

**The Co-operation between
Institute of Development
Management - IDM (Tanzania)
and Agder College (Norway)**

Johan Helland

WP 1999: 4

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Summary

This working paper reviews the background and experiences gained in the context of institutional co-operation between IDM in Tanzania and Agder College, Norway. This co-operation has evolved out of a long-standing relationship between IDM and NORAD. The current co-operation is funded by NORAD, is implemented in the mode of NORAD's "recipient responsibility" and is an example of NORAD's "Norway Axis" strategy.

The specific purpose of the co-operation is to improve research quality and expand research capacity at IDM through joint research projects, as a means to strengthen IDM's position in the Tanzanian market for the training and consultancy services.

The two parties have established an elaborate, and apparently successful, structure for an equitable and mutually beneficial institutional co-operation. The research output, however, has so far been limited, but has provided IDM staff with opportunities for gaining research experience and upgrading research competence. To what extent these individual skills are sufficient to make a positive contribution to IDM's market position remain to be seen.

The Co-operation between Institute of Development Management - IDM (Tanzania) and Agder College (Norway)¹

Johan Helland

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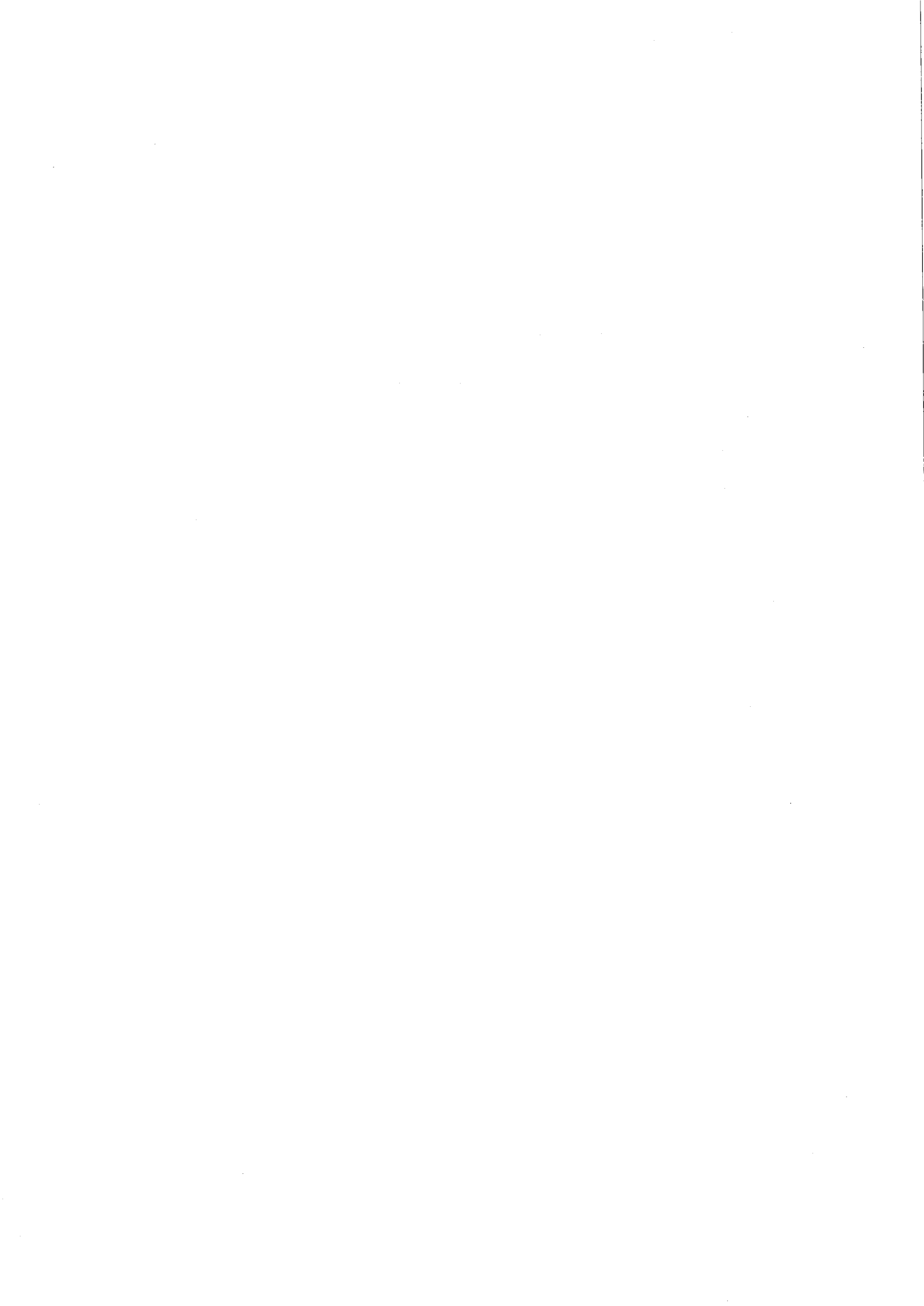
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Co-operation between Institute of Development Management - IDM (Tanzania) and Agder College² (Norway).

0. Introduction

0.1 The purpose of this study

At the beginning of this decade, NORAD embarked on a process of rethinking and reformulating strategies for Norwegian development assistance. One important result of this process was a renewed emphasis on the established NORAD policy that developing countries were in fact responsible for their own development and that NORAD could only assist the countries in question achieve specific objectives within such projects and programmes on which the two parties would agree. This re-emphasised policy guideline is labelled 'recipient responsibility', - a more rigorous formulation of the earlier policy known as 'recipient orientation'.

Another result of NORAD's strategic policy review, but an integral part of 'recipient responsibility', is the policy henceforth known as the 'Norway axis', which involves a promotion of links between institutions in the developing countries and similar institutions in Norway. A wide range of institutions are eligible, and a wide range of activities may be supported. The general idea of the 'Norway axis' is that Norwegian institutions will transfer competence and institutional skills to their counterpart institutions, in the developing countries to help them become better institutions. In fact, it is assumed that the collaboration will prove to be so valuable to both parties that it will continue (and evolve) without NORAD's involvement, financial or otherwise. The policy of the 'Norway axis', is clearly the Norwegian formulation of the strategy of institutional twinning which for the past 10 - 15 years has come to be seen as a replacement of traditional technical assistance arrangements, through which individual 'experts' were supposed to transfer specific skills and competence to individual counterparts.

