The Africa Unit

UK/Africa partnerships in HE/FE

Good Practices in Educational Partnerships Guide

UK-Africa Higher & Further Education Partnerships

Cover photo: Graduation at Chainama in April 2008

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1 Introduction

The Africa Unit was established in 2006, in the wake of the Commission for Africa Report 'Our Common Interest'. The Unit, based within the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), was intended to promote Higher and Further Education partnerships between the UK and Africa as part of the capacity-building needs identified in the Report. Further details can be found at www.ukafricapartnerships.org

The work of the Unit has been supported throughout by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and its predecessors in London and latterly by the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland (DELNI). This funding comes to an end in June 2010. We are grateful to both BIS and DELNI for supporting the writing and printing of this Guide, which is one of the agreed outputs from the Unit's work. We are also grateful to all those – including our external Partnership Working Group – who have shared their expertise in Higher and Further Education partnerships and have contributed to the Guide through examples, case studies and photos. Special thanks also to Myles Wickstead for his invaluable feedback on the Guide.

The main reason behind the preparation of this Guide is the lack of knowledge and data about the scope, nature and depth of UK-Africa partnerships in this area. It reflects discussions with individuals involved in such partnerships and their valuable insights; the findings from a survey conducted by the Unit in 2008; reviews of the literature on partnerships in education; and desk research.

The Guide does not set out to present a set of universal, objective rules to be followed and which will guarantee success – a project which would be doomed to failure from the outset. Partnerships differ in theory, in nature, in philosophy, and in practice. Whilst there is no 'one size fits all' solution, however, we believe that it is possible to identify valuable 'principles of management and good governance' which have been the driver behind a number of successful and sustainable UK-Africa partnerships and which can therefore inform future partnerships. Whilst we hope many will find the Guide useful, we hope that African institutions will find it of particular value.

The Guide is divided into two sections. Section one, the Conceptual Framework, attempts to highlight the main features characterizing the UK-Africa educational partnership landscape. It presents some of the main drivers of UK-Africa partnerships and the major challenges facing their success. It is informed by the results of a survey prepared and analysed by the Africa Unit in two unpublished reports in 2008; the first in March titled, *Global Higher Education Partnerships: The UK's Relationship with Sub-Saharan Africa: Towards a Manual of Good Practice*; and the second written in July titled, *UK-Africa Further and Higher Education Partnerships.* In particular, it also draws strongly from several articles published in the 41st edition of the NORRAG News, titled *The Politics of Partnership* (2008), and the report published by Million +, *Universities and International Higher Education Partnerships: Making a Difference* (Middlehurst, Woodfield, Fielden & Forland 2009).

The second section is essentially a 'How to do it' Guide.

It suggests 10 key Partnership Principles, which are as follows:

1 Shared Ownership
2 Trust and Transparency
3 Mutual Understanding of different Cultural and Working Environments
4 Clear Division of Roles and Responsibilities
5 Effective and Regular Communication
6 Joint Strategic Planning and Implementation
7 Strong Commitment across the board from Staff and Management
8 Supportive Institutional Infrastructure
9 Monitoring and Evaluation
10 Sustainability

These Principles are not intended to be fixed or rigid; they should be used as a flexible check-list, to be modified as required in the light of circumstances. That said, Principle 10 is crucial; unless there is a clear plan around sustainability (and particularly financing) the partnership will not succeed.

This section draws on the work of several influential publications on the subject of partnerships: a report written by the American Council on Education, which contained many relevant points for UK and African institutions, titled *International Partnerships: Guidelines for Colleges and Universities* (Van de Water, Green & Koch, 2008); a report published by the Council on Health Research for Development, *Principles of Good Partnerships for Strengthening Public Health Education Capacity in Africa* (IJsselmuiden, Duale & Nchinda, 2004); and *The International Health Links Manual: A guide to starting up and maintaining long-term international health partnerships*, published by THET (Gedde, 2009). The two unpublished reports written by the Africa Unit, detailed above, were also used to inform the '10 Partnership Principles'.

Our aspiration, therefore, is that this Guide will contribute to the ongoing dynamic discussion around partnerships in Higher and Further Education, both in providing an introduction to the theoretical framework but more importantly in providing some practical advice based on real-life examples. We firmly believe that partnerships can make a huge contribution to capacity-building and institutional development and that they can bring mutual benefits to all concerned. We hope that this Guide might contribute to bringing some of those partnerships to a successful conclusion.

The Africa Unit
June 2010

Graduation at Chainama in April 2008

2 Conceptual Framework

The aim of this section is to identify and highlight some of the issues of the UK-Africa educational partnership landscape.

2.1 The Emergence of the Partnership Paradigm

The term 'Partnership' has been used to describe all kinds of collaborative activities pulling in many different directions. It has been used interchangeably with terms such as 'collaboration' and 'link'. This has been coupled by a tendency to call any relationship between institutions regardless of its scope or impact, a partnership. Recently, legitimate questions have been posed about the term 'partnership' itself: What is meant by partnership? Who are the partners? What are their roles? Who decides for whom?

The paradigm and discourse of 'partnership' has become dominant in the world of development cooperation during the last few decades as a reaction against the 'former' power asymmetry between North and South, (Hours, 1992; Kothari, 2001, quoted in, Gutierrez, 2008, p. 20). This resulted in a shift in perspective in the development field from the notions of 'external imposition' and 'prescription', to 'partnerships' in development cooperation (Mason, 2008, p. 16).

However, many believe that even after this shift took place, most of these partnerships posited a one-way flow of 'development knowledge' reflecting the dominance of the western models of development. One factor which may account for this situation is the emergence of what has come to be called the 'globalization' of development knowledge. However, this in turn raises question of the 'production' of this development knowledge.

In addition, "Independent thought rooted in local realities as well as local experimentation can provide the basis for policy pluralism and home-grown development solutions" (Gore, 2008, p. 14-15).

More specifically and within the African context, the recommendations of the Commission for Africa (2005) on Higher Education (HE), and the Gleneagles Summit emphasized the vital role of African universities in Africa's economic and social development and called for stronger support to them. The recommendations of the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) launched by the African Union in Maputo further reinforced the key role of HE in poverty eradication and sustainable development. All these organizations recognize that weak human and institutional capacities constitute some of the major obstacles hindering the potential of Africa's education institutions to contribute to Africa's development agenda. They emphasized the need to revitalize African universities in order to enable them to contribute more effectively to today's global community and knowledge society.

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Within this context, North-South links and partnerships have been identified as one of the important ways through which the human and institutional capacity of African universities can be built and strengthened.

However, there are some who are concerned that, "current conceptualizations of partnerships may be merely an instrument that promotes top-down global governance of education instead of one that includes national and local voices in a true open dialogue that has ownership at its core" (van de Waerdt, 2008, p. 87). This raises the important issue of 'power relations' within a partnership.

2.2 Power Relations in a Partnership: Who owns the partnership?

Partnerships between the North and South are often characterised by the existence of asymmetries between the two partners at a number of levels – asymmetries in resources, capabilities and most importantly in 'power' (Gutierrez, 2008, p. 20).

Some believe that these partnerships are shaped by power relations that help to shape the boundaries of partnerships – what is possible within them, and who may enter, with which identities, discourses and interests (Gaventa 2004, quoted in, van de Waerdt, 2008). Likewise, Brinkerhoff (2002) points out that the intrinsic power relations in international development make it impossible to exclude power from a partnership (Brinkerhoff 2002, p. 178).

Within the field of educational partnerships, there has been a lot of discussion in the last years on the importance of 'country ownership'. Emphasis has been placed on the need for Southern universities to drive the partnership process. Without this ownership, partnerships risk being, "yet another episode in which the powerful talk to themselves" (Hoppers, 1998, p. 27). This can happen in the case of what Ellerman (2008) calls 'unhelpful help': "One form of unhelpful help [that he identifies] with partner organizations is to treat them as repeater stations for the 'correct messages' being sent from the centre rather than as potentially autonomous learning organizations" (Ellerman, 2008, p. 24).

Moreover, in the development scene particularly in the wake of the Paris Declaration there are increasing calls for 'national ownership' and external facilitation of national aims and objectives. It is crucial therefore, that partnerships are demand-driven.
According to previous reports, "During…visits to East African Universities, deans and directors from African universities were open and frank about the need for joint decision making and activity, from initial program design and budget determination to project implementation and final reporting" (Morfit, Gore & Akridge, 2009, p. 18). In other words, "such partnerships, with their shared sense of 'ownership', envisage not only shared rights on both sides, but also, as [Senegal's] President Diouf [once] indicated, shared responsibilities. That responsibility has, of course, to be shared in failure as much as in success" (Mason, 2008, p. 18).

Without joined ownership of the partnership, the result would be the creation of 'fake' partnerships that exist more or less only on paper.

2.3 The UK-Africa Educational Partnership Landscape

2.3.1 Drivers of Partnerships

Mapping the UK-Africa educational partnership landscape is a challenging task. There is a dearth of relevant data and the landscape itself is a constantly changing one that is not easy to describe. In the following section we present some of the main findings of the Africa Unit's work in its effort to explore and analyze the components of this landscape. These include research conducted by the Africa Unit and its discussions with different educational institutions engaged in partnerships, as well as desk research.

In a survey conducted by the International Association of Universities (IAU) which included Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from all over the world, it was found that many of them identified 'internationalization' as one of the top incentives for partnership (Knight, 2006). Globalising the institution was seen to serve as a competitive advantage in an increasing global market for HE.

In the UK there has been a renewed interest in encouraging UK HEIs to engage in international partnerships. The 2004 Department for Education and Skills (DfES) White Paper, *Putting the World into World Class Education*, acknowledged the global implications of national educational systems.

Additionally, the Crisp Report (2007), also highlighted ways in which to encourage, foster and promote global health partnerships (Crisp, 2007, p. 8).

Motivations for UK institutions to partner with African institutions include; a means to engage with the current internationalization process in HE, by giving UK institutions a competitive advantage in what is becoming an increasingly global market for HE. It was thought that partnerships provide UK partners with the opportunity to pursue research excellence, given that a number of African universities are potentially valuable collaborators in many areas.

Furthermore, UK institutions consider that partnerships can create opportunities for UK staff to work in new and different socio-political and cultural environments. From the UK perspective this signified providing staff with the opportunity of working abroad, undertaking research, teaching courses, or helping to develop curricula.

From an African perspective, partnerships with the UK are believed to serve a number of purposes. These include attracting funds for African institutions which could not have been easily attained by the institution individually. In addition, they can provide African staff with opportunities for professional development. Partnerships in this area were seen to provide new opportunities for staff development and for mentoring younger researchers and helping them to advance their careers.

