Meeting the capacity challenge? The potentials and pitfalls of International University Partnerships in Higher Education in Africa

A Literature Review

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JEFCAS Working Paper No.1

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Email for correspondence for this paper: a.l.mdee@bradford.ac.uk

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Summary

The central aim of the paper is to examine the nature and function of higher education in Africa, and to explore the potential for partnerships between institutions in the Global North and South to assist in meeting the current capacity challenge. The paper starts with a critical exploration of the contemporary shifts taking place in higher education around the world and how this is transforming academic and professional identities. Following this is an analysis of the rationales that drive the process of 'internationalisation' of higher education. We argue that internationalisation and globalisation present both a challenge and an opportunity for the rapidly expanding systems of higher education in Africa.

We then go on to consider how international partnerships might support the development of Higher Education institutions in Africa and we present a critical analysis of the pitfalls and potentials of such collaborations. We also reflect on a long-term collaborative relationship between the Universities of Bradford (UK) and Mzumbe (Tanzania). From this we take the view that robust and strategic long-term partnerships can avoid neo-colonial relationships and offer potential for both partners, but this requires institutional commitment at all levels.

This literature review serves as a foundational study, which will feed into further papers reflecting on the evolution and practice of the partnerships in place between JEFCAS (University of Bradford) and HE institutions in Africa.

1.0 A changing global HE landscape

Institutions of Higher Education bear a heavy responsibility in these times. They should be sites of knowledge creation and critical debate, which contribute to both economic and social development. They should be enabling the students who study in them to graduate with the skills that they and their future employers require. In Sub-Saharan Africa enrolment in University is booming and many economies are growing quickly. A growing middle class now has the money to invest in higher education. The numbers of Universities on the continent are swelling as governments invest and new private providers emerge to capitalise on the demand for qualifications. Alongside this expansion, there are a number of critical concerns in relation to capacity. Many of the Universities remain poorly equipped and resourced, key curriculum areas are lacking, there are insufficient numbers of Academics with PhDs available and systems of quality assurance are weak or non-existent. The question that we then ask in this paper is how can partnerships between African Universities and Universities in the global North contribute to meeting this capacity challenge? Our paper takes an exploratory approach and reflects on concerns that some partnerships may simply be an excuse for academic tourism.

1.1 Higher Education and Development

There has been an increasing global demand for higher education with institutions facing the challenge of widening access and participation. As Figure 1 demonstrates, student enrolments have risen globally over the last decade.

What is most evident from figure 1 is the stark gap between enrolments in various parts of the world, with sub-Saharan Africa still showing around 5% of the population engaged in higher education as compared to more than 70% in North America and Western Europe. However, in many African countries demand is growing rapidly (UNESCO 2009).

Figure 1. Tertiary gross enrolment ratio by geographical region, 2000 and 2007
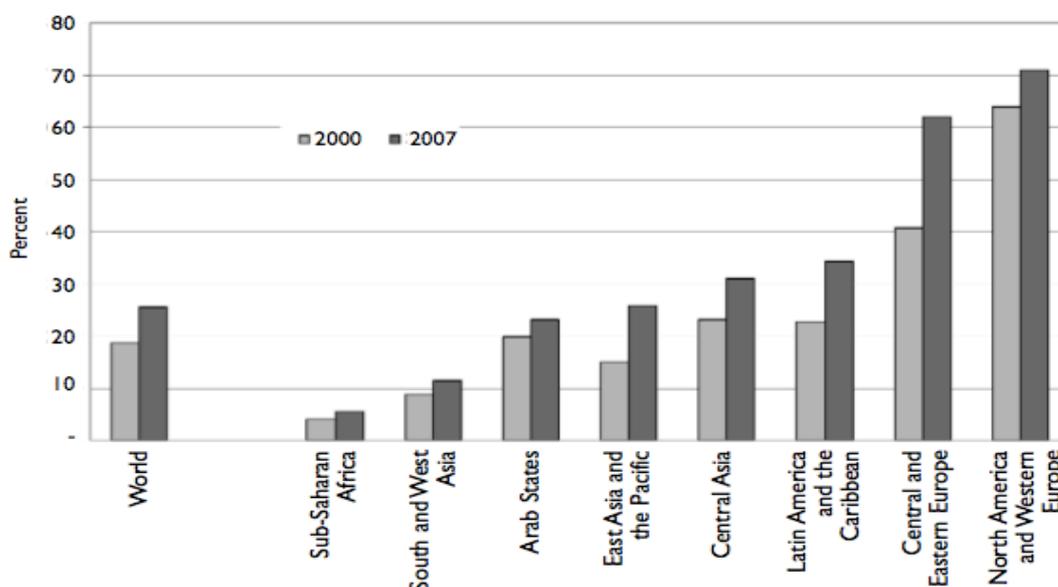
Note: These data include all post-secondary students (ISCED4, 5 and 6)

