

Development Cooperation: the role and experience of the partner

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Summary

Development cooperation is a mean used by the developed countries to change positively the development in developing countries.

Large amount of funds have been allocated so far to the south, but the results are still incipient.

The reasons for this slow and weak success in capacity development and in higher education in particular are presented, discussed and recommendations are made for an effective development cooperation with universities in the south.

Key words: capacity development, development cooperation, higher education, universities

Introduction

Development cooperation is the aid given by governments and other agencies to support economic, environmental, social and political development of developing countries, which differs from the humanitarian by its the long term character, i.e. poverty alleviation at long run and not only short response.

Furthermore, development cooperation is understood as a partnership between donor and recipient and not the situation in which one partner flows knowledge, funds to the poor recipient.

The development cooperation can take different forms, such as multilateral and bilateral.

This new concept of cooperation development replaces the colonial aid formula and is intended to make the use of the benefits of scientific and industrial knowledge available for the improvement and growth of developing countries.

So far, in the last 50-60 years, nearly USD 400 billion have been spend in technical cooperation, which comprises two main components training and technical assistance, mainly through the use of expatriate experts (Abdel-Malek, 2010). However, several assessments of this part of support have concluded that it did not produce anywhere near the expected tangible and sustainable improvements in capacities in most instances.

The reasons for this apparent failure to reach expected objectives motivated the present paper in which the role and experiences of the partner are presented and discussed.

Development cooperation, an overview

The development cooperation data indicate that only in 2009, Africa received USD 47billions, and Mozambique belongs to the top ten recipients. (Table 1.) (OECD-DAC, 2010).

Table1. Top ten recipients of ODA

Top ten Recipients of Gross ODA (USD million)	
Cape Verde	64
Morroco	58
Mozambique	48
Timor-Leste	37
Angola	19
Guinea Bissau	16
São Tomé e Príncipe	14

Bosnia and Herzegovina	14
Afghanistan	13
Lebanon	10

Source: OECD-DAC: www.oecd.org/dac/stats

As shown in the table 1 about 293 millions are spent to the top ten developing countries to support their development.

Despite these efforts, the complex and often uncoordinated collection of players in the development sector has led to costly problems for low-income countries; unpredictable support, fragmented resources and unbalanced concentrations of development finance. As a result aid loses up to 25% of its value when its flow is not well planned or predictable and an additional 10% through fragmentation, wasting up to USD 35 billion aid each year. (DCD-DAC, 2011).

The development cooperation distribution varies according to the government and agency. Some agencies distribute the funds by areas in which higher education and research may be part. Others, instead, allocate the funds to the Embassy and this is responsible for the distribution.

This model of earmarking funds has the danger of not benefiting the higher education and Science and Technology sector, since the other areas are equally important for any government.

The major donor agencies, using EMU as example, are represented in the table 2.

Table 2. Major donor agencies at the Eduardo Mondlane University.

The Swedish cooperation has a long lasting character approach and supports research training, research capacity, research environment in from of training at Masters and PhD level, support to the library and acquisition of equipment. Apart from the traditional donors, new countries are exploring and starting partnerships with EMU, namely Brazil, Spain, India, China, Ireland, Thailand, Austria, Canada.

The funding of research in developing countries in many cases is a long lasting process and aimed primarily at training at Masters and PhD level, mainly through a so called sandwich model.

This model allows the candidate to contribute to its institution, because he can still teach in some periods of its training, supervise small dissertations and enable the improvement of the research environment, through the acquisition of literature and equipment.

An evaluation made by Svensson *et al.* (2003) at request of the Swedish Sida/ SAREC development cooperation agency, concluded that sandwich model despite the above mentioned advantages, was a long lasting training model, ranging from 6 years to 10 years.

As a result of the evaluation it was recommended that it is necessary to rethink the model, particularly determining the maximum duration of the training of up to 6 years.

However, was strongly recommended to continue to reinforce research capacity the best way of empowering the university and the country.

Other constraints with the development cooperation, particularly with the technical cooperation include the pursuit of a supply-driven approach to training and technical assistance by development partners; mixed quality of expertise; and at times questionable relevance of policy advice and knowledge transfer; overpricing of inputs by service providers who face little or no competition; and lack of strong feedback from partner country beneficiaries.

The development cooperation can analyzed using different parameters, such as quantity, quality, effectiveness and other factors (Figure 2).