Institutional capacity building and strengthening have also been identified as one of the most important motivations for African institutions in partnering with the UK. From the African perspective, this referred mostly to projects related to building African capacity in teaching and research staff.

Most importantly, it was believed that partnerships have the potential to help African institutions achieve some of the developmental goals of the country, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), given the vital role of HE&FE (Further Education) sectors in this area. The endorsement of the report of the Commission for Africa (2005), *Our Common Interest*, by the British Government was an appeal for the UK as a whole to work towards helping to meet the MDGs.

Furthermore, another motivation is that funding schemes are attracted to such collaborative ventures which give both UK and African HEI's the opportunity to solicit more and increased funding.

In the partnerships surveyed, 'research collaboration' projects were identified by UK institutions as the main type of partnership activity undertaken. This can be explained by the fact that research is a global activity with agendas and funding rationalised at the international level. As a result, researchers need to be globally oriented in order to be successful and for national research to remain competitive. Moreover, many African institutions are internationally recognised in a number of subject areas. Research projects can also contribute to development strategies through greater research to inform policy and practice.

'Staff professional development' was cited as another highly ranked type of project. From the UK perspective this signified providing staff with the opportunity of working abroad, undertaking research, teaching courses, or helping to develop curricula. The aim was to provide them with specific skills and new experiences in different environments.

From the African perspective, this referred mostly to projects related to building African capacity in teaching and research staff. This was considered as particularly important given that the majority of research opportunities are usually targeted at the most established academics. Partnerships in this area were seen to provide new opportunities for staff development, for mentoring younger researchers and helping them to advance their careers.

Another explanation for this could be that that funding landscape for partnerships is much more conducive to research partnerships compared to institutional or thematic capacity strengthening. This is understandable given that many institutions both in Africa and the UK already have excellent research capacity and as such are a natural target for achieving research excellence through partnerships.

By comparison, there were fewer partnerships in the fields of capacity building or vocational and technical education and training. This is problematic because the FE sector in both Africa and the UK constitutes an integral part of the larger education landscape. Under conditions of slow economic growth and economic recession, competition for jobs can be fierce. The limited information available suggests that postsecondary technical graduates often compete well with university graduates for these jobs. In addition, many African countries have increasingly expressed the need for high-level technicians and given renewed attention to technical education. African FE Institutions (FEIs) therefore have an increasingly vital role to play in a globally competitive knowledge-driven society.

In the partnership context, some higher educational institutions in both Africa and the UK have had plenty of experience in initiating and sustaining partnerships. On the other hand, some FEIs have had little partnership experience and it is necessary to explore ways of reaching these institutions. In workshops and meetings that the Africa Unit has co-organized, African representatives of FE colleges and polytechnics emphasized that the sector should be given the 'prominence that it deserves in moulding the technical human resources that Africa needs to develop'. They expressed the view that partnership initiatives in the past 'only benefited the universities to the detriment of polytechnics and technical colleges'. It was suggested that the FE sector has the potential to develop partnerships and projects that could directly contribute to building up a specific skills base as well as improving the employment prospects of young people. There is therefore a strong need to assess the different ways in which the FE sector can benefit from UK-Africa partnerships and to determine the demand and what incentives might be required.

2.3.2 Challenges in UK-Africa Partnerships

UK-Africa HE/FE partnerships face a number of different challenges that can severely impact the effectiveness or sustainability of the partnership. In the survey conducted by the Africa Unit, the major challenge facing the success of a partnership was 'time'. Finding the adequate time to carry out the activities and projects due to other commitments was considered the top obstacle challenging partnerships.

In the UK, the staff are often under intense pressure to publish research papers in internationally recognized journals. This, in addition to their teaching workload can heavily restrict the time staff can afford to spend on international partnerships. According to some UK partners the level of support from their own institutions could be improved.

In addition, institutions in Africa have faced continued challenges and problems spanning many years,

"African academic institutions were badly hit by the region's socio-political and economic crises of the 1970s and 1980s. Over the last twenty-odd years they have experienced dwindling funding for academic resources and research, political stifling of bold scholarship, a rise in university student enrolment and the brain drain. In combination these have led to a variety of problems including low productivity, low engagement in global academic discourses and trends, poor or misguided leadership, increased dependence on external sources of funding and a growing inability to set their own research agendas" (de-Graft Aikins, 2008, p. 99-100).

In Africa, the challenges facing staff members include the heavy teaching load, low wages and the rising enrolment without an accompanying increase in funds. One result of this situation is that institutions in Africa are understandably hesitant to allow staff to work on other projects that do not necessarily directly contribute to their day to day job. While one member of staff may be willing to dedicate time and effort over and above what their role requires, this is unsustainable and places a heavy burden on one individual's shoulders.

The situation is made more difficult by the fact that many funding schemes do not fund staff time. While this may keep the costs of proposals down, it severely hampers the effectiveness of the projects. Individuals who already can only dedicate limited periods of time a week to the projects face greater barriers by having to do all their administration instead of actually 'carrying out' the project. This is especially true for poorer African institutions.

One result of this situation is that partnerships seem to go through periods of intense productivity immediately before and during certain phases of partnership projects. However they can often lie dormant because of the time constraints of those individuals involved in the implementation of the projects.

Imbalances in resources can also make partnerships frustrating for partner institutions. For instance, in the UK, access to technology (e.g computers) is taken for granted. In Africa however this can be a stumbling block and a severe constraint for many institutions (AUCC, 2003, p. 22). Supportive infrastructure in partnerships requires substantial funding, particularly to cover such basic running costs.

However most funding schemes do not address this in their rationalisation of funding. This can often seriously hamper the African partner institution which finds it much harder to cost-share the partnership than the UK partner. The result is that many partnerships have to scale down or increase the time allowed for each partnership activity.

Although there are also a number of funding schemes specifically designed to strengthen capacity, these are often short term measures. This is problematic given that capacity-building is a cumulative long-term process. In some cases, funding schemes may revitalize a specific area or give an institution a strong boost, yet they are not sustainable. More sustainable funding schemes and longer term projects need to be considered in the future as a means of placing capacity building in its different manifestations as a greater element of UK-Africa partnerships. The proceedings of two recent conferences on Africa's universities – the "Frame-works for Africa-UK Research Collaboration" meeting in Nairobi in September 2008 and the "University Leaders' Forum" conference in Accra in November 2008 - underscored these points.

Sustainability of partnerships is another challenge. In many cases, the funding is there to 'initiate' the partnership and provide some money for projects but there is no long term support. Initial start-up funds are often available, but contingent funds for long-term sustainability are mostly lacking. Sometimes the absence of skilled management on the ground, (because there are no funds to pay the staff), aggravates the sustainability problem. Moreover, partnership projects need to be completely supported at the highest levels to maintain sustainability.

Monitoring and evaluation also presents another major challenge facing UK-Africa partnerships. Many funding schemes do not provide funding to assess the outcome of projects. Monitoring and evaluation is therefore done informally, as in many cases there are no formal monitoring or evaluation processes. One reason is the difficulty of assessing the quality of the partnerships and the micro-managing required to monitor them. Consequently, the outcome of various projects is unpredictable. Hence, without proper and systematic monitoring and evaluation it is difficult to assess whether and how these many different kinds of partnerships are effective.

These represent some of the major challenges that UK and African institutions face that need be recognized and addressed by funding bodies if partnerships are to be effective and sustainable.

Lupane women proudly examine fabric they have been taught to dye using natural fabrics

2.4 Conclusion

The concept of partnership can mean several things to different individuals and institutions as well as in different cultural contexts. However, it is not the label itself but what you put into it that matters.

Drawing from various definitions in the literature and on our research, we suggest the following definition of a partnership:

'An effective educational partnership is a dynamic collaborative process between educational institutions that brings mutual though not necessarily symmetrical benefits to the parties engaged in the partnership. Partners share ownership of the projects. Their relationship is based on respect, trust, transparency and reciprocity. They understand each other's cultural and working environment. Decisions are taken jointly after real negotiations take place between the partners. Each partner is open and clear about what they are bringing to the partnership and what their expectations are from it. Successful partnerships tend to change and evolve over time.'

Finally, an effective educational partnership should go beyond the concept of 'borrowing' or 'replication' policies to that of 'knowledge sharing', and constructing a relationship of 'mutual learning'.

In the following section we draw on this conceptualization of partnerships to present some fundamental 'principles' on the initiation, formation and development of educational partnerships between UK and African institutions. These principles have been elicited from a number of case studies of UK-Africa partnerships and interviews with individuals who have been involved in partnership projects. Some of the principles presented may appear to be self-evident but evidence suggests that they were difficult to implement in practice. We have included them because in many cases they are not fully integrated in partnerships work on the ground. It is hoped that these principles will provide an overarching framework for African and UK institutions to build on the process of initiating and strengthening their own individual and institutional partnership projects.

3 Principles and Guidelines of Effective UK-Africa Educational Partnerships

This section firstly includes a 'How to do it' manual advising on how to establish a link. Secondly, the section sets out 10 fundamental principles of management and good governance which have been identified as important for the initiation, formation and strengthening of effective partnerships between UK and African institutions. These principles have been drawn from a number of case studies of UK-Africa partnership projects which were selected in order to illustrate the specific principles discussed.

It is emphasized that these principles are not intended to present a normative framework of best practice in UK-Africa partnerships. It is our view that initiating and maintaining a genuine educational partnership is not a straightforward simple process that can be based on a checklist or a step-by-step guide.

By discussing these principles, this section also highlights some of the major issues and challenges inspired by these models of partnership.

3.1 How to Do It

Identification and Assessment of Institutional Needs

It is important for educational partnerships to be demand-driven. Before initiating a partnership process UK and African institutions should therefore clearly identify their needs that motivate them to engage in a partnership. Partnerships should contribute to the academic and developmental mission, goals and objectives of the institution. The initial drive to get involved in a partnership may come from any of the academic staff within the institution. However it is essential for institutions to determine if there is evidence for wide support for the partnership including from senior management. This is important because an enthusiastic advocate can be useful at the beginning but it is important to ensure that the partnership does not become an individual project as it will not be sustainable. In other words, while the enthusiasm of staff members is very important, an educational partnership is an institutional collaboration that needs to be embedded in the structure and function of the institution.

A good idea therefore is to hold an initial consultative meeting within the institution to explore the idea of developing such a partnership in depth. Ideally, there should be an institutional mechanism in place to ensure the right individuals are convened.