Source: (Altbach, P., Reisberg &Rumbley 2009)

This increasing global demand has created pressure on higher education institutions to provide recognisable and, economically relevant qualifications, which value a diversity of cultural and economic influences. It is suggested that higher education (HE) is a critical element of development and will repay investment by governments, if they are to make progress in a world that feeds on knowledge and thrives on competition (Oyewole 2009; Cloete, Bailey &Maassen 2011). It has been further argued that such education can play a significant role in narrowing inequalities between the global North and South as has been seen in India and China. Cloete et al (2011) argue development investment in HE has suffered in recent decades with the international aid community firmly focused on the provision of primary education. Higher education has tended to be viewed as a luxury and a preserve of the local elites, rather than a significant driver or contributor to social and economic development.

  The systematic neglect of African universities acquired the status of official policy during 1980s and 1990s following the general presumption that university education yielded higher private benefits but negligible public returns (Psacharapoulous, G &

Patrinos 2002). Higher education was therefore believed to create no significant impacts on social equity or poverty reduction. This perspective was propagated through an body of theoretical rhetoric and empirical evidence emerging especially from the World Bank (Psacharapoulous, G. & Woodhall 1985). This also led to greater calls for educational spending to be directed towards investment in Primary Education, the culmination of which can be seen in Millennium Development Goal 2 which seeks universal primary education but fails to mention education beyond the primary level (UN 2010). This has had the result that aid flows for education to the primary level far exceed those for higher education. Whilst this is certainly appropriate in terms of benefits to the wider population, it is necessary to acknowledge the role of strong higher education institutions in producing skilled graduates to drive development.

In the last decade the value of Higher Education to economic development is now firmly recognised (if not adequately supported) by the mainstream development institutions. The World Bank International Task Force on Higher Education (ITHE) suggests that "without more and better HE, developing countries will find it increasingly difficult to benefit from the global knowledge-based economy" (World Bank 2000). In addition empirical evidence supports the positive impact that tertiary education can have on economic growth and poverty reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa (Bloom, Canning &Chan 2005). Oyewole, (2009) asserts that the role of higher education is not just for creating economically successful individuals, rather it is for building economies and providing templates for human development. He premises his assertion on the historical role that knowledge has played in determining whether individuals and/or nations develop and prosper.

There is concern that this narrowly utilitarian view of the contribution of HE to development misses the broader social value. Higher education has been called on to be more relevant not only in its work of educating students and societies with technical knowledge but also for social and intellectual transformation. Professor Helen Lauer recently argued that

"African Universities must return with urgency to their original mission of training and encouraging the intrepid intellectual power of autonomous individuals...." ,Prof Helen Lauer, University of Legon, Ghana – Proceedings of conference on the Development Philiosopy of Osigwe Anyiam-Osigwe, University of Ibadan 22nd Nov 2010 .

