THE DUTCH-MOZAMBICAN CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT IN GOOD GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION – A STUDY IN NORTH-SOUTH COLLABORATION TO IMPROVE HIGHER EDUCATION

By
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Abstract
This article discusses the challenges and lessons learned in an institutional collaborative programme between a Dutch graduate school of development studies (the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, The Netherlands) and four Mozambican higher education institutes- Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM), Higher Institute for International Relation (ISRI), Higher Institute of Public Administration (ISAP), and the Police Academy (ACIPOL). The four year programme (2004-2007) “capacity building in good governance and public administration in Mozambique” is sponsored by The Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education (Nuffic). It has four components; (a) developing graduate and post graduate academic curricula in public administration; (b) training of Mozambican lecturers in the discipline of public administration at post-graduate level (MA & PHD); (c) supporting local research and publication; and (d) providing ICT & infrastructure to support teaching and administration. By 2006, the programme had achieved more than 75% of its intended outputs, which by all standards had been effective. However, implementation of the programme has revealed interesting challenges and lessons regarding North-South cooperation to strengthen institutional capacity in the South. Such experiences and lessons have implications for similar collaborative programmes in the future.

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Introduction

Institutions collaborate with each other because of mutually beneficial expectations. In the academic circle, institutions collaborate with an expectation that their own institutions will be able to achieve more, offer effective and innovative programmes, gain recognition and valuable networks, and obtain financial rewards. Collaborations between higher education institutions in the North and those in the South are ways of supporting international development cooperation among countries. It demonstrates how institutions with common goals can apply their expertise collaboratively to global and locally based development challenges.

In this paper, we discuss the challenges and lessons learned in an institutional collaborative programme between a Dutch graduate school of development studies (the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, The Netherlands) and four Mozambican higher education institutes- Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM), Higher Institute for International Relation (ISRI), Higher Institute of Public Administration (ISAP), and the Police Academy (ACIPOL). The four year programme (2004-2007) “capacity building in good governance and public administration in Mozambique” is sponsored by The Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education (Nuffic). The paper is divided into five sections. The first section provides a brief insight into institutional collaboration with a focus on higher education. In the second section, we provide the background context based on which the programme was designed while section three highlights implementation issues and programme’s achievements. In section four we outline some of the lessons learned in the implementation of the programme and draw concluding remarks.

Institutional Collaborations in Higher Education

Collaborations\(^2\) involving different organizations have been evolving in a number of disciplines, sectors and development activities. In international development discourse,

\(^2\) The term collaboration as used in this paper also means cooperation, twinning, alliances and to some extent partnerships.
partnerships have become the new policy agenda\(^3\) (Penrose, 2000; Brinkerhoff, 2002). At the local level, some local governments have developed multiple institutional partnerships with commercial private enterprises and community-based organisations to augment local government capacity to provide basic services to citizens (Awortwi, 2003; Bennette, 1999). Collaborations between different actors and institutions, sometimes antagonistic in nature because of differences in power, resources, knowledge, and capacities have gained recognitions because of changing perspectives on the role of the state, private sector, and civil society in development. In all areas where they have become the preferred policy and implementation option, collaborations have aimed at ensuring that there is an increase and leverage of resources, creativity, synergy of experiences and benefits among the actors involved (Gray & Wood, 1991; Gray, 1985).

In the USA, academic consortia have existed for decades, with multiple areas of collaboration. Others are recent and have focused on international collaboration for both short and long term problem and opportunity. Some concentrate on joint curricula projects while others aim at providing increasing opportunities for students to study abroad (Godbey & Turlington, 2002: 91). At its very foundation, this arrangement enhances the capacity of collaborating institutions to serve students better, improve the quality of educational opportunities, offer students a wider range of special studies and facilities than any one institution could provide alone and control cost (Horgan, 2003).

In Africa, three different forms of institutional collaboration involving universities in the South and their counterparts in the North are in motion. First as a capacity building programme in the South, many of the collaborative programmes are initiated and funded by donor governments or their agencies. They tend to support northern academic institutions to engage with higher education institutions in the developing world to address collaboratively an array of complex developmental problems; strengthen their respective capacities for conducting educational missions of teaching, research, and advisory service; and increase the attention to and understanding of international education issues on campuses and among the institutions’ constituencies.