- What are the reasons driving the idea of initiating a partnership?
- What are the individual and institutional needs and aims?
- Is a partnership the best way of responding to these needs and objectives?
- Do the staff feel that the partnership would be beneficial in terms of their own professional development?
- Does the partnership fit in with any institutional plans or national strategic frameworks?
- Will the benefits delivered through the partnership have a long term impact?
- Can the institution make a long term commitment to the partnership?
- Is the institution able to invest the necessary human and financial capacity and resources involved in running a partnership?
- Are there enough staff from the organization willing and keen to get involved with the partnership? Are they willing to dedicate time to planning and managing the partnership?
- Would the senior management of the institution be willing to support the partnership?
- Will the institution be able to help monitor and evaluate the outcomes of the work to ensure it is meeting the agreed objectives?
- Are there any uncertainties or questions in the future which may jeopardise the partnership?

African institutions in particular need to make sure that a partnership will be an appropriate response to an identified issue or problem within the institution, providing a greater benefit than the time and resources required running it. For example, when staff are on training courses, there is an opportunity cost involved. Institutions should therefore aim for a partnership that is likely to have a strong impact on core institutional activities and priorities.

UK partners in particular need to ask:
- Why is there an interest in establishing a partnership with an African institution?
- Is there a real demand from the African partner for the expertise that they possess? Is the partnership demand-driven?
- Is there a genuine drive within their institutions to work with and support their proposed African partners?
- Will staff be supported and given time to engage in the partnership activities?
- Are those involved in the partnership willing to respond to partners' needs rather than imposing their own ideas? Are they ready to learn?

It is important to involve as many staff members as possible within the institution in this consultative process. This will ensure that the institution gains a broader understanding of the possible areas where the proposed partnership could help. It will also encourage organizational buy-in and ownership of the proposed partnership.

It would also be very useful if this consultation process could be extended to other educational institutions that have engaged in partnerships previously in order to find out the benefits gained, the challenges met and the lessons learned.

African institutions in particular should ensure that they have addressed these and related issues before committing to a partnership.

Some reasons why UK and African institutions get involved in partnerships include:
- Continuing professional development and training for staff;
- Staff retention;
- Capacity Building;
- Access to financial resources.
- Joint research opportunities;
- Curriculum Development;

"It is both right and in our own interest that we should seek to learn from others; share ideas and experience and collaborate to raise the standards of children's services and of education and skills worldwide. In pursuing this goal, our priorities will be to share expertise and resources to contribute to the improvement of education and children's services in the developing world, particularly in Africa" *(DfES, 2004, p. 11).*

Furthermore, as noted by de Gast (1995), the Vice Chancellor of the University of Zambia hoped to learn from the cumulative knowledge and excellence when entering into partnerships with HEIs in the North (de Gast, 1995, quoted in, Africa Unit 2008a, p. 33).

CASE STUDY – The 'Fair Trade in Skills' partnership led by the Association for College Management:
Colleges in the UK and Tanzania realised that there is a need to help strengthen the skills of Tanzanian vocational teachers in the field of agriculture, tourism and IT. By enhancing human resources in these sectors, the country's economy shall be built up and poverty ultimately relieved. Similarly, the partnership offered volunteer, gap-year-type placements for vocational students and professional development opportunities for college staff from the UK. (DIUS, 2008, p.16)

CASE STUDY – Leeds Met University and Chainama College of Health Sciences:
Leeds Met University and Chainama College in Zambia consulted each other widely as to the basis of the partnership, asking questions such as: Is it needed? Who asked for it? How will it be funded?

Chainama College aimed at obtaining university status which required greater staff development. Hence, capacity training targeted middle level health workers in order to build capacity within Zambian lecturing staff and to help retention. The broader social model of health offered a more sustainable model of health care. At Leeds Met University, the institution wanted to enhance its international reputation as part of the Leeds Met Africa program and hoped to enhance global awareness of the university.

In the last six years of the partnership, the relations between the partners have been further institutionalised through formal memorandums of collaboration which provide for future planning through clarifying roles and responsibilities.
(Dixey & Green, 2009, p.308)

CASE STUDY – University of Bradford and University of Jos, Nigeria:
The University of Jos identified the need to build the institutional capacity and infrastructure for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. It spelt out its aim to reposition itself as a centre for excellence in peace and conflict studies and a key reference point in Africa. The University then embarked on a series of foundational activities which resulted in the establishment of the Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies (CECOMPS) in 2002. The establishment of CECOMPS was a well thought out plan that was factored into the "Second Strategic Plan" of the University of Jos. The University decided that it needed to enhance the capacity of CECOMPS for teaching and research in peace and conflict studies.

A consultative mission met at the University of Jos. Its aim was to establish the needs and interests of CECOMPS. One result was a proposal for the upgrading of the Postgraduate Diploma in Peace and Conflict Studies into a MA programme after two years of running. While this was thought to create a great opportunity for enhanced capacity building, it also posed several challenges. The biggest challenge was how the capacity of the Conflict and Peace Centre will be enhanced to be able to undertake such an upgrade?

A consultative workshop prepared the University of Jos to articulate its needs, strengths, limitations, and future directions.

The University of Jos then decided that its aim of being a centre for excellence in peace and conflict studies could best be achieved through a partnership programme. Given that the University of Bradford has a long tradition of exposure and excellence as the world's leading and largest department in Peace Studies – with a unique advantage of an Africa centre - it was considered a suitable partner. The partnership was considered to be a means of strengthening the Africa Program of Bradford while allowing the University of Jos to benefit from the academic excellence of the University of Bradford's Peace Studies Department by becoming a leading centre for peace and conflict studies as well.

Remember:
- Identifying the needs of the institution and the objectives of the partnership should be a consultative process involving different individuals in the institution;
- Institutions need to have a clear rationale about the partnership;
- The purpose of the partnership must be defined in terms of its long-term vision, objectives and activities;
- It is important for staff and management to understand the implications of a commitment to engaging in a partnership.

Once the need for the partnership has been established through the consultative needs analysis, institutions should prioritize the objectives that they want the partnership to focus on, establish a group of interested staff and start searching for a suitable partner.

Finding a Suitable Partner

Selection Criteria

Following the identification of individual and institutional needs and aims and deciding that a partnership is required, the process of identifying a suitable partner begins. There are a number of routes which institutions can use to identify a partner. The starting point for finding a partner differs according to the nature of the proposed partnership and the potential partner profile.

> **However, before embarking on this process of identifying a partner, institutions need to decide on the following:**
> ■ What are our partnership selection criteria?
> ■ What is the profile of the proposed partner institution we are looking for?

These questions should be answered with reference to the 'aims of the partnership' identified at the earlier stage during the institution's 'consultative needs identification process'. Thinking of these and similar questions could help institutions find a suitable partner and ensure the partnership relationship is demand-driven.

When setting their specific partner selection criteria, it is useful for African institutions to take into account that educational partnerships are inter-professional and sometimes inter-disciplinary collaborations (Gedde, 2009, p. 17). It is tempting simply to ask their UK partners what they can offer. However, what they should aim at is drawing on a range of expertise from the UK proposed partner institutions.

> **Questions that could be asked in this regard include:**
> ■ What is the ability of the proposed partner to deliver?
> ■ Does the proposed partner have the expertise and skills necessary to support the required areas?
> ■ At the same time, UK partners should ask their African partners, what their priorities are.

If institutions receive an invitation to partner they should undertake a careful evaluation and engage in wide consultation before responding. Whether the invitation to partner is sent or received it is important to evaluate the match between the two institutions carefully and be confident that the priorities in support of the partnership are closely aligned. The alignment is essential to the decision to move ahead and to the ultimate success of the partnership.

It is important however to realize that there are no fixed rules for finding a partner. Educational partnerships are initiated through a variety of ways. The Africa Unit's research showed that many UK-Africa partnerships for instance developed as a result of personal networking, such as:

- Meetings at conferences between UK and African academics;
- UK researchers undertaking fieldwork in Africa and meeting African academics;
- Students and staff at UK and African institutions already involved with partnerships that go on to work at HEIs elsewhere can often be a catalyst for initiating partnerships from their personal network;
- Members of the African Diaspora working in UK institutions also play a key role in establishing UK partnerships, and their value should be more recognized and utilized.

In other cases, historical relations between UK and African institutions were the launch-pad for their partnership. Important as these personal and historical relationships are, they demonstrate the challenge facing institutions which do not have much experience in creating partnerships.

Visit of Senior Academics from Somaliland to the Africa Unit,
Association of Commonwealth Universities, 9 December 2009, London UK

Some routes to explore when searching for a partner:

- Approaching organizations such as the British Council in the UK or Africa;
- Harnessing the help of African and British academics working or undertaking research in UK and African institutions;
- Publicizing the fact that your institution is searching for a partner in conferences where UK and African academics are present;
- Using the brokerage facilities provided by organizations such as DelPHE. The DelPHE website houses a database of prospective/potential partners detailing their partnership requirements and needs as well as the partner profile they are searching for. The aim of the database is to facilitate the initiation of partnerships based on mutual needs and not only on chance meetings or personal and historical contacts;
- Exploring existing contacts in your institution. Are there any staff members who have connections with the UK or Africa? You may find out there are already a number of individual or departmental ties that already exist in the institution;
- Speaking to colleagues in other institutions who are already involved in a partnership, and asking if they can suggest any potential partners; and
- Talking about the partnership to African and British students studying in the UK and Africa as well as involving students more in the discussion of partnership issues either concurrently in their respective institutions or using online platforms through organisations such as U8[1] and MEDSIN.[2]

"One UK-Africa partnership responding to the Africa Unit survey is working with a student-led organization the 'U8 Global Student Partnership for Development' which is facilitating student-student discussions and peer-reviewed research on global development issues" (Africa Unit, 2008a, p. 51).

"One respondent to the African Unit (AU) Survey noted how his exchange to Uganda as a student resulted in a lifelong interest and commitment to African affairs and how African students to the UK have built up not just friendships but contacts for future professional collaboration. Using students in HEI partnerships would seem to be a very strong tool for promoting a culture of mutual understanding and to enable UK students to take forward their commitments to working with Africa" (Africa Unit, 2008a, p. 51).

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1 U8 Global Student Partnership for Development connects students with the help of a global student research organisation.

2 MEDSIN internationally bridges students on health issues.

Approaching the Proposed Partner

Once a potential partner has been identified, a letter could be sent inviting the selected institution to form a partnership. Its content will depend on the point in the process at which it is sent and how far the discussions have proceeded. For example, if the letter follows an initial visit that has laid the groundwork and established some general principles and guidelines, it may be a general outline of a proposed partnership. Or it may be a draft agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) if the discussions have progressed to that stage. Depending on the stage of the discussion, the letter might include some or all of the following:

- Rationale for the partnership and a description of potential advantages to both institutions;
- Strengths of the proposing institution and comments about how they complement specific interests of the proposed partner;
- Evidence of appropriate resources on campus (academic, administrative, financial, and physical) to support the partnership;
- Proposed responsibilities for each partner in terms of academic, financial, administrative, and physical organization of the partnership;
- Proposal of how the program costs would be met;
- Suggested procedure for implementing the partnership;
- Evidence of interest in an exchange of onsite visits and future negotiations; and
- A suggested timeframe for the partnership planning process.