This study sets out to look at one such project of twinning within this policy framework. The main purpose is to examine how a Norwegian institution (Agder College) contributes to the Institute of Development Management's capacity to exercise its responsibilities for its own situation and its own future. The context in which it must exercise these responsibilities is one where public contributions and subsidies from the Tanzanian Treasury are being restructured so that IDM must compete with other institutions for revenue, while NORAD has contributed

² Agder College was previously known as 'Agder Distriktshøgskole' (ADH). In 1994 six formerly independent colleges in the county of Agder were amalgamated into one regional college known as 'Høgskolen i Agder' (HiA).

substantial amounts of development assistance over the past 25 years, and continues to do so, at least for another few years.

This particular study has been carried out to throw some light on one particular way of organising a twinning relationship. It has not been selected because it is believed to be particularly representative of institutional twinning projects; the objective of the relationship is not institutional development as such, but a specific strategic endeavour to build capacity within an area of vital importance to IDM's continued existence under the rapidly changing conditions. The relationship between Agder College and IDM also illustrates the trajectory of change from a classical technical assistance model to a twinning arrangement. In this case the twinning arrangement also involves a change in outlook from a transfer of competence (from those who have it to those who do not have it) to one of complementarity and partnership, in which the two institutions join forces in projects to build competence at IDM and strengthen its competitive advantages in the emerging market. The partnership model also strongly suggests that there must be mutual advantages to the collaboration, as suggested by the 'Norway axis' strategy.

0.2 The object of study

The Institute of Development Management in Mzumbe, Tanzania was established by an act of Parliament in July 1972, with the primary purpose of providing training in the principles, procedures and techniques of management, accountancy, secretarial practice, public administration, the administration of justice, local government and rural development. It replaced and superseded several training establishments related to this sector in Tanzania and has since its inception been primarily concerned with providing training of a practical rather than an academic nature.

IDM and Agder College have cooperated on a project of research cooperation and capacity building since 1990 with the aim of enhancing research capacity and stimulating research skills at both institutions. This is primarily a matter of personal development of individual researchers, but also one with implications with regard to what kind of institution IDM wants to be. This must be seen against the background of the rapidly changing circumstances in which IDM finds itself. Upgrading research capacity is seen as an important element in a market strategy where IDM increasingly will need to offer training and consultancy services which are finely tuned to the demands of potential customers, in terms of both relevance and quality. IDM's revenues will increasingly have to come from such sources as direct budgetary contributions are cut back. Increased market adaptation and stronger competitive advantages are thus of vital importance to IDM's financial viability and survival.

Additionally, the cooperation has included some technical fields like advisory work on general library operations, on the computerisation of the library as well as acquisition policy with regard to computers for other general purposes, and finally, advisory work concerning the rehabilitation of a printing press at IDM.

The fields of co-operation specifically mentioned in the Memorandum of Understanding on which the co-operation is based are:

- Joint research, teaching and consultancy projects
- Staff exchange
- Workshops and seminars
- Joint publication
- Printing, library and EDP (Electronic Data Processing) support for research activities

The co-operation agreement is not specifically geared to the development of IDM as an institution, but has the more restricted objective of improved research capacity as its main focus. This strategically important issue is of course closely related to the issue of market adaptation, sustainability and IDM's future.

After a first phase of co-operation (1991-94), which was judged by the two institutions to be successful and productive, the two institutions agreed to prepare a second phase of co-operation by undertaking a thorough joint review of the situation. This in turn led on to a jointly produced project document for a second period of co-operation. A report entitled 'Report from the Pre-Study of a Prolonged Institutional Cooperation Between Institute of Development Management, Tanzania and Agder College, Norway' provides important background information on the two institutions as well as specifics on the project of institutional co-operation. The second phase which resulted from this exercise covers the same substantial fields as in the first phase, but introduces some changes with regard to the mode of co-operation.

In the second phase (i.e. from 1996 onwards) the cooperation also includes 'trilateral cooperation and networking' which was introduced to cater to the different mode of co-operation. In the second phase the research collaboration is structured around a limited number of Ph.D. projects to be undertaken by IDM staff (with Agder College staff taking part as lecturers, supervisors and field collaborators). This format has necessitated co-operation with an institution which grants Ph.D. degrees. In the event, IDM and Agder College have expanded their co-operation to include the Faculty of Commerce and Management at the University of Dar es Salaam in a trilateral relationship.

1. The Context of Co-operation

1.1 Policy Guidelines

It is difficult to understand the nature and scope of the co-operation between IDM and Agder College without a clear appreciation of the background to these two projects. The co-operation grows out of a long-term relationship between IDM and NORAD and may at present be seen as a semi-autonomous component in NORAD's ongoing support to IDM. In line with NORAD's principle of 'recipient responsibility', IDM is itself responsible for all aspects of project management, including sub-contracting and disbursement of the funds provided by NORAD. NORAD also promotes what is referred to as 'the Norway axis' in which institutions in developing countries are encouraged to enter into institutional co-operation with matching institutions in Norway. In the case of IDM and Agder College the co-operation is funded from the NORAD grant to IDM, but it is up to IDM to decide on the size of the budget and the contents of the relationship between the two institutions.

1.2 Project history

NORAD has provided development assistance in various forms to IDM since its formal establishment by an act of Parliament in 1972. In addition to a substantial contributions to various technical assistance provisions (line staff positions, advisors, consultants and twinning arrangements), funds have been provided for improvement of the physical plant (civil engineering works, buildings, equipment, vehicles etc.) as well as for staff development, running costs and maintenance. Hence, there have been two recurrent themes running through the various phases of NORAD assistance to IDM, viz.

- improvement and consolidation of the physical facilities and infrastructure on the one hand, and similarly,
- improvement and consolidation of the academic quality of the staff, the training and research activities at IDM on the other.