And indeed, one of the giants of the post-colonial era, Julius Nyerere asserted that *"Finally, our education, especially our higher education, should be socially responsible. Education for Self-Reliance is not Education for Selfishness."* (Nyerere 1999)

So African Universities find themselves with a challenge as both the appointed 'powerhouses' of technical innovation, suppliers of skilled labour and sites of social and intellectual transformation. The substance and nature of global higher education is also changing and HE institutions have had to be adaptive and respond to new expectations, changing needs and realities. Shifts in HE have been a significant phenomenon globally in the past 20-30 years with rapid expansion and with new actors entering a thriving global market place. In many countries there has also been significant decline in public funding to educational institutions. Hence Universities compete to recruit students from a global pool and the drivers of internationalisation have contributed to a diverse landscape of initiatives under this heading including: the development of new international networks and consortia; the growing number of students, professors, and researchers that are actively participating in student mobility schemes; the increase in the number of courses, programmes, and qualifications which focus more on comparative and international themes; more emphasis on the development of international/intercultural and global competencies; stronger interest in international themes and collaboration.

Significantly there is also a surge in the numbers of academic programmes delivered across borders; an increase in campus-based extra-curricular activities with an international multicultural component; the impetus given to the recruitment of international/foreign students; the rise in the number of double degrees; the expansion in partnerships, franchise, and offshore satellite campuses; the establishment of national, regional and international organization of focused international education; and, new regional- and national-level government policies and programs supporting academic mobility and other internationalisation initiatives (UNESCO 2009). One of the leading rationales at the institutional level for

internationalisation is the preparation of graduates to be internationally knowledgeable and inter-culturally skilled so that they can live and work in more culturally diverse communities at home and abroad (Knight, J 2004a). The increasing demands of the global knowledge economy are shaping the higher education agenda and also drive international partnerships and student mobility. Many jobs in the global within the global economy require educational qualifications at the tertiary level. Consequently, the demand for higher education has increased globally and the profiles of the students have changed. Second, the increasing demand for higher education has coincided with a changing view of the role of the state in the global knowledge economy. This has resulted in the rise in the "market forces" in higher education, which has manifested itself in the form of resource diversification and increased willingness to pay tuition fees. For instance in Tanzania in 2001 there were only 3 Public Universities in Tanzania. In 2011 there are 18 Universities recognised by the Tanzanian Commission for Universities with 10 out of 18 being in private ownership (TCU 2011).

This market is characterised by intense competition for students, scholars, and resources. Yet, the competition is no longer circumscribed by the national boundaries; it is now global in scale. However, if we are to understand the opportunities for African HE in internationalisation then it is then essential that we understand the current resource and capacity constraints within African HE institutions (Oyewole 2009).

Since their inception, the colonial and post-colonial higher education establishments in Africa have staggered through rapid periods of structural change and deepening economic and governance crises (World Bank 1998; 2000; Samoff, J. & Bidemi 2003). The enforcement of the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programmes in developing countries had precipitated a disastrous epoch in the history of Africa's political economy; pushing entire societies into conditions of heightened social, economic, and ecological vulnerability (Samoff, J & Bidemi 2003; Sawyerr 2004).

The higher education sector suffered severe impacts of the escalating economic and financial disasters that affected most developing countries in the 1970s and 80s (World_Bank 1998; 2002). As a result, public universities across sub-Saharan Africa

have become consumed in a spiral of uncoordinated demand-driven expansion, dilapidated learning and physical infrastructure, poor working conditions, low staff morale, patchy academic quality standards, and budgetary deficits, all compounded with the ravages of 'brain drain' of talented academics to better opportunities overseas (Sawyerr 2004).

More recently, waves of strikes[1] and protests at universities across the globe are reported in the international media. The uneasiness within global higher education institutions has been attributed to a range of factors including high tuition fees; poor learning infrastructure and staff capacity, government failure to adequately fund universities; compromised quality and poor conditions for students (Kizito 2009)[2]. For HE institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa, such pressures are acute but also comprise competing incentives (Cloete et al 2011). With insufficient public funding, it is often difficult for HE institutions to fulfil their social role and instead are compelled to behave as private organisations teaching as many students as possible for the lowest unit cost. The problem of insufficient, or in some cases even declining funding, is often compounded by the inefficient use of available resources.

