PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION
THE EXPERIENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OUAGADOUGO

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by

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INTRODUCTION

“Aiding research in collaboration and in partnership with developing countries is now presented as the principal means of enabling these countries to build problem solving capacities and to face up to their development needs” (Gaillard 1994:33) “

“North-south research partnership: Is collaboration possible between unequal partners?” Knowledge and Policy Summer issue pp.31-63.

● Objectives 2 and 3 of the five year strategic plan of the university of Ouagadougou underlines the potential contribution of national and international partners to meeting the growing needs and demands for quality university education
INTRODUCTION

- Objective 2 - To strengthen the interface between the University on the one hand and decision makers, the private sector and the civil society.
- Objective 3 - To improve the external efficiency of the university by promoting training and research oriented by the demand.

- This presentation aims at sharing the experience of the University of Ouagadougou and raising a few issues which we hope are relevant for the other AA-Dialogue members.
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGREEMENTS

- Cooperation conventions signed with foreign institutions of higher education and IGOs:
  - Algeria (2), Benin (2), Burundi (1), Côte d’Ivoire (2), Comoros Island (1), Egypt (1), Libya (1), Mali (1), Morocco (2), Niger (3 including EMIG and the AGRHYMET centre), Senegal (2), Chad (2), Togo (2), Ghana (4: GIL, Kumasi, Legon, Tamale), Nigeria (1 Ado Ekiti); Germany (5), Austria (1), Denmark (1), Spain (1), France (59), UK (1), Italy (9), Netherlands (1), Russia (2), Sweden (2), Switzerland (1), Canada (9), USA (8), West Indies/Guyana (1), China (1), Japan (2, including AA-Dialogue),
  - ACDI, AUF (Association of francophone universities), AAU, ECOWAS, IRD (former ORSTOM) and various UN specialized agencies
- Mixed commissions
  - Cuba, Egypt, France, Jordan, Libya, Sweden and Tunisia
COOPERATION AGREEMENTS

General Characteristics of the conventions signed:

- 5 years renewable by tacit agreements
- Academic cooperation (exchange of students and staff)
- Scientific cooperation (joint research projects, conferences, publications)
- Curriculum renewal (professionalisation, LMD system)
- Other (e.g. infrastructure: Belgium, Netherlands, Libya)
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION EXAMPLES

- Partnership with the French university of Limoges in the field of letters
  - It generated several international conferences and publications on Sahelian literatures.
  - It also allowed a couple of lecturers to obtain their promotion to Associate Professorship through the habilitation system.
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION EXAMPLES

- Partnership agreements between the University of Ouagadougou and Ghanaian universities (Legon, Cape Coast, Kumasi, Winneba) which serves as the basis for a bi-annual inter-university conference on language coexistence in West Africa.
- The DEDA adult education programme designed and implemented in partnership with the Belgian catholic university of Louvain.
- Collaboration with ministries, NGOs and IGOs in the forms of consultation or as members of working parties.
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

ACHIEVEMENTS

● Training of graduate students and junior researchers of various faculties and institutes in Northern universities
● Access to small grants for joint research projects
● Upgrading of the research skills of senior staff to facilitate their promotion to associate professorship
● Field work carried out in Burkina by MA and Ph.D. students from Northern institutions
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION ACHIEVEMENTS

- Research results presented at international conferences and published in the form of proceedings or special issues of university journals
- In a few cases co-authored books.
LIMITATIONS

The main weaknesses of these collaborative research projects is that they usually tend to be:

- **very limited** in scope and funding;
- **highly personalized** with the Northern partner insisting on working only with a specific individual Burkinabe partner sometimes against academic logic.
- **unequal**, with the Burkinabè partner often playing second roles in the implementation of the project;

Sometimes the Northern partner publishes alone the results of joint research.

Even when the publications are co-authored the Northern partner still has more visibility.
PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION AT NATIONAL LEVEL - EXAMPLES

● Cooperation conventions signed with local institutions of higher education (7)
● Collaboration with ministries, NGOs and IGOs in the forms of consultancy work or as members of working parties
● In the 1990’s a group of linguists of the University of Ouagadougou within the framework of an association called *ELAN-Développement*, designed and implemented a method for using local languages in education in partnership with a Swiss NGO (OSEO/SLA) and a peasants’ association called Manegdebzanga.
● This joint action research led to the successful experimentation of bilingual education which Burkina Faso is now trying to generalize to all its primary schools.
● In a separate but similar experiment, another linguist has set up an NGO (Tintua) that works in literacy, non formal education and bilingual education. He obtained a leave from the university in the late 90’s to devote his time exclusively to his association and he recently received a UNESCO prize for his endeavour.

● There are a few local networks to help disseminate research results, for instance AREB, an association that tries to group local specialists in education.
This type of local collaboration has allowed the university to implement one of its missions that is often not clearly perceived, namely to provide services to the wider national community in addition to producing and disseminating knowledge.
● They often result from isolated individual initiatives which have to overcome all sorts of bureaucratic hurdles.

● There is often a climate of mistrust between purely administrative staff and academics in the implementation of partnership projects. Accountants suspecting the project teams of keeping all the material benefits to themselves.
To conclude, we shall quote the characteristics of good international partnership and collaboration from the Vienna Program of Action. A good research partnership and collaboration must

- be in keeping with the development priorities determined by developing countries themselves;
- provide, as far as possible, for developing country participation, even when conducted in developed country institutions;
- provide for joint participation, when conducted in developing countries; and
- include a training component.
REFERENCES


- University of Ouagadougou. Plan stratégique 2005-2010
THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION!