

Nuffic expert meeting ‘A changing Landscape. Making support to higher education and research in developing countries more effective’, The Hague, 24-25 May 2005-02-11

Background paper and annotated bibliography

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Introduction

This paper provides a descriptive background for the Nuffic expert meeting to be held in May 2005. Issues will be addressed by following the key themes envisaged for the expert meeting. This first chapter deals with higher education in both developing and developed countries. The current global trends in higher education will be briefly discussed (1.1) and, subsequently, a distinction will be made between trends in higher education in developing countries (1.2) and trends in internationalisation in higher education in developed countries (1.3). In chapter 2, the characteristics, trends and perceived inconsistencies within the context of international cooperation programmes will be addressed.

Chapter 1. Issues concerning challenges and trends for higher education in the South and North

1.1. Global trends in higher education

Globally, the higher education sector is characterized by the rapid pace of change, enhanced competition, and ongoing internationalisation. Larger segments of the population require higher levels of education and training. Furthermore, socio-economic demands means that human capital formation is also changing, mainly characterized by an expansion of participation in education by people and by the appearance of new phenomena such as lifelong learning. The result of these phenomena is that education systems are continuously under adjustment, with more emphasis on creativity and flexibility and a focus on the changing demands of a knowledge-based economy.

The World Bank report on “*Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education*” (2002) states that scientific and technological knowledge yields its greatest benefits when it is used within a complex system of institutions and practices known as a national innovation system (NIS). According to the Bank, this system is composed of 1) knowledge producing organizations; 2) the appropriate macro-economic and regulatory framework, including trade policies that affect the diffusion of technologies; 3) innovative firms and networks of enterprises, and 4) proper communication infrastructures and other factors, such as access to the global knowledge base and certain market conditions that favour innovation. Higher education systems figure prominently in this framework, both as the backbone for high skill levels and as a network for information sharing.

The report provides a comprehensive overview and refers to a changing higher education landscape with distinct trends. Some of these will be briefly discussed below.

Diversification

A noticeable international trend relates to the *diversification* within the higher education sectors, also in developing countries. Alongside traditional universities, new types of institutions have emerged such as community colleges, polytechnics, mid-career training institutes, and corporate universities. This has created not only opportunities in terms of meeting the growing demand from society, but also threats: in some cases, the mushrooming of institutes in the sector is an uncontrollable development related to problems with management, quality, and accreditation. The World Bank (2002) has remarked that in Latin America, Asia, and, more recently in Eastern Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa, this trend has been intensified by the substantial growth in *private* higher education. A second wave of institutional diversification is now discernible with the emergence of new forms of competition in higher education that transcends traditional conceptual, institutional and geographical boundaries (CVCP, 2000).

Multinational Companies (MNCs) such as Siemens, BASF, Thyssen, Toyota, Dow Chemical, CISCO, IBM and many others, have for some time already been players in the global education market. The influence of their corporate universities is expanding, not least because of the vast development of global data communication networks. Corporate universities may operate through their own network of physical campuses, as virtual universities (IBM and CISCO) or through alliances with existing higher education institutes. Experts are predicting that by 2010 there will be more corporate universities than traditional campus-based universities in the world (World Bank, 2002).

Emergence of borderless education

The growth of virtual universities is becoming a global phenomena. Various initiatives are evident on a national level, such as the Virtual University of Monterrey, Mexico, and the Abdul Razak University, the first online institution in Malaysia. Virtual universities are explicitly targeting international or developing education markets. Educational networks, such as the World Bank-sponsored African Virtual University (AVU), have been active on the African continent for some years. This also applies to the World Bank's Global Learning Development Network (GLDN), which is operational on several continents. It is a growing partnership of more than 60 learning centres and public, private, and non-governmental organizations. It applies interactive distance learning techniques for development and enables knowledge sharing, dialogue, training and consultations on development topics. Whereas the AVU is more directed towards higher education and is confined to one continent, the GLDN is globally oriented towards the immediate application of knowledge. It is therefore aimed at the mid-career training market. An interesting feature is that various international donors have formed a partnership within the context of this network.

Various actors and institutions are penetrating the 'borderless' higher education market, such as virtual universities, franchise universities, corporate universities, media companies, libraries, museums, and media brokers (Salmi, 2001). New players, such as software producers, publishers, entertainment firms and others, are seeking to tap into the potential of an emerging international market in higher education (Benell and Pearce, 1998).

New types of partnerships in higher education

In many countries today, joint masters programmes have been developed with international partners. For instance, Delft University (the Netherlands) has been running courses in 'Global Product Realisation' for a number of years. On these courses, students from South Korea, the

USA and the Netherlands are jointly involved in industrial design processes in an online network.

Today, partnerships in this type of academic cooperation are occurring in developing countries too. For instance, the concept of what Robinson¹ calls 'metacourses' is relatively new (Robinson, 2002). In January 2001, political science students at Tufts University, the University of Dar es Salaam, and Makerere University began participating in an online metacourse organized around the theme of 'Regionalism in Africa'. Using a Blackboard-based digital learning environment as a communication and knowledge-sharing platform.

1.2. Trends in higher education in the South

An important development in the South that has a substantial impact on the entire higher education system in many countries is the vast increase in enrolment at universities which is clearly visible in Africa (SADC). This development has become widespread and is the result of a strong emphasis on capacity development in basic education during recent decades. This means, however, that the higher education system is in many cases under pressure in countries such as Uganda. Kasosi (2003) highlights the challenges of higher education in Uganda, which may also apply to many other developing countries and in some cases developed countries as well. These include:

- insufficient remuneration for academics;
- the deterioration of infrastructure due to lack of funding;
- student imbalances between a) the sciences and ICT and b) the arts and humanities;
- regional imbalances in access to education;
- insufficient attention to and insufficient resources for research;
- the looming threat of being cut off from sources of global knowledge creation, engagement in knowledge creation, and distribution due to the digital divide;
- making curricula more relevant to local needs.

Kasosi also identifies opportunities which could lead to benefits for the country. The most relevant of these are:

- the increased demand for higher education;
- liberal decentralisation policy by the government;
- steady economic development;
- resilience of the lower education system;
- the positive attitude of the World Bank towards higher education;
- a steady population growth that increases the demand for education;
- the digital revolution increasing the pace of at which knowledge is created and transmitted;
- the falling price of computers.

An interesting development in Uganda is that almost all new universities are private. Private universities are not sponsored, governed or funded by the government. It is therefore no surprise that most of these universities are under-funded. Moreover, they still receive little

¹ This refers to two or more campus-based courses that are linked by an overarching theme, a core body of knowledge, overlapping readings, and a series of interactive website exercises designed to involve groups of students at distant institutions in a common learning plan. It consists of the sum total of all the lectures and syllabuses associated with the individual on-site course; the web page (including text, images, video clips and links); and the new knowledge generated by students through their various online interactions.

funding from foreign private foundations. This is in marked contrast to state universities, which receive support from organizations such as the Commonwealth Fund, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation and others (Kasozi, 2003).

At the institutional level, the development of strategic policy plans has become an almost standard feature at many universities in various developing countries. In other words, transition processes are generally slow and it takes years to really effect institutional transformation. Moreover, it is not a static phenomenon, but rather an ongoing process. Based on this, institutional operational plans ('5-year rolling plans') are adjusted annually.

The development of ICT policy and master plans at the institutional level (and in many cases, the national) is a relatively new development in developing countries. It goes without saying that this has consequences for the development of university computing centres, for example, and therefore for the entire organizational structure as well. Since around 2000, e-learning elements have started to be seen as an integrated part of the ICT Policy and Master Plans or Educational Policy Plans.

As indicated earlier, new ICT applications are finding their way to countries with a poor ICT infrastructure. Moreover, the example of the joint online course partnership between the UDSM, Makerere University and Tufts University shows us that ICT is also entering the field of primary processes. In various consolidated universities in the SADEC region, ICT infrastructures and automated administrative systems have been undergoing development for more than a decade. These universities are now entering the e-learning era, making use of digital databases, Internet resources and digital libraries. These developments generate a lot of challenges: first of all, the introduction of e-learning requires new teaching skills and new teaching roles (e.g. the teacher as course moderator). In other words, it creates pedagogic challenges. Additionally, it creates organizational challenges. The organization around the platforms (i.e. Blackboard, WebCT, Lotus Notes, etc.) that facilitate the development of digital learning environments (DLEs) requires a strong and stable organizational set-up in order to support tutors and students. Finally, there are technological challenges: platforms, servers, computers, and standard and specific software (e.g. medical software) that require maintenance and replacement.

Apart from locally-developed digital content (i.e. Digital Learning Environments), more tailor-made and 'borderless' applications in the primary processes are entering the higher sectors in the South, involving large-scale corporate entities as online content suppliers. The University of Dar Es Salaam and Makerere University entered into arrangements with CISCO systems, USA, and are participating in the CICSO Networking Academy Programme. Once they had obtained the status of a CISCO-certified training institute, online CISCO courses (on ICT-specific subjects) could be conducted on-campus by academic staff of both the UDSM and Makerere University, reaching many ICT students and mid-career professionals. A similar arrangement has been made between Microsoft and the Kigali Institute for Science and Technology in Kigali, Rwanda.

1.3. Trends in internationalization in developed countries

The forces of globalization and the internationalization of education are forcing institutions to position themselves as centres of excellence. For many universities in the developed world, internationalization is a trend that has been visible for quite some time. However, the formalization of internationalization policies is relatively new. Internationalization in higher education in developed countries covers areas such as:

- 1) student exchanges;

- 2) exchanges of academics and researchers either individually or as part of joint research and/or curriculum development projects;
- 3) contracted cooperation projects in research and education;
- 4) institutional partnerships.