These management inefficiencies drain scarce resources away from the fundamental objectives of increasing the access, quality, and relevance of higher education. Obamba et al suggest that in Kenya:

> *"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*

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[1] The student strike at University of Puerto Rico in May 2010 was in response to budget cuts at the University of more than $100 million. Full article can be accessed from: http://www.democracynow.org/2010/5/17/student_strike_at_university_of_puerto. In November 2010, UK government faced a protested over government budget cuts. More details can be accessed from: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/8123194/Student-tuition-fee-protest-turns-violent-as-Tory-headquarters-evacuated.html

[2] Kayiira Kizito is a Uganda correspondent for University World News.

certificates at the expense of quality ... ethnicity has permeated universities and we either change course or we perish" (Quotation in Obamba & Mwema (2009) p.22.

In a somewhat contradictory way, the expansion and diversification of higher education systems without fundamental reforms in the public sector has often led to both internal and external brain drains. In many public African universities, low paid professors seek second and third extramural jobs such as teaching at private higher education institutions to supplement their incomes. Many academics are also lured by consultancy assignments offered by development and aid agencies at the expense their institutional commitments (Harle 2009). This internal brain drain is compounded by external brain drain (Doss, Evenson &Ruther 2003).

There is also a wider cultural challenge for HE institutions in Africa, namely that many systems of higher education are generally an artefact of colonial polices and institutions (Teferra & Altbach 2004). Therefore it has been argued that formal systems of education may also marginalise their students from indigenous society. As Nyerere (1999) asserts many forms of education require alienation from yourself and your community in that they privilege western and supposedly 'rational' knowledge systems above all others. It is important to acknowledge this as a contextual factor in thinking through HE partnerships between institutions in different cultural contexts. The internationalisation and globalisation of higher education is by no means something new and is linked to the history of colonisation. Its patterns around the world are directly related to the level of internationalisation of each nation state's political, cultural and economic systems. In the contemporary world, internationalization is one of the major forces impacting and shaping higher education. The impact of current global evolutions in higher education in Africa cannot be understood outside of historical contexts. Except for Egypt and South Africa, whose systems of higher education date back beyond colonialism, modern higher education in Africa has its roots in former colonial metropoles in which African universities operated as university colleges of the metropole major universities. Multiple international languages (dominated by English and French) imposed during

this period constituted a strong internationalisation factor for higher education in many of these countries (Oyewole 2009).

Within the rapidly evolving global knowledge system, there is also a growing appreciation for locally-specific knowledge in Africa. Concerned about the ability of institutions of higher education to maintain their autonomy in the face of globalisation, African scholars generated the Accra declaration on the internationalization of Higher Education in Africa in a meeting held in Accra, Ghana, in 2004 which declared:

> [a] renewed commitment to the development of higher education in Africa is "public mandate" whose mission and objectives must serve the social, economic and intellectual needs and priorities of the people of the African continent while contributing to the "global creation, exchange and application of knowledge"...we are therefore against the reduction of higher education...to a tradable commodity subject primarily to international trade rules and negotiations, and the loss of authority of national governments to regulate higher education according to the national needs and priorities. (AAU 2004)

This call recognises the possibility for an education that is both relevant and non-alienating, but that also contributes to the creation of global knowledge. The challenge for HE in Africa is great. Whilst the value of robust HE institutions is no longer in doubt, it is clear that significant challenges of capacity, vision and incentive remain. We now consider the role of Higher Education Partnerships (HEP) between institutions in Africa and the North as one means by which some aspects of these challenges might be addressed.

2.0 Africa higher education and the potential of collaboration

A recent UNESCO report on HE in Africa recommends international partnerships and collaboration as one means of addressing problems plaguing higher education at the global level. Partnerships involve organisational joint ventures which can take several forms — between or among institutions, through departmental alliances across institutions, or with university programs that pair with businesses or community agencies (Altbach, P., Reisberg et al. 2009). Many scholars have argued

for academic collaboration as a means of enhancing access, strengthening the capacity of institutions and bridging existing gaps. The available research on higher education classify the rationales driving the need for collaboration at local, regional and international levels as: social, political, economic and academic rationales (De Wit & Knight 1999; De Wit 2002; Altbach, P. & Knight 2006)

