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### ***News and Events***

An international workshop on "Enhancing research capacity in developing and transition countries", organised by the Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE) will be held in Berne, Switzerland (21-22 September 2000). The event aims to exchange experiences on strategies and tools for research capacity building and institutional strengthening.

<http://www.kfpe.ch/kfpews2000.html>

"Building Capacity for the Financial Sustainability of Civil Society Organisations (CSO)", Nairobi, Kenya (21-24 November 2000). This conference, organised by the International Fund Raising Group (IFRG), aims to provide a forum to debate and discuss policies and strategies for increasing the financial sustainability of CSOs.

<http://www.ifrg.org.uk/capacity.html>

In April 2000, Capacity.org hosted an on-line discussion on "Joint Action between Local Government and Civil Society for Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development". A report summarising contributions and viewpoints can be ordered from [cb@ecdpm.org](mailto:cb@ecdpm.org)

(More info on [www.capacity.org](http://www.capacity.org))

## ***Advancing the policy and practice of capacity building in international development cooperation***

### ***Partnership - An Instrument for Capacity Building?***

Partnership is one of those concepts that have gained popular currency in international cooperation over the last decade. Underlying the concept is a significant desire to re-balance power relationships between developing countries and external funding agencies, and to progressively transfer responsibility and ownership to the former. Terminology such as donor and recipient has accordingly been replaced by terms like development partners, suggesting a more equitable relationship based on a shared agenda for change.

As tends to be the case, such concepts are over-used and applied uncritically, and critics wonder if, under the veneer of the new jargon, anything has really changed - the "old wine in new bottles" syndrome. Even when it has been applied genuinely, it is debatable whether real partnership can be achieved in a context of inequality, and pervading self-interest.

This issue throws some light on the concept and practice of partnership in a particular realm of development cooperation - twinning - institutional cooperation between Northern and Southern training, research, and public sector organisations. The focus is on how partnership is seen by the different partners, and especially how partnership is seen to support capacity mobilisation and capacity building.

Merrick Jones bases his reflections on work carried out for SIDA to evaluate twinning programmes that aim to build sustainable organisational capacities in the South. Chris Nwamuo sets out some principles required if capacity building through North-South partnerships in the African university sector is to be effective. Johan Helland reports on the twinning experience of two management development institutes in Norway and Tanzania illustrating a strategy to grow cautiously through an iterative process of experimentation and innovation.

Beyond these contributions, there is an ever-growing literature on the topic of partnership, two of which are annotated in this issue. The first reports on an electronic discussion forum on partnership for development organised by the World Bank and entitled: "Learning to Partner with Civil Society." The second reviews guidelines for Research in Partnership with Developing Countries prepared by the Swiss Commission for Research with Developing Countries.

Issue 6 of *Capacity.org* provides a snap-shot of a wider debate and on-going processes of experimentation. We hope these will encourage readers to share their views as well as their own experiences. Contact: [cb@ecdpm.org](mailto:cb@ecdpm.org)

# ***Issue 6***

July 2000

# **Research Capacity Building through Partnership - The Tanzanian-Norwegian case**

The Institute of Development Management – IDM was established in 1972 to meet the need for skilled manpower in the broad sector of public administration, local government and rural development in Tanzania. IDM has always provided training of a practical rather than academic nature. Over the years, it has received considerable amounts of development assistance for investment in the physical plant as well as for consolidation and improvement of its training programmes.

The cooperation between IDM and Agder College in Norway grew out of a long standing relationship between IDM and NORAD (the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) in which various approaches to institutional development have been pursued. These included traditional technical assistance arrangements, on the job training, staff development programmes involving overseas training courses for IDM staff, and a twinning arrangement. A major premise underlying these attempts at academic improvement has been that IDM's leading position and continued sustainability can only be safeguarded through high academic quality. This requires highly competent staff, but also a programme of management research to ensure that the training offered at IDM is relevant to the realities of Tanzanian society.

