

5. Characteristics of Good Linking Arrangements

From a number of evaluation studies it is possible to note that adherence to certain guiding principles will work to ensure the success of link arrangements.

5.1.1 The DC institution should:

- i) be a training, educational, research or administrative institution with experience of and responsibility for managing a permanent staff, and its own physical facilities.
- ii) have an appropriate and well qualified and experienced staff.
- iii) be a recognized authority in its field.
- iv) have significant experience of developing countries.
- v) have its head take an active and personal interest and support the principles of the collaboration.
- vi) have the facilities and expertise to provide a training of trainers input.
- vii) have major interests and knowledge and expertise which coincide with those required by the LDC institution.
- viii) have the capacity to work out in detail the logistics and language requirements for each visit to a LDC and particularly the release of competent staff.
- ix) look for a good match of academic/research/administrative interests and a good balance of academic level research/administrative/capability.
- x) be competent in problem diagnostic and consulting skills and be able to price its services accurately when these are requested. If not it should associate itself with a consulting firm possessing these skills.

5.1.2 The LDC institution should:

- i) identify and develop teams to specialize in the topics which are the subject of the link.

- ii) ensure that activities planned are of real use to the country and not too sophisticated for the current level of experience.
- iii) provide and maintain adequate equipment, service, transport and facilities for the sustaining of joint activities.
- iv) identify and specify individual members of staff and charge them with responsibility for each teaching/research/administrative task involved in the collaborative programme, stating the dates on which they assume responsibility.
- v) design and properly maintain staff/student/research records for follow up and evaluation purposes.
- vi) liaise closely and regularly [reporting quarterly or half-yearly and on an agreed report basis] with sponsoring donor agencies.
- vii) make plans, specifying details and arrangements for continuing activities, particularly courses at the conclusion of the formal link arrangements.
- viii) in the case of a multi-campus institution, ensure that the most appropriate and conveniently reached campus is used for meetings/training courses etc.
- ix) create a special short course unit to stimulate, manage and integrate the institution's short course/seminar/lecture series programme.
- x) ensure that LDC staff receive adequate advance information about link preparations.
- xi) ensure that counterparts selected are eligible to be appointed to full-time appointments, and have good prospects of becoming full-time members of staff.
- xii) ensure that in the case of training courses, those trained have the opportunity to teach others wherever possible.

- xiii) have its head take an active and personal interest and support the principles of the collaboration.

5.1.3 Together the DC and LDC institutions should:

- i) determine the content of the training/research/teaching/administration link.
- ii) design evaluation procedures and specify indicators by which effectiveness can be determined.
- iii) determine the nature of the teaching material/research etc to be developed (preferably in the LDC to ensure local relevance), also the language to be used, allocate the component tasks of such development and agree and adhere to a timetable for preparing and completing materials.
- iv) agree and adhere to a timetable specifying individual responsibilities and the details of the way the DC institution and staff are to decrease their input, particularly to course design, curriculum formulation, teaching, management procedures etc and the LDC institution to increase its participation.
- v) secure the involvement and support of relevant professional and advisory bodies in co-ordination and in determining training needs and mounting short training courses.
- vi) investigate and encourage the support and involvement of the private sector in designing and financing link arrangements.

5.1.4 The Donor Government/Donor should:

- i) ensure that the objectives of the collaborative link are clearly stated and carefully adhered to.
- ii) separately specify the sums in the total aid financing which are to be devoted to the major components of the link, e.g. courses (design,

mounting, management, and evaluation) and preparation of teaching materials (including translation if necessary).

- iii) ensure full documentation on costs and seek to establish speedy administrative procedures for the transfer of funds, particularly for the purchase of equipment; ensure also that office in charge of funds agree procedures for approving, implementing and monitoring programmes and that this information is kept to be made available to official evaluators.

5.1.5 The LDC Government should:

- i) ensure that LDC participants stayed linked to the collaborative activities for a significant period of time, and if replaced, that the substitutes are staff of an appropriate level and capability.
- ii) ensure that if the collaboration involves training, that participants arrive promptly and stay the whole duration of the course.
- iii) ensure that relevant ministries/agencies are made aware of the link activities, and what evaluators will be looking for after the link has finished.

5.2 Problem Areas

Several problems were repeatedly mentioned and highlighted in evaluation documents:

- o Language: sufficiency of funds for crash courses, translation of documents (particularly for training courses) and employment of competent interpreters.
- o DC Staff Release: frequently difficult for DC staff to be released for longish periods. Temporarily employed staff sent to LDCs were often unsatisfactory.
- o Solo Travel and Accommodation: often found difficult by both DC and LDC staff alike.

- o Transferability of qualifications: difficulties experienced by LDC students in meeting entry requirements of DC institutions; LDC staff unable to practise in a DC institution (eg as midwife) because of professional requirements for practice.
- o Foreign Exchange: LDC shortage of convertible currency making activities lop-sided, e.g. far more visits by DC staff to LDC than vice-versa.
- o Mutuality of interest: a LDC institution may require linkages with a number of other DC centres that have relevant experience in particular fields. There should be no attempt to restrict or monopolize access. Each individual link needs its own agreement, costing, monitoring and evaluation procedures. This was emphasized many times.
- o Research and teaching: a fresh emphasis needs to be put on "normality" or "ordinariness", on routine matters and topics, alongside work of a developmental character. There should be opportunities for LDCs to research in DCs or in other LDCs.
- o Synthesis of past and on-going research in LDCs is urgently required. The U.N. Agencies are seen to have an important role in remedying this situation.