It is imperative to reaffirm the role and importance of higher education for sustainable social, political and economic development and renewal in Africa in a context where on-going globalization in higher education has put on the agenda issues of increased cross border provision, new modes and technologies of provision, new types of providers and qualifications, and new trade imperatives driving education. Higher education in Africa has to respond to these challenges in a global environment characterised by increasing differences in wealth, social well-being, educational opportunity and resources between rich and poor countries and where it is often asserted that 'sharing knowledge, international co-operation and new technologies can offer new opportunities to reduce this gap (Knight, J. & Wit 1999). Although this 'technology optimism' can be countered with a more pessimistic view of a digital and knowledge divide which will further build inequalities between institutions (Oyewole 2009). Multiple forms of the internationalisation of higher education could potentially bring identifiable mutual benefits to African countries as much as to their cooperating partners in other countries and regions. To that end, international cooperation in respect of knowledge creation, exchange and application, to the enhancement of access to higher education and to increasing academic mobility within Africa itself might be assumed to be beneficial to all the key stakeholders (Ogachi 2009).

The collaboration of HE institutions in research, teaching and service is necessary given the increasing interdependency among nations in addressing global issues. The international and intercultural aspects of curriculum and the teaching/learning process are important for their contribution to the quality and relevancy of higher education. Given internationally available knowledge, it greatly benefits each individual nation to create knowledge links to other countries. These links help a country guard against isolationism and parochialism; they also open the society to broader economic, intellectual, technical, and social possibilities. A strong public

case can be made for reducing any import or export constraints on the flow of new knowledge. Higher education collaboration could potentially provide Africa with a critical mass of professional peer review not available at the national level, thus sustaining peer pressure for learning and excellence as well as alleviating professional isolation. It is also an effective mechanism for keeping in touch with the rapidly changing frontier of knowledge through contact with the rest of the world and information sharing.

Another benefit is associated with the provision of a medium of exchange of experiences in a comparative mode and a mechanism for gleaning best practices from specific higher education policy contexts thus making them an important resource for collective knowledge. Networks provide a cost effective means for specialized training and skill formation often not viable at the national level given the limitation of resources and time availability of specialist trainers. This applies not only to research but also collaborations in teaching and quality assurance (UNESCO 2009). Further North-South collaboration between HE institutions constitutes one possible approach for the pooling of resources and capacity. In this way, partners can enhance their professional credibility thereby attracting additional opportunities for professional engagements and providing credible inputs from Africa into global learning systems. Finally HE collaboration can in theory enhance the quality of higher education by providing opportunities for professional interaction and help create a professional ethos and *esprit de corps* on a larger scale.

The development and maintenance of higher education partnerships is by no means without its difficulties and challenges. We would argue that higher education partnerships can sometimes be susceptible to 'blindness' as to the local contexts of the participating universities and that they are unable (or unprepared) to recognize the complexity of them. Evidence suggests that international partnerships are not easy to sustain (Morin 2001). Morin (2001) further refers to the 'blinding paradigms' – things that obscure prospects for effective international higher education partnership. These barriers are identified as: poor communication and feedback, complacency, misguided improvement objectives and lack of credibility between the partners. Misconceptions in international partnerships often involve educators negotiating agreements, designing programmes, and delivering services in settings

and work contexts that are not fully familiar to them. As long as all parties benefit, such differences do not necessarily pose a problem. Nonetheless, these programmes often encounter frustrations. As cross-border partnerships expand in number, size, and complexity, the need to more fully understand the ingredients of success increases.

