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Capacity Building through Education Provision:

A review of the North-South
collaborative programmes of MS-
TCDC and Kimmage DSC between
1994 – 2014

by

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Executive Summary

Capacity Building through Education Provision was a collaborative joint research project between Kimmage DSC and MS-TCDC, Arusha, Tanzania, which aimed to discover to what extent graduates continued to use their skills in development practice and what difference their training made. The overall objective of this research was to explore what worked well in this partnership between two institutes from the 'North' and the 'South', and how this collaboration has advanced capacity building in its various forms to inform transformative learning and social change. Primarily, the study set out to explore whether in fact, capacity building of participants was achieved, and how this was experienced by participants both during and after the programmes attended. Secondly, the study explored the nature of the partnership model which had been maintained for 20 years, and to see if lessons could be drawn from this significant example of collaboration.

This was largely a qualitative piece of research, using a combination of a survey based tracer study to graduates of the programmes, a reflective workshop with a selection of graduates, and a series of semi-structured interviews with a sample of graduates, and a number of current and former staff of both institutes. It was conducted during the period from November 2015 to July 2016. In total 492 questionnaires were distributed with a response rate of 23 per cent from 112 completed responses. In this sample, the breakdown was 48% female and 52% male. 105 respondents (94%) stated they were currently working in the development sector, and moreover 76% have been engaged in development practice from between 11 years and for 21 years and more.

The analysis of the findings attempted to draw conclusions in response to these two most pertinent questions within the objectives stated above: (1.) Was capacity building achieved? (2.) Was it an effective partnership? And if so, how and why? To the first question, the survey provides a very strong indication that participants in the programmes run by these two institutes did consider their capacity was enhanced, and indicated that this occurred at personal, organisational, and community levels. This impression was underlined by comments from all staff interviewed. To the second principal question, this study presents strong indications that it was indeed, an effective partnership. Some interesting insights emerged from discussions with key staff contributors to the programme which point to some unique circumstances behind the success. Issues of 'ownership' were not seen as problematic, and financial transfers were not an issue at all, given that each partner effectively sourced funding for its own contributions to the programme, with reciprocal funding when staff exchanges took place. As articulated by one staff member from MS-TCDC, both organisations held onto mutual identities while maintaining an equal partnership; other points raised by other colleagues regarding reciprocity and trust conform with those characteristics of effective partnership identified in the literature. The longevity of the collaboration is another factor, as this provided a strong sense of continuity of provision and ensured that the programme was not constrained by a two or three year project cycle. Another very significant aspect that emerged during the

research was the importance of relationship, and this is therefore given appropriate attention both in the conceptual discussion and insights drawn from interviewees.

Key lessons to be drawn from the study include:

1. Capacity development did take place – for the students at the heart of the programmes run by MS-TCDC and Kimmage DSC – and in many instances, for their organisations and communities. There is also clear evidence that the staff in both institutes developed their individual and professional capacities through the dynamic of this partnership, and strong perceptions that both institutes were also transformed – being changed, as Eyben (2011) would say by the relationship forged by working together.
2. Partnerships can be challenging but extremely fruitful. If ways can be found to resource the partners separately or through reciprocal arrangements (as often happened in the Kimmage – TCDC relationship) this could remove a lot of the ‘wrong kind of power’ from the dynamics between partners. (See Eade’s (2007:635) point about dependency earlier in Section 2.)
3. The life span of partnerships needs to be longer than a typical project cycle of two or three years, as appears to be the consensus of many commentators, and endorsed by the TCDC/Kimmage partnership, which had no fixed time boundaries.
4. Relationships are key, and must not be underestimated or undermined. By their nature, difficult if not impossible to quantify and hence challenging for funders to assess the value of, but the results of this modest review would seem to echo the strong arguments of others, that ways should be found to make ‘what cannot be counted, count’. This study presents a strong argument that time spent by lecturers respectfully engaging with course participants, and time invested by both sets of staff to the developing of constructive but convivial relationships has borne fruit.

Major transitions in terms of organisational structures and financial arrangements embarked upon by both Kimmage and TCDC, were a key factor in the final divergence in the respective paths taken by each institute from 2014 onwards. During this period, a significant turnover of staff at TCDC – in fact, a complete replacement of all management and senior staff – contributed to an ending of the strong ties and rapport that had existed between staff of both institutes. Therefore perhaps quite reasonably, the new personnel at TCDC, in focusing upon new projects with new partners, did not share the interest of their immediate predecessors in this study, and so original ambitions expressed regarding joint conferences and dissemination were not pursued. Paradoxically their reduced contribution to this project serves to justify the emphasis made in this study to the importance of close relationships in partnerships.

Section 1: Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

Kimmage Development Studies Centre and MS-Training Centre for Development Cooperation (TCDC), Arusha, Tanzania have had a long standing, and in the Irish context, unique 20-year collaboration in the provision of high quality third level education. This training was delivered at MS-TCDC campus at Usa River, near Arusha, and attracted students from throughout east and southern Africa, and a few from further afield. Begun as a pilot in 1994, the collaboration was further enhanced through Irish accreditation of a BA course delivered in Tanzania (itself a first). This partnership continued without pause for over 20 years until the final cohort of BA students graduated in November 2015.

Capacity Building through Education Provision was a collaborative joint research project between Kimmage DSC and MS-TCDC, hereafter for the purposes of this paper referred as 'Kimmage' and 'TCDC'. The research project aimed to discover to what extent graduates continued to use their skills in development practice and what difference their training made. It will assess what worked well over the course of the collaboration, and reflect on lessons learned in areas where things didn't go according to plan. Both institutes hope that this study will promote discussion on the ways in which capacity building may be employed to stimulate transformative learning and influence change. In particular we look forward to further conversations on the future role of research in advancing the capacity development agendas of both partners. We trust that the findings of this research will be helpful to both institutes in planning of further North – South collaborative partnerships, and moreover, that lessons learned from this study will also be relevant to other higher education institutions (particularly Irish HEIs in planning long term collaborative engagements with Southern partners) and to donors, including Irish Aid, who may be interested in fostering successful collaborations.

1.2 Objectives

The overall objective of this research was to explore what worked well in this partnership between two institutes from the 'North' and the 'South', and how this collaboration has advanced capacity building in its various forms to inform transformative learning and social change. Specifically, the study set out to:

- i. Assess the successes and challenges of this collaboration in capacity building for transformation.
- ii. Document the experiences of participants in the programme and the type of change this may have facilitated in their lives.
- iii. Explore the partnership model adopted in the context of the current aid effectiveness principles in order to inform future collaborations.
- iv. Assess the effectiveness of such longer-term capacity development programmes (i.e. run over more than one year) in advancing transformative learning and social change.

1.3 Research Process

This was a qualitative piece of research, using a combination of a survey based tracer study to graduates of the programmes, a reflective workshop with a selection of graduates, and a series of semi-structured interviews with a sample of graduates, and a number of current and former staff of both institutes.

1.4 Background to the current project and origins of the collaboration

As a member of staff of Kimmage in 1994 (and continuously since then), I was one of the initiators of the programme of collaboration between the two institutes. This review is therefore strengthened by the 'insider view' and 'institutional memory' that I can provide. My role and experience however, also brings potential limitations in terms of perceived lack of 'objectivity' or independent perspective towards this study. We (the Principal of TCDC at the time, Dr Suma Kaare, and myself) however embarked on this study in 2015 determined to provide an openly critical reflection on the successes and failures of the two-decade long collaboration, and I have attempted to guard against any possible bias throughout. At the very least, we considered that the quite remarkable longevity of the partnership was something worth recording, documenting and reviewing for lessons learned.

The initial collaboration began in 1993, following an invitation to visit from TCDC. At the time, TCDC were undergoing a substantial transition. The centre at Usa River, near Arusha, in Tanzania, was established by the Danish organisation MS in the early 1970s, ostensibly to provide orientation and language training to expatriate development workers, largely but not exclusively from Denmark and other Scandinavian countries. By the early 1990s, TCDC were reconsidering their operational role, in part due to a general decline in overseas volunteering, and also in response to the rapid emergence of civil society organisations in Tanzania along with the need and demand for more training of nascent community development organisations. 'MS in the South' was a popular slogan and regular discussion topic during those days, with many of the staff in TCDC keen to see the centre become a development resource for people in the region.

At that time in Kimmage we were also reassessing the contribution we were able to make in terms of internationally based development workers, and especially those unable to avail of sponsorship to enable them to attend courses run in Dublin. A graduate of Kimmage from several years earlier, Alais Morindat had joined TCDC as a Training Development Officer, and he saw the a potential synergy between Kimmage and TCDC and arranged for me to visit. The result was the setting up of a pilot course in **1994** with a small grant from Irish Aid to cover Kimmage costs, which was entitled a **Certificate in Management of Community Development programmes**. This was aimed at personnel from CBOs (community based organisations), local NGOs, Church employees, and the first intake also included programme officers from MS-Tanzania and other MS offices in Kenya and Nepal. Programme officers from other organisations in Zambia, Uganda were also enrolled. The first programme ran for 18 months, with 5 modules of 4-5 weeks each separated from each other by about 4 months. Initially, Kimmage staff

provided about 60-70 percent of the teaching and facilitation, and TCDC provided the rest, mainly from visiting lecturers, while they were building up their own Development Training Office.