Norwegian funds to support IDM were initially incorporated in a joint Nordic project together with Finland and Denmark (up to 1983) and have later been provided under several consecutive bilateral agreements:

Nordic project	18 million NOK
NORAD 1984-90	48 million NOK
NORAD 1991-94	36 million NOK
NORAD 1995	13 million NOK
NORAD 1996-99	27 million NOK

An evaluation of IDM carried out in 1989³ points out that NORAD's contribution to IDM's overall budget has been considerable. Using 1986/87 as a (representative ?) example, the evaluation shows how NORAD provided over 60% of the overall budget, for both investments and operations, in that year.

The evaluation distinguishes between 3 main phases in IDM's history:

- a construction phase, with significant expansion of the physical plant at IDM, and a corresponding expansion in the number of students
- a quantitative expansion phase, in which IDM reached out to new clients in Tanzania and created a number of new courses in the regular programme.
- a qualitative improvement phase in which curricula and teaching programmes were consolidated and short-term courses and consultancies were developed.

A main theme throughout these various periods has been the academic quality of the staff and staff development. The Nordic project provided a comparatively large number of instructors to IDM (120 man-years over 11 years). A first priority was obviously to nationalise the staff; secondly to upgrade it. NORAD (and other donor agencies) have thus funded further training abroad of IDM staff (often themselves IDM graduates) to Master's and (less commonly) Ph.D. levels. At present, 7 staff members out of 110 instructors hold Ph.D. degrees. Approximately half the staff are still at junior levels and less than 10 % of the staff are women.

1.3 Quality of training provided by IDM

Although a lot of money obviously has been spent on the physical plant (first in straightforward construction activities, later with an emphasis on various forms of maintenance/rehabilitation works) the NORAD-supported projects have also been concerned with issues involving the quality and scope of the professional training provided at IDM.

IDM was originally created in 1970 out of a merger of the former Institute of Public Administration and the Local Government and Rural Development Training Centre. IDM has therefore throughout its existence maintained an outlook which has emphasised practical training designed to meet specific manpower needs in various

³ Evaluation of the Tanzanian Institute of Development Management; Evaluation Report 5.89 prepared by IMTEC for the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Development Cooperation, Oslo, November 1989.

public service organisations, as opposed to a more generalised and academic type of training with a broader appeal to a larger spectrum of potential employers. IDM's mission of being a practical, down-to-earth and work-related institution has been maintained, even if the scope of training offered at IDM has been expanded, into a large number of specialised short courses on the one hand; and into a graduate programme offering Master's degrees in Public and Business Administration on the other. This expansion has been driven by the need to meet the demands of a wider market, on the one hand, and concerns to enhance and maintain the quality and standards of the training offered at IDM, on the other.

Although NORAD, as the principal donor (and indeed the principal source of funds for the overall budget at IDM for long periods of time) did not actively support the establishment of a graduate program, NORAD has throughout its relationship with IDM agreed to generous support for staff development, in particular training up to Masters' level. NORAD has historically been rather reluctant to fund staff training at the Ph.D. level⁴; funds have never the less been available in the local budgets of IDM for staff to undertake small research projects. This apparently self-contradictory policy seems to have combined a concern to avoid unwarranted 'academization' of IDM as a practically oriented training facility with an acceptance of the importance of research in maintaining quality standards in the training offered, in particular with respect to ensuring the relevance of this training to the realities of Tanzania. What the policy did not consider was how to create a research environment.

With the underlying tension between the 'academic' and the 'practical' both in NORAD and at IDM it is perhaps not surprising that the funds made available for research were consistently underspent throughout the 1980's. An overview provided in the 1989 evaluation indicates that 47% of the projects embarked on were completely abandoned (with an additional 16% being classified as 'stalled'). Only 5 projects (or 13%) of the 38 projects started between 1977 and 1986 were completed! No assessment have been made of the quality of the completed research reports.

1.4 The role of research at IDM

The 1989 evaluation concluded unequivocally that attempts to build a research program at IDM had failed. This, it seems, was not primarily due to a lack of resources, although it is pointed out in the evaluation that research activities at IDM

⁴ Up to recently, NORAD was dogmatic in its insistence that Ph.D.'s were 'academic', while Master's degrees were 'practical'. In a training institution which relies on up-dated research-based knowledge this distinction of course became quite bizarre!

were perceived by staff as inadequately funded 'ad-on' activities, to be performed on top of regular teaching duties. The problems were rather identified as being related to lacking research skills in the staff, an incentive structure (both for immediate remuneration as well as for promotion) which did not reward research, a lacking 'community of research' at IDM and a leadership which did not promote research or attach much importance to it.

But the evaluation also concluded very strongly that if IDM were to overcome the clearly identified problems relating to the lack of suitable and relevant teaching materials and continue to offer training which is directly relevant to the constantly evolving administration and management issues in Tanzanian society, there were no alternatives to a well planned and properly executed programme of management research.

This has been a recurrent theme in relation to quality issues in teaching at IDM, with a main concern that the training offered must be closely related and directly relevant to the realities of Tanzania. Furthermore, the issue of how research activities contribute to staff competence is a matter which has become increasingly acute in the changing environment of Tanzania in the 1990'ies, where IDM increasingly has to compete for both students and consultancies as a source of revenue. Hence, an active research programme is justified with respect to relevance as well as staff quality and competence.

1.5 Technical assistance and twinning

NORAD's support to IDM after the termination of the Nordic project was structured to provide support for improvement of physical facilities as well as strengthening academic quality. The latter concern was primarily handled through a staff development component, aimed at upgrading IDM staff. During the Nordic phase of support there were a large number of donor-funded technical assistance staff involved in teaching, but by 1985 these had largely been replaced by Tanzanian staff. It is difficult to perceive of this process as one of successful transfer of skills from technical assistance staff to local staff, since the staff upgrading component largely involved local staff going abroad for further training. After 1985, NORAD continued to fund staff development projects as well as two technical assistance arrangements, viz. the placement of NORAD-recruited advisors (curriculum development advisors, research advisors, academic advisors) at IDM and through the promotion of a twinning relationship with a Norwegian institution with a professional profile similar to, or at least congruent with IDM. This happened at a point in time when traditional Technical Assistance arrangements were being increasingly questioned and twinning arrangements between institutions were being seen as a solution to many of the problems associated with traditional technical assistance schemes. Another event which may have been relevant is that NORAD in the early 1980'ies discontinued its policy of providing technical assistance staff over and above project budgets and

started to charge such costs to the relevant projects. This change of policy in many cases caused project designers to look for alternative arrangements, if technical assistance support was still required.

