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Frank Niedermeier | Xia Qin (Eds.)

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Sustainable Capacity Building in Higher Education Leadership and Management

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Preface

Supported with funds provided by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Programme 'Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies' (DIES) aims to strengthen higher education management capacities in developing countries. DIES, which is jointly coordinated by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), offers a bundle of measures—training courses, dialogue events, projects, and partnerships—that fosters professionalisation of institutional management processes, alignment of education to international quality standards, and strengthening of research capacities.

The training courses are the backbone of the DIES programme contributing to individual capacity building and institutional change processes. Modular, practice-oriented training opportunities for management-level professionals from universities in developing countries, and courses based on a blended-learning approach and the principle of intercultural dialogue, are all offered. These training opportunities range from faculty, research, and financial management to internationalisation, quality assurance, and third-party funding acquisition.

In DIES training courses, trainer teams with international experience support participants from Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Spanish-speaking Latin America to implement practical changes at their home universities. This hands-on approach is effective not only in terms of acquiring knowledge but also in allowing immediate transfer and application of the course learning outcomes, and in linking theoretical concepts to the participants' working environments, turning them into practice.

To ensure the sustainability of these trainings and to deepen their impact, the DAAD and the HRK conceptualised the National Multiplication Trainings (NMT). This is a tailor-made programme line targeted exclusively at alumni of DIES training courses, and intended to promote networking at national and regional levels and enhance the positive effects of DIES training courses, which are only available for a limited number of participants. The first call for the NMT programme was coordinated by the DAAD and published in 2013 with overwhelming success. Of the more than one hundred applications received, nine were selected for funding.

Through the NMT programme, DIES alumni apply for funding to actively multiply the impact of university management topics at their home universities and share their newly gained knowledge in their home countries. Furthermore, the NMTs facilitate an exchange of experience between the participants of different DIES trainings which can contribute to the creation of regional alumni networks and the development of sustainable structures.

The Centre of Quality Development (ZfQ) at the University of Potsdam in Germany has coordinated the NMT programme since 2017. Two calls (2017 and 2019) were launched offering DIES alumni around the world the opportunity to implement independent, self-designed, peer-to-peer training measures, and multiplication activities in their home countries. The two calls yielded overwhelming interest which showed how committed the DIES training course alumni were in sharing their knowledge and in contributing to the strengthening of higher education management in their respective higher education systems.

We look forward to continuing our successful cooperation with the University of Potsdam to further contribute to the multiplication of knowledge of higher education management and to empower our DIES alumni as multipliers and agents of change through the National Multiplication Training Programme!

Tobias Wolf
Head of Section
Development Cooperation: Partnership Programmes,
Alumni Projects and Higher Education Management (P32)
German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)

Frank Niedermeier

Introduction

Higher education institutions worldwide have to address a multitude of complex issues and disruptions ranging from issues such as digitalisation (Khalid et al., 2018; Holmwood & Servós, 2019; Rof et al., 2020) and globalisation (Altbach, 2008; Altbach et al., 2009), to matters dealing with consequences of mass education, i.e., a more heterogeneous student body (Trow, 1972, 2010), or demographic trends such as found in ageing societies. The list could be continued at will, with topics like the universities' contribution to sustainability and their engagements to political and social challenges and demands.

The COVID-19 crisis has proven that existing disruptions, such as the digital one, can gain even more importance and necessity within a very short time. Universities all over the world had to change traditional models of teaching and learning almost overnight. At the time of the writing of this introduction, it is too early to tell, how well this shift to distance and online teaching has made learning possible. Clearly, though, a wide range of online teaching methodologies have been implemented. It is unclear though, in how far these reached levels beyond the transfer of knowledge. Only time and further research on the matter can tell what the lessons and longer-term effects will be.

One thing that the pandemic has shown is that there is a need for higher education professionals who are experts in the online delivery of teaching and learning and who can manage such a shift and the many consequences it brings, including external guides and regulations set by governments. From supporting the teachers in their work both technically and didactically, to making sure the students are not left behind and are ready for the new form of learning, to hygiene concepts and the general issues of organising the very special semester, all these must be given attention. The crisis has shown the importance of digital, didactical, and technical knowledge and skills as well as quick and flexible evaluation methods to find out more about the 'black box semester' that lecturers and students have lived through together.

The pandemic situation is proof that higher education leadership and management have become indispensable in higher education institutions and that leadership and coordination is crucial in an environment, where the word 'management', for the most part, is difficult to use. Higher education institutions are confronted with growing complexity and uncertainty which are the main driver for a need of management, not so much the question of dwindling resources and efficiency (Krücken, 2008).

Whilst the manifold and fluctuating topics and issues have to be addressed by higher education institutions, the need to build and develop not only governance and structures but also administrative and managerial capacities with specific contextual knowledge and skills must also be given priority.

The organisation and management of higher education institutions vary within countries and institutions. When it comes to the management of higher education, two main models usually co-exist in many universities. Some managing positions or management tasks are delegated to faculty and academics, which are time-restricted and, in some cases, part-time, on top of the usual faculty duties of teaching and research. Examples of such positions are heads of departments, deans, or senior management.

In other cases, management positions are full-time and are being fulfilled by academics who have related backgrounds or skillset and are located between administrative and academic staff, the third space (Whitchurch, 2008). Furthermore, the faculty themselves need to accept increasing responsibilities in managerial tasks within the university (Krücken, 2008).

Although these are very different models with many variations in between, what they have in common is that they build a need for training and networking to further develop knowledge and skills in higher education leadership and management.

Academics who are active in higher education leadership and management are often thrown in at the deep end without much prior knowledge in the area of work or management in general. Being educators and scholars, they are of diverse backgrounds and most with very little or no connection at all to higher education leadership or management, to management in general, or to the administration of the field they are entrusted with.

The 'Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies' (DIES) Programme of the German Academic Exchange Service and the German Rectors' Conference supports this need with training courses for higher education institutions in emerging countries in fields such as faculty, internationalisation, research, or quality management. The demand and success of the Programme show the great need to offer training and the possibility to exchange and network in the area of higher education leadership and management.

The need is also shown by the success of the DIES 'National Multiplication Trainings' (NMT) Programme, which supports alumni of the DIES training courses, to implement their own capacity-building projects. To do so, alumni can team up to apply for the support from the NMT Programme to implement their capacity building concepts.

The compilation of articles in this book revolves around the topics of higher education leadership and management with a focus on capacity building in these areas. It aims to share the experiences and findings made by DIES alumni who have implemented training courses in the frame of the NMT Programme.

The articles are thus a valuable resource and source of inspiration to higher education institutions, organisations active in the field of higher education leadership and management, as well as experts and trainers who are concerned with capacity building and training in higher education. The cases on training and capacity building might also be valuable for capacity building and training organisers in other fields of application.

The 'National Multiplication Trainings' Programme has become a distinctive pillar of DIES in strengthening its alumni in their role as multipliers in higher education leadership and management and in promoting the sustainability of the DIES training courses in the target regions. All these could not have been achieved without the extraordinary engagement and dedication of the DIES alumni and experts who were involved, as well as the DIES training course organisers who participated. A sincere appreciation is extended to them all, individually and collectively. Further cooperation in the multiplication and common cause of building capacities and a strengthening of the quality of higher education and research are hoped for in the future.

This publication is composed of six English and two French articles. The latter had been translated to English and have been enclosed after the original French version of the articles.

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An Overview of the 'National Multiplication Trainings' Programme

ABSTRACT: The article introduces the efforts exerted to initiate multiplication of the DIES training courses to a wider audience of higher education managers and academics in the target regions. The DIES 'National Multiplication Trainings' Programme has supported three cohorts of alumni teams so far to implement national training courses in the area of higher education leadership and management. The article sets the context of this publication and reflects on the main evaluation results of the programme implementation itself.

KEYWORDS: training multiplication, higher education management, higher education leadership, capacity building; alumni work

1. What Is DIES and What Is Being Multiplied?

The 'Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies' (DIES) was created jointly by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) in 2001 to promote cooperation with universities in the South in the field of higher education management. Since its establishment, DIES has been supporting a group of initiatives in the field of higher education management to promote positive changes among German universities and those in developing and emerging countries through dialogue activities, partnerships cooperation projects, and participative training.

Since 2005, DIES has supported more than 7,000 individuals who took part in training courses offered within the frame of the DIES programme. The training courses have been generally coordinated and implemented by German universities in cooperation with DAAD/HRK and partners in the respective target regions. The following is an overview of current training course offers:

- **International Deans' Course (IDC)**

This course is offered to newly elected deans, vice-deans, and heads of departments in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. It offers modules related to faculty management such as strategic management, financial management, quality assurance and leadership, and managerial skills.

- **University Leadership and Management (UNILEAD)**

UNILEAD targets young management level professionals from higher education institutions in Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Latin America who work in central administrative offices in their universities. It offers modules on project management, strategic management, and human resource management.

- **Proposal Writing for Research Grants (ProGRANT)**

This course is designed for young researchers and young PhD holders from Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. It is meant to enhance skills in formulating sound research proposals based on prevailing international standards which are essential for a successful application for research funding.

- **Management of Internationalisation (MoI)**

MoI targets heads of international academic offices and university managers from Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Latin America responsible for coordinating their universities' international activities. To improve the management of the central tasks at an international office, the course contains modules on internationalisation, competences and key tasks of an international office, soft skills, and domestic management skills.

- **Training in the Frame of 'ASEAN-QA'**

To support the harmonisation of higher education and develop capacity in the field of quality assurance (QA) in Southeast Asia, a multitude of training activities had been offered under the ASEAN-QA Project between 2011 and 2019. The project targeted both representatives from the external quality assurance side such as accreditation agencies and assessors, and representatives from the internal quality assurance side at higher education institutions, such as directors and vice presidents in charge of QA. With the Training on Internal Quality Assurance (TrainIQA), a comprehensive and holistic training approach for the management of quality in higher education institutions has been designed and implemented.

- **Training in the Frame of 'Enhancing West African Quality Assurance Structures' (EWAQAS)**

EWAQAS aims to strengthen and harmonise national higher education systems. Similar to the ASEAN-QA project, training on external and internal quality assurance were offered between 2013 and 2019 to practitioners in West and Central Africa, both to university representatives and those involved with external quality assurance.

All DIES training courses have in common that participants and/or institutions implement a personal project or an institutional change project within the frame of the training. Furthermore, the training courses are mostly offered in cooperation between German and European institutions and regional organisations and institutions of the respective fields. This cooperative approach is also reflected in the delivery of the training with a good mixture of European and regional experts, which often work in trainer tandems. The DIES training courses, in most cases, bring together participants from different countries or even regions.

Alumni who took part in the training courses are valuable resources for multiplying knowledge and skills in higher education management, establishing cooperation between German universities and universities in their home countries, as well as promoting development and generating changes in the respective higher education systems. Hence the DIES programme 'National Multiplication Trainings' (NMT) was initiated in 2013 to support the DIES alumni in amplifying their knowledge and skills and in initiating needed capacity building activities in their national settings. The DIES NMT Programme is funded by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ).

2. The National Multiplication Trainings Programme

The NMT Programme trains, supports, and funds DIES alumni through independently implementing higher education leadership and management training activities in their home countries. The objectives of this programme are the following: (a) to strengthen DIES alumni in their role as multipliers in the field of higher education leadership and management, (b) to promote the sustainability of DIES training courses, (c) to initiate organisational changes at the participating universities, and (d) to encourage exchange and networking of DIES alumni from different training courses and countries.

The NMT Programme has thus two target groups at different levels. First, the DIES alumni from Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia who are supported to be organisers, as well as trainers and facilitators, in implementing their training courses. To receive the financial support, groups of three to four DIES alumni need to jointly conceptualise a multi-part training course in the field of higher education leadership and management and go through a highly competitive selection process to receive funding and to take part in a Training of Trainers which includes mentoring by experienced experts in the field.

Second, through the national training courses implemented by the DIES alumni, the programme targets higher education managers and their institutions who have not yet participated in any of the DIES training courses. These participants will implement change projects within the frame of the multiplication training courses.

The multiplication training courses address current issues and perspectives on higher education management that are tailored to the needs in the respective country. The alumni teams are not recquired to make use of the same concepts of any of the existing DIES training courses but should instead address the specific needs within a framework set by the programme. They need to address topics of higher education leadership and management such as faculty management, project management, finance management, human resource management, and research management with focus on 'proposal writing', quality assurance including curriculum development, internationalisation, or a mixture of these.

The training should also bring theory and practice together. For the practical part, the participants are required to work on individual or institutional change projects throughout the training. The DIES alumni, in their role as trainers and mentors, support the participants in this journey through individual consulting and peer-counselling.

Another requirement and pillar of the programme are that the DIES alumni take full responsibility for the whole training process and implementation. They are in charge of conceptualising, implementing, selecting the participants and mentors, facilitating the workshops, and evaluating the training. Furthermore, they are also required to manage the finances connected to the grant of up to 25,000 EUR, including reporting and accounting.

Each national multiplication training course trains at least 20 participants, with two workshops of three to four days, and with a period of at least four months between the two workshops to allow participants to conceptualise and initiate their projects.

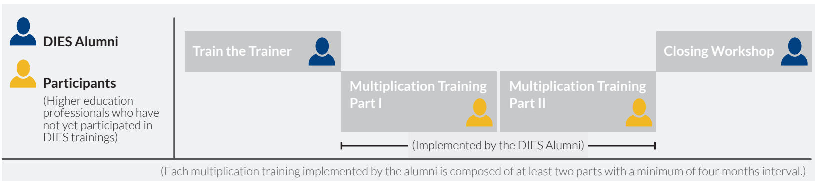
The principle that the alumni are held fully responsible for their training does not mean that they are left alone in conceptualising and implementing their activities. Indeed, the actual implementation of their own courses is part of the training concept to train them as trainers. This allows for a thorough and practical grounding experience in which the alumni receive formative feedback and take part in reflection sessions with experts and peers during a closing workshop. Since the second cohort of the DIES NMT Programme has been implemented, the alumni teams can choose up to two external experts from the region and/ or from Europe who will accompany their multiplication training. The main role of these experts is to support and advise the alumni team in the conceptualisation, planning, and implementation of the training with a focus on content and didactics.

Once the alumni teams are selected and they receive the confirmation of the grant, representatives of the teams are invited to join a Training of Trainers at the University of Potsdam in Germany. Here they are introduced to topics and agendas related to the conduct of workshops: (a) planning and organising, (b) facilitating and moderating, and (c) discussing and revising concepts like formulating training goals, identifying target groups, etc., with experts and peers. The chosen experts will, from then on, further support the alumni team and mentor the implementation of each step in the training, as well as join the workshops to be able to give feedback during and after the implementation. The mentoring and assistance by the experts are therefore extended before the training, during the training, and after the training.

Besides the mentoring by experts, the exchange with peers coming from the target regions is another important pillar of support. The teams have ample time to exchange and counsel each other during the Training of Trainers and a further opportunity has been initiated by introducing a closing workshop, where the training teams can reflect on experiences, consider exchanges of good practices, and identify common challenges. These are made available to new cohorts who are simultaneously participating in their Training of Trainers and can therefore profit highly from the exchanges with the already experienced cohort.

The general structure of the NMT Programme for both DIES alumni and the participants is depicted in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: *Structure of the National Multiplication Trainings Programme for One Cohort*



Through the activities within the NMT Programme, DIES alumni act as multipliers at the national level and pass on their knowledge and skills to higher education professionals and institutions in their countries and regions. Thus they are contributing significantly to the enhancement of the respective higher education systems. By offering these multiplication workshops, the DIES Programme reaches a much wider audience in the target regions of Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the exchange of the alumni teams has been expanded to online meetings and workshops which are held between the Training of Trainers and the closing workshop. These virtual meetings have been very valuable in both addressing the urgency of the pandemic and in shifting the training to online activities to retain the contact among the different alumni teams, experts, and the coordinating team at the University of Potsdam.

3. Facts and Figures about the National Multiplication Trainings Programme

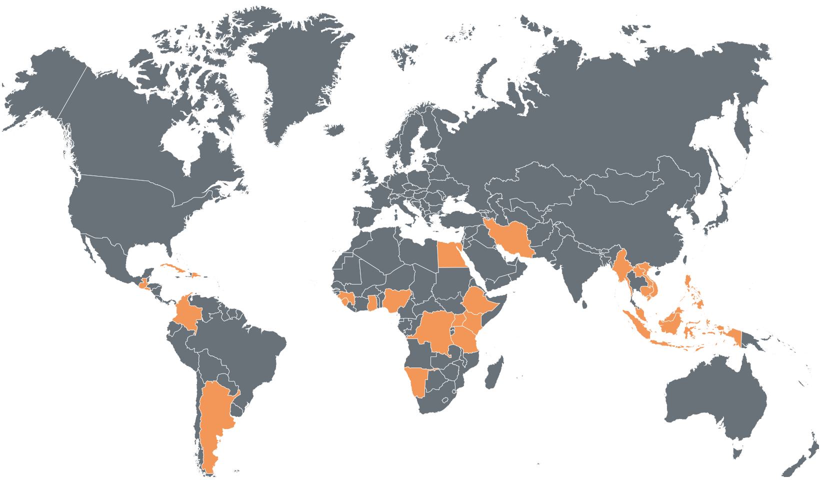
The NMT Programme is centrally organised by the Centre for Quality Development (ZfQ) at the University of Potsdam in Germany. The ZfQ is a central unit of the University which designs and implements quality assurance and quality development processes on a central university level and supports the faculties in their decentralised quality management. As an institution, which has rich experience and sound expertise in international cooperation, the Centre has been coordinating the NMT Programme since 2017, after it had been initiated and run by DAAD during the first cohort. The current concept is based on the experiences of alumni work and multiplication activities developed in the frame of the ASEAN-QA Project, a strategy on capacity building in the area of quality assurance with aim to support harmonisation in higher education in Southeast Asia, which had been implemented by the ZfQ between 2011 and 2019.

Starting with the first cohort in 2013, the NMT Programme is currently in its third, which will end in 2020. In total, it has supported 38 DAAD alumni teams implementing multiplication training courses in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia. More than 700 participants have attended the training courses.

Figure 2 shows the countries where the NMT Programme has been carried out.

The first cohort of alumni teams participating in the NMT Programme which was coordinated by the DAAD between 2013 and 2014 supported 9 alumni teams to implement training courses in their home countries. Since then, the second and third cohort have been coordinated by the University of Potsdam and a total of 29 alumni teams have been active multipliers across Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. The third cohort includes alumni teams which are being supported for a second time to promote the sustainability of the programme.

Figure 2: *Overview of Countries (in orange) Where a National Multiplication Training Has Been Implemented*



The following table summarises the different cohorts and shows the training courses and countries/regions they have been carried out for.

Table 1: *Overview of the NMT Cohorts and Multiplication Training Courses*

Cohort	Training Name	Country/Region
Cohort 1 (2013–2014) 9 training courses	InterCHANGE for Higher Education Institutions	Central America
	Management tools for the Internationalisation of Research	Colombia
	Gestión de la Innovación en la Educación Superior (Innovation Management in Higher Education)	El Salvador
	Training on Research and Grand Proposal and Scientific Paper Writing	Ethiopia
	Indonesia Deans' Course: A Course in Faculty Management and Leadership	Indonesia
	Curriculum Development and Review for Newly Chartered Public Universities in Kenya: Implementation and Accreditation	Kenya

Cohort	Training Name	Country/Region
Cohort 1 (continuation)	Academic Administrators Training in Malaysia	Malaysia
	National Quality Assurance Trainings for QA Directors in Uganda	Uganda
	FacultyLEAD—Leading to an Autonomy and Entrepreneurial Faculty in the University of the 21st Century	Vietnam
Cohort 2 (2017–2018) 10 training courses	Internacionalización para la Construcción de Paz	Colombia
	Rédaction d'une proposition de recherche	D. R. Congo
	Training Course for Higher Education Managers and Academics to Develop Skills for Scientific Strategic Management	Cuba
	Senior University Management Training for Academics	Ghana
	Indonesia Deans' Course for Private Higher Education Institution	Indonesia
	Training of Deans and Directors on Quality Leadership and Management: A Driver for Change in Higher Education	Kenya
	Transforming Higher Education Scenarios in Myanmar: Pathways to Success for Leadership Skills	Myanmar
	Multiplication de la formation en assurance qualité interne dans l'enseignement superieur en Guinée	Guinea
	Strengthening the Development Capacity for Minimum Programme Standards	Lao PDR
	Project Management Training	Tanzania
Cohort 3 (2019–2020) 19 training courses	Gestión de la Internacionalización para la Calidad en Educación Superior	Colombia
	Task Force for Internationalisation in Higher Education	Egypt
	Internationalisation at Home in Vietnamese Universities	Vietnam
	Writing Renewable Energy Research Proposals	Argentina
	Renforcement des capacités des chercheurs à la rédaction et la budgétisation d'un projet de recherche scientifique	D. R. Congo
	Development of Practical Skills in Grant Proposal Writing for Young Researchers in Namibia	Namibia

Cohort	Training Name	Country/Region
Cohort 3 (continuation)	A Training on Multidisciplinary Research Proposal Writing for Heads of Academic Departments in Higher Education Institutions	Tanzania
	Academic Deans: Roles, Challenges, and Solutions	Cambodia
	Integral Leadership in Higher Education: Promoting Transformational Change	Dominican Republic
	Leading for Change in Higher Education	Guatemala
	International Deans' Course Malaysian Chapter (MyIDC)	Malaysia
	DIES-International Deans' Course Philippines (DIES-IDCP)	The Philippines
	Education for Sustainable (ESD): Initiative for Green Campus	Iran
	Enhancing Best Practices in Project Management, Financial Management, and Human Resource Development in Higher Education Institutions	Kenya
	Atelier national de multiplication en assurance qualité dans les établissements d'enseignement supérieur 2019–2020	Guinea
	Training on Indonesian Quality Assurance (TrainIdQA)	Indonesia
	Implementing Quality Management System in Higher Education Institutions	Myanmar
	Curriculum Development as a Veritable Tool for Internal Quality Assurance in Higher Education Institutions	Nigeria
	Training on Quality Assurance and Curriculum Development for HEIs in Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone

4. Lessons Learnt from the NMT Programme Evaluation

This section takes a deeper look at the formative evaluation design and its results which have been carried out since the second cohort of the programme. The aim is to gain and present more general fields of improvement and the lessons learnt from the implementation of the training courses and the programme as a whole. The evaluation results outlined herewith are mainly sourced from the second cohort (2017–2018), whilst the third cohort is still ongoing at the time of writing this article.

4.1 Evaluation Design

The evaluation design of the NMT Programme puts a strong focus on a formative approach which means that data collection and analysis have been carried out alongside the programme implementation. The main aim of such a formative evaluation is to provide ongoing support for decision making and to enable the draft and execution of possible improvements during the implementation segment of the programme. The summative aspect of the programme evaluation, on the other hand, strongly focuses on collecting data with regards to the effects and results of the multiplication training.

The evaluation concept of the NMT Programme includes the perspectives of all involved target groups and experts in the programme activities using a mixed-methods approach. Hence, sources of data used in the evaluation process include the following:

- Quantitative and qualitative data from the participants of the multiplication training courses (questionnaires for workshop evaluation and interviews during site visits);
- Quantitative and qualitative data from the DIES alumni trainer teams (questionnaires for Training of Trainers' evaluation, feedback forms, and interviews during site visits);
- Feedback from both regional and European experts (feedback forms)
- Observation data from the site visits at the multiplication training courses (observations and interviews during the site visits).

4.2 Results from the NMT Programme Evaluation

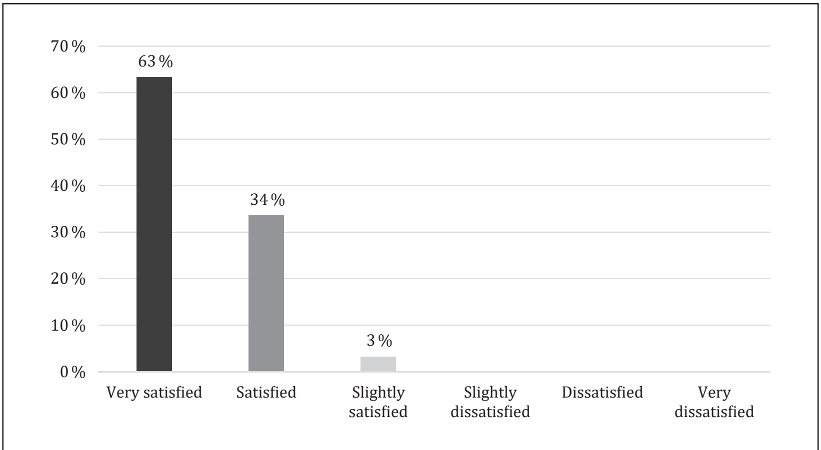
The following sections detail the main evaluation results of the second cohort (2017–2018) differentiated from the viewpoint of training participants, the trainer teams and the experts, as well as observations made during on-site visits. The evaluation results concerning the implementation of the participants change projects, which are an important part of the training, are also presented.

4.2.1 Results of the Feedback from the Participants

The participants' feedback on the multiplication training courses is based on quantitative online surveys conducted after each workshop. The questionnaires used for this evaluation are part of the monitoring tools of the DIES Programme and are provided by DAAD. The DIES alumni trainer teams had the opportunity to adapt the questionnaires according to their interests and needs.

Figure 3 shows the general satisfaction of the participants with the conceptual set-up of the multiplication training. 63% of the respondents were very satisfied with the conceptual set-up of the training and none of the 158 respondents had indicated to be dissatisfied with the training concept.

Figure 3: *General Satisfaction with the Training Concept* (n = 158), Percentages

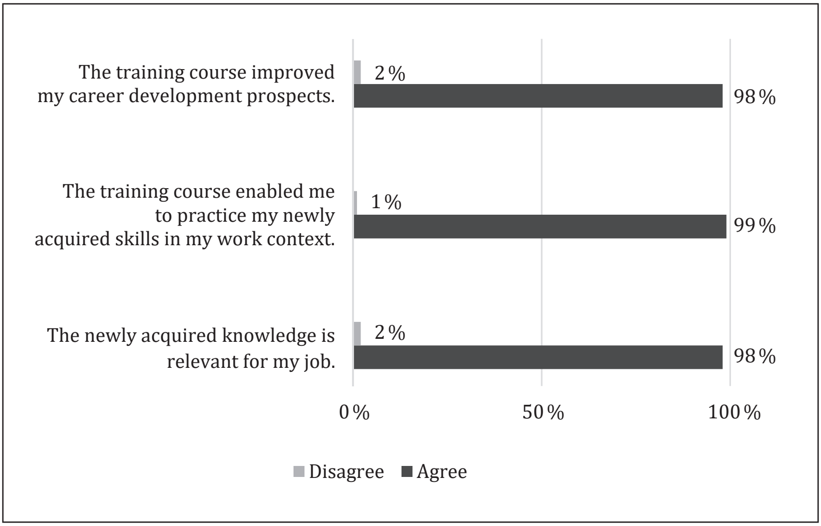


Question: How satisfied/dissatisfied are you in general with the conceptual set-up of the course in separate contact phases?

Figure 4 gives an overview of the self-perceived personal gain of the participants after finishing the second part of the multiplication training[1]. More than 90% of the participants agreed that participating in the training improved their future career perspectives. The survey results also indicated that the contents of the training had high relevance in the work context of the participants. More than 90% of the participants reported that they could practise the newly acquired skills in their work context. These results show that the multiplication training courses had generally been implemented with high satisfaction and relevance of the training for the participants.

1 Each multiplication training was composed of two workshops.

Figure 4: *Personal Benefits of the Multiplication Training Participants (n = 171), Percentages*



4.2.2 Results of the Feedback from the Trainer Teams and Experts

Based on structured feedback sheets after each workshop by the alumni teams and by regional and European experts, and the interviews with the alumni teams during the site visits, the following lessons learnt for the NMT have been derived:

- Availabilities and roles during the workshops should be defined and accepted prior to training since well-founded and sustained commitment within the trainer teams is key;
- Regional/European experts should be given adequate time for groundwork and preparation before the training begins;
- A crucial briefing and coordination meeting should be held before the workshop starts to give trainers and experts time to do final directives;
- The motivation of the participants should be considered in the selection process (e.g. handing in a letter of motivation or a video);
- If possible and suitable, a great variety of higher education institutions should be selected to have a stronger national impact and an interesting mix of cases;

- An easy and effective communication channel among the trainers, experts, and participants (e.g. creating group chats using mobile phones) should be put in place;
- The participants of the multiplication training should be updated and informed about future DIES activities and a form for factoring in alumni status should be considered by DAAD/HRK for them;
- The workshops need to be well-structured combined with a realistic and attainable timeline;
- Expected learning outcomes should be defined for each workshop and session to align and clarify the goals for the trainers and make them evident and straightforward to the participants;
- The time between the two workshops allotted for the development of the projects and mentoring should be made sufficient and commensurate to the tasks at hand;
- Some alumni teams and experts had recommended a blended learning approach with online training and/or mentoring part between the two workshops;
- Mentoring between the workshops should be defined and coordinated well in advance and should include the experts in its conceptualisation;
- Resources for marketing should be included to enhance the visibility and impact of the training.