The evaluation of the first programme concluded that it was a very successful training and a much needed contribution to the sector in Tanzania and East and Southern Africa generally. A reduction in the length of time, and series of separate visits, that participants had to make to undertake the programme was also enacted, and most significantly, a request that the certification be formally validated by a higher education body was also pursued. TCDC had no interest at that time in becoming an academic provider so Kimmage sought accreditation from the National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) in Ireland. By the time the second Certificate course was offered, this Certificate course had become an internationally recognised award courtesy of approval from the NCEA. That programme continued for 3 years until further demands for higher level awards, at National Diploma level (at the time the highest award offered through Kimmage) led to further accreditation submissions from TCDC/Kimmage and in **2001** the subsequent offering of the **National Diploma in Development Studies**. This was a unique transnational programme in that it was run for Irish-based participants in Dublin as well as for African-based students in Arusha. This level of award continued successfully until **2004** when the Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) - (the validation authority that succeeded the NCEA in Ireland) - effectively abolished the award of a National Diploma and required all programmes to describe themselves as BA degrees (Level 7). Both our institutes at that time had misgivings about offering a 'BA' rather than a diploma, even though the academic standard was the same. We each saw that the description would create differing perceptions among our client constituencies – now it was perceived more formally as a 'mainstream academic' award and no longer as a specialised, professional qualification that, at least in East Africa, the National Diploma was considered to be. TCDC were also concerned about how this would be regarded by other universities in Tanzania, given that they might be perceived as moving into their territory by offering a bachelor's degree. Nevertheless, we jointly decided that there was more to gain than to lose by going along with this transition – which did require adjustment to the curriculum even if the academic level had not changed – for example we needed to find a way to validate their relevant prior learning experience and include this for exemption purposes for many of our participants (North and South) and this was eventually achieved. The **BA in Development Studies** ran for 13 years until the final intake in Arusha in **2013-15**.

Kimmage had by this time already ceased offering the parallel BA programme in Dublin, (our last intake was in 2012-13) – for reasons to do with our own transition – from 2014 onwards Kimmage would be providing courses for a new **BA in International Development** for Maynooth University and this was seen as a more cost-effective and productive use of staff time and resources. At the same time, the numbers attending the BA in Arusha had declined, with colleagues in TCDC identifying vastly increased competition from the university sector in East Africa, and, related to the impact of the economic collapse

from 2008 onwards, diminishing sources of sponsorship for capacity building training for its target clientele.

1.5 Content and Pedagogy

Among the reasons for the initial attraction between TCDC and Kimmage was a realisation that both institutes shared a common interest and philosophy in providing participants with learner-centred, experientially based, participatory programmes that were relevant to the needs of development practitioners. It seemed as though some TCDC staff steeped in the Danish *Folk High School* tradition and philosophy saw the Freirean approaches long established and favoured in Kimmage as completely compatible. The Kimmage model of teaching development studies (more akin to a development education approach, which emphasises learning *for* development, and not just *about* development) included enabling participants to read theories of global and international development and relate these to their own regional, national, local and, significantly, personal realities. It was quickly agreed that would be a useful basis for the ongoing curriculum for TCDC.

The structure of the course became the model used subsequently by TCDC to develop further longer term trainings and indeed other academic offerings¹. It consisted of modular blocks of teaching of four to five weeks, consisting of five intensive full days. Then participants would leave the centre and return to their jobs in various organisations – mostly in the region – and continue with any reading and assignments during a period of 3-4 months before returning to TCDC again for a second and then a final third module after a similar break. This enabled the course work to remain closely connected to the work of these development practitioners and for them to easily draw upon their experience when returning to the classroom.

From the outset, Kimmage staff saw their role as helping to establish the programme, to continue to support it as desired by TCDC, but by gradually decreasing their involvement in actual teaching and facilitation in the classroom while the Training Department at TCDC was being strengthened and developed. Underlining this intent was a system of 'shadowing' introduced in the first few courses, which entailed newly recruited staff of TCDC following the courses presented by Kimmage, co-teaching, and eventually replacing the Kimmage people. Another aspect which helped to cement relationships and clarify a unified approach towards the teaching and goals of the programme was the Staff Exchange arrangement. This was used to reduce the costs of Kimmage staff coming to Tanzania – it was based on a system of non-payment of lecturing and time, but that the host would provide accommodation and meet travel costs of the visitor. This worked well in reverse, as a number of TCDC were facilitated to come and lecture at Kimmage, and as well as cost saving, it helped to maintain a coherence on the BA programme that both institutes were running in parallel.

¹ interesting to note that this 'block release' model for a longer-term development training programme was used again by other partners of Kimmage, including at the Furra Centre near Awassa, Ethiopia, and more recently (but for the last 12 years) by the Grail Centre, Kleinmond, South Africa.

1.6 Structure of this report

The report is presented in line with the following sequence: Section 2 explores some of the key conceptual issues considered during this study; Section 3 assesses the primary data gathered from questionnaires and interviews; Section 4 draws conclusions from the findings and presents an overall assessment.

Section 2: A Review of Key Concepts

2.1 Introduction

Some of the concepts we began to look at in this study emerged as 'core', while others decreased in significance, as far as this particular review is concerned. For example, given our agreed title, capacity building was certainly at the centre of our reflections. However the concepts of **(global) North** and **(global) South**, while accurate to an extent, don't reflect what could be called a genuine North-South relationship. While geographically it is true that together we forged a sustained partnership between two institutes located respectively, north and south, given its parent body (MS) in Copenhagen, and in receipt of ongoing funding through Danida, the southern partner was only partly 'of the south'. Another point of interest in this North-South discussion was noted by McEvoy (2013a: 3)

Until recently, [development studies] was, with important exceptions, an “asymmetric business” (Forster 1997). “Northern” social scientists were studying the “South”, i.e. those parts of the world which were facing perceived “development problems” (EADI 2005). But lately the line between ‘developing’ and ‘developed’ countries has begun to blur. The far-reaching and systemic financial crisis which has hit Europe and North America since 2008 has discredited any notion that development is something that can be transferred from the ‘North’ to the ‘South’; rather is a growing recognition of global North-South inter-dependence, and of development as a process that impacts on all countries, whether wealthy, poor or ‘transitional’.

Certainly the transnational nature of the training personnel at TCDC, which had grown both in numbers and capacity during the period of our collaboration (as Kimmage's hands-on involvement lessened, TCDC's increased) - comprising Tanzanians, Ugandans, Kenyans, Sudanese, Nigerians, Zimbabweans and Danes – would seem to underscore this notion of interdependence.

Other concepts such as **partnership** are worthy of scrutiny in this review, and we shall look at this below, along with another concept which emerged in significance during the data gathering, that of **relationships**. However, we begin this survey through the literature with some reflections on the core concept we are concerned with in this study, namely Capacity Building, or in some instances, Capacity Development.

2.2 Capacity Building

The OECD (2006) introduces its publication *The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working Towards Good Practice* as follows,

The publication reviews 40 years of development experience and concludes that donors and partner countries alike have tended to look at capacity development as mainly a technical process, or as a transfer of knowledge or institutions from North to South. (quote from Foreword by Richard Manning, Chair DAC)

In view of the 'North-South' dimensions of Kimmage/TCDC already expressed above, this is not how capacity building has been perceived by the key actors focused in this review.

Deborah Eade (2007:632) provides another useful perspective,

A glance through the development literature – from scholarly articles to agency PR – confirms the ‘buzzword’ status of capacity building. Some dismiss it for this reason as a sloppy piece of aid jargon. For others, it is a synonym for institutional or organisational development. Often it is no more than a serious-sounding alternative to ‘training’. After all, no NGO could admit to funding one-off training workshops whose impact may be short-lived,

And goes on to say: “simply changing the name does not change the practice, and adopting a narrow view of capacity building as in-service or vocational training is just as unhelpful as using it as a catch-all to mean everything and nothing.” (ibid.)

Eade’s historical review of the origins of the concept chime well with other pedagogical orientations favoured by Kimmage, and, as we discovered in 1994, with TCDC.

The intellectual and political roots of capacity building lie partly in the rights-centred *capacitacion* of Liberation Theology and the *conscientizacao* work of Paulo Freire. Southern feminists and ‘gender and development’ policy makers and activists have also deepened the understanding of ‘empowerment’ and social exclusion, [and] Sen’s work on entitlements and capabilities provides insights into the dynamic nature of the exclusion that capacity building seeks to address. (ibid.)

She continues in her discussion of the ambiguous usage of many other associated terms, such as civil society, by adding the warning note “that capacity building originally drew on a generally left-leaning range of intellectual and political traditions, but is today commonly used to further a neo-liberal ‘pull yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps’ kind of economic and political agenda.” (ibid.)

While the focus of Eade’s article is upon NGOs, and therefore not strictly nor immediately related to the programme began by Kimmage and TCDC, the perspectives she outlines do seem to have some relevance,

A capacity-building approach therefore means focusing less on supporting scores of projects and more on seeing any intervention within the wider context of social and other kinds of change – local, national, regional, and global. Training may be successful in its own terms, but contribute very little to enabling participants to change their realities. International NGOs may claim spectacular campaigning achievements, but translating these successes into sustainable changes in people’s lives means a long-term commitment and listening to what they themselves say. (ibid, 633)

The OECD (2006: 7) make the related point, “Capacity development involves much more than enhancing the knowledge and skills of individuals. It depends crucially on the quality of the *organisations* in which they work.”

Eade (2007: 634) makes helpful points about what Capacity Building is, and what it isn’t. For example, “...we cannot look at an input in isolation and say a priori that X represents capacity building while Y doesn’t. It is much more a question of understanding the subtleties of the context and direction; an approach, rather than a thing.” OECD (2006: 7) echo this view: “A good understanding of context is fundamental.”

OECD (2006: 7) iterate that “The new consensus, articulated strongly in the 2005 Paris Declaration, sees capacity development as a necessarily endogenous process, strongly led from within a country, with donors playing a supporting role.” An interesting point, if not completely relevant to the context of Kimmage/TCDC.

Other issues which would appear to be relevant to this study, include Eade’s point “if a relationship is only as sustainable as its money supply, then power games and dependency lie at its heart. All power corrupts, but absolute dependency undermines absolutely.” (2007: 635) Furthermore, “.... a partnership that is based on a one-way transfer of resources (whether these are financial or intellectual) is profoundly asymmetrical, a fact which will tend to distort the functioning and dignity of the weaker partner, as well as fostering the hubris of the stronger one.” (ibid.)

OECD (2006: 7) would seem to be in accordance with this view,

Future capacity development initiatives should be designed to maximise learning at each of the three levels of capacity development: individual, organisational, and enabling environment. A particularly high priority should be given to building shared understanding about what works and what doesn’t in terms of improving the enabling environment.

