proposal-writing workshops had to be quickly set in motion in order to address weaknesses in the first drafts of proposals. However, these workshops were not just about capacity building for Southern partners. They brought together African researchers immersed in the educational problems and discourses of their particular national contexts, the Director, who held the ‘big picture’ of the overall purpose and framework of a complex international research programme initiated in UK and ‘resource people’ engaged with international academic literature. The challenges of formulating the research cannot be separated from the demands of meeting the knowledge needs of specific countries at the same time as addressing the agenda of the international development community.

Throughout its programme, EdQual has found itself bridging between the horizons of national research and policy interests, donor agendas and academic debates.

Bringing together African researchers in cross-national comparative research projects led by an African institution presented challenges. Direct communication between researchers based in two different African countries often seemed to be difficult to achieve. This partly related to breaking habits of Northern leadership within an overall programme led from the North. It also related to taking researchers outside the national horizons of their research interests. However, logistical challenges also played their part. For example, the vagaries of power supply and mobile networks in both Ghana and Tanzania have necessitated the appointment of a UK resource person as a central contact to facilitate communication and information-sharing.

Capacity building is an affirming word; it signifies that a partnership aspires to create a sustainable legacy of organisations and individuals, empowered to initiate the next generation of research. Capacity building also carries a subtext of current difficulties and inequalities. In a context where public African higher education institutions are under pressure to expand enrolments, participation in a large international research collaboration, especially one that decentralises leadership, stretches institutional capacity even as it seeks to builds it. The lead researchers at Kigali Institute of Education (KIE) juggle teaching over-sized classes of trainee teachers and the coordination of two EdQual projects with their own doctoral studies, sponsored by EdQual as part of its plan to develop the research capacity of partners. Through support and collaboration with co-researchers and supervisors in UK, Chile and South Africa they have acquired skills and learnt much about the design and implementation of research. However, it is strong teamwork and consistent cooperation between colleagues within KIE that have allowed them to meet the multiple demands on their time, experience and skills.

The Research Programme Consortium (RPC) model for financing research does create opportunities for partnerships in which all partners assume leadership roles that are meaningful because they relate to all stages of research from conceptualisation to
dissemination. This is realised through an overarching framework of a programme that is, nonetheless, funded and led from the North. For EdQual, the RPC model has created opportunities for capacity building and re-conceptualising the role of Northern-based researchers within research conducted in the South, from which all partners have benefited.

0-0-0-0-0

SYMMETRY AND ASYMMETRY IN RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS: LESSONS FROM 20 YEARS EXPERIENCE

Berit Olsson, formerly of SAREC, Sida, Stockholm
Email: berit.m.olsson@gmail.com

Keywords
Research partnership, education, Sida, Sweden

Summary
This article examines Swedish Sida support to research partnerships. It notes, among other things that asymmetry is unavoidable in spite of all rhetoric about mutuality. Nonetheless, there is mutual interest, though the nature of this interest is different for the Northern and Southern ‘partners’.

What are research partnerships - how do they work
Cooperation among peers is a sine qua non for research. Researchers refer to earlier findings as a starting point for their own studies and publish internationally as an input into the ongoing scientific dialogue. International peer review is practised in assessing submitted articles and candidates for promotion. Researchers engage in direct cooperation across borders in joint and comparative studies. Do we call such interaction partnerships? I believe not. The partnership concept, which somehow implies a degree of equality, is one which nowadays has become popular in development cooperation and often refers to a relation between those being supported and those supporting. These are basically unequal relations, although some are more unequal than others.

As an actor in Swedish research funding since mid-80s, I have followed a great number of such research partnerships. Like many aid agencies, Sida funds research addressing issues of major importance for development. Front line researchers collaborate for instance in developing a vaccine against malaria or environmental friendly low cost energy. Sooner or later such research requires research links in low or mid income countries and here often asymmetric relations occur. The research leader, who “owns” the grant, is often from a recognised Northern institution. She/he may offer collaboration to a “partner” at an institution in the South. Such partnership modalities remain the norm for many development research funding agencies. Frequently, it is assumed that the project contributes to enhancing research capacity in the partner country. Capacity building,
however, is a secondary ambition to the main goal of addressing defined research issues and themes.

Sida has observed that external cooperation offers certainly may contribute to individual research careers. However, as long as the partner country and institutions have a weak basis for research, their capacity to benefit from such offers remains limited. Instead, the many diverse cooperation offers may add to fragmentation. Aid-funded research tends to be very applied and does not contribute to the build up of basic disciplines and research methods, say in statistics, biology, sociology, etc.

From early 1990s, therefore, Sida, in addition to funding thematic research, has directed its bilateral research cooperation to enhancing the very basis for research. As the primary objective is to enhance the capacity of a national scientific community in low income countries, we have moved from project funding addressing defined issues to supporting institutional conditions for research. Part of the support packages goes to research management and research infrastructure, such as laboratory and library facilities as well as ICT connectivity. A major part goes to research training of academic staff, which involves research cooperation between relatively weak partners in the South and established researchers in the North as supervisors.

The asymmetry is unavoidable in spite of all rhetoric about mutuality. Of course, there is a mutual interest in such relations, mutual but not the same. The Southern institution gets material support in addition to research training of its staff. The PhD candidate may look forward to research opportunities and promotion. The Northern researcher gets access to situated perspectives and data necessary for addressing the research questions and may enjoy the excitement of visiting countries with different conditions. In spite of good intentions on both sides, however, the relation may easily be abused. The partnership may involve risks on both sides; also the risks are mutual, but different.

The Northern partner risks delays resulting from poor communication or other weaknesses, and costs may be less predictable than at home. The Southern partner risks becoming more of an assistant than a partner in research, and risks having limited influence over the research agenda and problem formulation, and risks losing influence over data and property rights, just to mention some risks. The Southern institution as well may risk losing a qualified staff member to the Northern institution.

Swedish research cooperation, over the years, has sought ways of minimising such risks and balancing the asymmetry. We started in 1975 with consulting national research councils for research priorities, then allocating funds and assigning Swedish researchers to engage in collaborative studies. We soon realised that in many cases, there were no qualified scientists as partners and decided to reorient the support towards research training of individuals and groups within the projects.

From early 1990s individual project grants were replaced with support packages aiming at enhancing conditions for research at national universities, seen as the hub for research development in the low income partner country. All along, the research training modality
was “sandwich based”, i.e. the PhD candidate remains a staff member active at the home institution, spending shorter periods with an external supervisor. Thus, conditions at the home institutions gets enhanced, both through investments in facilities and in minimising the brain drain risk.

Another shift was the allocation of funds to the national university. Supporting their selection of and decision on research links became the norm. Swedish, or in some cases South African or other invited resource partners/supervisors will still have the upper hand concerning research methodology etc, but cannot unilaterally decide on research orientation. The principle of allocating the funds to the weaker partner certainly contributes to empowerment in the relation.

Most importantly, the support is negotiated in line with institutional strategies (increasingly also with national strategies) for research development, thus contributing to a planned development. Reporting, auditing etc are also aligned with the local institutional cycle, thus reducing management and transaction costs. During the last few years, we have tried to convince other funding agencies to follow this path, much in line with the generally accepted principles of the Paris Agenda for aid effectiveness. With a degree of frustration however, we find that our major colleagues in research funding still prefer to start with thematic priority setting, leaving capacity development as a secondary ambition. The focus on grand research programmes makes it difficult for researchers in low income countries to become principal investigators, and thus researchers from the funding countries continue to have an upper hand even if funding in principle has become untied.

As long as research on and for development, often guided by agency policy needs, appears to be the main objective rather than capacity for research by and in partner countries, low income countries will have difficulties enhancing the analytical capacity they direly need to manage external relations, including the aid negotiations.

0-0-0-0-0

THE POLITICS OF PARTNERSHIPS: MOVING TARGETS, CHANGING TACTICS

Ad Boeren, Nuffic, The Hague
Email: aboeren@nuffic.nl

Keywords
Partnership, North-South, Netherlands

Summary
This article examines the changing nature of university partnerships between institutes in The Netherlands and those in the South. It notes that the situation in The Netherlands is not unique but signifies an international trend in the divergence of national education interests and efforts to accommodate global capacity needs.
The classic concept of partnership usually refers to shared interests, common understanding and long-term relationship. In a sense it resembles a sort of marriage; the partners complement each other and together they achieve more than by staying alone.

Partnerships exist at all levels of society, individual, family, organization, institution and even state. The principles of engagement are similar for all, but the rule seems to be that the opportunities and conditions for engagement at each level are determined by the next higher levels of society. Individuals tend to be more successful in their marriage if both families and society at large approves and supports the arrangement.

Partnerships between academics and educational institutions in the North and the South are governed by the same principles. Individual academics and researchers may want to start collaborations with international colleagues for exchange of professional knowledge and the conduct of joint research. For this, however, they need funds from their own institutes or external sources, and the approval and academic support from the institutes where they work.

Likewise, academic institutes may be inclined to start partnerships with other international institutes to further their own institutional and academic interests. In this endeavour they are looking for best matches and strategic alliances. However, their strategies and choices are heavily influenced by international trends, like globalization and commoditisation of education, and by national policies of quality improvement of education through internalization and international competitiveness.

The strong internationalisation agendas of the Ministries of Education in Northern countries tends to have a discouraging influence on the collaborations between Northern institutes and institutes in developing countries. Simultaneously, development partners increasingly insist on strict forms of demand-drivenness in the South, and in doing so have created a parallel process of demotivating Northern institutes from forming partnerships with Southern counterparts.

The situation in The Netherlands may serve as an example: less than twenty years ago most universities in The Netherlands were involved in capacity building projects with universities in developing countries because they regarded this to be one of the mandates of the university. The education funding allowed them to use part of the regular budget for this purpose. The bulk of the money was provided by the Minister for Development Cooperation who saw the universities as allies and valuable collaborators in his development policies. These conditions favoured the development of longer term collaborations between Dutch institutes and their partners in developing countries.

Since then the tables have turned drastically. Education funding is now more strictly confined to serve education in The Netherlands, and the role of the Dutch institutes in development cooperation programmes has been drastically revised by the Minister for Development Cooperation.
As reported earlier,\textsuperscript{21} in the new generation of capacity building programmes\textsuperscript{22} funded by the Minister for Development Cooperation, the role of the Dutch universities is restricted to that of provider of services to solve a capacity problem of the client (i.e organization) in a developing country. Partnership is no longer a term being used: collaboration is defined as a professional client-service provider relation.

The recently released internationalisation agenda of the Dutch Minister for Education, Culture and Science\textsuperscript{23} defines four strategic activities: 1) increasing the mobility of Dutch students, 2) stimulating the international orientation of Dutch universities, 3) increasing the so called brain circulation, and 4) improving the working and living conditions for foreign academics and researchers in the Netherlands. These activities are meant to achieve one thing: quality improvement and increased international competitiveness of the Dutch education system. Despite the opportunities which developing countries offer to Dutch institutes in terms of increasing mobility, international orientation and brain circulation, collaboration with (institutes in) developing countries is not mentioned once in this document.

The situation in The Netherlands is not unique but signifies an international trend in the divergence of national education interests and efforts to accommodate global capacity needs.

The evolution, or devolution, of international cooperation in higher education with developing countries in The Netherlands demonstrates that partnerships as we used to know them are dependent on supporting schemes and policies from government. Now that the conditions have changed, the partnership model may have to be revised in form as well as meaning.

Fortunately, still a great number of collaborations do take place – also with institutes in developing countries – especially at individual level. These collaborations are sometimes made possible through very creative means. Maybe these collaborations signify an alternative model to the classic partnership arrangement which better suits the current academic, institutional and financial contexts. It would be interesting to look into these arrangements and how they work in practice.

Whatever form of collaboration is adopted, the crux of the matter seems to be that it should avoid short-term and parochial interests and that it be based on more open-minded and long-term visions of international collaborations between all parts of the world. This certainly releases new forms of innovative thinking that are desperately needed to face the vast global problems we are experiencing today.

\textsuperscript{22} The Netherlands Programme for Institutional Strengthening of Post-secondary Education and Training Capacity (NPT) which started in 2002 and will be phased out in 2012 and, the Netherlands Initiative Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education Institutions (NICHE) which will start on 1 January 2009 for a period of nearly four years.
PARTNERSHIP IN RESEARCH PROGRAMMES – A CASE STUDY OF ALBANIAN-SWISS COOPERATION

Blendi Gerdoçi, University of Shkodra and Dieter Zürcher, KEK-CDC Consultants, Bern
Emails: gblendi@yahoo.com and zuercher@kek.ch

Keywords
Partnership, research programmes, Albania, Switzerland

Summary
Using the example of an educational partnership between a university in Switzerland and one in Albania (2005-2007), this article describes the experience of partnership from the Albanian side. It notes that while the success of institutional partnerships depends a lot on personal relationships between individuals, there is scope for such time-limited partnerships to trigger more long term institutional dynamics.

Context
Within the SCOPES programme the Post-Graduate Course on Developing Countries (NADEL/ETH) at the Swiss Federal Institute for Technology (Zurich) entered an institutional partnership with the University of Shkodra, a regional University in Northern Albania. The cooperation lasted from October 2005 until September 2007 and the main aim was to conduct capacity building of lecturers as well as gaining knowledge about the decentralisation process in a previously highly centralised country. The output of this small project consisted of a series of research papers which can be downloaded from the following homepage http://www.cis.ethz.ch/publications/publications. The following represents mainly the view from the partner in Albania. Mr. Blendi Gerdoçi was the responsible research coordinator at the Economic Faculty of the University of Shkodra which offers various Bachelor and Master studies.

View of the partner
In order to overcome the lack of most of the lecturers’ experience in research a training on methodological approaches was conducted and a network consisting of local consultants and representatives of authorities was established in order to function as an Advisory Board for the selection/coaching of the studies. The work programme and thus the partnership faced various challenges right from the beginning: the lecturers of the Economic Faculty had an extremely high teaching load hindering their participation in the project, the salary level was very low (without scope of complementing it from the project), and the family and career obligations of the mostly female lecturers were substantial. Finally, progress was hindered by logistical shortcomings such as drastic electricity cuts during most of the winters, no internet access at the beginning, and difficulties in physically reaching out to the municipalities because of bad infrastructure.
But the greatest challenge and disappointment emerged when the cooperation with some representatives of local government units (LGUs) was extremely difficult and time consuming because of a lot of mistrust and misunderstandings. This resulted in the collection or submission of a lot but often irrelevant or inconsistent data. Despite some very large databases they were not linked with the key question of the studies. The lack of experience of the lecturers in such studies became evident. The performance-based remuneration of the lecturers was founded on the submission and approval of research proposals and papers. Although this was effective to reach the goal it created difficulties for some lectures who wanted be part of the project but could not contribute in time for several reasons. Great care was dedicated from the local coordinator for the process of evaluating those studies that ought to be published. The publication *per se* represented a great stimulus for the lecturers because the majority of them were following their PhD career, where publications represent an important criterion. A huge challenge was then the translation of the papers into English, and the debate whether the quality of the papers (data) was adequate or whether the translation was not up to standards provoked heated debates. The publication process and related efforts to guarantee a certain quality were foreseen but heavily underestimated.

**Concluding remarks**

In a more general framework, the cooperation and exchange of experiences between local research groups and exposing lecturers to Swiss audiences were a good approach with a satisfactory outcome on both sides. A greater amount of meetings, discussions and feedback, as well as a coaching of the research work would have encouraged left-behind groups but would have required higher resources for the local coordinator.

The lecturers grasped well the importance and dimensions of the study after a conference was held. The majority of them still consider participating in this project their best experience which helped solidify their professional profile, as well as the reputation of the institution they represent. Many of them are searching, or applying, to get involved in similar projects by the sheer motivation of the experience they had, but also with the belief that their work can be applied in the decision-making of LGUs.

An open issue is, of course, the sustainability of such a project. With changing positions of key staff the institutional geometry is changing and a lot depends on personal relations. Yet, this case illustrates the institutional dynamics which a time-limited partnership can trigger.

FRAMING RESEARCH BETWEEN AFRICA AND THE UK

Jonathan Harle, The Association of Commonwealth Universities
Email: j.harle@acu.ac.uk
Keywords
Partnership, research, Africa, UK

Summary
Partnerships will continue to be an effective form of research support, but only in so far as they demonstrate an understanding of the wider landscapes of research. Most critically, the priority of UK-Africa partnerships should be to support and enable the reinvigoration of continental networks, if genuine collaboration across African and UK academic communities is envisaged.

This article offers some observations and tentative conclusions from a recent meeting in Nairobi, sponsored by the British Academy and organised jointly with the Association of Commonwealth Universities. Its aim was to examine the challenges of successful research partnerships in the social sciences and humanities. Recognising its own support could only be very small, the Academy was keen to convene a broader debate on the challenges facing African research, in order to understand how it and others could better support its renewal.

Clearly, understanding the partnership process first requires an understanding of the environments within which researchers work. Good research is done in Africa, but much more high quality work could be produced if conditions for doing it were more favourable. That there are too few trained to PhD level, that essential resources and facilities are lacking, and that institutions and their internal structures are weak and unresponsive is well known. These and many other problems besides have hollowed-out departments and dissolved research cultures. Such obstacles to research generally are also obstacles to the very partnerships which hope to improve it.

Symptomatic of this, many African scholars are now academically isolated and face a relative lack of intra-Africa networking, which has a critical effect on their ability to sustain vibrant research programmes. Reinvigorating collaboration within Africa must therefore be a priority if research levels are to be increased and if cultures of rigorous, high quality scholarly enquiry are to be encouraged and supported. Similarly, the weak state of many universities means that very few, outside of South Africa perhaps, have the capacity to undertake a full and varied programme of research across the humanities and social sciences. Turning institutions around will take time, and in the meantime research will only be improved by forging links and networks between institutions, which can harness the talents and experience of a number of researchers within a particular field (eg a department or faculty) or around a particular thematic area (which may be interdisciplinary and inter-departmental), and can also pursue some degree of shared resource development. These two observations – looking from the perspective of both individuals and their research careers and institutions and their research cultures – set the context within which extra-continental partnerships need to be explored.

For Africa-UK collaboration to offer genuine support to African researchers, from postgraduate to senior level, they will need to embed themselves within a landscape and
culture of African academic dialogue. With a good African base, north-south partnerships can be used to plug dynamic networks of African scholars into counterpart communities across other regions. Without such a continental focus north-south partnerships instead risk drawing African academics outwards, rather than encouraging collaboration inwards. Similarly, stronger African networks will offer research environments of greater value to their Northern partners, whose own ability to explore African social and cultural questions will be significantly enhanced. Considered long term solutions, rather than quick fixes, are clearly required.

International support will of course be critical in achieving any programme of renewal, both because public funds within Africa for higher education and research are limited, and because good research depends ever more on international collaboration and the sharing of knowledge and ideas. Partnerships are likely to be a valuable (and popular) mode of delivering this support. In particular they can offer a valuable framework through which essential material and collegial assistance can be provided, and African networking enabled. Many initiatives do this very well already (though many offer only small numbers of awards), and by encouraging mobility and interaction between the UK and Africa have genuinely, if paradoxically, cultivated intra-Africa cooperation.

While collaborations may be funded on a UK-Africa basis for example, they may in practice entail a three- or four-way partnership, where the African membership is relatively greater – bringing a group of African academics to a UK centre, or linking, in the context of a particular programme of research, one UK but several African scholars. Such a funding opportunity, and the UK involvement, may buy time and travel for research which would otherwise prove impossible to get off the ground. It may in turn be a catalyst which enables researchers to translate existing interests into larger projects, or provide a locus for African colleagues to explore new ways of working together, and in doing so to develop continental relationships which outlast the initial project. Where African universities are able to establish their own inter-institutional networks, there may also be a role for UK (or other) universities who seek to establish departmental research links to forge partnerships through existing collaborative programmes.

An important point which is implicit here, but which is nevertheless worth emphasising, is the need to be responsive to what African humanities and social science researchers define as their needs and the ways in which a collaborative project can help to advance these. The practical constraints of some funders (that grants must be disbursed via a UK institution for example) may complicate this; funders can help by ensuring that there is sufficient time and space – and where appropriate access to additional funding – for colleagues to explore the design of a project. A system of research funding is also needed, which across the range of donors and research agencies offers a web of support at multiple levels, such that researchers who secure funding for an exploratory project subsequently have the potential to generate more substantial financial support for a longer-term and deeper programme of research. Too much funding for networking or for putting ideas together is of no advantage if there are limited prospects for taking these early investigations further.
How this might be done, and what partnerships might provide for – research, postgraduate training, and publishing for example – is significantly more complex than this very brief and basic sketch allows for. By no means will it be possible for one partnership scheme to set out to achieve all of this within the confines of its own programme of support, and nor would that be desirable. The aim has been to suggest the wider research landscapes which partnerships need to be cognisant of, and to articulate with, if they are to make an appropriate and effective contribution.

---

### UNVEILING PARTNERSHIPS: POWER RELATIONS IN THE YEMENI EDUCATION SECTOR

Robbert van de Waerdt, University of Amsterdam  
Email: robbertvandewaerdt@gmail.com

**Keywords**  
Partnership, Education, Yemen

**Summary**  
Illustrated by an international development partnership in the Yemeni education sector, this article argues that without a critical analysis of power relations, current conceptualizations of partnerships may be merely an instrument that promotes top-down global governance of education instead of one that includes national and local voices in a true open dialogue that has ownership at its core.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) goals reflect an apparent global consensus to combat poverty in its multiple dimensions. Within these global partnerships the importance of building ownership is identified as key to achieving the goals. Indeed, terms such as ‘partnership’ and ‘ownership’ have gained a great deal of attention in recent years, from governments, from development agencies, and from academics, and have thus become key words in a new era of international development.