When Developing the Partnership Proposal

Keep all interested parties informed. This is especially true of staff members, who are the key to a partnership's future success. It is important that they remain aware of the value of the partnership proposal and through each stage of development remain directly involved at all times.

It is also vital to ensure that senior leaders and others who might be interested in or affected by the proposal, such as in the areas of academic affairs, budgets, or planning, are aware of the proposed partnership and follow its progress. This is crucial in order to ensure the commitment of everyone to the partnership.

If the potential partner gives a strong positive response to the proposal, the process can now move to the negotiation stage.

Negotiating the Partnership

During this stage it will be essential to identify a 'contact person' or 'coordinator' for each party. This decision will be shaped by several issues, including the nature of the proposal, the model being used, and the administrative structure of each institution.

It is also sensible to try to anticipate and address potential problems before they occur, thereby reducing the prospect of conflicts, asymmetries or misunderstandings among the partners in the future. Some differences are expected, while others may cause problems as the partnership unfolds.

People at both institutions who eventually will have responsibility for the operation, evaluation and continuity of the partnership should lead the negotiations. Broad consultation at the negotiation stage with faculty staff and administrators is necessary. Relevant heads of departments, deans, and faculty members who might participate in initial partnership programmes should be included in the discussions.

Securing Funding for the Partnership

Partnerships and supportive infrastructure can require substantial funding, particularly to cover basic running costs which are often excluded from funding schemes. Underinvestment can often seriously hamper the African institution, which finds it much harder to cost-share the partnership compared to other mechanisms for strengthening institutions.

There are a number of funding bodies that support educational links, partnerships and their related activities between the UK and Africa. Sources of funding will depend on the nature of the proposed partnership, the partner selected and model of partnership. Funding schemes for partnerships differ in their aims and scope. A number of UK government departments including the Department for International Development (DfID) and the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) are involved in funding UK-Africa partnerships.

Some funding schemes are aimed at:
- capacity building and staff development;
- academic research and researchers;
- scholarships;
- student exchanges and different others.

Funding schemes relevant to UK-Africa partnerships include:

- Education Partnerships in Africa (EPA)[3]
- Development Partnerships in Higher Education (DelPHE)[4]
- British Academy – International Partnerships[5]
- Africa Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (AKTP)
- Prime Minister's Initiative2 (PMI2) – UK-US Partnership Fund[6]
- African Studies Association of the UK (ASAUK) Teaching Fellowships[7]
- International Association of Universities (IAU) – Leadership Development for Higher Education Reform (LEADHER) Programme[8]
- Commonwealth Scholarships – Fellowships for Mid-Career Academics[9]
- Nuffield Foundation – Africa Programme

However, it is important to remember that the funding landscape is a dynamic one. African and UK institutions should therefore search different funding sources and try to map the landscape as it changes. For instance, Research Africa offers a database of funding schemes to its members.

"African institutions should take the initiative to encourage partnerships with UK institutions. The UK is in a better position to fundraise more therefore more suggestions should be coming from African institutions"
(Interview with Dr. Maureen Mackintosh, Open University UK, 23 March 2007).

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3   The EPA programme is now closed to any further applications.
4   Round 5 of the DelPHE programme is now closed, but further rounds are expected for 2011-12.
5   Scheme is hoping to be run again in 2011 with an April deadline.
6   Is currently running a UK-US Partnership Fund, which welcomes applications from a third HEI in any country to be involved, on the understanding that they already have partners in the UK and US in mind.

7   The ASAUK programme is now closed to any further applications.
8   The LEADHER programme is now closed to any further applications.
9   Applications are invited in late spring/early summer for 2011 for funding.

CASE STUDY – University of Bradford and University of Jos, Nigeria:
The Bradford - Jos Link programme was made possible through a British Council HE Links grant which was initiated to establish Peace and Conflict Modules at HEIs. The funding lasted for an initial 3 years commencing from 1999 to 2002. In 2003 when the fund came to an end, the partnership between the two universities was renewed. Though there was no major donor for the partnership, low scale activities were still ongoing with the help of a joint grant from the BC and DIFID. The Africa Centre for Peace and Conflict studies at the University of Bradford secured a grant from the Ferguson Foundation in 2005 to support CECOMPS.

CASE STUDY – University of Leicester and University of Gondar, Ethiopia:
The Leicester-Gondar Link started through the motivation of a group of individuals and the work of an umbrella organisation, THET, who provided seed core funding. Formal discussions began in 1997 for a partnership between the University of Gondar, Ethiopia, and the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Leicester. Under the umbrella of the Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET), a London-based voluntary organization that facilitates links between medical schools and hospitals in the UK and Africa, the joint initiative was able to secure funding for the partnership.

Through a joint effort the link submitted an application and was successfully granted a British Council Higher Educational Link grant for lecturers from the Gondar Department of Community Health to visit Leicester. In 2002/3 they adapted the Masters in Health Services Research in Leicester for use in Ethiopia.

Later in 1998, The Children's Research Fund in Liverpool assisted the Link with a grant of £15,000 per year for five years. This activity was suitably boosted with the award of a British Council grant to the University of Leicester. The grant enabled staff from Gondar to visit Leicester even more, participate in teaching and other activities, and provide them with access to modern facilities. A memorandum of understanding was signed in 2004 formalizing the commitment on both sides of the partnership. With this access Gondar staff (with assistance from Leicester counterparts) has been able to prepare two modules of a Masters programme that would fit with the needs of Gondar. Another indicator of success is the fact that the partnership program received another welcome boost from the UK Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in the form of a £60,000 grant. This was provided specifically for accelerated training and development program between both institutions.

Guidelines for Applying for Funding

When it comes to planning your fundraising strategy, try to think of all the potential sources of funding available to you. You may want to rank them in terms of efficiency, time needed to be invested, probability of success, and scale/amount of funding.

Remember:
The partnership funding proposal must be aligned with the priorities and guidelines of the possible funding agency or organization.

In many cases it is the donor's funding criteria that will determine whether the work is eligible for funding. While the objectives of the partnership should not be driven by access to funding this may be an important consideration.

A planning grant or 'seed money' grant can be valuable in developing a long-term proposal and a positive working relationship with the new partner.

When thinking about how much funding the partnership will require:

- Prioritise – Break the objectives down into costed activities to be addressed in order of priority. This will provide a fundraising target and allow activities to be carried out as the funds are raised.
- Plan your income – This is the key to sustainable funding. The further in advance you can plan the better.
- Allow for contingency – Because plans and circumstances change. Often the programme work agreed by partners evolves through the year and unanticipated costs can emerge. Ensure your fundraising plans take account of this.

Some grant-giving organisations have their own format for application. If not, the fundraising application should contain:

- The need – what is the challenge, problem or issue being addressed? Why is it worth addressing?
- The response – what is the partnership proposing to do? Why is this a good approach? Why is the partnership the best one to do it? Focus on the outcomes the work will deliver.
- The bigger picture – how does the work fit in to the bigger picture? Who else is working in the field? What is being done to avoid duplication?
- The long-term – what will be the long-term impact of this project? What will happen after the funding comes to an end? Think about sustainability and exit strategies.
- Measuring impact – how will you monitor and evaluate your work?
- A detailed budget.

Africa Unit Workshop 'Hit or Myth: UK-Africa FE Partnerships for Skills Development' at the British Council 'Going Global 4' Conference, 24-26 March, 2010, London, UK

Criteria for successful funding applications:
- Calculate a realistic budget;
- Find out if you are eligible;
- Note the deadline for submission;
- Read the guidelines and application process very carefully.

3.2 Ten Partnership Principles of Management and Good Governance

Once the institution has identified a suitable partner and secured funding, it needs to start discussing the remit of the partnership in more depth. This will involve a joint planning process. It is also a good idea to set up a Partnership Committee at each institution to take a lead on the partnership.

Once a partner has been found it is important that partners agree upon a set of principles to guide their partnership. The following principles have been identified by the Africa Unit as some of the most important that are shared by a number of successful UK-Africa partnerships studied. It is important to note that these suggested principles are not rigid and can be modified in any way that suits the specific purpose of the partners and the nature of their partnership.

Main Partnership Principles
 1 Shared ownership of the partnership
 2 Trust and transparency amongst partners
 3 Understanding each partner's cultural environment and working context
 4 Clear and agreed division of roles and responsibilities
 5 Effective and regular communication between partners
 6 Strategic planning and implementation of partnership plan and projects
 7 Strong commitment from junior and senior staff and management
 8 Supportive and enabling institutional infrastructure
 9 Systematic monitoring and evaluation of partnership and partnership projects
10 Sustainability

What are your partnership principles?

In the following section each of these principles will be discussed and illustrated.

3.2.1 1st Principle: Shared Ownership of Partnership

Given historically unequal power relations, it is crucial that partners, particularly UK institutions, ensure that they are not the only ones setting the agenda of the partnership. They need to make sure that their African partners are involved in the decision-making process and ownership of the partnership.

Partners therefore need to:
- Be clear and transparent about partnership aims and expectations;
- Ensure there is detailed discussion about the different aspects and stages of the partnership before any decision is taken;
- Make every effort to reach mutual understanding about the different partnership aspects whenever possible;
- Make sure that partners jointly participate in the decision-making process and management of the partnership;
- Ensure no decisions concerning the other partner are taken without prior discussion; and
- Listen to the needs, suggestions and concerns of their African partners.

CASE STUDY – University of Greenwich and Makerere University, Uganda:
Regular dialogue between project leaders and the donor led to a mutual understanding of each others needs and strengths, facilitating the research to implementation continuum over a period that went beyond the typical three year project cycle. The project was very much a two-way collaboration, with northern partners gaining from the collaboration through local knowledge, connections and the enthusiasm of students and staff, while southern partners gain through capacity building in the area of biotechnology, an enhanced appreciation of external opportunities, e.g. being part of an innovation process by which new knowledge is converted into products and processes, in this case, solutions to plant diseases that threaten local communities and their livelihoods.

Remember:
Partnerships should have benefits for both partners although these need not be exactly symmetrical.