\(^3\) Reference is made to chapter eight of the millennium development goals.
Second, in recent times internationally recognised foundations have supported North-South co-operation in higher education to develop and deliver academic programmes. For instance, in May 2000 four major US foundations—Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Ford Foundation, the JD Catherine CT MacArthur Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation joined together to launch ‘the Partnership for Higher Education in Africa’. The foundations together committed US$ 200m to higher education in seven African countries—Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and recently Kenya.

The third form of institutional collaboration has been through direct arrangements between southern and northern institutions without any intermediary. This type of collaboration often results in three of the following options:

   a) Programmes fully delivered by northern staff at another training institution in Africa, using the southern partner’s resources like library, classrooms, and administration;

   b) Programmes jointly delivered by staffs from the northern institutions and another institution in the south;

   c) Programmes fully delivered by staff from a southern institution, which has been granted academic status by the northern university.

In the Netherlands, the government since 2003 has been implementing capacity building programmes in post secondary education (NPT) in 15 countries across the developing world, of which, 10 are in Africa. The NPT is a programme of North-South cooperation which helps developing countries to strengthen their institutional capacity for providing post-secondary education and training. It does this by mobilizing the expertise of Dutch organizations, who may call on organizations in other countries to help them meet the specific needs of southern partners. Given that NPT is a demand driven programme, it is expected that the southern institution first approaches the Dutch government for support.
and through that series of consultations between Nuffic\(^4\) and the southern institution develop, leading to writing of the project outline. The project outline is then advertised on Nuffic’s website after which Dutch institutions bid for the right to implement the programme by submitting a detailed project proposal. The winner of the competitive bidding process then signs a partnership agreement with the beneficiary institution in the south. In some of the programmes, it is a tripartite agreement between the Dutch institution, the beneficiary institution and the ministry of higher education or the responsible ministry in the south. By the year 2006, 125 of such co-operative capacity building programmes were in operation in Benin, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Below we describe the background and implementation issues of one of the projects that ISS and four Mozambican higher education institutions are involved.

**Background of the Capacity Building Project in Good Governance and Public Administration in Mozambique**

The origin of Mozambique’s current problem of inadequate manpower capacity to manage public services is a legacy of colonization. At the time of independence in 1975, the overall literacy rate of the populace was only about 8 percent- a result of Portuguese colonial policy of segregation. After independence, the vast majority of experienced administrators, technicians, small businessmen, professionals, skilled workers, and artisans, abandoned the country as part of the Portuguese exodus. This created a huge vacuum in human resource capacity of the country. From a management standpoint, the country was denuded of capacity. Many people took up managerial positions in an attempt to respond to the challenges of a newly independent state. Sadly, these people had little or no technical and managerial capacity to deliver government services. From 1975-1994, the government of Mozambique made efforts to reduce some of the legacies of colonization: the excesses of political and administrative centralization; the lack of planned and rational management of human resources; and inadequate and irrelevant academic and professional training programmes. The process of creating a national civil

\(^4\) The Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education (Nuffic).
service in Mozambique has been ongoing since then and has been supported by a number of training programmes.

A diagnosis of Mozambique’s public sector provides a clear picture of current shortcomings and challenges faced by the government. Public policy is not conceived and co-ordinated in accordance to objectives and principles that allow effective management. Because public policy does not constitute a specified technical activity that is institutionalised and practised, many civil servants are simply managing undefined activities. Other than intentionally maintaining the status quo, there is a real lack of technical knowledge and management skills among the staff of public institutions. For almost three decades after independence, still less than 4% of about 110,000 civil servants hold a university degree while about 80% have only basic and primary education. As a result more than 50% of the civil servants are in managerial positions for which they have insufficient training to undertake their jobs (Sitoe, 2006). The overwhelming paucity of qualified staff makes application of meritocracy in the recruitment and selection of civil servants almost impossible. Of the 4% civil servants that have university education, about 85% reside and work in the nation’s capital, Maputo. Having undertaken the difficult process of decentralizing government responsibilities to lower levels, the municipalities are saddled with inadequate personnel with the right competencies thereby leading to a case of reproduction of central government structures at the local levels.