IDM signed a contract for a twinning arrangement with the Norwegian School of Management (Bedriftsøkonomisk Institutt - BI) in 1984 and maintained this relationship up to the middle of 1989.⁵ The assumption was that BI would offer advice and training related to the kind of practical management issues which is IDM's primary brief. This arrangement seems to have worked reasonably well in an initial phase, but for reasons which are not entirely clear, the relationship did not live up to the initial expectations. The 1989 evaluation of NORAD's support to IDM concluded that the dual structure of the technical assistance arrangement (with independent advisors working alongside but outside the twinning arrangement) created some confusion with regard to lines of communication and the distribution of responsibility, finally leading BI to see itself as a consultant to NORAD rather than as a partner to IDM. In any event, the relationship was terminated in 1989. The twinning arrangement with BI has since become a standard reference in IDM documentation as a technical assistance arrangement which was unsuited to the needs at IDM, with particular mention frequently being made of the hierarchical nature of the relation to BI.

2. Relations between IDM and Agder College

Staff from IDM visited a number of universities and colleges in Norway on a study tour in 1986 and gained a favourable impression of Agder College, perhaps on the basis of personal relationships established by an Agder staff member who worked as a curriculum advisor at IDM at the time. Agder College was also included on a study tour by IDM staff later the same year. The relationship established in 1986 was maintained and staff from Agder paid a return visit to IDM in early 1988, when a first agreement of cooperation between the two institutions was drawn up. This first agreement simply set out some areas for possible cooperation, which for all practical purposes have been retained in later agreements as the fields within which the two institutions have common interests. But the agreement from 1988 did not contain any financial provisions and neither of the two institutions at that time had resources in their budgets to allow actual implementation of projects.

⁵ This arrangement is specified in the bilateral agreement making available the project grant. According to the text, BI is 'commissioned' by NORAD to assist in the implementation of the qualitative improvement of the project, and is contractually responsible to NORAD for the 'conduct, execution and quality of its services'

It was agreed, however, that IDM should make available resources from the NORAD-funded Academic Improvement Programme for "a few pilot projects". In 1989 an IDM staff member visited Agder College for 3 months, using part of the time to plan a workshop on research methodology together with a lecturer from Agder. This workshop was carried out at IDM in July the same year, with the Norwegian lecturer being largely responsible for the academic contents of the workshop. This experience was enjoyed by the enthusiastic Norwegian lecturer (who apparently spent his summer holidays doing this project) and was also found to be valuable by the workshop participants, many of whom received their first research training through this initiative.

Further pilot projects included staff exchange. Agder College was host to an IDM staff member during his sabbatical year in 1989-90, and the Agder College students attending the one-year Development Studies course offered at Agder started visiting Tanzania and IDM on a study tour in 1990. IDM had on this occasion prepared a training package for the Norwegian students and accommodated the group for some 10 days.

On the basis of the first agreement from 1988 and the experiences gained from the pilot projects in 1989, a new Memorandum of Understanding was signed by IDM and Agder College in June, 1990, according to which the two institutions would co-operate with the main objective of increasing competence and capacity in research skills among members of IDM staff. Even so, the Memorandum emphasises the mutually beneficial nature of the project, i.e. that the co-operation should also benefit the academic programmes at Agder College as well.

2.1 The basis for partnership

It is not entirely clear why IDM during its study tours in 1986 and later identified Agder College as an interesting or suitable partner for further co-operation. Agder College had a one-year taught course in Development Studies on its programme, but few staff members beyond the limited number directly involved with this course had any professional interests or any experience from working in a developing country. The personal link to some staff members at Agder College who had worked as individual staff members at IDM (i.e. not as part of any institutional co-operation) has been mentioned, but does not seem to offer a full explanation.

In part, the explanation must be related to the perceived negative experiences which IDM had gained from the co-operation with BI. As pointed out above, it is not clear why this relationship turned out the way it did, but the interesting point is that IDM also after this experience realised that it did need a partner institution to help it

overcome the problems (particularly those relating to research capacity and academic quality issues) pointed out in the 1989 evaluation report. Although no mention is made of any directive from NORAD to this effect (which would have been contrary to NORAD policy) it is of course quite likely that NORAD, as the principal donor, in various other ways indicated a strong interest in IDM identifying another Norwegian partner institution after the disappointing experience with BI.

Perhaps the size (roughly equal to IDM) and the general profile of Agder College at the time (a regional college with the bulk of its activities in undergraduate programmes, with a reasonably active research programme but without any distinctive profile in fields of study relating to IDM's mission) offered greater promise of a relationship on an equal footing. An additional factor may have been the long time span and several visits which were undertaken by staff of both institutions before any commitments were entered into. This slow pace allowed the two partners to become reasonably familiar with each other.

It seems quite clear that the institutional base (in terms of academic programmes, staff numbers, staff research interests, research capacity etc.) at Agder College was not very strong, particularly not at the time when future collaboration between IDM and Agder College was being discussed. With a few exceptions of staff working with the Development Studies Programme, there was actually little interest at Agder College in issues of direct relevance to IDM and its position in Tanzania. The contributions Agder College could make to enhance research capacity and research skills at IDM cannot therefore be perceived in terms of transferring competence and skills from a well-established institution. In fact, Agder College was itself in the process of establishing programmes in e.g. economics and business administration at the time, as part of an effort of academic consolidation. Hence, the relationship between IDM and Agder College must rather be seen in terms of a complementary relationship between two institutions with differing profiles as far as strengths and weaknesses are concerned.

This lack of a strong research programme at Agder College directed at Tanzanian studies may actually have been instrumental in promoting an egalitarian relationship and allowing a fuller expression of mutual interests and benefits. The research projects which have been organised later have to a large extent been a matter of bringing together Norwegian researchers with experience and training in general research methodology (but not necessarily with any empirical knowledge of Tanzania) and Tanzanian researchers interested in upgrading their skills or acquiring new techniques. In many cases the real beneficiaries of research collaboration have been young Tanzanian staff members, since the common format adopted for the research projects have been to link a senior Norwegian researcher with one senior and one or more junior Tanzanian researchers. While the co-operation on joint research projects have

exposed Tanzanian staff members to the research process and imparted research skills, there is no doubt that also the Norwegian staff have benefited in terms of gaining research experience and international exposure.