CASE STUDY – Leeds Met University and University of Malawi:

This partnership is part of the 'Leeds Met Africa Initiative' and originated from a BC HE link 'Development and Enhancement of Capacity in Engineering' at the Polytechnic at the University of Malawi. Part of this link was to help revitalize the engineering curricula in order to increase access to higher education, particularly for the disadvantaged and women. The funding ran for six years. One year after the funding had ended, Leeds Met revisited the Polytechnic. They discovered that the University of Malawi was not able to take full advantage of the curricula that had been developed through the link. More support was needed if the effects of the link were to be sustained. This led to the secondment of a member of staff from the Department of Engineering at Leeds Met to the Polytechnic for one year. Leeds Met funded the salary and the University of Malawi provided the accommodation. The latest outcome of the secondment is an EAP project on curriculum and institutional reform and an EPA project relating to E&E skills and capacity development as Leeds Met contributed £10, 000 to part fund a management conference in Malawi to consider priorities and routes to implement their Strategic Plan leading to the EPA project.

Does your partner have a real voice?

Remember:
Make sure that your partnership is based on a real exchange. Both sides have to get something out of the partnership.

3.2.2 2nd Principle: Trust and Transparency amongst Partners

It is vital that partners have mutual trust and there is transparency between partners, especially given the geographical distance between the partners.

Partners should be particularly honest and transparent when discussing:

- Partnership objectives;
- Motivations for engaging the partnership;
- Managerial issues;
- Ownership of results of research;
- Access to resources etc.;
- Budgetary issues: In particular, there must be transparency in budgetary issues. Neither partner should embark on expenditures involving the partnership budget without prior discussion and agreement. Many partners have expressly emphasized the use of total transparency in reporting and financing mechanisms to quell any doubts about the ways in which funds are being used.

It is also important to be transparent and open about the nature of the length of the partnership – is it intended to be a short-to-medium-term partnership or are both parties entering into a long-term engagement?

Transparency between partners should translate into specific 'acts' such as:

- Documentation and record keeping.
- Communicating openly.

During initial exchange visits there should be open and frank discussions of all these and other issues. Each partner should understand the procedures and constraints of the other. Differences of opinion should be aired.

> **CASE STUDY– University of Greenwich and Makerere University, Uganda:**
> In the eyes of the project leaders, mutual trust born out of a long-term relationship between collaborators, long-term funding prospects and a transparent dialogue with the donors was key to most of the successful outcomes of this series of projects. Were it not for the long-term perspective of the donor that allowed the partners to build trust, the quality and quantity of outputs and capacity building would have been seriously compromised.

Opportunities to meet face to face can build trust, particularly to appreciate different working conditions. This serves to build up momentum and enthusiasm for the partnership and projects as well as to nurture the personal friendships vital to a functioning partnership. Partnerships based on trust and mutual respect take time to nurture and develop, but once achieved are in a much better position to deliver success in the long term. It is hard to create mechanisms to replace longstanding relationships and trust of partners.

Remember:
There should be no hidden agendas among partners.

Have you encouraged transparency and honesty in discussions with your stakeholders and your partner?

NUST staff from the Department of Textiles addressing Lupane village community

3.2.3 3rd Principle: Understanding each Partner's Cultural and Working Environment

Once a prospective partner has been chosen it is of absolute importance that both partners understand the context in which each other operates and what can realistically be expected of both partners.

It is important to remember that educational institutions operate in different educational and socio-cultural contexts. It is therefore necessary to be aware of and evaluate the impact of the larger environment on the proposed partnership. Awareness of these differences and constraints is a vital factor in the success of the partnership.

It is therefore crucial that both partners understand and appreciate the working context and cultural environment of each other to ensure that projects and processes are appropriate. It is important to understand what the baseline of capacity is for both institutions in order to plan and to manage expectations on both sides about the timescales as well as the ability to work together. The overestimation of capacity or underestimation of time – because of insufficient knowledge of the partner's working context - has slowed down and limited the scope of partnerships in some cases.

In certain cases, UK institutions were frustrated by what they perceived as the lack of tangible communication and proper management of partnership schemes in Africa.

However, UK institutions need to be aware that some of the working processes and structures that they are used to working with may not be familiar in other countries. Likewise, UK institutions need to be aware of the pressures faced by their African partners. In the UK, access to technology (e.g. computers) is taken for granted. In Africa however this can be a stumbling block and a severe constraint for many institutions. Other difficulties faced by African institutions include:
- Overworked staff
- Poor infrastructural support (IT, library services, and labs)

"UK researchers are often able to access grants which provide for replacement teaching costs, allowing leave from normal duties. African institutions must instead typically find this additional money from their own funds, or simply pass duties to other colleagues" *(Harle, 2007, p. 19).*

"The key instrument in establishing and maintaining a successful link is the project management. But in the process of making sure that capable and successful project managers are installed some factors should be put into serious consideration, i.e. give people time to adapt to their work and ensure that their time is paid well, having in mind the fact that previously they were mostly underpaid"
(Interview with Dr. Maureen Mackintosh, The Open University, 23rd March 2007).

Language and cultural differences can also be a source of problems that can affect every dimension of the partnership. It is common to underestimate the issues related to language competency and the preparation needed to adjust to a new language and cultural environment. Language and cultural difficulties can hinder the planning and negotiation process as well as the implementation of the agreement. Cultural norms can differ with regard to the expected standards of polite behaviour.

The laws and bureaucracies in certain countries can be complex.

Once the partnership is underway, institutions should prepare those involved in it, (students, staff, administrators, and project managers/coordinators) for cultural issues they may encounter. For example, they could be provided with information about the partner country and institutions that can help them identify the cultural differences they may encounter and interpret them.

Finally, an agreement needs to be reached among partners as to a working procedure and structure that takes into account the cultural variables of the partners' institutions.

What can be learned about the political and economic situation in the region of the partner institution? Are there major changes expected in the near future that might have an impact on the local environment of the partner institution?

Remember:
It is important that different cultural and working values of partners are mutually respected.

3.2.4 4th Principle: Clear Division of Roles and Responsibilities

The role and responsibility of each partner and the individuals involved should be clearly identified, examined and agreed upon. The roles and responsibilities of the partners and each individual, should be dependent on their capabilities and skills, current and anticipated.

Partners should:
- Ensure that each institution and individual is clear about their roles and responsibilities;
- Have mutual understanding and appreciation of what each partner brings to the table.

This is important in order to:
- Ensure that individuals in each institution have been assigned tasks that are suitable to their qualifications, skills and experience. In some cases this may reveal that certain individuals in one partner institution require training to optimally fulfil their roles and responsibilities in the partnership;
- Develop trust and transparency;
- Establish accountability.

Partners need to determine such questions as:
- Who will be responsible for drafting the proposal?
- Who should be involved in the monitoring and evaluation process?

CASE STUDY – University of Bradford and University of Jos, Nigeria:
Space has been provided by the University of Jos for the rehabilitation and expansion of the students' computer lab. This facility has to be converted and refurbish into a comfortable research centre where computers and working areas will be housed. It was agreed that the University of Jos will provide the furnishing (such as tables, chairs and computer spaces) but other support equipment will be provided by the project as a whole.

"It was agreed that four Leicester external PHD studentships were to be created and to be based in Gondar. The VC at Leicester has agreed to waive the cost of the fees. Gondar has agreed to pay the salaries for the part time students. This leaves the costs associated with travel and research projects. The small amount of funding required would facilitate a win-win partnership with a clearly defined research-capacity building agenda"
(Interview with Mike Silverman, Leicester University, 1 December 2006).

As a partnership is being developed it is important to openly and fully negotiate the aims and goals of the partnership to suit both parties. It is important to be realistic in the ambitions of the partnership itself, as well as in the specific partnership projects so as not to create frustration that is often seen in UK-Africa partnerships being overly ambitious in their proposed projects.

Be clear about what your institution has to offer:
- What structures are needed to manage the partnership?
- How will people be chosen to take responsibility?
- How will responsibilities be divided up?

Planning the Partnership Activities
Partners also need to ask themselves: What activities need to be carried out to achieve the desired outcomes or objectives? These may include:
- Training or support visits from the UK partner to the African institution. Think about the purpose of these visits, the expertise required and the duration. This will help identifying suitable people;
- Mentoring and support by the UK partner for specific activities;
- Books, journals, and other literature need to be provided.

Some activities will involve both the partners working together while other responsibilities may fall individually to the UK or the African partner. These should be set out clearly within specific time scales so that everyone is aware of their responsibilities.

3.2.5 5th Principle: Effective and Regular Communication

Partnerships seem to go through periods of intense productivity before and during phases of projects but can often lay dormant due to time pressures of academics, researchers and other individuals involved who may have other commitments.

Communication and dialogue are essential for monitoring and strengthening the partnership. It is important that partners plan for both internal and external communication. Internal communication refers to talking with all the key individuals and offices involved in the partnership within the institution particularly at the early stages when the partnership agreement is being negotiated. External communication refers to a dialogue with external parties such as heads of other departments of the university, Ministries of Higher Education and other stakeholders. This is important in order to ensure there is optimal use of the partnership results.

Evidence shows communication between partners is usually strong at the early stages of a partnership but slows down in the middle. However, effective and regular communication should be maintained between partners as much as possible.

This is important in order to:
- Ensure smooth flow of information;
- Communicate any changes in the partnership work plan;
- Report any challenges and problems that arise;
- Better understand each partner's perspectives;
- Ensure the partnership results are communicated.

In order to achieve this, partners need to:
- Identify key contact points/coordinators in both institutions;
- Discuss and agree upon the best and most practical 'channels' of effective and regular communication (taking into account the constraints faced by African institutions mentioned above);
- One important channel of effective communication is exchange visits. The strongest drives of partnerships are the individual relationships between members of staff at all partner institutions in keeping the enthusiasm and momentum going. Investing in these relationships through exchange visits to each other's institutions is therefore an excellent way of building up trust and nurturing the personal friendships. Time and effort needs to be invested on both sides for this to be successful.

Some benefits of exchange visits are:
- They provide face-to-face meetings between partners;
- They allow partners to identify needs and motivations for the partnership, discuss and agree on objectives and the work plan;
- They allow each partner to have a stronger first hand experience about the cultural and working environment of the other.

Remember:
It is useful to hold exchange visits at the beginning of the partnership where needs are identified and objectives and aims are being discussed.

CASE STUDY – University of Leicester and University of Gondar, Ethiopia:
Senior Management from Gondar came to the UK to shadow Senior Management at Leicester which provided to be a valuable experience for all. Some 70 exchange visits, in each direction, have taken place over 10 years involving medical practitioners, nursing staff, senior managers and senior members of the new University of Gondar.

'To successfully initiate and sustain a joint project two way visits to assess needs on both sides are essential. This creates the possibility for a two-way assessment and can successfully build bridges towards better understanding of each other'
(Interview with Mike Silverman, University of Leicester, 30 April 2007).