Partnership arrangements come in all shapes and sizes, and emerge for many reasons, even within the same institutions. HE providers need to look beyond simple and attractive definitions of partnership and determine what is best for them in a particular situation, given the needs, capacities and its relevance. However, this does not always happen. Lessons from higher education partnerships indicate that many institutions have and are declaring their intentions for partnership and in some cases senior managers spend much time developing strategies for working more closely with partners, yet, in many instances, there is no apparent change at operational level. On the other hand, regardless of whether senior managers favour partnerships or not, there are also instances where, at an operational level, there is unofficial partnership that emerges out of necessity (Wanni, Hinz &Day 2010)

Clearly, both approaches are sub-optimal and arise from a failure to appreciate the benefits and difficulties entailed in establishing partnership, especially the need for a consistent approach throughout the institution. What is required, if partnerships are to achieve their purpose, is a combination of strategic intent and operational necessity. Owing to the challenges facing higher education in Africa there will need to be a more focused and cooperative approach in order to provide reasonable and sustainable solutions that establish working partnerships which go beyond project-based short-term funding relationships. Such approaches to partnership building tend to be favoured by donors such as the British Council in supporting UK-Africa HE links but do not necessarily constitute a basis for building a sustained and productive partnerships. Leaders and managers of higher education institutions will need to form strong networks and alliances involving cooperation with their counterparts abroad in an attempt to look for sustainable solutions to existing challenges. For instance HEPs involving collaborative provision of taught programmes may offer reciprocal learning on processes of quality assurance (UNESCO 2005; Ogachi 2009).

As highlighted above in reference to quality assurance, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) suggests that "*The lack of comprehensive frameworks for coordinating various initiatives at the international level, together with the diversity and unevenness of the quality assurance and accreditation systems at the national level, create gaps in the quality of higher education delivered across borders. It makes students and other stakeholders more vulnerable to low-quality provision of cross-border higher education*" (OECD 2002):10.

Due to the existence of this gap, a joint guideline for quality provision in cross-border higher education, based on UN and UNESCO principles and instruments emerged (Daudet & Singh 2001) and targeted stakeholders in higher education, provided orientation for practitioners and sought to promote mutual trust and international cooperation between the receivers and providers of cross-border higher education. Quality assurance paradigms and mechanisms vary throughout global HE systems but in effective teaching and research collaborations, some shared and negotiated agreement on the constitution of quality is certainly desirable. Ogachi (2009) identifies the lack of shared agreements on quality assurance has hampering efforts towards greater regionalisation in HE in Africa.

Internationalisation of higher education, in its current phase, has developed to be a more complex enterprise, sometimes operating outside the surveillance of national regulatory institutions. What is clear is that the process, even if conceived from the point of student mobility, establishment of offshore campuses, access to academic programmes of foreign universities or engaging in joint research and development, the process still remains unequal, and for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, magnifies previous interaction with the West, only that now the players in the current phase of internationalisation have multiplied. As Altbach (2002) observes, internationalisation of higher education is characterised by deep inequalities. For example, a few countries dominate global scientific systems, the new technologies are owned primarily by multinational corporations or academic institutions in the major Western industrialised nations, and the domination of English creates advantages for the countries that use English as the medium of instruction and research. This state of affairs means that although internationalisation of HE is touted as a solution to the

problems facing higher education provision in Africa, the reality may be different. What internationalisation and collaborations could well do is to deepen the relations of dependency of local HE institutions on HE institutions in industrialised countries. There is also the danger as stated earlier of the privileging of some forms of knowledge over others (Obamba & Mwema 2009; Ogachi 2009; Oyewole 2009).

  For countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, internationalisation of HE magnifies other historical and political processes. For example, during the cold war period, partnerships in higher education between African countries and the Western superpowers were structured to achieve certain socio-economic and political ends favourable to the superpower country involved (Poku & Mdee 2011).   Similarly Ogachi (2009) states in the current phase cross-border initiatives are dominated by the lucrative provision of 'business education' at the undergraduate level rather than a more developmental objective of building postgraduate research capacity in the sciences.

We might speculate that internationalisation of higher education could lead to forms of 'HE imperialism' where weaker systems in developing countries give way to stronger ones from the industrialised countries, in terms of institutional set-ups and more importantly knowledge packages. More specifically, it is not automatically apparent that internationalisation is beneficial to higher education in Africa. Whilst being aware of this threat we would still argue that HE partnerships do offer mutual potential benefits and therefore we turn to explore the mechanics of partnership.