A key point Eade stresses is “the basic message is that if NGOs want to take capacity building seriously, then they must be prepared to change their own structures and practices in order to reflect this commitment to partnership, reciprocity, shared risk-taking, and inter-dependence.” (2007: 636)

In her conclusions, Eade (2007: 637) emphasises

Capacity building is an approach to solidarity-based partnerships with an infinite variety of expressions. While some of the ingredients can be identified, there is no global recipe, no quick fix. Partnership entails mutual accountability, and you cannot have one without the other. This includes accounting back honestly for decisions that affect others. This approach is demanding, and it calls for time, flexibility, shared risk taking, open dialogue, and a willingness on both sides to respond to feedback. Co-development is also far more rewarding than trying to be a catalyst, which exerts ‘an impact or change on another component within a system without itself changing’ (the last point citing Eyben 2006: 48).

2.3 Partnership

A related point alluded to by Eade (2007) above, is that of partnerships, which is another significant variable that this study is concerned with. “The importance of partnership is articulated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the eighth of which calls for the establishment of a global partnership for development. This prominence was later strengthened by the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* of 2005 and the *Accra Agenda for Action* (2008).” (Downes 2013:1) Downes cites Steve Kayizzi-Mugwera describing partnership as the ‘new big idea’ in development discourse, and “yet,” he says, “this ‘new big idea’ has not been subject to the critical scrutiny commensurate with its standing.” (ibid.)

Robert Chambers (2013) in an online blog, claimed “*The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* repeatedly talks of *partners* and *partnership*, which added together are used more in the Declaration than any other word or word root (my count is 96 times)”

However, it appears – perhaps unsurprisingly – given the intertwined relationship between the two concepts, that many of the dynamics that commentators are critical of regarding capacity development, are to be found again in assessments of partnership. As Brehm (2001: 1) states “‘partnership’ has undoubtedly become the victim of its own success; the term has been overused and applied to a whole range of inter-organisational relationships.” Moreover, the paper contended, “the debate on partnership has concentrated on the failure of NGOs – particularly in the North – to live up to aspirations for ideal partnership based on solidarity and mutuality.” In 2010 Dochas commissioned a report entitled *Partnership in Practice: A Kenyan Perspective on the Nature of Relationships with Irish NGOs*. Among the key findings of this study, the following conclusions are worth restating:

Kenyan partners, in describing the “ideal partnerships” they would like, highlighted a range of key values, characteristics and practices. These included: respect, consultation and joint decision-making; complementarity and flexibility; listening and learning together; and a focus both on real impact and the long term, above and beyond any short-term financial relationships.

In contrast, many of the Kenyan NGOs and CSOs surveyed found that the *donor Irish NGOs’* values, objectives or priorities predominated; that they could be overly focused on funding-related aspects of the relationship, or on programme delivery, rather than capacity building and organisational development; and that the priorities, outcome thresholds and timeframes they used inclined them towards short-term engagement.

(Aburi et al, 2010: 6)

The question of limitations of time – usually bound by the necessities of project funding – is a clear challenge that all partnerships have to contend with. Oliphant (2013) refers to the problem of longer-term sustainability in his otherwise positive assessment of an educational partnership between the Centre for Global Development Education (CGDE) at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick and Lesotho College of Education.

This issue has been reiterated, fairly recently, by Teferra (2016, online):

The literature on development cooperation, including university cooperation, is replete with challenges of forging successful, productive and truly equal partnerships between institutions in the North and the South. One of the persistent concerns of such programs and partnership schemes have been the brevity of their lifetime. Many development partners typically support higher education projects for three years. This practice has been often criticized for its lacklustre impact on institution and capacity building.

Nevertheless, in concluding Teferra also takes a broadly optimistic perspective

Though interest in development cooperation (otherwise known as aid) is largely waning, some progressive trends are emerging in a few corners. These trends include a long-term commitment to joint academic and research cooperation, the shifting of the Southern partners to the driver seats to lead and manage cooperation, as well as the deployment of the intellectual diaspora. (ibid.)

Other views, gathered by Anderson et al (2012) as part of *The Listening Project* by CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, in their publication *Time to Listen: Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid*, give voice to the criticisms of being limited by project-funding requirements,

A delivery system approach to international assistance does not lend itself to healthy partnerships. Top-down decision-making, constraints on time and prespecified funding commitments, pre-planning of projects, pre-identification of beneficiaries, and the proceduralization of approaches all concentrate power in the giver and limit adaptation to context. One-size-fits-all approaches undermine healthy relationships and, therefore, effective partnerships. (Anderson et al, 2012:98)

Of necessity, a healthy partnership must be developed by all parties, over time and with focused effort. Partnerships in international assistance are too often seen as a means to an end (how to get the resources delivered). (ibid.)

While such criticisms – directed at ‘aid’ and ‘development interventions’ generally – should be taken note of, a more optimistic tone is presented by Bailey and Dolan (2011) with respect to partnerships in Higher Education between institutions North and South, when they state “In the interests of revitalising African higher education, many universities and higher education institutions from the global North have engaged in a process of partnership with universities from the global South.” (2011: 36) They provide a definition of partnership, within a higher education context of development cooperation, from Wanni et al (2010: 18) as

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

Bailey and Dolan (2011: 36-37) highlight the HEA/Irish Aid’s Programme of Strategic Cooperation between Irish Aid and Higher Education and Research Institutes as an example of the prioritisation of ‘partnership’. In this regard, partnership has been identified as one of the key objectives: “To facilitate the *establishment of collaborative partnerships* within and between higher education institutions and research institutes in Ireland and in countries benefiting from Irish Aid support” (Irish Aid, 2007). Moreover, “Higher education institutions applying for funding under this programme were and are required to demonstrate a commitment to and evidence of a partnership approach to education activities.” However, as Bailey and Dolan point out, “it is not clear what is meant by partnership in this context, or what constitute its essential elements. Indeed, it may simply be another word for co-operation.” (2011: 37)

Another North-South educational partnership reviewed by Tedrow and Mabokela, highlighted issues such as “barriers of communication, cultural differences, and leadership” (2007: 177) leading the authors to question the sustainability of that partnership. They underlined their findings that “the effectiveness and efficiency of partnership linkages depends on resolving conflicts over differences in communication styles, culture and values, and leadership” but nevertheless, concluded with the view “the value of learning from the differences benefits both Northern and Southern hemisphere partners.” (ibid.)

Peter McEvoy's very comprehensive, historical survey of past and current partnerships between Ireland and African Higher Education institutions closes with three recommendations:

The first is that future aid programming should incorporate HE and research capacity support as an integral feature, within the broader aid effectiveness framework. The second lesson is that Ireland's contribution in this respect should inform, and be informed by, shared intelligence among likeminded donors around what constitutes good practice (the European Donor Harmonisation group on HE is of potential value here). And thirdly, that nurturing institutional partnership of medium to long-term duration should be a cornerstone of an effective strategy to harnessing HE and research in the service of development. (2013b: 76)

A useful summation of the potentials and challenges for HE partnership between institutions on this island and Africa is provided in the article by Nakabugo et al (2010):

Various partnerships and international research networks linking Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the global North and South have emerged in the past decades, as an expression of higher education's contribution to international development, and of the need to bridge the North/South knowledge divide. Such partnerships have contributed to enhanced human and infrastructural capacity, as well as to a better integration of the Southern partners in international exchanges. Nevertheless, they have also been criticised for focusing too much on the one-directional 'transfer' of capacity from North to South, at the expense of *genuine* partnership working, mutual learning and responsiveness to need. Furthermore, the challenge of nurturing long term mutual partnerships has frequently proved to be at odds with the shorter-term timelines of most donor-funded programmes. (2010: 1)

It seems the ideals of a genuinely open, reciprocal, collaborative partnership – as detailed by Wanni et al (2010) cited earlier – are not easily attained. Even among those fully committed to the principles and practices of such, may find it challenging to always ensure that there is equality or mutuality in sharing. For example, and perhaps uncomfortably 'close to home', Downes (2013:6) points out that each article [in the journal he is guest editing]:

is composed by a member or members of only one of the institutional partners involved in the North-South partnerships featured in this issue of *Policy and Practice*. Although such a discrepancy was certainly not a deliberate ploy on behalf of any of the researchers or editors, it is perhaps indicative of how the partnership process in North-South educational contexts can, on occasion, be driven more forcefully and led by a single institutional partner, rather than being an egalitarian practice of equal input guided by mutual collaboration with reciprocal benefits for all the partners involved.

The questions raised by these critiques of partnership were an interesting stimulus to reflections I held personally concerning the collaboration with TCDC, and which would later be stimulated further by discussions held with colleagues from both institutes as part of this review. A concept which came very much to the fore during this exploration of literature was the question of relationships.

2.4 Relationships

While considering various aspects of partnership during this study, my positive experience of working in a collaborative context over several years with colleagues at TCDC, prompted me to include an exploration of relationships in this conceptual review. In particular, the ideas of Rosalind Eyben (2006, 2011) as she

sees relationships as a key – and sometimes missing or overlooked – aspect of development practice and aid.

Her critique on the Paris Declaration is interesting. While it emphasises principles of mutual responsibility and partnership, she says, there was “little consideration as to how donors should change to live up to these principles.” (2006: 2) Moreover, she goes on to say,

There has been little public discussion of what we have learned from psychology; that ultimately, the only people we can change are ourselves (Harris, 1969) and that in order to be part of the solution, donors must recognise that they are part of the problem. (ibid.)

In a later publication, Eyben (2011: 28) returns to her argument critiquing “planning approaches that assume that aid practitioners are in control and that change is predictable.” She argues “this prevents donors responding effectively to a largely unpredictable and dynamic policy environment.” (ibid.)

Eyben criticises a mindset behind international aid policy and practice, as based upon a philosophical mode of thought described as Substantialist. (ibid: 28-29) “This is why” she maintains, “in international aid quantifiable things play an important role as indicators of results achieved” and which can frustrate “the empowerment and capacity development efforts of agencies receiving official funding.” (ibid.) She cites a comment made at a workshop she attended “the logframe would make us appear to have failed but we have achieved so much.” (ibid.)

Chambers has similar arguments in his earlier analysis (1997: 37) of binary oppositions of ‘Things’ and ‘People’ which, he suggests, are competing paradigms. (2010: 11-12) He records the growth in popularity of a more ‘People’ based rhetoric (if not reality) in development practice through the 1990s, and then the shift again, towards ‘Things’ in the 2000s. “In much development practice, problems were aggravated by the way linear logic, assumptions of predictability, objectively verifiable indicators, impact assessments, logframes and results-based management were more and more required by donors and lenders.” (ibid., 13) He bemoans the unsuitability to many projects and programmes of the logframe, and evinces surprise at its prevalence in nearly all donor requirements to this day.