To make sure the exchange visits are successful, partners need to prepare for the travel arrangements early.

Practicalities to consider:
- **Passport and visa application:** It could take a long time to obtain visa clearance in some countries. If you have never travelled abroad, you have to apply for a passport which might take months.
- **Flight and accommodation booking:** Avoid visits during the most expensive peak times and don't make any bookings until the visa has been secured.
- **Vaccination and travel insurance:** Some countries denial entry without certain vaccinations. Make sure you have an appropriate travel insurance which will cover you in case of medical emergency while being abroad.
- **Subsistence costs:** The living costs in the UK might be substantially higher than in Sub-Sahara Africa. Be clear on who will provide the subsistence costs.

After the exchange visits, partners still need to stay in touch as much as possible through the different partnership stages in order to review the partnership regularly.

Although exchange visits are important what happens between visits is as important in determining the outcome of the partnership. Ongoing communication, monitoring of activities, completing agreed actions, follow-up after visits, and exchanging information are also key components. Therefore, other communication mechanisms should be explored and institutionalized such as emails and videoconferencing if possible. All these multiple means of communication must be sustained over time.

Regular communication between the two Partnership Committees or through the designated partnership coordinators is vital to ensure an effective partnership. Partnership coordinators/ committees should talk regularly to update each other on progress against agreed plans.

Remember:
Effective and regular communication is necessary to build up trust.

Training in handbag making using llala palm and sisal fibres – Lupane

3.2.6 6th Principle: Joint Strategic Planning and Implementation of Partnership Plan and Project

Any educational partnership goes through a number of stages and phases during its lifecycle. These stages differ according to the type of partnership and the profile of partner institutions involved. However no matter what these stages are, strategic planning and implementation is central to the success of any partnership process.

Planning the partnership needs to be a joint process:
- African partners should usually be the ones to identify the problems the partnership can help address. They can identify the aims and suggest priorities;
- The UK partner also needs to be involved in the planning process to ensure they can deliver what is asked of them. The UK partner can also play a facilitator's role: asking questions about the needs identified, and stimulating ideas about how they can be addressed;
- In all cases, both partners need to be forward thinking and consider the sustainability of what they are doing;
- In larger partnerships, or those involving more than two institutions, it can be helpful to establish a steering committee for the partnership formed of individuals on all sides of the partnership in order to share expertise and successfully guide the partnership through potential obstacles.

Strategic planning in the partnership context means:
- Agreeing on clear strategic objectives for the partnership;
- Deciding on concrete deliverables related to each objective;
- Developing a Partnership Plan of Action;
- Setting realistic timescales for each stage of the Plan;
- Agree on project delivery and project management;
- Deciding on a partnership framework. This could take the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or an informal agreement.

Some partnerships may be established with minimal organisational and legal infrastructure. Other partnerships may be more formalised through the development of a joint mission statement and objectives in a partnership agreement.

Components of the Partnership Agreement

The negotiation process and the ensuing agreement are required to focus attention on the many components of the partnership and any relevant details. When the partners are all in agreement, they can begin drafting a formal partnership agreement. The key elements of the partnership formalized in the written agreement may include:

- Mutual partnership project goals;
- Administrative and physical space arrangements for the partnership project;

Plans for on site visits;
- Methods of communication among the partner institutions;
- Plans to implement these goals should include agreement on:
  - Which departments in the institution will participate and the degree of their involvement;
  - The degree of reciprocity involved and negotiating balance.
- Provisions for changes in the content of the partnership.

The final agreement does not need to include all the details of the partnership, and it may be preferable to avoid excessive detail. By using broad terms in the formal agreement, the partners may be able to avoid frequent revisions related to fluctuations on the number of participants or changes in the financial terms of the partnership. It may be desirable to keep the formal document short and general in nature and supplement it with a MoU.

Memorandum of Understanding

Memoranda between participants may include statements about:

- Objectives
- Rights and responsibilities
- Procedures
- Decision-making mechanisms
- Expectations
- Accountability

Flexibility to move the partnership goals and process in line with the changing circumstances needs to be built into the MoU.

CASE STUDY – University of Leicester and University of Gondar, Ethiopia:
The long-term strategic aim of the Leicester-Gondar link was to build professional capacity in all aspects of health care in northern Ethiopia, by creating partnerships between health professionals in Gondar and Leicester. With the encouragement of the Ministry of Education in Ethiopia, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester and the President of the University of Gondar.

It is important however to note that the content of the partnership agreement or MoU will depend on the particular nature of the partnership.

Whatever partnership framework is agreed upon, the draft agreement or MoU should be circulated among officials at partner institutions for their comments. Relevant stakeholders at the partner institutions need to review and comment on the agreement before it is signed.

While they have no solid legal value in enforcing partners they can provide a strong element of reassurance and transparency in clearly defining and agreeing the roles in the partnership and projects. Overall they can provide an element of clarity about the goals and responsibilities in the partnership which can be vital for avoiding ambiguity as well as in the event of staff turnover.

Establishing a Partnership Committee
Partnership committees tend to form more easily in the UK as the UK partner often takes the lead on fundraising. But if the partnership is to be demand-driven, then it is vital that the African institution also has a partnership committee or an effective co-ordinator who communicates regularly with the UK team.

Implementation Process
Following the planning process, it is equally important for partners to plan carefully the different stages of the implementation process. Partnership work should have a clear and manageable focus.

The following points need to be discussed and agreed upon:
- What is the purpose of each implementation stage of the Plan of Action?
- What are the expected outcomes of each stage?
- Who will be responsible for the different implementation stages?

Once the partnership agreement is a reality, an important first step is to put into place the necessary staff.

"One of the key instruments in establishing and maintaining a successful partnership is to have a good Project Manager on the ground. But in the process of making sure that capable and successful Project Managers are installed, some factors should be put into serious consideration, i.e. give people time to adapt to their work and ensure their time is paid well" *(Interview with Dr. Maureen Mackintosh, The Open University, 23 March 2007).*

CASE STUDY – University of Westminster and Delta State University, Nigeria:
A small team of the University of Westminster staff visited Delta State, Nigeria to conduct a feasibility study. Three years later, in partnership with the Delta State Government (DSG) of Nigeria, the International Projects Office (IPO) coordinated the University's provision of skills, knowledge and expertise which led to the creation of three polytechnics and one sports college in Delta State, Nigeria. They are: Otefe-Oghara Polytechnic, Ozoro Polytechnic, Ogwashi Polytechnic and Mosogar Sports College. University staff from many departments, including the Education Initiative Centre, Campus Computing and Audio Visual, Harrow Business School and Human Resources was involved in various stages of the project. Technical assistance was provided in the areas of I.T., Physical Planning, Academic Planning, and Staff Development.

CASE STUDY – University of Manchester and National University of Textile Technology, Zimbabwe:
The Department for Textile Technology at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) initiated the DFID funded link with The William Lee Innovation Centre at the University of Manchester from 2002 to 2005. The aim of the partnership was to improve methods of cotton production and to provide technologies and training to enable farmers to process cotton partially or completely. Training on successful technologies and practices to promote economic growth and development based on a strategy using the cluster concept. They formed a textile industry group and partnerships with local industry. The partnership resulted in the formation of Matabeleland Wild Silk Commercial Insects and Plants (MWSCIP) Trust whose purpose is to empower rural communities with skills for self-sustainability. During the duration of the project, a lot of textile related natural resources with a potential for income generation were identified. As a result, a DelPHE partnership was initiated aiming to exploit these resources. The partnership is between the Department of Textile Technology at NUST, the Department of Textile Engineering at MOI University, the Nelson Mandela University and the University of Manchester and is entitled 'Pro-economic Growth and Higher Education Development, Underpinned by Textile Technologies, Research, and their Applications and Sustainability'.

CASE STUDY – TABEISA (Technical and Business Education in South Africa), Coventry University, Greenwich University, and 6 South African former technikons: TABEISA is fundamentally about training students in entrepreneurial skills and helping small businesses grow. Initially focused on the former technikons in South Africa, TABEISA has extended its work to Ghana and Kenya. Design4 Life is one example of a project that builds capacity for entrepreneurial activity. The aim of Design4Life is to build capacity within HEIs and to link skilled artisans and entrepreneurs in Ghana and South Africa, with flair and marketing understanding, to create products that are clearly 'Designed 2 Sell'.

It is sometimes useful after signing a new partnership agreement to publicize the partnership in order to stimulate interest and involvement in the new project and to ensure that information about opportunities will reach all the intended audiences.

The first few months of the partnership will set the tone for the future of the working relationship and help determine the success of the project. Close attention to details can minimize problems that can arise in the early stages of the partnership.

Shifting Priorities and Goals

"All institutions are constantly changing. Changes in leadership, institutional priorities, and the external environment for all partners can significantly alter the context for a partnership. It is important to discuss changes expected by each partner in the future and whether they will have a significant impact on the goals of the partnership. Obviously, many changes cannot be anticipated, and the path of any partnership is to some extent unpredictable" *(Van de Water, Green & Koch, 2008, p. 40/41).*

In particular, the changing needs of African environments have to be recognized and the partnership must be able to respond to these changing needs by modifying the work plan and maintaining a certain degree of flexibility.

Adjusting to the Unexpected

"…[E]very new partnership will bring some surprises in spite of exhaustive advance planning and extensive communication. Expect them and try to understand why and how they happened. […] Discuss the surprise with the partner(s) and explore possible responses to it in a collaborative manner. It is important to understand the possible cultural dimensions. […] Once the partners have reached an agreement as to the best response, they can make the necessary adjustments" *(Van de Water, Green & Koch, 2008, p. 51).*

Woman displays completed handbag

3.2.7 7th Principle: Strong Commitment from Junior and Senior Staff and Management

Commitment to the partnership is required at the level of *individuals*, and with regard to *time*.

Individual Commitment

It is important that partners are aware of the implications of establishing and sustaining a partnership relationship over a period of time. Partnerships can put pressures on partners at more than one level. Strong commitment to the partnership at different levels in the institution is therefore key to the success of the partnership.

A partnership needs to have interest from within the institution in order to ensure that the partnership can be sustained and to bring about change in the long term. Commitment from senior management in partner institutions is particularly important. At the same time a partnership cannot be a top-down decision from senior management without support from other staff.

There needs to be a group of committed people who have the skills and the time to make the partnership a reality. For African partners, this means people who have the motivation and drive to lead the partnership, communicate with other partners and think strategically about where a partnership can have an input. For UK partners, it means having the people with the professional skills, time, contacts and experience of working in Africa.

Many partnerships make progress because they are supported by dedicated colleagues at the partner institutions. Partnerships work much better when they are initiated by enthusiasm from the bottom. However, high level support is also essential in driving the partnership forward.