Partnerships however are not neutral. They are shaped by power relations, that help to shape the boundaries of partnerships - what is possible within them, and who may enter, with which identities, discourses and interests (Gaventa 2004). At the global level, this becomes apparent through globalization as a multidimensional process that affects economic power, state power and political power. King (2004) for example sets out how the EFA agenda has been narrowed down to Schooling for All and how this agenda has been distributed globally. Here, the promotion of a standardized set of norms, ideas and values that is inherently normative informs and shapes the very nature of states as well as their policies. If education is increasingly globally governed, how then can partnerships promote ownership and self-reliance?
In Yemen, a country that has throughout its history been influenced tremendously by various forms of globalization, a partnership has been set up between the Government of Yemen and development agencies around the national basic education development strategy. To explore the relationship between partnership and ownership, this present study has applied Steven Lukes’ (1974) three-dimensional theory of power for a deeper analysis of power relations in the partnership in the Yemeni education sector. Research for the study was based on three months of fieldwork in Yemen, during which, alongside observation and collection of unobtrusive data, interviews were carried out with a range of state and international stakeholders.

A first step toward increased cooperation and coordination between the Government of Yemen and development agencies was the establishment of a Partnership Declaration. However, although not unimportant, the partnership only seemed to imply coordination among development agencies. The coordination meetings, mainly attended by representatives from development agencies and similarly chaired by a donor coordinator, primarily seemed to be there to avoid duplication of activities, instead of activities being guided by the Yemeni government. In terms of Lukes’ first dimension of power, \textit{decision-making power}, an analysis of concrete observable behaviour (following Béland 2006) suggests that the partnership has not promoted more ownership in the Yemeni education sector.

An analysis of Lukes’ second dimension of power reveals that the partnership seemed to have increased \textit{agenda-setting power} of development agencies. Exemplified by among others a donor retreat, issues identified by an individual or a limited number of development agencies could more easily be prioritized collectively as a result of the partnership. In the same vein, agencies were (physically) closer to the governance level and could consequently influence the agenda more easily. DFID for example seconded a consultant to the Yemeni Ministry of Education who in effect held a key position as education adviser, which could be seen as an institutionalized part of the Yemeni governance system.

Lukes’ third and most important power dimension is \textit{ideological power} or the ability to determine “the rules of the game” (Dale 2005: 131). Firstly, the absolute focus within the partnership is basic education, most notably formal basic schooling. Without underestimating the contribution and value of basic education, the importance of formal basic schooling as fundamental priority seemed to be unquestionably taken for granted. Secondly, a reform agenda was inherent in the partnership that was mostly supported through so-called “capacity building” in the administration, planning and management of education. An example in this regard of institutionalization of external influence in the Yemeni education sector was the technical advice that a German team presented to the formulation and development of the Yemeni Basic Education Development Strategy. Whatever the German input has been, one could wonder what the popular opinion would be if a Yemeni team contributed to the formulation of the German national education strategy. A third example is the use of English as language in the coordination meetings, a language that few people within the Yemeni Government master. Although most
meetings provided for translation and most key documents were bilingual, the use of English as the prime language of communication seemed to be taken for granted, and might be an obstacle for the partnership to become government-led.

An analysis of Lukes’ dimensions of power suggest that the partnership in the Yemeni education sector could be seen as a mechanism that effectively mediates the western-dominated global education and development agenda to the level of the Yemeni education sector. Tying aid directly to specific policies or policy components gives external stakeholders a powerful means of ensuring compliance with international development agendas (Kuder 2005). Partnerships, then, “may imply yet another episode in which the powerful talk to themselves” (Odora Hoppers 1999: 24).

If development agencies truly aim for ownership, they will have to listen to the needs and aspirations of others and come to a dialogue without their minds already made up about what they will fund (King and McGrath 2000). As long as partnerships are shaped by imbalanced power relations, national education systems might be primarily supportive of the global agenda for education. However, as Samoff (2005: 4) holds, learning has no standard model: “Ultimately, “best” is always local.”

Whereas there seemed to be a consensus that ownership is best reached through partnerships, ownership actually appears to be a prerequisite for partnerships. By unveiling power relations in partnerships, alternative conceptualizations could be suggested that take ownership at their core and include other - national, local, alternative - voices. Partnerships should be used as a framework where a true open dialogue is taking place. Indeed, Tikly (2001) argues that indigenous governance structures should be supported, and included in partnerships, if global governance of education is to go hand in hand with local ownership and inclusion of civil society.

References

PARTNERSHIP FOR EMPOWERMENT: YEMENIS AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS UNITED FOR PROGRESS AND CHANGE IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Maaike van Vliet, Embassy of the Netherlands, Sana’a
Email: Maaike-van.Vliet@minbuza.nl

Keywords
Partnership, Empowerment, Yemen, Education

Summary
This article examines different dimensions of partnership within Yemen’s education sector.

Yemen is a very poor country according to any standard, but rich in terms of an old civilization, history and its growing population (22 million, population growth is 2.97%). The enormous challenges that Yemen is facing in the development of the country, and in particularly in the education sector, are daunting. Remember that Yemen was closed from the outside world virtually until the 1960s, when the rule of the Imam was forcefully terminated. After a period of turbulence the country was united: the North and South of Yemen became one republic in 1994. Since then educational development has taken a tremendous step forward. Yemen became one of the first countries to qualify for the Catalytic Fund from the Fast Track Initiative in 2002/03 because of its credible policy and plan for Education. Key development partners who supported Yemen for the last 30 years have been Germany, the UK and the Netherlands together with the World Bank.

The statistics on education do not lie: the literacy rate is 53%. For females this is 40% (NB: this means that one out of three women is literate, and two are illiterate) and for men 77%. Enrolment rate in primary education is 65% for girls and 85% for boys.

In order to reach Education for All and the Millennium Goals, there is no time to waste to reach out to its people, the majority of whom (70%) live in remote mountainous and rural areas with limited sources of livelihood. With dwindling water- and oil reserves coupled
with a fragile balance of power in the country and an influx of refugees from the Horn of Africa (Somalis and Ethiopians) there is a lot to do.

When I came to Yemen in the summer of 2005 I already had my share of working with partnerships, for better for worse, in East African countries, Pakistan and Vietnam, to name a few. In Yemen I had to adjust myself to the fact that we have so few development partners (Yemen, at times, therefore is labeled by some as a “donor orphan”) and that our countries contribute a much lesser share of ODA to education in Yemen than in many other countries in e.g. in Sub-Saharan Africa. As an illustration: the total amount of ODA to the GoY education budget is not more than 7%. I also discovered that the first robust steps towards donor coordination, harmonization and alignment were taken on the bumpy road to an effective partnership that works. The first Partnership Declaration agreed upon dates from 2004 and has been adjusted to current realities; a Joint Annual Review has been initiated by the Ministry of Education and was held for the fourth time in May 2008 in Sana’a, building upon lessons learnt from previous years; the Ministry of Education has developed a Medium Term Result Framework (MTRF) and unified Annual Work Plan for Education with transparency of the contributions of all development partners including semi-government institutions like the Social Fund for Development (SFD), INGOS (Care and Save the Children), the UN agencies (UNICEF and WFP), the bilateral agencies (JICA, DFID, GTZ, KfW, EKN, USAID) and the World Bank.

My question has always been: how can I, as an educationist, best contribute to assist any country, including my own country, in education development, taking into account that education is an universal human right (and therefore a woman’s right)? It is as simple as that and this is at the core of my own personal and professional values in life, having been privileged to grow up in the Netherlands with access to quality and relevant education.

How does this relate to working in Yemen in our Partnership for Education?

First of all, I consider a “partnership a way of working”. Hard work for that matter! It is a means to an end and not an end in itself.

Secondly, “partnerships are here to stay”. For a good reason. We all agreed on the importance of aid harmonization, alignment and aid effectiveness through e.g Paris Declaration, Accra and EU Code of Conduct. In a globalised world it makes a lot of sense to try to work effectively and efficiently with the limited resources at hand (both funding and human resources).

Thirdly, partnerships are a “work in progress”. Partnerships are not a given, a static concept, but it is a dynamic concept that needs a lot of nurturing. It is people who make up partnerships. Obviously power relationships are there, as in all human and contractual relationships. This is nothing new. What matters is how we deal with these power relationships from both sides. To be honest, given the many challenges in my work in education in Yemen I feel often more powerless than powerful. The education system in a
country like Yemen is characterized by an enormous demand for education services, but a poor supply of these services; lack of teachers, especially female teachers; lack of school buildings, quality textbooks and curricula; and the well known issues of slow progress in civil service reform, budgetary reforms and decentralization. The workforce to implement the education reform and to provide the education services is made up of an enormous army of civil servants, often ill educated and ill prepared for the job, senior appointments based more on political affiliations and patronage than on qualifications. This frustrates not only us, as development partners, but also many of our colleagues at the Ministry of Education.

In this situation I commit myself to visit the field on a regular basis, after which I report at the highest level to the minister and his team and to my colleagues in the Development Partnership on what I observe by “looking behind the façade”. In so doing I regard it as our duty to echo the voices of people we meet in the villages and the slums of the cities: the fathers and mothers, the boys and girls and the teachers of the schools we visit. I appreciate that most, if not all, of my colleagues from the development partner community do the same. In so doing we all contribute to a rich and effective policy debate, ongoing at the highest level, with trust and respect for each others’ opinions.

The Ministry of Education, and H.E. the Minister of Education, are very proud of the Partnership and time and again they express, and show, a great sense of ownership. The Partnership on Education is often taken as an example by the Yemenis as a pioneering and effective way of coordination and cooperation among all partners that matter in education, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Civil Service and Local Administration, and, last but not least, the Development Partners.

And that brings me to my last point on Partnerships in Yemen: partnerships can only flourish when there is mutual respect, understanding of each others’ positions, a joint vision and commitment for the future.

0-0-0-0-0

ARE RECENT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES REALLY DOING BETTER?
THE NEW AID ARCHITECTURE FOR VET

Manfred Wallenborn, European Training Foundation, Turin
Email: Manfred.Wallenborn@etf.europa.eu

Keywords
Partnership, VET

Summary
Development policies follow changing paradigms and agendas of politics. This article examines the international cooperation and partnership for vocational education and training (VET).
‘If certain problems are approached in a complicated way, there are finally more solutions developed than problems exist’
(Management Centre, Witten, www.mz-witten.de)

Development policies follow changing paradigms and agendas of politics. The interests of Northern political systems are only on a very abstract level identical with the demands and needs of education and training in the partner countries. Different policies and approaches for development (e.g. the structural adjustment, MDGs, promotion of civil society, corporate social responsibility etc.) are consequences of paradigm shifts and the changing intervention logics of donors (new solutions for longstanding problems).

Since 1990, international cooperation in VET with developing countries has constantly declined in terms of financial investments and technical assistance (bi- and multilateral donor support). New approaches and contents (environment/pollution, energy, avoiding conflicts and crisis etc.) are considered as appropriate answers to the ongoing globalization of economy, transnational conflicts, scarce resources and environmental changes etc. The remaining problems, e.g. what qualifications, skills and competencies are required in stagnant societies with high population growth rates or how to address rapidly changing skills demands on globalized markets had been nearly ignored during 15 years (same neglecty for agriculture/rural development, accused FAO in June 2008).