As a way of addressing the above mentioned problems and challenges, on June 25, 2001, the President of Mozambique launched a ‘Global Strategy for Public Sector Reform’ in the country with the hope of improving public service delivery and also promotes sustainable development (Macuane, 2006). The reform is taking place within a larger environment, in which the role of government is gradually shifting away from direct operation and control of the economy to monitoring and regulation of activities being performed by multiple non-state actors. In the implementation of the reform programme, one of the areas that were considered for improvement was higher education because of its potential role in the envisioned administrative reform and modernization process.
Although this is a general concern in Africa, in Mozambique given the dearth of human resource capacity, it was crucial. In fact in 1996 African governors of the World Bank noted that one of the reasons for the decline of capacity in public and private sectors is the collapse of the higher educational and senior management training institutions (World Bank, 1996: vii).

Building on earlier works of Brautigam, 1996; Grindle, 1996; World Bank, 1997) Olowu argues that of all the capacities\(^5\) needed to build a developmental state, the most critical are the capacity of the higher civil servants- the top technical and administrative personnel- for three reasons. First, they possess skills that enable them to provide technical and political advice to politicians; second, they are crucial for programme implementation: deciding on which institution in public or outside government that is capable of mobilising, implementing and managing government programmes once political decisions are made; thirdly, by applying rules of the game, they subject governance and policy processes to democratic principles of transparency, accountability, responsiveness and rule of law (Olowu, 2002:277).

Given this context, the government of Mozambique through the former ministry of higher education, science and technology (MHEST) and Nuffic developed a project outline to support the four Mozambican higher education institutes to improve their capacity to train government workers in public administration. In diagnosing their problems, the MHEST and the beneficiary institutions requested for assistance in the following areas: review of existing public administration curricula and development of new post-graduate courses; support to undertake higher level staff training; development of a comprehensive research programme; and improvement of teaching and learning infrastructure.

In responding to €2.9m tender by Nuffic, ISS proposed to enhance the quality of training, research and outreach capacities of the four institutions involved in the programme. It proposed to conduct series of short and long-term training programmes to improve the

\(^5\) Five main types of capacity building efforts in a developmental state: political, technical, administrative, extractive and delegative.
technical, functional and analytical skills of the staff in good governance and public administration. It also proposed to improve the soft and hardware teaching materials to complement the training programmes and further develop the capacity of the lecturers to undertake empirical research with the aim of publishing their findings. The research work was to be linked to a development of outreach programmes to be implemented by the institutions. The project activities were to be organised in an integrated and synergistic approach that ensures co-ordination of the programmes in the four institutions.

**Project implementation and management**

Considering the complexity of the project, a consortium of three Dutch academic institutions; the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Technical University Delft (TUD), and Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS), and one Danish firm (T&B Consult) was formed. The ISS was the lead institute responsible for the implementation of the project. In addition, five renowned African higher education institutes and universities were mobilised as regional partners to augment the Dutch capacity. They are Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration (GIMPA); Department of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Botswana; Graduate School of Public and Development Management (P&DM) of University of Witwatersrand; Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Fort Hare; and School of Development Studies, University of Natal, all in South Africa. A project office was established in Maputo, Mozambique to coordinate the four southern institutes and also to link them with ISS in The Hague. The Danish organisation which had an established office in Mozambique was contracted with the responsibility of managing the project office in Maputo. Without prior experience in Mozambique, the ISS organised a three month inception phase which involved building a ‘platform’ in the country and conducting detailed planning of the project. During the inception phase, series of discussions between the ISS, the MHEST and the four beneficiary institutes were conducted. The end product of the inception phase was a clear project document and a signed collaborative agreement between the four institutions and ISS.
**Expected outputs**

The project was expected to deliver 42 outputs divided into four thematic areas: curriculum review and development; human resource training and development; research and publication; and ICT and infrastructure support.

**Curriculum Development**

The curriculum development component was expected to support the four institutes to review their existing public administration (PA) curricula and further develop post-graduate programmes. Table 1 shows types of curricula and the institutions involved.

Table 1: Curriculum review & development among the institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Curricula</th>
<th>ISAP</th>
<th>ISRI</th>
<th>FLCS</th>
<th>ACIPOL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of 2 certificate courses in PA (CPSAP I &amp;II)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of postgraduate diploma in PA (PGPAP)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of a Bachelor’s course in PA (BPAP)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design of a certificate course in GG for police officers</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of existing BA curricula in PA</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design of MA curricula in PA</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The methodologies for reviewing and developing the curricula were agreed as follows:

- Organisation of a workshop with all the institutions and partners to discuss the processes involved in reviewing and developing the curricula;
- Translation of existing institutional training curricula & modules from Portuguese to English language;
- Submission of training curricula & modules to a team of resource persons at ISS & regional institutions for initial analyses and review;
- Visitation by short-term resource persons to Mozambican institutions to share ideas based on initial analyses and review;
- Preparation/design of the curricula & training modules;
- Compilation of annotated bibliography & list of reference materials for the modules;
- Organisation of a workshop on the new curricula & training modules;
• Submission of final curricula, training modules & reference materials;
• Pedagogic training workshops for teachers (where needed);
• Purchase of textbooks based on the list of references in the curricula;

Human Resource Training & Development

A total of 21 staff members from the four Mozambican institutes were expected to receive scholarships to pursue various post-graduate degree programmes in Dutch and regional institutions. Table 2 shows the breakdown:

Table 2: Scholarships available for staff training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>ISAP</th>
<th>FLCS</th>
<th>ISRI</th>
<th>ACIPOL</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-term courses</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the inception phase it was recommended that each institution initiates an open and transparent process of identifying and presenting candidates for the scholarship. The following processes were recommended:

• Each beneficiary institution, where possible presents more candidates than their envisaged scholarship slots to enable Dutch or regional institutions to pre-select qualified ones;
• Depending on the results of the English Language Test, placement of students may be organised around English and Portuguese options;
• The ISS will assist PhD candidates to strengthen their research proposals where necessary;
• The final selection of students among the pre-qualified candidates shall rest with the beneficiary institutions in Mozambique.
Common Research Programme

Only FLCS and ISRI had originally included a research programme in their project outlines. However, during the inception phase it was agreed among all the institutions that the research component be enlarged and redesigned into a cross cutting programme. Although it was felt that research lends itself to cross-institutional initiative and activity, ISS also recognised that not all the institutions have the same capacity to undertake research but the essence of the project was also to build institution and human resource capacity. The following sequences of activities were to be followed:

- Assessment of research capacities of the staff and development of capacity augmentation measures where necessary;
- Identification of research interests/topics and formation of research clusters;
- Pairing of researchers in Mozambique with partners abroad;
- Data collection, analysis, write-up and presentation of findings in a form of research seminars;
- Product development and publication (Working paper series);
- Dissemination of research findings (research conference & edited book publication).

ICT & Infrastructure Development

The overall objective of the ICT & infrastructure component was to improve technical and physical working environment of the institutions so as to facilitate teaching, research and general administrative work. Specifically, it included development of a well functioning library and documentation centre, acquisition of 1000 text books and teaching logistics (photocopier, projectors, computers, internet access, and stationery), renovation of existing infrastructures (offices and classrooms), training of library staff, and introduction of electronic library categorization systems.

Achievements
By June 2006; 24 expected outputs had been completed (57%), 9 in the final stage of completion (21%) while 9 were in progress (21%). Specifically, three lecturers who pursued various MA programmes at ISS had completed and returned to Mozambique, while additional six who are studying in South Africa and Brazil are about to complete. In terms of curricula review and development, ISRI & FLCS have had their programmes completed. ISRI opted for an MA in development studies with specialisation in public administration and development (PAD) and international relations and development (IRD) while FLCS chose MA in public administration with two specialisations: public policy & management (PPM) and governance & democracy (GD). At ISAP, designs of two certificate courses have been completed while the diploma and bachelor’s programmes have just started. Design of good governance programme at ACIPOL as well as improvement in infrastructure work in all the institutions has also been completed. The research work has seen seven reports produced.

**Lessons learned during project implementation**

There are a number of significant lessons that can be learnt from this experience. These are discussed below.

*Searching for qualified staff to pursue PhD Programme*

Getting qualified lecturers to pursue PhD programmes abroad based on the institutional allocation of scholarships proved to be more difficult than we had anticipated. Out of the total number of seven scholarships available for the PhD programme, only four staff members qualified for enrolment. While it was the expectation of ISS & regional universities in South Africa to enrol the candidates in their programmes not only because of the financial benefits that these students bring but also to fulfil their accepted responsibilities in the collaborative agreement, they were unable to lower established admission requirements in their institutions to accommodate some of the Mozambican applicants. However, the flexibility that the institutions showed resulted in the conversion
of the remaining three PhD scholarships into MA programmes where more staff members took advantage of to pursue various programmes in Brazil and South Africa.

**Reviewing the content of PA curricula and training modules: Some critical observations**

During the review of the BA curricula in PA, about 50% of the modules were found to be ‘generalist’ or at best in the realm of social-anthropology; which focused less on the critical issues and challenges facing public administration and management in Mozambique. The assumption behind generalist model as against specialist was that public administrators require a body of general knowledge to help them distinguish between good and bad policies or to carry out routine administration of government programmes (Awortwi, 2006; Ayee, 2001). However with recent emphasis on transformations of the state and widespread application of the policy of enablement and new public management (Awortwi, 2006; Helmsing, 2002; Sorenson, 2004), the structure and functions of public sector and administration have changed. And since in almost every profession new circumstances require development of new skills or redefinition of existing skills, training curricula need to take this transformation into consideration and bridge the gap between training and practice. However, proposals to scrap some old modules and introduce new ones did not go down well with some of the lecturers. Considering that they have been teaching these outmoded modules for years, attempts to sway them to new ones also meant that they had to undertake further readings and development of teaching notes. Some lecturers saw this as extra burden, as a result they were reluctant to accept the revised curricula without negotiations. Scrapping some teaching modules also meant reducing the authority and influence of some of the lecturers. Given that the whole programme was a demand driven approach, Dutch and regional partners that were involved in the exercise had to strike a compromise without watering-down the discipline and the expected competences that the new curricula would offer.

**The dilemma of choosing between pursuing consultancies and undertaking research works**
In Mozambique, development agencies like the UNDP, World Bank, USAID, Danida, and others run after few senior researchers and academics to undertake consultancy works. As a result getting competent academics to undertake empirically based research work without paying them according to a commercial market rate as consultants is difficult, next to impossible. Given that the rules that guide implementation of the NPT programme forbid financial payment to staff of the beneficiary institutions for none administrative related work, senior lecturers from the four institutions were reluctant to undertake research work.

Having gone through the agreed procedures for starting the research programme, about 20 senior and experienced researchers as well as junior ones expressed their interests in undertaking a research on good governance and public administration. Two lecturers from FLCS & ISS were asked to review current trends on researches and publications on governance and public administration with the aim of finding critical issues that would shape the research agenda in Mozambique. Four research themes were identified after the findings had been presented in a workshop in Mozambique. They were; (a) politics, democratisation process and good governance; (b) decentralisation and local governance; (c) globalisation and local development; and (d) public sector reforms. Each of the themes had a coordinator. However, commencement of the research work hit a glitch when project management offered to pay the cost of fieldwork and an honorarium of US$1000 to each researcher. The twenty researchers rather wanted management to pay them a commercial fee as consultants.

With the desire to accomplish project outputs, the project management had to broaden its search for researchers by advertising in Mozambican newspapers a research grant of US$ 5000. Even this was not enough to sway senior researchers to be interested in research for publication. As a result only twelve junior researchers submitted proposals after which only seven were chosen to have any reasonable chance of being successful in the research programme. After thirteen months of research work, the quality of the reports was disappointing. A number of African intellectuals complain that their Northern
counterparts do not undertake joint publications with them after they have supported them in data collection, analyses and write-up. However, what we need to ask is; if Southern researchers are not ready to invest in research but are rather expected to be paid as consultants, on what basis do we claim intellectual property rights of our contributions in empirical data collection. At best, Northern intellectuals only acknowledge the contribution in footnote remarks.