So, in the name of rigour and accountability what fits and works better in the controllable, predictable, standardised and measurable conditions of the things and procedures paradigm has been increasingly applied to the uncontrollable, unpredictable, diverse and less measurable paradigm of people and processes. (ibid., 14)

Eyben explains ‘Substantialism’ as “a mode of thought that categorises things, including people and abstract concepts.” (2011:29) An alternative to this mode of thought is ‘Relational’. Thinking ‘relationally’ is “an approach to donor action that is to develop long term and consistent relations with selected recipient organisations who are pursuing a social change agenda compatible with the donor’s own values and mission.” (ibid.:30)

An explanation provided by Eyben states “Relationism is a perspective in which things (substances) are understood and observed as they relate to or a function of other things.” The contrast with substantialist

thinking is that for example “referring to *aid* as a *catalyst* is *substantialist* as it assumes the donor can trigger change in others without *itself* changing.” (ibid: 30 emphasis added.) “In relational thinking, donors as well as recipients are changed by the aid relationship and it is this that produces unintended consequences.” (ibid.)

She explains that the categorical nature of substantialist thinking “leads to a paradigm of change that assumes that it is possible to gain sufficient knowledge to engineer the desired result. This works when we are dealing with what are called ‘bounded problems’ or what Jake Chapman calls ‘difficulties’” (ibid: 31) “With difficulties,” she clarifies, “there is broad agreement on the nature of the problem: there is some mutual understanding of what a solution would look like; and there are limits to what is required in terms of the time and resources required for their resolution. Unbounded problems, on the other hand, are ‘messes’.” (ibid.)

Alluding to Complexity Theory, Eyben says “people fail when they insist on treating messes as difficulties, ignoring the wider effects of a linear cause-effect in just one part of a complex system.” (ibid: 32)

Chambers makes the point, echoing Eyben’s argument, that “realities of poor people contrast with the conditions which many professionals assume or seek to create and where they can exercise their expertise.” (2010: 34) This is the stage at which Complexity Theory has something to offer, see for example, the Cynefin Framework of David Snowden (Snowden and Boone, 2007). The Cynefin Framework is a model used to describe problems, situations and systems. It has a four-part differentiation of domains as Simple, Complicated, Complex and Chaotic (with Disorder as a fifth). Simple and Complicated are ordered, (what Eyben was reporting as ‘difficulties’) and Complex and Chaotic are unordered (‘messes’). Chambers suggests that “Simple and complicated are especially the domains of competence of professional experts. The worlds they try to create for themselves are ordered, controllable and predictable” and “In contrast, the worlds that many people living in poverty experience are in the complex and chaotic domains – un ordered, uncontrollable and unpredictable.” (2010: 34-35)

In her earlier work, Eyben talks about donors’ learning difficulties. Donor bureaucracies, she says, “work in a highly uncertain environment. Operating in a volatile and contradictory world, the pressure grows to pass themselves off as infallible, thus depriving themselves of the ability to learn.” (2006: 49) This is along the same lines as Chambers’ critique of ‘uppers’ being susceptible to the notion of ‘all power deceives’ (2010: 36):

The Cynefin Framework illuminates major misfits in much current donor thinking and practice. 'Things' procedures like the logframe and results-based management originate in the simple and complicated domains where cause and effect are in principle knowable. They are then applied in the complex domain of unpredictability which prevails in most development. This is demanded and driven by the increasingly imperious demands of upward accountability. This forces fabrication of the future as if it were controllable, manageable, and measurable, The misfit has high costs: in misdirected effort which does not respond well to changed conditions; in demotivating those who live and work with those changes; in prudent editing and massaging what is often misinformation ('all power deceives') passed up the chain of power; and in learning foregone.

Moreover, Eyben argues, because many of the people driving these substantialist planning processes remain quite distant from the reality of the lives of recipients, "this produces perverse consequences in which the orthodox perspective confirms previously-held convictions." (2011: 33) She claims many experienced front-line aid practitioners "learn to articulate substantialist discourse while responding relationally to local context so as to minimise unwanted effects." (ibid.)

A UN official told me that many of her agency's most effective country level interventions are those that have not been reported because these were concerned with investing in relationships rather than achieving the kinds of outcomes that get included in logical frameworks.(ibid: 33-34)

In her conclusions, Eyben talks about how there is now an orthodoxy of substantialist thinking in international aid, but alongside there is "the ambivalent, if not subversive, relational response of some aid practitioners." (ibid: 37)

However, because these relational practices are often mis-represented up the management chain to conform to the official representation of how aid works, their positive effects may be falsely attributed to the successful implementation of the substantialist orthodoxy. Thus, hidden relational practices may be sustaining the very norms that such practices are subverting. (ibid.)

Eyben gives the striking parallel of collectivised agriculture in the Soviet Union apparently producing sufficient food to convince authorities that the system was working, while in practice, farm workers put most of their energies into their own smallholdings – growing enough food for themselves and the collective farms – but which meant their subversion was effectively maintaining the system they were resisting. (ibid.)

2.5 Conclusions

The Kimmage – TCDC collaboration was a North-South relationship in its broadest sense. Capacity building as described in this section was a core focus of both parties, and some of the characteristics as highlighted by Eade as "commitment to partnership, reciprocity, shared risk-taking, and inter-dependence" would appear to have been present during our collaboration. While partnership is something that in my experience wasn't talked about very much in meetings and discussions between the two institutes, but good practices as described in this section e.g. by Wanni et al "based on respect, trust, transparency and reciprocity" I believe would be readily recognised by colleagues and course participants. The perspectives on relational thinking by Eyben deserve further investigation within the primary data gathering, particularly the discussions with current and former staff.

Section 3: Research and Assessment of Findings

Data for this Review was gathered primarily from a Questionnaire that was distributed through Survey Monkey to 492 graduates of the Kimmage/TCDC programmes for whom emails were available. One of the limitations realised was that we did not have many email contacts for participants from the early years of the collaboration, and this is reflected in the numbers of survey responses from those attending in later years.

Secondly, we sought to gain insights from a number of former participants invited to attend a workshop at MS-TCDC in January 2016. In total, 9 graduates, along with myself and with Alais Morindat, (both initiators of the original pilot course in 1994) participated in the workshop. This provided an opportunity for in-depth discussions on many of the questions raised in the survey, and for interviews with (3) graduates of the programme, a further one taking place later in Ireland with an Irish participant of the BA programme at Arusha. In total 4 graduates of the programme were interviewed face-to-face. Some of the reflections from this workshop and interviews with graduates are added alongside details of the Survey findings.

Thirdly, interviews were conducted with selected staff of both institutes. I interviewed in Dublin, three colleagues from Kimmage who had been engaged in the Arusha programme from the earliest years to the final year of the BA offering there. I interviewed in Tanzania, two key people – Alais Morindat who was the first coordinator of the initial pilot programme, and Suma Kaare, the Principal of TCDC up to the time that the last BA was offered at the Centre. I then interviewed by Skype, another 4 colleagues from TCDC (all now ex-staff) but who were there at significant periods during the 20 years of the relationship. In total 9 staff involved in course provision were interviewed. I add in comments from these after the survey data, see sub-section 3.B.

The layout of the findings is organised according to the thematic nature of the questions within the survey, as follows: questions asked regarding:

3.1 The Background Data on Respondents (when they attended, which programme they followed, what work they were doing prior to their studies, what they are now doing, etc.);

3.2 Reflections on the Programme (some of their reflections on their experiences of participating in the programmes at TCDC);

3.3 Capacity Development Experienced (the degree to which the programme enabled this, and to what levels, etc.);

3.4 Awareness of the Partnership of the Course Providers (whether this influenced their decision to attend, and if they thought it was effective, and what advice they would give to either of the Providers regarding future offerings.)

3.A. Survey Findings

What follows is an assessment of findings from the survey.

3.1 Background Data on Respondents (Questions 1 – 13)

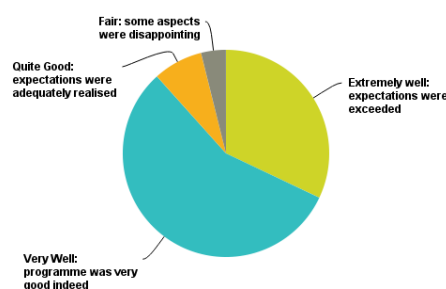
- 492 questionnaires were distributed; we received 112 completed responses giving a 23% response rate.
- 48% were female, 52% male
- 90% of respondents (101) gave age ranges between 36 – 60 years
- 14 nationalities were declared
- 105 respondents (94%) stated they were currently working in the development sector
- 76% have been engaged in development from between 11 years and 21+ years

This data is interesting in that it strongly indicates the retention rates of people who may be described as 'career development practitioners'. This may also be reassuring for TCDC/Kimmage in that this could be interpreted that the programmes offered were not being seen by participants as an easy 'back door' into higher education, regardless of the content provided.

3.2 Reflections on Programme (Content / Approaches used) (Questions 27 – 29)

Q27 To what extent did undertaking the programme at MS-TCDC meet your expectations?