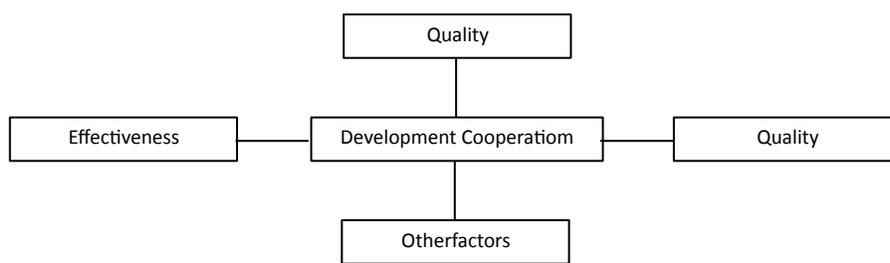


Figure 2. Analysis of development cooperation

Quantity

Data indicate that Africa has a population of 839, 6 millions, with an annual growth of 2.5%.

The GDP (annual %) is 1.7, with a life expectance of 52.1 years, a mortality rate (per 1000 live births) 80.8, a literacy rate at 67% and the prevalence of HIV of 5% (Statistics in Africa, 2011).

In Mozambique a southern located country, with a population of 23049621 inhabitants, has the mortality rate at 63, 7 %, at the literacy rate of 64% and the HIV prevalence is at the level 11, 5%.

Despite the fact this the GDP is growing continuously in the last years, ranging always values above 5%, the needs are still high.

Therefore the needs of Africa and Mozambique are still enormous, so that no aid can still be sufficient, from all the possible sources of the north or even of the south.

Quality

Development aid is often provided by means of supporting local development and aid projects. In these projects sometimes occurs that no strict code of conduct is in force. In some other cases there are management mechanisms that make the funds being apparently insufficient.

The quality of funds varies from donor to donor. Some donors will allocate funds in form of a small project which does normally not make a difference for the whole. Other donors will allocate funds without any strict code so that they can be used for non important activities or other are so strict that even in case of emergency, the funds cannot be used. However, it has been shown that tied aid can increase development aid project costs by up to 20 and 30 % (OECD, 2010) and sometimes is related to high amounts remained in the donors and strict procurement procedures. Therefore, the best parameter to measure the quality of development aid is the use of the Commitment to Development Index which measures then the overall policies of donors and the quality of their development aid.

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the development cooperation has been of concern with diverging opinions regarding its evaluation.

The concerns relate to the fact that sometimes the aid did not contribute for development, due various reasons such as unbalanced appreciation of the recipient's currency, adverse political effects, corruption etc.

Additionally, from the beneficiary country, sometimes, there is not sufficient capacity to reject the offer or for demanding restructuring and fear of losing the aid.

The development cooperation and higher education

Higher education has been long ago recognized as of critical importance to the long term development of knowledge societies. Higher education institutions are needed to train the teachers required to obtain primary and secondary enrolment objectives and more generally to educate future professionals, including the managers and leaders that will drive a country's development trajectory.

Thus, the universities in particular are vital for conducting research and research training, and therefore are important for knowledge generation and innovation to meet both global societal and economic needs.

Therefore, it is important that all countries have a higher education capacity to respond to domestic and global challenges in the future.

Burton (1983) has argued that in order for universities to contribute to the sustainable development, there is a need to be a pact about the importance of knowledge in development and the special role of the university; the academic core needs to be strengthened, particularly in terms of knowledge production, the need of a greater coordination among the increasing numbers of actors agencies (government departments, business and foreign donors) involved in higher education and that university development activities must rather strengthen than weaken academic core capacity.

The development cooperation strategies

Development cooperation is an instrument to speed economic growth and alleviate poverty in developing countries. However, as referred before, there are concerns about the quality, quantity and effectiveness of the cooperation.

The concerns about aid effectiveness in particular has led to the creation of a group known as Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, that met in Rome (2003), Paris (2005) and Ghana (2008), and produced declarations with the aim of making development cooperation more effective.

For the purpose of this paper the Paris and Accra Declaration are the most important.

The Paris Declaration recommends that to make the aid effective, measures such as ownership, alignment, harmonization, results and mutual accountability are to be implemented.

On the other hand, the Accra Declaration has produced 8 major commitments, namely, strengthen and use country systems; enhance ownership and accountability for development policies; improve division of labor; increase the predictability of aid flows; work with new donors; promote south-south cooperation and improve transparency and deliver results.

All these measures are to act as guidance to the future projects and programs.

In the higher education sector, African leaders met in Dakar and defined some priorities for the revitalization of higher education in Africa.

These are related to increasing and broaden access, through measures such as the participation of the private sector and diversification of institutions, improve relevance, namely curriculum relevance and match graduate and human resources need, explore the technical, vocational and entrepreneurship as part of the higher education system and well as the use of indigenous knowledge.

Under relevance it has been stressed the inculcation of values of peace, conflict prevention and resolution and foster a culture of use of TIC and open and distance learning.

