How to design and carry out a successful capacity building project – experiences from the NUFU Programme

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Building on SIU’s experience as administrator of the following South-North collaboration programmes:

- The NUFU Programme (since 1991)
- The NOMA Programme (since 2006)
- Norad’s Programme for Arts and Cultural Education (since 2005)
- Agreements regarding support to administration of Norwegian bilateral support to HE institutions in Tanzania and (including PITRO) (since 2006)
Partnership model ("the NUFU model")

- Long-term institutional cooperation
- The South partners’ needs and priorities as basis for the cooperation
- Anchoring of the cooperation in the leadership of the participating institutions
- Decentralised model for initiation, implementation, monitoring and reporting
  - Researcher driven initiation and implementation
  - Institutions responsible for monitoring and reporting
- Basic salaries and basic infrastructure covered by the institutions
- Equality and transparency
  - Online application and reporting with double (or more) access
How does it all start – the initial steps:

- Personal relationship – or institutional initiative
- Shared academic interest
- Needs identified – at institutional and national levels
- Including more partners (network project)?
- Anchoring in the participating institutions
- Thorough joint elaboration of the project proposal/plan
- Submission of proposal
- Allocation of funds
- Revision of proposal/design of project document
Success factors in the implementation phase:

- Personal commitment, priority, time
- Appropriate mix of project components (research, education, infrastructure, training etc)
- Detailed planning and distinct division of labour
- Clear governing structure of the project e.g. steering committee:
  - Equality and transparency
  - Mutual commitment
  - Regular meetings and frequent communication
  - Written agreements/minutes from meetings
- Physical meetings at different levels (including administrative personnel)
- Incorporation of the project in mainstream university structures (mitigating vulnerabilities and ensuring sustainability)
- Linking the project to existing research groups
- Quick take-off (including recruitment of students)
- Mutual benefits
Challenges to a successful project:

- Keeping up the speed
- Adequate and effective project administration
- Financial management of projects (transfer of funds, bank accounts, exchange rates, inflation, incompatible or insufficient accounting systems, internal procedures at South institutions)
- Unforeseen challenges e.g. illness, change of personnel, political unrest etc
- Lack of commitment from coordinators, students and other participants
  - Heavy workload
  - Other obligations (family etc)
- Reporting (jointly, internet access and power supply, accuracy in reporting results)
- Relationship between network partners
Mutual benefits in the partnership model:

- Mutual benefits are not necessarily identical benefits.
  - South:
    - Increased level of education among staff members
    - Research/new knowledge relevant for the national/regional context
    - Increased competence and capacity for research and research based education
    - Exposure to international research networks
    - Internationalisation
  - North:
    - Research/new knowledge in developing country contexts
    - Opportunities for exchange/access to fields for research
    - Internationalisation
• Other benefits (that might be identical):
  • Friendships
  • Cultural exchange
  • Mutual learning experiences
Thank you!