Answered: 103 Skipped: 9



Extremely well: expectations were exceeded	Very well: programme was very good indeed	Quite good: expectations were adequately realised	Fair: some aspects were disappointing	Poor: generally disappointed, expectations were not met
32% (33)	56% (58)	8% (8)	4% (4)	0% (0)

A sample of the comments shared by respondents included:

My aim was to get skills on how I should be able to improve my social, political and economic life and I got all those skills while studying at MS TCDC. Lazaro Massay, Businessman and Peasant, Tanzania

My life is changed as a result. Kateba Mapoma, Managing Director, Zambia

The impact of the training is manifest in me to this date – lifelong changes. Ronald Kitanda, Social Development Facilitator, Uganda

I got more than I had expected, it was too much. I am very grateful that I studied this course. Lennah Owamang'ole, MS Student Kenya

The following question (28) asked: Did the mode of delivery suit your learning needs/ (eg lecture styles, group work, types of assessment, etc)? To which the 103 who responded, did so with 100% saying **Yes**. Some of their explanatory comments included:

Group work training was very useful because it built my confidence through discussion and group work presentations. Julien Mafuru, Manager, Tanzania

The lecture styles was with friendly language, groups work were ideal for experience sharing and assessment was fairly done. Amani Lukumay, Assistant Manager, Tanzania

This was more interesting since multiple ways of delivery were used which really encouraged learners to participate fully in the programme without being bored. Albert Samson, Agronomist, Tanzania

As a worker, the module format was okay in three periods. The lecture styles and group work equally good. The types of assessment and field trips were pleasurable. Young Moto, Video-journalist, Cameroon

The group were asked to consider what was their best experience while on the programme; this was the result:

Question 29. What do you recall as your best experience while attending the programme?

Best Experience	No. of Responses	%
Group Work/Group Interaction	35	31%
Field Visit/Work	22	20%
Lecturers	21	19%
Individual Subjects	9	8%
Participatory Learning	8	7%
Practical Application of learning	5	4%
Research	5	4%
Assignments	4	4%
Conducive Learning Environment	3	3%
Graduation	2	2%
Student Representative Role (group elected 'reps' each year)	2	2%

A sample of the clarifying comments offered by respondents:

The trip to Monduli for research methods and reporting was my best experience. Interacting with the Masai, learning from them and being in their environment was a worthwhile experience. Lucia Mvula, Project Officer, Zambia

The whole programme was a great experience for me. Having a diverse faculty team from both Ireland and Africa. The approaches were diverse and enriched the learning. One of the activities that I will live to treasure for the rest of my life is the opportunity of experiencing life in a Masai village conducting the PRA exercise. Aggie Kalungu-Banda, Managing Consultancy Company, UK

The interactions among my classmates, the methods of delivery of lectures, the class assignments, the role play. Emenike Sixtus, Human Resource Manager, Nigeria

Team work and support by lecturers on working on project. Hawa Digale, Protection Officer, Kenya

Being in a team of people from different backgrounds and nationalities and ending up as brothers and sisters in development. This encounter provided extra curricular learning in an informal way, perhaps the most cementing bond in my team. The feeling that we were going to meet again in another semester, was a great incentive to come back sooner. Japhet Makongo, Consultant, Tanzania

While I was attending Adult Education and Political Studies. First of all the teachers were good and understandable. I gained confidence in terms of learning abilities, group work skills. I came to know that everything is politics and knowing that even if I am not a politician but I have a role to play as a development worker in African politics. Kezia Oola, Research Assistant, Tanzania

From interview with Emily Karechio, President, Muthaa Foundation, Kenya

Research methodology and also Adult Learning. For every project we do on the ground we have to do feasibility studies, and also while still going on, we have to do report writing and to be able to present to our partners, including government and other key stakeholders, including donors. The other one was how to handle adult learning - which was very well articulated. Of course doing community development we are dealing with adults and this has proved very helpful.

3.3 Capacity Development Experienced (Questions 14, 18-26)

Within the survey one of the questions asked was: **Q.14 Do you think the training you received at the Centre in Arusha has made a difference to your work?** The response was 100% positive as all 112 respondents ticked the box for Yes. Invited to briefly explain, the main clustering of responses (note there are more than 112 as some respondents included several aspects) is captured in the following table. Some samples of the responses are also presented in text boxes below.

Frequency of comments Added to Q.14

Difference Made to my work	No. of comments
"Skills"	22
"Critical Analysis"	20
"Knowledge and Understanding"	13
"Promotion"	12
"General upgrade of ways of working"	11
"Broadened thinking"	10
"Confidence"	10
"Project Planning"	5
"Facilitation Skills"	5
"Qualifications"	4
"Able to articulate issues"	3
"Better at dealing with people"	3
"More focused"	2

Thanks to the course, my perception about human development, development concepts etc has changed. I am much more open to listen than I was before attending the course.
Ernesto Cassinda, Director, Angola

It has given me more skills from developing project concept, managing and co-ordinating the projects and communicating with donors. Jonathan Kapanga, Programme Co-ordinator, Kenya

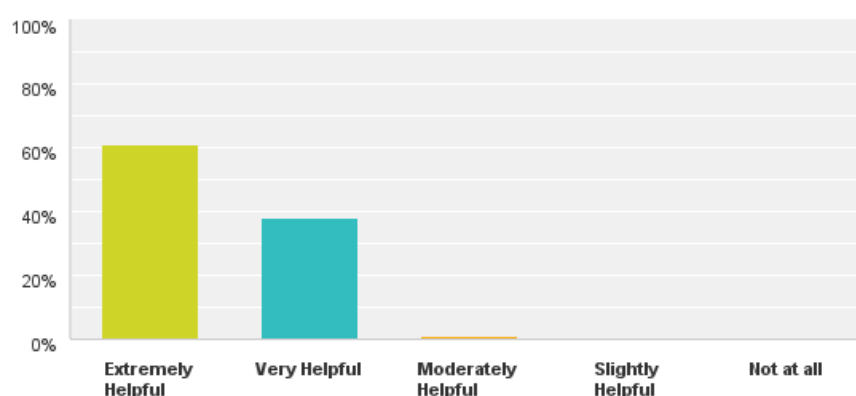
Using the knowledge gained I have been able to confidently articulate issues and provide guidance to my peers as well as implementing partners. Kateba Mapoma, Managing Director, Zambia

Am confident in working with different community groups and organisations from different cultures in addressing development issues including gender/protection and nutrition. In addition confident in project management and report writing. Caroline Koromia, Programme Officer, UNWFP, Tanzania

Another question (Q.18) asked in the survey regarding this theme recorded a very clear and positive result from those who responded (3 skipped), with 61% recording “Extremely Helpful” and 38% indicating “Very Helpful” to their work.

Q18 How would you describe your studies with MS-TCDC / Kimmage DSC in terms of assisting you in your work to date?

Answered: 103 Skipped: 9



Extremely Helpful	Very Helpful	Moderately Helpful	Slightly Helpful	Not at all
61% (63)	38% (39)	1% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)

Responding to a drop-down menu in this question: **Q.21** From the following checklist, choose one sentence that best fits your experience of the programme attended - the following results emerged:

Question 21. From the following checklist, choose one sentence that best fits your experience of the programme attended. [103 responded, 9 skipped]

It enabled me to engage more confidently with my peers, with donors, community groups and other stakeholders	28	27%
It totally transformed the way I think and do things	20	19%
The programme gave me confidence to undertake further studies/ trainings	12	12%
I am a changed person as a result of taking this programme of studies & training	10	10%
The programme was instrumental in influencing social, political or economic changes according to my context	9	9%
It provided me with a relevant qualification	9	9%
The programme was a catalyst for change in my personal experience	9	9%
It helped me gain/retain employment in the development sector	2	2%
Other (alternative description chosen by respondents)	2	2%
It gave me credibility and status with my community/organisation	1	1%
I developed valuable relationships and networks through the programme participants	1	1%
The programme didn't change things very much in terms of my circumstance	0	0%

Several respondents chose to clarify their choices to this question with statements such as the following:

The programme played a great part in the way I interact with people in general and the experience I gained helped me bring positive change in the organisation I work for which contributed to get two new donors. Judith Musheshe, Project Co-ordinator, Tanzania

This programme was an eye opener for me in a number of perspectives. First, it gave me a clear understanding of why some development interventions succeed while others fail. Secondly, it opened my inquisitive mind that craved for a deeper understanding of development and lastly, the inter-connectedness of some of the greatest challenges of our time – poverty, hunger, inequality and environmental degradation. Patrick Moses, Child Protection Specialist, South Sudan

The programme opened my mind from being simply health-care oriented to the development arena. I am now working in a development setting, I intend to open a development centre in my community in future. Rose Akulu, Nutrition Specialist, Uganda

The course emphasised critical thinking and making decisions based on good judgement and thorough analysis of the problems. I learnt not to take situations for granted but to understand them before passing judgement. Charles Wapalwena, Organisational Co-ordinator, Zambia

Graduate Workshop Jan. 2015 - Collected comments on what the graduates gained from the programme:

Doing things differently: innovation – in a context – awareness – action

new organisations (established) e.g. Hakielimu ADLG

new approaches of critical thinking – new frames of reference: questioning authority

Confidence, knowledge

application of skills – less consultation – recording minutes

Identification of community gatekeepers – e.g. elders, chiefs

respecting community values and practices – e.g. traditional systems in conflict resolution

improved performance: e.g. in HR job appraisals

advancing (progressing personal) education (goals) e.g. towards an MBA

personal confidence and success e.g. more stakeholders

(expanded) personal network, change of attitude towards people and towards work

getting on well with staff and fellow leaders (group dynamics, adult learning, participatory

development methods) – (which) helps to involve communities and adults. (Perceiving) that

adults are not 'pupils' / simplify learning methods

project planning and management:

not leave anyone behind – involve your family

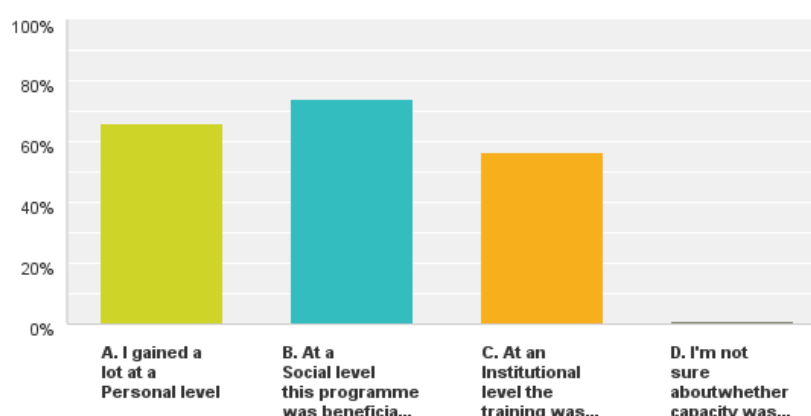
become passionate importance of understanding others

getting organised personally

Attempting to get a sense of the what kind of Capacity Development the respondents have experienced the next question posed the following:

Q22 What capacity development have you experienced as a result of your participation in the programme? Please indicate the kind of capacity against one or more of the check boxes below. Please explain a little more in the comment box at the end.