3.0 The mechanics of partnership

Prospective partner institutions should be consciously aware of cultural and power differences; it would be presumptuous to believe that one can simply arrive at a HE Institution in another country and begin to offer a collaborative provision of programmes, or any other form of partnership. These are all things that take time, if one looks at funding that is allocated to HE partnerships, many such programmes are funded only for short periods of time and for narrow objectives. The danger of this approach is that without building on a pre-existing relationship or using such funds as embedded components of longer-term links is that they simply facilitate academic's holidays (Wanni et al 2010)

There is limited critical and analytical literature relating to North-South Higher Educational partnerships, there is even less that chronicles what the process has been to formulate a partnership. What does it take to formulate a partnership in the first place, which ones have been successful, what programmes have they offered, what have the benefits been to each party?

There have been some recent attempts to do just this. In the UK, the Africa Unit of the Association of Commonwealth Universities produced a good practice guide for partnerships. The Carnegie report on Partnership for Higher Education in Africa provides a useful checklist for reflection on international partnership in HE based on their long experience in Africa.

- Collaborate on issues and ideas of a scale that one organisation could not do alone.
- Secure senior leadership support and engage them throughout.
- Ensure that senior leadership delegates authority to programme officers.
- Set clear goals and expectations to keep members focused on what success looks like.
- Carry out a brief planning period.
- Establish a clear structure and rules of participation including how to make decisions.
- For large initiatives, create a secretariat or coordinating body and give it decision-making power.
- Be clear about the time commitment and set the time aside.
- Look for a common initiative soon.
- Take time for participants to get to know one another and build trust.
- Consider pooled funding to work on joint activities.
- Set up a system to gather data and evaluate the outcomes of large grants.
- Establish single-reporting templates and contact person or organization for joint grantees where possible.
- Consider broad and deep partnerships—with local agencies, with organisations you are supporting, and with other large agencies and government bodies.

- Establish an exit plan." (Lewis, Friedman &Schoneboom 2010) (pp. 36-41)

The guides are useful as operational checklists but are rather more silent on issues of cultural dissonance and inequality. The challenge is for those academics and institutions engaged in HEPs to foster a deep and sustained commitment to allowing partnerships the time to begin, mature and to flourish into strong relationships with space to reflect on the underpinning motivations and assumptions held by the partners. These should not be not short-term marriages of convenience but respectful and negotiated relationships, which avoid the temptation for academic tourism.

3.1 Building sustainable relationships

The John and Elnora Ferguson Centre for African Studies (JEFCAS) at the University of Bradford has developed a five–year strategy on higher education partnerships that commits it to developing functional collaborations with African universities. The strategy focuses on a small number of partners in SSA. The collaborative initiatives are centred on five broad thematic areas these being: curriculum development and implementation, staff development and capacity building, staff and student exchange programmes; joint research and publication, and networking. The level and nature of collaborations vary depending on the context of each university but it is intended to build long-term partnerships with and between all participating institutions.

The impetus for establishing this partnership approach builds on a long-term collaboration between the Universities of Bradford in the UK and Mzumbe in Tanzania which has its roots reaching back over 40 years. In order to briefly reflect on the relationship between Bradford and Mzumbe we use Knight and *de* Wit's four approaches to international collaboration: *activity, competency, ethos* and *process* to (De Wit & Knight 1999) .

A range of *activities* have formed the basis of the collaboration with Mzumbe University and have been both actively created and reactively constituted in relation to the availability of funds. Specific activities have included student academic support and curriculum development, capacity building for staff on both sides, academic

mobility and partnership on research projects. The academic collaboration has culminated into two joint Masters Degree programmes in the area of International Development offered in Mzumbe University (MU). These programmes are accredited by the University of Bradford but delivered as a franchise by Mzumbe. Availing access to important programmes locally offers unique opportunities to local students who could have not enrolled for the same academic programmes overseas due to financial and visa constraints and thus has the potential to contribute to Tanzanian development. This approach is sufficiently flexible to allow the adaptation of the curriculum to fit the Tanzanian context.