The partnership with Agder College in Norway has focused on research cooperation. This has been as fortuitous as it was uncertain, since Agder College neither had a strong research programme of direct relevance to IDM, nor a well-established graduate programme. Agder College has thus never conceptualised its relationship to IDM as mentor to fledgling. On the contrary, this point of departure has facilitated the establishment of an equitable partnership, where the comparative strengths and weaknesses, advantages and disadvantages of the two institutions have complemented each other. Research and research training, in contrast to other possible fields of cooperation, involves quite specific activities and bench-marks for progress, and this has guided the partnership. Both institutions have gained:

IDM staff have improved their skills with respect to designing and executing research projects, through training courses in research methodology, and arrangements for supervision;

Agder College has benefited in terms of international exposure and actual research experience in a developing country.

This partnership has been successful in terms of vitalising research at IDM, allowing staff members to pursue research-based advanced degrees and helping to build the capacity and competence needed to offer a graduate studies programme at IDM. It has, furthermore, helped to safeguard academic quality, thus strengthening IDM's position in the market for training and consultancy.

The idea of partnership was strongly supported by NORAD, the main foreign donor supporting IDM. Following NORAD's commitment to 'recipient responsibility', it has been up to IDM to define its own needs and negotiate the scope and content of the arrangement with Agder College. This departs significantly from IDM's first experience with a twinning arrangement in the 1980's, in which the Norwegian partner quickly became a consultant to NORAD rather than a genuine partner to IDM. Under the new format, IDM controls all funds and Agder College has no independent access to NORAD. Furthermore, the interactions between IDM and Agder College have demonstrated IDM's capacity to manage all aspects of the agreement in a professional and business like manner. The practical problems encountered (e.g. cumbersome banking services) have been solved and NORAD has contributed to an equitable partnership, by putting IDM firmly in the driver's seat.

The relationship between IDM and Agder College took several years to mature. In the first phase it was based on good personal relations (Agder College staff members had been working at IDM) and growing mutual familiarity after several rounds of exchange visits. The first agreement was quite broad in terms of possible areas of cooperation and reflected a cautious approach. An elaborate management structure was agreed, involving yearly meetings between the leadership of the respective institutions, in addition to biannual consultations between project leaders. A quite rigid format for individual projects, governing time frames as well as expenses for both Norwegian and Tanzanian participants was also agreed at an early stage. Finally, in the interest of promoting the cooperation, Agder College agreed to an administrative model, which does not seem to cover all economic costs. The agreement thus gave IDM full financial and administrative control over the project, as well as a good deal in terms of price.

This cautious approach may not have been necessary in strictly operational terms, but it helped to establish mutual familiarity and multi-stranded trust relations between the partners. Over time, a framework has been generated, which now facilitates:

- Joint target and priority setting;
- Definition of common interests.

On this basis, the second phase of cooperation has concentrated on a smaller number of projects which are both more directly relevant to IDM's mission and allow Agder College to focus its academic resources more sharply. The expected benefits of the new approach are improved academic quality, increased relevance of research to the Tanzanian reality, and an enhanced competitive advantage in the market for training and consultancy services in Tanzania.

The important lessons to be learned from the IDM – Agder College cooperation are

Partnerships must be built on the self-interest of partners: it takes a long time to build trust!

Equity must be given concrete expression. In this case, the weakest partner (in terms of research competence) was given the strongest hand (in terms of control over resources).

Partners need not provide the same inputs or expect to receive the same outputs from a partnership. Research cooperation, if properly carried out, provides a suitable platform for genuine partnership, since it involves clearly defined activities and widely accepted bench-marks for progress. Not all fields of activity may benefit as much from a partnership arrangement.

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## **Capacity Building through North-South Partnership - The African University Sector**

Any attempt to bring about social change in Africa must appeal to shared societal values, identify and deal with local sources of power and integrate local structures within the process. Doing so will help to sensitise and conscientise the people who will see themselves as key players in the change process, having become aware of their strengths and potentials, and the need to be involved in effecting a change in the quality of their lives. By being involved, recipients are happy to be part of the development process and become fully committed to any development assistance.