The overall conclusion drawn was that the complexity of transnational problems in world society should be tackled with more complex approaches of development support and interventions in terms of quality and quantity (SWAP, budget support and mid term expenditure frameworks). This is partly acceptable, but a too simple linear correlation, assuming that human capital development problems can exclusively be solved with new instruments of intervention, instead of supporting more comprehensively the existing VET structures using new functional criteria for socio economic development.

Apart from the politicians, the education and training systems in the partner countries and their system logic mostly don’t like these new types of intervention. The structural imbalances of complex donor approaches, e.g. heavy evaluation procedures, overloaded monitoring instruments and reporting schemes do not correspond to the available manpower resources in the responsible ministries and management bodies of the partners. Capacity building or organizational capability as a precondition for modified interventions are not adequately considered from the donors; furthermore they are often seen as a long lasting precondition and obstacle for the immediate disbursement of funds.

One consequence of this problem is the reproduction of the vicious circles of intervention logic in development cooperation in other donor driven contexts: the new development paradigm considers e.g. technical assistance (‘projectitis’ with high transaction costs) as outdated, mostly creating artificial structures in the partner countries. This problem is today mainly ‘solved’ with new artificial structures/contributions of donors: plenty of consultants are working on outlining education strategies, reporting structures, following up the coherence of performance indicators with formulated objectives etc. which hardly
anybody in the country is able to do. This undermines the so called ownership of the locals (which exists in many cases only on paper as political will of decision makers).

VET is back on the agenda of many donors (see Arab Human Development Report and the two last World Development Reports). This does not mean that old intervention logics of VET-cooperation would fit today in a more complex environment (e.g. simple transfer of systems like dual system or copying complicated regulations like National Qualification Frameworks) and structural inertia. VET and cooperation in VET must be perceived today from strategic socio-economic objectives of development (create rapidly new skills, employment opportunities, income generation etc.) and the foreseeable economic and social development context of a country. Consequently more heterogeneity in VET interventions will be necessary in international cooperation.

Highly fragmented societies in Latin America, in many MENA/MEDA countries and partly in Asia do not need a coherent and monolithic VET system. Flexible qualification strategies, which have answers for training needs and solutions for human capital development in a high technology based segment of modern industry and service sector, are different from skills development in traditional industries and the craft sector. Informal sector workers need skills development as well as business competencies, which are different from the other economic sectors. In other words: a functional approach (in terms of social and economic development objectives and strategies for more employment and productivity) for new human capital requirements of the future will be the focal point for VET interventions.

Furthermore the global division of labour, fostered by the transnational economy, will create different opportunities for economic and social development for various types of countries. Labour market trends will reveal clear signs of what is going on in the next future and what might be the challenges for initial VET, adult training and lifelong learning. The traditional school based VET structures will not be able to cope with these changes if they continue to be too costly, too far away from the world of work and not innovative enough for change. This will open another scope for the donors on private VET providers, work based training, more efficient and incentive based financing schemes etc.

This is the reason why traditional approaches of intervention with a mere systemic inside look in partner countries’ VET are not any longer sufficient. VET or general secondary education should have for donor interventions no priority as such – looking exclusively at the internal design of training or education systems. Rather, the challenges and the needs for improving the systems are coming from outside – mostly from the economy and the labour market development, which are the new imperatives for more private sector driven training.

Donors must take into account this rapidly changing framework in a gloabalized economy. Looking to the above mentioned context, they should be constantly aware of the structural problems of intervention logics, which camouflages under the new approaches like SWAP and budget support the old problem of artificial structures,
introduced by the agencies of the North, either formerly in project implementation units but now through international consultants in the line ministries.

This structural problem of donor cooperation could be partly solved by strategic capacity building for local institutions and experts. Development will take place through an innovative framework which fosters the initiatives of well qualified and trained people. Funds and assistance from outside might be necessary, but without the effective performance of local/national human capital nothing will be converted in a success story. ‘The more funds . . . the more sustainable development’ is the logic of donors who are only partly aware of the specific constraints in capacity building of local people and their organizations to foster organizational capabilities.

Ownership driven strategies should consequently use the local know-how and the performance capacities of national institutions. Projects which rely on partner know-how, hardly follow the project cycle management (a typical product of western societies) but are based on trial and error and learning loops for experts, partners, beneficiaries and donors. This is required in a donor environment which focuses too much on external resources.

The new VET-approaches will be holistic and must be outlined on the background of partner countries’ economic context, labour market developments and new arrangements of the social partners in designing, implementing and conducting VET programmes. The VET system as such is not the reference point for improvement but the social and economic environment. Donors should therefore constantly and carefully look on the recent developments on labour markets and the demand of the private sector - a precondition for small, but good projects and for tailor-made interventions.

0-0-0-0-0
PARTNERSHIP SEEN FROM THE SOUTH
ONE SIZE DOESN’T FIT ALL: INSIGHTS FROM NORTH-SOUTH ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS IN AFRICA

Ama de-Graft Aikins
Department of Social and Developmental Psychology / Centre for African Studies, University of Cambridge.
Email: ada21@cam.ac.uk

Keywords
Academic partnerships, Ghana, Africa, health research, sustainability.

Summary
A fundamental rule of north-south academic partnerships is that one size doesn’t fit all. This piece considers three categories of this rule within the African context: funding, structure and purpose of partnerships.

My first encounter with a north-south academic partnership was in Ghana in 1997. I had arrived from the UK after a psychology MSc to start a year of internship at the University of Ghana Medical School (UGMS) while I developed ideas for my PhD. I was based at the Centre for Tropical Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics. The first task I was given by the centre’s director was to write a report on ‘Ghana’s Healthcare Infrastructure’ for the funders of a research partnership on applied diabetes research. As a new and junior member of the centre, I was not privy to the level of funding the partnership received, but it was clear the ‘Ghana Diabetes Project’ (GDP) was a significant project. The two medical schools – UGMS and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology Medical School, teamed up with Ghana’s Ministry of Health, the University of Virginia, and the global pharmaceutical company, Eli Lilly, to develop a national programme on diabetes. It involved original empirical research investigating cultural attitudes to diabetes, the state and quality of diabetes care, and policy challenges across the country. Through stakeholder consultations, diabetes education materials were produced for patients as well as health workers. The project ran for a number of years and eventually yielded a number of important publications for the senior researchers (cf Amoah et al, 2000, 2002). Country reports were produced for various stakeholders.

Like all major research projects of this kind – as I found out subsequently and as is reported in several reflexive accounts of academic and research partnerships (cf Campbell, 2003; Mosse, 2005) – the process was challenging on a variety of levels: negotiation of roles, data ownership and publishing rights being the most prominent. And, typically, once the funding run out, the programme died, along with its practice and policy benefits. Two years after my involvement with the project I conducted my doctoral research on representations of diabetes in rural and urban Ghana. One of the major findings
was a lack of adequate information on diabetes and its management for patients and health workers in both rural and urban settings, including at institutions that had received diabetes training from the GDP (de-Graft Aikins, 2004, 2005).

In the years that followed I have been involved in a variety of other partnerships in different technical capacities and levels of commitment:

- A researcher on an alcohol intervention study in Upper West Ghana with a partnership made up of UGMS’s Department of Psychiatry, the Ministry of Health and the Danish Aid Agency DANIDA.
- The principal partner of the British Academy funded UK-Africa Academic Partnership on chronic disease in Africa. The partnership is made up of interdisciplinary chronic disease researchers from Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria, Kenya, the UK and Netherlands (see http://www.britac.ac.uk/funding/awards/intl/africapartnerships.html).
- A sub-contracted local consultant reviewing the Millennium Villages Project (MVP) in Ghana. The MVP, brainchild of Columbia’s Jeffrey D. Sachs, brings together the Earth Institute (at Columbia University), UNDP, Millennium Promise, and ministries and selected villages of ten African countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda) (see http://www.millenniumvillages.org/)

These projects have framed my experiences and perspectives on north-south academic partnerships in Africa over the last ten years. Among the many lessons I have learned is the fundamental one that one size doesn’t fit all in partnerships.

We can speak of at least three categories of ‘one size doesn’t fit all’

The first category is level of funding. Funding ranges from small five-figure grants (such as partnership awards by the British Academy, DelPHE, and Leverhulme Trust/Royal Society) to substantial seven to eight-figure sums (such as awards by DFID and Wellcome Trust). While local researchers invest greater effort towards the larger grants, more money does not necessarily translate into successful sustainable outcomes. The Ghana Diabetes Project received more funding than the alcohol intervention project mentioned briefly; neither yielded long-term benefits for their research communities. More money can also be a double-edged sword: it changes the culture and focus of research and creates resource imbalances across institutions. For example, despite a well-documented double burden of communicable and non-communicable disease in Ghana, health research is skewed heavily towards HIV/AIDS,
malaria and tuberculosis. This is largely in response to a problematic international health and donor focus on these three conditions cf. (Fuster and Voûte, 2005). The Ghanaian story is shared across the continent.

The second category is structure. The DelPHE application guide describes structural permutations best: north south partnerships can be “Bilateral (One-to-one / Institution to Institution), Multi-disciplinary (3+ departments), Multi-institutional (3+ institutional partners), Multilateral (3+ countries involved)”.

At a basic level a smaller partnership means less administrative effort for the leaders; a larger more complex consortium will require more administrative skill and effort. There’s a theory doing the rounds in researcher circles that the move towards huge multi-million dollar funding is the funder’s way of offloading administrative duties to the directors of the new ubiquitous consortiums. Smaller grants mean more groups of fundees and more annual reports to read, evaluate and file away. But structure is important at a conceptual level also. Often partnerships seek to maximise a mix of institutions with a range of skills and expertise, as well as history of involvement in partnerships. In Ghana, for example, one can speak of three kinds of academic institutions existing on a continuum of poor to stellar scholarship. At the poor end of the continuum lies the conservative traditional university department, often of a marginalised discipline in Africa, bogged down by increasing student numbers, minimal resources and university bureaucracy. At the stellar end is the dynamic semi-autonomous institution, often interdisciplinary, but with a core development oriented focus, usually run by dynamic leaders with international exposure, is wired to the world, attracts committed lecturers and researchers and can be categorised as world class. In the middle lies the revamped traditional university department, which despite facing the same structural and cultural problems as our conservative marginalised department, has managed to find a way of thriving under difficult circumstances. The way has often been through north-south partnerships. On Ghana’s Legon campus, African Studies, Linguistics and Geography, for instance, have solidified their status through their associations with the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU; http://siu.no/en/Programme-overview/NUFU-programme). The theory is that by mixing institutions from these three categories together, for instance, one simultaneously elevates and equalizes institutional fortunes. But like funding, larger and more complex partnerships are not necessarily better than smaller partnerships. Small partnerships which replicate the skill mix at intra-institutional individual level will also reap benefits. A quick study of the DELPHE and MHaPP websites will illustrate this point.