Unless a member from the institution's management has been involved in setting up the partnership you will need to convince them. Communicate with them right from the beginning to get initial endorsement for the partnership. A partnership with high level support is much more likely to be successful and sustainable. Such support may allow staff to take time off to conduct visits. Sometimes the management may be willing to support the partnerships financially. Many partnerships which responded to the Africa Unit survey noted how the projects were either delayed or scaled down, as they were initiated without fully understanding what might be possibly required in terms of the commitments of those involved in the partnership on both sides as well as financial and communication constraints.

"It is of utmost importance to find committed locals and academics. We found individuals at Foura Bay College who have done a commendable job, one of the reasons being that they were alumni of the OU and are familiar with OU policies"
(Interview with Dr. Maureen Mackintosh, The Open University, 23 March 2007).

CASE STUDY – University of Bradford and University of Jos, Nigeria:
The governing council of the University of Jos has pledged to take full responsibility for the sustenance of all areas covered by the funding. The entire university was committed to ensuring that all the facilities are properly maintained and improved upon for continuity. The participation and further willingness of the University of Bradford's Africa Centre to take part in even more projects presented another assurance of external resource availability.

CASE STUDY – University of Leicester and University of Gondar, Ethiopia:
The Leicester-Gondar partnership has seen enormous progress since its establishment partly because of the support it has received from dedicated staff in both HEIs. The partnership was initially driven from the bottom up. The "bottom-up" strategy has also been of great use in the enhancement and facilitation of the project's sustainability. However, the partnership had strong senior level support from the NHS Trust Chief Executive and the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester. This was a crucial element in driving the partnership forward. The Leicester-Gondar experience has clearly demonstrated that the sustenance of funding for continuity largely depends on personal enthusiasm from both junior and senior staff.

CASE STUDY – Greenwich Community College and Colleges in Tema, Ghana:
The Greenwich Community College has established partnership arrangements with colleges in Tema, Ghana, aiming at curriculum and staff development in the field of tourism industry. One contributing factor in establishing the partnership was the official twinning between the City of Greenwich and the City of Tema as the local governments and employers are also involved in developing the city's tourism industry. (DIUS, 2008, p.14)

"The existence of an organization such as THET to provide this initial impetus was an important milestone in the partnership"
(Professor John Fothergill, University of Leicester, 1 December 2006).

"Support is important from senior managers. However an institutional strategy should not constrain individual links. Within an African institution, African academics will use their external contacts to influence the strategy of their institutions, rather than embarking on a link/project that fits with the strategy of their institution"
(Interview in Leicester Medical School, 1 December 2006).

The partners need to be confident that all share nearly the same level of interest in making the partnership effective and taking the necessary steps to support it. An institution's level of interest might be determined by confirming the faculty and staff support that it will be able to provide, the administrative level and location from which the partnership will be coordinated, or the human and financial resources it is willing to commit *(Van de Water, Green & Koch, 2008, p. 38).*

In addition,

"A new partnership may reflect the personal interests or contacts of an individual faculty member. In such cases, careful attention should be given to providing the partnership with a broad base of support that will sustain it when these key individuals retire or move to another institution. This concern needs to be addressed at the negotiating stage to understand that all parties understand the institutional, as opposed to individual, [needs] of the partnership" (Van de Water, Green & Koch, 2008, p. 40).

Time Factor

Time allocated for partnership work is already severely restricted by other commitments as well as funding schemes not covering the costs of the institution, particularly so for African partners. If people have too many university obligations and cannot contribute the time needed to the partnership this can jeopardize the success of the partnership. As mentioned before, staff at African universities very often has a heavy teaching load. While one member of staff may be willing to dedicate time and effort over and above what their role requires, this is unsustainable and places a heavy burden on one individual's shoulders.

CASE STUDY – University of Bradford and University of Jos, Nigeria:
They agreed on a 14.5% staff Buy-Out for the Project Coordinator. This is a facility to enable the Project Coordinator and Director of the Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies of the University of Jos to devote sufficient time to the effective implementation of the project activities. The amount will be used to employ one Research Fellow or Assistant Lecturer who holds a Masters degree to cover part of the Director's teaching and supervision duties.

"For UK – Africa partnerships to succeed one important component required is the time factor" *(Interview with Dr. Maureen Mackintosh, The Open University, 23 March 2007).*

Remember:
A common error is to underestimate the labour-intensive nature of international partnerships.

"Creating collaborations between the UK and African higher education institutions can be an extremely slow process"
(Interview with Dr. Maureen Mackintosh, The Open University, 23 March 2007).

"Occasionally, political or economic events may interrupt the planned course of a partnership. Temporary suspensions of activities may be required and the relationship nurtured in other ways until the collaboration can resume. Such suspensions may last for brief periods or long times. However institutional commitments have been known to survive and even thrive under such challenges" *(Van de Water, Green & Koch, 2008, p. 53).*

Remember:
Partnerships take time to develop. Keep the partnership momentum going.

3.2.8 8th Principle: Supportive Institutional Infrastructure

Being keen and committed however is not enough to guarantee the success of the partnership. Educational institutions need to provide a supportive environment for partnerships. According to the Africa Unit survey (2008a), UK academic staff involved in partnerships stated that levels of support from their own institution could be improved.

Partners need to support each other in order to ensure the individuals involved in the partnership have the time, skills and capacity to deliver the objectives set out in the partnership plan of action. However, in order for these infrastructural needs to be identified, they have to be discussed between the partners with transparency.

Skills: Some individuals in the institution may lack the precise skills needed for a particular aim or task in the partnership. Training programmes could therefore be organized by the partner institution to improve and share skills.

"One area which could be improved would be to reduce the obstacles to sharing skills" *(Interview in Leicester Medical School, 1 December 2006).*

CASE STUDY – University of Leicester and University of Gondar, Ethiopia:
University of Leicester and Gondar: Another important area that deserved major attention was staff development particularly among senior health managers in Gondar. In conjunction with Skill-share International, an international non-governmental organization, a series of workshops were organized in Gondar to provide leadership and management training. The partnership also engaged in the setting up of a Staff Development Centre with guidance from Leicester. This infrastructural support which involves facilities for teacher-training and research is a vital step towards Gondar University's teaching and research excellence in the future.

Capacity: Your partner institution may not have the institutional/infrastructural capacity or individual capacity that is needed for the implementation of the partnership plan of action.

The question to be asked is:

"Is there an appropriate infrastructure in place to support partnerships or does the institution need to develop one?" *(Van de Water, Green & Koch, 2008, p. 27).*

Remember:

A partner institution could provide infrastructure support and build or strengthen the capacity of the other partner.

CASE STUDY – University of Leicester and University of Gondar, Ethiopia:

In the partnership between Leicester University and Gondar University, 'Ethiopia in Public Health', Leicester University is providing the infrastructure in the form of libraries, labs, and training material to support the partnership projects between the two institutions such as MSc programmes.

CASE STUDY – National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and Literacy teachers in Uganda:

In the partnership between the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and literacy teachers in Uganda, British Airways, with UNESCO, supported the institutional infrastructure through initial assessment and the development of materials using locally available resources. *(DIUS, 2008, p.16)*

"For the sustainability of partnership projects, training should be provided. Resources for this to happen should also be made available. Accessibility to services such as the internet and provision of infrastructure is imperative" *(Interview with Mike Silverman, University of Leicester, 30 April 2007)*.

Do the staff of your own or your partner organizations require any related training?

Furthermore, in the UK, access to computers is taken for granted, but this can be a stumbling block in many institutions in Africa. The lack of access to technology for the African partners represents a severe constraint. If the African partner has limited access to ICT, then report writing, drafting research outputs as well as maintaining contact is going to prove to be a serious barrier to an effective partnership. Jon Harle notes in the anecdotal responses to his survey of African researchers how funding schemes do not address these most basic needs in their rationalization of funding:

"Funders and researchers from the North do not fully understand the constraints that researchers in the South work under … we have a DFID funded research project in partnership with two top UK universities and a number of other African ones. The grant includes funding for computers for two research assistants…but none for the principal researchers who…share one with about 20 other members of academic staff" *(Harle, 2007, p. 11)*.

Moreover, the resource imbalance and lack of sufficient funding to address these issues plays a key role in hampering communication. Many responses to the Africa Unit survey (2008a) voiced their frustrations at the pace at which their projects were going, although they understood the constraints they faced it did not provide an environment conducive for partnerships. Jon Harle anecdotally highlights the same point:

> "The ability to cope with self sponsored communication e.g. having to expend your little personal resources in sending and receiving information via emails and surface mails, coupled with delays and queues in cyber cafes may lead to breakdown in communication and (delay) in the research process" *(Harle, 2007, p. 11).*

Will resources (ICT access, training programmes, etc.) be made available?
Will you be able to arrange training sessions that your UK partners can feed into?

International Offices within Institutions

In order to address issues such as imbalance of skills, resources and capacity, institutions need to provide an enabling framework for their international partnerships.

For example, the International Office at Leeds Met University provides a high degree of support for Leeds Met's many international partnerships. At Warwick University the Institute for Advanced Study has been created to provide a central mechanism for coordinating and supporting research and collaboration with Africa.

It is particularly interesting to note the increased establishment and development of international offices in African HEIs as a mechanism for co-ordinating external engagements including international partnerships. The University of Stellenbosch's International Office plays a key role here, but smaller institutions such as Gondar University are also implementing an international engagement strategy. These examples of good practice in both the UK and Africa should be encouraged to provide support and advice for staff and departments that desire to engage in partnerships as well as helping to provide information and data on where partnerships exist to be able to widen and deepen the evidence base.

Remember:
While individual commitment plays an important role, a partnership is a collective effort. Partnerships need to have a supportive infrastructure which should address imbalances in resources and skills.

3.2.9 9th Principle: Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are key elements in an effective partnership as they measure and document progress and obstacles. It is important that both partners provide initial feedback to each other about the partnership through the established communication channels. It is also important to monitor and evaluate partnerships regularly in order to make sure that the overall aims of the partnership are still synergised. This is particularly important after staff turnover, given the importance of personal relationships and motivations in HEI partnerships.

While partnership projects are usually evaluated and monitored in compliance with the funding body, the partnership itself is rarely evaluated. While this may be overly time consuming it is very useful to give it a regular check to make sure processes are working as effectively as they can be, goals are clarified and opportunities are identified.

Sometimes things change rapidly within a partner institution. Issues that have been included in a two year activity plan for the partnership in 2010 may be out of date by 2011 because the institution has a set of new strategies.

Regular review is therefore very important: assess whether the original plans are still priorities and make any necessary modifications.