Answered: 103 Skipped: 9



Indications of the Type of Capacity Development Experienced	Options selected	%
A. I gained a lot at a personal level	68	66%
B. At a social level this programme was beneficial to groups and community with whom I have worked	76	74%
C. At an institutional level the training was helpful to the organisation(s) I have worked with	58	56%
D. I'm not sure about whether capacity was developed	1	1%

Clarifying or elaborating comments included:

I gained individually in that I got qualifications and skills but at the same time people I have worked with have gained immensely from my experience. My organisation has also benefitted a great deal because I have been able to take up more challenging roles in the organisations with confidence.
Severinus Mzungu, Associate Manager, Kenya

At personal level, I am more confident to engage in with others over matters of personal growth. At social level, I have been more influential in facilitating positive change in groups and communities I work with. At institutional level, I am one of the most consulted individuals on a number of programme planning and implementation issues.
Musonda Harrison, Senior Programme Officer – HIV Prevention, Zambia

I have managed to mobilise villagers in my village to participate in solving social services in their area, example build a health dispensary and kindergarten, demand social services from their local government and now one community have water project which was initiated by me. My organisation is doing wonderful job because of having well planned objectives and programmes. David Chanyehgea, Executive Director, Tanzania

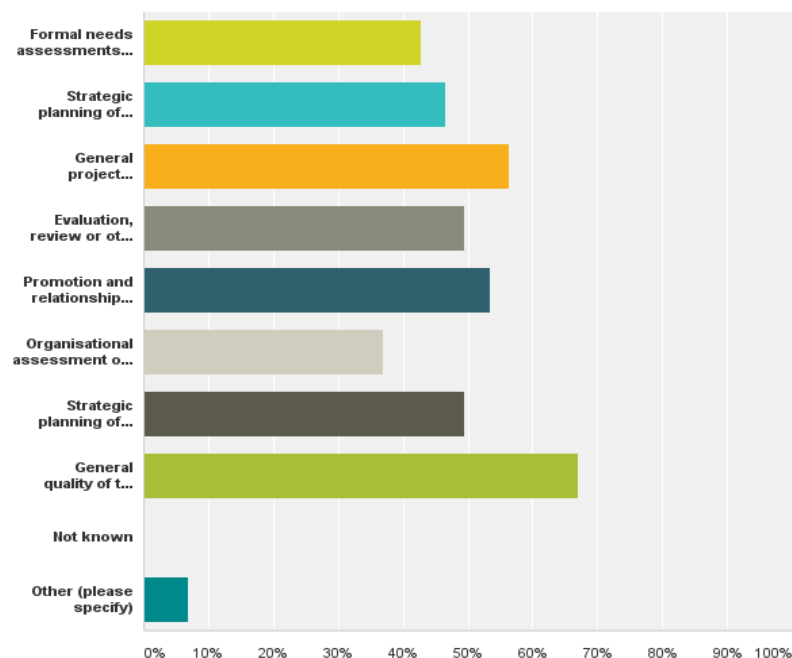
I am finding it easy to speak out and share ideas at any level. Gertrude Siame, Training Officer/Animal Husbandry Specialist,

Emily Karechio, Kenya President Muthaa Community Development Foundation (from interview)
After finally graduating in 2011, I had the skills to run programmes, but what changed was that I was able to position myself in both the NGO and Corporate Markets to be a link between corporate bodies that want to run corporate social responsibility [projects], [and the development sector]. Corporates come to me to look for ideas and activities and initiatives that they can run, and that are ideal for their CSR objectives. Following the DS programme I'm in a better position to identify what are the best initiatives that are linked with corporates' objectives. That has created a lot of change for me. And, on a personal level, the BA has enabled me to position myself as a confident person. I have been enabled to be invited as an international speaker, I have spoken on panels where I have been able to debate on issues of community development, and I'm certain that if it was not for the DS programme that I did, I would not be able to articulate issues well with the experience I have, and skills that I gained from the DS. From that point, I have since been able to upgrade myself with an MBA programme I am doing now, and its from a very good foundation that I got from my BA degree at MS-TCDC, and I see this [as part of my efforts] to have a sustainable organisation.

Perceptions about Changes to Organisational Capacity

Q25 What areas of your organisation's capacity were most influenced by your completion of this programme?

Answered: 103 Skipped: 9



General quality of team work and staff relationships	69	67%
General project management	58	56%
Promotion and relationship work with beneficiaries and donors	55	53%
Evaluation, review or other forms of assessment of development projects	51	49%
Strategic planning of development work of whole organisation	51	49%
Strategic planning	48	47%
Formal needs assessments including participatory needs assessment work	44	43%
Organisational assessment of development work of whole organisation	38	37%
Other (incl.fund raising, offering technical support, mainstreaming gender)	7	7%
Not known	0	0%

Question 26 asked respondents: Can you think of other benefits from studying on this MS-TCDC / Kimmage DSC programme? 101 replied, with 94 saying 'Yes' and 9 saying 'No'. Among the 91% affirmatives, were the following comments:

Working with people from different backgrounds and education levels is not any longer a challenge for me as I tend to be more tolerant of divergent views and ways of thinking. Elizabeth Kageni, Administrator, Kenya

The cultural experience was very beneficial – many nationalities bringing varied experiences to the course. Connie O'Halloran, Overseas Development Officer, Ireland.

I managed to build network and links with individuals and organisations where for years now we are still interacting bringing benefits to our own organisations, communities and countries. For example as a result of being on this course I have been working on the development project with Irish partners for year, we have met useful partners and create a network of volunteer services organisations across East Africa. Personally we have a big family and sometimes very proud to associate with alumni who are now holding strategic leadership positions in politics and civil society organisations. Benedict Mongi, Executive Director, Tanzania

3.4 Awareness of the Partnership of the Course Providers (Questions 15 – 17, 30)

In a broad qualitative question – with optional comments invited - graduates were asked about their knowledge of the 'Partnership' that was providing the course they attended, and this revealed a fairly even spread of levels of awareness about it.

Question 15. How much were you aware of the partnership between MS-TCDC and Kimmage DSC before attending the programme?

Completely aware of the partnership	Had fair understanding of the partnership	Knew little about the association between the two institutes	Had heard about it but not fully clear	Unaware of it
19% (21)	22% (25)	24% (27)	18% (20)	17% (19)

The following question reflects a similar spread of responses,

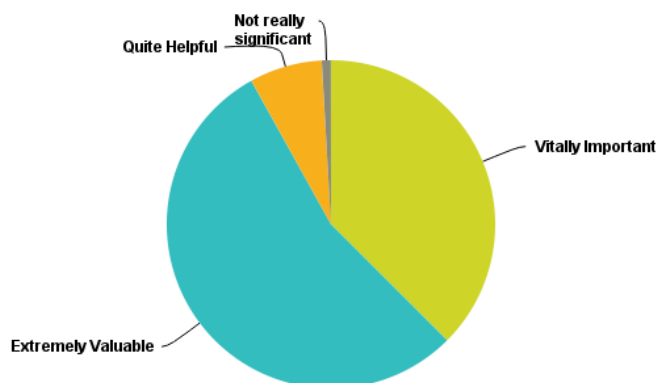
Question 16. Would knowing about the partnership between MS-TCDC and Kimmage DSC have been a factor in your decision to do the programme?

Not at all – would have made no difference	Might have provided additional interest in it	Would have been seen as adding value to the programme	Would have been a significant reason for enrolling	Would have been the main reason for taking it
16% (18)	18% (20)	29% (33)	22% (25)	14% (16)

A more direct question requiring their opinion on whether such a collaboration was important revealed the following response:

Q17 How important do you see a partnership between MS-TCDC and Kimmage DSC (or international collaborations generally) in running programmes such as the one you attended? (Choose one of the following options)

Answered: 112 Skipped: 0



How Important is the Partnership?

Vitaly Important	Extremely Valuable	Quite Helpful	Not Really Significant	Don't Know
37% (42)	54% (61)	7% (8)	1% (1)	0% (0)

When asked what advice graduates would give to the Course Providers in terms of offering future programmes, the final question in the survey received the following results:

Question 30. If in future, MS-TCDC and Kimmage DSC were to offer similar programmes to the one you completed – in order for it to be a very positive and successful experience for participants – which piece of advice would you give the organisers? [100 responded, 12 skipped]

	No. of themes in responses	%
Accreditation (Progression)	23	21%
Fees (Reduce) & Scholarships	17	15%
Facilitators (improve)	15	13%
Time (more)	13	12%
Continue (as is)	9	8%
Modules (Increase)	9	8%
Study Visits (More and Improved)	7	6%
Marketing	4	4%
Mentoring (early)	4	4%
Library (improve)	2	2%
Communication (better)	2	2%

Among the clarifying comments offered were:

"Offer more practical lessons and fields visits both in host country and other countries." Emily Karechio, Muthaa Foundation President, Kenya

"To develop programmes for development workers which suit the existing changes in the world ie good governance, global warming and politics." Celestina Nyenga, Country Co-ordinator, Tanzania

"Kindly ensure that possibilities for further studies are enhanced by the awards given. Try to be clear with the limitations of your courses too since I was unaware until much later and wanted to pursue my Masters studies." Nicholas Odhiambo, Community Development Officer, Kenya

"I would advise that the programme be upgraded and given a Masters degree status." Newman Hove, Research & Evaluation Consultant, Tanzania

"Need to have experienced lecturers as some were found wanting especially those coming in as replacements of the experienced ones." Participant, 2013-14 programme

Collective comments taken from Graduates' workshop Jan 2016: when asked for 'ways forward'
- reconsider an enhanced version of the course – including social media, ethics – i.e. - go with the trend.

- start – don't wait for an ideal partnership.

- Is there still a demand? (a market?) - [yes?] if not too academic, but practical to fit needs. Kimmage could provide main route.

- we need DS (not necessarily a BA, or MA) – would it be possible to have a mobile training? (similar to the original 'PO' course) – go back to the roots.