The dilemma of choosing between undertaking a research related work and pursuing commercial consultancy is a widespread problem in many academic institutions. In an informal survey that was conducted among senior lecturers in Mozambique, Ghana, and Uganda, for the purpose of this paper, it was revealed that two out of three have undertaken at least one consultancy services for a fee within the past year while three out of five have not published for the past three years. The reality is that a great number of southern lecturers are chasing consultancy services so as to support their meagre salaries. In Mozambique, consultancy income ranges between 40-50% of a senior lecturer’s annual income. While there is no doubt that consultancy services enable lecturers to learn some practical issues that may feedback into teaching and publication, the reality is that this has not much materialize. This is because much of the consultancy work has little relevance to classroom teaching.

*Common events among the institutions*

Through the project, it has been possible for the four higher education institutions in Mozambique to collaborate in terms of joint seminars, workshops and researches. This is unprecedented in the history of higher education in Mozambique. The joint activities have created a forum where higher education institutions discuss issues of common concern especially changing trends in teaching and practices of public administration and governance. It is expected that by 2007, FLCS would establish a centre for public management and democratic governance in its outfit. This would institutionalize the forum and further provide the conduit for the institutions to engage government in policy debate and dialogue.
Delays in programme implementation

There are few delays in the implementation of the programme. The most significant ones are; development of ISAP’s curricula and FLCS’s outreach programme. A major factor that seems to have delayed work at ISAP was that in the beginning of the project, the institution existed only on paper without structures (physical location, management and teaching staff). Working with ISAP was so frustrating in the beginning to the extent that it nearly demoralised its partner; Graduate School of Public and Development Management (P&DM) of University of Witwatersrand. P&DM however showed a remarkable degree of flexibility. FLCS’s outreach program has also delayed because staff members are involved in a number of activities outside the faculty. The simple task of getting the right people together at the right time has been a challenge.

Flexibility in programme implementation

The project implemented its activities with a lot of flexibility within the rules that guide the programme. While the NPT rules do not allow extra payment to staff of Mozambican institutions for undertaking technical activities within their institutions, the project found other ways; the use of daily subsistence allowance for staff who participate in meetings and provision of honorarium for those who write and present papers in seminars and workshops. We also used some of the lecturers as local experts for working for institutions other than theirs. This kind of flexibility no doubt promoted some goodwill between the southern and Dutch lecturers who worked on the programme. Without that there was no way we could achieve some of the outputs.

Project administration and management

There is no doubt that the success rate of the project has been possible as a result of the office we established in Maputo. The office helped to maintain the project focus as it tried to combine local perspectives with those of the northern partners in addition to
balancing competing interests. While officials of the MHEST argue that similar projects have not been able to achieve expected outputs because Dutch partners had maintained a distant relationship and only use short-term missions, the downside of our approach was the high cost of maintaining the expatriate project leader in Mozambique. In the first two years, the Maputo office alone cost the project about 25% of the annual budget. The question that keeps coming again is; could we have achieved the same success rate at a lower cost by using local staff? Even if that was possible, it was not in the interest of the consortium partner that had the responsibility of maintaining the project office.

Apart from the high cost of maintaining the office, the strategy also threatened the effort to build capacity within the Mozambican institutions to develop and maintain future projects. So after two years, the project management renegotiated with all partners to have a local leader. This did not go down well with some of the partners, including the southern institutions because they had become accustomed to the expatriate. The savings that accrued from the transfer of project leadership from an expatriate to a Mozambican also enabled the project to provide financial support to the four institutions.

*Balancing competing interests*

Given that each of the northern and regional partners had interests in the project, apportioning of work and the finances was also difficult, though the partners did not resort to horse-trading. Work and finances were negotiated based on institutional capacity, time availability, language convenience, and most importantly, preferences of the four Mozambican institutes. While ISS tried to maintain regular consultations with all the consortium and regional partners, it was difficult to satisfy each of the partners’ expectations. At the end some institutions benefited more than others.