The final category is the purpose of the partnership. There is a consensus that African universities are in crisis. African academic institutions were badly hit by the region’s socio-political and economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s. Over the last twenty-odd years they have experienced dwindling funding for

---

24 http://www.britishcouncil.org/delphe.htm
academic resources and research, political stifling of bold scholarship, a rise in university student enrolment and the brain drain. In combination these have led to a variety of problems including low productivity, low engagement in global academic discourses and trends, poor or misguided leadership, increased dependence on external sources of funding and a growing inability to set their own research agendas. The proceedings of two recent conferences on Africa’s universities – the “Frameworks for Africa-UK Research Collaboration” meeting in Nairobi in September 2008 and the “University Leaders’ Forum” conference in Accra in November 2008 - underscored these points. Within this context partnerships are seen to serve a variety of capacity building purposes. Three dominant themes are building capacity for institutions (e.g improving IT and internet access), teaching (e.g training more PhDs) and research (e.g strengthening intra and inter-disciplinary knowledge on MDGs). Some of the new consortia, such as the ones to be inaugurated shortly through generous ten-year multimillion pound Wellcome Trust funding, aim to achieve multi-purpose functions, thereby creating much needed centres of academic excellence in the region.

References


INDIVIDUAL AND INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS: SOME EXPERIENCES

Beatrice Avalos, University of Chile, Santiago
Email: bavalos@terra.cl

Keywords
Research partnerships, individual & institutional, Chile, RRAG, Papua New Guinea

Summary
Three very different kinds of partnership are discussed here. The first, in Chile itself, was much more than research training; it involved joint research with a key partner. The second was a South-South cross-national egalitarian partnership in a policy research review on teacher effectiveness; and the third was a bilateral partnership in PNG for local teacher development.

In the early seventies we were setting up a programme focused on interdisciplinary research in education, at the Catholic University. It was a wonderful time to be moving ahead in this direction as the University had just reformed itself and there was a great emphasis on establishing interdisciplinary research centres. We got together young potential researchers who worked in different university departments, most of them with Ph.D. or Masters degrees from American, British and other European countries. However, none of us had really been able to move ahead in research, as we were solitary individuals in different locations. A substantial grant from the Ford Foundation and solid support from the University was a good starting point. But we needed something more. Noel McGinn from Harvard University agreed to spend a year with us, and that was a crucial input for many to learn about the mechanics of being a researcher. He assisted some in refining research methodologies, participated in the critical analysis of our ongoing studies and engaged in a major research project with three other of us. It was the best practical learning experience that we could have had in those years. The
Interdisciplinary Programme of Educational Research known as PIIE is no longer in the Catholic University, but stands on its own as a longstanding centre committed to research with a social focus.

Years later, in the late seventies, I was lucky to be involved together with Bob Myers, in the setting up of the Research Review and Advisory Group (RRAG)\(^{25}\) and to lead with Wadi Haddad the production of a State-of-the-Art Review of Teacher Effectiveness research. This meant identifying researchers in different world locations and discussing with them an outline and set of procedures to gather and analyse research in those locations. Probably, this could be defined as a very rich egalitarian form of partnership. In West Africa, India, South America, Middle-East, Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand, each researcher endeavoured against all odds to find, analyse and produce a review of the research in the country which in most cases was the first in that field ever done. The partnership worked without e-mail communication, with a couple of face-to-face meetings and the rest through ordinary mail and telephones. The product of the effort of so many with little resources is still quoted in international literature concerning teacher research in developing countries.

In the late eighties, my adventurous spirit took me to Papua New Guinea, where I spent six years as Professor of Education at the University. This was a country that was building its higher education system and putting a great effort into preparing local capacity to replace the many expatriate teachers and professors still working in the country. There were many fronts on which to work. One had to do with the improvement of teacher preparation in the Community Teachers’ Colleges. There was the possibility of Australian money to move ahead on this. I still remember the day when Bob Elliott and Clarrie Burke from Queensland University of Technology (QUT) came to my office to discuss a proposal to establish a joint B.Ed. campus programme for Community Teachers’ College lecturers. The University of PNG would grant the degree while the QUT would provide a one-year programme in Brisbane and on-going support when the lecturers were back at their jobs in the colleges. There was an incredible amount of learning on both sides, and as a result a solid group of lecturers were empowered to become academic leaders in a system of teacher education which, at the time, was involved in important changes such as raising entry standards and lengthening of the period of study.

All the former were different forms of working together which, rather than being imposed externally, grew from the circumstances and the willingness of researchers and academics to pool the strengths each one had, to learn from each other, and to contribute to education in their different contexts.

---

\(^{25}\) It was from this RRAG conception that NORRAG was developed in 1986. [Ed]
EXPERIENCES OF PARTNERSHIPS FROM肯尼亚:
NORTH-SOUTH AND SOUTH-SOUTH

Fatuma Chege, Kenyatta University, Nairobi
Email: fatumasee@wananchi.com

Keywords
Research Partnership, North-South, South-South, Kenya

Summary
This article reflects on some of the differences and similarities between North-South and South-South research partnerships, based on the experience of Kenyatta University. It notes the unidirectional nature of much of the North-South ‘partnerships’ that they have been involved with. It contrasts this with a more positive experience of South-South partnership.

It is in the constructions and narratives which are basically experiential that the concept of partnerships between categories of actors may yield a life of contextualised meanings and reflections. In this context, I have chosen only one aspect of partnerships, namely, research, to locate my experiences dating back to the mid 1990s when I began working with senior Kenyan researchers on research projects that were designed to respond to educational issues and questions. Notably, these research projects had been hatched and defined mainly by ‘experts’ who were outsiders to the local Kenyan settings. They included ‘experts’ on Kenyan education, history, development, politics and so on. As is the case in contemporary Kenya, many of the research projects were funded from outside organisations/institutions based mainly in Europe, particularly the UK, Germany, Netherlands, and Sweden among others, as well as the USA and Canada. During those years, the idea of problematising the nature and purpose of research ‘partnerships’ across the continents hardly ever occurred as many of us focused on doing the research and submitting acceptable products. In retrospect, however, it has become increasingly clear that the dominant North-South research encounters were often unidirectional – with the local Kenyans acting mainly as field researchers and at most as participants in generating draft reports and presenting the same. Looking back at this North-South engagement, it is difficult to identify the essence of partnership, which entails interactions right from the conceptualisation of the research problem and its relevance to local Kenyans, all the way to implementation of findings in the interest of the local communities. Often, the engagement was in the form of international sponsors–not partners- donating the funding as well as the topics of research, then complementing this package of donations with ‘experts’. The role of the ‘expert’ was clearly to alert the locals towards the ‘correct’ and most appropriate research direction. Examples abound of times when we locals would watch helplessly as the ‘experts’ expunged data items that were deemed to be, in their view, embarrassing (to who?).

Ten years later, in 2004 I was to enter into a clearly new experience of research partnership with colleagues from the East, namely Japan and by association, India, the
Philippines, and Indonesia. This turned out to be a partnership with a difference of freshness of space through which African research partners found their place on an equal footing to develop and pursue research ideas. This novel approach is traceable to one pioneering Japanese institution, The Centre for the Study of International Cooperation in Education (CICE) of Hiroshima University. CICE has played a key role in bringing together the African and Asian partners of like-minded vision and mission, in a partnership which came to be named the ‘Africa-Asia University Dialogue on Basic Education Development’. This partnership, which has been dubbed simply and fondly as the ‘A-A Dialogue’ was founded on the need to create a self-reliant approach in conducting policy and action research among its partners. The Dialogue has since diversified its research mandate beyond basic education and expanded the partnership from the initial four African countries (Kenya, Malawi, South Africa and Ghana) to twelve African countries from the Eastern, Western and Southern regions of Sub-Saharan Africa. The Asian partners have remained relatively fewer and this tends to have some positive effects on the African partners who have been historically a minority in such engagements. While most of the initial funding of the A-A dialogue activities came from the Japanese Government as well as CICE and UNESCO, the participating African partners ushered in a well-received wealth of ideas and experiences emanating from their expertise as local African researchers in their own right as well as from their histories of colonialism, its effects and the lessons it had taught the African people.

Within the same year of initiating the Africa-Asia Partnership, I got engaged in another venture of North-South partnership that involved not just the North-South (Western Europe and Africa), but a triangulation of North-South-East (Western Europe-Africa-Asia). The actual partners who include the UK, Kenya, Ghana, India and Pakistan engaged to work jointly in a research project funded by the UK DfID under the Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty (RECOUP). In this triangular partnership, new approaches of conducting policy research among poor communities were prioritised. The main role of the partners from the South is taking the lead in providing voice –through participatory research approaches- to the local communities that have been identified as living in poverty. Here, the local expertise of Southern partners is recognised as vital in working with communities as they construct local meanings of their situations in the context of education and the role it plays (or ought to play) in transforming their lives. To a large extent, the Northern partners who are renowned researchers in their own right also play a major role in offering technical support within the project research themes. Apart from producing research reports and disseminating findings, RECOUP undertakes joint publication with the partners and is committed to capacity building at different levels.

A comparison of the two concurrent partnerships of the A-A Dialogue (between Africa-Asia) and the RECOUP (for Africa-Asia-Western Europe) reveals a renewed zeal in conducting research that could influence evidence-based policy and its implementation. It also reveals a renewed interest directed at working with African partners in the area of developmental research. Experientially, the two partnerships function differently and the effects of the nature and form of inclusion of the African partners are also experienced differently. For example, while most of the projects in RECOUP were conceptualised
through leadership of the expertise from the North, all the projects in the A-A Dialogue have been defined, conceptualised and concretised through round-table sittings of all partners. Consequently, the RECOUP research projects have all the theme leaders coming from the North, while research leadership in the A-A Dialogue has remained on the African platform in the most fundamental ways that entail not only the design but also the methodology components. Experientially, therefore, there is relative ease in the engagement between the South-South partnerships – perhaps because of the histories involved - than there is between the North-South partnerships. However, the outcomes of these two concurrent partnerships that have Africa, as the common denominator will, without a doubt, provide insights to feedback on the broader picture of the experiences of research partnerships in Kenya and other countries in the region.

0-0-0-0-0

THE HISTORICAL EFFECT OF PARTNERSHIPS IN EAST AFRICA

David Court, consultant, Nairobi, formerly Rockefeller Foundation, East Africa
Email: davidcourt@iconnec.co.ke

Keywords
Partnership, East Africa, North-South university partnership

Summary
This article looks at the historical impact on universities in East Africa of North-South partnerships against a current background of university crisis that will make partnership a challenge.

The state of partnership conditions in East Africa
NORRAG’s latest focus, on the concept of partnership, coincides with my retiree effort to sort out and dispose of books and articles on the topic assembled over 30 years. Renewed contact, with at least the titles of this extensive array, provokes the following thoughts on the historical impact on universities of North-South partnerships.