North-South institutional partnerships in the African university sector aimed at capacity-building and fostering international cooperation must be conscious of this development principle. Much of the effort towards sustaining African universities in the past two decades has come through donor agencies and partnership arrangements, particularly through North-South academic cooperation.

There is no doubt that the activities and support of these agencies will be required for African universities to meet the challenges of the new millennium. However, experience shows that donors have tended to monopolize projects and have exhibited attitudes, which projected them as the "senior partner". As such, they determine priorities, budgets and activities, and generally interfere with the autonomy

of local institutions mixing up "field logic" with "headquarters logic". The result has been lack of commitment on the part of African partners and the non-sustainability of projects.

### **Why partnerships?**

In general, partnerships between Northern and Southern universities are seek to:

- bridge the unequal educational opportunities existing between them;
- encourage globalisation and the exchange of skills and competence;
- facilitate the transfer of knowledge and resources;
- deal with change, diversity and development in higher education institutions;
- build sustainable capacities for change and development;
- develop capacity to build a research culture;
- encourage international cooperation.

Partnerships can, in particular, help to build capacity in areas such as leadership, providing support for graduate studies, research skills, invigourating institutional or organisational reform, training and staff retention, enhancing teaching methodologies, provision of ICT infrastructural facilities, etc.

A focus on these areas will improve the quality of teaching and learning in African universities, encourage the application and use of ICT in universities and improve leadership and governance capacities, thereby enhancing the image of African universities and equipping them to play their role in higher education delivery.

### **Conditions for effective capacity building**

Whether a Northern university is seeking to increase its market share in international education and training, by offering development assistance, or an African university is seeking to address its human resource needs by purchasing such educational services, there must be a clear analysis and mutual understanding of the conditions informing the relationship. Roles, responsibilities, rights, obligations, and lines of accountability need to be clearly defined.

Partnership for capacity building tends to thrive under certain conditions:

- Clear definition and understanding of the criteria for partnerships, involving a negotiated mutual reciprocity and trust on the part of each partner. Trust is one of the major determining factors, and has thus been referred to as the basis of the social capital required for development;

Respect for values and cultural norms of partners, seriousness of purpose and commitment to meeting partnership objectives;

More open and transparent systems for policy formulation, project funding and implementation;

Willingness of the parties to build enduring relationships on the general understanding that partnerships are meant to build synergies between groups rather than highlight the superiority or weakness of partners.

Without these pre-conditions in place, there is a tendency for the northern partner to feel frustrated due to non-attainment of project objectives, exert undue influence over the other, assume ownership of the project, insist on policies rather than practice to guide project implementation, and not hire local consultants to supervise project implementation.

### Facilitating equitable partnerships

It might be helpful to take the following points into consideration when designing an approach aiming at the realisation of equitable partnerships:

Knowledge of the ground rules and an understanding of the particular university's needs before engaging in partnership is essential and a pre-requisite for sustainability.

Establish staff development programmes or a teaching fellows programme, which encourages the exchange of teachers for 3-6 month periods. Staff development will counter-balance the issue of brain-drain and provide role models for the younger and inexperienced staff.

Donor funding needs to be diversified to ensure equitable development across Africa, rather than the current practice to concentrate on a few of the older universities, especially in an age of private education provision in Africa.

Encourage the generation of ICT "content" in the South, to break the

current domination by the North. The readiness and preparedness of the North to fund research in the South, for knowledge generation and application, will obviously facilitate equitable and more enduring partnerships.

Northern partners should begin to show greater concern for income generating projects by the local universities themselves in order to sustain development in African universities.

Intensify efforts at joint team or collaborative research among university staff to improve research capacity.

Encourage the development of long-term personal relationships, not just short-term ones.

Encourage universities to employ an integrated approach towards community development, thereby ensuring their relevance and contribution towards meaningful development in society.

### Conclusion

At the beginning of the new millennium and in the wake of a new phase of partnership between African universities and their Northern counterparts, institutional partnerships for capacity building must encourage the development of indigenous knowledge and the recognition and use of local structures. The sensitisation of direct beneficiaries to understand the impact of the project on their lives and on the development of local human resources has to be integral part of this approach.