It is also significant to the co-operation which followed from the first contacts in 1988 that a major change in the management structure of the NORAD project at IDM was being introduced at this time. While the funds made available for the contract between IDM and BI were disbursed directly by NORAD to BI, financial management in the IDM/Agder relationship has since this first phase of pilot projects been the responsibility of IDM. Agder College has always had to deal directly with IDM, without any independent linkage to NORAD. This means that projects and budgets have been managed by IDM from the very outset of the co-operation. Project proposals were to be directed to the IDM project management team and would be approved by them. Budgets should also be approved and funds disbursed by IDM.

This particular distribution of responsibility may seem insignificant in itself but has probably played a major role in ensuring full equality in the partnership. It has also ensured full transparency as far as the terms and conditions of staff taking part in the activities are concerned and no doubt explain certain economies and financial savings made in the projects, e.g. even senior Tanzanian staff members will only be paid student subsistence rates when they visit Norway, and Norwegian researchers on fieldwork in Tanzania will draw 'per diems' according to the local rates determined by IDM. Again, such issues may not be important in and by themselves, but they have no doubt contributed significantly to the matter of equality. In the joint IDM/Agder report reviewing experiences from the first period of co-operation (1991-94) the issues are summed up as follows:

The underlying philosophy of the cooperation between the two institutions is based on the idea of equal partnership implying a spirit of mutual respect and willingness to understand cultural differences, and an attitude of trust, tolerance and openness in the relationship. Such a cooperation between equal partners can not be based on a consultant-client relationship. Neither of the collaborators should consider themselves superior or inferior to the other.⁶

Agder College and IDM seem to have come a long way in achieving this kind of egalitarian relationship in their co-operation. The importance of the management structure outlined above, which conforms to NORAD's policy of 'recipient responsibility', should not be underestimated. Particularly in the current phase, this

⁶ Report from the pre-study of a prolonged institutional cooperation between Institute of Development Management, Tanzania and Agder College, Norway (mimeo) Mzumbe & Kristiansand, January, 1995 (p.10)

policy has been consistently implemented, with all funds to the project going to IDM through the Tanzanian Treasury.

It is also interesting to note that in a technical paper discussing the first experiences with twinning arrangements as a mode of technical assistance, prepared by the World Bank in 1988, it is pointed out that

... the lack of international experience could also mean that they (staff involved in twinning arrangements) will have fewer preconceptions and a greater willingness and ability to be flexible in adapting to a new environment.⁷

This is a lesson which seems to have been borne out by the experiences gained in the co-operation between IDM and Agder College.

2.2 The cost of equality

The Memorandum of Understanding which was signed by IDM and Agder College in June 1990 opened up for co-operation in a number of fields. These included

- Joint research, teaching and consultancy projects
- Staff exchange
- Workshops and seminars
- Joint publications
- Printing, library and EDP support for research activities

A budget line was included in NORAD's programme of support to IDM (1991-94), under the Academic Improvement Project,⁸ providing NOK 750.000 per year for 4 years to cover the cost of the institutional co-operation programme. Although the Memorandum lists the types of activities to be covered, actual work plans should be prepared on a yearly basis and approved jointly by the two parties.

⁷ Cooper, L.: The Twinning of Institutions; its use as a technical assistance delivery system, World Bank Technical Paper No. 23, Washington 1984

⁸ It should be noted that that the total cost of the twinning arrangement (NOK 3 million) amounts to 20% of the total Academic Improvement Project (NOK 15 million), but only 8.3% of the total NORAD support to IDM (NOK 36 million) in this period, which also includes a large Maintenance and Rehabilitation Project.

Although it is very difficult to gain a clear understanding of the actual costs involved in the co-operation, it is quite clear that the level of funding set for the first period of co-operation was not based on real economic costs. There has been a significant (but undisclosed) level of direct subsidy to the project from Agder College which apparently has been justified by treating the project as part of the research profile of the college. Individual Agder College staff members taking part in the project have also subsidised the project, mostly in terms of opportunity costs. There can be no doubt that IDM has got a better deal from Agder College than it would have been able to negotiate with a partner insisting on full economic costs. Although these subsidies have contributed to the profile of equality and partnership, and basically does not concern anybody outside the partnership, there is a danger that the individual opportunity costs experienced by some staff members may have negative effects on quality, in terms of less than enthusiastic participation or difficulties in recruiting counterpart researchers. There are some indications that this has been a problem, the most significant of which is that when IDM/Agder College proposed a second phase of co-operation, which did include some additional activities, the proposed budget was increased by 260%.

2.3 Structures for project management

In view of the fairly limited budget made available for institutional co-operation between IDM and Agder College, it is interesting to note that the two parties have agreed on a quite elaborate structure for the management of the project:

- A Policy and Planning Committee (PPC), consisting of the Principals of IDM and Agder College and the two Project Team leaders as well as Project Managers from the respective institutions, meet once a year to approve plans and accounts prepared by the Project Teams at the respective institutions. All projects, activities and budgets for the following year must be approved by the PPC, which is also free to raise all matters and issues relating to the co-operation. The venue of the PPC meeting alternates between IDM and Agder College, with the respective Principal acting as Chair.
- Each institution has created a Project Team, consisting of the researchers and project managers involved in actual (research) projects, with Team Leaders drawn from the intermediate leadership of the two institutions (the Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences at Agder College and the Director of Studies at IDM). The Project Teams are the operational units in which projects are conceptualised, planned, prepared, implemented, monitored and accounted for. The Project Team is also responsible for the preparation of accounts as well as submission of plans and forward budgets for approval by the PPC. As noted above, the Team Leaders are part of the PPC, thus providing an important link between management and the operational units at the respective institutions.
- The Project Managers of the projects under implementation meet twice a year in Consultative Meetings which alternate between IDM and Agder College. These

consultative meetings discuss all operational matters relating to the planning and implementation of projects.