4.2.3 Results of the Site Visit Observations

During the second cohort, the University of Potsdam conducted four site visits to get a deeper understanding of the training courses taking place in the target regions. In addition to the observation conducted during the visits, interviews were carried out with the trainer teams and with the workshop participants.

The site visit observation and interviews provided data related to the exchange and communication between the trainer teams and the regional/European experts before and between the workshops that are crucial in running a successful training. Ideally, there should be multiple programme conferences (online or in-person) with all facilitators and experts during the preparation of the workshops to address the distribution of tasks, to clarify roles and expectations, as well as to discuss content-related issues. It is also important that roles and responsibilities among the team members and experts were communicated and made clear before the beginning of the training.

Regarding the didactical aspects of the multiplication workshops, questions related to moderating and facilitating the workshop (i.e., time-keeping), facilitating discussion, and implementing a variety of teaching/learning methods, showed to have room for improvement. These elements were addressed during the Training of Trainers, but it is also a question of experience and confidence to use new methods. Whilst the implementation of the workshops is considered to be part of the Training of Trainers, as was the actual implementation of the training as a whole, the didactical training could be extended, bringing in more possibilities to practise before the first workshop is implemented. Another option would be to offer didactical training after the first workshop experience, not only to receive feedback from the mentors but, more importantly, to specifically address the needs which have become evident during the first implementation.

4.2.4 Results of the Change Projects of the Participants

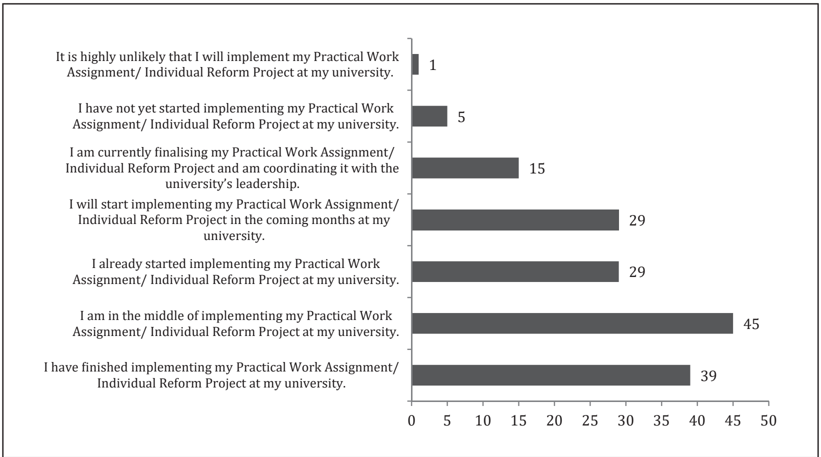
All participants of the multiplication training courses should implement individual or institutional change projects, which are linked to the training contents. The change projects are mentored by the alumni team with the support of the regional and European experts. In this section, the evaluation results from different stakeholder groups regarding the change projects are summarised.

Figure 5 outlines the status of implementation of the individual change projects by the end of the multiplication training courses. The results indicate that 24% of the participants finished implementing their individual change projects, whereas 46% of the participants were in the middle of implementing or were just starting their individual change projects. Furthermore, 30% of the participants reported that they had not started their individual change projects by the end of their training. The qualitative feedback from the experts and alumni trainer teams reported that it would be difficult for most of the participants to finish their change projects after the training without the support from the trainers and experts.

Based on the qualitative feedback gleaned from the trainer teams and the experts, the causes for not finishing the change projects are as follows:

- The change projects were too complex to be implemented within the short training period of less than a year;

Figure 5: *Status of Implementation of Participants' Change Projects after the Second Workshop (n = 163), Total Number*



- Participants struggled with insufficient leadership support and changes in academic position within the leadership occurred during the implementation of the projects. These delayed or even totally aborted the completion of the change projects.
- Multiple responsibilities shouldered by participants made the implementation of some projects difficult;
- Participants lacked the time to focus on the implementation of the change projects because they needed to be done in parallel to the everyday tasks at the HEIs;
- Participants lacked experience in project management.

According to the feedback from the trainer teams and experts, some possible solutions in overcoming the challenges met during the implementation of the change projects would be to (a) focus on making the projects realistic and feasible so that each could be carried out during the time-frame of the multiplication training, and (b) to possibly offer some funding to support the implementation.

Given the fact that more than 60% of the projects did not see implementation at the end of the NMT activity, support and counselling from the project mentors beyond the second workshop of the multiplication training should be taken into consideration.

Apart from the challenges met whilst implementing the change projects in a short time, all of the trainer teams, experts, and participants agreed on the importance of the change projects for institutional development. The participants and alumni trainers reported that using Project Action Plans (PAPs) as a tool to plan and monitor their change projects was very beneficial.

5. Conclusions and Outlook

This article shows that the NMT Programme is very complex and involves numerous and diverse stakeholders and target groups across the continents of Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Europe. It is an encompassing and comprehensive way in broadening the sustainability and reach of DIES training courses, and in supporting the networking among the different alumni groups.

The evaluation design and its results gave an ample picture of the actual multiplication training activities in the target regions. The success factors, the challenges, as well as the newly emerged needs were taken into consideration for further programme development.

With the possibility of extending the project that arose in 2018, some major takeaways from the evaluation could be implemented for the second cohort (at that time running) and the planned third cohort. To wrap-up the experiences and learnings made during the implementation and to promote exchange and knowledge transfer among the different alumni teams, a closing workshop was organised to be attended by the alumni of the second cohort (2017–2018).

In September 2019, the alumni teams were invited to Potsdam, Germany, to reflect on their training courses and share their experiences. In conjunction with this, the Training of Trainers workshop for the third cohort (2019–2020) took place in Potsdam as well. This setting promoted knowledge transfer and networking between cohorts. Altogether, more than 50 alumni from different parts of the world attended this activity. Some of the alumni of the second cohort were invited as experts for the new third cohort. The didactical sessions in the Training of Trainers workshop were given more sufficient time.

The evaluation showed that some main challenges regarding the implementation of the multiplication training courses regarded workload and availability of time. The alumni teams who were organising and implementing the training courses on top of their usual work duties had a challenging workload. It is therefore imperative that the respective institutions, especially the hosting institution, are supportive of the training and its goals, and responsibilities that emerge from the training course are fully acknowledged and adequately handled by institutional leadership.

The participants, on the other hand, who would be joining the training whilst on the job, should also be backed by their leaders' institutional commitment and implement a realistic and relevant project they could work on during the training. A focus should be given on downsizing and making the projects realistic in the initial mentoring phases. The time between the workshops of the multiplication training courses had often been too short to work on the projects and their implementation. It is recommended, therefore, to extend the time needed to finalise the project plans and initiate the projects before the second workshop. This short project time could be addressed by either identifying and defining projects that could be finished by the second workshop, or by setting milestones to be reached within the training time.

As an initial step to address the time issue, a longer interval of at least four months was set as a framework for the multiplication training courses in the call for applications for the third cohort.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has brought tremendous challenges to the implementation of the national multiplication training courses. The workshops planned between the middle of March and June of 2020 had to be suspended. More than 20 workshops in the target regions had been rescheduled and/or reconceptualised. Due to the various lockdown measures, some of the alumni teams had to change the traditional face-to-face workshops to online workshops, which are especially challenging in some countries due to the lack of support infrastructure (i.e., unstable internet connections and outdated equipment). However, the trainer teams, as well as the experts, have been very flexible and timely to adapt to these new circumstances. Numerous online meetings have been conducted to find solutions in accomplishing the training courses in a justified and most beneficial way to the participants. From the programme side, an online series of Training of Trainers workshops using virtual settings was offered to the teams to support them in these challenging times.

The current worldwide pandemic, though posing as a grave challenge, brought with it a catalyst as well, a boost to include more online and blended learning activities into the multiplication training courses and the NMT Programme in general. The numerous online experiences initiated by the disruption paved the way to a more fruitful implementation of the online parts found in the NMT Programme. Furthermore, the readiness of participants to take part in online training settings has been evident, allowing for new possibilities to implement online activities as an enrichment component of the workshops and programme.

Last but not least, networking between cohorts and the different training is a steady, invariable pillar of the programme with room for development not only but also because of the current digitalisation boost.

The experience, the knowledge, and the expertise of the DIES alumni have been proven to be extremely valuable, making them multipliers of change with far-reaching effects towards the establishment of quality higher education leadership and management systems in emerging countries of the world.

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Leadership Training in Malaysia: Impact and Implications

ABSTRACT: The higher education structure in Malaysia has experienced significant changes since the implementation of the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act of 1996. The unprecedented expansion of the higher education sector and the increasing autonomy conferred to universities have created a huge demand for competent university leadership that supports the development of higher education in Malaysia. This article discusses the very first national multiplication training in Malaysia in 2014 and analyses such outcomes as the identification of good practices for future initiatives and applications in university leadership training.

KEYWORDS: university leadership in Malaysia, higher education, university management, training programme

1. Introduction

Higher education is continually transforming to meet with the varying calls for education. The development of the knowledge economy and changing demographics has led to an increase in the demands for quality tertiary education. At the same time, new financing mechanisms for higher education and shifting demands for skills as a result of technological progress and internationalisation have led to changing expectations. The evolving forces have resulted in the growing diversity of the higher education landscape. Not only do the size and types of higher education institutions differ, but also do the range and spread of programmes offered, in the mode of delivery, in learning experiences, and governance as well (Altbach et al., 2009; Staley & Trinkle, 2011; Mayer & Wilde, 2015; Wan & Sirat, 2018).

In Malaysia, the higher education structure has also experienced significant changes, especially with the passing of the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act in 1996. Before that year, only nine public universities and 156 private colleges offered undergraduate and postgraduate degree-granting programmes (Lee, 2002). Under the Act, however, private higher education institutions were also allowed to offer full degree programmes and foreign universities can set up branch campuses in Malaysia. The number of universities and other forms of private higher education institutions increased greatly after 1996. In 2020, the number of public universities had grown to 20 whilst the number of private higher education institutions accelerated to 443, which now include 10 branch campuses of foreign universities, 54 private universities and branch campuses, 37 private university colleges and branch campuses, and 342 colleges (Department of Higher Education, 2020). Moreover, more flexibility in academic programmes was offered and greater autonomy was granted to higher education institutions with the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) self-accreditation status.

The rapid expansion of the higher education sector in Malaysia and the increasing autonomy accorded to higher education institutions have raised concerns on two issues: (a) the readiness of university leaders to take up the roles and responsibilities of university management in the changing environment, and (b) the qualities of university leaders and managers to lead, support, and sustain the development of higher education in Malaysia. Effective higher education management is a critical component of developing quality and competitive higher education sector whereas the competitiveness of the higher education sector is one of the factors contributing to the nation's competitiveness (Lopez-Leyva & Rhoades, 2016). According to Marginson (2006), most universities aspire to achieve the best qualifications in the various quality indicators; their concern to be ranked in the higher positions of world-class universities lists have increased; institutions compete for research funding, and to enrol the best and brightest students and integrate its academic staff with academically distinguished professors.

As administrative roles are considerably different from academic roles, there is a need to better prepare academic administrators on higher education management. Generally, academics are beyond question in the performance of their primary tasks of pedagogy and research, but not all are equally effective in the administrative and management roles. Some undertake to do their administrative tasks but without much training or orientation towards them. Motivated by the increasing needs to nurture more effective academic leaders and administrators in Malaysia, the first Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES) National Multiplication Trainings (NMT) programme was conducted in 2013–2014.

A total of 20 academic and non-academic leaders and administrators from 10 public and private higher education institutions attended and completed the NMT programme. Six years after the completion of the programme, it is now an opportune time to review the implications of the NMT programme. Therefore, the paper is structured to address the following issues:

1. To what extent had the NMT training achieved the objectives of the programme?
2. What best practices were learnt from the NMT training?
3. How did the participants evaluate the effectiveness of the programme and which aspects of the programme can be improved?

The main objective of the paper is to share the experience in organising the first NMT programme in Malaysia, to identify good practices, and to evaluate the outcomes of the NMT programme as well as aspects to be improved in future programmes.

2. Motivation and Design of the First NMT Training Programme in Malaysia

Realising the importance of cultivating an excellent pool of academic leaders and administrators for effective university management and development in Malaysia, and inspired by the intention of German Academic Exchange Services (DAAD) and DIES to leverage on the knowledge and competencies acquired by the DIES alumni to improve higher education management in the country, a training committee consisting of four DIES alumni was formed to implement the first multiplication training programme in Malaysia.

The first challenge encountered in the process of designing the programme was to define specific training objectives and to identify relevant topics to address the changing environment faced by higher education institutions. The scope of effective university management is indeed very broad. Among the topics considered included leadership development, staff development and performance evaluation, quality assurance, human resources management, financial management, internationalisation, project management, change management, curriculum development, research management, strategic planning and governance, just to name a few.

After a careful discussion on the scope and nature of the training, particularly in terms of the objectives of the first NMT training in Malaysia, the duration of the programme, as well as the delivery methods and targeted participants, the training committee decided that since the programme would be organised for the first time in Malaysia, the focus would be on providing practical knowledge and insights useful for academic administrators (both academics and non-academics personnel) in performing their administrative duties more efficiently and effectively.

The scope of the training was further defined to include eight topics which were relevant to university management and would reflect the needs of higher education management in Malaysia at that particular period. The topics were delivered in two contact phases with a duration of four days for each phase and an online discussion between the two contact phases (the gap between the two contact phases was three months). The first contact phase was the problem identification phase where participants were exposed to critical issues in university management. The second contact phase discussed the processes and methods that underlie the development and management of an academic institution. The topics covered in the programme were:

Contact Phase 1
1. Current Changes in Education Institutions
2. Academic Management and Leadership Development
3. Human Resource Management in Education Institutions
4. Staff Development and Performance Evaluation

Contact Phase 2
1. University Management and Organisation Development
2. Strategic Planning
3. Research Management
4. Quality Assurance

An important element of the NMT training was the construction of an individual Personal Action Plan (PAP) by each participant. During the first contact phase, participants were guided by the training committee in identifying key management challenges in the respective department or faculty and proposed actions that were to be taken in the next three months. Discussions with trainers on the implementation of the action plan were conducted through emails during the off-contact phase. In the second phase of the programme, participants reported their action plans, shared best practices in university management, and discussed further strategies to be developed.

To ensure the practicality and relevance of the training programme for participants with a diverse background, the training committee incorporated the methods learnt from other DAAD and DIES programmes to develop a unique, predominantly practice-oriented methodology. Through practical problem discussions, case studies, role-plays, and PAPs, participants were encouraged to relate the topics with actual difficulties they experienced in their workplace and to bring in their personal experiences for dialogue and exploration.

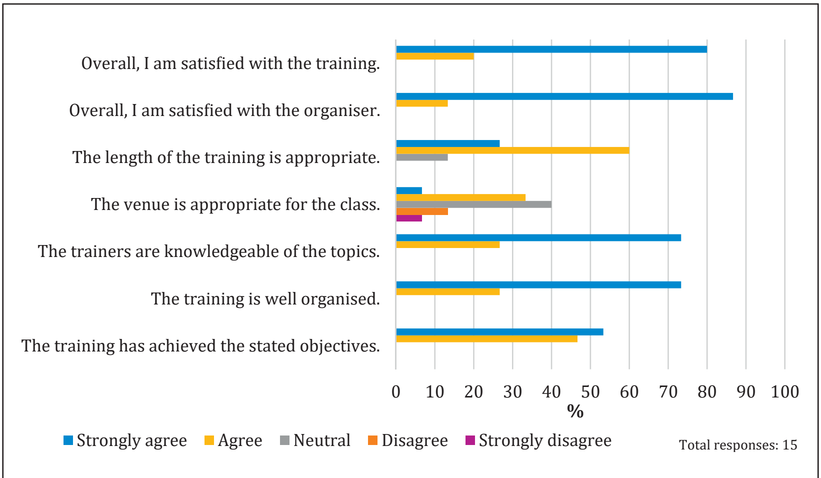
The targeted participants were young university leaders, preferably below 45 years old and held leadership positions in universities (such as Director, Dean, Deputy Dean, Head of Department, Programme Director, and Deputy Director). One of the requirements imposed was that the participants would be able to attend the complete training course. However, in actual implementation, some participants could not join the programme fully due to several reasons, i.e. family concerns, official duty in the university or overseas, etc. As participants were university leaders holding key positions such as Dean, Deputy Dean, Head of Programme, or Director, in their respective universities, it was a challenge to ask them to leave the office for four days in succession to attend the training. There was a debate among the training committee whether to penalise participants for not attending or completing the programme. For future programmes, there might be a need to set some rules on minimum participation to be eligible to 'graduate' from the programme.

3. Feedback and Comments on the First NMT Programme in Malaysia

The training applied a continuous improvement approach to ensure the effectiveness of the NMT programme. Performance evaluation was conducted every day during the first and second contact phases to collect feedback and suggestions for improvement. Also, an overall evaluation was conducted at the end of the programme.

Figure 1 shows the overall evaluation obtained from the participants on the last day of the second contact phase. Generally, participants were satisfied with the training programme and considered it well-organised and achieving its objectives. However, conflicting opinions on the duration of the programme arose. Some commented that the duration was too long as they could not leave the office for four consecutive days in a week.

Figure 1: Overall Evaluation of the NMT Programme



On the other hand, some participants thought that the duration was rather short to cover so many topics in the programme. The programme was conducted in a city centre which was affected by much traffic and was considered by many participants as not very conducive for such training.

Table 1 highlights some of the comments expressed by the participants at the end of the programme. Generally, participants had benefited from the knowledge and experiences shared during the programme. The innovative ways of conducting the programme provided a favourable environment for learning from the trainers, as well as from peers.

The diverse background of the participants was helpful for meaningful discussions and learning, but also created some challenges in group dialogues. Some participants felt that more time should have been allocated for activities and discourse, presentations of case studies, and outdoor involvement for team-building purposes. A few additional topics for inclusion in the future programme were conflict management, crisis management, and strategic management.

A few additional topics for inclusion in the future programme were conflict management, crisis management, and strategic management. Indeed, there is a need to balance the different kinds of activities prepared for the programme in the future. One of the concrete outcomes of the NMT programme was the PAP reports prepared by participants.

To sum up, the participants were in the opinion that the programme was beneficial and they have gained new knowledge related to higher education management. It was well organised and the topics were relevant and the classroom activities provided the opportunity for them to learn and share new ideas about university management.

In addition to the positive comments given, the participants also shared views and suggestions for improvements, which included the selection of a more appropriate venue for the programme, and inclusion of some topics considered essential for academic leaders in dealing with the ever-changing environment of higher education institutions. The methodology can be further improved to include more interactive discussions and activities, as well as group discussions and brainstorming sessions. Generally, the participants strongly proposed that this NMT programme should be continually organised and offered in Malaysia.

Table 1: Participants' Comments and Suggestions

Question	Comments
What did you like most about the training?	The interaction with participants from other institutions
	New ideas to share, networking
	Trainers' background and experience, PAP sharing
	Group discussion on new topics
	Sharing of experience and introduction of new ideas from authors of books, etc.
	The materials, the trainers, and the participants
	Sharing knowledge and experiences
	Knowledge sharing between participants, group activities and presentations
	The knowledge shared by the trainers
	Sharing of experience, insights, and practical tips. Networking among the family of NMT
	An innovative and creative way of presenting the content of the workshop
	The learning environment with less rigid way, more open to giving comments and ideas, diversified universities members
What aspects of the training could be improved?	Some lecture parts can include more activities.
	Numbers of participants can be increased.
	Venue
	Very 'lecture approach'. Should have more case study and group presentations
	More time for discussion and brainstorming
	More engagement with the participants
	Can include the evening sessions for team building, group activities, games etc., provide accommodation for all participants
	More outdoor participation, more group activities
	Flip board and wireless application
Additional comments/ suggestions:	Training can be conducted outside of Kuala Lumpur.
	Make it a continuous event. Let the participants become trainers in their organisations. Form a master group and continue the impact.
	A well-organised workshop. Well done, organiser. Topics could be more current and relevant. More discussion is appreciated.
	Should have the second phase on the training which focuses on other areas related to human resources, student management, crisis management, and basic financial analysis
	To have a second phase of the training on Conflict Management and Time Management for HODs/Deans
	This training could have proceeded to the next session with more outdoor activities, group involvement, thinking and decision-making skills.
	PAP needs to be monitored and improved to ensure the three-month projects. HOD achievement is not present.

4. Impact and Implications of the First NMT Programme in Malaysia

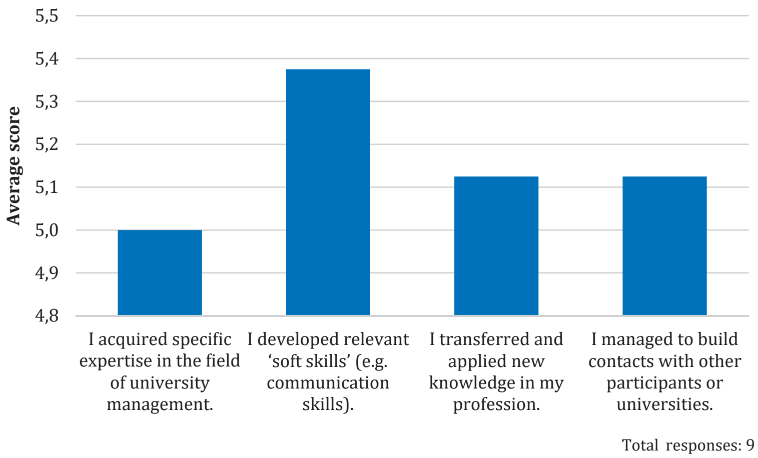
Whilst the evaluation conducted on the last day of the programme reflected the immediate impacts of the training on the participants, a survey conducted in 2020, six years after the conclusion of the programme, was still meaningful in assessing its effectiveness and applicability in developing the participants' capableness as university leaders.

A survey questionnaire was developed to gather participants' feedback on the impacts and effectiveness of the training programme. Out of 20 participants who had completed the first NMT training programme in Malaysia, nine responded. Of the nine respondents, five had moved up the academic ladder by becoming professors or associate professors, three had been promoted to higher university management positions as managers or directors, and one had changed institutions. Generally, the participants in the first NMT programme in Malaysia experienced upward movement and growth in the academic or management ladder during the past six years.

On the scale of 1 to 6 where 1 = Strongly Disagree and 6 = Strongly Agree, respondents were asked to express their opinion on the following three questions: (a) What kind of personal benefits did you gain through NMT training? (b) Which of the modules/projects of NMT strongly supported your career development? (c) Which opportunities did you use to pass on newly acquired knowledge and skills from the training course to your university?

Figure 2 to Figure 4 show the feedback from the respondents on the impacts and implications of the NMT programme. The average score was calculated for each option and used as an indicator to compare the various implications of the programme. On the types of personal benefits gained through NMT training, as shown in Figure 2, most of the respondents agreed that they have developed relevant soft skills, such as communication skills, through the NMT programme. Whilst building contacts with other participants or universities was considered to be one of the benefits gained from the programme by most of the respondents, one respondent did not seem to benefit from it. The reason could be that this respondent held a portfolio (in the counselling department) slightly different from that of the other participants, hence the opportunity for this respondent to develop meaningful contacts throughout the programme was limited.

Figure 2: What Kind of Personal Benefits Did You Gain through NMT?



The modules and activities designed for the programme covered various topics related to university management and governance. Depending on the position and responsibility of the respondents in the institution, the significance that each module brought had been different from one participant to another. For instance, quality assurance and research management were not so relevant to one respondent whose responsibility was related to the management of student affairs. In general, the module on 'Academic Management and Leadership Development' was considered to be important for career development by all the respondents (as shown in Figure 3). Also, respondents had highly commended the individual projects that they had to complete during the training programme, i.e. Personal Action Plan (PAP). PAP was helpful in the application of knowledge learnt from the programme.

One purpose of DIES in organising the NMT programme was to ensure that the knowledge acquired by the participants from the DIES training would be expanded and shared to more people in a multiplication manner. Participants who attended the NMT programme were expected to play their roles as multipliers to sustain DIES training and to promote continuous quality improvement in higher education management. Figure 4 shows that all respondents undertook one or more

Figure 3: Which of the Following Modules/Projects of NMT Strongly Support Your Career Development?

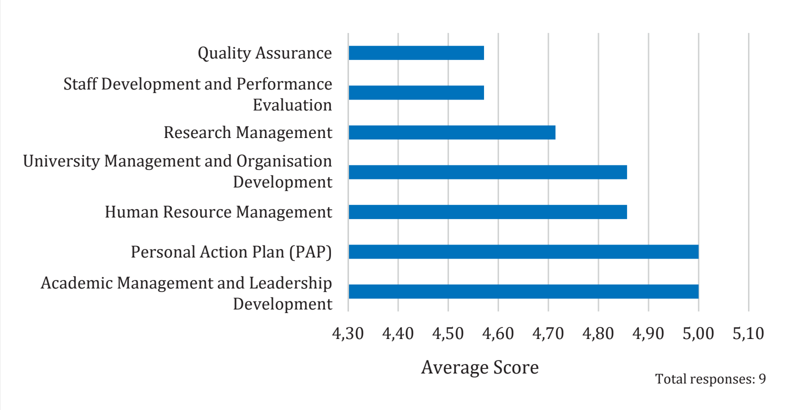
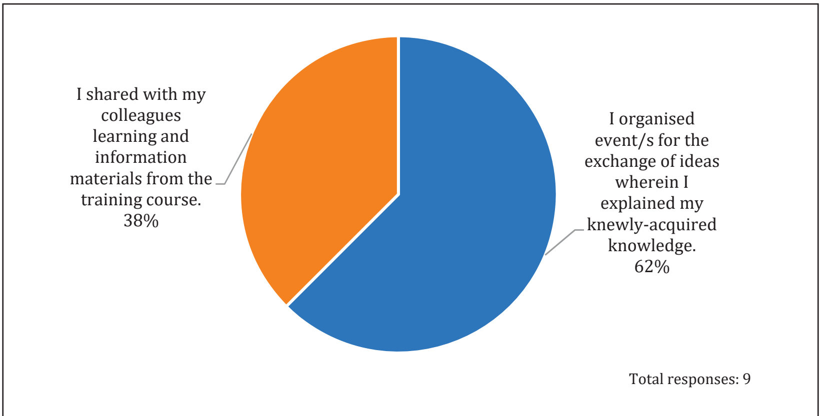


Figure 4: How Did You Pass on the Newly Acquired Knowledge and Skills from the Training Course to Your University?



methods of sharing their knowledge with colleagues from the same or different institutions. Based on the newly acquired knowledge and skills, some respondents had developed their materials and concepts and shared with their colleagues within their institutions. Some organised in-house training (i.e., mentored or supervised junior staff and nurtured young university leaders). The multiplication objective of NMT had been achieved.

5. Conclusion

The first NMT programme in Malaysia was a joint project spearheaded by four DIES alumni with the purpose to develop and implement a training programme to promote quality university leadership and management. The training committee comprised alumni who had attended the different programmes organised by DIES and had acquired different knowledge and skills. Many ideas were shared during the programme design stage which led to the unique and innovative structure and organisation of the first NMT training in Malaysia.

As the programme was specifically designed to focus on university management, with young university leaders in mind, the programme covered two broad areas of university administration, namely, (a) the critical aspects of higher education management, and (b) the processes involved in effective university management. Eight topics were selected and delivered in two contact phases. Each participant was required to prepare an individual’s Personal Action Plan (PAP) during the programme.

A survey on impacts and implications was conducted six years after the programme ended. Generally, the findings revealed that participants had benefited substantially from the programme in terms of knowledge, best practices in higher education management, and sharing of experience and expertise among the participants and the speakers. The positive implications of the training were well reflected in the upward movements of the participants in their career ladder within a rather short period of six years.

Some respondents suggested that the targeted participants should be defined more specifically to focus on early or mid-career academics to prepare them for future administrative and leadership roles. In the first NMT programme, participants from academic and non-academic backgrounds were invited to join in, as the goal was to allow for the sharing of opinions and experiences from diverse viewpoints. However, it was found that some topics were not relevant to some participants and the networking between different groups of participants was rather weak. Indeed, there had been advantages and disadvantages to inviting a diverse group of participants for a training programme. Hence the objectives of the programme must be spelt out clearly before identifying the targeted participants.

After the first NMT programme was completed in 2014, no other NMT programmes were conducted in Malaysia until 2019, when a group of DIES International Deans' Course Malaysian alumni started the inaugural IDC Malaysia Chapter (MyIDC) under the sponsorship of Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT), and the Malaysia Ministry of Education with support from DIES NMT. Many participants of 2014 NMT had strongly recommended that the NMT programme should be made an annual training programme in Malaysia to sustain the efforts of developing a critical base for effective university leaders and managers. This is particularly vital during these times of change that the world is experiencing now. Many new challenges and developments are affecting the management of higher education institutions, making the NMT training more relevant than before.