- don't forget the poor. Still there. Remember original reasons for the partnership.

- be aware of trends: go to next level if you consider this level enough.

- journey costly. Re-engage TCDC – how? Don't end the relationship!

- reflect on building capacity of local supervisors – build the brand – not have two colours!

- make use of the 'Arusha – Kimmage – Alumni'! We have a very good bunch of facilitators.

3.B. Perspectives from Staff of TCDC and Kimmage

Capacity Building

Here are some views from staff on whether capacity was developed,

I can think of Sophie Noor. She was one of the nominated senators in the Kenyan Parliament. She brings a very strong women's agenda. We've had a number of people operating at the county level of government, particular those working in the north-eastern province of Kenya. I've met them at graduations since, and they talk about so much that they learned from the programme, that they're trying to apply it at county level. We've had people working in the children's rights field, Barnabas Solo and people like that. TANWA – the Tanzanian Women's Lawyers Association – graduates that have gone on to work with them – with a strong human rights development focus. (Patrick Marren, Kimmage staff member / Coordinator of BA).

Recently speaking with visiting professors from Kenya who think our methodology is unique – which is that which was applied in the BA (DS). They were not speaking so much on the content, but on the confidence it has given the students to raise their voices. So, that individual transformation that participants have experienced and is noticeable by outsiders is another achievement. (Suma Kaare, Principal of TCDC)

We were effective in delivering results! The number of people that went through the programme and where they are now, this cannot be underestimated. The people we were giving opportunities to when we were delivering the Certificate course, one example is Maanda Ngoitiko - comes to mind. She would never be where she is were it not for that programme. (Prudence Kaijage, former Principal TCDC)

Impact perceived - people active in politics in Kenya, in Tanzania. e.g. Polepole playing a great role for youth. The inspiration around the learning. enabling people to take key roles in civil society. (Bo Damsted, TCDC staff member / deputy director)

From the early days, Ronald Chitanda, who has gone on to run his own consultancy. He came to our programme – came right through that process. Maanda Ngoitiko is [another] incredibly strong example, because she comes from a marginal group in Tanzania, and she ends up as being a leader in operating in politics at that level. Njuki, now teaching in Tangaza institute in Nairobi, and coordinating a Community Radio network across Kenya. (Patrick Marren)

It was interesting to note that colleagues did not discuss capacity only in terms of course participants, for example,

We definitely achieved capacity building. There was Maanda, there was Oliva Kinabo, Simon Sentamu, myself! I got my Masters through my association with the programme! (Prudence Kaijage)

The learning for me was that not only the learner took something, but I, as a trainer, took something. I learnt also. It's the learning that happened on both sides. (Alais Morindat, first head of NGO training department, TCDC)

This point was echoed by Eimear Burke, who was one of the Kimmage staff involved from the very beginning of the programme, who felt she benefitted from engaging in certain approaches in TCDC before later incorporating them into her teaching at home,

TCDC was the hardest place to do it. And if I could do it there I could do it in anywhere. this was particularly around getting people to take risks with each other in terms of relationships, of giving each other feedback, of giving each other criticism, that's really risky stuff. I did give people the opportunity to slip out if anything was getting uncomfortable for them, but I couldn't get people to stop talking. (Eimear Burke)

And Bo Damsted, touched on issues around the notion of 'handing over the stick' as Chambers would say, and seeing the 'learners' on both sides,

How complex the challenge of inspiring adult learners [is]....listening to what inspires people. How different types of experiences people would point out, and confuse me about what was important! The different learning styles that people have, being able to remain flexible and [adaptable] for learners - we had to be alert to this, or we would fail. Any time we felt we had the right approach/ methodology the next group would cause us to change our minds on this. This was putting the responsibility for learning into the hands of the learners. (Bo Damsted)

Partnership

Was it an effective partnership? These comments are drawn mainly from discussions with staff from Kimmage and TCDC, but with some insights drawn from the graduate survey also.

I think from a Kimmage perspective, the fact that the partnership lasted so long. We were able to run a partnership over a very long period of time, and various [respective] strategic planning processes, where the programme could have been dropped, and yet the partnership actually grew each time. It went from a one-year programme to a level 7 degree programme. That was really impressive. We built up all the structures around that, to allow a partnership – I can't say a partnership of equals – but it was close enough, in terms of the running and management of it. Because we were the accrediting body [agent] we had the final say. (Patrick Marren)

Kimmage was very influential in TCDC growing. TCDC had its own identity - it didn't become Kimmage, but retained its own identity, however much it was influenced by Kimmage. It remained a very distinct training institute. This was a good partnership in that sense, it's one, definitely, of the most equal partnerships that I've ever come across when you look at partnerships where one is Western/European partner and the other is based in Africa. A very good example of an equal partnership. (Stella Maranga, TCDC staff member)

Suma Kaare addresses the point about sustainability raised earlier by Oliphant (2013):

In terms of aid effectiveness I think we made a great achievement. Of course the issue of sustainability could have been possibly considered [more] – a good lesson for this partnership might have been to think much more thoroughly in terms of sustainability of the programme. (Suma Kaare)

She goes on to make links with some of the principles of the Paris Declaration:

If you want to relate on the principle of aid effectiveness as outlined in the Paris Declaration, when I look back again at this relationship I think we achieved it in a greater sense, i.e. whatever we collected in terms of fees, a small proportion was going to Kimmage and a large part of it was remaining here, so in terms of the cost of the programme, there was a lot of work done by my colleagues and those in Kimmage in clarifying the roles and responsibilities and in terms of that clarification, it really echoed a point that this was a mutual and equal partnership between North and South. There was a contribution of intellectual property by both sides, this was not a programme that was dumped on us, the curriculum was developed by both Kimmage and TCDC. (Suma Kaare)

Her predecessor as Principal of TCDC gave his analysis of what worked well in the partnership:

Shared resources. complementing different competencies that different institutes bring. it expands outreach. credibility also, which comes about by working together, the fact that it was run by two institutions, and had international accreditation. It gave it clout, than if TCDC were running it alone, or if Kimmage, weren't just running a course as an 'outreach'. The fact that we were doing it together enhanced its credibility. (Prudence Kaijage)

Eimear Burke summed up what she saw as the mutual benefits of the collaboration,

the reciprocal sharing - TCDC staff coming to Kimmage and vice versa. Good for Kimmage, who might otherwise be in a little 'development bubble' in Ireland, bringing the course to Tanzania, somehow makes it more relevant, on the land, (not that Kimmage is in a bubble), but something around having that shared experience keeps it richer and keeps it dynamic. For TCDC having Kimmage as a partner helped to keep them on line and to maintain standards. For Kimmage, Arusha keeps (its content) alive and on the ground. (Eimear Burke)

Suma was adamant about the need for partnerships:

We cannot afford not to have North-South relationships. We don't live in isolation, and development requires alliance-building, sharing of knowledge, access to capacities (on both sides), and to me, this is what makes collaborative programmes very important. (Suma Kaare)

This would seem to dovetail with McEvoy's (2013a) point cited earlier about the "growing recognition of global North-South inter-dependence". Suma Kaare goes on to explain,

We now have a new strategy for TCDC, and one of the critical means for us to achieve our strategy is to strengthen partnerships between South-South capacity building initiatives, and also between South-North initiatives. The justification for this strategy was based on our lessons that were drawn from experiences in the Kimmage-TCDC partnership. It was the first partnership in terms of long-term partnerships, and frankly speaking, it has informed a lot of our learnings. So I would advise that we are a testimony to the fact that these partnerships have helped us to grow, and also that we have helped our partners in the North, grow in terms of understanding the context, but also in understanding how we can actually relate with Southern institutions. (Suma Kaare)

Relationships

Several of the staff interviewed used the term 'relationship' frequently in their comments – usually more often than the term partnership. In this instance, I had asked Suma (then Principal of TCDC) for her reflections on the partnership, and this was her response:

What I found very practical about the programme was firstly the strong relationship existing between colleagues here TCDC and Kimmage. The constant communication between us, both in terms of the content and the methodology of the programmes. I found the relationship very enriching is the sense that it was not one-sided. The impression I had when I joined was that we started this programme because TCDC did not have capacity and therefore we were reliant on Kimmage for capacity building. But I think the practice was very different, in the sense that colleagues from TCDC were constantly being asked to input into the content, to the methodology, we were constantly being challenged to provide resource persons for particular modules, and also for updating the modules. So for me, it was an eye-opening to see that you could find some of these partnerships which had mutual understanding and mutual appreciation of capacities on both sides. I think to me that was an eye-opener. (Suma Kaare)

A very insightful comment from Stella Maranga, who was involved in the programme from the earliest days and had been engaged in the first two programmes run with Kimmage:

That it was an easy relationship we had, I wonder now: if the fact that there wasn't a financial transaction between us, if this contributed to the relationship feeling mutually beneficial. We remained in this relationship because we wanted to be there, not because we felt we wanted something. Kimmage as well. We got something from each other. (Stella Maranga)

How was the relationship maintained?

The exchange programme. Staff co-facilitation of courses. Being able to do things together. The credibility that came with this programme - a certified programme. (Stella Maranga)
The teachers exchange was an important key principle. the fact of Kimmage staff coming to Arusha, and enabling TCDC staff to come to Dublin was one thing that comes to mind. The togetherness - the trust - Tom coming down to clarify aspects. (Bo Damsted)

Prudence Kaijage, former Principal, compared the relationships of Kimmage-TCDC with other collaborations:

For institutional partnership to succeed personal relations matter. We (TCDC) had many other institutional collaborations, I don't think many were as equally productive as the one we had with Kimmage. When I looked back, some of the things I could point towards, that personal chemistry, it's something that is under-rated, not valued but it does make a difference. Therefore those face to face meetings, social aspects built into them, [at all levels] e.g. Nuala and Lydia [respective librarians], the coordinators, the directors, - personal chemistry makes a huge difference when it comes to institutional relations. Others we had to close due to miserable relationships - if you look back, it wasn't because of the content, it was more to do with relationships. Simply didn't work out. Relationship not built on respect, etc. (Prudence Kaijage)

Reflecting on a difficult experience on what was to be her last visit during the 2013-14 programme, Eimear Burke felt that something had been lost with the changeover of so many staff at TCDC during the transitional changes of MS merging with ActionAid. She complained about the lack of any staff support on her first day teaching on her module, no one to meet her, to show her where the classroom was (a cleaning woman was helpful in that regard), and a general lack of attentiveness both to her and the participant group at that time,

They [the new regime] didn't understand what TCDC was about. They didn't get it. One of its strengths, a bit like Kimmage's strength over other development studies courses in that it's based on relationship stuff, and that the academic stuff (will follow) - it was almost as if they said, they're only talking with one another. But if people don't get the importance of relationships, working relationships, and connections, nothing ever works, but it doesn't look sexy on a brochure. (Eimear Burke)

Section 4: Assessment and Conclusions

The analysis of the findings that follows will attempt to draw conclusions in response to these two most pertinent questions: (1.) Was capacity building achieved? (2.) Was it an effective partnership? (And if so, how and why?)