To avoid dealing with each of these internationalisation aspects separately here, we will limit ourselves in this section to briefly outlining the first two aspects as well as the final one. International cooperation in formalized projects (4) will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Kenneth King remarked that there are trends showing that universities need to spread internationally and need to adjust their reach to cover a much wider market than their own nation states. Yet at the same time, they need to be specialized and flexible in order to be competitive internationally. Moreover, they need to offer access to knowledge and research that is both locally and globally relevant (King, 1997). Exchanges of students and staff may flow two ways and manifest themselves in many forms. However, institutional and national instruments are currently being designed in the North to attract foreign students, particularly in science and ICT subjects, who may end up obtaining an academic staff position after completing their PhD.

The internationalisation of academic and research personnel, educational programmes, cooperation projects and student exchanges is often perceived as a prerequisite for sustained participation in and access to the international pool of researchers. However, the main concern of various countries (e.g. Germany, Japan, Finland, and Singapore) is not so much whether these researchers stay or go, but whether their local research environments appear prominently on the international map of science exchanges. According to Mahroum (2003), the debate concerning retention and repatriation of expatriate researchers to the South is a different one than the debate concerning the North. In the North, the debate concentrates on career opportunities and the possibilities of improving the quality of research output. In the South, however, the debate concentrates on general factors such as living conditions, poverty, political instability and the lack of resources for scientific research.

Both developed and developing countries need highly qualified knowledge workers and other senior staff. The contribution of foreign skilled workers to economic growth and achievement in host countries, in particular to research, innovation and entrepreneurship, is increasingly being recognized. At the same time, the problems caused by brain drain in the poorer sending countries are substantial. Migrants from developing countries are generally more likely to stay in their host country than migrants from the developed countries. The harsh reality is that only a handful of countries have been successful in drawing their talented expatriates back to their home countries. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that some 300,000 professionals from the African continent live and work in Europe and North America. By some estimates, up to a third of Research & Development professionals from the developing world are believed to live in the OECD area. In 2000, it was estimated that some 1,500 highly qualified Indians returned from the United States, although more than 30 times that number leave India each year (Chevantes, 2002).

For Northern universities, the emphasis in terms of institutional partnership lies more in building strategic alliances with quality partners in the North than in working together with weaker partners in the South (Boeren, 2004). When partnerships in the South are established, it is usually in newly industrialized countries. Some cases from the Netherlands may serve as an example. The Delft University of Technology established *formalized* partnerships with universities in China, but not in the with those in 'traditional' developing countries, e.g. those

in the SADEC region. However, it does implement capacity building projects in Asia, Africa and Latin America which are funded from external national and international subsidies.

The Technical University of Eindhoven does not pursue a policy of formalized institutional partnerships in developing countries, despite the fact that a limited number of individual projects are implemented in these countries. Its international cooperation office has been all but closed down, and this also applies to other universities, such as Radboud University in Nijmegen.

On the other hand, a few universities do have explicit policies in relation to development aid in general. This applies to universities such as the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, Groningen University, Maastricht University, the Erasmus University in Rotterdam and Wageningen University. The internationalisation policy of Wageningen University is based on institutional partnerships with counterpart organizations in developing countries. It aims to develop policy instruments to cater for the integration of developing countries in global markets and has a strong emphasis on rural sectors.

The specialized international education (IE) institutes have always had a strong focus on capacity building in developing countries. They were established in the sixties to specifically cater for capacity and training needs in developing countries. The six major institutes established collaborations with institutions in the South through the Dutch funded SAIL Projects Programme and other funding schemes. These institutions have recently merged with some of the universities (e.g. Maastricht University, Wageningen University and the Erasmus University). After the development policy change in the Netherlands which took effect in 2002 and replaced the old cooperation and fellowship programmes with new ones (see Chapter 2 for more information), it remains to be seen to what extent the IE institutes will continue to direct their activities exclusively towards long-term cooperation (staff exchanges, institutional development, curriculum development and joint research) with universities and post graduate training institutions in developing countries. The new programmes make it more difficult to establish long-term collaborations and the IE institutes have to compete with universities and other providers for project and fellowship funds.

In terms of content, the faculties have a fair amount of autonomy in these types of projects. At the level of the faculties or departments, longer-term partnerships with counterpart institutions in the developing countries may be established. Usually, the training of PhD and MSc students forms the core and most attractive feature of these types of cooperation. Facilitating PhD and MSc candidates from developing countries with research posts may also lead to longer-term academic cooperation and/or partnerships. This serves mutual interests: for the PhD candidate and for the university since posts are filled which might otherwise (especially in the sciences and IT) remain vacant.

Generally speaking, formalized cooperation between Dutch universities and higher education institutions in the South at the institutional level hardly exists as it does not seem to be regarded by the Dutch institutions as strategically important. However, partnerships can be found at the level of faculties and departments or specialized international education university institutions.