Due to an ever-changing environment in the academic landscape, especially with regards to the current outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, remote teaching and learning are fast becoming the new normal. The topics for academic leadership training and the mode of the training will have to change to reflect current developments (Kohtamäki, 2019). Hence, continuous exploration, learning, and sharing will become important components for future NMT programmes.

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Lessons Drawn from Evaluation and Implementation of the Malaysian Chapter of the International Deans' Course

ABSTRACT: Deans at Institutions of Higher Education are seldom recipients of effective or specific professional management training, institutional mentorship, and coaching despite an increasing demand on them to play a more dynamic leadership role in the face of ever-changing local and global challenges. To address this deficiency, the inaugural Malaysian Chapter of the International Deans' Course (MyIDC) was held in three parts over 2019 and 2020. In this paper, findings related to feedback on the programme are presented and discussed. Responses from the participants from two sets of surveys, and written feedback provided by two IDC international trainers involved in MyIDC were analysed. These reveal potential areas of improvement for the forthcoming MyIDC programme, such as in terms of planning and organisation, duration, content, and delivery. The article explores the lessons learnt from the MyIDC 2019/2020 training programme and discusses the improvements that can be made arising from the feedback received.

KEYWORDS: higher education, academic leadership

1. Introduction

The Malaysian higher education (HE) environment has changed tremendously over the last two decades. Not only has there been an increase in public higher education providers (HEPs), but the liberalisation of Malaysia's HE in the mid-1990s has also brought about an increase in private HEPs (Abd Aziz & Abdullah, 2014). Similar to most universities around the world, public HEPs have had to deal with internationalisation and globalisation. Among the visible changes are the more diverse campuses with international students and faculty members. Further, the need for global recognition has seen increasing links and collaborations with universities around the world (Wan & Sirat, 2018), and regional and international accreditation of academic programmes. This is also reflected in the participation of several private and public HEPs in global ranking and rating exercises, and the public responses to the results.

To a large extent, this need for global recognition and excellence has seen drastic changes in the output expected of public HEPs. These changes are evident in the deliverables expected of individual academic staff in terms of, for example, innovative and outcome-based teaching and learning, high impact research, and the push towards commercialisation of research outcomes. Another recent development is that all public universities were accorded 'autonomous' status in 2018. This autonomy, however, comes with responsibility and accountability, including the responsibility to effectively generate income and manage resources. As universities navigate and address the dynamic nature of HE, including preparing their graduates for the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR4.0)[1] and beyond, much of the implementation of new approaches and strategies will cascade down to middle management, that is, the Deans (Wahlers & Wilde, 2011; Wilde & Wolf, 2019).

Thus, Deans or Directors or Heads of Faculties, Schools and Institutes, and their deputies, cannot function effectively without an understanding of the ever-changing scenario of HE, not just in Malaysia but around the world. They also need to understand the tasks that they do at their respective centres of responsibilities, and how these need to be aligned with current national priorities. Deans need to be dynamic individuals

1 IR4.0 refers to the new phase in the Industrial Revolution. The focus in IR4.0 is on advances in technologies which include artificial intelligence (AI), augmented/virtual reality, and big data and analytics.

who can inspire academic and support staff to be engaged in the changes taking place. They have a range of portfolios to manage at the faculty level, requiring specific skill sets. These include dynamic leadership skills and capacities in human resource and financial management, academic matters, student development and well-being, research performance, national and international collaboration, marketing of courses offered, community and stakeholder engagement, and development and maintenance of resources and facilities. They need to very ably handle conflict management and to make sound decisions. As put forth by Mayer and Wilde (2015)

> Deans of faculties need new skills, they need to have a sound understanding of new requirements, they have to have knowledge about the potential of modern management methods, and their limitations. They need to have the necessary social skills in order to create a climate where tertiary institutions find a way that is accepted by people inside and outside the academic realm. (p. 16)

However, in many cases, deans may be appointed without having had prior specific training, and they often have to learn what they need to do whilst on the job. Any training that they receive whilst in office is likely to be a one-off affair with no sense of continuity from one course to another. There is also little in the way of institutional mentorship and coaching. Without relevant professional management training, matters of governance and accountability may be compromised. This was highlighted in the World Bank's Report on HE in developing countries, i.e., that "poor management is often the single greatest obstacle to stronger higher education" (World Bank, 2000, p. 95).

2. Malaysian Chapter of the International Deans' Course

In Malaysia, the Higher Education Leadership Academy or its Malay acronym, AKEPT, was set up in 2008 under the Ministry of Higher Education to train and develop university leaders based on a framework of core competencies (Asian Development Bank, 2012). The focus on talent identification and talent development is expressed in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education) under Shift 2 on talent excellence (Ministry of Education, 2015). Guidelines on leadership development are also outlined in the University Transformation Programme (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2017). It is expected that institutional leaders will be able to "demonstrate managerial capacities by being flexible, adaptable, strategic, and most of all, effective. In addition to being scholars in their own right, they will be able to inspire others by creating, supporting, and sustaining environments for talent to flourish" (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2017, p. 65). Moreover, they are also expected to "combine their strategic and managerial talents with holistic human values to promote well-being among students, staff, community, the nation, and humanity" (ibid.). Whilst attention has been given to talent development for university leaders, deans may not receive appropriate training before they take on their leadership roles or may have missed out on the training provided due to the timing of the programmes or their busy work schedules.

To begin addressing this skills deficiency among Deans, the inaugural Malaysian Chapter of the International Deans' Course (MyIDC) was held in three parts over 2019 and 2020. In line with the expectations expressed in the University Transformation Programme (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2017) and the core competencies outlined by AKEPT, the objectives set for the programme were the following:

1. To provide participants with knowledge of the current trends and challenges of higher education in Malaysia and other parts of the world;
2. To provide participants with innovative ways of thinking about strategic management and decision-making processes;
3. To provide participants with practical and transferable skills to respond to changes in higher education at their own faculties/schools/institutions;
4. To enable participants to apply methods and tools received during the programme in their academic contexts;
5. To create a support system comprising mentors and peer support.

The programme was spearheaded by a group of current and former deans who attended the Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES)—International Deans' Course (IDC) for Southeast Asian universities over the last twelve years, with the support of AKEPT, in collaboration with five local universities (Multimedia University, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Malaya, Universiti Putra Malaysia, and Universiti Utara Malaysia). The second and third parts of MyIDC 2019/2020 were partially supported by the DIES National Multiplication Training (NMT). A total of 15 IDC alumni, along with Professor Dr. Peter Mayer, who is the IDC Africa/Southeast Asian Project Director, were involved in the planning and execution of MyIDC. Twelve Malaysian IDC alumni were involved as trainers in MyIDC 2019/2020, and a total of 24 participants took part in MyIDC 2019/2020.

Two of the alumni were involved in an NMT programme in 2013, and the expansion of alumni involvement in the 2019/2020 programme is testimony to the impact that DIES IDC has had on the Malaysian IDC participants. This impact is not just evident on the successful leadership roles the alumni have held or are currently holding, but on the sustainable effect that DIES IDC has on its alumni who see the need to replicate their training to newly appointed academic leaders in Malaysia.

In this paper, the following key points are discussed concerning the MyIDC 2019/2020 training programme:

1. Examination of the feedback on the programme from the participants and two international trainers;
2. Exploration of the lessons learnt from the MyIDC 2019/2020 training programme and discussion of the changes that can be derived from them.

The paper aimed to address this question: What improvements can be made to the MyIDC programme based on the feedback received?

2.1 MyIDC: Content and Delivery

Like the IDC, MyIDC 2019/2020 was conducted over three parts which were held in different locations. The first part was held in Kedah, the northwestern state in Peninsular Malaysia, over ten days. The second part was held in Melaka for five days, and the last one, in Cyberjaya over five days. The rationale for conducting the training over three parts echoed that of IDC, where it was felt that "the complex skills required to manage higher education institutions cannot be meaningfully discussed, trained, or reflected upon when there is just one get-together" (Mayer & Wilde, 2015, p. 16). Further, Lacerenza et al. found that training programmes "with multiple sessions spaced temporally resulted in greater transfer and results than massed training sessions" (2017, p. 16). The reconvening of the same participants for the second and third part of the programme provided more time for reflection of their leadership practices, meaningful sharing, and development of their own Project Action Plans (PAPs). The length of the face-to-face and online contact among the group of participants is also aimed at promoting camaraderie and establishing peer support among the participants.

In total, 24 Deans, Deputy Deans, Directors and Deputy Directors of academic centres from 19 Malaysian universities completed their My-IDC training. The participants included three participants from private universities. Only one participant from part one withdrew from the programme as he was subsequently appointed as deputy vice-chancellor of a university.

The overall content of the three-part MyIDC programme was developed based on the IDC training modules, but these were modified and adapted to suit the Malaysian context. The development of the modules and training of the trainers were facilitated by Professor Peter Mayer and Professor Ong Duu Sheng, who is also an IDC Southeast Asia trainer. Table 1 provides an overview of the modules in each part of MyIDC. Modules 7 and 12 are modules developed specifically for MyIDC.

Table 1: Modules in MyIDC 2019/2020

Part	Modules
1	University Governance
	Strategic Faculty Management
	Entrepreneurial University
	Project Action Plan
	Leadership
	Change Management
2	Communication
	Conflict Management
	HR and Talent Management
3	Research Management
	Internationalisation
	Psychosocial Profiling for Effective People Management

The modules were arranged in such a way as to cascade from major issues related to faculty leadership and preparation for the development of individual PAPs in part 1 of the training programme, to more people-oriented modules in part 2. The modules in part 3 continued as people-centred and with two other important areas for higher education in Malaysia, internationalisation and research management.

As previously mentioned, the core trainers comprised a group of 12 IDC alumni. Invited trainers included Professor Mayer, Dr. rer nat Jutta Fedrowitz (Centre for Higher Education, Germany), as well as, Professor Dr. Maria Flordeliza L. Anastacio (Vice-President of Centro Escolar

University, The Philippines—Malolos Campus), and Professor Dr. Didi Achjari (Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia). The latter two are IDC alumni, and Dr. Anastacio is also an IDC Southeast Asia trainer. Invited speakers from Malaysia included the Director of AKEPT, Professor Dr. Nordin Yahaya. The organising team felt that the diversity of expertise and leadership experience among the trainers and invited speakers would strengthen the MyIDC programme not just with theoretical knowledge but with actual practices and lived experiences as well. This is in line with the IDC curriculum which "seeks to equip participants with the knowledge, tools, and experiences to respond to challenges and opportunities in their operating environments" (Antia, 2019, p. 22).

To engage the participants and encourage more reflective practices among them, various delivery methods were utilised. The use of multiple delivery methods, particularly those that are practice-related, have been shown to affect the extent to which participants used the knowledge and skills obtained during the training in their jobs (Lacerenza et al., 2017). Similar to IDC, the delivery methods used in MyIDC included the gallery walk, discussion of case studies, role-plays, and peer consultations. The participants also visited two local universities to learn more about how things are done at these universities. In one of the trips, participants learned about a student entrepreneurship programme at the university. In another trip, the participants were exposed to an agricultural-based business model. Student entrepreneurship and income-generating programmes are important elements in Malaysian institutes of higher education (Ministry of Education, 2015). Hence, these site-visits provided participants with possible ways of doing similar activities at their institutions. Short social and educational trips including engagement with a local minority community in Melaka were also included in the programme.

One of the aims of these trips was to foster a closer relationship between participants. It was important for them to bond and feel comfortable with each other as this helped to establish trust between them and reduce inhibitions. As a result, more meaningful and open discussions could be carried out during the programme. The discussions included, for example, strategies involved in different institutions on postgraduate intake, income generation, and grant proposal writing. To protect the confidentiality of some of the matters discussed, examples will not be provided here. However, in terms of topics, the matters discussed included conflict management and challenges related to dealing with human resource issues.

The PAP was also a major component of the knowledge transfer. The PAP was not just an exercise in project management but was directly related to the participants' contexts, managing the change project in a faculty. The conceptual framework for PAP was presented in part 1 of the programme, after which the participants consulted their assigned mentors (from amongst the MyIDC trainers) online and began developing and implementing their PAPs over eight months. The participants then presented the progress of their PAPs in parts 2 and 3, and obtained feedback from the trainers and their peers. A colloquium was held immediately after the conclusion of part 3, where the MyIDC participants showcased their PAPs in the form of poster displays, not only to fellow participants and MyIDC trainers, but also to deputy vice-chancellors and representatives of Malaysian universities, and other guests.

Table 2 shows the broad thematic distribution of the 24 PAPs. The themes revealed areas of concern among the MyIDC cohorts. The projects included one that was working towards establishing a green sustainable transportation system at a university, and another on engaging alumni to increase joint research and publications. Based on the presentations of the PAPs, most of them were already being implemented at that point. For example, for the PAP on engaging alumni to increase research and

Table 2: Thematic Distribution of MyIDC 2019/2020 Project Action Plans

Themes	Number of PAPs	Notes
Faculty Management	8	Included projects related to the establishment of a business unit, a centre for continuing education and development, and a community engagement centre. Other projects related to creating a 'happy workplace', and a mental health programme for students and alumni engagement.
Personnel Management	7	Included four projects related to research and publications, and two related to entrepreneurship.
Curriculum Development	4	Included projects were related to entrepreneurship, service-learning, and soft skill development.
Project Management	2	Included a project on energy-efficient campus mobility.
International-isation	2	The projects focused on student and staff mobility.
Research Management	1	The project was related to engaging alumni to increase opportunities for research collaboration and publications.

publication opportunities, the alumni association had already been officially set up and registered by part 3 of the MyIDC programme. As a result of the engaging alumni, three joint research grants had been secured and two co-authored journal articles were in progress. This particular PAP enabled the participant to strategise alumni engagement which is already showing quick gains in research collaboration. These collaborative efforts and their outputs in terms of publications and research grants are important to the institution's research reputation and prominence. The efforts also contribute to the university which is a research-intensive one.

3. Methods

The study employed the following methodology. First, two main sources of data were used to examine the feedback from the MyIDC 2019/2020 participants. The first was an online survey designed by AKEPT via Google forms (henceforth, AKEPT's survey) for part 1 of MyIDC 2019/2020. The surveys required participants to provide feedback for each module and related trainer (henceforth, 'speaker'). The participants were asked to evaluate if the:

1. speaker was well prepared;
2. speaker was knowledgeable regarding the subject matter;
3. speaker effectively engaged with the attendees;
4. content was beneficial to them.

Comments could also be added. A total of 25 participants responded to the survey by AKEPT.

Second, feedback from two other surveys carried out by the Centre for Quality Development from the University of Potsdam as the DIES NMT Coordinator (henceforth referred to as the NMT survey) was collected. The first survey was carried out from 18 to 20 December 2019, and the second one from 5 February to 5 March 2020 via an online system. Apart from the main demographic information, the main question in this survey was about the personal benefits the participants gained through their participation in the training course. They were asked to assess a series of statements on a five-point agreement scale. They were also asked to comment on what their expectations were for the training and to provide suggestions for future workshops. A total of 18 of the remaining 24 participants responded to this survey, resulting in a 75% response rate. Some failed to respond within the given time possibly due to their work commitments. The second NMT survey focused on ten areas including content, trainers, the PAP and personal benefits. A total of 22 of them (92%) responded to the second NMT survey.

Whilst the surveys were generally related to the level of satisfaction of the participants on the speakers, content, delivery, and organisation of the training programme, triangulation was also done with the feedback provided by two IDC experts who were involved in several training components of MyIDC 2019/2020. As the PAPs were an important element of the programme, feedback on lessons learnt from the PAPs which participants presented in their oral and poster presentations was also examined.

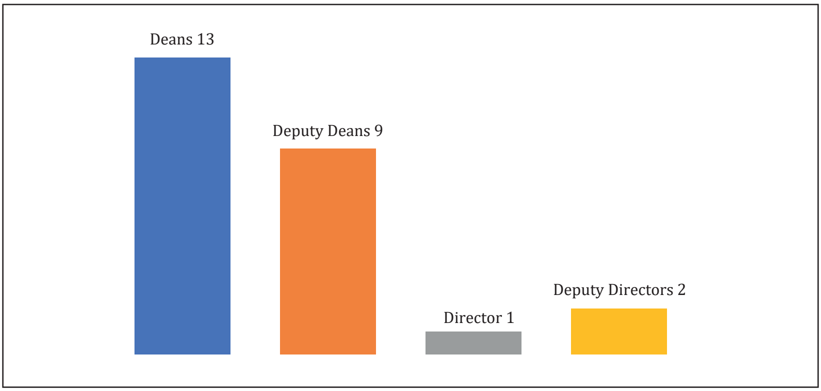
4. Findings

This section presents the feedback on the programme.

4.1 MyIDC 2019/2020 Participants

The first part of the programme started with 25 participants, 9 females and 16 males. The positions they were holding are shown in Figure 1. Most of them were aged between 36 to 45 years old (64%) and 36% of them were 46 years old and older (36%).

Figure 1: Positions Held by MyIDC 2019/2020 Participants



4.2 AKEPT's Survey

The overall feedback for the modules conducted in part 1 of MyIDC 2019/2020 is shown in Table 3. The means were calculated based on the evaluation for each session and the related speaker. Based on the performance indicators provided by AKEPT, all the modules in part 1 were rated as 'good', with average scores of between 3.5 to 3.9.

Based on the 77 comments from the participants for part 1, the following themes emerged:

- content
- delivery
- duration of the programme
- food and accommodation
- logistics
- networking and bonding
- out-of-class activities
- trainers/speakers
- others

Table 3: Mean and Frequencies for Module Achievement in Part 1 of MyIDC 2019/2020

Module	Mean
1. University Governance	3.6
2. Strategic Faculty Management	3.8
3. Entrepreneurial University	3.7
4. Project Action Plan	3.9
5. Leadership	3.8
6. Change Management	3.8

Key Performance Indicators	
Mean	Performance
4.5–5.0	Excellent
4.0–4.4	Very Good
3.5–3.9	Good
3.0–3.4	Intermediate
2.9 and below	Low

Of these, most of the comments were related to delivery (27%), content (20%), duration (13%), and out of class activities (13%). The comments on the methods of delivery (N = 21), content (N = 15) and out-of-class activities (N = 10) were generally positive. Concerning delivery, there were suggestions for fewer lectures, more discussions, and a range of activities. The participants also felt that there should be pre-session materials, and that the session notes should be shared more quickly. There was also a suggestion to use interactive online learning. There appeared to be contradictory feelings about case studies with one comment saying that there were too many of these. Two out of 15 comments were on content, saying that one of the modules was too general and was not of interest to the participants. On duration, all 10 commented that part 1 of the programme was too long and too intensive.

4.3 NMT Survey

The NMT survey for part 2 of MyIDC showed encouraging results. Table 4 shows that the responses to the question on the personal benefits gained through their participation in the training course were on the whole positive, with the majority of the respondents strongly agreeing to the statements shown in Table 4. The participants rated acquiring relevant 'soft skills' (e.g. conflict management, communication skills, leadership etc.) (M = 1.5) as the most beneficial to them throughout the training course.

The positive responses to these items suggest that the programme objectives of providing participants with knowledge of the current trends and challenges of higher education in Malaysia and other parts of the world, with practical and transferable skills, and with innovative ways of thinking about strategic management and decision-making processes were fulfilled (refer to the objectives of MyIDC 2019/2020).

The NMT survey for part 3 of MyIDC had a more comprehensive coverage compared to the AKEPT survey as it was conducted at the end of the MyIDC 2019/2020 programme. In terms of programme content, Table 5 and Table 6 show that the responses to the question of the training fulfilling the objectives of sessions or modules, and the evaluation of the organisational and didactical structure of the training course, were overwhelmingly positive. Again, this feedback indicates that the objectives of the programme concerning the provision of new knowledge and transferable skills were achieved.

Where trainers and experts were concerned, as shown in Table 7, all the respondents strongly agreed or agreed to the related statements.

Table 4: Level of the Agreement for Personal Benefits Gained in Part 2 of MyIDC 2019/2020

Items	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I acquired new thematic expertise in the field of university management.	1.7	56%	33%	6%	–	–	6%
I have gained knowledge of the current trends and challenges of higher education in Malaysia and other parts of the world.	1.7	61%	28%	6%	–	–	6%
I have acquired relevant 'soft skills' (e.g. conflict management, communication skills, leadership etc.).	1.5	78%	11%	6%	–	–	6%
I have acquired innovative ways of thinking about strategic management and decision-making processes.	1.6	67%	22%	6%			6%

Table 5: Level of Agreement for Objectives Fulfiled for Part 3 of MyIDC 2019/2020

Items	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree
I acquired new knowledge in the respective field the session/module covered.	1.3	73%	27%
The newly acquired knowledge is relevant to my job.	1.2	77%	23%

Table 6: Level of Agreement for Organisational and Didactical Structure of the Training Course for Part 3 of MyIDC 2019/2020

Items	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly agree
The training course enabled me to practise my newly acquired skills in my work context.	1.3	68%	32%	–
The training course struck an adequate balance between inputs and discussions.	1.4	64%	36%	–
The training course provided opportunities to discuss the taught topics.	1.2	82%	18%	–
The training course struck an adequate balance between theoretical and practical inputs.	1.4	64%	32%	5%
The experts presented content in an organised manner.	1.4	68%	27%	5%
The training course used a good mix of didactical approaches to engage the participants.	1.3	68%	32%	–
The team coaching helped solved questions and problems related to the training topics.	1.2	77%	23%	–
The team coaching helped coordinate exchange with other participants.	1.3	73%	27%	–

Table 7: Level of Agreement for Performance of the Trainers and Experts for Part 3 of MyIDC 2019/2020

Items	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree
The trainer/key expert possessed strong expertise in his/her field.	1.2	77%	23%
The trainer/key expert used appropriate didactical methods to convey knowledge.	1.3	73%	27%
The trainer/key expert responded flexibly to the participants' needs.	1.3	68%	32%

Similar responses were recorded for networking where all the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that they used their newly established contacts to exchange information and initiate cooperation (see Table 8). Their responses were consistent with the sharing of administrative and research expertise and experience through the MyIDC 2019/2020 WhatsApp group. Events held at each of the participants' universities, such as conferences, talks, seminars, and, more recently, webinars, are still being constantly promoted in this WhatsApp group. This mode of communication not only creates an informal platform to discuss matters related to work but also creates a social network of peers and mentors that encourages and supports each other. This close network of MyIDC 2019/2020 alumni and facilitators enables them to reach out to others in different fields of academia and research at all the institutions involved in MyIDC 2019/2020, thus, creating new connections and extending each of their networks even further. Therefore, the objectives of creating a support system comprising of mentors and peer support were largely been met.

Table 8: Level of Agreement for the Use of Newly Established Contacts for Part 3 of MyIDC 2019/2020

Items	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree
I used my newly established contacts to exchange information.	1.2	77%	23%
I used my newly established contacts to initiate cooperation.	1.4	64%	36%

Similar to the findings from the NMT survey for MyIDC part 2, the respondents generally agreed to the statements in the section on personal benefits that they gained from the training programme. Table 9 shows that they rated acquiring new thematic expertise in the field of university management (M = 1.2) and acquiring relevant 'soft skills' (e.g. conflict management, communication skills, leadership etc.) (M = 1.2) as the most beneficial to them throughout the training course (see Table 9). These skills help them be better equipped in carrying out tasks in their present positions especially in managing human resource issues more effectively, and addressed the related MyIDC 2019/2020 programme objectives.

Table 9: Level of Agreement for Personal Benefits Gained for Part 3 of MyIDC 2019/2020

Items	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly agree
I acquired new thematic expertise in the field of university management.	1.2	77%	23%	–
I can transfer and apply new knowledge in my profession.	1.3	73%	27%	–
I have gained specific expertise in internationalisation and research management.	1.3	73%	27%	–
I have acquired relevant 'soft skills' (e.g. conflict management, communication skills, leadership etc.).	1.2	77%	23%	–
I have acquired knowledge in Psychosocial Profiling for Effective People Management.	1.5	59%	32%	9%

The skills acquired were mainly transferred or shared at the universities of the respondents through sessions that were conducted to explain their newly acquired knowledge and skills (N = 17) and the distribution of materials from the training to colleagues (N = 17). The findings in Table 9 are consistent with the level of satisfaction expressed by the respondents on the overall training in general (see Table 10) and their high level of agreement to the statements related to the training course meeting their expectations (see Table 11). All these findings suggest that the programme objectives were being met.

Table 10: Level of Satisfaction with the Training in General

Items	Number of responses	Percentage
Very satisfied	14	63.6%
Satisfied	8	36.4%
Total	22	100.0%

Table 11: Level of Agreement for Expectation of Training Course

Items	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree
I feel more prepared for my position in university management.	1.5	55%	45%
The training course improved my career development prospects.	1.4	62%	38%

As Table 12 shows, the respondents were satisfied with the conceptual set-up of the course into three phases.

Table 12: Level of Satisfaction on the Conceptual Set-up of the Course in Separate Contact Phases

Items	Number of responses	Percentage
Very satisfied	11	50.0%
Satisfied	11	50.0%
Total	22	100.0%

The second NMT survey contained specific sections on the PAP. Table 13 shows the responses to the question regarding the current implementation status of the PAPs. Eight participants (36.4%) responded they had already started implementing the projects at their institutions and 8 participants (36.4%) responded they were in the middle of implementing them. Based on the oral and poster presentations at the end of MyIDC 2019/2020, almost all of the participants will be able to complete their PAPs by the end of 2020 (see Challenges and Lessons Learnt).

Concerning the question on how the higher education management at the participants' universities had been involved in their projects, majority of them (86%) responded that their university management had been informed of their project whilst 67% of them responded that the university management was involved in the implementation of their project in terms of supporting the projects by officially approving them

Table 13: Current Implementation Status of the PAP or Change Project

Items	Number of responses	Percentage
I am in the middle of implementing my change project at my institution.	8	36.4%
I already started implementing my change project at my institution.	8	36.4%
I have finished implementing my change project at my institution.	3	13.6%
I am currently finalising my change project and am coordinating with the university's leadership.	3	13.6%
Total	22	100%

and, in some cases, even providing funding for the projects. All the participants who responded were satisfied (N = 14) and very satisfied (N = 8) with the mentoring of their PAPs. The participants were also asked to provide suggestions regarding the mentoring process, and, in general, they suggested more frequent and regular communication and discussion between the mentors and mentees.

Table 14 shows the level of agreement to the type of changes the projects initiated in the participants' universities. The responses show that they mainly agreed with the three related statements, and most of them strongly agreed, in particular, with the second statement where their PAP had made a positive impact on their faculty and university development. The participants answered these questions based on the knowledge and skills that they acquired in the MyIDC programme and with regards to their PAPs.

When asked what they did between the second and third workshops, the responses from the participants indicated that 77.3% of them modified their PAPs (N = 17), whilst 63.6% (n = 14) of them implemented the project at their universities. Only seven said that they read relevant literature recommended by the trainers. It is likely that they did not have the time to do this due to their busy schedules, heavy administrative commitments and research workload. In other words, Deans still have to meet their personal research targets since their core position is as academics, and they have to do all these whilst serving in term-based administrative positions (e.g. a two- to a three-year term as Dean).

Like the AKEPT survey, the comments from the two NMT surveys were analysed in terms of emerging themes. Similar but fewer themes emerged from the comments in the first NMT survey which were on pro-

Table 14: Level of Agreement about the Types of Changes Initiated in Universities from the Projects

Items	Mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Disagree
My university has established new processes/ structures in the field of university management.	2.3	19%	48%	24%	5%	5%
My university has improved the possibilities to achieve its strategic objectives within its field of work.	2.0	32%	36%	27%	5%	–
My university has developed new ideas and concepts in the field of university management.	2.1	19%	57%	19%	5%	–

gramme delivery, content, and organisation and out-of-class activities. The same points about having more discussions, sharing and reflection sessions, and participating in more out-of-class activities, rather than lectures, were brought up in the NMT surveys. The participation of other university officials and the involvement of leaders of other organisations as part of the MyIDC programme were also suggested in the comments. Further, it was felt that at least one part of the module should be held outside Malaysia, and that a yearly refresher course to monitor the progress of the MyIDC participants should be conducted.

The comments in the second survey were similar to the comments in AKEPT's survey reported in the previous section. Themes related to several of the programme objectives emerged in the comments on what the respondents liked about the training. They are as follows:

1. The **community of practice** with shared issues, a sense of camaraderie, and a support system.
2. The acquisition of **new knowledge** and **skills**.
3. **Networking** among participants.

The suggestions for improvements included having more activities in the sessions and even outdoor activities or excursions to foster camaraderie among the participants. These comments, which were mainly to do with content and delivery, have been discussed by the main organising committee to improve the next MyIDC. Based on the positive feedback related to the programme objectives, it seemed that the objectives were being met to a large extent.

The respondents also suggested topics for future training programmes, and these included the following:

- community service,
- cross-cultural management,
- dos and don'ts lists for human management skills,
- managing difficult people,
- risk management,
- sessions with targeted stakeholders of universities,
- social behaviour management,
- spiritual values,
- sustainable management/leadership, and
- the psychology of a leader.