Regarding quality insurance it was emphasized that it is important to establish sub regional and regional networks for quality assurance, build capacity and establish quality assurance mechanisms.

The need of strengthen institutional and human capacity for good quality research as well as the promotion of research, development and innovation targeting development problems indigenous to Africa and create incubators and scientific parks are the main activities to increase research and innovation are some of the other recommendations.

Similar to Bologna the creation an African education area and centers of excellence are recommended in order to allow exchange of experiences and expertise, encourage joint degrees and mutual recognition certificates, diplomas and degrees.

All the above indicated actions demand partnerships and funding.

Therefore, it is important to promote north-south cooperation based on strong structures and sustainable frameworks and south-south and north-south cooperation addressing relevant regional cross-boarder issues such as water, energy, wildlife, history, ethnicity and culture, governance, trade, transport, conflict resolution, climate and food security.

The funding should be according to the African Union Plan of Action, which recommends that at least 20% of the national budget is allocated to education. Other measures include cost sharing or cost recover in higher education and diversification of funding sources and the establishment of the African Higher Education Trust Fund to supplement the efforts of African governments and institutions to expand and strengthen higher education institutions

The development cooperation in the period of crisis

The economic crisis devastating the majority of economies, has also affected the development cooperation.

No data are available, but qualitative evaluation indicates a reduction of countries supporting development cooperation, reduction of donor agencies and reduction of funds.

The effects of these measures are not measurable at short run, but they will reduce or influence in negative manner the research capacity and training, the research environment and management in many institutions of the developing world.

Thus, the evolving aid architecture and mounting development challenges caused by the recent crisis, demand urgent and critical review of existing aid modalities.

It is necessary to move forward and adopt more inclusive approach to development assistance, to rid ourselves of the divide between traditional and emerging development partners, promote more joint actions to cope with these challenges and accelerate the implementation of the Accra Plan of Action.

For this reason, even if cooperation development is to be affected by the crisis, the capacity development should remain untouched, since it is a key development objective.

Abdel-Malek (2010) has defined the essence of capacity of development as the ability of people, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully.

Capacity development improves development outcomes, these outcomes in turn upgrade a country's capacity to pursue more ambitious development goals, including becoming more competitive in the global economy, attracting foreign direct investment, boosting exports, acquiring relevant. He further argues that even in the event of crisis capacity development is one of the highest-yield investments a country can make.

The lessons learned from years of cooperation indicate that to make the capacity development efficient, it is necessary, to make it endogenous process; develop strong ownership and leadership; choose a genuine and explicit demand from the country; align with the country policies and harmonization; orientation to results; active role of partners in management; stimulate mutual dialogue; involve middle income country south country if possible (Boesen *et al.* 2010).

An experience on how to make capacity development effective in the in the education sector in Nepal, has come to the following principles: needs-based and demand based; consultative and participatory; process to build owner ship on the stakeholders; focused on improvement of the area under support; prioritization; flexible and adaptable to incorporate expectations and changes in the environment; adequate resource feedback; aligned with the existing policies and legal framework; results-based; minimize separate units and parallel systems; document and utilize the success stories in the development cooperation process and realistic.

In the higher education sector it is recognized that the south and the north need to work together to address the crisis and the global challenges, such as sustainable development, energy, climate change, security and migration. In this regard increased cooperation between universities in the north and south is a way to support capacity building and development.

The White Paper on Africa-Europe Higher Education cooperation for development (2010) has stated that universities partnerships are strategic means to contribute to overall capacity building of African universities. If they are structured efficiently and sustainably, partnerships can generate research and teaching capacity, empowering universities as economic drivers and agents of knowledge transfer.

The main recommendations for the Africa-Europe university cooperation, for the purpose of this paper can be summarized as follows: need of university partnerships; develop research collaboration, as knowledge generation and exchange and capacity building; improve access and retention through collaboration; strengthen research collaboration and capacity building in doctoral education; academic mobility; improve communication and coordination; consult universities by the development of Africa-European Strategic Partnership.

Concluding remarks

Development cooperation is an important aid for development countries and the capacity building assumes a crucial role.

Since its inception, large amounts of funds have been allocated to developing countries, but the effectiveness is a matter of concern.

The current crisis has affected the development cooperation resulting in reducing the amount of aid or the number of the agents.

In the situation of crisis south and north have to implement the strategies agreed in Paris, Accra and Dakar, as means of minimizing the effects.

Additionally, to cope with the crisis it is important to strengthen collaboration and partnerships between the south and north universities and particularly to involve the universities in both sides in the preparation of the important development programs between Africa and Europe.

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