Chapter 2. Issues concerning the modalities of international cooperation and scholarship programmes

2.1. Characteristics and trends in international cooperation programmes

Most international capacity building programmes in higher education (HE) have been adapted or changed as a result of policy changes and the findings of external evaluations and internal reviews. These changes concern management structures, focus and cooperation modalities. A rather drastic change took place in the Netherlands, when, in 2001, it was decided to replace the seven existing cooperation and fellowships programmes by a new cooperation programme and two new fellowships programmes. These programmes², which started in 2002, have a number of striking characteristics:

- the direct influence of Dutch higher education institutions on the management of the programmes has been completely stopped;
- the demand in the South determines the themes and topics for cooperation under the NPT programme³ and the allocation of fellowships across the listed NFP courses;
- ownership in the South is stimulated through a demand-driven identification and articulation process and by the preference given to Southern institutions when awarding a grant for a cooperation project;
- partners in the cooperation programme are brought together through a public tender procedure.

The long-term linkage formula for institutional strengthening that was characteristic of the MHO⁴ programme has been abandoned. The NPT funds capacity-building projects with a maximum duration of four years.

To a certain extent, the characteristics of the new Dutch programmes echo trends which could also be observed in programmes and policies of other donor agencies. In most programmes, the influence of higher education institutions in the management of the programmes has now been curtailed or terminated. Programmes are managed by government agencies or independent intermediary organizations. Belgium offers one of the few examples where the universities still have a mandate to manage programmes (Boeren, 2004).

‘Demand-driven’ and ‘ownership’ have been buzzwords in development cooperation for more than a decade, and all programmes have incorporated these laudable principles into their objectives. The extent to which these concepts have been deployed, however, differs from programme to programme. In some programmes, it means linking projects and training to agreed sectors for bilateral cooperation, while in others it means the consultation of organizations in the South when projects are being identified and formulated. The ultimate proof of ownership lies in putting the managerial responsibility of the project in the hands of the organization in the South, including responsibility for the management of project funds. This definitively relates to accountability requirements. The SIDA/SAREC⁵ and NPT programmes are rare examples of government-funded programmes which stimulate full Southern ownership.

² The Netherlands programme for the Institutional Strengthening of Post-secondary Education and training Capacity (NPT) and the Netherlands Fellowship Programmes (NFP).

³ For a quick overview of European university cooperation and fellowship programmes, see bibliography section

⁴ MHO: Joint Financing Programme for Cooperation in Higher Education, managed by Nuffic.

⁵ SIDA: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency/Department for Research Cooperation.

Matching partners through a public tender procedure is quite uncommon in development programmes that try to stimulate cooperation and partnerships. In most cooperation programmes, it is expected (either explicitly or implicitly) that long-term mutually beneficial partnerships will evolve from working together on a project. One of the arguments of the Dutch government to introduce the element of tendering in the NPT and NFP programmes is that the competition between providers of education and training in the Netherlands in tenders will result in better value for money for the projects. Secondly, it will also give more organizations in the Netherlands the chance to participate in the programmes.

Competition is a common phenomenon in other programmes, but it is usually organized differently. In other programmes, the competition is between the project proposals submitted for funding by cooperating partners. A selection committee assesses the proposals and selects the best. The selected proposals receive funding and are then implemented. The Norwegian NUFU⁶ programme, the Danish ENRECA⁷ programme and Belgian VLIR-OI⁸ programmes, as well as the European Commission cooperation programmes, use this competitive model. While the selection processes of some of these programmes were not always open and transparent in the past, much has improved over the past few years.

The concentration on fewer countries is characteristic of the NPT programme, and follows a common trend, especially in programmes which aimed at systemically strengthening institutions in the South. In research cooperation programmes, the concentration is less strict because the mutual interests of the cooperating partners carry more weight than the alignment of these activities with other development goals and programmes.

In general, there is a clear tendency of convergence of development aid ideologies and objectives at the level of the global donor community. Donor policies have shifted from project support to sectoral programmes, from bilateral interventions to multi-lateral support. There is a strong inclination to align international, national and thematic development policies, ultimately serving one common goal: poverty alleviation.

Furthermore, there is increasingly greater transparency in programme funding. It has become clear in some countries in Europe (Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) that new cooperation programmes, like the NPT and NFP in the Netherlands, are breaking away from the almost exclusive financing of suppliers of education, training and expertise in the North. On the other hand, there are countries such as Norway, Denmark and Belgium where it is acceptable to spend development cooperation funding on maintaining a knowledge base and expertise in the North (Boeren, 2004).

In this respect, the issue of untying aid is increasingly becoming the subject of debate. Proponents of untied aid emphasize that this form of development assistance will lead to more efficient programmes (OECD, 2001). Many European countries (Sweden, Norway, the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark) have already untied more than half of their bilateral ODA. However, all cooperation programmes mentioned earlier (except SIDA/SAREC) consist of tied aid. In the United Kingdom, The Department for International Development (DFID) commissioned a review study considering options for changing the Higher Education Links Scheme (HELs). In the report (Allsop, 2003), the issue of untying of aid is presented as an alternative option instead of the current form of the HELs scheme, because that would enable DFID to gain access to more or better technical assistance.

⁶ The Norwegian Universities' Committee for development Research and Education.

⁷ Bilateral Programme for Enhancement of Research Capacity in Developing Countries.

⁸ Flemish Inter-university Council – Own Initiatives Programme.

Another noticeable tendency is the emphasis on accountability in international cooperation. While in the past more emphasis was placed on activities, input and costs, the current emphasis is on the relationship between objectives and results. The financing principles of programmes and projects are shifting from input to output financing. At the level of the Southern and Northern counterpart institutions, more emphasis is being placed on the accountability of the financial administration of the partners.

As far as technical assistance is concerned, the tendency is towards consortium formation, but not only between the Northern suppliers. Southern providers are becoming increasingly involved in the running of projects, both from the recipient Southern country and also from the region. Partnerships are no longer restricted to North-South partnerships. In various programmes, cooperation projects are leveraged to establish linkages with local organizations or with organizations in the region.

2.2. Trends in brief

Before we focus on the different modalities of cooperation programmes, it may help to briefly summarize the observed trends of the higher education cooperation programmes discussed in the previous section.

Observed trends:

- the alignment of HE collaboration programmes with (bilateral) sectoral aid;
- an emphasis on programme support instead of project support;
- a shift from bilateral interventions to multi-lateral interventions;
- the stimulation of ownership in the South;
- concentration on fewer countries;
- the introduction of tendering processes: enhancing competition in the North;
- intermediary organizations are responsible for programme administration;
- transparency in programme funding and accountability in international cooperation;
- budgeting shifts from input to output financing.
- consortia formation both in the North and in the South
- untying of aid

2.3 Modalities of cooperation programmes

The most common specific objectives of higher education (HE) cooperation and fellowship programmes within the framework of development cooperation are capacity building and the institutional development of the Southern partner, and, on the other hand, research collaboration and networking between Southern and Northern partners. Programme components are fairly standard and follow on from the specific objectives. They include staff development schemes, curriculum development, the improvement of teaching and research facilities, joint research activities, staff and student exchanges and professional advice.

These specific objectives tend to overlap. In many HE cooperation programmes, two or three of the specific objectives are combined. Capacity building may well form part of the institutional strengthening process, and capacity building and institutional strengthening may have to be in place on the Southern side before research collaboration between partners can begin.

Examples of programmes aimed at the institutional development of Southern institutions through HE cooperation are the Dutch-funded MHO, HOB⁹ and SPP¹⁰ Programmes, and the Belgian-funded VLIR-Institutional University Cooperation (IUC) Programme. The MHO and VLIR-IUC programmes use a focused strategy to strengthen the partner institutions. The programmes are implemented in a small number of institutions in the South and take a long-term view. In those institutions, a number of projects have been launched on the basis of a strategic plan formulated by the Southern institution. The projects should have an impact on certain disciplines and on administration and management, but above all, their sum total should strengthen the performance of the institutions as a whole.

Examples of research cooperation programmes are the Norwegian-funded NUFU programme, the Danish-funded ENRECA programme, and the Belgian-funded VLIR Own Initiatives Programme. These tend to combine research cooperation with capacity building and elements of institutional development. The projects are carried out in a great number of countries, as the initiative is usually taken by the Northern partner. The view is medium to long term. The British-funded Higher Education Links Scheme (HELs) funds cooperation between higher education institutions in the United Kingdom and developing countries. It has no institutional development objective, and it supports knowledge transfer and staff development, which makes it more of a capacity-building programme. The European Commission also funds programmes aimed at establishing networks and partnerships between higher education institutions in Europe and other continents. Among these are the Asia-Link programme, focusing on the creation of new partnerships and new sustainable links between European and Asian higher education institutions, and reinforcing existing partnerships, and the ALFA programme, a networking programme for European and Latin American higher education institutions.

The Swedish SIDA/SAREC programme and the NPT programme managed by Nuffic¹¹ are also focused on building the capacity of institutions in the South, but with a rather different perspective. The SIDA/SAREC programme focuses on research that strengthens national knowledge systems in a small number of countries with which Sweden has broad, long-term programmes for development. The programme is demand-driven and funds national research programmes or national research institutions through a package of modalities. Cooperation with Swedish research institutions on staff development and joint research is one of these modalities, but will only take place if the need has been defined by the Southern partner.

The Dutch NPT programme supports the strengthening of education and training capacity in 15 countries. The projects are identified by local stakeholders and should preferably strengthen the sectors which have priority in the Dutch bilateral aid programmes in these countries. Dutch expertise is contracted to co-implement the projects. The cooperation relationship is not defined in terms of a partnership, but rather in terms of a business arrangement between the client (project owner) and the Dutch service provider. This is further underlined by the way in which suppliers are selected. The projects which have been identified by Southern partners are advertised in the Netherlands through a public tender procedure.