These topics are especially related to the Malaysian context. Community service, for instance, has become an important pillar of public education in which universities are asked to account for the impact of their research on communities and society at large. The incorporation of spiritual values is also understandable within the local context and is, in fact, already being carried out by AKEPT through its QALB (values) Guided Leadership Module. Almost half of the participants have attended this programme to date. About the psychology of a leader, a module on psychosocial profiling for effective people management was offered in the final part of MyIDC 2019/2020 (see Table 1). Many of the topics are connected to human relations as deans have to deal with Malaysian and international academic colleagues, non-academic colleagues, students, and other stakeholders (e.g., government officials, people from industry, community members and parents).

4.4 Feedback from IDC Experts

Two IDC experts provided their feedback on MyIDC 2019/2020: one on MyIDC part 2/NMT part 1 (Expert 1) and the other, on MyIDC part 3/NMT part 2 (Expert 2). Both were involved in the training programme in these respective sessions. Feedback on five components of the training programme was provided. The list is as follows:

- what they liked about the programme;
- preparation and organisation;
- workshop implementation;
- training committee as a speaker, moderator, facilitator;
- fulfilment of the main goals or learning outcomes of the workshop; and
- concrete enhancement proposals.

In terms of **what they liked about the programme**, both experts mentioned the teamwork and distribution of roles among the Malaysian alumni of IDC Southeast Asia. Expert 1 also commended the well-designed and balanced programme inclusive of topics and methods according to the needs of deans. Both experts felt that the **preparation and organisation** of the programme, including excursions, were well organised. Expert 1 also commented on mutual benefits for MyIDC and the community derived from a community engagement activity which took place at a village in Melaka. Both experts were also of the opinion that the **implementation of the programme**, coupled with relevant and important topics, was suitable for participants. Expert 2 thought that the poster presentation of PAPs was a good idea, and that the PAP presentations were interesting and well executed.

Concerning the **training committee**, Expert 2 felt that the team of trainers was very strong and very committed. Expert 1 noted that the team used its different talents and experiences wisely. However, she felt that some of the trainers could still learn from their presentation experience in MyIDC part 2, and further improve their training methods.

In terms of programme objectives, both trainers reported that the **goals,** in general, were met, although Expert 1 felt that the intended learning outcomes of one of the sessions were unclear to her, and, therefore, emphasised that trainers must be clear of the intended learning outcome of a method or activity. Expert 2 felt that there should be a reassessment of the tasks assigned with role re-distribution among the committee members and trainers. Expert 1 also pointed out that given the amount of work and time involved in planning and organising MyIDC, a financial allocation for administrative support may be warranted as a means of **concretising the MyIDC programme.**

4.5 Project Action Plan Presentations

Each participant presented the progress of their PAPs in the form of oral presentations in parts 2 and 3 of MyIDC 2019/2020. At the end of part 3, they also presented their PAPs in the form of posters, which was a major highlight during the post-MyIDC colloquium. This colloquium was held immediately following the final of part 3. The findings on the challenges and lessons learnt from each PAP were collated by trainers present in the various oral presentations and from the participants' poster presentations.

Several challenges were identified by the participants during their oral presentations. These were related, for instance, to budget constraints when, in some cases, the project had to be scaled down or alternative funding had to be sought. The lack of funding could also potentially affect the sustainability of the project. Related to this were the allocation of time and the need to balance the project with administrative duties, and academic and research tasks. Due to this, meeting the projected deadlines for the project or monitoring the progress of the project was not always possible.

Another challenge was obtaining buy-in from colleagues and related stakeholders, and managing people from within the faculty and institution. As Deans, for example, the participants had to present their ideas to their faculty management team and faculty colleagues and stakeholders (e.g., students, community, industry), and, in some cases, even to the university management, to convince them of the viability of the project, and to obtain official support for it. Other challenges were related to persuading colleagues to work together as a team or committee, and to convince them to invest their time and energy on the project. Without committed teamwork, the success of the project was not guaranteed, and several participants reported that it was a real challenge trying to convince people. This was especially true when it came to what one participant referred to as 'academic compassion', or the willingness to help and mentor junior colleagues. Communication skills were of the utmost importance here to be able to engage colleagues and other stakeholders and to garner support for one's PAP.

Still another challenge mentioned was the lack of expertise and skills among non-academic staff and students, such as technical skills, which meant that they were unable to contribute meaningfully to the project in this particular capacity. In such cases, tasks like building an online system for students' progress needed to be outsourced to external parties resulting in added costs to the project.

Changes in management or administrative structure within the university was another challenge faced by some participants as was any type of sudden change in situations which could delay scheduled milestones for the project. The ability to respond to change quickly and effectively was critically important. Suggestions from other participants and facilitators may have helped them overcome some of the challenges they faced. Among them were strategies to get more colleagues involved in the implementation of the project. The peer support and a gesture of solidarity from fellow participants also provided a sense of "I am not alone" to participants as some of them faced similar challenges with their PAPs.

Based on the challenges encountered by the participants, the lessons learnt from the PAPs were divided into two main categories which address two of the programme objectives. The first related the guidelines provided in the programme to knowledge and skills on project management acquired by carrying out PAP. The second included the learning points gained through the experience of planning, implementing, and monitoring the success of their PAPs, which are as follows:

- engaging relevant stakeholders and getting the buy-in from stakeholders and the university administration,
- establishing effective communication and teamwork,
- being flexible and making changes where necessary,
- looking at the bigger picture within which the PAP is situated,
- employing data analysis in the planning stage so that one is well informed of the context involved, and
- sourcing adequate funding, and even space in some cases.

The participants generally felt that these lessons derived from working on the PAPs could also be applied to other projects they are currently involved in, or in future ones. The methods used to manage the PAPs were found to be useful in planning and implementing projects systematically. In the words of a participant, "I find the PAP helpful as it makes me consider all angles of proper planning. I see the potential for a spin-off stand-alone PAP course". Organising a stand-alone module on PAP is something that is being considered by the MyIDC committee.

Further, based on the feedback received from the participants, it was also felt that the facilitators should receive training on mentoring PAPs. The challenges and lessons learnt from the PAPs will be shared with future MyIDC participants to help them plan their PAPs more effectively. An idea has been mooted to write about the PAPs from MyIDC 2019/2020 in the form of a book so that it may act as a point of reference to others (e.g., the current MyIDC alumni, colleagues of the alumni, and future MyIDC participants).

5. Discussion

5.1 Feedback on MyIDC 2019/2020

Based on the AKEPT and NMT surveys, as well as reports from the international trainers, the overall feedback on the content, delivery, and trainers was generally positive. The overall rating of 63.6% 'very satisfied' and 36.4% 'satisfied responses' from the participants about the training in general, strongly suggests that the three-part MyIDC programme was a success. Participants felt that they were more prepared for their positions in university management and felt that this course improved their career development prospects. For the participants, finishing the programme equipped with a higher degree of confidence and belief in one's abilities to carry out duties at work had been an important mark of achievement, and indeed, a measure of success for the programme.

However, it also needs to be said that the AKEPT survey for part 1 was methodologically different in that it sought feedback on each session in every module, including feedback on the trainers from that session. This did not provide overall feedback of part 1. Rather, the responses to all the sessions in every module were quantitatively analysed and rated based on AKEPT's Key Performance Indicators (refer to Table 3). Based on this, the modules were all rated as 'good' rather than 'very good' or 'excellent'. The ratings for each module combined the evaluation of individual trainers and content of a session, and compared to the NMT surveys, suggest a less favourable response from the participants despite the overall 'good' evaluation. This result contrasted with the high level of agreement and satisfaction in the NMT surveys. It is therefore suggested that in future MyIDC programmes, an NMT-type of a survey be carried out as the AKEPT, one is more appropriate for a single module than a comprehensive three-part programme like MyIDC.

The findings from parts 2 and 3 are consistent with the feedback from the two international experts. The training team and organising committee were commended for their planning and implementation, i.e. team effort and support among the Malaysian IDC alumni involved in MyIDC was key to the success of MyIDC. This was despite not having a dedicated administrator to assist the organising committee, all of whom were also involved as trainers or moderators in the programme. Many man-hours were spent above and beyond their administrative, academic, and research duties to ensure the success of MyIDC 2019/2020. This included having to make last-minute changes in the venue and schedule for part 3 due to the unavailability of the training facilities at AKEPT, which was being used as a quarantine centre for Malaysians arriving from abroad in light of the impending COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. This situation also led to the trainers having to advance their personal funds to ensure that this part of the programme could still be carried out. Discussions about the most suitable venue and changes in the schedule were made mainly via communication on the MyIDC WhatsApp group, where participants were free to share their opinions and express their anxieties. In the end, a consensus was reached about the venues and schedule. This was indeed a lived experience and lesson on crisis management and a consultative decision-making process.

The feedback on content, delivery, and trainers was also positive. However, a point about trainers learning from their experience, and being more aware of the learning outcomes of the session they were conducting, was brought up. This point needs to be considered and could account for the evaluation in AKEPT's survey. The trainers only attended one 'train-the-trainer' session due to time and funding constraints, and although they may be content experts, more professional training sessions are necessary to enhance their delivery and presentation skills. The lack of separation of duties among members of the organising and training team, which placed an unnecessarily huge burden on the team as a whole, was also noticed by the international experts.

The comments from the participants pointed to the need to rethink the duration of each part. Whilst the participants liked having the programme broken into parts, they generally felt that part 1, in particular, was too long. This is perhaps not surprising given their administrative duties and the many responsibilities that are associated with their work make it challenging for them to be away from the office for long. Unlike the two-week phase in Germany in IDC, the first part (and indeed, the other two parts as well), was held in Malaysia. This meant that the participants could be asked to return to their universities for meetings and events, or had to answer emails and calls whilst the training was going on. This broke the momentum of the training for them and affected the dynamics of the group.

Being in the administrative positions that they are in, and with Professors and Associate Professors among the participants, it was clear that they did not favour sitting down and listening to lectures, although there was a consensus that they had acquired new knowledge and skills in this course. Nor did they favour an intensive pace for the delivery of content. Instead, they suggested that there be a range of activities and more time for discussion. This ties in with the feeling that being in the programme created a community of practice where they could share ideas and issues with both trainers and fellow participants.

The participants also felt that there was a need for more out of class activities. Many outdoor activities were organised for them during the programme to encourage them to get to know each other better. These included a forest walk, a day trip to the island of Langkawi (to visit a university's geopark), campus tours and visits, a cooking session with a local minority community, a riverboat cruise, and even short hikes organised by the participants themselves. Online learning was also suggested as a component of MyIDC.

Concerning the PAPs, faculty management was an important area to the participants, which is not surprising given their administrative positions. However, a closer look at the topics of the PAPs (refer to the notes in Table 2) indicates that the PAPs were related to the setting up of units or centres, and generally to creating a better environment for colleagues and students. Given the drive towards research output in Malaysian universities, many of the projects were also related to enhancing research and publications.

The participants were generally positive about the benefit of planning a real project as part of MyIDC, but suggested more frequent communication and discussions with their mentors in between the three parts of MyIDC. Worth mentioning here is that most trainers kept in touch with their mentees via WhatsApp individually or as a group (each trainer was assigned four to five mentees). A WhatsApp group, comprising all the participants, trainers, and AKEPT representatives, was also set up for ease of communication among everyone involved in MyIDC. This WhatsApp group continues to be active with members, especially the participants who share information about academic and research events, updates on research findings, and the latest news of awards and achievements.

5.2 Lessons Learnt

In this paper, feedback on the MyIDC 2019/2020 programme from the participants and two international trainers was examined, and the lessons learnt from feedback to improve forthcoming MyIDC programmes were explored. Based on the feedback it would appear that the objectives of the programme have been met.

For instance, the objective of providing participants with knowledge of current developments, changes and challenges of higher education in Malaysia and at the international level, to which the participants reacted positively, would have been derived from the modules, and expertise and experience of the local and international trainers and speakers.

Providing participants with new and creative ways of thinking about strategic management and decision-making processes, which again, the participants agreed that they had obtained through the modules and various delivery modes, as well as the PAPs, would have contributed to the achievement of this objective. The knowledge and skills obtained throughout the course would have been derived not just from the formal content and delivery but from informal communication with the facilitators, speakers and fellow participants.

One way of ascertaining if participants applied some of the skills, methods and tools to respond to changes and demands at their institutions would be their choice of PAP topics (see Table 2), and the way they planned and implemented their PAPs. Based on the progress of the PAPs from part 2 to part 3, it would appear that the participants had made use of some of these skills and abilities to effect changes at their faculties and, in some cases, at the university level.

Among the essential skills and abilities is the ability to make informed decisions, to be mentally and emotionally prepared to manage colleagues, and to deal with the high demands of work (e.g. increasing student intake, conducting high impact research, increasing number and quality of publications, securing national and international research grants, generating income) amidst limited resources. These demands are reflected in the topics of the PAPs, and the support from individual institutions of respective PAPs is a good indicator of the relevance of the projects to the faculty or institution. Given that there is an observable trend of younger academics under the age of 45 leading faculties in Malaysian institutions of higher education, presenting them new ways of thinking and doing things would benefit them further. Moreover, having gone through MyIDC should make them better ready to face the ever-changing scenario in higher education both in the home front and in the global context.

The PAP, as well as the ongoing communication via the WhatsApp group, can be taken as a measure of success in addressing the last objective of creating a support system of mentors and peers. Thus, all the objectives of MyIDC can be considered to have been met. Since the objectives of MyIDC were developed in tandem with the expectations of HEI leaders as outlined in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education) (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015) and the University Transformation Programme (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2017), the fulfilment of the objectives of MyIDC means that the expectations of leaders in higher education institutions are also being addressed. In other words, MyIDC is helping to develop the kind of academic leadership that the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education endeavours to establish and develop for the nation as a whole.

To sum up, based on the findings from the three sets of surveys and feedback from the international experts, several key lessons emerged, and these are being taken into account in the planning stage of the next MyIDC programme:

- **Planning and organisation.** The organising and training committees should be separated so both groups can focus on their tasks. To ensure the sustainability of the programme, the current team of trainers should be reorganised into a core team for each part of MyIDC supported by a local organizing committee. Funding should be made available for the hiring of an administrator who can assist with the planning and organisation of MyIDC as the AKEPT representatives are also occupied with their administrative duties and other training programmes.
- **Duration.** The full length of part 1 needs to be reduced to just eight training days. In reality, this would entail five working days if the weekend is taken into account (although it is noted that in several states, the working week is from Sunday to Thursday).
- **Content.** The topics suggested by the participants were taken into account and so was the reflective feedback from the trainers who conducted the modules to assess how the content can be improved.
- **Delivery.** The delivery methods should be diverse and interactive with more time for participants to reflect on their learning, share their challenges, ideas and opinions, and to discuss issues related to the training modules. Online learning support beyond the sharing of course materials should also be seriously considered, especially

as online education and training have now become a norm in most countries in the world due to the COVID-19 pandemic. An online platform can help bridge the time between the three parts.

- **Training team.** The training of trainers needs to be conducted more systematically and in several sessions to enhance their training and delivery skills, and to develop and document training plans and activities for assigned modules. Support through formal recognition of each core trainer's university is important as many man-hours are invested in the organisation and implementation of MyIDC.
- **PAPs.** The mentoring system for PAPs needs to be revisited to ensure that participants receive adequate and timely support from their mentors. Time could also be set aside for participants to meet their mentors individually or as a group in all three parts of MyIDC. The sharing of PAPs with university leaders and other participants should continue in future MyIDC programmes. This could be in the form of a poster display or through digital means. At the same time, MyIDC alumni can be brought on board as buddies to new MyIDC participants. Such peer support could extend beyond the PAP module.

6. Conclusion

The findings that were shared in this chapter point to favourable outcomes for MyIDC in terms of (a) addressing the objectives and meeting the general needs and expectations of higher education leaders through the 12 modules, (b) the various tasks and modes of delivery, (c) the planning and implementation of individual PAPs, (d) the out-of-class activities, and (e) the ongoing communication platform via the MyIDC 2019/2020 WhatsApp group.

In meeting the programme objectives, the deans should be better prepared to plan, gather support, and implement strategies to meet current (e.g. internationalisation, globalisation, and of late, remote and online learning) and future challenges in higher education. The positive evaluation of the programme has resulted in AKEPT continuing to support the second MyIDC programme. However, the findings from the different sources have provided several salient lessons that need to be considered when planning the forthcoming MyIDC programme to strengthen the programme concerning its objectives and the needs and expectations of institutions of higher education and the country as a whole. These include elements in planning and organisation, content, duration, delivery, the training team and PAPs. It would be useful to obtain follow up feedback from MyIDC participants, for example, after one year, to gauge the long-term effects and impact of the programme. This could be done through an online survey or focus group interviews with the MyIDC 2019/2020 participants.

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Enhancing Completion Rates through Structural and Operational Changes in the Management of Postgraduate Programmes in Kenya's Public Universities

ABSTRACT: During the National Multiplication Training in Kenya in 2018, participants raised concerns about attrition, completion rates and quality of PhD programmes in Kenya's public universities. This led the authors of this article to further examine the question of PhD completion rates. Available data underlined that PhD students across various disciplines in Kenya's public universities take unnecessarily long to complete their studies due to a myriad of factors that are related to their supervisors, university guidelines for post-graduate studies, or the students themselves. This article examines inertia areas along the PhD training pathway at three public universities in Kenya and provides suggestions on structural and operational changes universities must make to shorten completion periods.

KEYWORDS: doctoral studies, completion rates, structural and operational changes, public universities in Kenya

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The importance of investing in higher education and particularly in PhD training for both the student and national development cannot be overemphasised (Beaudry et al., 2018; MacGregor, 2016). Rare cases however exist where high completion rates are observed. In the Netherlands for instance, PhD candidates are often successful in completing their doctoral trajectories within the pre-set period (van de Schoot et al., 2013), overall doctoral attrition and poor completion rates have become a topic of pressing concern in higher education around the world, with an estimated 40% to 50% of candidates failing to finish their studies (Bair & Haworth, 2004; Litalien, 2015).

Not completing a doctoral programme is an expensive venture because students invest substantially in terms of time, intellectual resources, and finances coming from different sources. A delay in PhD completion also undermines a university's overall ranking besides creating long term staffing shortages in academic institutions. Low completion rates in postgraduate studies are equally pressing challenges in Kenya's public universities. Contrary to the expected three-four and two-three years for PhD and Master's degrees, respectively, internal self-evaluation reports indicate that most students take at least twice the design period to complete their studies and graduate (Kenyatta University, 2011; Maseno University, 2017).

On the other hand, when students complete their studies and graduate, they join the labour market as experts in various fields. Their professional accomplishments become a reflection on their universities' academic and research acumen, whilst society and sponsors get a good return on their investments.

Although Kenya has set its national benchmark for doctoral completion rate at 20% for every cohort admitted at this level, the national average from the higher education institutions indicates that only about 11% of students complete their studies within the stipulated period of three years. The average time to complete a PhD seems to be six years (Barasa & Omulando, 2018). According to Nganga (2019), Kenya's vision to release at least 1,000 PhDs every year to drive the country's economic ambitions risks failure because of persistent deficiencies in postgraduate training and research. Only one out of 10 PhD students in Kenya completes his or her studies (Mboya, 2019). When the age at which most people earn their

PhDs and the current retirement age that ranges from 70–75 years for university faculty is considered, it is plausible to indicate that higher education, and by extension, Kenya's national development does not reap maximum benefits from this critical human resource (Amutabi, 2017). The returns on investment in higher education could be worse should the retirement age of university faculty be standardised to the mandatory 60 years as is the case for other public servants. Currently, article 70 (1) (c) of the Public Service Commission Regulations (2020) stipulates that lecturers shall retire at such age as may be determined by the Commission for lecturers and research scientists serving in public universities, research institutions, or equivalent institutions, as determined by the Commission in consultation with such institutions.

Whilst completion rates should be enhanced, doubts on the quality of the degrees are also raised. A recent case in point is the unprecedented high number of PhDs that were awarded in one graduation ceremony at Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology (JKUAT) in 2018. Inquiry into this matter was launched by the Commission for University Education, findings of which are meant to streamline postgraduate studies across all universities in Kenya (Commission for University Education, 2019). Essentially, attritions, long completion durations, and poor quality of PhD studies are attributed to multiple factors that are related to the university environment, the academic supervisors, and the students themselves (Bednall, 2018).

1.2 Rationale

The extended time it takes to complete PhD studies is a reflection of deficiencies in the governance of postgraduate programmes, which calls for transformative organisational development and change management in higher education. To regain their reputation as quality hubs and to benefit from the ripple effects thereof, post-graduate students need to finish their studies within the stipulated time and be able to quickly fit into the labour market. Although public universities in Kenya were taken through the Rapid Results Initiative (RRI) model wherein components of various initiatives or projects were supposed to be realised within 100 days (Rapid Results Institute, 2003), they appear not to have institutionalised this model as a culture. Instead, every effort is made to be certified based on the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and, in particular, the ISO 9001 series that focuses on the requirements for quality management systems (The 9000 Store, 2020). The long time it takes to complete PhD studies undermines the essence of such certification.

This paper was motivated by the need to re-invigorate the culture of quality assurance based on the experience the authors have gained through their participation in the Dialogue for Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES) National Multiplication Trainings (NMT) 2017–2018. This project was initiated by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and Rectors Conference (HRK) with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ). As DIES alumni, the authors won a grant under this framework to train Kenyan deans and directors on quality leadership and management as a driver for positive change in higher education. During the NMT training, concerns about low completion rates and quality of PhD programmes in Kenya came out strongly from the Project Action Plan (PAPs) in which 25% of the participants focused on improving postgraduate programmes from various dimensions, such as curriculum review and rationalisation, proposal writing and funding, plagiarism and academic integrity, and the increasing importance of Information Communication Technology (ICT). Face-to-face discussion singled out low completion rates as cutting across study disciplines.

1.3 Hypothesis and Research Question

Whilst PhD completion rates and attrition are caused by various factors whose relative importance is different across universities, this paper was guided by the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between prolonged PhD completion durations and postgraduate structural and operational procedures of universities. The statutory bureaucracies involved in processing proposals and the final theses can be very long and often stressful to students. It was, therefore, necessary to identify inertia areas along the postgraduate studies pathway and propose ways of shortening them or removing them altogether. This would be actualised by answering the question, "What structural and operational changes must universities make to mitigate the challenge caused by poor completion rates?"

2. Methodology

To analyse the key research question, a social survey study was conducted on randomly selected faculties from the three universities in Kenya where the authors work. Respondents were restricted to faculty who had completed their PhD degrees during the last five years. For confidentiality purposes, their names are not used in this paper.

Primary data were collected using a survey questionnaire, which contained both closed and open-ended questions. The content focused on respondents' age on completion, the length of time it took them to complete their studies, the length of time it took to process proposals and the final theses, timelines to the oral examination, and study challenges and suggestions for improvement.

The survey targeted 30 respondents. The response rate was 53% (i.e. 16 respondents) with males accounting for 60% and females, 40%, based on valid data on this gender variable. Based on the near homogeneity of postgraduate programmes and procedures in Kenya's public universities, this response rate was considered sufficient in providing a snapshot of the situation in the country.

Barnett and Sisson (2018) observed that taking small samples from large populations is a valid statistical technique for getting accurate information about the wider population for a fraction of the time and cost. The data yielded by the questionnaire were subjected to descriptive statistics using SPSS to provide general trends on completion rates and factors influencing the same. Secondary data were obtained from both the university and the Commission for University Education documents. The authors' insights obtained during their participation in the Dialogue for Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES) and National Multiplication Training (NMT) programme proved very useful in the discussion of results.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Master's and PhD Completion Rates Based on Secondary Data

This section presents data from secondary sources that point to lengthy PhD studies and the need for structural and operational procedures to remedy the situation. Records in Kenyatta University indicate that only 3% of master's students completed their studies in two years whilst 8%

did so in three years during the period ending 2010. The majority took 4–7 years. Similarly in the same period, only 8% completed their PhDs in 3 years. The majority took 4–7 years (see Table 1). These apparent low completion rates were attributed to the following reasons: (a) students having limited financial recourses for tuition and research, (b) unavailability of supervisors due to heavy workloads, (c) supervisors taking too long to review drafts and to communicate with their students, (d) inter-supervisor conflicts, (e) conflict of interests between students and supervisors in the context of the research focus, and (f) student-related factors that are outside the mandate of the university.

Table 1: Postgraduate Statistics for December 2010 Graduation

Number of years taken to graduate	Master's programmes	PhD programmes
	Percentage of students	Percentage of students
2	03	–
3	08	8
4	22	29
5	25	22
6	21	22
7	13	7
8	05	3
9	2	4
10	1	–
11	0	2
> 12	–	3

Note: For benchmarking purposes, students who enrolled in 2006 should have graduated in December 2010 (Source: Synthesised from Kenyatta University, 2011).

The burden of postgraduate supervision and its potential to cause delays have been cited by Beaudry et al. (2018), among others, who observed that cases exist where one supervisor is assigned up to 70 master's and PhD students to supervise, alongside teaching loads and undertaking own research. In such circumstances, the supervisors end up giving postgraduate students little attention. According to the guidelines of the Commission for University Education (2014a), postgraduate supervision workload per faculty member should be three PhD and five master's degree students, alongside their other roles in any given academic year. It is plausible to assume that most universities do not implement these guidelines for a variety of reasons. In terms of work instructions, the three universities where the authors are employed do not differ significantly when it comes to the time taken to process submitted theses and the time given to external examiners to review them (see Table 2).

Table 2: Work Instructions for Processing PhD Theses (Source: University Documents)

Variable	Kenyatta University	Masinde Muliro University	Maseno University
Time allotted to process submitted thesis for examination	4 days	Upon receipt and approval by the board of examiners[2]	Within 4 weeks
Time allotted to external examiners	6 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks
Time allotted to invite students for the oral examination	not standard[1]	3 weeks if there is no backlog[3]	≤ 1 month from receipt of the last project

[1] It depends on the number of students on the queue.
[2] No timelines are specified.
[3] Backlog of pending defences due to other occurrences gets cleared first.

Delays appear to be introduced when it comes to invitations for defences. Backlogs as a source of delays depend on operational gaps that can easily be resolved. At Kenyatta University, students who successfully defend their PhD theses in oral examinations can end up being delayed if they fail to submit the final corrected and signed version of the theses within the prescribed time limit. For instance, candidates who passed with minor corrections are supposed to correct the work within three months after the oral examination. Should these candidates fail to meet this deadline, they are required to resubmit the theses afresh as if they had never been examined before. This is an example of statutory procedures or guidelines that are self-defeating when viewed from the equally important goal of timely completions.

3.2 Primary Data Output on Completion Rates

3.2.1 Respondents' Age on Completion of Studies

A majority of respondents (53.3%) completed their studies at middle age status (i.e. between 40 and 49 years). Those who completed their studies within 39 years of age were 20%. The rest (26.7%) completed their studies when over 50 years of age. Fifty percentage of those in this category were above 60 years old. In essence, about 70% of PhD graduates have the possibility of working for 20–30 years based on the retirement age that ranges from 70–75 for university faculty. Whilst a good number complete their studies when they are below 50 years, their effective contribution to higher education is constrained by their inability to immediately secure jobs in universities. This has implications on the net returns to investment in higher education when the cost and time taken are considered.

Table 3: Respondents' Age on Completion (% Frequency) (n = 16)

Age category	Frequency	% Frequency	Valid % frequency	Cumulative % frequency
≤ 39	3	18.8	20.0	20.0
40–49	8	50.0	53.3	73.3
> 50	4	25.0	26.7	100.0
No response	1	6.2	–	–
Total	16	100	100.0	–

3.2.2 Proposal Development and Approval Timelines

Universities vary in proposal development and approval requirements. Some do not even have course work at PhD levels. Where course work is a requirement, a majority of the respondents (56.3%) indicated developing their proposals before the end of the coursework (see Table 4). It is good to note that 37.5% develop their proposals before admission to the university since it is a requirement. Only 6.3% indicated embarking on proposal development six months after course work. Since proposal development requires ample time, delays in completion are caused by other factors along its value chain, which demand structural and operational changes in the context of rapid results initiative or ISO 9001 certification, which most universities have acquired. Results on how long proposals took to be approved showed that most (43.8%) were approved after one year and 25.0% were approved after a year-and-a-half. Together this is a very considerable 68.8% of respondents whose proposal approval was delayed. Only 12.5% had their proposals approved after three months and 18.8%, after six months. The apparent inertia in the approval process requires structural and operational changes at departmental, school and postgraduate directorate levels to solve the problem of long completion times.