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### Related Sites

<http://www.acbf-pact.org> - The establishment of the African Capacity Building Foundation was a response to the severity of Africa's capacity problem and the challenge to invest in indigenous human capital and institutions in sub-Saharan Africa. The site provides access to information on the implementation of the Partnership for Capacity Building in Africa Programme and ACBF's newsletter.

<http://www.adb.org/WGPSR/publications.html> - This link provides access to interesting reading on material of the Informal Working Group on Public Service Reform. This donor working group is concerned with improving the capacity of public institutions and tries to achieve a more consistent donor coordination in assisting Public Sector Reform.

<http://www.aercafrica.org/> - The research and training programmes of the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) aim to strengthen national research institutions in Africa.

<http://www.intrac.org/n-capb1.htm> - ONTRAC, INTRAC's newsletter, focuses on organisational strengthening as a means to develop and strengthen civil society. See also ONTRAC's Capacity Building News which is included in the newsletter.

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/capacity.htm> - Lists a wealth of policy papers, case studies and UN decisions on capacity building relating to Agenda 21 and sustainable development.

# ***Twinning as a Tool for Sustainable Organisational Capacity Building***

There is currently much interest in organisational twinning as a vehicle for sustainable institutional capacity building. In this article, I reflect on two decades of experience in this field and draw out a small number of what seem to be crucial elements. My experience has been as a consultant for the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) involving me in a variety of twinning projects, in evaluation, feasibility study, project design, and contributing to policy making.

My thinking has been crystallised through my involvement in a research project, commissioned by SIDA, into the efficacy of their twinning model as a mechanism for sustainable capacity building. In particular, SIDA sought evidence that twinning has the potential to enable the partner organisations to learn from each other. SIDA's recent thinking about twinning is influenced by the current upsurge of interest in the notion of 'learning organisations'. The results of the study are described in detail elsewhere (Jones & Blunt, 1999).

It seems clear that twinning offers potential advantages over other possibilities for development cooperation, but that its full potential has not often been achieved. During the last two decades, SIDA has accumulated considerable experience with twinning projects in a large variety of countries. There is no doubt that the combination of professional expertise and SIDA funds in twinning arrangements has – as would be expected – produced some very successful outcomes in the enhancement of professional/ technical competence (which can, of course, also be produced by other development cooperation methods, perhaps more cheaply). There is far less evidence that twinning projects have produced benefits in the development of sustainable organisational/ institutional capacity – which is SIDA's major rationale for twinning. Hence, there remain serious doubts in many projects about the sustainability of enhanced competence when the twinning relationship ends. There is also a danger that twinning projects produce dependency in the developing country partner: The antithesis of the aims of development cooperation.

The research project studied two twinning projects. One of them in particular, in Namibia, seemed to the researchers to have produced benefits beyond the obviously considerable enhancement of professional/technical capacity, and there appeared to be evidence of the development of a putative culture of organisational learning. What made this 'discovery' especially intriguing was that the key elements contributing to this had apparently combined serendipitously. That is, not directly as a result of the twinning arrangement (see Jones, 2000, for a detailed discussion). It seemed that, through this combination of organisational factors, a culture had developed in which it was 'alright' to ask questions and where

the activities undertaken in the twinning projected were seen as opportunities for learning.

This experience, and others mentioned above, lead me to suggest the following as some crucial requirements to capitalise more fully on the potential of the twinning method.

Since sustainability and learning are so closely related, twinning projects should have as their ideal and framework the development of an organisational learning culture, to be specified in project outcome objectives and evaluated at the level of organisational capacity development. A number of models exist for evaluating the development of organisational capacity (c.f. SIDA 1997), which might be used to establish the extent of progress beyond technical/professional enhancement.