The extent of written attention to the topic underscores the significance of the ever-changing North-South relationship on the purpose, character and quality of universities in Africa.

My archive reveals thee distinct historical periods:

- The relatively straightforward 1960s-1970s period, of post-independence excellence and elitism which produced a relatively uncritical duplication of the best that the North had to offer at that time.
- The political instability of the 1980s led to national disregard for higher education (HE), and the beginning of questioning on both sides about what the appropriate content of imported partnerships should be.
The mid-1990s to the present have produced expanded north and south recognition of the importance of universities for national development. Globalization has accelerated this perception. New technology - computerization, internet, ICT, mobile phones etc, has created a powerful international context of instant communication, expanded knowledge, and scope for large scale partnership cooperation.

The overriding connection across all three periods has been the impact of the changing state of the national and international situations on what happens at the universities. In this context there are two key cross-period themes affecting the concept of HE in Africa: (a) the changing philosophy of northern organizations and b) its relationship to evolving southern politics and governing practice.

In our thinking about what makes sense today, there is some virtue in drawing lessons from historical reviews. However, the radical nature of contextual change over the past decade, led by internet access, makes it more useful to focus now on the evident consequences for partnership of the current content and environment.

Northern recognition of the importance of HE by the World Bank and international agencies multiplies potential support and diversifies partnerships, but causes problems of relevance and ownership. This has provoked political sensitivity about the need for mutual agreement in university decision making, and the danger of dictation from the sources of finance:

- Northern Agencies, and particularly the World Bank, tend to rely on central theoretical criteria and pay limited attention to the all important local conditions and needs.
- Evaluations of northern agency efforts tend to be biased towards programme success rather than more common failures, and the criteria of success tend to be pre-established northern ones.
- Consultancy arrangements and money-seeking research make little contribution to national or regional development.

The situation in the south does not bode well for strong partnerships. A recent university speech by a Kenya specialist provides the following analysis: “Universities have ceased to be genuine institutions of higher learning…the country is at a cross-roads because universities have become commercial ventures…It will not realise its potential unless the institutions change their manner of conducting business…it could only be built through research which they have abandoned…Kenyans are becoming obsessed with certificates at the expense of quality…ethnicity has permeated universities and we either change course or we perish” (Daily Nation November 14 2008). No shortage of challenges then! The following problems therefore remain:

- Governments tend to view the expansion of HE as a political purpose, unrelated to its content. This motivation expands student numbers and disregards quality and professionalism. Research is turning into commercial self interest.
• There has been a vast increase in the number of universities - private, public, religious in origin – and of students. However this has been accompanied by a significant decline in the quality and relevance of what is taught. Not a single university outside South Africa gets into the top 500 of the official quality league table of universities.

• For ethnic and other reasons, there is little official willingness to focus resources on a few high quality institutions that could provide models of research, teaching quality and outstanding students.

• The recent Accra conference of the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa (PHEA) confirmed the fact that “African Universities face a Looming Shortage of PhDs” and stated further “African Universities are rapidly losing their faculty members to retirement and industry, and their capacity to educate new PhD holders is eroding, raising deep concerns about the continent’s ability to produce new generations of academics” and strong partnership teams. (Chronicle on Higher Education)

• The large scale externally funded PHEA has itself made some important contributions to university development but, as its evaluations have shown, university responses are limited, partly because the founding members themselves have found partnership with each other an unexpected challenge!

There is still a need for assessment and analysis of research partnerships—what works what does not work, why, and what should be done. This should include:

• Wider assessment of the assumptions aims and practices of the many Northern agencies that support research.

• Specification of the response of southern researchers to external involvement and conditionality.

• Clear documentation of the practice, quality, and developmental relevance of research partnerships.

• Detailed examples of success, and particularly failure, because agencies tend to neglect northern limitations.

• Partnerships that get beyond education scholars and involve economists, environmentalists and the younger generation, in thinking about innovation and what universities ought to be doing.

• More assessment from the south.

What are required are coherent analyses of successful partnerships-regional and international-and likewise, the inclusion of case study failures, with conditions and causes in each aspect. Conclusions can be drawn as to what university mechanisms have been inspired by partnerships, and how the concept itself has changed and improved. Serious partnership attention must be paid to quality PhD level training.

Academic investigation over the last 30 years has focussed on the kinds of partnership that can help promote the purpose, pattern and distinction of university roles in the south. The challenge continues.
PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE DISADVANTAGED YOUTH TRANSITIONS FROM EDUCATION TO WORK IN LATIN AMERICA.

Claudia Jacinto, redEtis, IIPE-UNESCO

cjacinto@redetis.iipe-ides.org.ar

Keywords
Local and horizontal partnerships, ‘good practices’ in youth training, networking, intersectoral policies, challenge to sustainable partnerships

Summary
For disadvantaged youth transitions to work to succeed, there is a need to improve horizontal partnership between different actors in education, vocational training and public and private employment, as well as vertical partnership between local, regional and national levels.

When it comes to promoting the work insertion of poorly qualified youth in Latin America, there is consensus on the need to improve horizontal partnership between different actors in education, vocational training and public and private employment, as well as vertical partnership between local, regional and national levels.

There’s a consensus that partnerships are key to ‘good practices’ to improve youth training and employment opportunities. Amongst these would be: promoting a closer bond with the private sector employer in order to add work insertion strategies and on-the-job learning (internship/placements) as a part of the training; ensuring young people’s access to employment services and counseling, either on self-employment, micro-enterprises, or paid employment; advisory, coaching actions (in some cases in charge of local employment services) and access to micro-credit for inexperienced small self-employed entrepreneurs, in first stages of business development; linking different educational paths and learning environments (formal schooling, vocational training, workplace). Specially when addressed to disadvantaged youth, some methods and instruments on social education and linkages with social and health services seem essential.

As public policies on training in Latin America are increasingly decentralized, it is therefore indispensable to establish local networks, between institutions addressing training, companies, NGOs, and other social institutions, like health and social services. However, in most cases, the efforts are insufficient to establish lasting networks.

In fact, for sometime now, emphasis has been placed on the need for broader approaches in terms of youth transition policies. Evidence has proved the effectiveness deriving from integrated approaches through a youth protection network. But as it’s difficult to achieve, intersectoral strategies have been promoted as a way to improve links. However, experience has shown that there are still great political and institutional drawbacks to overcome for constructing strong linkages. The lack of links between different government levels and other actors reveals the complex structure of public
policies resulting from the socio-political and cultural, regional and national history. One key aspect to understand the difficulties in creating sustainable partnerships derives from the fact that different social, individual and collective actors, with diverse political orientation, interests and values back up varied strategies and expectations, influencing and modifying the original plans. It is now necessary to accept and analyze the logic behind such actions to come up with creative ways to overcome the drawbacks they impose, also acknowledging that, in many cases, “voluntarist” approaches have prevailed.

Some of the major challenges still pending are: a further co-ordination between national actors, the effective design of integrated and inter-sectoral approaches, the strengthening of actors’ management and implementation competences, the consolidation of public-private partnerships, and preventing fragmentation in training-for-work policies.

ENGENDERING COUNTRY-LED PARTNERSHIP: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AS A CLUSTER LEADER

Emefa Takyi-Amoako, St Anne’s College, Oxford University
Email: emefa.amoako@st-annes.ox.ac.uk

Keywords
Ghana, Ministry of Education (MoE), donors, country-led partnership, cluster-leader

Summary
Country-led partnership could be achieved in MoE-donor interactions if both the MoE and donors would revolutionise their cultures and promote the former as a cluster-leader in their interactions.

First, it is absurd to talk about partnership, a notion that denotes equality, in aid donor-recipient relations shaped fundamentally by power asymmetries. However, on the basis of findings derived from a qualitative study of the Ministry of Education (MoE)-donor interactions in Ghana, this article argues that one way (among others) in which the MoE-donor interactions in Ghana could probably be transformed to a country-led partnership is if the MoE effectively assumes the role of a “cluster-leader”.

The data reveal that in order for a country-led partnership to become a reality in the MoE-donor interactions for effective education delivery, it is imperative that both the MoE and donors transform their distinct cultures, practices, perceptions and actions. The MoE with a resumed sense of agency has to recognise that there are many dimensions that need partnership: the MoE and its agencies and divisions working together with other relevant ministries and institutions, civil society and development partners (both local and foreign aid donors, lenders and non-governmental organisations [NGOs]) and if relevant, other entities. Subsequently, the MoE needs to facilitate this partnership of many dimensions to assume the role of a cluster-leader. The MoE as a cluster-leader
represents a crucial link in the chain of dimensions. Each of the rings in a dimension represents a dialogue. While these distinct dimensions are connected in a chain-like fashion, within each a similar process must occur at the same time with the MoE as facilitator. For instance, while the MoE dialogues on education with these different entities, simultaneously, it must facilitate dialoguing and information sharing among the divisions and units within itself. It is also essential that it harmonises and coordinates the activities and views of not only the different units and divisions it is made up of and other Government agencies but also other stakeholders that constitute the various strands of civil society. This is because it has the responsibility to filter the thought processes of these sub-dimensions within it, as well as others in order to engage and dialogue effectively with donors. Yet, it was noted at the time of data generation that even some of the key players in the MoE had not yet fully grasped the notion of its newly developed Education Strategic Plan (ESP). Evidence also indicates that sometimes the ministries/sectors do not talk amongst themselves very much. While a particular ministry can work hand in hand with another one in order to reach informed decisions on policy issues, in others this is not happening...This is what the Government or Ministry (MoE) must be doing in order to lead in the coordination and harmonisation of donor activities...It is not only a question of partnership but harmonisation of all stakeholders and the involvement of civil society and other organizations. (Interview)

As a result, the data show that it is important that the MoE assumes the lead position, for example, by developing an effective communication structure amongst its divisions as well as with other relevant entities, during which it needs to gather data annually to measure success and self-evaluate. These are regarded as characteristics of what an interviewee identified as “partnership-leadership-MoE in the driving seat” (Interview). According to this interviewee, “partnership is harmonisation which implies sharing information and making sure everybody is informed” (Interview). Another interviewee also maintained that before harmonising donor support, the most essential step for the MoE to take to strengthen their position is to coordinate the views within the education sector in order to assume the leadership mantle. He stressed that it was important to know how the MoE listened to the teacher unions and the various units that form the polity and allowed them to express their views. He therefore posed the question:

To what extent are our people [the MoE] listening more to themselves than to outsiders. How do they ask whether the opinion of the directors count just as well as the external partners? To what extent are their views expressed and how are they listened to? (Interview)

In his view, the MoE must hold and own the education programme by listening more to the local voices, an act more important than coordinating support. However, if the MoE wants to be successful in harmonising donor support it “...has to hold its programme tightly by collectively involving the different directors and start managing their roles...and continue developing its own educational programme. And when this is done, genuine ownership will be achieved” (Interview) and country-led partnership would emerge. For the MoE to achieve harmonisation, it will have to secure the ‘driving seat’ by being abreast with the local (and some global) knowledges that are relevant to education in Ghana so as to keep all stakeholders including the donors informed. Since this had not yet happened, it was acknowledged in the Ghana Proposal for Inclusion into
Education for All Fast Track Initiative, that the lack of stakeholder coordination could be a threat to the successful implementation of the ESP and the Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA FTI) component. It was also alleged that the lack of collaboration between the MoE and other Government ministries coupled with its lack of strong educational programme or plan led to the ineffectiveness of some donor support programmes. For instance, according to an interviewee,

even before the (QUIPS)\textsuperscript{26} programme was introduced to MoE...for endorsement the signature of the Ministry of Finance had already been obtained without any consultation with the MoE officials to determine if the programme was feasible. However, QUIPS went ahead to be implemented. USAID also contracted US NGOs to implement the programme in Ghana which did not help the MoE/GES (Interview).