Particularly in the first phase of co-operation (1991-94) there seem to be a number of good reasons for placing so much emphasis on consultation and close follow-up. Agder College was moving into a new venture, with which they had little experience but which the college authorities had decided to implement. One obvious risk in the first phase was that Agder College had promised more than it actually could deliver, given the limited in-house research interest in matters relevant to the co-operation with IDM in this initial phase. IDM on its part had the unfortunate experience with another twinning partner fresh in mind and no doubt wanted to monitor the progress of the new initiative quite closely. Both parties were moving into a situation about which a lot was unknown, involving staff which were unfamiliar with the project and each other. All these potential hazards were exacerbated by the poor state of communications. IDM is physically located in a rather awkward place and did not have access to modern means of telecommunications until September 1997, when a microwave link to the national telecommunication network was installed.

Additionally, as has been pointed out in the World Bank technical paper referred to above

One factor that can contribute to institution-to-institution cooperation is establishing a link between the two entities at the very top. Most TA suppliers emphasize the importance of having the top managers of both entities committed to the twinning arrangement. This can be a critical factor in providing support and setting the tone of the relationship down the line. Visits by top management to each other's facilities have been found to be useful for increasing understanding of each other's operations and helping to identify the tasks and ways in which the two entities can work together.⁹

2.4 The first period of co-operation

From the list of possible activities indicated in the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1990, research co-operation and joint publications received most attention. By the end of the first period of co-operation, 14 joint research projects had been initiated and 7 research reports had been published. Some delays were experienced, but none of the research projects which were embarked upon have been terminated. As reflected in the PPC minutes over the years, the causes for the delays seem to be quite evenly distributed between the two institutions (e.g. staff withdrawing from the

⁹ Cooper (op.cit), p.15

project, being substituted by other partners, unavailability of staff at previously agreed periods, etc.)

In addition to the joint research projects, an annual research workshop to present result from the previous year has been organised at IDM. Staff exchange has taken place, in the form of study tours to Norway organised for IDM staff members, research visits by staff from either institution and the annual tour of Agder students attending the Development Studies programme¹⁰. Studies relating to possible library co-operation, the printing press and computer facilities at IDM have also been carried out and reports produced. A joint project to produce teaching materials (for economics courses at IDM) has been started but has experienced delays.

The research projects initiated under the auspices of the co-operation between IDM and Agder College have been quite limited in size, with a limited amount of resources (in terms of time and money) being made available to each project. The projects are expected to conform to a fairly strict model which involves the following steps:

1. A staff member from either institution prepares a research proposal which is evaluated by the institution
2. According to the research project model format, the overall budget available for each project is limited to NOK 110.000, to cover expenditures at both institutions.
3. Proposals may then be forwarded to the other institution with a request for a partner. The Project Team should facilitate the identification and linking of partners with similar research interests, unless the prospective research partners know each other beforehand.
4. When a partner is identified, the two researchers meet for discussions to finalise the project and to implement a pilot study in Tanzania, with a duration of 2-4 weeks.
5. Data collection is carried out in Tanzania by the IDM researcher, with the assistance of one or more research assistants. Research assistants could be junior staff members or graduate students. A particular effort has been made to recruit female assistants.
6. Data analysis, desk studies and report writing is carried out at Agder College by the IDM researcher, together with the Norwegian counterpart, for a period not exceeding three months. Findings are discussed at a seminar in Norway and the first draft of the report should be prepared.

¹⁰ These tours are not paid for by the co-operation project and are strictly speaking not part of the project, even if they draw on IDM staff for lectures etc. and contribute to increased familiarity.

7. The draft report is discussed at a research workshop in Tanzania
8. The final report is prepared and published in the Agder College - Institute of Development Management Collaboration Research Reports. According to the project model regulations additional dissemination and publication in refereed journals may take place later, but this has apparently not been done.

In the first period of co-operation approximately 4 research projects per year were approved and 7 research reports have actually been produced. Given the modest funding (which barely covers travel expenses and other direct costs) this must be seen as a quite respectable achievement, in terms of volume. It should be noted, however, that the research results have apparently not been submitted to full quality control and assessment through e.g. a proper peer review process outside the two participating institutions. The short-term advantages of publishing in a separate series of reports may easily carry long-term penalties if quality is not assured. This has become an issue at a later stage in the programme.

The most obvious bottleneck within the projects is time. Staff at Agder College have some research time set aside in their normal terms of employment, - even so a common complaint (not only at Agder College) is that these allocations are insufficient. But additional research time requires resources to release the researcher in question from his/her other duties, and this quickly becomes very expensive. Time for research is also a scarce resource at IDM. After a semester system was introduced a few years ago (partly in response to suggestions made by NORAD-funded curriculum development advisors) it has become easier to fit in research time. Some resources are available at IDM's Research, Information and Publication Centre (RIP) (approximately equivalent to 4 man-years per year) and some time will be allocated to researchers on application.

There have also been problems with the research project model format. On the one hand it opens up to a very wide range of research questions (to the extent that some researchers wish for more guidance and requirements of conformity with IDM's mission), while it on the other hand lacks administrative flexibility in adapting the different stages of the model to arising situations. There are thus arguments in favour of organising a more focused research programme on the basis of research priorities within each institution. On the basis of such a research programme it should also be possible to adopt a more flexible attitude to research budgets and the allocation of resources in each individual case. But in the PPC minutes from the first period of co-operation it is obvious how reluctant the PPC has been to deviate from e.g. the fixed budget ceilings. How this has effected research output, particularly in terms of quality, is not known.

There has also been some problems in finding suitable counterparts at Agder College. There is no doubt that Agder College is seen as a credible source of technical assistance and an institution which is actively and successfully involved in the same kinds of activity as IDM, but there is hardly a complete overlap in all respects. This becomes particularly acute in research projects where interest may differ. Aspiring researchers at IDM may simply not be able to find suitable counterparts at Agder College. If the research partnership is restricted to Agder College staff sharing general experience and demonstrating and/or advising on the application of research techniques (a situation sometimes referred to in discussions as the consultancy model), the relationship easily becomes negatively affected and the mutuality of benefits will disappear. If the co-operation between Agder College and IDM is to continue and thrive, particularly given the rather austere level of pecuniary remuneration accruing to participating staff, there must be clear benefits to both parties in terms of other achievements.