Twinning projects must be understood as major organisational change processes. It should be understood by all the stakeholders at the outset that a twinning project is a major intervention in an existing organization. Systems theory tells us that an intervention in any subsystem of an organization will certainly have effects in all the other subsystems, some of which can be anticipated and planned and some cannot. In particular, the management of the developing country partner must appreciate that the establishment of such a change process within its structure will have consequences beyond the delivery of equipment and training of staff (especially if it is successful). This demands flexibility in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of twinning projects.

It is essential that all the parties to the twinning project – particularly the twinned organisations and the sponsoring agency – establish a forum where stakeholders can debate the meaning of the project. This is crucial if abstract Western notions like sustainability, institutional capacity building, and organisational learning are to have any concrete significance in the cooperation; and to ensure that stakeholders understand and are committed to these notions. If a shared perception (ideally, a 'psychological contract') of the project, as an organisational change process with intended sustainable outcomes, can be established, then dialogue concerning organisational learning and capacity enhancement (rather than just technical/professional issues) will become a natural element of the cooperation.

Leadership is crucial. In the Namibian project, the unusually open leadership style of the head of the local organisation was complemented by the abilities of the (Swedish partner's) long-term advisor to the project, who was sensitive to the concerns of

the Namibian partner and was able to influence the direction and tone of the cooperation. As was noted earlier, in this particular project this leadership blend was serendipitous and it is true, of course, that every project is unique in terms of its leadership. Nevertheless, consideration of this aspect of the twinning model must become more explicit, particularly by the sponsor.

The term twinning may appear to imply, unfortunately, that the developing country partner is supposed to become more like its more experienced twin. It is important that twinning projects be viewed by the stakeholders as organisational cooperation, emphasising that the twinned organisations carry equal responsibility, as partners, for all aspects of the cooperation.

It is desirable that the sponsoring agency makes its overarching development goals and its requirements for the twinning projects very clear at the outset. Again, this will reinforce the requirement for sustainable outcomes at the organisational/ institutional level.

The sponsoring agency, at the planning stage, should carefully consider the macro-environment in which the project will be located, to ensure that it will not create an isolated pocket of enhanced organisational capacity within an unchanged hierarchy.

It is crucial that the project is managed in such a way that it creates developmental opportunities for staff that will continue after the cooperation ends. This helps to reduce the danger of losing trained personnel to more attractive sectors .

SIDA's experience of twinning has, for me, reinforced the reality that organisational change of the kind attempted in sustainable capacity building is a complex social process, which to a significant extent cannot be planned for, nor precisely specified.

## References

- Jones, M. L. 2000. Sustainable organisational capacity building: is organisational learning the key? *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, forthcoming.
- Jones, M. L., and P. Blunt. 1999. 'Twinning' as a method of sustainable institutional capacity building. *Public Administration and Development*, 19,381-402.
- SIDA. 1997. Diagnosis of organisations in development cooperation. Stockholm: SIDA.

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## Annotated Bibliography

**World Bank. 2000. Partnering with civil society. An electronic discussion on partnership for development, 29 November 1999 to 28 January 2000.**

With the launch of the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF), the World Bank has reinforced its policy to bring government, civil society, private sector and international funding institutions closer together to bring about better achievement of development goals. The difference with earlier approaches is the stress on civil society as a key actor to facilitate national development processes.

This interesting on-line discussion ([http://www.worldbank.org/devforum/forum\\_civsoc.html](http://www.worldbank.org/devforum/forum_civsoc.html)) on partnering with civil society, organised within the context of the Bank's virtual "Development Forum" responded to this initiative and brought together an

interesting mix of practitioners, researchers, policy makers, non-governmental organisation (NGO) representatives and the Bank's NGO and civil society experts. They discussed such topics as how to deal with the complexity of civil society, its history, its mandates, its capacities and its relationship with the state in a given country context.

More specifically, the main objectives of the forum were to facilitate a discussion on concepts and approaches in building development partnerships, to share experiences and lessons on tools, structures, mechanisms and instruments for building development partnerships and to facilitate communication and exchange between different stakeholders interested in improving the quality of development through partnerships.