Some of the programmes referred to are explicitly aimed at building long-term partnerships between the cooperating partners. This is especially the case in the NUFU, ENRECA and

⁹ The Programme for Cooperation between the Dutch Universities of Professional Education and Educational Institutions in Developing Countries for the Benefit of Primary Education (HOB Programme).

¹⁰ The SAIL Projects Programme (SPP).

¹¹ Nuffic administered the NFP, MHO, SPP and HOB programmes which ended in 2004, and now administers the NPT and new NFP programmes since 2003.

VLIR-OI research cooperation programmes. It is hoped that the cooperation institutions, as a result of programme support, will reach a stage of equal strengths where collaborative research of mutual interest will be possible. The establishment of a well-functioning partnership can be regarded as proof of the sustainability of the project results.

Partnership is an implicit aim of institutional development programmes such as MHO, SPP and VLIR-IUC. However, the mutual interests of partners in these programmes tend to be smaller than in the research cooperation programmes because of the emphasis on curriculum and staff development, the improvement of management and administration, and the improvement of facilities.

In the SIDA/SAREC and NPT programmes, there is no mention of partnerships. In these programmes, Swedish and Dutch institutions respectively, are instruments in realizing the capacity aspirations of the Southern organization. Partnerships may evolve as a result of the implementation of the project, but this is a spin-off and not a primary aim of the programme.

The fellowship programmes are, almost by definition, capacity-building programmes. They cover one aspect of institution building, i.e. staff development, but do not aim to establish partnerships. Most of the fellowship programmes which are funded by European donor agencies are designed to train the staff of organizations and projects located in developing countries. This applies to the Netherlands Fellowship Programmes, the NORAD Fellowship Programme, the UK's Commonwealth Scholarships and Fellowships Plan, the VLIR Scholarships Programme, the Danish Fellowship Programme, and the Alban Scholarship Programme of the European Commission.

The table below provides an overview of the orientation of the different European capacity-building programmes in higher education (Boeren, 2004).

Table 1: *Typology of programme modalities by objectives*

Objectives	Capacity building		Institutional development		Cooperation and networking
Modalities	Service provision		Linkages		Partnerships
Programmes	Fellowship Programmes	SIDA/SAREC NPT HOB SPP HELS	MHO VLIR-IUC	NUFU ENRECA VLIR/OI	Alfa Asia-Link

2.4. Programme ownership

Over the years, development assistance policies have moved from a project approach to a programme approach identifying a limited number of sectors to receive more concentrated support, and from a paternalistic perspective to a demand-driven perspective emphasizing the need for local ownership and responsibility. Likewise, programmes in higher education have shifted from mainly academic cooperation based on mutual interests towards more development cooperation directed towards the institutional development of higher education (Audenhove, 1998: 545).

Multilateral and bilateral programmes are increasingly governed by agendas that have been agreed by the entire donor community, such as the Millennium Development Goals and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. Donor agencies tend to strive for consistencies in policy, and synergy between various development programmes. Not surprisingly, there has been a trend among almost all donors to align cooperation programmes in higher education and research with bilateral programmes and overall development policy principles. Hence the programmes are increasingly expected to contribute to poverty alleviation, remove gender discrepancies, improve the environment, support sectors identified for bilateral cooperation and focus on sub-Saharan Africa. In their approach, they should be demand-driven, promote ownership in the South, stimulate donor coordination and lead to sustainable results. The room for initiatives from the North, the free choice of cooperating partners, and free identification of topics for research has diminished considerably (Boeren, 2004b).

This bundle of governing principles may very well serve today's policies of the donor community, and appear to be rightfully serving the needs of the South, but it certainly does not help raise or sustain the interests of Northern organizations in these programmes.

Traditionally, cooperation programmes in higher education and fellowship programmes have not been obliged to follow these overall development policies to the letter. The reasons for this were twofold. The first part relates to the fact that in some countries, the programmes served dual purposes. In a number of countries, support for those countries' own higher education was an important underlying – and usually – implicit motivation (Audenhove, 1998: 538). The programmes in Norway (NUFU), Denmark (ENRECA), Canada (UPCD) and Belgium (VLIR-OI) are regarded as important instruments in creating and sustaining development-related expertise in the country and to internationalizing the higher education system. Collaboration between institutions and fellowships are good instruments for capacity building on both sides, and they serve objectives that are broader than those of development cooperation alone.

The second reason is that partnerships and networks will only work if both sides have something to offer that meets a need of the other side. This process cannot easily be accomplished within strict boundaries set by priority themes and regions. In return, the institutions in the North are expected to make a financial contribution to the projects. In the NUFU, ENRECA, VLIR-IO research cooperation programmes and in the HELS and VLIR-IUC programmes, this contribution is substantial. Northern institutions contribute their staff time to the projects, free of charge. In the Dutch institutional development programmes MHO, SPP and HOB, there is a 15% financial contribution to the personnel input of the project budget. Northern institutions are expected to capitalize their returns in the form of published research, opportunities for staff and student training, development of international courses and advisory and consultancy services on the basis of expertise gained, and the like.