Agder College has attempted to expand its resource base by activating its links to other institutions in the Kristiansand area. In the Pre-Study Report particular mention is made of Agder Research Foundation and the Centre for International Co-operation and Development in Kristiansand as suitable and available resource pools. The Director of CICD actually took part in the production of the Pre-Study, but so far no projects involving these proposed partner institutions have been organised and there are no other indications that these have played a very active part in the co-operation.

According to the Pre-Study Report's own summing up of the first period of co-operation

... there have been some conflicts within some of the projects due to communication problems, cultural differences, time constraints, limited resources, variations in conception of time and commitment. But none of these have been serious. Being linked to and co-operating with another unknown person with a different social, cultural and professional background has been a challenge and an important learning process requiring patience, tolerance, respect and willingness to solve conflicts.¹¹

2.5 Enhancing IDM's competitive advantages

Most of the effort in the institutional co-operation project between IDM and Agder College has gone into the joint research programme and fields closely associated with it, such as staff exchange and research workshops. Other fields, mandated in the Memorandum of Understanding, have been given less attention. Staff exchange visits

¹¹ Report from the Pre-Study of a Prolonged Institutional Cooperation, p.11

between the libraries of the respective institutions have been organised and a report on library co-operation has been produced. In the other technical fields, co-operation over the printing press was suspended due to personnel and management problems at the IDM printing press. A report on a computer investment plan was prepared and some computer training has been offered in conjunction with the research collaboration.

The most obvious omissions involve two fields which probably were included because they are important in their own right as well as being important to the overall objectives which the institutional co-operation set out to achieve. On the other hand, they are difficult to operationalise under the circumstances where staff have to organise project activities within the scope of their daily duties. These involve teaching and participation in joint consultancy work.

Since the first workshop on research methodology in 1989 (which was organised in the summer break of the Norwegian lecturer in question) Agder College has not been involved in teaching activities at IDM (perhaps with the exception of an occasional lecture or the like). IDM staff visiting Norway to write up their research have also given occasional lectures to Norwegian students, but have not undertaken to teach longer courses. The main difficulty is probably a matter of funds, i.e. the funds required to compensate staff to use their available time (if any) to teach courses at the other institution, are not there.

As for joint consultancy it is an open and unanswered question whether Agder College staff (with some obvious exceptions) hold the skills, experience and competence required to enhance IDM's competitive advantages on the Tanzanian market for consultancies. But in this case the problem may not be the competence of individual staff members at either IDM or Agder College. It is a stated and accepted problem that while a number of individual staff members at IDM do very well as individual consultants, the same is not true for IDM as an institution. Joint consultancies, however, have not been implemented.

This is of course a considerable dilemma, because a large part of the overall justification for the institutional co-operation programme between IDM and Agder College hinges on an assumption that improved research skills and enhanced research capacity hold a dual importance to IDM:

- First, under the circumstances of a change in education policies in Tanzania, IDM must adapt to an emerging market in the sense that it must offer an education (in its regular programmes at under-graduate and graduate levels) and training (in its short-term courses) which are of high quality and relevant to the needs of potential customers, i.e. those who sponsor students, pay student fees and commission short-

term training courses. The research co-operation with Agder College is intended to contribute to academic quality in this sense. In the first period of co-operation it seems that Agder College has been able to address these issues only indirectly. The resources available have permitted activities which have stimulated research activities on a broad front (including some production of teaching materials) but have probably been insufficient to permit an approach with a sharper focus on the issues at hand.

- Second, it is assumed that given the imminent changes in the structure of funding to Tanzania's institutions of higher learning, IDM must adapt and be prepared to compete in an emerging market for commissioned research, advisory work and consultancies. Again, it is assumed that improved academic quality will produce pay-offs in terms of enhancing IDM's competitive advantages in this market. How true this is remains to be seen. But in terms of the co-operation with Agder College, there have not been any activities to date which have focused on these issues.

By all available accounts, the institutional co-operation project between IDM and Agder College has been successful and appreciated for improving research capacity and research quality at IDM in general terms, i.e. the research projects which have been undertaken have been completed in a satisfactory manner. This may, to a certain extent, be besides the point, because if the co-operation project is to contribute positively to the main issue at hand, viz. the professional sustainability and financial survival of IDM as an institution of higher learning, then clearly a much more focused approach is called for. There is often a difficult balance to be struck between academic quality in terms of methodological refinement and sophistication and the relevance of research in terms of addressing issues of concern to the potential clients for the products IDM will have to offer in the new market.

But it is important to realise at this juncture that the co-operation between IDM and Agder College is limited to a few substantive fields, which have grown out of an obvious compromise between the research support needed by IDM and what Agder College can offer. The agreements open up for some activities more or less closely related to research, but at no time has there been talk of a relationship involving the whole range of institutional activities on either side.

2.6 Adjusting the co-operation to new conditions.

These concerns have to a large extent been expressed in the joint pre-study which was organised by IDM and Agder College in early 1995. The study recommends a continued co-operation on the basis of the trust and mutual familiarity which has been

established between the two institutions. It also recognises the need for a more active and aggressive relationship to the market. It is proposed to maintain approximately the same format of co-operation (i.e. continued co-operation within the same substantive fields and the continued reliance on a quite strict financial and operational model for research co-operation). Greater importance will be attached, however, to identifying

... (research) topics of special relevance for the ongoing profound changes in Tanzania and for which there exists a common ground for IDM and Agder College, both in terms of competence and commitment, Broad research programmes around specific topics should be developed¹²

This is of course a perfectly valid argument. Agder College cannot be all things to IDM, even within a relationship restricted to research co-operation. Additionally, a sharper focus and a concentration on specific topics would no doubt help overcome some of the operational difficulties (particularly relating to finding and linking suitable partners within a very wide research programme) encountered in the first phase of co-operation.

2.7 The second phase of co-operation

The pre-study therefore recommended a concentration on some fields of study which on the one hand are of great importance to the context in which IDM will have to operate in the future, and on the other hand, where Agder College believes it could mobilise the required resources. There was some reluctance to completely exclude fields which were more marginal to the main issues at hand, and the compromise formulation seems to be that they simply would be given lower priority.