Five sets of questions were discussed, each introduced by a guest contribution and dealt with during a one week period. What is understood as a partnership, and whose concepts, definitions and objectives determine the nature of a partnership? How to undertake partnerships, how to determine roles and responsibilities of the respective partners and how to determine the pace and substance of their actions? What makes or breaks a partnership? How do cultural or social-political factors affect the dynamics and success of partnerships? How to measure the results, who undertakes the evaluation and how to determine the overall framework, tools and mechanisms within which partnerships are supposed to be implemented?

Over 100 reactions from around the globe were recorded, providing a wealth of viewpoints and first hand experiences on issues and difficulties at stake when implementing development partnership policies and new approaches. These are particularly useful for people seeking to implement projects through 'real' partnership, a term which - according to many contributors - is over-used in international development cooperation. For various structural reasons related to dependency and conflicts of interest, partnerships are extremely difficult to achieve. But they do have the potential to create and foster ownership among stakeholders, leading to good results if carefully nurtured over time. When evaluating such partnerships, however, an over-emphasis on inputs and impacts should be avoided. The focus should be more on processes and relationships established over time rather than on short term tangible outcomes.

The on-line discussion provides an up-to-date *tour d'horizon* of an ongoing debate and provides a useful overview of what can realistically be expected from development partnerships. To grasp the essence of the discussions, the reader is advised to go through the moderator's end-of-week summaries, which are listed in the table of contents.

**KFPE. 1998. Guidelines for research in partnership with developing countries. Berne: Swiss Commission for Research Partnership with Developing Countries.**

How to work together in partnership to build research capacities? This hands-on publication ([http://www.kfpe.unibe.ch/guidelines\\_e.html](http://www.kfpe.unibe.ch/guidelines_e.html)) gives a useful orientation for a broad audience. Although written primarily from the background of what Swiss research institutions need to undertake in order to implement a new way of working, i.e. capacity building through research partnerships, the principal questions addressed are relevant to practitioners from other sectors.

Setting up and running projects, programmes and institutional cooperation agreements through equitable partnerships require that the approach is well understood and adhered to by all sides. It requires mutual respect, honesty and openness facilitated by effective communication and a commitment to long-term involvement. This needs to be supported by a continuous dialogue and the exchange of information and experiences among all those involved. Only then tangible and visible results will be realised.

This basic message is contained in the first section of the booklet where a set of 11 principles to guide (research) partnerships is elaborated. It includes such questions as how to build up mutual trust, sharing responsibility, how to create transparent structures within organisations and how to jointly monitor and evaluate the collaboration. In a rather detailed manner, the rationale for each principle is explained, supplemented with practical suggestions and a checklist of questions for evaluating how far a specific proposal fulfils the aim. The checklist is rather focused on the research sector, but can be adjusted to other contexts as well.

An annex comprises case material from research partnerships with organisations in Peru, Ghana and the Lake Victoria region and a list of commonly encountered experiences from North-South partnership projects to illustrate the principles. The guidelines and experiences referred to do not claim to be exhaustive on the topic but do provide a useful reference for Northern and Southern partners to set-up and verify their operations.

### ***New Initiative***

By the end of 2000, the World Bank intends to have launched a Global Development Gateway (GDG) as a tool for all development stakeholders to share knowledge, engage in dialogue, and contribute to more effective development aid. The intention is that the gateway will also be a resource for civil society. It will be implemented in a decentralised partnership mode with existing networks, associations and groups as active participants. As an input to the implementation of the planned gateway, extensive consultations - electronic, as well as regional and national meetings - are being planned to gather ideas, suggestions, and feedback from a wide range of potential users, contributors, and partners. These are planned for the next six months. Please contact [globalgateway@worldbank.org](mailto:globalgateway@worldbank.org). For more information: <http://www.worldbank.org/gateway>.