Monitoring: should be an ongoing process that is carried out regularly and constitutes an integral part of good management practice. The indicators of success need to be jointly determined and applied at regular intervals.

Evaluation: the first stage of a new partnership includes putting into place the evaluation plan discussed during the negotiation stage. Once a partnership is well established it is time to consider a comprehensive evaluation of accomplishments to date and a plan for the future. Such an evaluation provides the basis for setting new goals as well as refining and improving existing project components. Evaluation of the partnership itself, not just of outputs and deliverables, has to be built into the partnership.

One challenge here is that many funding schemes do not provide funding for any formal assessment of the outcome of projects. Monitoring and evaluation in many cases is therefore done informally with minimal financial and staffing inputs. The effect, therefore, can be to make the outcome of various projects both unpredictable and risky.

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be agreed by the Partnership Committee responsible for planning and guiding the overall direction of the partnership.

Mechanisms can include:
- Periodical evaluation reports;
- Clear qualitative and/or quantitative indicators that measure objectives.

An informative evaluation report gives you something tangible to disseminate and this can be an important vehicle for sustainability, including in relation to the leverage of public funding, investment or sponsorship.

Whatever monitoring mechanisms are chosen by the partners what is important is that a systematic evaluation of the impact of the partnership at different levels and in its different stages is undertaken. Partners need to jointly establish appropriate monitoring and evaluation indicators. The aim should be to provide an objective evaluation of the partnership strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations for the future.

CASE STUDY – University of Leicester and University of Gondar, Ethiopia:
In the Leicester and Gondar Partnership, there is a 'Links Committee' which checks regularly on the project between the two institutions. Monitoring and evaluation is therefore done through informal summaries of the projects that are presented at regular 'Links Committee' meetings.

Some of the successful outcomes of the partnership include: the development of a very successful part-time modular Masters in Public Health which is undertaken by a wide variety of health workers, including doctors, nurses and health offices; the development and publication of a textbook of paediatrics for undergraduates; and research projects leading to peer-review publications, jointly authored by Gondar and Leicester staff.

The Open University has endeavoured to monitor and evaluate its Open Door policy with African institutions. It shares its progress reports with the public as it publishes the Open University Evaluation Reports. These reports indicate that pedagogical reform has taken place in several African institutions. Indicators show the scheme has had an impact on building capacity in African higher education institutions while statistics also demonstrate the positive impact of the project on student performance.

Feedback from the partners in the pilot project confirms that the Open Door policy provides extremely valuable 'enabling' materials in contexts where universities are poorly resourced. The materials have been used as library materials, pedagogical resources for lecturers and supplementary learning materials for students.

A good partnership is constantly evolving. Project leaders should evaluate the partnership and identify new opportunities on a regular basis. As the partners become more confident in working together they can introduce new projects, develop new collaborations, realign priorities and identify new funding sources, based at least in part on the evaluation.

"For example, an institution might want to expand a program-specific partnership into a broad institutional relationship. It also might be advantageous to expand the initial bilateral partnership to a consortium framework and, in the process, develop new components and extend the number of partners and the degree of reciprocity" *(Van de Water, Green & Koch, 2008, p. 52).*

Case Study – University of Bradford and University of Jos, Nigeria:
The success of the program between Bradford University and Jos University in Nigeria has led to the extension into Universities in Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Remember:
- Partners need to discuss and agree on a monitoring and evaluation mechanism. It should be practical, clear, and culturally appropriate;
- A successful partnership generates new opportunities for cooperation;
- Monitoring and evaluation allows the benefits and impact of partnerships to be recognised which can lead to further funds for projects.

3.2.10 10th Principle: Sustainability

This is the last but ultimately most important principle. Unless there is a clear financing plan in place, no matter how rigorously the other principles are followed, the partnership will fail.

"Trying to achieve things which are beyond resources is a common scenario in the UK and Africa" *(Interview in Leicester Medical School, 1 December 2006).*

The resources needed to run a partnership successfully will depend on the objectives and activities that you agree with your partners. When determining these it is important to be realistic about the resources available to both of you, taking care not to raise expectations beyond what you will be able to deliver.

The imbalance of resources and lack of opportunities to overcome them is an obstacle that partnerships face and may have to scale down or increase the time allowed for each activity causing much frustration for partners.

Funding is sometimes available from external sources – such as DFID's DelPHE scheme or the EPA scheme funded by BIS[10] – to support the establishment and initial stages of a partnership. If it is specifically designed to be a short-term engagement, this might be sufficient. But in almost all cases, and in particular when the initial stages prove successful, the partners will wish to continue their relationship. It is vital to be clear about how the funding to sustain that is to be made available. As other parts of this guide make clear, personal commitment and the development of a good relationship are necessary – but, in the absence of funding, not sufficient.

10 Currently, it appears that the EPA scheme is now closed
    to any further applications.

4. Looking Forward

There is dearth of data on UK-Africa partnerships. The aim of this guide was to outline some fundamental principles in good practice and highlight challenges in initiating and developing UK-Africa educational partnerships. The purpose is to learn from those partnerships having built up cumulative knowledge and experience.

There are many UK initiated partnership proposals with Africa and a diversity of funding schemes. Given the diversity of the partnership and funding landscape, there is a need to provide African institutions with greater opportunities to seek partners, given the great number of UK-initiated partnerships with Africa. It is therefore necessary to publicize UK-Africa partnership opportunities in order to widen the pool of prospective partners to choose from, based on mutual benefits rather than serendipity. UK-Africa partnerships need to be tailored more specifically to meet the needs of partners.

It is important to realize however that although African institutions share certain characteristics, their HE & FE environments can differ in a number of aspects from one country to the other. This differing context thus translates into a diversity of needs and motivations for partnerships. Priorities therefore need to be set in-country.

At the same time, the scope of the UK-Africa educational partnership itself needs to be expanded in order to include partnerships between different forms of education and sub-sectors, such as between universities, governments, NGOs, the private sector and communities.

Our research on this guide has also raised many other issues and questions pertaining to UK-Africa partnerships that require in-depth analysis.

Some of the following areas that have emerged from our work and discussions are:
- What kind of information and research is needed to evaluate our information on partnership and how can this information be best collected, shared and used?
- Are there gaps in funding the partnership life-cycle and how can these be overcome?
- What are the opportunities for, and constraints to, the development of UK-Africa partnerships?
- How can the 'impact' of UK partnerships on African institutions be measured and vice versa?
- Are there disciplinary areas in partnerships which are dominant or those which are overlooked?
- How does the 'nature' of a partnership change and develop over time?

It is hoped that this document will have assisted in attaining a better understanding of the principles and mechanisms for more effective sharing of good practice and flagging common challenges that partnerships and projects face in order to ensure that partnerships can be made more effective. Furthermore, it is important to avoid replicating or conducting similar partnerships without learning from those that have built up cumulative knowledge, contacts and experience. To do so, it is necessary to identify what works and highlight where the challenges lie.

To conclude, we need to continue to explore ways of mapping the UK-Africa partnership landscape. In particular we must continue to investigate the different ways in which good practices and challenges in partnerships can best be shared between institutions and individuals. At the same time it is essential that we highlight the contribution and impact of partnerships on both UK and African institutions as well as funders. The outcomes of such research and analysis could then be used to make recommendations to funding bodies, governments and other organizations involved in partnerships. Only by thus strengthening the evidence base and consolidating our knowledge we can inform policy, enhance the quality of UK-Africa educational partnerships and ensure they are meaningful partnerships.

Lastly, it is hoped that this guide will be a contribution to the literature of international partnerships and initiate a dialogue with UK and African institutions involved in educational partnerships around these issues.

5. Annex

For further information on relevant resources, please visit the Africa Unit website, which can be found at *http://www.ukafricapartnerships.org/* where you will find the following resources:

A searchable database of **Funding Schemes** relevant to UK-Africa partnerships. Funding Schemes have been organised into separate categories, such as; Schemes Aimed at Academic Research and Researchers; Scholarships and Student Exchanges; and Schemes Aimed at FE/HE Partnerships, for example:

- Africa Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (AKTP):
  http://www.britishcouncil.org/africa-aktp.htm
- British Academy – International Partnerships:
  http://www.britac.ac.uk/funding/guide/intl/ip.cfm
- Commonwealth Scholarships – Fellowships for Mid-Career Academics:
  http://www.cscuk.org.uk/apply/academic_fellowships.asp
- Development Partnerships in Higher Education (DelPHE):
  http://www.britishcouncil.org/delphe.htm
- Nuffield Foundation – Africa Programme:
  http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/go/grants/commonwealth/page_100.htm
- Etc.

Talking to farmers about cotton crop spacing

THE AFRICA UNIT

A list of **Useful Links**, which provide information and links to relevant and helpful organisations, based in both Africa and the UK, for example:

African Network for the Internationalisation of Education (ANIE):

- http://www.anienetwork.org
- African Studies Association of the UK (ASAUK): http://www.asauk.net
- Association of African Universities (AAU): http://www.aau.org
- Association of Colleges (AoC): http://www.aoc.co.uk
- Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU): http://www.acu.ac.uk/
- BIS (Department for Business Innovation & Skills): http://www.bis.gov.uk/
- British Council: http://www.britishcouncil.org
- City & Guilds Centre for Skills Development (CSD): http://www.skillsdevelopment.org/
- Commonwealth Association of Polytechnics in Africa (CAPA): http://www.capa-online.org
- Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC): http://www.cscuk.org.uk/index.asp
- DELNI (Department for Employment & Learning Northern Ireland): http://www.delni.gov.uk/
  Learning & Skills Council (LSC): http://www.lsc.gov.uk
- Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA): http://www.sarua.org
- UK Collaborative on Development Sciences (UKCDS): http://www.ukcds.org.uk
- U8: http://www.u8development.com
- 157 Group: http://www.157group.co.uk
- Etc.

A list of **publications**, which provide visitors easily accessible free resources. Including: previous Africa Unit newsletters; Academic Reports; Conference Reports; Guides; Official Documents and Research Reports.

6. List of Abbreviations

ACU   Association of Commonwealth Universities
BIS   Department of Business, Innovation & Skills
DfES   Department for Education & Skills
DIUS   Department of Innovation, Universities & Skills
FE   Further Education
FEIs   Further Education Institutions
HE   Higher Education
HEIs   Higher Education Institutions
H&FE   Higher & Further Education
MDGs   Millennium Development Goals
MoU   Memorandum of Understanding

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The Africa Unit

UK/Africa partnerships in HE/FE

BIS

**Department for
Business Innovation
and Skills**

Department for
Employment
and Learning

www.delni.gov.uk

**The Association
of Commonwealth
Universities**