The dual goals of the programmes, combined with a sometimes considerable own contribution, had implications for the ownership and management of the programmes. The institutions in the North regarded the programmes as their own and were granted the responsibility to manage the programme and allocate funds. This was the case in the first phases of NUFU, ENRECA and the Dutch SPP programme, and still is the case in the Flemish VLIR-IO programme. Another modality was to put the management in the hands of intermediary organizations with strong links to national universities. Nuffic, the British

Council and AUCC¹² manage the cooperation and fellowships programmes on behalf of their national governments.

In recent years, this situation has changed in some countries. In an attempt to decrease the influence of Northern institutions on the administration of the programmes and to shift the ownership to more neutral grounds, management has been transferred to other bodies. In Norway, SIU's 13 status was changed on 1 January 2004 from the Centre for International University Cooperation, created in 1991 by the Norwegian Council of Universities (UHR), to an administrative agency under the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (UFD) with its own Board of Directors. The ENRECA programme is now being managed by the Council for Development Research, and in the Netherlands, Nuffic had to break its formal links with Dutch higher education institutions and adopt a new and independent status in 2002 in order to qualify for the administration of the new international cooperation programmes. In Belgium the programmes are still administered by a Council of Universities. However, the Council has been granted this responsibility in exchange for complete transparency and accountability in programme management and implementation.

In Northern Europe, the trend towards de-linking the programmes from the Northern institutions and aligning them with bilateral cooperation themes and focal areas is clear. The Sida/SAREC programme already had this model. The Dutch NPT programme followed its example. The NUFU and ENRECA programmes have been de-linked, but still struggle to combine bilateral development aims with partnership conditionalities. The latter applies equally to the HELS programme. The British government had plans to terminate this programme, not because it was unsuccessful, but because it did not tally with the government's other development cooperation policies.

The table below provides an overview of European programme modalities and ownership (Boeren, 2004a).

Table 2: *Typology of cooperation programmes according to the criteria of programme modality and programme ownership*

Programme modality	Service provision ← → Cooperation	
Programme ownership		
Northern partners	SPP HOB HELs	NUFU ENRECA Asia-Link
	VLIR-IUC MHO	
Southern partners	SIDA/ SAREC NPT	

¹² The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada administers the University partnership in Cooperation and development Programme.

¹³ The Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Higher Education (SIU), administers the NUFU and NORAD Fellowship Programmes.

In the programmes just mentioned, the initiative for projects and the responsibility for the implementation of the projects lies primarily with the Northern partners. In the NUFU, ENRECA and VLIR-OI programmes, a committee of peers is responsible for the selection of project proposals. The principle of mutual benefits for both partners requires that the interests of the Northern partner are also taken into consideration in the selection of areas of cooperation. Their interests may not fully dovetail with those of the Southern partners.

2.5. Inconsistencies in programme set-up

Boeren (2004a) identifies three inconsistencies in the programmes with regard to guiding policy principles and strategies which affect their performance. These inconsistencies create tensions among the stakeholders, especially the donors and higher education institutions in the North.

The first inconsistency concerns the compatibility (or lack thereof) of the objectives of bilateral development policies and the objectives of international cooperation in higher education and networking. Compatibility in this respect is achievable, but is highly dependent on conditions and local circumstances in the South and in the North. Most bilateral aid programmes direct the bulk of their resources to the most needy countries and organizations. HE cooperation flourishes best between more or less equal partners with mutual interests. Universities in the most needy countries are far from equal to their Northern counterparts and have little to offer in the way of academic cooperation, yet they are often the focal point of bilateral aid programmes. In other words, these universities are often selected as partners in HE cooperation programmes for political reasons, although they have little to offer academically. They need to be built up to a certain level before mutually beneficial cooperation with their Northern counterpart can take off. This is quite common in most cooperation programmes. Projects start off as 'technical assistance' in order to build up the most basic capacity, and gradually evolve to a stage where academic partnership and collaboration become possible. This process takes time.

The second inconsistency relates to the collaboration period. To build up a department from scratch to the level where it can offer masters and PhD programmes, takes eight to twelve years. Curricula need to be developed, staff trained, facilities improved. The partners should have guarantees for this type of long-term funding in order to be able to reach the required level. This applies to most programmes: not many cooperation programmes guarantee funding for such a long period. Projects are usually funded for 4-5 years.

A third inconsistency lies in the perception among donors that the principle of joint financing makes the interest of the Northern institutions in the partnership visible, and that at the same time the projects need to address the urgent needs of the Southern partner. Evaluations of joint financing programmes show that the majority of projects carried out are relevant to Southern institutions. However, at the same time it is clear that cooperation is usually suggested by the Northern partner and that management also lies in the hands of the Northern institution, which tends to be the 'owner' of the project. Hence, joint financing leads to projects that are relevant to the Southern institution, but they may not be the type of projects the institution needs most.