Table 4: PhD Proposal Processing Timelines (% Frequencies)

	Proposal development		
Period	**Frequency**	**Valid % frequency**	**Cumulative % frequency**
Pre-admission	6	37.5	35.7
Before course work	9	56.3	93.8
After course work	1	6.3	100
	Proposal approval		
Time	**Frequency**	**Valid % frequency**	**Cumulative % frequency**
After 3 months	2	12.5	12.5
After 6 months	3	18.8	31.3
After 1 year	7	43.8	75.0
After 1.5 years	4	25.0	100.0
After 2 years	0	0	

3.2.3 Thesis Submission and Defence Timelines

Concerning how long it took to develop and submit their theses for examination and be invited for defence (oral examination), 43.8% of the respondents indicated having submitted their theses before three years were over. Those who submitted within the conventional expectation of 3–4 years were 18.8%. The rest of the respondents (i.e. 37.6%) submitted their theses outside of institutional timelines as detailed in Table 5. With 62.5% of respondents having developed and submitted their theses for examination within four years, any delays to completion should have been caused by either the examiners overstaying with work or graduate schools taking long to invite the candidates for the oral examination. Data, however, appear to exonerate the latter factor as the majority of the respondents (56.3%) indicated having been invited for the defence in good time (i.e. within 6 months of submission). About 38% were invited within a year and none was invited after two years. In essence, total delayed defences accounted for 43.8%. This calls for an audit of procedures and guidelines to remove bottlenecks along the entire processing chain.

Table 5: PhD Thesis Submission and Timelines to the Oral Examination

Likert scale-based timelines	Thesis submission for examination		
	F	% F	Cumulative % F
In the 3rd year (Timely)	7	43.8	43.8
3–4 years (Standard)	3	18.8	62.5
4–5 years (Late)	4	25.0	87.5
5–6 years (Very late)	1	6.3	93.8
6–7 years (Extremely late)	1	6.3	100
After 7 years (Unacceptable)	0	0	–
Timelines	**Oral examination**		
3–6 months (Timely)	9	56.3	56.3
6–12 months (Late)	6	37.5	93.8
1–2 years (Very late)	1	6.3	100
After 2 years (Extremely late)	0	0	–

3.2.4 Respondents’ Reasons for Prolonged Completion Durations

Respondents were asked to express the extent to which selected factors contributed to the extended time it took them to complete their PhD studies. The respondents felt that the most prevalent reasons for low completion rates taken as the sum of ‘very frequently’ and ‘frequently’ ratings were supervisor-related challenges at (81.3%), student private challenges (56.3%), financial constraints (37.5%), and non-adherence to rules and guidelines at 30.5% (see Table 6). Another 12.5% of the respondents identified and rated sexual harassment and lucrative job opportunities as other challenges that were not listed yet very frequently slowed down the completion rates.

Supervisor-related challenges emanate from weak administrative policies and practices that allow faculty to keep supervising candidates regardless of their thematic relevance, workloads, and, in some cases, questionable intellectual acumen and supervisory competences. When professors across public universities cannot be plausibly rated as peers and equivalents based on their capacities and competences, the quality of PhDs they supervise is similarly likely to be different. The Commission for University Education attempted to solve this problem through its harmonised promotion criteria (CUE, 2014b). Its implementation has, however, been halted by the court.

Other factors responsible for delayed completions include unfriendly and unsupportive bureaucracies; poor communication between graduate school, postgraduate committees, supervisors and the graduate students; and non-adherence to rules and guidelines of the PhD process. Cases of sexual harassment are often very intrinsic and difficult to prove. A remnant of students simultaneously takes up lucrative jobs, which eat into their study period. The impact of financial constraints for self-sponsored students cannot be overemphasised. Some university guidelines make it more difficult for not allowing completed work to be processed when a candidate has fee balances.

Table 6: Respondents Opinions on Reasons for Long Completion Rates

Reasons	Statistics	Most frequently	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Very rarely	System	Total
Financial constraints	F	4	2	3	4	2	1	16
	% F	25.0	12.5	18.7	25.0	12.5	6.3	100
Supervisor-related issues	F	4	9	0	3	0	0	16
	% F	25.0	56.3	0	18.7	0	0	100
Student-related issues	F	5	4	3	2	0	2	16
	% F	31.3	25.0	18.7	12.5	0	12.5	100
Bureaucratic university procedures	F	1	3	4	5	1	2	16
	% F	6.3	18.7	25.0	31.3	6.3	12.5	100
Poor student-supervisor communication	F	1	5	2	3	3	2	16
	% F	6.3	31.3	12.5	18.7	18.7	12.5	100
Non-adherence to rules and guidelines	F	2	3	4	2	2	3	16
	% F	12.5	18.8	25.0	12.5	12.5	18.7	100
Sexual harassment by supervisors	F	2	0	0	0	0	14	16
	% F	12.5	0	0	0	0	87.5	100
Availability of lucrative job opportunities	F	2	0	0	0	0	14	16
	% F	12.5	0	0	0	0	87.5	100

Note: F: Frequency

3.2.5 Most Significant Supervisor and Student-related Challenges

Respondents' opinions on the most significant supervisor-related challenges, which undermine completion rates, are summarised below:

1. Limited capacity and competence were evident in research methods, statistics, and students' research thematic focus.
2. Low emotional intelligence is manifested through strained interpersonal relationships and poor communication between supervisor and student.
3. Supervisors' heavy work overloads, including in some cases, administrative responsibilities render them unavailable to their postgraduate students.
4. Unprofessional practices such as losing students' theses or overstaying with them.

Similarly, the most significant student-related challenges were the following:

1. Financial constraints are often been exhibited by self-sponsored students. In all the universities, theses are not submitted for examination until all fees are paid.
2. Inadequate grounding in research methodology and statistics was evident.
3. Poor planning and time management were exemplified by procrastination tendencies, lack of focus and target setting, inability to multitask, and not consulting widely.
4. Students embarked on research themes where they had limited theoretical knowledge and technical know-how.
5. A culture that consistently dislikes investing time in review of journal literature was evident.

Although the relative importance of these factors varies across universities, this paper agrees with Zhao et al., (2007) who observed that the choice of supervisors and the nurturing of good student-supervisor relationships are very critical in enhancing completion rates.

4. Structural and Operational Changes toward Enhanced PhD Completion Rates

When it comes to improvements that universities must make, the following structural and operational changes in universities merit consideration in enhancing completion rates in postgraduate programmes.

1. Admission into PhD programmes should be restricted to the departments that have qualified faculty to train at this level and universities that have appropriate and accountable protocols to monitor and track the progress of students.
2. Critically, research methods and statistics should be taught by faculty with proven proficiency, with statistical computer applications being key components. Further, these two units should be taught during the last phase of course work based on the competency-based learning model, whereby a student develops and delivers a complete proposal for grading as part of university examination and direct processing by respective directorates of postgraduate studies.
3. A more democratic way of allocating supervisors to students that considers area of specialization and students' preferences should be encouraged. This will reduce delays caused by poor working relationships between students and supervisors.
4. When students and supervisors can no longer get along, mechanisms to expedite the 'divorce' without leaving the student vulnerable should be readily available.
5. To afford supervisors adequate time to mentor their students, universities need to adhere to workload guidelines provided by the Commission for University Education. Further, faculty on staff development need to be freed from teaching workloads.
6. Regular mentoring forums for both students and their supervisors should be encouraged. Critical mentoring aspects should include competences in planning, time management, target setting, multi-tasking, public relations, and publishing.
7. For self-sponsored students, a symbiotic mechanism that allows them to first complete their studies then afterwards sort out their financial obligations merits some consideration.
8. For not being a refereed document, which is equally subject to continuous changes as the thesis is developed, a proposal should be handled as an idea and not be subjected to "endless demands on rubrics" checks that only serve to delay students.

9. The merit of causing students who defended and passed the oral examination to re-defend their work for not finalizing the required corrections within certain time frames, thus causing them to waste another one year, merits re-evaluation.

5. Conclusions

The prolonged time it takes to complete postgraduate studies is a change management challenge that universities in Kenya need to pro-actively solve. Although not refereed documents, approval of proposals takes unnecessarily too long. Supervisor re-tooling in research methods and statistics should be a routine practice. Supervisors should neither be imposed nor force themselves on students. Their areas of specialisation and the students' feelings should be considered. Universities should create and nurture a culture of research excellence and delightful student mentoring. This calls for collective adherence to progressive structural and operational procedures and sanctioning of non-adherence to them. Ultimately, study completion rates will improve thus benefitting students, the universities, and the wider society.

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Enhancing Internationalisation for Peacebuilding among Higher Education Institutions in Post-Conflict Colombia

ABSTRACT: This article collected the results of a qualitative study focused on Colombian Higher Education Institutions' representatives partaking in the training 'Internationalisation for Peacebuilding 2018'. The selected Higher Education Institutions and representatives were all located in regions acutely affected by the Colombian armed conflict, now experiencing multifaceted challenges and opportunities in a post-conflict scenario. Interviews with participants of the training were conducted to analyse the skills acquired and to identify possible improvements brought about by the training at the institutions. The article further identifies specific needs of the institutions, to be taken into account for future courses on internationalisation for higher education institutions.

KEYWORDS: internationalisation for higher education, capacity building, international cooperation, peacebuilding, quality in higher education

1. Introduction

In 2017, a group of Colombian alumni of the Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies-DIES Management of Internationalisation of Higher Education Training Course devised a National Multiplication Training proposal entitled 'Internationalisation for Peacebuilding'. The backdrop of the proposal was the historical moment of the country, given the then recently sanctioned peace agreement with the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces guerrilla (FARC for the acronym in Spanish), which ended a sixty-year-old armed conflict. The proposal reflects a commitment from the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst—German Academic Exchange Service, DAAD alumni, all seasoned international managers at leading Colombian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to contribute to peace by lending their expertise toward regional capacity building in higher education.

The targeted HEIs were located in regions of the country that suffered the most acute consequences of the civil armed strife. At the very least, it can be argued that the strife reinforced Colombia's profound geopolitical asymmetry in terms of economic development, the rule of law, and the promise of good governance. Consequently, many Colombian HEIs had either been slow or unable to react to innovations in management, teaching, and research. The training course established the notion of internationalisation as a key driver of quality and innovation, an essential, core concept of global Higher Education, which had been left largely unattended in the conflict-induced isolation of peripheral Colombia. The peace agreement now brings the opportunity of opening these regions and their HEIs up to the world, as well as accesses the expertise of Colombian colleagues in the field.

Thus, the training was built upon the notion of internationalisation beyond strict quality considerations, spreading knowledge and expertise that are key to regional peacebuilding. This paper thus commented on the rationale for the training, its development, and the findings of impact assessment. The assessment also provided the opportunity to identify future topics for new training in internationalisation with equal social impact on the local and global community, which could set the ground for the development of similar experiences around the globe.

2. Internationalisation for Peacebuilding: The Rationales

Internationalisation, in its most current definition, states that it is "the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, function, and delivery of post-secondary education, to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society" (Hunter et al., 2016, p. 11).

On the other hand, 'global citizenship' is a term usually associated with consequences of internationalizing Higher Education. A study requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education on the understanding of Internationalisation of Higher Education in the European context (De Wit et al., 2015) when discussing global citizenship, mentions the need of rethinking the purposes of higher education, or that, at least, for it to include a focus on peacebuilding, and to highlight three main dimensions: social responsibility, global competence, and civic engagement.

Thus, international cooperation in research and teaching is not only relevant for positioning and visibility, or even for rankings, but it could contribute in bringing communities together, and in promoting the development of global citizenship and innovation for the solution of common challenges. The societal aspect of internationalisation of higher education (HE) gains more relevance regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Brandenburg et al. (2019) discuss in an article for World University News the great potential of internationalisation on societal impacts, and the need to move beyond dimension aspects like mobility, towards a comprehensive internationalisation that transcends campuses, thus highlighting the need for inclusion.

However, inclusion and equality are not widespread concepts in internationalisation. The 2014 (Egron-Polak, 2014) and 2018 (Marinoni, 2019) International Association of Universities (IAU) Global Survey on Internationalisation of Higher Education show that the most significant risk of university internationalisation is that international opportunities may be made available only to students with economic resources. In the same surveys, the majority of the respondents identified the lack of financial resources as the greatest obstacle to the development of internationalisation processes.

The same is also the case for Colombia, where a significant percentage of the student population has socio-economic limitations (if they get to access higher education at all). The possibility of having an intercultural experience to enrich the students' academic curriculum with additional skills that add value to their university education, whilst preparing them both as economic and social global beings, should be made realistic goals. However, this is not the case for many HEIs in Colombia, where, according to a national study developed in 2013 by the National Ministry of Education, only 48% claimed to have a curriculum internationalisation strategy and, within those institutions, most of the strategies implemented are not up to date with international trends.

3. Internationalisation for Peacebuilding: The Training

The training focused on capacity building for international management of HEIs located in former conflict regions of Colombia, as a means to enhance quality and contribute to territorial peacebuilding. Four key streams matching this capacity-building focus were identified: (a) internationalisation at home, (b) 21st-century pedagogic strategies, (c) international visibility, and (d) international resources allocation. As a result, four specific objectives were established for the training:

1. To raise awareness about the linkage between internationalisation and quality in higher education;
2. To provide practical knowledge on building global citizenship curricula;
3. To develop the necessary tools to implement internationalisation at home initiatives;
4. To showcase international resource mobilisation strategies and assist participants in developing their own.

The target group for the training had to involve leadership and hands-on staff. It was thus decided to increase individual participation per institution, with the hope of a higher diversity of participating HEIs in mind. The decision was taken to improve the probability of success for the individual change projects. Thus, participants included Academic Vice Presidents, Deans, Academic Programme Directors, International Officers, and Academic Quality Officers coming from nine different regions in the country.

The training combined basic theoretical discussions with creative thinking techniques—creative problem-solving and active learning methods, such as world-café and networking opportunities. The training, designed to allow participants to relate theories to their institutions and to strengthen individual projects, gave access to cognitive and practical tools, as well as real-life scenarios, by putting learning into practice, further developing skills. Internationalisation at home was key in motivating the internationalisation of HEIs in vulnerable territories, contributing to the enhancement of quality education and peacebuilding in the country.

Two workshops were divided into the four identified streams, with a webinar in between, conducted by a regional expert.

- Stream 1, Strategy building for internationalisation at home. This section focused on the foundations of internationalisation at home and internationalisation of the curriculum (concepts, trends, rationales, actors).
- Stream 2, Faculty development for innovative pedagogic strategies for internationalisation at home. This section focused on conceptualisation on teacher training and capacity building and integration and implementation of 21st- century educational skills.
- Stream 3, International resource mobilisation. This section focused on a management model and strategy to implement international resource mobilisation in Higher Education, plus practical tools for proposal writing.
- Stream 4, International visibility and positioning. This section focused on an overview of concepts and best practices for implementing an international visibility strategy and development of a map of stakeholders and a differentiator matrix.

It is important to highlight the development of the first on-site workshop that took place within the framework of an event that has become a milestone for international academic cooperation in Colombia: Catedra Europa. Hosted and organised by Universidad del Norte (part of the Expert Committee) since 1997, this event brings the latest global debates in Higher Education development cooperation and provides unique networking opportunities for European and Colombian institutional actors in both fields. Thus, the first on-site workshop, besides providing sessions for instruction, conceptual and practical training and providing the foundations and rules for the development of the change projects, allowed participants to move from theory to practice, by engaging them in real networking activities, therefore enhancing the skills acquired during the three-day workshop and adding value to project development (see Table 1).

Table 1: Kick-off Workshop Outline

Topics	Content
DAY ONE Strategy building	• Keynote lecture on internationalisation at home and internationalisation of the curriculum concepts, trends, rationales, and actors • Best practices on internationalisation of at-home strategies • Creation of international environments created at home. World Café methodology to promote creative, and collaborative thinking for inspiring practices
DAY TWO Faculty development for innovative pedagogic strategies for internationalisation at home	• Conceptualisation on teacher training and capacity building • Integration and implementation of 21st-century educational skills • Best practices on internationalisation of the curriculum (inside the classroom) • Briefing on existing international agencies; programmes and calls financing Higher Education projects (Erasmus+; DAAD; NUFFIC; FULBRIGHT, etc.)
International resource mobilisation	• Management model and strategy to implement international resource mobilisation in Higher Education • Proposal writing for a specific international programme or call
DAY THREE International visibility and positioning	• Overview of concepts and best practices for implementing an international visibility strategy from an International Relations Office perspective • Starting from scratch: The main inputs of an international communication strategy for cooperation purposes • Guidelines on how to develop an institutional internationalisation stakeholders map and a differentiator matrix for positioning purposes • International positioning starts from inside the institution: Identifying the key indicators and strengthening the information systems for decision-making. • Main trends on international communication in HEIs: Where is the world going? • The international communications plan: Key elements, realistic goals and follow-up

The webinar, placed in between the two workshops, served as an opportunity to address needs that were identified during the first workshop, which had to do with sharing concepts, rationales, and tools for internationalisation at home at their institutions. Thus, this webinar reinforced the acquired knowledge and served as space for sharing good practices in the implementation of internationalisation at home and in the identification of concrete actions. For greater impact and benefit, participants were asked to invite key players that needed to be involved in the internationalisation-at-home process at their institutions, so teams of five to ten people per institution were formed. This allowed participants to set the ground for the establishment of important synergies and gain supporters towards a more inclusive internationalisation strategy in the development of their projects. The webinar started with a general presentation from the regional expert, followed by a Q&A session, an institutional group discussion, and a feedback session from the entire group of participants. In addition to the webinar, the mentors followed up on the participants at least once a month and aided in the development of the change projects.

The second workshop's main objective was a proper training wrap-up, providing participants with a final input on how to strengthen the internationalisation strategy of their institutions, and how to facilitate dialogues between them and key stakeholders of the Higher Education sector in Colombia. Furthermore, two intensive sessions of thematic seminars were conducted. These focused on topics identified throughout the Programme as critical for the participants and their institutions: strategy management and intercultural competences. Participants were also able to have direct dialogues with decision-makers in the Colombian Higher Education sector to help them better understand the logic behind the HEI internationalisation context and to set up a networking environment for future projects that they might develop.

4. Methodology

4.1 Study Objectives and Design

The study aimed to (a) analyse the improvement of internationalisation management in the HEIs participating in the 'Internationalisation for Peacebuilding' training conducted in 2018; and (b) instruct participants in the areas of innovative methodologies of higher education, mobilisation of international resources, international visibility, and internationalisation at home. The study, which is qualitative with a phenomenological approach, considered the points of view of the participants by describing their experiences of the world from a representation of the subjects (Colás, 2009). Gibbs (2012) explains that qualitative research analyses the experiences of individuals or groups to delve into social phenomena.

The rationale behind this study was to find out about the internationalisation skills acquired by the participants during the course and to identify changes generated in the management of internationalisation processes. Finally, it was also important to collect information about topics that the participants considered relevant in the field of higher education, for implementation of future training in Colombia.

The specific research objectives are specified thus:

- Objective 1: Characterise the skills acquired during the course to improve the quality of internationalisation management.
- Objective 2: Identify the changes generated at the institutional level for internationalisation management structure, internationalisation at home, and the mobilisation of international resources.
- Objective 3: Propose content for future courses on internationalisation, based on the suggestions made by the participants.

4.2 Data Collection Method

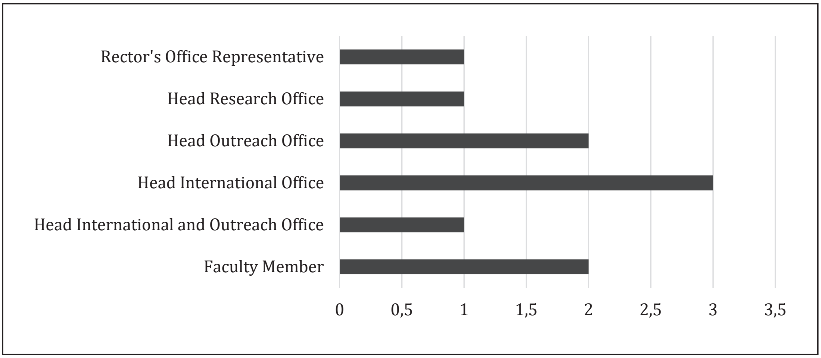
The data collection method used was the semi-structured interview. Martín (2018) explains that semi-structured interviews allow the construction of questions as a guide for the interview, which can be adapted to the interviewees. Moreover, answers to these formulations are usually open, leading to the obtaining of more information, whilst the interviewer encourages the subjects to describe their experiences and actions (Kvale, 2011). According to Flick (2017), the perspectives of the interviewees can be collected, since conversations on specific topics are flexible. The interview script was divided into three dimensions: (a) the first focused on the skills acquired for the improvement of internationalisation management; (b) the second aimed to identify the institutional changes generated through the attendance in the training; and (c) the third sought to identify suggestions by the participants for contents of future courses oriented towards the internationalisation of higher education.

4.3 Participants

For the study, ten participants from the training 'Internationalisation for Peacebuilding' in 2018 were interviewed. From the nine institutions participating, seven were represented. The interviewees were administrative officials and professors from Higher Education Institutions located in diverse regions of Colombia which were affected by the Colombian conflict. The fieldwork was carried out on February and March 2020.

Since the original training was attended by 17 participants, the study strived to interview at least 50%. Ten interviews were conducted with former participants representing institutions from seven Colombian regions and occupying different positions in universities, as shown in Figures 1 and 2.

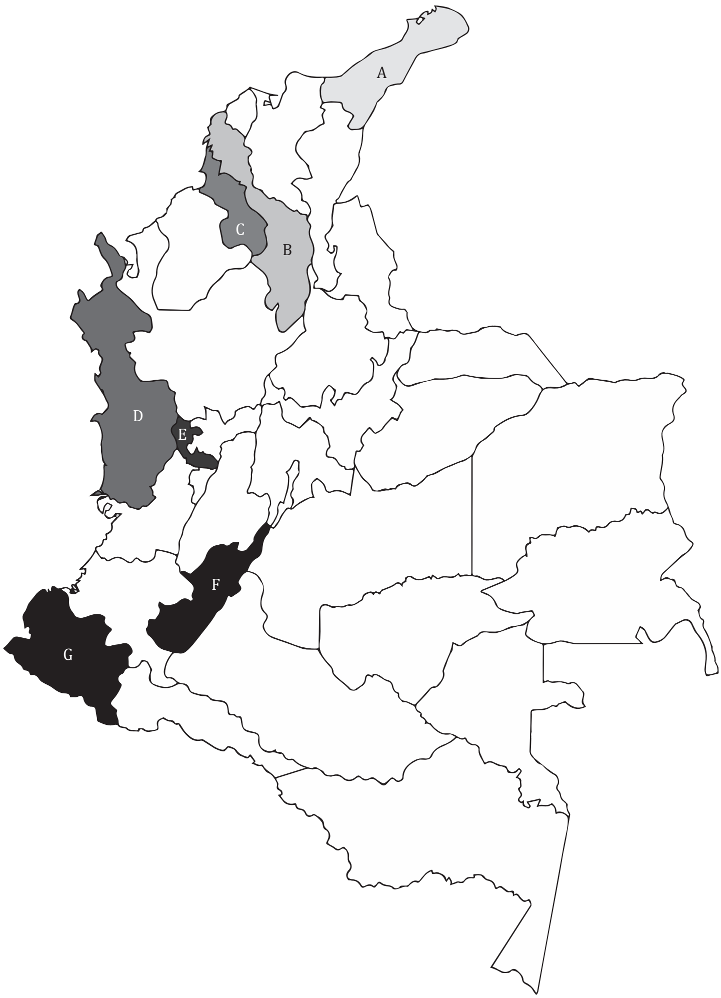
Figure 1: Positions of the Participants



4.4 Data Processing Method

The method used in processing the collected information was qualitative content analysis. According to Mayring (2010), a content analysis seeks to organise into categories the data collected. Ruiz (2012) explains that analysts can build their categorisation system. For the analysis of the interview data, categories and subcategories were generated, taking into account the research objectives. The data collected, associated with the specific research objectives, are presented in the following chapter.

Figure 2: Colombian Regions of the Interviewees



A La Guajira (2) B Bolívar (1) C Sucre (2) D Chocó (2)

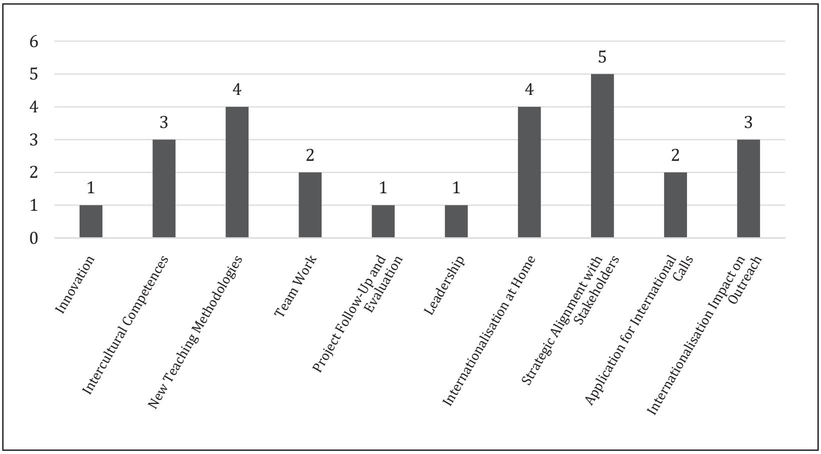
E Risaralda (1) F Huila (1) G Nariño (1)

5. Results and Discussion

Objective 1: Characterise the skills acquired during the course to improve the quality of internationalisation management.

To answer the first objective of this research, participants were asked about the internationalisation skills acquired during the course. They explained that the course gave them skills for the strategic alignment with stakeholders, for internationalisation design activities at home, and new teaching methodologies. Participant 10 explained that the ability to articulate internationalisation activities with academics was strengthened in her institution. Further, it also fostered intercultural competences and strengthened alignment between internationalisations at outreaches. In addition to this, the participants expressed that they learnt teamwork skills for projects, the follow-up and evaluation of projects, and the application for international calls. The following figure shows the participants' responses:

Figure 3: Skills for Improved Internationalisation

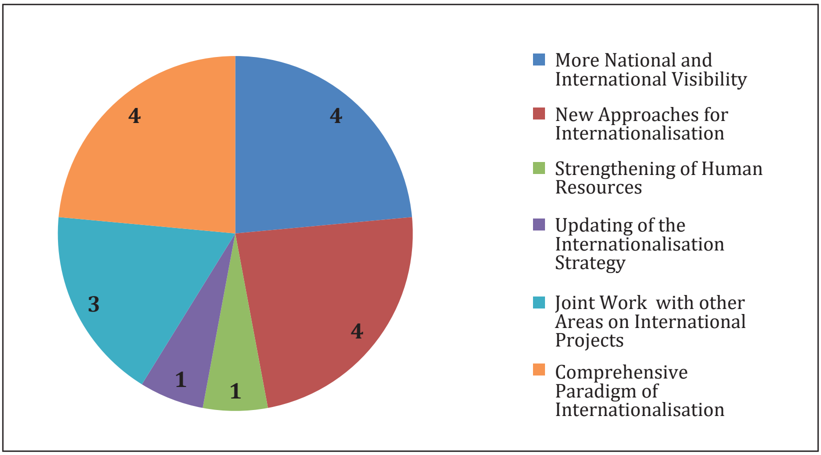


Objective 2: Identify the changes generated at the institutional level for internationalisation management structure, internationalisation at home, and the mobilisation of international resources.

By analysing the changes generated in the management of internationalisation after the course, the participants explained that they worked on the improvement of the image of internationalisation in the institution, generating new ways of the national and international visibility of the institution, in some cases. New approaches for internationalisation were also strengthened by presenting a shift towards a comprehensive paradigm of internationalisation, that is, beyond mobility. For instance, one institution located in the region of *La Guajira* has focused internationalisation on capacity building and community work. Participant 2 explained that the paradigm of internationalisation changed in her institution: "We thought that internationalisation was only an issue of incoming and outgoing mobility, and also of curricular developments. We forgot that internationalisation can have an impact on communities and transform people's lives. You can impact a community from the organisations that are present in that community through internationalisation and leave installed capacity".

Participant 5 remarked that the alignment of the various actors within the institution has been strengthened and also "the institution's internationalisation strategy has been updated and two professionals have been added to the internationalisation team". Interdisciplinary working groups for internationalisation were also created within institutions and one institution updated the internationalisation strategy, as shown in Figure 4:

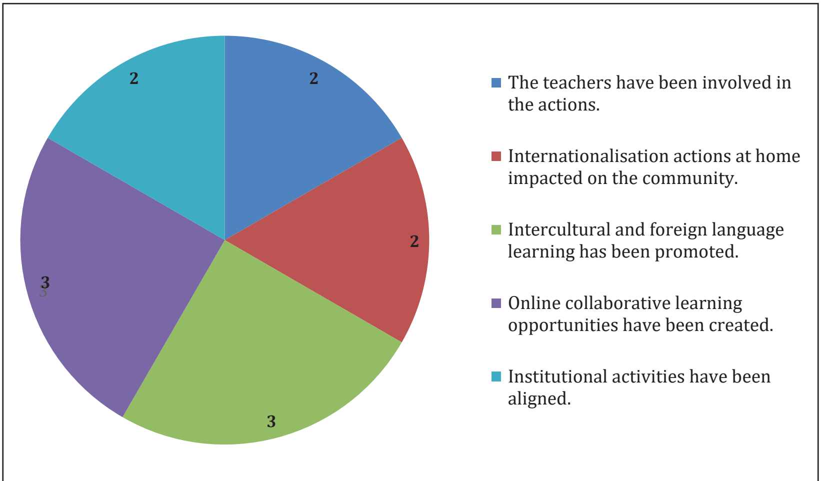
Figure 4: Changes Generated for the Management of Internationalisation



An important aspect of the 'Internationalisation for Peacebuilding' training to be considered by regional institutions was the transmission of knowledge about internationalisation at home, a strategy not as expensive as international mobility and one in which students enjoy an international atmosphere without leaving their domestic environments. Participants explained that they learnt to generate tools and resources for internationalisation activities for teachers in the classroom thereby empowering them. Their internationalisation-at-home strategy became participatory due to institutional alignment, with different members from the community participating in the process (teachers, students, and administrators). Participant 1 remarked that her internationalisation-at-home strategy has become more participatory: "Not only the international office participates, but also all the professors. The students and staff are also important actors in becoming much more involved". One institution designed a virtual learning guide for the implementation of internationalisation-at-home activities. Professors from some participating institutions received training for the design of activities and materials, as well as for the topic 'new pedagogies for internationalisation'. One institution began with the implementation of formative research projects to improve the impact of internationalisation in classes. Online collaborative learning opportunities were thus created.

Furthermore, some institutions (see Figure 5) overcame institutional barriers, impacting communities near campus with their internationalisation activities at home. Participant 3 explained that she has reached "various communities in the Chocó region", to build capacities with other teachers, about internationalisation-at-home activities. Finally, intercultural and foreign language learning activities were carried out on campus, with students from other institutions located in the same region also participating. The changes generated by the promotion of internationalisation at home by the participating institutions are shown in Figure 5:

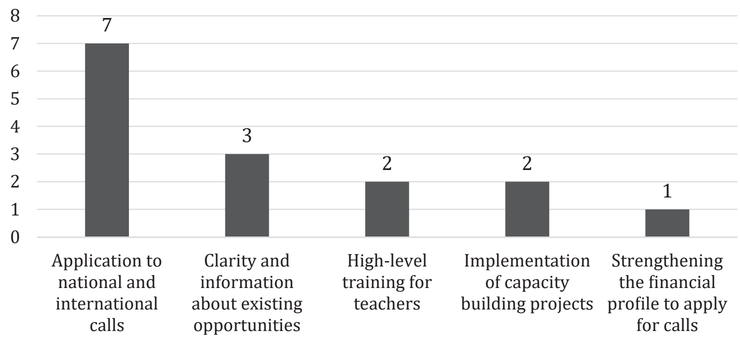
Figure 5: Changes Generated by the Internationalisation at Home



Another meaningful element in the training was the knowledge transmitted for the management of international resources. The participating institutions had the opportunity to learn how to manage different resources (experts, financial resources, scholarships), which could strengthen their institutional capacities. From the changes made by participating institutions, it was observed that they had consolidated their capacities to receive more international resources and to gain more clarity about existing opportunities. The institutions have applied to increased calls, from both national and international agencies, either for the management of experts or for capacity building projects. They have promoted high-level training for their professors by their applications to international calls for doctoral studies. Administrative and teaching staff have also applied to short-term courses promoted by foreign governments. Participant 6 explained that both financial and technical resources have been managed and that her institution is implementing courses with international institutions: "We have applied to ERASMUS + with Spain and other European allies, and we are now offering advanced courses".

Some institutions also have carried out capacity-building projects, such as Participant 10. "We are participating in a project with Canada for the empowerment of women, and installed a capacity which will be left in the university for sustainable entrepreneurship". The results of the generated changes can be seen in Figure 6:

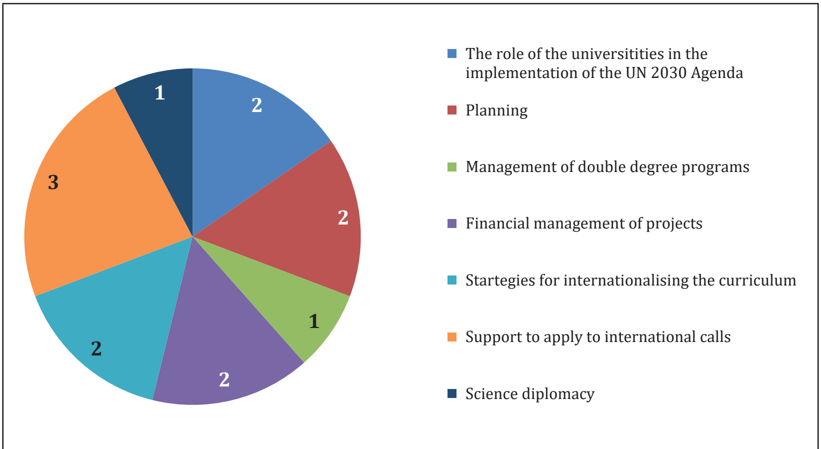
Figure 6: Changes Generated for International Resource Mobilisation



Objective 3: Propose content for future courses on internationalisation, based on the suggestions made by the participants.

Finally, participants were asked about their suggestions for future courses on the topic of internationalisation. The interviewees expressed the need to understand better the role universities take in the implementation of the UN-2030 Agenda, and the application to international calls for small or regional institutions. Likewise, the participants wanted to learn more about the financial management of international projects, institutional planning, internationalising the curriculum, and the coordination of double degree programmes. Participant 8 recommended future workshops and more support to the adaptation of the projects to the context and regions of universities. Lastly, an institution manifested the need to understand Science Diplomacy schemes and the role that internationalisation of higher education takes in this process, which is mainly led by governments.

Figure 7: Suggestions for New Courses on Internationalisation



6. Conclusion

The 'Internationalisation for Peacebuilding' training was created to transmit knowledge to Higher Education Institutions located in remote areas of Colombia, which suffered the armed conflict and unrest. The Training Committee understood the concept of 'Internationalisation of Peacebuilding' as the possible means of accessing knowledge and opportunities for cooperation among institutions located in the different regions of the country. Learnt knowledge could be channelled to academic communities thereby paving the way toward a build-up of internationalisation strategies.

Through the interviews conducted, it was identified that the training held gave the participants tools for the management of internationalisation, as well as generated changes in the management model of the participating institutions, such as the availability of more resources (financial and human) for internationalisation, or the creation of interdisciplinary teams to work on international projects. Internationalisation at home was also strengthened with tools and resources from the internationalisation of learning experiences with teachers. International cooperation was also promoted through the institutional alignment for the reception of international financial resources, as well as the application to national and international calls for experts and other forms of cooperation for capacity building such as scholarships for the staff of the institution.

Lastly, the further strengthening of the internationalisation capacities of the institutions in the regions is observed to improve the quality of the academic programmes and other missionary functions of the institutions, considering a scheme which is based on the transfer of knowledge that empowers participants and turn them into generators of new knowledge and leaders of institutional transformations.

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Dieudonné Musa Alokpo

Mise en œuvre de l'atelier d'écriture des projets de recherche en République démocratique du Congo : défis, approches et acquisitions des participants

RÉSUMÉ : Tout en offrant un cadre d'apprentissage et d'émancipation scientifique, l'atelier d'écriture des projets oppose différents défis, d'ordre organisationnel et didactique, dont les approches influent sur son déploiement et sur l'atteinte des objectifs assignés. Comment s'y prendre pour contourner ces défis et accomplir avec succès l'implémentation de la formation proposée ? Quelle en est l'incidence sur la qualité des acquisitions des participants au terme de la formation ?

Le présent article répond à ces questions, partant des observations faites lors des formations organisées à Kinshasa (République démocratique du Congo) dans le cadre du programme National Multiplication Training (NMT). Il en ressort que le succès d'un atelier réside dans la pertinence des approches mises en oeuvre. Le recours à l'approche participative a favorisé les échanges constructifs entre participants, formateurs et experts, et a permis à tous les participants de finaliser des projets cohérents, pour postuler aux financements nationaux et internationaux.

MOTS CLÉS : rédaction de projets, didactique participative, national multiplication training

1. Introduction

Dans notre monde marqué par la profusion des connaissances (Vink, 2017 ; Lafrance, 2019), nombre de chercheurs portent d'idées pertinentes, mais n'arrivent pas à les valoriser ni en tirer le maximum de profit. Cela les rend inaudibles dans les cercles du débat scientifique et moins présents dans les espaces des projets. Parmi les causes de cet anonymat figure le non accès au financement qui puisse faciliter la conduite et la vulgarisation de leurs travaux. La Répartition des dépenses de recherche et développement dans le monde de 2014 à 2016[1], montre une grande disparité entre zones géographiques, où l'Afrique est à la queue, avec un investissement annuel respectif de 0,9 %, 0,88 % et 0,87 %.

En République Démocratique du Congo, le budget de la recherche[2] et développement est d'environ 1 %. Dans la sphère universitaire, seuls moins de 5 % de chercheurs ont accès au financement public et privé ; contre plus de 95 % qui n'y parviennent pas, et s'efforcent à autofinancer leurs projets. La difficulté d'accès au financement privé est aussi due à la sous information sur l'identité des agences attitrées, leurs politiques et leurs exigences. L'on note également une rareté de formation des multiplicateurs, qui du reste sont peu nombreux. Cette lacune rend beaucoup des chercheurs moins productifs et moins compétitifs. Certains amorcent des initiatives, mais qu'ils n'achèvent pas ; d'autres ont plusieurs fois soumis des projets, sans jamais décrocher de financement.

D'autres encore nourrissent la peur de s'évaluer aux pairs, suite à l'obsession d'un monde marqué par le culte de la concurrence et de la performance (Hadji, 2012). Ils n'entreprennent pas grand-chose et taisent leurs idées qui auraient pu faire avancer certaines causes sociales ou économiques, si elles étaient mises à la portée de la communauté.

Dès lors, la préoccupation principale est de savoir comment relever les défis dans des tels contextes afin d'autonomiser les collègues et les rendre compétitifs ? Dit autrement, comment les aider à transformer leurs idées en projets (Bergerault & Bergerault, 2019 ; Cohen, 2016), qui répondent aux besoins réels des groupes cibles et aux standards de scientificité, pour accéder au financement ?

1 Lire The 2016 Global R&D Funding Forecast : https://www.iriweb.org.

2 Lire la ventilation du budget national par secteur : https://budget.gouv.cd/budget-2020/.

Des réponses possibles, la formation à l’écriture des propositions de recherche constitue l’option pouvant satisfaire à cette double nécessité.

Cette formation remplit deux fonctions : scientifique et pédagogique. La première, en tant que processus de production des connaissances sur le protocole de recherche, les normes rédactionnelles, la cohérence interne des parties et leur hiérarchisation. Le projet de recherche est ainsi conçu comme un outil qui aide à structurer la pensée et à développer l’autonomie en recherche (Gordon & Pétry, 2010). La seconde consiste en la transmission ou partage desdites connaissances dans une vision multiplicatrice.

Accomplir ces fonctions requiert des choix pertinents au plan organisationnel et didactique, pour des interactions plus qualitatives. De même qu’un dispositif logistique adéquat, et un programme d’activités cohérent.

Le rôle du formateur est ainsi mis au débat, concernant la portée et l’efficacité des approches utilisées, de même que les effets qui en résultent sur les acquisitions des apprenants. Trois perspectives s’affirment, quant à ce.

La première, prône un contrôle total du formateur sur l’ensemble du processus de formation. Un unilatéralisme pédagogique qui centralise l’initiative des connaissances autour du formateur, dont seules les idées, les expériences et l’analyse comptent. Il initie tout, suivant une démarche didactique stricte à laquelle doivent se conformer les participants invités à l’écoute attentive de son discours, pour en saisir le sens et appliquer les propositions y formulées. L’approche privilégiée dans ce cadre est l’exposé magistral.

S’il est vrai qu’à l’avantage de cette perspective l’on note le gain du temps et la simplification du processus de communication pédagogique, l’on observe cependant qu’elle n’encourage pas l’initiative personnelle des participants à construire les connaissances à partir de leurs propres expériences (Zeitler et al., 2012).

De cette critique, émerge une deuxième perspective fondée sur la nécessité d’un apprentissage interactif, à travers des échanges permanents entre acteurs du processus de formation. Elle tient au fait que les participants ont des trajectoires sociales et académiques différents qui offrent un éventail de repères à leur apprentissage (Baroni & Jeanneret, 2008). La différence de parcours et d’expériences est un capital mobilisable dans un processus pédagogique, permettant à chacun d’apprendre des pairs.

Le principe de médiation sous-tendant la théorie constructiviste trouve ici son plein sens, entant que déterminant de la co-construction des savoirs, à travers des échanges verticaux et horizontaux.

Cependant, parallèlement à la possibilité de promouvoir une didactique participative, l'approche collaborative (Baudrit, 2007) contrarie quelque peu l'initiative des participants, dont les actions sont continuellement soumises à la validation des formateurs ou des pairs.

Cette critique a suscité une troisième perspective qui prône la pleine liberté des apprenants dans le choix, l'organisation et la conduite de leur apprentissage, selon leurs intérêts et aptitudes. Une autodétermination pédagogique qui les portent à s'approprier et assumer le contrôle total de la formation. Cette démarche a l'avantage de favoriser l'autonomie de l'apprenant (Zimmerman et al., 2000) qui, travaillant à son rythme, fait prospérer sa créativité. Elle est cependant critiquée pour son laisser-faire, qui conduit à des apprentissages lacunaires voire pervers. D'où, la nécessité d'un contrôle de conformité, à partir des référents connus, pour effectuer des ajustements éventuels.

Partant des forces et limites des trois perspectives susmentionnées, d'autres auteurs (Anadón, 2019 ; Ladage, 2016) privilégient une approche hybride ou mixte qui en combine les forces dans un triptyque : exposé magistral – participation – autonomie. Cette trilogie a été utilisée durant les ateliers d'écriture des projets tenus à Kinshasa en 2018, 2019 et 2020. Il s'agit des formations Progrant organisées dans le cadre du programme NMT coordonnées par l'Université de Potsdam où, faisant face aux multiples challenges, l'équipe des formateurs a mobilisé une gamme des stratégies conséquentes.

Le présent article met au clair les défis desdits ateliers et les mécanismes fonctionnels adoptés par les formateurs pour y répondre ou les contourner. Il se propose d'offrir un cadre de référence sur les déterminants du succès et de l'échec des ateliers de formation.

La problématique y traitée se traduit aux questions spécifiques suivantes : dans quelle mesure les ateliers d'écriture organisés à Kinshasa offrent-t-ils un cadre d'émancipation scientifique ? Quels en sont les défis majeurs et comment l'équipe de formateurs s'y sont pris pour pouvoir les contourner avec succès ? Quel est le niveau des acquisitions des participants au terme de la formation ?

Les réponses à ces questions trouvent leur fondement dans le modèle constructiviste, qui permet d'analyser la formation en atelier comme un cadre d'échange des connaissances, à travers un processus participatif. Les détails sont donnés dans la brève revue de la littérature ci-dessous.

2. Revue de la littérature

En tant que cadre d'échanges constructifs et d'émancipation personnelle, la formation remplit une fonction sociale, qui est analysé sous diverses perspectives : mécanisme de libération, processus d'autonomisation, cadre d'actualisation des savoirs, etc.

Pour Freire (1986), la formation est un moyen d'autonomisation de l'individu ou du groupe, en lui faisant acquérir des connaissances et capacités de changer ses conditions de vie. Dans la même optique, affirme Drouin-Hans (1998), la connaissance élève le niveau de culture de l'individu, le rendant capable de mieux réfléchir sur la manière d'organiser sa vie et d'être autonome. Dans ce processus de construction des connaissances, la collaboration avec les pairs est indispensable. Ce qui amène Abrami et al. (1996) à introduire dans le débat la notion de *l'interdépendance positive,* dont la principale caractéristique est que l'apprentissage de chaque participant au processus de formation dépend fondamentalement de l'interaction avec les autres.

Cette analyse est partagée par Lave et Wenger (1991) qui décrivent la formation, mieux l'apprentissage, comme un processus social se déroulant dans un contexte dont il subit l'influence. A cet effet, ils évoquent la notion de « communauté de pratique », pour marquer la nécessité de la complémentarité entre les individus engagés dans une formation, faisant que chacun construise et améliore ses connaissances dans un processus participatif.

Avec l'émergence de la société de la connaissance, les communautés d'apprentissage sont des moyens de produire des formes de sociétés (Cristol, 2017) où chaque humain, en tant produit de l'histoire personnelle et collective (Lamy & Saint-Martin, 2018), fait profiter à l'ensemble de la communauté ses différents acquis. Chacun ayant la possibilité de contribuer à l'édification intellectuelle de l'autre, la prétention au monopole du savoir est une pure illusion dans la société de connaissance. De même, toute rencontre peut être une opportunité d'apprentissage, dans la mesure où elle met en choc différents backgrounds et en érige la synthèse de vues en référentiel de conduite collective. Cette convergence résulte d'une contradiction rationnelle qui se construit à partir de l'analyse des forces et faiblesses des alternatives en présence.

Dans ce processus, et en contexte d'atelier de formation, l'équilibre des savoirs est à trouver à trois niveaux. D'abord, entre formateurs, dont la différence de parcours et d'expertise peut être un obstacle à l'apprentissage des participants, lorsqu'ils développent des thèses antinomiques, et s'y maintiennent, sans la moindre volonté de compromis. D'où l'intérêt d'une mise à plan des divergences éventuelles, pour définir des modèles partagés à présenter aux participants. Ce travail s'effectue en amont, lors de la conception et la préparation des travaux. Le choix des formateurs et des experts s'inscrit dans la même logique.

Le deuxième niveau d'équilibre est celui entre formateurs et participants. Ces derniers, bien qu'apprenants, ne sont nullement un vase vide à remplir. Autant que les formateurs, leurs trajectoires scolaires et universitaires sont chargées de nombreux repères sur lesquels se construisent leurs nouveaux apprentissages. Les questions qu'ils posent et les inquiétudes qu'ils affichent, traduisent les conflits cognitifs (Butera et al., 2019) qu'ils éprouvent entre leurs acquisitions antérieures et les nouveaux savoirs présentés par les formateurs.

A cet effet, plutôt que leur imposer des arguments d'autorité, les formateurs instaurent des échanges décomplexés et créent des interactions formatives, profitables à tous (formateurs et participants).

Le troisième équilibre s'établit entre seuls les participants, appelés au même destin[3] pédagogique. La diversité de parcours et de champs disciplinaires font parfois obstacles à un dialogue constructif, lorsque chacun utilise les codes qui soient inaccessibles à l'autre.

Cette difficulté appelle un effort conjugué, pour établir des passerelles d'échanges (Cristol, 2017), dans une perspective interdisciplinaire. La richesse de cette expérience est observée lors des travaux en petits groupes, où chaque participant profite des critiques lui formulées par ses pairs, pour améliorer ses propres vus et son projet. Un choc informationnel qui éclaire et valide les préconceptions des participants et des formateurs. Donc, un moyen de construction mutuelle des savoirs.

L'atelier favorise également l'émancipation scientifique des participants (Barbot & Trémion, 2016), à travers l'émergence du sentiment d'émulation positive qui pousse chacun à produire un travail de qualité comparable, si non supérieure à ceux des pairs. Etant préoccupé à donner une meilleure image de soi, le participant s'investit à corriger continuellement son projet et lui imprimer la forme recommandable.

Si l'assistance du formateur et des pairs facilite pareille réalisation, l'idéal est que chaque apprenant y parvienne par sa propre démarche. Car, dit-on, ne connait réellement que celui qui est capable de transmettre simplement ses savoirs aux autres. Cette autonomie de connaissances obéit à un système de reproduction pédagogique, où l'apprenant d'hier

3 Celui-ci est fixé par les objectifs de la formation.

devient aujourd'hui formateur d'une nouvelle génération qui, à son tour, formera une autre, et ainsi de suite.

L'atelier fait ainsi office de laboratoire, où les participants expérimentent et jaugent leurs connaissances, en se confrontant aux pairs. Cette processus d'émancipation scientifique s'apprécie au moyen de trois indicateurs : le niveau de compétences avant et après l'atelier ; la fréquence des formations post-atelier réalisées au bénéfice des tiers et la proportion des projets ultérieurs soumis et acceptés. Si les informations relatives au premier indicateur sont données à la section 4.3, traitant des acquisitions des participants, les deux autres ne sont pas évalués dans le présent article. Ils feront l'objet des analyses ultérieures.

3. Méthodes

Les informations traitées dans cet article ont été recueillies à l'aide de l'observation participante. Cette méthode permet d'observer un groupe, sans que celui-ci en soit au courant ni n'y consente (Abercrombie et al., 2000). Sa double particularité est qu'elle est généralement utilisée pour observer des groupes moins nombreux et fermé (Abercrombie et al., 2000) ; d'autre part, le chercheur la pratique sans dévoilement de son intention d'enquêter (Bastien, 2007). Il intègre pleinement le groupe cible pour mieux l'observer. Son utilisation ici est justifiée par la nature des données à recueillir, lesquelles nécessitent une immersion dans l'atelier, pour en saisir les différents contours. Aussi, l'atelier était constitué d'un nombre réduit de personnes, vingt-six au total (participants, formateurs et experts).

Mon statut de membre de l'équipe des formateurs a facilité la mise en application de cette méthode. En même temps que je participais aux activités de l'atelier, j'observais et je notais progressivement les détails essentiels du déroulement des travaux, lesquels ont ensuite été soumis à l'analyse. Cette observation se faisait au quotidien à l'aide d'une grille structurée qui a permis de noter les faits majeurs de l'atelier, concernant notamment son organisation, sa mise en œuvre et le suivi des activités. Ont été aussi notées les différentes interactions entre les acteurs impliqués (formateurs, experts et participants). Ces informations sont présentées à la section 4, consacré aux résultats.

Par ailleurs, les données sur les caractéristiques des participants (sexe, statut, discipline et institution) sont obtenues à partir des dossiers de candidature. Elles sont exposées au tableau ci-dessous et concernent deux cohortes de 20 participants des ateliers respectifs de 2018 et 2019/2020. Il en ressort que la majorité des participants (75 %) sont des hommes, contre 25 % des femmes. Concernant leur statut, ils sont respectivement assistants et chefs de travaux[4] à l'université. Au plan de domaine de recherche, ils proviennent des souches variées : biologie, chimie, sciences politiques, sociologie, gestion, sciences de l'éducation et psychologie. Cette diversité constitue une énorme opportunité pour chaque participant d'apprendre des démarches utilisées dans les domaines proches ou distants du sien. Au plan d'origine institutionnelle, 75 % des participants de la première cohorte (2018) sont de l'Université de Kinshasa et 25 % autres proviennent des établissements environnants ; alors que tous (100 %) les participants de la deuxième cohorte (2019/2020) appartiennent à l'Université de Kinshasa. Cette inégalité d'effectif est due aux profils présentés par les sujets venant de l'Université de Kinshasa. Les meilleures parmi les candidatures manifestées pour la sélection appartiennent à ladite université.

Tableau 1: Caractéristiques des participants aux ateliers de 2018 et 2019/2020

Variables	**Modalités**	**Ateliers 2018**	**Ateliers 2019/2020**
		(n = 20) %	**(n = 20) %**
Sexe	Femme	25	25
	Homme	75	75
Statut	Assistant (Junior)	15	15
	Chef de travaux (Senior)	85	85
Discipline	Sciences politiques	15	20
	Sociologie	10	10
	Education/Psychologie	25	75
	Relations internationales + Droit	–	10
	Gestion	15	5
	Biologie et Chimie/Médecine Vét.	35	–
Institution	Université de Kinshasa	75	100
	Autres	25	–

Au terme de l'analyse des informations recueillies de l'observation directe et participante des ateliers, les résultats sont présentés ci-dessous.

4 Il s'agit des assistants séniors dans la nomenclature des grades du personnel scientifiques des universités congolaises.

4. Résultats

Cette section présente les défis de l'atelier, les approches utilisées par les formateurs et les acquisitions des participants au terme de la formation.

4.1 Défis de l'atelier d'écriture des projets

Ils sont de trois types : défis d'organisation, défis de mise en œuvre et défis du suivi.

Défis de l'organisation
Ils concernent la constitution de l'équipe de formateurs et des experts ; le lancement de l'appel à candidature et la sélection des participants ; et la conception du programme des activités de formation.

- **Constitution de l'équipe de formateurs et d'experts**

Opérer un choix judicieux parmi la multitude des collègues disposant tous des compétences en écriture scientifique, pour constituer l'équipe de formateurs, est un énorme challenge, renforcé par la diversité de leurs usages. De même, faudrait-il scruter leur profil relationnel, pour s'assurer de leur sens coopératif ; étant évident qu'aucune équipe de travail ne peut accomplir sa mission avec succès, si les individus qui la composent ne se supportent ni ne coopèrent (Chédotel, 2004). A cet effet, les conflits et les contradictions stériles sont les ferments de la désagrégation organisationnelle et sociale. Nous concernant dans les ateliers sous examen, les formateurs ont été choisis sur base de leurs compétences. Nous nous connaissions, pour avoir déjà collaboré dans plusieurs activités similaires.

Au-delà de la compétence, la disponibilité des formateurs et experts potentiels est une autre équation à résoudre. Il n'est pas facile de fixer des dates qui rencontrent la disponibilité de tous, suite à leurs agendas souvent chargés. Arrêter les dates de l'atelier est une épreuve difficile, qui renvoie à des négociations diverses pour obtenir un réaménagement des agendas personnels. Ce qui n'est pas évident, au regard des contraintes professionnelles des uns et des autres.

Il peut arriver qu'un expert ou un formateur attendu se désengage, peu avant le démarrage des travaux. Cela met en difficulté le staff d'organisation, porté à relancer des nouveaux contacts en vue de son remplacement. La difficulté est particulièrement grande lorsqu'il faudrait par exemple remplacer un expert international pour lequel il n'est pas certain de trouver, aussitôt, un autre qui soit disponible. Ce fut le cas lors de notre 1er atelier en 2018. L'expert de l'Université de Cologne nous a annoncé son indisponibilité à deux semaines de l'atelier. Ne pouvant à cette échéance trouver un autre expert international, nous nous sommes remis à l'organisateur[5] qui a pu recommander un autre qui, heureusement, séjournait en Afrique en ce moment.

- **Conception et élaboration du programme d'activités : choix des thématiques**

Confectionner et animer un programme répondant aux objectifs de la formation (Noyé & Piveteau, 2018 ; Courau, 2017) est une nécessité et un défi pour les formateurs. Ce qui selon (Chocat, 2018) pose la question du lien entre la formation des animateurs et les dispositifs de formation cernés par ces derniers.

En même temps qu'ils en spécifient les contenus, doivent-ils également hiérarchiser les différents sous-thèmes et se les repartir avec justesse, en tenant compte de leurs compétences respectives.

Il arrive qu'un formateur renonce à un sous-thème lui attribué et propose de le changer contre un autre. Cette situation perturbe l'exécution du programme, singulièrement si la remise demandée intervient la veille de l'atelier. Pour anticiper sur pareil désagrément, la concertation autour des sous-thèmes doit se faire plusieurs semaines avant la tenue de l'atelier. L'équipe de formation pourra ainsi s'assurer des attentes des uns et des autres, et apporter, à temps voulu, des rectificatifs nécessaires.

Deux options se présentent dans l'élaboration du programme d'activités : d'une part, confier à l'un des formateurs d'élaborer le corpus du programme, qui sera ensuite soumis à la validation des pairs ; d'autre part, discuter ensemble de l'entièreté du programme, avant d'en répartir les rôles.

Dans l'une ou l'autre démarche, l'important est de parvenir à mettre en place un programme cohérent qui rencontre les attentes des participants et répondent aux objectifs de leur formation. Un contrôle mutuel du contenu permet d'éviter l'improvisation ; la nécessité étant pour les formateurs d'avoir le même entendement sur le programme.

Pareille convergence, autant qu'elle occasionne un contrôle collectif, favorise également aux formateurs de se compléter mutuellement lors des exposés. Dans ce même cadre, la ponctualité et la gestion rigoureuse du temps imparti s'impose, pour que chaque activité se déroule dans les

5 Université de Potsdam.

limites du temps fixé. Tout dépassement du temps d'un module se répercute inéluctablement sur la séquence suivante et sur l'ensemble des modules, rendant difficile l'accomplissement de l'entièreté du programme. Nous concernant, seule la rigueur dans la gestion du temps a permis de parer à ces manques.

- **Mise en place d'un lieu de formation**

Trouver un cadre approprié, qui permette d'organiser les travaux de l'atelier, est un défi capital que nous avons affronté. Les activités programmées nécessitent un endroit calme et sécurisé, qui dispose à la fois des logements au nombre des participants (20), des formateurs(4) et des experts (2) ; et d'une salle de conférence, équipée des mobiliers adaptés et de la sonorisation. A défaut, cette dernière devrait être louée auprès d'un tiers.