The fields with the highest priority for the proposed second period of co-operation are

- local government studies
- private sector development
- the relationship between local government and the private sector

Within these broad fields, some issues were thought to be particularly important:

- environmental issue

¹² Report from the pre-study of a prolonged institutional cooperation (p.4)

- gender issues

The pre-study also indicates that Agder College as such is not very well placed to co-operate with IDM on important issues like improving commissioned research and consultancy. The report suggests, however, that some of Agder College's partner institutions, in particular Agder Research Foundation and the Centre for Co-operation and Development could play a role in such ventures. No experience in this respect has been gained as yet.

The pre-study recommended that a budget of NOK 2 million per year over four years should be set aside for the continued programme of co-operation between IDM and Agder College. When the final budgets for NORAD's support to IDM were approved, however, this amount had been reduced to approximately NOK 3.6 million for the whole period.

In view of this the PPC decided that the scale of co-operation should be adjusted downward. It was decided to initially concentrate on one research programme on entrepreneurship and small scale business development, and later on expand into a research programme on local government studies. Furthermore, and equally important, it was decided to concentrate on improving the quality of the research output, compared to the first phase of co-operation.

The main vehicle of co-operation in the current phase will therefore be support to a small number of Ph.D. projects to be undertaken by IDM staff members within the fields selected. Since neither IDM nor Agder College offer Ph.D. degrees, a link with the Faculty of Commerce and Management at the University of Dar es Salaam has been established, in a trilateral relationship, to provide the Ph.D. students with a formal foundation for their projects. Agder College staff will participate in teaching courses, both in Tanzania and in Norway, in curriculum development, field collaboration and supervision of students and provide institutional support like e.g. specialised library acquisitions. This project is just about to start now in October 1997.

Although it obviously is too early to say how successful the new model of co-operation will be, it is important to note how the evolution of new approaches have come about through a careful process of mutual consultation. This, together with the level of trust and familiarity which has been established between the two institutions has allowed a fine-tuning of the co-operation to overcome problems on both sides. At Agder College the main problem seems to have been the identification of sufficiently interested, and hence, suitably qualified staff, to link up with Tanzanian partners in joint projects. At IDM the problem seems to have been that the enhancement of

research capacity, for all its contributions, has been too general to address the most acute problems of market adaptation and the development of marketable skills.

3. Institution-building at IDM

In a review of institution building as a development assistance method carried out in 1995¹³, it is pointed out that institution building exercises now have moved away from regarding the lack of physical, financial and human resources as the key constraint to institutional performance. Institution building now rather concentrates on issues like incentives, motivation, rewards and sanctions, i.e. the factors which encourage the staff of an organisation to work and make their organisation perform well.

In the case of NORAD's relationship to IDM, there is little doubt that NORAD for several years accepted that lacking infrastructure and poor facilities were major problems at IDM, and that the development assistance policy for all practical purposes could be described as one in which NORAD attempted to provide the resources which were lacking. In the initial Nordic phase of the project the resources provided also included a large number of teachers/instructors, in a classical technical assistance project. The provision of additional resources to IDM in terms of physical plant has characterised every phase of the project. Even in the current NORAD project to support IDM, most of the funds are intended for upgrading/maintaining/rehabilitating the physical plant. But agencies like NORAD have also come to realise that it is not enough to provide institutions with the resources they need. They also need to look at the pressures and discipline necessary for the staff to use those resources well!

3.1 Staff development and market adaptation

Staff development has been an important component of NORAD support, initially aimed at substituting national Tanzanian staff for expatriates, later with the aim of gradually increasing the academic qualifications of the staff. Most of the upgrading seems to have involved sending staff away to educational establishments overseas. This strategy probably works well enough at the level of the individual, providing the individual with qualifications, but it may be detrimental to institutional goals like committing the staff to the mission of the institution. In other words, the totality of

¹³ Moore, M.: Institution building as a development assistance method; a review of literature and ideas, SIDA, Stockholm 1995

individual qualifications need not necessarily contribute to increased competence in meeting the challenges faced by the institution.

IDM is increasingly moving towards a situation in which the ability to utilise its resources and skills in a situation of market competition will be of decisive importance to the very survival of the institution and sustainability of its programmes. The final test of the success of the twinning/co-operative arrangement with Agder College will be how well the arrangement has contributed to this goal. In the first phase of co-operation the first priority was to get IDM staff involved in research. Less thought seems to have been given to the compatibility between the research experiences thus gained and the demands for particular kinds of research skills posed by the external environment. Additionally, the issue of research quality seems to have been given low priority in the first phase. There was therefore a real danger that in the first phase of co-operation IDM staff would gain research experience and competence in fields and approaches which were irrelevant or only marginally relevant to the main issue at hand, viz. IDM's adaptations to the market.

These are considerations which have become more prominent in the second phase recently embarked upon. The PPC has made a choice to give greater prominence to quality issues in the research programme. The decision to concentrate on a few research topics rather than leaving the field open, has on the one hand made it easier to find suitably qualified and interested staff at Agder College and has facilitated participation by Agder College in the project, but has also, on the other hand, necessitated a discussion of relevance and market adaptation as well. The decision to restructure the research co-operation around a limited number of Ph.D. projects has both given the project a sharper focus and has also brought quality issues to the forefront.

3.2 By way of conclusion

The SIDA review referred to above sums up some conditions for successful institution building gleaned from a review of the literature. These conditions are listed here by way of conclusion, because the co-operation between IDM and Agder College as outlined in this report to a large extent seems to conform to them:

- Institution building is a long term activity; insofar as it requires external support, this support should also be long term
- Similarly, institution building is what is often termed a 'process' rather than a 'blueprint' activity; it cannot be programmed in detail, and will require flexibility and adaptiveness on the part of the people involved, including the funders.

- Institution building is not a mechanical activity, but requires adaptiveness to the specific political, cultural and economic etc. context. Effective external institution building agents should therefore be familiar with that context.
- Institution building involves, at some level or other, changes in social relationships. Such changes often generate resistance. There should therefore be substantial commitment to the process on the part of both the people directly concerned and (with some scope for trade-offs) the people who have power over the organization/institution involved
- More precisely, successful institution building requires effective, proactive leadership.

Finally, the test of how successfully Agder College has contributed to IDM's capacity, competence and competitive advantage in the market is yet to come. IDM still enjoys a substantial budget subsidy from NORAD and is still sheltered from the brutal realities of the new market-oriented strategies now being put in place for Tanzania's education sector.

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