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Appendix 1

A selection of European university cooperation and fellowship programmes

Belgium

The VLIR Own Initiatives Programme (VLIR-OI)

Research cooperation programme

(Approx. EUR 3.5 million per year; 75 projects in progress)

Information: <http://www.vlir.be/>

The VLIR Institutional University Cooperation Programme (VLIR-IUC)

Institutional development programme

(EUR 8.2 million per year; 12 partners in the South; >60 projects)

Information: <http://www.vlir.be/>

The VLIR Study Scholarships for International Courses and International Training Programmes Participants

Scholarship programme for professionals from developing countries to study in Belgium

(EUR ? per year; 2003: 859 PhD or Masters degree scholarships; 370 scholarships for training)

Information: <http://www.vlir.be/>

Denmark

The ENRECA Programme

Research cooperation and institutional development programme

(EUR 8 million per year; approx. 43 projects in 26 countries - 1999 figures)

Information: <http://www.um.dk/danida/evalueringsrapporter/2000-5/2000-5-1/colophon.asp>

The DANIDA Fellowship Programme

Fellowships to study in Denmark, to cover the training and education needs of DANIDA-funded programmes and projects.

(EUR 10.7 million in 2002)

Information: <http://www.dfcentre.com/>

European Commission

Alfa programme

Regional and multilateral networking between higher education institutions in EU member states and Latin America.

(EUR ?; 15 member states of the European Union and 18 Latin American countries)

Information: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/alfa>

Asia-Link Programme

Regional and multilateral networking between higher education institutions in EU member states and South Asia, South-East Asia and China.

(EUR 30 million for the period 2000-05)

Information: http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/asia-link/index_en.htm

Alban programme

Scholarships programme for Latin Americans to study or retrain in the European Union Higher education Institutions

(EUR 88.5 million; approx. 3,900 students and professionals until 2009; 18 Latin American countries)

Information: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/alban>

The Netherlands

The Joint Financing Programme for Cooperation in Higher education (MHO Programme)

Institutional development and HRD programme

(EUR 20.5 million per year, ending in 2004; 11 partners in the South; > 90 projects)

Information: <http://www.nuffic.nl/>

The Programme for Cooperation between the Dutch Universities of Professional Education and Educational Institutions in Developing Countries for the Benefit of Primary Education (HOB Programme)

Institutional development and HRD programme

(EUR 1.4 million per year, ending in 2004; 7 projects - 7 countries)

Information: <http://www.nuffic.nl/>

The SAIL Projects Programme (SPP)

Institutional development and HRD programme

(EUR 9 million per year, ending in 2004; 40 projects - 21 countries)

Information: <http://www.nuffic.nl/>

The Netherlands Programme for the Institutional Strengthening of Post-secondary Education and Training Capacity (NPT Programme)

Institutional development and HRD programme

(EUR 31 million per year as of 2005; replaces the MHO, HOB and SPP Programmes)

Information: <http://www.nuffic.nl/npt>

The Netherlands Fellowship Programmes (NFP)

Fellowships for mid-career professionals from developing countries to study or be trained in the Netherlands

(EUR 24 million per year; 1600 fellows each year; 57 eligible countries)

Information: <http://www.nuffic.nl/nfp>

Norway

The Norwegian Universities' Committee for Development Research and Education (NUFU)

Research cooperation and institutional development programme

(EUR 5 million per year; 107 projects in 22 countries - 1999 figures)

Information: <http://www.siu.no/nufu>

The NORAD Fellowship Programme

Fellowships for students from developing countries

(EUR 6.6 million per year; 210 students; 30 countries)

Information: <http://siu.no/vev.nsf/O/NORAD-NORAD+Fellowship>

Sweden

Sida: Department for Research Co-operation (SAREC)

Research cooperation and institutional development programme

(EUR 24 million per year; approx. 200 projects in 9 countries)

Information: <http://www.sida.se/Sida/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=396>

SIDA International Training Programme

Short training courses to enhance managerial and technical skills in DC partner countries

(EUR: 20 million ; 60 course titles; 1,400-1,800 participants per year)

Information: <http://www.sida.se/Sida/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=2335>

United Kingdom

The UK Higher education Links Scheme (HELs)

Institutional development programme

(EUR 4.3 million per year; 450 links in 45 countries)

Information: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/education/helinks/>
Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP)
Network of study opportunities for staff and students in the Commonwealth.
(EUR 17.5 million per year; 600 fellowships)

Information: <http://www.acu.ac.uk/scholarships/>
British Chevening Scholarships
Scholarships for postgraduate studies or research at UK institutions of Higher education
(EUR 54 million per year; yearly intake of approx. 1,850 scholarships; 160 countries)
Information: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/>