4.1 Capacity Building

The survey provides a very strong indication that participants in the programmes run by TCDC/Kimmage did feel their capacity was enhanced. See responses to questions 14, 18-26, which provided some indications of this occurring at personal, organisational, and community levels. This impression was underlined by comments from all staff interviewed. I was struck by Suma Kaare's statement,

[recently] Visiting professors from Kenya think our methodology is unique – which is that which was applied in the BA (DS). They were not speaking so much on the content, but on the confidence it has given the students to raise their voices. So that individual transformation that participants have experienced and is noticeable by outsiders is another achievement.
(Suma Kaare)

Eade's point cited earlier in this review, (Eade, 2007: 637) neatly combines the concepts of capacity building and partnership, "Capacity building is an approach to solidarity-based partnerships with an infinite variety of expressions. While some of the ingredients can be identified, there is no global recipe, no quick fix. Partnership entails mutual accountability, and you cannot have one without the other" and that "this approach is demanding" but, "Co-development is also far more rewarding than trying to be a catalyst, which exerts 'an impact or change on another component within a system without itself changing' (the last point citing Eyben (2006: 48). The comments from Stella Maranga, Suma Kaare, Prudence Kaijage all seem to underscore their view that while setting out to build the capacity of others, they themselves were changed – and this was held as true for Kimmage to TCDC, as well as teachers and course participants.

4.2 Partnership

What is an effective partnership?

Of necessity, a healthy partnership must be developed by all parties, over time and with focused effort. Partnerships in international assistance are too often seen as a means to an end (how to get the resources delivered). (Anderson et al, 2012:98)

As Wanni et al (2010: 18) claim "Successful partnerships tend to change and evolve over time" and include such ingredients as ownership, respect, trust, transparency and reciprocity. I did wonder, at the beginning of this review whether in fact Kimmage/TCDC was a partnership, since it was a fairly unspoken element within the collaboration. It wasn't something trumpeted very highly, for example, in the promotion of the programme by TCDC or Kimmage, and not excessively talked about to newly

arriving participants. Rather the collaboration between us became more apparent as the programme continued. This was clearly indicated in the responses to questions 15 – 17, and 30 in the survey. All colleagues firmly confirmed their views that this was indeed, an effective partnership, see for example, the statements from Kaare, Kaijage, Burke, Maranga and Marren. The point about 'ownership' may be critically examined – whose course was it, really? Patrick Marren's point highlighted the 'agency' role that Kimmage had as far as providing a conduit to the accrediting body in Ireland. However Stella Maranga's strong view of holding onto mutual identities while maintaining an equal partnership, and other points raised regarding reciprocity and trust by other colleagues, would seem to conform with those characteristics examined in the literature.

As Teferra (2016) has argued, "one of the persistent concerns of such programs and partnership schemes have been the brevity of their lifetime" but in the case of TCDC/Kimmage, this does not apply. However, as mentioned earlier, Oliphant (2013) refers to the problem of longer-term sustainability. Eventually the central piece of work which kept the two partners together – namely the provision of a higher education course – ceased to remain viable economically, and other events, concerning both institutes had created other activities for us to focus upon.

4.3 Relationships

This emerged as a significant phenomenon during the research, and, on the evidence of this review, is an important factor which deserves further attention. I am persuaded by Eyben, Eade, Chambers and others, that this aspect of good development practice needs to be talked about more, and attentively practiced more. It was perhaps, something that we, in both institutes, tended to take for granted?

Unsolicited by me, comments pointing to the special relationship the existed between the two institutes, came to the fore in many of the interviews, as shown in the few sampled statements, e.g. by Kaijage, Kaare, Maranga, Damsted and Burke. The latter point, from Eimear Burke, was more of a sad commentary about the perceived loss of the strong, person-centred relationship that she had experienced in most of the previous years.

It is not appropriate for this review to pass judgement or attempt to assess the qualities and characteristics of the new management and current orientation of TCDC, because I realise that for the first time since 1993, I do not know any of the people now running this fine establishment. However, it seems evident that without a solid, core, *raison d'être* that held the partnership together for so long – namely the joint educational project that we both owned and took responsibility for, and built on the well-developed relations between both sets of staff – the collaboration continue.

4.4 Conclusions (lessons learned)

- ✓ Capacity development did take place – for the students at the heart of the programmes run by TCDC and Kimmage – and in many instances, for their organisations and communities. There is also clear evidence that the staff in both institutes developed their individual and professional capacities through the dynamic of this partnership, and strong perceptions that

both institutes were also transformed – being changed, as Eyben (2011) would say by the relationship forged by working together.

- ✓ Partnerships can be challenging but extremely fruitful. If ways can be found to resource the partners separately or through reciprocal arrangements (as often happened in the Kimmage – TCDC relationship) this could remove a lot of the ‘wrong kind of power’ from the dynamics between partners. (See Eade’s (2007:635) point about dependency earlier in Section 2.) Though not focused upon as much within this review, it could be argued, (and was for example by Dr Kaare) this partnership adhered very well to aid effectiveness principles, even though these had not been formulated when this collaboration began in 1994.
- ✓ We need to find ways to extend the life span of partnerships. Needing to be in partnership for longer than a typical project cycle of 2/3 years would appear to be a recurring lament of many commentators. TCDC/Kimmage partnership had no fixed time boundaries. Deadlines yes, and these appeared on paper, in MOUs, programmatic reviews, etc, but it was the strength of the relationship that enabled us to continue to look forward and discuss what shall we do next.
- ✓ Relationships are key, and must not be underestimated or undermined. By their nature, difficult if not impossible to quantify and hence challenging for donors to assess the value of, but the results of this modest review would seem to echo the strong arguments of others, that ways should be found to make ‘what cannot be counted, count’. This study suggests that time spent by lecturers respectfully engaging with course participants was not wasted. Likewise, the time invested by both sets of staff to the developing of constructive but convivial relationships has borne fruit, as evidenced by a continuous partnership that spanned two decades. If (and when) we embark on our next substantial collaboration, other aspects of relationship building such as reflective practice among partners will be strongly recommended.

To return to the objectives set out at the beginning of this review, we have assessed the successes and some of the challenges of this collaboration. The successes have been claimed by many of the 112 responses, and endorsed by lecturing staff. The challenges are less apparent – although reading the comments of some participants reveals their feelings that some of the courses/lecturers did not deliver a consistently high standard, and the issue of transfer and access to other higher education programmes has proven to be difficult in some instances. The experiences of the participants in the programme in terms of how they found the courses, and any changes this brought about in their lives, has been documented here.

This model of partnership, in the context of current aid effectiveness principles stands up well. In terms of the unbounded nature of the time given to the partnership, not being tied into a project cycle, it could be seen to be ahead of the curve. Several innovations, such as the staff exchange programme, and the shadowing mentorship arrangements, are aspects we would recommend for future training like this.

The effectiveness of longer-term capacity development programmes such as that run from 1994 until 2014 in TCDC is strongly attested to in terms of the responses from this, admittedly, potentially biased sample of respondents. (They would say that wouldn't they? - those who have taken the effort to respond to 30 questions, along with a few more, to attend a workshop, must surely be

predisposed to think well of the institute(s) inviting them to do so.) Nevertheless, it seems that the model we co-created back in 1993, to facilitate the work agendas of development practitioners, and lecturers from various institutes (North and South), has proven to be a durable approach to this kind of academic and professional training. Evidence is drawn from other programmes TCDC is now engaged upon with Jomo Kenyatta University, and from the Grail Centre in South Africa, with whom Kimmage has a partnership running since 2002, both of which follow the same practices of providing a type of continuous in-service access to adult learners.

Postscript:

In the original proposal – as discussed by Kimmage and TCDC in 2015 – to document and celebrate this long-running partnership, TCDC and Kimmage entertained ambitious plans which included the desire to have at least one substantial conference / seminar held at Usa River, and another smaller symposium in Dublin. The latter was achieved, by way of a presentation made as part of a Panel Discussion to the **Development Studies Association Ireland (DSAI)** conference that was held in Dublin on 24-25 November 2016. Regrettably, Dr Sarone Ole Sena, from TCDC was unable to attend as co-presenter, as was originally intended.

Circumstances and events – on both sides – intervened to stall our preparations which we only returned to again in early 2016. These included coincidentally, major transitions in terms of organisational structures and financial arrangements that each institute had embarked upon. In the intervening period, a significant turnover of staff at TCDC – in fact, a complete replacement of all management and senior staff – contributed to an ending of the strong ties and rapport between staff of both institutes. Therefore perhaps quite reasonably, the new personnel at TCDC who were by this time focusing upon new projects with new partners, did not share the interest of their immediate predecessors in this study, and so original ambitions expressed regarding joint conferences and dissemination were not pursued. Paradoxically their reduced contribution to this project serves to justify the emphasis made in this study to the importance of close relationships in partnerships.

Nevertheless, it is hoped that TCDC and Kimmage will remain open to discussing any opportunities for new collaborations in future, perhaps with more of a focus upon research objectives of each institute. It will be impossible to try to recreate the circumstances and economic environment of 1993, and time has moved on in terms of the institutional development and orientations of both Kimmage and TCDC. Nevertheless, we can be justifiably proud of the extremely successful collaboration that was jointly cultivated over many years, and which surely made valuable contributions to the capacity development of practitioners, their organisations and communities during this period.

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