Cependant, plusieurs hôtels contactés à Kinshasa, ne pouvaient offrir ces conditions. Certains disposent des chambres, mais sans salle de réunion ; d'autres offrent un nombre de chambres inférieur à la demande ; d'autres encore ont des chambres et des salles d'activités, mais à un prix supérieur au budget disponible. Il a fallu beaucoup de temps et de démarches, pour finalement trouver un cadre qui répondaient aux conditions souhaitées (salles de travail adéquates, logements confortables, etc.).

Pour contourner cette difficulté, nous avons pris la précaution, lors des prochains ateliers, d'effectuer la réservation du lieu de formation plusieurs semaines avant la date du début. Cela implique aussi que le budget soit disponibilisé bien à temps, au moins un mois avant. Pour ce, l'Université de Potsdam faisait le nécessaire pour transférer les fonds à temps voulu.

- **Annonce de l'appel à candidature et sélection des participants**

C'est une tâche exigeante que d'élaborer un appel à candidature qui captive l'attention du public concerné et le porte à appliquer à la formation. Comment procéder pour atteindre ledit public ? Serait-il efficace de procéder de bouche à l'oreille, par des affiches, par mail ou via un blog ? C'est autour de ces paramètres que réfléchit l'équipe de formation, pour trouver la voie pertinente à annoncer la tenue de l'atelier.

Une fois le choix fait, il faudrait structurer le contenu de l'annonce, déterminer les critères d'éligibilité, la date limite de dépôt des candidatures, etc. Le texte d'annonce doit avoir une taille acceptable. Pas trop long, pour ne pas fatiguer le lecteur, mais contenir les informations nécessaires relatives à l'objet de la formation, aux objectifs et aux conditionnalités y relatives. Plus une annonce est claire et précise, mieux elle est comprise et peut mobiliser les candidats potentiels. Par contre, une annonce au contenu non explicite et confus perd son intérêt à être lu, avec risque de demeurer inconnu du public visé, et que personne n'y postule.

Face à la multitude des candidatures, la sélection devient un autre défi à relever. D'abord, lorsque plusieurs candidats répondent aux critères d'éligibilité, pour un nombre très limité de postes, comme ce fut le cas pour nos ateliers avec seulement 20 places. De même, lorsque les candidatures reçues présentent des profils quasi complémentaires. C'est-à-dire, les critères exigés se présentent de manière partagée entre les candidats, les uns remplissent certains critères qui manquent à d'autres, et inversement. Enfin, lorsque seuls les candidats de même institution, de même sexe ou de même discipline remplissent les critères fixés. L'arbitrage devient nécessaire pour trouver les points d'équilibre utiles.

L'idéal est de sélectionner les participants provenant d'horizon divers (établissement, discipline, sexe, etc.), en vue d'avoir des échanges fructueux qui puissent consolider l'interdisciplinarité et favoriser l'enrichissement mutuel. Cependant, le décalage souvent observé entre le souhait et la réalité, met l'équipe de formation devant une difficulté d'appréciation, qui impose le recours au bon sens.

L'équipe de formation peut certes être envahie par des hésitations, pour sélectionner les candidats d'une même institution, quand bien même ceux-ci répondent objectivement au profil prédéfini ; ou seulement les hommes par rapport aux femmes, et vice versa. Cette hésitation est motivée par la peur des critiques des bailleurs de fonds, qui mise généralement sur la représentativité des participants. En réponse, elle élimine certains candidats pour faire la place à d'autres, même ceux moins méritant, et créer ainsi un semblant d'équilibre.

Au-delà des paramètres sus-évoqués, la fixation d'un timing est également un important défi. La question est de déterminer une échéance raisonnable entre le lancement de l'appel à candidature et la date limite de dépôt des demandes. Cette période ne doit être ni trop courte ni trop longue, mais suffisant pour permettre aux candidats potentiels de constituer leurs dossiers et les soumettre.

Défis de la mise en œuvre et du suivi

Le principal défi affronté lors de la mise en œuvre et du suivi des activités de l'atelier, est la diversité d'horizons disciplinaires des participants et leurs spécificités méthodologiques.

Trois cas de figure se présentent, à cet effet. Primo, la mixité des participants provenant des disciplines aux approches très éloignées. Secundo, le décalage disciplinaire entre le formateur et les participants. Autrement dit, un formateur se trouvant en face des participants d'un champ disciplinaire différent du sien. Les spécificités méthodologiques et conceptuelles lui imposent des efforts supplémentaires, pour mieux saisir la teneur des projets des apprenants et y apporter des correctifs pertinents. Ce qui n'est pas toujours certain. Tertio, la diversité des domaines de recherche dans l'unicité disciplinaire. Dit autrement, l'offre de formation aux participants d'une même discipline, mais travaillant sur des questions différentes. L'avantage ici est la complémentarité fructueuse, sachant qu'une discipline est un tout qui articule la dimension historique et structurelle qui la compose (Berthelot, 2018), et dont les connaissances se lient les unes les autres. Cependant, la difficulté tient au niveau d'expertise des formateurs et de leur culture générale ; selon qu'ils ont ou non des compétences suffisantes dans les domaines des projets des participants. Ainsi, pourront-ils ou non leur apporter un appui utile et satisfaisant.

Le défi de la diversité disciplinaire réside au fait que les usages en matière d'écriture scientifique diffèrent d'une discipline à l'autre. Les sciences dites « dures »[6] fondent leurs convictions sur une démarche contrôlable, à partir des essais de laboratoire, qui débouchent sur l'établissement des lois universelles. Par contre, les sciences sociales procèdent par une approche critique et interprétative de la réalité observée ou préconçue.

Alors que les premières placent l'expérimentation au centre de leur action, les secondes recourent généralement à une double logique interprétative et hypothético-déductive. Alors que les premières aboutissent à des lois rigoureuses, les secondes édictent des principes discutables et contextualisables.

L'ingéniosité et le pragmatisme des formateurs (Laot & De Lescure, 2006) constituent la clé du succès de leur action, à travers des choix didactiques pertinents et conciliants. Face aux participants issus de la même discipline ou groupe de disciplines, la tâche du formateur est facilitée par

6 Exemple : mathématiques, physique, chimie, cybernétique, etc.

la similarité terminologique et méthodologique. Ils se comprennent et interagissent plus facilement, dans un débat ouvert et accessible. Il en est d'autant facile que le formateur soit lui-même du domaine ; comprenant mieux les préoccupations des participants, il les oriente utilement.

A l'inverse, avec les participants des disciplines et domaines éloignés, les échanges ne sont pas évidents. Personne ne s'imprégnant de ce que fait l'autre, ne s'y intéresse réellement. Cette difficulté se renforce lorsque le formateur est d'un bord scientifique différent de celui des participants. Il est très limité dans l'appui à apporter au fond de leurs projets.

De trois cas de figures susmentionnés, la mixité des participants est la plus fréquemment rencontrée dans les ateliers de rédaction des projets. Nous l'avons expérimentée lors de nos ateliers à Kinshasa, qui réunissaient les participants de souches scientifiques très variées, à savoir : chimie, biologie, sociologie, psychologie, sciences de l'éducation, gestion, sciences politiques, etc. Un large spectre des disciplines aux approches méthodologiques distantes et, apparemment, non conciliables dans le cadre de l'écriture scientifique. Cette crainte a été prise en compte lors de la constitution de l'équipe des formateurs et dans le choix des experts, lesquels étaient basés sur l'interdisciplinarité (sciences exactes et sciences sociales). La mise en commun de leurs atouts et expériences a permis de répondre efficacement au défi de la diversité des champs disciplinaires des participants.

4.2 Approches des formateurs et gestion des interactions formatives

Bien que la mise en place d'une didactique efficace préoccupe tous les formateurs, la maîtrise des approches pouvant améliorer les acquisitions des apprenants n'est pas certaine pour tous, loin s'en faut ; elle requiert de l'expérience et du bon sens (Leroy, 2016). Plusieurs facteurs font obstacles au choix des meilleures approches, notamment l'ignorance ou la sous information, la non maitrise des approches adoptées.

L'ignorance (sous information) fait référence au niveau de culture des formateurs sur les moyens possibles d'animer un atelier de formation. Cette culture se construit par la participation aux programmes de formation pour formateurs, et par l'autoformation. L'exemple typique de la formation des formateurs est le programme organisé en 2017 et 2019, par l'Université de Potsdam, au lancement du programme *National Multiplication Training* (NMT). Plusieurs équipes sélectionnées dans différents pays y ont suivi, durant trois jours, des modules de formation sur l'organisation, la préparation et l'animation d'un atelier. Un équipement théorique certain, qui a permis de mettre en confiance les équipes participantes, dans la mise en œuvre de leurs futurs ateliers dans leurs pays.

Faute d'un tel background, le formateur est limité et souvent désemparé ; incapable d'imaginer des procédés innovantes pouvant susciter la motivation des participants et les impliquer activement dans les activités programmées.

Nous concernant, ce défit a été observé, bien qu'à faible proportion, chez certains membres de notre équipe qui n'ont participé, autant que les autres, à la formation des formateurs. Ils ont affiché quelques difficultés d'approche, notamment concernant la structuration des exposés, la conduite de la discussion et la gestion des interactions avec les participants. Ces difficultés étaient directement compensées par d'autres collègues, grâce au mode de travail en équipe institué, lequel favorise le relais et la complémentarité entre membres de l'équipe de formation.

Par ailleurs, n'ayant pas eu l'opportunité de suivre une formation formelle ou un séminaire pour formateurs, un formateur peut également s'auto-former (Tremblay, 2019) par la lecture personnelle, ou en prenant part aux discussions informelles traitant de la question intéressée. Cette voie n'est souvent pas exploitées par certains, arguant que la société n'offre pas assez d'opportunités, quant à ce. Ce faisant, se privent-ils des initiatives d'un auto-apprentissage libéral qui permet de satisfaire au besoin d'information et de culture personnelle, lequel ne répond à aucune exigence externe, mais au seul désir de saisir le sens des choses et de développer la capacité à l'action (Musa, 2018). Cette attitude accroit les bagages intellectuels de l'individu, en tant que sujet connaissant, et lui donne la latitude de se bâtir un profil de compétences perfectible. Ce processus et le résultat qu'il gère, trouvent leur sens dans la hiérarchie des besoins de Maslow, précisément le besoin d'autoréalisation que l'individu cherche à satisfaire pour un prestige personnel et un équilibre mental, sans une visée matérialiste ou lucrative.

Par ailleurs, connaître les approches didactiques est une chose, les appliquer à bon escient en est une autre. Le recours à une approche ne doit pas être hasardeux, mais rationnel en évaluant les avantages qu'elle renferme par rapport aux objectifs que se fixe l'équipe de formateurs. Surtout, la capacité de cette dernière d'en faire un usage pertinent.

L'expérience vécue durant nos ateliers est, en effet, assez illustratif. Il nous est arrivé d'arbitrer entre deux ou trois approches, pour organiser certaines activités ou les faire accomplir par les participants ; lorsque ceux-ci devaient exposer leurs projets et les soumettre à la critique des pairs. Les avis étaient partagés entre, par exemple, traiter une question directement dans le grand groupe de 20 participants ou les repartir en petits groupes de travail séparés et, ensuite, faire des mises en commun.

A différents moments, le choix était porté sur l'une ou l'autre démarche, avec des résultats significatifs. Cependant, il est aussi arrivé que l'approche choisie n'occasionne pas le développement des interactions qualitatives. Ce qui nous a porté à la changer par une autre.

Lors des ateliers susmentionnés, l'approche privilégiée dans la construction des interactions d'apprentissage a été l'approche par compétences, renforcée par le focus group, afin d'amener les participants à apprendre de leurs propres difficultés. Dans ce cadre, l'atteinte des objectifs de l'atelier s'apprécie par la qualité des acquisitions affichées par les participants, comme exposé ci-dessous.

4.3 Rendement des participants et finalisation des projets individuels

Les approches interactives utilisées ont favorisé la co-construction des apprentissages (Buchs et al., 2006 ; Thievenaz, 2018), et consolidé l'avancement des projets des participants. Ces faits sont attestés par les résultats d'une enquête exploratoire des opinions des participants sur l'accomplissement du plan d'action et d'implantation des projets individuels, et la satisfaction du programme et de la compétence des formateurs

Plan d'action et de l'implantation des projets individuels

L'intérêt de planifier la mise en œuvre du projet, est d'en systématiser les actions et d'éviter toute forme d'improvisation. Une ligne d'actions doit être définie pour spécifier à chaque phase les activités à mener.

Les projets que portaient les participants étant essentiellement académiques, l'enjeu était de les transformer en projets bancables à soumettre aux agences de financement. Ce qui a nécessité une réorientation vers des buts plus fonctionnels, relatifs à la solution d'un problème social. L'absence de cette dimension rend le projet incomplet et, donc, non satisfaisant pour les bailleurs de fonds qui désirent imprimer leurs manques en finançant les projets à impact visible.

A cet effet, deux patterns ont été présentés et utilisés par les participants pour finaliser la rédaction de leurs projets. D'une part, le pattern d'un protocole de recherche académique, celui de financement et, d'autre part, le pattern d'un budget de recherche. L'efficacité dans la conformité à ces trois modèles implique, comme précédemment dit, que chaque participant travaille sur son propre projet, avant de le soumettre à l'équipe des formateurs pour évaluation de conformité. Ce processus s'opère efficacement en deux moments. D'abord, après le premier atelier, pour vérifier la justesse des corrections apportées, en référence aux orientations reçues pendant les exposés théoriques. Ensuite, à l'issue du second atelier, pour évaluer les améliorations finales réalisées.

Il en découle que tous les participants (100 %) ont finalisé leurs projets, dont la structuration et la présentation répondent aux attentes des formateurs. Les buts scientifiques et sociaux y sont clairement mentionnés, de même que le gap à combler, lequel rend l'originalité des projets.

Au-delà de ces facteurs, chaque participant a acquis une double expertise : la compétence à élaborer une proposition de recherche répondant au protocole requis, et la capacité à évaluer objectivement un projet soumis par un tiers (un autre chercheur). Plus concrètement, vingt chercheurs sélectionnés et formés ont pu monter des projets prometteurs assortis des budgets cohérents pour postuler à des financements nationaux et internationaux. Le contenu de la formation et les exercices effectués ont renforcé leurs capacités dans la conception, la structuration, la rédaction et la budgétisation d'un projet de recherche bancable.

Cependant, par rapport aux projets de 2018 qui ont déjà démarré, et dont certains en passe de s'achever, aucun projet de 2020 n'est mis en œuvre, faute de financement disponible. Beaucoup de participants n'ont pas encore trouvé des bailleurs travaillant dans leurs domaines respectifs. D'autres continuent d'attendre des réponses à leurs applications, étant sur la liste d'attente des agences contactées. En dépit de cela, l'atelier s'est avéré être un investissement intellectuel solide, dont ils se prévaudront leur carrière durant.

Satisfaction au programme et à la compétence des formateurs

L'écrasante majorité des participants (près de 97 %) ont affiché une très grande satisfaction face aux activités réalisées durant les ateliers. Ils affirment y avoir acquis des nouveaux outils méthodologiques qui complètent et renforcent leurs acquisitions antérieures. Beaucoup d'a priori ont été dissipé et les idées reçues éclairées, permettant à chaque participant de construire son projet suivant une démarche rigoureuse, qui tiennent aux principes de scientificité et aux exigences des agences de financement. Au-delà de l'initiative étrangère du programme *National Multiplication Training,* cordonné par l'Université de Potsdam, ainsi que la présence des experts européens et régionaux, deux facteurs ayant conféré un caractère international à l'atelier et motivé un grand nombre de candidatures, la qualité des prestations des formateurs a significativement rencontré les attentes des participants. Ces derniers affirment unanimement en être satisfaits. Cette position est corroborée par les résultats des enquêtes successives menées *on line* par l'Université de Potsdam auprès des participants. Près de 94 % d'enquêtés affirment avoir acquis des nouvelles connaissances les ayant permis de mieux approcher la problématique du projet. Une proportion similaire jugent très satisfaisant les profils des formateurs et leurs compétences. Enfin, tous les participants (100 %) affirment n'avoir jamais pris part à un forum similaire, où ils apprennent l'écriture des projets. Cette lacune questionne la léthargie de leurs facultés à pouvoir les outiller à cet effet, pour briser le complexe d'infériorité et l'hésitation à appliquer aux appels à projets à l'international ; attitude qui amenuise leur productivité scientifique et les confine dans l'anonymat.

5. Conclusion

Faisant recours aux approches participatives et magistro-centrées, les ateliers organisés dans le cadre du programme *National Multiplication Training,* ont contribué au décloisonnement scientifique des participants, à travers la transmission des codes d'écriture des projets répondants aux standards internationaux. Cela, dans un contexte où bon nombre de chercheurs sont relativement moins compétitifs sur le marché des projets bancables.

L'efficacité ainsi démontrée, appelle à la réorientation de la politique universitaire et de la recherche, pour créer des cadres d'échanges entre chercheurs, leur permettant de mettre en choc des idées et expériences, afin de produire des référentiels partagés de réflexion et d'action.

La compétitivité intellectuelle doit s'incruster dans la culture universitaire, en tant que moteur de production des connaissances et fondement du progrès des sociétés modernes. Les universités doivent envisager en permanence cette nécessité d'actualisation intellectuelle dans leur plan stratégique. Ce qui implique d'y allouer des ressources financières suffisantes, mais aussi d'établir des coopérations interuniversitaires, permettant aux institutions moins outillées de bénéficier de l'apport de celles qui en ont l'expertise.

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Implementation of a Proposal Writing Workshop in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Challenges, Approaches, and Learning Outcomes of the Participants

ABSTRACT: Whilst providing a framework for learning and scientific emancipation, a proposal writing training is confronted with various organisational and didactic challenges, which influence the achievement of the set training objectives. Based on observations made during the workshops for proposal writing organised in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, as part of the NMT Programme, the article raises two main questions: (a) How could these challenges be overcome and successfully addressed in the training? (b) What is the level of learning outcomes of the participants at the end of the training? The article shows that the success of the training lays in the relevance of the employed training approaches. The use of a participatory approach encouraged constructive exchanges between participants, trainers, and experts, and enabled all participants to finalise coherent projects to apply for national and international funding.

KEYWORDS: proposal writing, participatory didactics, national multiplication training

1. Introduction

In the world of abundant knowledge (Vink, 2017; Lafrance, 2019), many researchers carry relevant ideas but fail to value them and make the most of them. This failure makes them inaudible in the circles of scientific debate and less present in project spaces. One of the causes of this anonymity is the lack of access to funding to facilitate the conduct and dissemination of their work. The distribution of research and development expenditure in the world from 2014 to 2016[1] shows a great disparity between geographical areas, with Africa lagging far behind, with an annual investment of 0.9%, 0.88% and 0.87%, respectively.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the research and development budget[2] is about 1%. In the academic sphere, only less than 5% of researchers have access to public and private funding, compared to more than 95% who do not, and try to self-finance their projects.

The difficulty in accessing private funding is also due to under-information about the agencies involved, their policies, and requirements. Scarcity in the number of training for multipliers also prevails. This lack makes many researchers less productive and less competitive. Some start initiatives but do not complete them; others submit projects several times without ever obtaining funding. Still, others feed the fear of peer review, as a result of the obsession with a world marked by the cult of competition and performance (Hajji, 2012). They do not undertake much and keep quiet about ideas that could have advanced social or economic causes if they were made available to the community.

Therefore, the main concern shown in this article lies in meeting challenges in such contexts to empower colleagues and make them competitive. In other words, how to help them transform their ideas into proposals (Bergerault & Bergerault, 2019; Cohen, 2016), which meet the real needs of the target groups and scientific standards, and to access funding.

Of the possible answers, training in writing research proposals is the option that can satisfy this double necessity. This training fulfils two functions: scientific and pedagogical. The first, as a process for producing knowledge about the research protocol, writing standards, the internal

1 Read The 2016 Global R&D Funding Forecast: http://www.iriweb.org.

2 Read the breakdown of the national budget by sector: https://budget.gouv.cd/budget-2020/.

coherence of the parties, and their prioritisation. The research project is thus conceived as a tool that helps structure thinking and supports autonomy in research (Gordon & Pétry, 2010). The second consists of the transmission or sharing of this knowledge in a multiplying vision.

Accomplishing these functions requires relevant choices at the organisational and didactic levels, for more qualitative interactions. Furthermore, an adequate logistic system and a coherent programme of activities should be developed.

The trainer's role should also be considered, concerning the scope and effectiveness of the approaches used, as well as the resulting learning outcomes of the learners. Three perspectives are presented in this regard:

The first advocates total control of the trainer over the entire training process, a pedagogical unilateralism that centralises the knowledge initiative around the trainer, whose ideas, experiences, and analysis alone count. The trainer initiates everything, following a strict didactic approach to which the participants have to cope with, listening attentively to the trainers' speech, to grasp its meaning and take into account the suggestions made in it. The preferred approach in this context is the lecture.

Whilst it is true that this perspective has the advantage of saving time and simplifying the process of pedagogical communication, it does not encourage the personal initiative of the participants to build knowledge from their own experiences (Zeitler et al., 2012). From this criticism, a second perspective emerges, based on the need for interactive learning, through permanent exchanges between actors in the training process. It stems from the fact that participants have different social and academic trajectories that provide a range of reference points for their learning (Baroni & Jeanneret, 2008). The difference in backgrounds and experiences is a capital that can be mobilised in a pedagogical process, allowing each person to learn from their peers. The principle of mediation underlying constructivist theory finds its full meaning here, as a determinant of the co-construction of knowledge, through vertical and horizontal exchanges.

However, alongside the possibility of promoting participatory didactics, the collaborative approach (Baudrit, 2007) somewhat thwarts the initiative of the participants, whose actions are continually subject to validation by trainers or peers. This criticism has given rise to a third perspective that advocates the full freedom of learners to choose, organise, and conduct their learning according to their interests and aptitudes.

Pedagogical self-determination leads them to take ownership and assume total control of the training. This approach has the advantage of promoting learner autonomy (Zimmerman et al., 2000), which, working at his or her own pace, allows creativity to flourish. However, it is criticised for its *laissez-faire* approach, which leads to incomplete or even perverse learning. Hence, there is a need for a conformity check, based on known referents, to make possible adjustments.

Based on the strengths and limitations of the three perspectives mentioned above, other authors (Anadón, 2019; Ladage, 2016) favour a hybrid or mixed approach that combines the strengths of the two previous ones in a triptych: lecture—participation—autonomy. This trilogy was used during the proposal-writing workshops held in Kinshasa in 2018, 2019, and 2020. The Kinshasa workshops for proposal writing had been organised within the framework of the NMT programme coordinated by the University of Potsdam where, faced with multiple challenges, the team of trainers mobilised a range of consequent strategies.

This article clarifies the challenges that were met at the Kinshasa workshops and the functional mechanisms adopted by the trainers to meet or bypass them. Moreover, it aims to provide a frame of reference on the determinants of success and failure of future training workshops.

The problem addressed in the report is reflected in the following specific questions:

1. To what extent did the writing workshops organised in Kinshasa offer a framework for scientific emancipation?
2. What were the major challenges and how did the team of trainers manage to overcome them?
3. What was the level of learning outcomes of the participants at the end of the training?

The answers to these questions were based on the constructivist model, which allowed the workshop training to be analysed as a framework for knowledge exchange through a participatory process. Details are given in the brief literature review below.

2. Literature Review

As a framework for constructive exchanges and personal emancipation, training fulfils a social function, which is analysed from various perspectives: liberation mechanism, empowerment process, a framework for updating knowledge, etc.

For Freire (1986), training is a means of empowering the individual or group by providing them with knowledge and abilities to change their living conditions. In the same vein, Drouin-Hans (1998) argues that knowledge raises the level of culture of the individual, making him or her capable of better thinking about how to organise his or her life and be autonomous. In this knowledge-building process, collaboration with peers is indispensable. This leads Abrami et al. (1996) to introduce into the debate the concept of positive interdependence, whose main characteristic is that the learning of each participant in the training process depends fundamentally on interaction with others.

The same analysis is developed by Lave and Wenger (1991), who describe training or learning as a social process taking place in a context, from which it is influenced. To this end, they refer to the notion of 'community of practice', to stress the need for complementarity between individuals engaged in training, whereby each person builds and improves his or her knowledge in a participatory process.

With the emergence of the knowledge society, learning communities are means of producing forms of societies (Cristol, 2017) where each human being, as a product of personal and collective history (Lamy & Saint-Martin, 2018), makes the whole community benefit from his or her different achievements. Since each person has the opportunity to contribute to the intellectual edification of the other, the claim to a monopoly of knowledge is a pure illusion in the knowledge society. In the same way, any encounter may be a learning opportunity, insofar as it confronts different backgrounds and establishes the synthesis of views as a reference point for collective conduct.

This convergence is the result of a rational contradiction that is constructed from the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the different alternatives. In this process, and the context of a training workshop, a balance of knowledge must be found at three levels:

First, a balance of knowledge is found between trainers, whose different backgrounds and expertise can be an obstacle to participants' learning, when they develop antinomic theses, and stick to them, without the slightest willingness to compromise. Thus, it is useful to map out possible divergences to define shared models to be presented to participants. This work is carried out upstream, during the design and preparation of the work. The choice of trainers and experts follows the same logic.

The second level of balance is found between trainers and participants. Indeed, although they are learners, the participants are by no means an empty vessel to be filled. Just as much as the trainers, their academic trajectories are loaded with numerous reference points on which their new learning is built. The questions they ask and the concerns they display reflect the cognitive conflicts (Butera et al., 2019) they experience between their previous acquisitions and the new knowledge presented by the trainers. To this end, rather than imposing authoritative arguments on them, trainers initiate uncomplexed exchanges and create formative interactions that benefit both trainers and participants.

The third balance is established only between the participants, called to the same pedagogical destiny. The diversity of backgrounds and disciplinary fields sometimes impedes constructive dialogue when each uses codes that are inaccessible to the other. Such difficulty calls for a joint effort to build bridges of exchange (Cristol, 2017) from an interdisciplinary perspective. The richness of this experience is observed during the work in small groups, where each participant takes advantage of the criticisms made by peers to improve his or her views and project, an informational shock that sheds light on and validates the preconceptions of participants and trainers. Such is a means of mutual construction of knowledge.

A workshop also promotes the scientific emancipation of the participants (Barbot & Trémion, 2016), through a feeling of positive emulation that pushes all members to produce work of comparable, if not superior, quality to that of their peers. Being concerned with giving a better self-image, the participant invests in continuously correcting his or her project and giving it the recommended form.

If the help of the trainer and peers facilitates such an achievement, the ideal is for each learner to achieve this through his or her approach since it is said that those who truly know can transmit their knowledge to others with ease. This autonomy of knowledge follows a system of pedagogical reproduction, where yesterday's learner becomes today's trainer of a new generation who, in turn, will train the next generation, and so on.

The Kinshasa workshops thus acted as a laboratory, where participants experimented and gauged their knowledge, by presenting themselves to their peers. This process of scientific emancipation is assessed through three indicators: (a) the level of skills before and after the workshop, (b) the frequency of post-workshop training carried out for the benefit of third parties, and (c) the proportion of subsequent projects submitted and accepted. Whilst the information on the first indicator is given in the paper, dealing with participants' learning outcomes (a), the other two, (b) and (c), are not assessed in this paper. These will be the subject of future analyses.

3. Methods

The information presented in this article was gathered through participant observation. This method involves observing a group without their knowledge or consent (Abercrombie et al., 2000). Its dual characteristic is that it is generally used to observe smaller or closed groups, and the researcher practises it without disclosing the intention to investigate (Bastien, 2007). The target group is fully integrated to better observe it. In this case, the use is justified by the nature of the data collected, which requires immersion in the workshop to grasp the different aspects of its progress. Furthermore, the workshop had a small number of people, twenty-six in total (participants, trainers, and experts).

The author of this article, as a member of the trainers' team, facilitated the implementation of this method. The workshop activities had been participated in, and the essential details of the proceedings observed, progressively noted, and submitted for analysis. This observation was done daily using a structured grid that allowed the major facts of the workshop to be noted, particularly concerning its organisation, implementation and follow-up of activities. The various interactions between the actors involved (trainers, experts, and participants) were also noted. All these elements are presented in the Results section.

Also, data on the characteristics of the participants (gender, status, discipline, and institution) were obtained from their application files. They are presented in the table below and refer to two cohorts of 20 participants in the workshops, held in 2018 and 2019/2020, respectively.

The majority of participants (75%) were men, compared to 25% women. Concerning their status, they were junior and senior assistants[3], respectively, at the university, and they presented a broad variety of

3 In Congolese universities, two categories of assistants are recognised: those who are in their first or second year of mandate (junior assistants), and those who have more than four years of career, called in French "chefs de travaux" (senior assistants).

research. Their backgrounds were biology, chemistry, political science, sociology, management, educational science, and psychology. This diversity provided an enormous opportunity for the participants to learn from approaches used in fields close to or distant from their own.