To address this, it was said that the MoE had begun taking steps to strengthen its leadership, management systems and capacity in general for better coordination and mainstreaming. A senior MoE official claimed that there were now opportunities available for training in order to expose them (MoE personnel) and have an efficient running institution. We are putting more stress on deadlines, showing results, accounting for time spent from week to week, day to day. What we are focusing more now on is the designing of a system that will help in reporting back. When you are encouraging people, there should be a system that should feed you, link up everybody (e.g. intranet), track systems. Correspondence should not sit on the table without being dealt with. Once we’ve done that, the directors will be challenged to focus more on the quality aspect of their job to increase output. (Interview)

It appears the MoE system, through a seemingly growing strong leadership, was being geared up to harmonise donor support and assume the leadership position in the MoE-donor interactions. Another interviewee also added that because of this growing sense of strong leadership in the MoE,

on the donor side there has been a very big improvement in the respect for the position of the Ministry. We have consistently trumpeted the fact that their issues should be congruent to the Ministry’s priorities. We are no longer pushovers. We insist on things that will be in the interest of the Ministry... though we recognise this is collaboration... However, we’ve made them aware that everybody has to toe the line. What we need to do is to demonstrate that we are willing to build the capacity required, if we mean to mainstream donor support in the Ministry. (Interview)

Almost certainly, it seems palpable as far as the data are concerned that the ability of the MoE to strengthen its management / knowledge capacity and strongly own their education programme would enable efficient harmonisation of donor support for mainstreaming which may culminate in an MoE-donor partnership that is country-led. Nevertheless, the fact still remains that for a country-led partnership to truly prevail, the MoE as a cluster-leader equally needs to strengthen its financial capacity and reduce its foreign aid dependency.

\textsuperscript{26} Quality Improvement in Primary Schools
STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

Paschal B. Mihyo
Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA)
Email: Mihyop@yahoo.com

Keywords
Academic partnerships, Europe-Africa

Summary
There are major differences in the ways that partnerships have worked in government linked scientific research institutes and regular departments. The former are part of known institutional strategies; the ownership and institutionalization of many university links are much less strong. The key to the improvement of the latter is much more institutional embeddedness.

Introduction
Partnerships between African and European academic institutions are as old as formal higher education in Africa. Some of the best universities in the African region were launched as colleges of European universities before independence. In the last four decades cooperation has become stronger and taken various forms the most prominent of which have been: staff development, technical assistance, joint teaching and research programmes and staff exchange. These partnerships have managed to create a critical mass of highly skilled professionals; put and keep in place solid infrastructure; upgrade equipment and stocks in libraries and laboratories; support staff development and counter the tide of staff capacity erosion; establish and strengthen innovation centres in engineering, medical and agricultural research; provide back up support for academic management training and staff exchange; provide budget support for universities and research institutes and most important help academic institutions to enrich their curricula through joint courses in the region along with staff training abroad. These gains could be further strengthened and new ones maximized if some of the factors that have reduced the dynamism of these partnerships could be addressed.

What has worked or not worked with partnerships
The most successful partnerships in Africa have been in centres of innovation in faculties of engineering; national medical research institutes and national and regional agricultural, forestry and livestock research institutes. The factors that have contributed to their success are numerous. First regional and national institutes are governmental or inter-governmental and their ownership and demand orientation are uncontested and clear. Partly due to this, they enjoy the recognition, respect and support of bilateral and multilateral agencies. This factor is missing in other types of partnerships especially those based in universities. In the case of the latter, the programmes are owned by faculties, departments or in some cases individuals. The fingerprints of universities or sectors
relevant to the link programmes in some universities are very faint. This creates problems of ownership, demand orientation and recognition that affect their relevance, scale, span of life and size of their funding.

Secondly, the programmes that are run by engineering, medical, agricultural research and innovation institutes are institutional; they are built within their strategic plans which show road maps of their human resources, financial and other growth perspectives; they are used as a base for performance evaluation and by development agencies and northern academic institutions for decisions whether or not to enter into partnerships with them. Most of the institutes and departments in universities that have links and partnerships programmes lack this. They have not developed long term strategic plans spelling out the role of development cooperation in their short term and long term plans. This undermines the scope, scale, size and span of their projects.

Third, the goals and expectations of partners matter. In the case of institutes of research, the goals of cooperation tend to be clear. They are stated in the statutes or projects that reflect institutional thinking. In the case of university-based links and partnership projects clarity is missing. In two big projects in which the author was involved in Namibia and Zimbabwe, it was clear that the expectations of the partners were different. The actors from the North expected to learn though joint research and to leave capacity for continuation of the programme after the initial phase. But in both cases, local partners saw the programme differently. Whenever the northern partners came, the local partners took time off to do other more important things especially individual consultancies and only participated in teaching activities that carried extra pay funded by the projects. When the projects ended no learning had taken place and the northern partners did not want to extend cooperation.

Learning systems is the fourth issue. Having participated in partnerships also from the north, I wanted the activities to generate critical capabilities in local institutions. In the Namibian and Zimbabwe projects, the projects had slots for Ph.D. studies. The local counterparts were not equally excited about this. They went on using the project to take time off and do consultancies and training opportunities were not utilized adequately. But the research institutes on the other hand have training programmes in their plans and when they send trainees for higher studies, they create conditions for utilizing them on their completion of training. In the absence of learning and capacity utilization plans, partnerships can easily lead to internal brain drain if local experts use them to work on other non-organizational activities or facilitate brain drain if experts are trained but no plans are put in place for their gainful utilization.

Making partnerships work better
The best way to ensure maximum gains from partnerships is to step back and take a look at the way we have been operating and then design ways of doing things rather differently. First, we need to strengthen ownership by institutionalizing links and projects. This needs institutional and sector wide approaches. Departments and universities are part of the national and regional structures and their programmes should reflect national and regional priorities. The finger and foot prints of universities, relevant
ministries and regional bodies on link programmes should be clear and indelible. Secondly, while individuals matter, partnerships based on individuals tend to disappear with or because of them. Partnerships should be institutional, should be based on long term plans and should be part of the human resources and other strategic maps of organizations involved. Third, partnerships should be long term and not based on fashion or fad but on long term objectives of knowledge generation, application and sharing. Finally, partnerships should design clear platforms and mechanisms for generating, sharing, utilizing and internalizing knowledge. Unless this is done they will be a waste of time and resources, and a disappointment to partners on both sides and to the intended beneficiaries.

PARTNERSHIP IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION?

Lyabwene Mtahabwa, University of Dodoma, Tanzania
Email: Lyabwene Mtahabwa <lrwr2003@yahoo.co.uk>

Keywords
Partnership in education

Summary
This article examines the concept of partnership in education, noting that it can mean several things to different individuals and different cultural contexts. It poses the question: How far are partnerships in education really partnerships?

The discourse of partnership in education has recently gained prominence in educational circles. Its use goes beyond involvement which tends to demean roles played by one side of the participating parties. Currently, there is an enormous orchestration of the use of partnership in conducting research between individuals in the North and those in the South or among researchers in the South. Virtually all stakeholders in education across a myriad of cultures speak of partnership as a key ingredient for quality practices. For example, in early childhood education, partnership is believed to be one of the indicators of quality programmes in many countries such as the US, Italy and the UK. One major problem with the use of the concept of partnership is that it can mean several things to different individuals and different cultural contexts. Its use is always prone to misuse. First, in any educational venture, who decides the elements that constitute partnerships? Second, when does the idea of partnership become shared among interested parties: at the conception stage of the project, middle or towards completion of it? Third, who initiates that idea and why? Fourth, what differences – economic and educational – exist among parties and how are these differences facilitative or inhibitive of the partnership agenda? Fifth, how are gains – immediate and future – shared among parties?

These questions suggest that the discourse of partnership must be approached carefully and skeptically. I find it to be one of the most challenging aspects in education. Even if a
succinct delineation of the elements that make up partnership in education was attempted, one would still expect some hidden agenda among parties. Not all the so called partnerships in education are genuine. For example, a government may advocate partnerships with other stakeholders such as parents but a critical analysis may reveal that such partnership is intended to provide the government an opportunity to escape its obligation – that of responsibly delivering quality services to its citizens. The Harambee philosophy in Kenya (see Kipkorir, 1993) and the call for parents’ participation in pre-primary education in Tanzania (see Mtahabwa, 2007) are closely related to this stance. Genuine partnership is difficult to achieve and educators may need to rethink its use. How far are partnerships in education really partnerships?

References
NORRAG’S ANNUAL STRATEGY MEETING, 2008: A SUMMARY AND A LOOK AT MEMBERSHIP

Robert Palmer, NORRAG, Amman
Email: rob.palmer@norrag.org

NORRAG Strategy Meeting

A meeting of the NORRAG Strategy Group took place on 6th October 2008, during which the activities and outcomes of the last funding phase (2004-2008) as well as future plans, were discussed. Over this period NORRAG has been supported by DFID, SDC and also through in-kind support from NUFFIC (since 2006). All three of these agencies have recently agreed in principle to support NORRAG for the 2009-2012 phase.

The 2004-2008 phase
Over the last almost five years, NORRAG has deliberately sought to innovate in respect of the global access to NORRAG NEWS (NN) & NORRAG membership, its survey knowledge of its own constituency, its choice of NORRAG NEWS (NN) topics & spread of authorship of contributions, its targeted dissemination through policy briefs, a user friendly website and national cluster meetings (during 2008). Particularly since 2006, NORRAG’s new Strategy Group has strongly encouraged the exploration of these new modalities, constituencies and initiatives. However, these innovations take place against the background of strong confirmation that the basic formula of NORRAG NEWS, which is rapid, critical appraisal of policies in international education and training, and especially in the sphere of development cooperation, has been confirmed over these five years, and should be sustained. The regular production of NORRAG NEWS has continued to be the centre piece of NORRAG.

The key features of the 2004-2008 period have been: mastering many of the challenges of ‘going virtual’ (see NN30); changing from a small NGO network to a project with global impact; dramatically changing NN’s web design and presence from being password-protected to being accessible by Google; translating the NN policy summaries into six languages, including Chinese; developing the leadership structure so that dynamic younger Francophone and Anglophone individuals participate in all the NN and NORRAG initiatives.