## Further Reading

**ECDPM. 2000. Implementing the new ACP-EU partnership agreement. Lomé Negotiating Brief, (8): 1.**

Looking at the New Partnership Agreement between the 71 ACP countries and the 15 EU Member States this brief analyses the major changes in the new Convention on political and economic cooperation aiming at alleviating poverty and assisting ACP countries to integrate into the world economy. ([http://www.oneworld.net/ecdpm/lome/lmb8\\_gb.htm](http://www.oneworld.net/ecdpm/lome/lmb8_gb.htm))

**James, R. 2000. Power, partnership and capacity building. Ontrac Capacity Building News, (4).**

This article is an edited extract from a forthcoming book by the author entitled "Power and Partnership in Capacity Building". He explores the theme of partnership and power in the context of Capacity Building. (<http://www.intrac.org/n-capb5.htm>)

**Fowler, A. 2000. Partnerships: negotiating relationships, a resource for non-governmental development organisations. (OPS, 32). Oxford: Intrac.**

The perspective adopted in this paper is that Southern development NGOs are typically dis-empowered in today's non-authentic partnerships. The approach concentrates on the organisational dimensions of NGOs' external relations. Two key suggestions for improvement are made. (<http://www.intrac.org/n-ont15b.htm>)

**Tennyson, R. 1998. Managing partnerships: Tools for mobilising the public sector, business and civil society as partners in development. London: The Prince of Wales Business Leaders Forum.**

This publication seeks to guide partnership practitioners from all sectors in developing cross-sector initiatives themselves. Practical information is given on issues such as planning and collecting

resources for partnerships, how to develop cross-sector working relationships or how to manage the partnership-building process. The appendices include checklists and prompters for practitioners involved in the management of cross-sector meetings/ workshop events and action research/ impact assessment. ([http://www.pactpub.com/Info/powoo1\\_icon.htm](http://www.pactpub.com/Info/powoo1_icon.htm))

**Mohiddin, A. 1998. Partnership: a new buzz-word or realistic relationship? Development, 41(4): 5-12.**

The author explores the conceptual and operational understanding of partnership. He asks if partnership is yet another buzz-word or does it connote a realistic post-cold war relationship between the rich and the poor countries? Is it an inevitable form of globalisation or simply a by-product of the donors' self-interests and a calculated strategic response to the changes and challenges of the 21st century? (<http://www.sidint.org/publications/development/vol41/no4/41-4b.htm>)

**Bossuyt, J., and G. Laporte. 1994. Partnership in the 1990's: how to make it work better. (ECDPM Policy Management Brief, 3). Maastricht: ECDPM.**

Is partnership still a useful approach, how can both recipient ownership and donor accountability be combined, and how can changes in the aid system be achieved? This brief summarises the discussions in the aid system. It argues that there is no alternative to partnership, but that the concept needs redefining. Suggestions are made on how this can be done in the management of development programmes. Finally, it analyses strategies to accelerate the desired reform. ([http://www.oneworld.org/ecdpm/pmb/b3f\\_gb.htm](http://www.oneworld.org/ecdpm/pmb/b3f_gb.htm))

(More on [www.capacity.org](http://www.capacity.org))

*Capacity.org* was set up by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) as a tool for development researchers, practitioners and decision-makers. As both a web site and a newsletter, *Capacity.org* brings together information, ideas, and viewpoints on capacity building policy and practice within international development cooperation. It acts as a platform for dialogue and provides a channel for informed review and synthesis of the complex issues faced by development practitioners and policy makers.

Focusing on both the "why" and the "how" of capacity building - debating policy questions and learning from practical experiences - *Capacity.org* seeks to "unbundle" the complex of ideas and practices that we call capacity building. In doing this, the editors particularly encourage the exchange of perspectives and experiences from the South, to ensure that the discussions are rooted in reality.

Developed by ECDPM, it is our aim to make *Capacity.org* a joint effort in which all of our various capacities and expertise are mobilised and shared. Interested individuals and organisations can help make *Capacity.org* an effective communication tool for people who seek to alleviate poverty through capacity building. Join us by contributing information, lessons, ideas and opinions, and feedback. Offers to co-finance parts of the initiative or to link related initiatives are very welcome.

<http://www.capacity.org>

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