The *competency* approach is related to the outcome approach to university or higher education where quality is thought in terms of knowledge, skills, interests, values and attitudes of the students. Here, the collaboration focused on the human element of the academic community – students and faculty staff. The central aim of this approach has been to enhance transfer of knowledge that is meant to develop competencies in the personnel of both universities to be more internationally knowledgeable and interculturally skilled. In this regard, the international curricula and joint degree programmes which have developed are not viewed as an end in itself but a means of enabling a joint production of knowledge by the students and staff of both institutions.

The *Ethos* approach relates more to organisational development theories with a focus on creating an organisational climate or culture of support of international and intercultural values and initiatives within the collaborative framework. The *Ethos* approach inculcates the culture of internationalised education as an intrinsic component of both institutions. Firstly, the academic staff from both institutions leading and supporting the new academic programmes spent time in joint preparation and development and gaining understanding and knowledge of each other's organisations. Ongoing staff exchanges between the two universities and study visits to other partner universities are part of consolidating an institutional culture of collaboration.

The *Process* approach emphasises the integration of international and/or inter-cultural dimensions into academic programmes as well as in the guiding principles and procedures of an institution. The use of virtual learning environment and access to University of Bradford online academic resources by students and the staff running the joint programme provide a very practical example of sustainable resource sharing enabled by the creation of a joint academic programme, which generates revenue. The joint programme relies on the University of Bradford quality assurance systems, which is seen by Senior Management of Mzumbe as a positive input for the development of quality assurance processes in Mzumbe.

Several factors played a key role in making the collaborative provision between Bradford and Mzumbe reasonably sustainable namely: the long history of personal and institutional connections between the Universities and staff; the leadership and enthusiasm of the key players specifically including Senior Management on both sides; and the availability of seed funding from the British Council through an Education Partnerships in Africa grant. These critical factors appear to reflect many of the suggestions contained in the Africa Unit Good Practice Guide (Wanni et al 2010) and from the Carnegie Report cited above.

Despite the gains that have been realised in the partnership, some challenges still abound: there is limited logistical support for staff; the limited availability of ICT equipment and skills gaps in staff and students makes access to and use of digital learning resources challenging. Furthermore, there is need for reliable and fast broadband services to cope with the teaching and learning demands of the joint programme. Bradford and Mzumbe need to continue to work together on processes of quality assurance, particularly for example in the use of software to detect plagiarism by students. Exposure to such software is new for Mzumbe but is much welcomed by staff in trying to counter the growing problem of the 'copy and paste' internet essay. The collaboration requires the flexibility to adapt and amend practice to fit the local context whilst trying to ensure that students studying in both Bradford and Mzumbe achieve comparable standards in assessment. The staff working on the programme in Bradford have considerable previous experience of working in Tanzania and other countries of SSA. This factor alone provides a robust possibility

of mutual understanding, which may not be possible in short-term partnerships more akin to academic tourism.

5.0 Conclusion

The sheer scale of the potential for partnerships to contribute to the improvement of higher education is both an opportunity and a threat. The opportunity is for universities to work together to improve services, expand coverage of programmes and increase the relevance of HE. The threat is that the diversity of opportunity can fragment efforts, suck in resources and reduce effectiveness. Therefore, the benefits that appropriate, well-thought out and well-managed HE partnership between the north and south can bring are considerable. Unfortunately, much of what has been written and spoken about higher education partnerships do not distinguish between those situations where partnerships are possible and beneficial and those where they are not.

While cross-border partnerships in higher education are expanding rapidly, they are also taking on new forms which, in turn, raise new issues in higher education organisation, management, and finance. The rate of expansion and wider experimentation with a range of organisational forms of cross-border cooperation will continue, but this proliferation will pose challenges for universities trying to chart a sensible course into this terrain. The dynamics that underlie motives, relationships, and operational strategies in these partnerships are different and, in many respects, less well understood by HE leaders than those associated with more narrowly focused instructional collaborations. Thoughtful analysis of institutional experiences to date provides a useful tool for those seeking to enter into new forms of cross-border partnership but actors in this arena need to think strategically if HE in Africa is to develop to meet the challenges ahead. The gains for partners in both North and South to be enriched through collaboration should not be underestimated but neither should they be romanticised as a complete answer to the capacity challenge.

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