The impact of these strategies is evident in the table below which illustrates a 100% expansion of countries with NORRAG members, and an increase of individual membership by almost 6 times. Interestingly, this has been achieved in ways that have privileged developing countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Countries with members</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership totals</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>2298 (Sept.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-South membership</td>
<td>60% North – 40% South</td>
<td>50% North – 50% South</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Latest data on registered members (02.09.08)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-East / North Africa</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia / Russia</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia / Pacific</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>919</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America / Caribbean</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America (not Mexico)</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2298</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that since back issues of NN can be consulted online without registering, the numbers of registered members are likely to be a large underestimate of the total numbers accessing NORRAG NEWS. For example, on average the norrag.org site receives some 500 visitors per day.

A note by Stephanie Langstaff on who is reading NORRAG NEWS in French

Out of 2,400 NORRAG members (as of 1st December 2008), approximately eighteen percent are based in countries where French is an official language. Most of them are from Switzerland and France, where there are 146 and 100 members, respectively. The membership in Francophone countries of Sub-Saharan Africa remains sparse, though NORRAG intends to intensify its relationship with educational networks in this region next year.

Until 2007, a special issue of NN in French was made out of several NN issues. Unfortunately, the implication was that Francophone readers had to wait some time before having the French version of NN released. To develop access to the contents of NN more rapidly, each issue of NORRAG NEWS has been translated into French since NN36, in a slightly shorter version.

French issues of NN are very popular according to the large number of issues which have been downloaded this year. For instance, the issue of NN of Best Practice (n°39) has been downloaded 645 times up to now, while NN38 on TVET, NN37 on Poverty and NN36 on the Development Year 2005 have been downloaded 900 times on average.
FIRST NORRAG CLUSTER MEETING IN THE NETHERLANDS: A SHORT REPORT

Ad Boeren, Nuffic, The Hague
Email: aboeren@nuffic.nl

Nuffic organized a first NORRAG cluster meeting in the Netherlands on 6 October in Utrecht. Dr Jos Walenkamp, Director Knowledge and Innovation, Nuffic, welcomed the participants. The meeting consisted of four topics:

1. Dr Henk Molenaar, Deputy Director of NWO-Wotro, presented the outcome of the international conference ‘Knowledge on the Move: research for Development in a globalising World’ which took place 26-28 February 2008 in The Hague (www.knowledgeonthemove.nl). The objective of the conference was to reflect upon the state of affairs concerning research for development and to generate a new spirit and new enthusiasm, particularly in the Netherlands. The conference took place against the backdrop of a number of global trends:
   • The global context for development and international cooperation is changing rapidly;
   • Knowledge and innovation are increasingly recognized as basic ingredients for economic and social development;
   • Unfortunately, in many of the poorest developing countries, the capacity for research and innovation is fragmented and even deteriorating;
   • Because of its international orientation, research is becoming less embedded in the societal context;
   • As a consequence, research cooperation and development cooperation seem to be moving in opposite directions, one focusing on international research agendas and the other on national development agendas;
   Concluding observation: Research for development finds itself caught in between.

The participants of the conference looked at these trends and challenges from three perspectives: a) research partnerships; b) embedding research, and c) research capacity. They concluded that the new understanding of research for development acknowledges the need for a more equitable global knowledge order in which knowledge and research capacities are widely distributed to be able to link generalized and contextualized knowledge. Such a global knowledge order is essential if we are to meet the development challenges of the 21st century. The capacities needed to meet these challenges relate to the ability for transdisciplinary research and interactive learning within innovation systems. But they equally relate to disciplinary quality and rigour. These two capabilities – interdisciplinary skills and disciplinary knowledge – are complementary and indispensable for research for development, which needs to be grounded in both society and academia. This means that research for development has to be highly networked both locally and internationally.

The conference book is expected to be published within the next few months.
2. Dr Robert Palmer, NORRAG, gave a short presentation of the findings of the NORRAG web-survey among its members. He highlighted the composition of the membership, their professional interests, how the members use the NORRAG facilities, and their preferred topics for future issues of NORRAG News. The topics which gained most support are: TVET (21%); ii) Partnership, Education Financing, Aid Modalities (9%); iii) Access, Equity, and Quality (9%).

3. Professor Kenneth King, CAS-University of Edinburgh, NORRAG NEWS Editor, discussed with the audience some topics related to “The Politics of Partnerships”, the working title of the next NORRAG NEWS issue. Professor King explained how topics of NORRAG NEWS are chosen and contributions solicited. While in the past a small number of ‘usual suspects’ were asked to write a short piece, nowadays members spontaneously submit articles once the theme for the coming issue has been announced. Contributions come from all over the world. It is a challenge to increase the membership in non-English speaking countries. To tackle the under representation of the network in some regions, policy briefs (synthesis of the main topics in a NN issue) are now being translated into French, Spanish, German, Arabic and Chinese. Adding a translation into Russian in the near future has also been suggested.

NORRAG NEWS has little competition because it is not a peer reviewed academic journal but a platform where academicians and professionals can share ideas, views and experiences in a quick and informal way. It that sense it is unique.

4. Ad Boeren, Senior Policy Advisor, Knowledge and Innovation Directorate of Nuffic, led a brainstorming session on what NORRAG could mean to the Dutch members, and what the members could do for NORRAG. The audience was positive about organizing NORRAG meetings like this one, but the topic of the meeting should be more closely linked to current or upcoming policy debates and should avoid duplicating similar initiatives by other networks, such as those of DPRN and NWO/Wotro. It would be wise for NORRAG to explore where it could organically link up with those initiatives and major policy meetings in the Netherlands. Younger researchers should be encouraged to contribute to NORRAG NEWS.

Although the attendance of this first meeting was smaller than expected, 15 of the 86 registered Dutch members showed up, the participants were positive in their evaluation of the event. Overall, the initiative was welcomed and should have a follow-up.
OVERCOMING INEQUALITY: WHY GOVERNANCE MATTERS

A critical reflection on the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009

Monday 26 January 2009

The Jeffery Hall, The Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL

Overcoming Inequality - why governance matters is the seventh annual Education for All Global Monitoring Report. It maps the complex and multiple facets of inequality and examines some of the key questions that national governments and donors must address in attempting to ensure that the benefits of education are shared by the poor and by disadvantaged groups and regions that are being left behind. It shows that public policy and governance reform, together with sustained financial commitment, can break the cycle of disadvantage, improve access, raise quality and enhance participation and accountability.

Purpose
The colloquium, organised jointly by the UK National Commission for UNESCO and the UK Forum for International Education and Training, has three objectives:

1. To present the report and its findings.
2. To subject the report and the specific themes within it to critical review and discussion.
3. To identify how UK-based stakeholders can support progress in the areas covered by the report towards EFA by 2015.

Programme
Kevin Watkins, the Director of the GMR team, will introduce the report and its findings. Distinguished plenary speakers will respond and help to frame the ensuing debate. In the afternoon, facilitators well known for their work in the area will lead discussion groups.

Participants
The colloquium will be of interest to development experts, comparative education specialists, economists, social scientists, policy makers and planners, literacy and early childhood experts, officials in bi-lateral and multilateral agencies, NGOs and civil society groups active in education, health and community organisations.
Further information and registration

For further information about the report see www.efareport.unesco.org. Copies of the full report will be made available to participants on the day.

A full programme will be posted on www.ukfiet.org and www.unesco.org.uk.

To register for the colloquium please contact Claire Bastin: C.Bastin@leeds.ac.uk. The full fee is £25 and the student fee is £12.

Sponsored by the Department for International Development (DFID)

0-0-0-0-0

THE NEW POLITICS OF AID PARTNERSHIPS

Thematic Section of the 10th UKFIET Conference on Politics, Policies and Progress, 15-17th September, New College, Oxford.

The notion of ‘partnership’ has become a dominant concept in discussions of development. The older terminology surrounding aid relationships of transactions between ‘donors’ and ‘recipients’ has been replaced with this new discourse of ‘partnerships’ between countries. The sense of equality that is suggested by these changes is, however, often belied by the reality. In many countries and regions, aid agencies are having an even more fundamental impact on developing country policies than before. In some, the aid dialogue surrounding poverty reduction strategy papers – in which the education sector is often an important constituent – is more centrally concerned with policy change than it ever was. Equally, new modalities, including sector-wide approaches, sector and direct budget support, bring external actors much closer to the heart of national government politics and policies than the earlier project-based approaches – especially so where external aid finances almost half the government budget. It is important to analyse the dynamics of these new patterns of influence, including the continuation of the project modality in new forms, – to document their nature, the language in which they are embedded, and how they interplay with the influence which domestic politics has on policy formation.

Of course project and programme aid is no longer a prominent element in Latin America, East and South-East Asia, except for a few countries. But new forms of knowledge transfer and policy learning continue to be influential. There, it would be useful to explore the ways in which domestic politics actually drives educational policy in countries like Brazil, Chile, Malaysia or China. Some of these countries have continued to be aid recipients, e.g. China and India, while they have developed new approaches to development aid and economic cooperation. In contrast, in many other poorer countries, education and training policy may often be driven by the external politics of aid. Nevertheless, how do some countries with strong national ownership of educational policy promote this, despite apparent aid-dependency and strongly expressed donor
priorities? These questions invite interrogation of the politics/policy process in countries which are not aid-dependent as well as in those which are.

Equally, new actors in development cooperation have emerged in addition to traditional bilateral and multilateral development agencies and the international NGOs. Internationally-known multinational firms as well as special funds and foundations have joined the other actors in development cooperation, along with national research bodies. New partnership models are also rapidly developing which involve the participation of households, the private sector and governments in new ways. Often modelled on northern experience, public-private partnerships are advocated on grounds of efficiency, ownership and effectiveness, yet often risk creating new patterns of privilege which exclude the poor. Corporate actors are also often shaping national systems of education and training through corporate social responsibility programmes, internal training practices, and through their interaction with local training providers and the wider labour market. These new models and approaches emerge on the basis of both local and international experience and action, all with potentially important implications for educational policy and practice in the South.

This thematic section is open to proposals and welcomes abstracts (maximum length 250 words) that relate to this new politics of development cooperation in education and training, involving both public and private actors at national and international levels. See the website [www.cfbt.com/ukfiet](http://www.cfbt.com/ukfiet) The deadline for abstracts, sent to the UKFIET site, NOT to us, is 3rd April 2009.

The Section is sponsored by three institutions: 1. NORRAG, the Network for Policy Research Review and Advice on Education and Training. Its focus has been on the politics and policies of aid for over twenty years ([www.norrag.org](http://www.norrag.org)) [Prof. Michel Carton and Kenneth King]. 2. RECOUP, the Research Consortium on Educational Outcomes and Poverty, coordinated by the University of Cambridge; it has a research strand on aid and partnerships [Prof. Christopher Colclough]; and 3. The UNESCO Centre for Comparative Education Research at the University of Nottingham [Prof. Simon McGrath].

Contact Point for Queries:

Dr. Robert Palmer, NORRAG, Amman: Rob.Palmer@ed.ac.uk

0-0-0-0-0