*Ownership & Sustainability*

There is consensus that capacity building programmes perform better if they are locally driven. While in all respects the project is owned by the four institutes in Mozambique
given that the whole conceptualisation of the project has been demand driven, there are some instances where one wonders if the gains that have been made are sustainable after project period. The presence of the Mozambican office although was a critical success factor in the project outputs, the four institutions had relied on the expatriate project leader to initiate strategies for implementing work plans and basic administrative issues. The dependence of the four institutes on the expatriate team leader created a false impression that the local institutions were incapable of managing the project and that we needed to maintain an expatriate leadership against an earlier plan to handover the project to a local team leader. When finally, the decision was made to replace the expatriate with a local leader, it was surprising that some of the Mozambican institutions were not happy.

*Language barrier*

Considering that Mozambique is not an English speaking country and only a few staff members among the northern and regional partners could speak Portuguese, translation became a routine procedure in curricula review and development, research, and documentation. Not only that; but also meetings and seminars had to be conducted in at least two languages in several instances. Although direct teaching was not part of the project terms of reference, the use of Portuguese as the only language of teaching did not provide any options for Dutch staff who wanted to add teaching to their missions.

*Learning from local context*

Given that ISS is a development studies school with about 70% of its students from developing countries (and at least 25% from Africa), such institutional collaboration provides a lot of experiences to staff in their teaching, research and advisory services. The project offers opportunity to ISS lecturers to learn about conditions in the south. Going on a mission to any African country involves diligent background readings of contextual issues; the people, resource capacity, socio-economic and political conditions,
and culture. The learning experiences that staff acquires from their interaction with southern students, colleague lecturers, and public officials are feedback to their teachings in the Netherlands. It also enables Northern lecturers to put into perspective some of the prejudices and stereotypes that they have about Africa.

Concluding remarks

There is no doubt that the collaboration has brought a lot of benefits and experiences to FLCS, ISRI, ISAP & ACIPOL and all the partners involved in the project. In Mozambique’s higher education, the programme has helped to update BA curricula in public administration, it has introduced two MA programmes in public administration and development studies, trained nine lecturers in various MA programmes, and in the process of training four lecturers at PhD level. Teaching and learning materials in the four institutes have seen remarkable improvements while research and outreach programmes are making progress. The programme has also offered a wide degree of networks for all the institutions to dwell on even after completion of the project.

Not only did the project benefit the Southern partners but also the Dutch and regional partners. Apart from the finances involved, the ISS staff members that were involved in the programme have learned a lot from Mozambican context and these are fed into their teaching, research and advisory services. The ISS and other Dutch partners have built a strong relationship with Mozambican and regional partners to the extent that they can draw on these experiences for future collaboration with other academic institutions in the south. In fact, the ISS is drawing on the Mozambican experience to shape its collaborative programme in Uganda.

A summary of the lessons that can be learned from the project are that in a donor sponsored collaborative programmes, there is always the possibility of tensions developing between northern and southern partners. In a situation where northern staff is seen as external experts whose inputs needed to be paid but southern staff’s inputs are seen as counterpart support that cannot be paid from donor funds, there is always the
possibility of tension developing in the partnership. It worsens in countries like Mozambique where a lecturer’s salary is about one-tenth of the external experts’. Flexibility and humility are key strategies by the northern staff to be able to get the goodwill of southern counterparts. Without that, getting support of local staff is difficult and there is always the possibility of delays in project implementation. Northern staff needs to be realistic about the dilemma that Southern staff face in undertaking their academic responsibilities. While salaries in many academic institutes have not appreciated substantially, the increasing workload as a result of governments policy to increase university intake have doubled. There is a pressure on university lecturers to undertake research for publication but research grants are disappointedly low to the extent that consultancy works have become a matter of necessity for lecturers if they are to survive. While northern staff may see research and publications as fundamentals that academics need to fulfil, in the south, perhaps we need to move systematically and understand also issues of ‘bread and butter’.

Evidence in the ISS-Mozambican project shows that North-South institutional collaboration is a viable vehicle for building capacity in an African academic institution but it is also the one that requires generous donor input to set collaboration in motion. Neither Dutch nor any of the regional partners could have raised that amount to support the programme had it not been the generous support from Nuffic.
References