In terms of institutional origin, 75% of the participants in the first cohort (2018) were representatives from the University of Kinshasa and another 25%, from surrounding institutions, whilst all (100%) of the participants in the second cohort (2019/2020) came from the University of Kinshasa. This inequality in numbers was explained by the profiles presented by the participants coming from this university, where the best applications for selection came from.

Table 1: Characteristics of 2018 and 2019/2020 Workshop Participants

Variables	**Modalities**	**Workshops 2018**	**Workshops 2019/2020**
		(n = 20) %	**(n = 20) %**
Gender	Female	25	25
	Male	75	75
Status	Junior Assistant	15	15
	Senior Assistant	85	85
Discipline	Political Sciences	15	20
	Sociology	10	10
	Education/Psychology	25	75
	International Relations + Law	–	10
	Management	15	5
	Biology/Chemistry/Veterinary Medicine	35	–
Institution	University of Kinshasa	75	100
	Others	25	–

Based on the information analysis gathered from direct and participating observation in the workshops, the results are presented below.

4. Results

This section presents the challenges met during the Kinshasa workshops, the approaches used by the trainers, and the participants' learning outcomes at the end of the training.

4.1 Challenges in the Proposal Writing Workshops

There were three types of challenges: organisational challenges, implementation challenges, and follow-up challenges.

Organisational Challenges
These refer to the constitution of the team of trainers and experts, the launch of the call for applications, the selection of participants, and the design of the programme of training activities.

- **Constitution of the Team of Trainers and Experts**

Choosing wisely from among a multitude of colleagues, all of whom possess scientific writing skills, to form the team of trainers, was a huge challenge, coupled with the diversity of their uses. Likewise, relational profiles were also scrutinised to ensure their sense of cooperation, since no work team can accomplish its objectives if the individuals who comprise it do not cooperate and support the team (Chédotel, 2004). To this end, sterile conflicts and contradictions make up the base of organisational and social disintegration. For the various workshops, the trainers were chosen based on their skills and qualifications and previous collaborations in several similar activities.

The availability of potential trainers and experts was another equation to be solved. It was not easy to set dates that met everyone's availability, due to often busy agendas. Fixing workshop dates was a difficult ordeal, which involved various negotiations to get personal agendas rearranged. This had not been easy, considering the professional constraints of everyone involved in the training.

An expected trainer or expert in the field could withdraw shortly before the start of the activities. This is difficult for any organisation staff who will have to find an immediate replacement. The difficulty is particularly great when, for example, what needs replacing is an international expert, because it is never certain whether someone is available to take up the role at such short notice. This was the case at the first NMT workshop in 2018. The European expert announced his unavailability two weeks before the workshop. Unable to find another international expert in so short a time, the organiser (University of Potsdam) was consulted. Another resource speaker who, fortuitously, was staying in Africa at the moment, was sent to the workshop to serve as the international expert.

- **Design and Development of the Programme of Activities: Choice of Themes**

Designing and facilitating a programme that meets the training objectives (Noyé & Piveteau, 2018; Courau, 2017) is a necessity and a challenge for trainers. According to Chocat (2018), this raises the question of the link between the training of the facilitators and the training devices proposed by them.

After the contents of the training had been specified, the different sub-themes were prioritised and distributed fairly, taking into account the trainers' perspectives and competences. A trainer might sometimes give up a sub-theme assigned to him or her and suggest changing it for another one. This situation could disrupt the execution of the programme, especially if the requested handover takes place the day before the workshop. To anticipate such inconvenience, consultation on the sub-themes should take place several weeks before the workshop. This should enable the training team to ascertain each other's expectations and make the necessary corrections in good time.

Two options are available in the development of the programme activities. One is to entrust one of the trainers with developing the corpus of the programme, which will then be submitted for peer validation. The other is to discuss the entire programme together, before allocating the roles. In either approach, the important thing is to arrive at a coherent programme that meets the expectations of the participants and the objectives of their training. Mutual control of the content helps to avoid improvisation since the trainers need to have the same understanding of the programme.

Such convergence, as long as it results in collective control, also encourages trainers to complement each other during the presentations. In the same context, punctuality, and rigorous time management are essential, so that each activity takes place within the set time frame. If the time limit for one module is exceeded, this inevitably affects the sequence of the activities and all the modules, making it difficult to complete the entire programme. In the case of the Kinshasa workshops, only diligent time management made the overcoming of these hurdles on time management possible.

- **Setting up a Place for the Training**

Finding an appropriate place to organise the workshop was a major challenge that was encountered. The planned activities required a quiet, secure place, which required accommodation for participants (20), trainers (4), and experts (2); and a conference room, equipped with appropriate furniture and sound system. In case the sound system would be missing, it would be rented out from a third party.

However, several hotels contacted in Kinshasa could not offer these conditions. Some had lodging rooms, but without a meeting room; others offered several rooms below the demand; still, others had rooms and activity rooms but at a price much higher than what the available budget could afford. It took a lot of time and effort to finally find a setting that met the desired conditions (adequate workrooms, comfortable accommodation, adequate sound system, etc.).

To deal with this difficulty, during the succeeding workshops, reservations of the training place were made several weeks before the starting date. This had implications on the budget being made available well in advance, at least one month, before the start of the training programme. The University of Potsdam made the necessary arrangements to transfer the funds on time.

- **Launch of the Call for Applications and Selection of Participants**

A call for applications that could attract the target group and get them to apply for the training was a time-consuming task. The training team thought of certain parameters in finding the right way to announce the workshop, which included the best way to reach the audience. Would it be more effective to do this by word of mouth, posters, email, or blog? Once the choice had been made, the content of the announcement was structured, specifying the eligibility criteria, the deadline for submitting applications, etc. The announcement text was of an acceptable size, not too long, so as not to tire the reader, but contained the necessary information about the purpose of the training, the objectives, and related requirements. The clearer and more precise the advertisement was, the better it was understood and potential candidates were better mobilised. On the other hand, a call with non-explicit and confusing content could lose its interest in being read, with the risk of remaining unknown to the target audience, and nobody applying for it.

Faced with a multitude of applications, the selection turned out to be another challenge. Several candidates met the eligibility criteria for a very limited number of positions, as it was the case for the workshops with only 20 places.

Another question was how to deal with many applications that presented almost complementary profiles. That meant that the required criteria were presented in a shared manner among the candidates, with some participants fulfiling certain criteria that others lacked, and vice versa.

Finally, another matter taken up was that all candidates came from the same institution, gender, or discipline. Arbitration became necessary to strike the right balance.

The advantage of selecting participants with diverse backgrounds (institution, discipline, gender, etc.), was to have fruitful exchanges that could consolidate interdisciplinarity and foster mutual enrichment. However, the gap often observed between what was desired and what was happening made it difficult for the trainers' team to assess the situation, and which required the use of common sense.

The trainers' team was certainly hesitant to select candidates coming from the same institution, even if they objectively met the predefined profile, or selecting only men without any women, and vice versa. This hesitation was motivated by the fear of criticism from donors, who recommended the representation of the participants. In reaction, the trainers' team eliminated some candidates in favour of others, even those less deserving, to create some kind of balance.

In addition to the above-mentioned parameters, setting the timing was also a major obstacle. The issue was to determine a reasonable deadline between the launch of the call and the submission of applications. This period should neither be too short nor too long but had to be sufficient enough to give potential applicants time to compile their documents and submit them.

Implementation and Follow-up Challenges

The main challenge faced during the implementation and follow-up of the workshops was the diversity of the participants' discipline backgrounds and their methodological specificities. In the following, three scenarios are presented.

First, the mixed nature of the participants, coming from disciplines with very different approaches.

Second, a discipline gap between the trainers and the participants. In other words, trainers are faced with participants coming from disciplines different from their own. The methodological and conceptual specificities require additional efforts to better understand the content of the learners' proposals and to make relevant corrections, which was not always certain.

Third, the diversity of research fields within a single discipline. In other words, participants came from the same discipline but worked on different issues. In this case, the advantage was fruitful complementarity, knowing that a discipline is a whole that articulates the historical and structural dimensions that comprise it (Berthelot, 2018), and the knowledge of the practitioners is linked to each other. However, the difficulty lay in the level of expertise of the trainers and their general culture, depending on whether or not they have had sufficient competence in the areas of proposals brought by the participants. Thus, they might or might not be able to provide useful and satisfactory support.

The challenge of discipline diversity lies in the fact that practices in scientific writing differ from one discipline to another. The so-called 'hard'[4] sciences base their convictions on a controllable approach, using laboratory tests, which lead to the formulation of universal laws. However, the social sciences proceed by a critical and interpretative approach to observed or preconceived reality.

Whilst the 'hard' sciences place experimentation at the centre of their action, the social sciences generally resort to a double interpretative and hypothetico-deductive logic. Whilst the former result in rigorous laws, the latter enact principles that are debatable and can be contextualised.

The ingenuity and pragmatism of trainers (Laot & De Lescure, 2006) are keys to the success of their action, through relevant and conciliatory didactic choices. Faced with participants from the same discipline or group of disciplines, the trainer's task is made easier by the similarity of terminology and methodology. They understand each other and interact more easily, in an open and accessible debate. If the trainers come from the same scientific fields as the participants, they might be able to understand the participants' concerns easier and provide them with useful guidance.

Conversely, with participants from distant disciplines and fields, exchanges are not readily apparent. No one is immersed in what the other is doing. This difficulty is reinforced when the trainer comes from a different scientific background from that of the participants. This might sometimes be a problem when the participants need help (support) on certain theoretical aspects of their fields.

4 For example: mathematics, physics, chemistry, cybernetics, etc.

Of the three cases mentioned above, the mixed nature of the participants was the most frequently encountered in the proposal writing workshops. During the workshops in Kinshasa, participants from a wide variety of scientific backgrounds, namely, chemistry, biology, sociology, psychology, educational sciences, management, and political science were brought together.

The team had to deal with a broad spectrum of disciplines with distant and seemingly irreconcilable methodological approaches to scientific writing. This concern was taken into account in the constitution of the trainers' team and in the choice of experts, which were based on interdisciplinarity (natural sciences and social sciences). The pooling of their assets and experience made it possible to respond effectively to the challenge of the diversity of the participants' disciplinary fields.

4.2 Trainers' Approaches and Management of Formative Interactions

Although the implementation of effective didactics was a concern for all trainers, not all of them showed sufficient proficiency in improving outcomes of the learners, which required experience and common sense (Leroy, 2016). Several factors hindered the choice of the best approaches, including ignorance, or the absence of information about good practices and the use of approaches that are not well mastered.

A culture is built through (a) participation in training for trainers programmes, and (b) self-training. A typical example of training for trainers is the programme organised in 2017 and 2019 by the University of Potsdam for the launch of the National Multiplication Trainings (NMT) programme. Several selected teams from different countries attended a three-day training module on the organisation, preparation, and facilitation of a workshop. The participating teams achieved certain theoretical equipment, which allowed them to gain confidence in the implementation of their future workshops in their countries.

Without such a background, the trainer is limited and is often helpless, unable to imagine innovative processes that can motivate the participants and actively involve them in the programmed activities.

This challenge had been observed in the workshops, albeit in a small proportion, among some members of the team who had not participated as much as the others had in the training of trainers. They had some difficulties in their approach, particularly concerning structuring the presentations, conducting the discussion, and managing interactions with the participants. These difficulties were directly compensated by other colleagues through the teamwork practice, which favours relay and complementarity between members of the training team.

Without following a formal training course or a seminar, trainers can also self-train (Tremblay, 2019) through personal reading, or by taking part in informal discussions on specific issues of interest to them. This possibility is rarely exploited, though, arguing that society does not offer enough opportunities for this. In so doing, trainers deprive themselves of the initiatives of a liberal self-learning process, which make it possible to satisfy the need for information and personal culture, and which do not respond to any external requirements, but to the sole desire to grasp the meaning of things and develop the capacity for action (Musa, 2018).

This attitude increases the individual's intellectual base, as a knowledgeable subject, and gives him or her the latitude to build a perfect skills profile. This process, and the result it manages, finds its meaning in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, precisely the need for self-realisation that the individual seeks to satisfy for personal prestige and mental balance, without a materialistic or lucrative aim.

However, knowing the didactic approaches is one thing, applying them wisely is still another. The use of an approach should not be hazardous, but instead rational in assessing its advantages concerning the objectives set by the team of trainers. Above all, it should be based on the capacity of the team to use it appropriately.

The experience of the workshops was, indeed, quite illustrative. Arbitration between two or three approaches had been resorted to, so that organisation in certain activities could take place. Participants presented their projects and submitted them for peer review then finally carried them out. Opinions were divided between, for example, dealing with an issue directly within the large group of 20 participants, or dividing the participants into separate small working groups and then pooling them.

At different times, the choice was made between one or the other approach, with significant results. However, there were also times when the chosen approach did not lead to the development of qualitative interactions. This led to the use of another one.

During the above-mentioned workshops, the preferred approach was the skills-based approach, reinforced by the focus group to get the participants to learn from their difficulties. In this framework, the achievement of the workshop objectives is assessed by the quality of the learning outcomes shown by the participants, as outlined below.

4.3 Participants' Performance and Completion of Individual Projects

The interactive approaches that were used encouraged the co-construction of learning (Buchs et al., 2006; Thievenaz, 2018), and consolidated the progress of the participants' projects. These facts were evaluated by an exploratory survey conducted among participants concerning the completion of the action plan, the implementation of individual projects, satisfaction with the programme, and the competence of the trainers.

Action Plan and Implementation of Individual Projects

The interest in planning the implementation of the project was to systematise its actions and avoid any form of improvisation. A line of action was defined to specify the activities that were carried out at each phase.

As the participants' projects were essentially academic, the challenge was to transform them into eligible projects to be submitted to funding agencies. Therefore, a re-orientation towards more functional and practical goals was called for, and which related to the solution of a social problem. With this dimension lacking, the project is incomplete and, therefore, unsatisfactory for funders, who wished to make their mark by financing projects with visible impacts.

Two patterns were presented and used by the participants to finalise their project drafts: (a) the pattern of an academic research protocol and that of funding, and (b) the pattern of a research budget. The effectiveness in complying with these models depends, as previously mentioned, on the participants working on their proposals, before submitting them to the team of trainers for conformity assessment. This process takes place effectively in two stages. After the first workshop, checking the conformity of the corrections made with remarks received during the theoretical presentations, and, after the second workshop, assessing the final improvements made.

All the participants (100%) at the Kinshasa workshops completed their projects, with structures and presentations that met the trainers' expectations. The scientific and social goals were adequately mentioned, as well as the gaps to be filled, thus proving the originality of the projects. Most importantly, each participant acquired double expertise: the ability to develop a research project that met the required objectives, and the ability to objectively evaluate a proposal submitted by a third party (another researcher). More concretely, twenty selected and trained researchers set up promising proposals with coherent budgets to apply for national and international funding. The content of the training and the activities that were carried out strengthened their capacities in designing, structuring, writing, and budgeting an eligible research project.

However, compared to the 2018 projects that are now nearly complete, none of the 2020 proposals is being implemented due to a lack of available funding. Many participants have not yet found donors working in their respective fields. Others are still on waiting lists, standing by for responses to their applications from funding agencies. Despite this, the workshop was a solid intellectual investment that the participants will be able to use throughout their careers.

Satisfaction with the Programme and the Competence of the Trainers

The vast majority of participants (nearly 97%) were very satisfied with the activities carried out during the workshops. They acquired new methodological tools that complemented and reinforced their previous learning outcomes. Many preconceptions were dispelled and preconceived ideas were clarified, allowing the participants to write their proposals following a rigorous approach that respected both scientific principles and requirements of funding agencies.

The foreign initiative of the National Multiplication Trainings programme (coordinated by the University of Potsdam) and the presence of European and regional experts were two factors that gave the workshop an international appeal and motivated a large number of applications. The participants were unanimously satisfied with the quality of the trainers' work. This was the result of the online participant surveys conducted by the University of Potsdam. Nearly 94% of the respondents claimed to have acquired new knowledge that enabled them to better achieve the challenges of setting up a project. A similar number considered the profiles of the trainers and their skills to be very satisfactory.

Finally, all participants (100%) said that they have never taken part in a forum similar to what they have attended, i.e. where they learnt how to write proposals. This gap points directly at the lethargy of their faculties since they had been amiss in equipping participants with skills and knowledge precisely needed in writing proposals. The inferiority complex and the hesitation to apply surrounding projects at the international level need to be broken since these are negative attitudes that, if allowed to persist, reduce the participants' scientific productivity and lock them into anonymity.

5. Conclusion

Using participatory and didactic approaches, the workshops organised within the framework of the National Multiplication Training programme contributed to the strengthening of the capabilities of the participants in writing scientific project proposals that meet international standards. This is a context where many researchers show relatively less competitiveness on the market for bankable projects.

The effectiveness of the workshops thus demonstrated calls for a re-orientation of university and research policies in creating frameworks for exchanges between researchers, enabling them to bring ideas and experiences into contact with each other thereby producing shared reference frameworks for reflection and action.

Intellectual competitiveness must be embedded in university culture as a driving force for the production of knowledge and the foundation of progress in modern societies. Universities must constantly consider this need in the intellectual update of their strategic plans. This has direct implications not only on allocating sufficient financial resources in the university's guidelines and policies but also on establishing inter-university co-operation and on enabling less-equipped institutions to benefit from the contribution of those with know-how and expertise.

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L’assurance qualité dans les établissements d’enseignement supérieur guinéens : état des lieux, développement et perspectives

RÉSUMÉ : Les établissements d’enseignement supérieur en Guinée sont confrontés à de nombreux défis, notamment les responsabilités en matière de rapports, la mondialisation et la massification. Les évaluations institutionnelles des établissements d’enseignement supérieur (EES) et de recherche en 2013 n’ont pas permis d’initier la mise en oeuvre des processus de changement au sein des établissements. Récemment, diverses initiatives ont été lancées pour changer cette situation dans le but de sensibiliser et de renforcer la prise de conscience et les capacités des structures d’assurance qualité dans les EES guinéennes. Jusqu’à présent, l’accent a été mis sur l’amélioration de la qualité dans l’enseignement supérieur, en particulier sur l’évaluation de l’enseignement, l’élaboration des programmes d’études, ainsi que sur la mise en place de structures d’assurance qualité. Cet article donne un aperçu de l’état des lieux et fait le point sur les activités qui ont été lancées pour mettre en place des mécanismes d’assurance qualité dans les établissements d’enseignement supérieur et de recherche, et présente les perspectives de développement de l›approche qualité en Guinée. Le projet « Multiplication de l’assurance qualité 2017–2018 » sert d’exemple pour décrire les approches et les activités de mise en place de structures stables d’assurance qualité, et pour renforcer et sensibiliser à une « culture de la qualité ».

MOTS CLÉS : l’assurance qualité dans l’enseignement supérieur guinéen, agence nationale d’assurance qualité en Guinée, structures d’assurance qualité, évaluation de la qualité, culture de la qualité

1. Aperçu sur la situation de l'enseignement supérieur en Guinée

Au nombre des problèmes qui assaillent les pays subsahariens, la baisse de la qualité du système éducatif occupe une place importante. L'intensité de cette baisse de qualité varie d'un pays à l'autre en fonction de la politique sectorielle de l'éducation mise en œuvre par chaque gouvernement, mais aussi et surtout, en fonction des ressources budgétaires allouées au secteur de l'éducation (Peter, 2007).

La République de Guinée, après soixante-deux (62) années d'indépendance, est, comme d'autres pays africains, toujours tributaire d'un enseignement de qualité peu satisfaisante qui se manifeste par le recul du niveau de la formation.

À ce jour, le pays compte 60 établissements d'enseignement supérieur dont 42 privés. Depuis 2007, le référentiel pédagogique Licence-Master-Doctorat (LMD) est en vigueur dans le pays. Cependant, les principes de base de ce système ne sont pas appliqués partout et avec la même rigueur.

1.1 De la gouvernance

A l'exception de l'Université Gamal Abdel Nasser de Conakry et de l'Institut Supérieur des Mines et Géologie de Boké, tous les autres établissements d'enseignement supérieur publics ne disposent pas de Conseil d'Administration (CA). Les deux (2) CA qui existent ont été constitués grâce aux recommandations de la Banque Mondiale qui finance la mise en œuvre des projets d'Écoles ou Centres d'excellence dans ces établissements. Les CA déterminent les orientations des établissements d'enseignement supérieur et veillent à leur mise en œuvre en application de la politique de l'État dans le domaine de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche scientifique.

Cette absence de CA est contraire aux dispositions des Décrets 062/063 du 03 avril 2013 en vigueur, qui exige deux organes de gouvernance dans les Institutions d'Enseignement Supérieur (IES) : un organe délibérant interne, le Conseil d'Université et un organe délibérant externe, le CA. Les Conseils de facultés et de départements sont également des maillons très importants de la gouvernance institutionnelle.

La faible fréquence de la tenue des sessions des conseils ou la quasi-inexistence de certains organes de gouvernance ne favorisent guère le développement d’une démarche qualité soutenue au sein des établissements d’enseignement supérieur guinéen.

Pour rendre plus efficace la gouvernance, le financement des établissements devrait être adossé aux contrats de performance avec le Ministère de l’Enseignement Supérieur et la Recherche Scientifique (MESRS). Cette réalité n’est pas encore connue dans le secteur de l’enseignement supérieur comme mode de gouvernance universitaire alors qu’elle est annoncée dans la politique de développement comme une stratégie de renforcement du financement du supérieur.

1.2 Des ressources humaines

L’enseignement supérieur guinéen est confronté à un réel besoin de personnel enseignant qualifié. Selon le MESRS (2019), le ratio des enseignants de rang A[1] sur la totalité du corps enseignant est très faible (0,13). Au même moment, la population estudiantine (92 856)[2] et le nombre d’établissements (60) augmentent de manière vertigineuse. Le processus de renouvellement du corps enseignant déjà très vieillissant n’est pas assuré. A cela, se greffe, les départs à la retraite et les cas de décès enregistrés dans le rang des enseignants les plus gradés.

Le manque de politique clairement définie de recrutement, de formation et d’avancement en grade académique du personnel enseignant est une autre raison explicative du manque de qualité dans les Institutions d’Enseignement Supérieur (IES) de la Guinée.

Pour corriger cette insuffisance en personnel qualifié, le MESRS a, en 2018, mutualisé les fonds pour financer un vaste programme de formation des formateurs avec pour ambition à court terme la formation de titulaires de 1000 PhD et 5 000 Masters. Ce programme commence à produire ses premiers résultats avec des soutenances de thèses et de masters organisées en Guinée et à l’étranger.

1 Enseignants de rang A sont les Maîtres de Conférences et les Professeurs titulaires.

2 Population estudiantine : ensemble des étudiants inscrits dans les établissements d’enseignement supérieur.

1.3 Formation et du suivi des diplômés

Le niveau de la qualité de la formation est très hétérogène, la comparabilité des diplômes délivrés est difficile malgré l'instauration du référentiel harmonisé de LMD. La rénovation périodique des programmes n'est pas fréquente dans les établissements d'enseignement supérieur guinéens. L'implication des professionnels dans l'élaboration, la révision et l'exécution des programmes de formation peine à se concrétiser.

Quant aux Nouvelles Technologies de l'Information et Communication (NTCI), elles sont peu utilisées dans les programmes de formation. L'inadéquation de la formation au besoin du marché de l'emploi est aussi l'autre triste réalité de la formation dans les IES du pays à laquelle s'ajoute l'absence d'harmonisation des programmes de formation.

La qualité des équipements de laboratoire et des ressources documentaires constitue un autre goulot d'étranglement du système. La formation des enseignants chargés des travaux pratiques n'est pas non plus assurée. De même, le manque notoire d'amphithéâtres devant abriter les grands groupes pédagogiques rend très difficile les conditions d'étude et affecte négativement la qualité de la formation.

En absence d'un cadre de coopération formalisé entre les établissements de formation et les entreprises et sociétés, l'organisation de stages et le suivi des diplômés ne sont pas, pour l'instant, une réalité dans la plus part des IES. L'observatoire de suivi des diplômés n'existe pas et les enquêtes de satisfaction ne sont toujours pas réalisées auprès des structures qui les reçoivent en stage ou en situation de travail.

Les établissements, pour la plupart, ne disposent pas de connexion à internet et d'ordinateurs en nombre suffisant. Seulement deux universités disposent d'écoles doctorales, toutes caractérisées par l'irrégularité de sortie de diplômés. Pour corriger ce fait, le MESRS a mutualisé les ressources financières au cours de l'année universitaire 2019–2020 et a démarré un programme de formation des formateurs, dénommé « 1000 PhD et 5000 Masters ».

1.4 Au plan du financement

Le mode de financement constitue une épineuse question du fonctionnement des établissements guinéens d'enseignement supérieur. Leur source de financement se résume uniquement au budget national de développement. Ce financement étatique est octroyé trimestriellement au prorata de l'effectif des étudiants. Mais une grande partie de cette subvention est essentiellement destinée aux transferts sociaux, notamment aux bourses d'entretien des étudiants. Ce qui ne favorise pas le développement institutionnel. Aussi, les bourses d'entretien octroyées par l'État ne sont pas sélectives et donc n'incitent pas à l'excellence.

Au sein des établissements universitaires, très peu d'initiatives novatrices sont organisées pour la recherche de fonds complémentaires à travers le montage des projets lucratifs ou de recherche de financements externes. Il en résulte que la subvention de l'État soit la seule source de financement et limite de *facto* leur autonomie de gestion.

1.5 Au plan du partenariat

Un partenariat diversifié offre aux IES de Guinée une aubaine pour leur développement. Il s'agit du partenariat public/privé, de la coopération entre les institutions au niveau national et de la mobilisation de l'expertise des guinéens de l'étranger. Mais cette importante opportunité est très peu valorisée. Les accords de coopération opérationnels et fructueux sont presqu'inexistants. Au niveau national, les institutions guinéennes entretiennent très peu de relations de partenariat entre elles. De même, les relations de coopération entre les entreprises et les structures de formation semblent au point mort. Pourtant, la proximité géographique serait un avantage à exploiter pour le développement de la coopération au niveau national et même sous régional.

1.6 Au plan de l'assurance qualité

L'assurance qualité est une démarche transversale et collaborative qu'une institution d'enseignement supérieur peut mettre œuvre pour accroitre de manière continue le niveau de satisfaction de toutes ses parties prenantes (étudiants, personnel d'enseignement et de recherche, employeurs …) (Ganseuer & Randhahn, 2017).

Avant 2017 aucune IES ne dispose d'un système fonctionnel de gestion de la qualité et de gestion du changement à l'exception de l'Université Kofi Annan de Guinée.

Commandité par le MESRS deux vagues d'évaluation des institutions et des programmes ont été organisées en 2011(uniquement les IES privées) et en 2013 pour l'ensemble des Institutions de Recherche Scientifique (IRS) et IES publiques et privées.

Cependant, pour le cas des IES et IRS publiques, les résultats de cette évaluation de la performance des institutions et programmes n'ont jamais été publiés et les recommandations formulées n'ont pas abouties à la mise en œuvre pertinente de processus de changement en leurs seins.

Des programmes de formation, à leurs propres initiatives, se sont fait évaluer par le Conseil Africain et Malgache de l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES) pour l'accréditation. Pour autant, ces accréditations sont arrivées à ce jour à expiration. Pour maintenir le cap, ces programmes doivent désormais être soumis à l'Autorité Nationale d'Assurance Qualité dans l'enseignement, la formation et la recherche (ANAQ) pour accréditation et avant de se faire évaluer par une autre structure d'accréditation.

C'est pour pallier ces nombreux défis énumérés, la restructuration du Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique s'est imposée comme une nécessité et actée par Décret 004 du 12 janvier 2017. Les Directions Nationales ont été érigées respectivement en Direction générale de l'enseignement supérieur et en Direction générale de la recherche scientifique et de l'innovation technologique et la création d'une institution de régulation qu'est l'Autorité Nationale d'Assurance Qualité dans l'enseignement, la formation et la recherche (ANAQ).

2. Les activités de formation continue

Pour répondre aux défis de l'enseignement supérieur en Guinée décrit dans le premier chapitre, on devrait mettre beaucoup d'engagement sur les activités de formation continue pour qualifier et professionnaliser les directions, les enseignants, les chercheurs, et le personnel administrative.

Auparavant, très peu d'activités de formation continue ont été menées dans le domaine de développement de la qualité de l'enseignement supérieur. Pendant la décennie 2007–2017, correspondant à la durée de mise en œuvre du référentiel LMD, deux sessions de renforcement de capacité en Assurance Qualité ont eu lieu à Conakry. Ce sont : le 7ème Atelier francophone de formation en Assurance Qualité *et* les ateliers de formation en Assurance Qualité de l'Institut international de Planification de l'Éducation (IIPE). Pendant les dernières années, les activités de formation continue ont été beaucoup renforcées, avec le soutien de plusieurs programmes du DAAD comme le « Training on Internal Quality Assurance in West Africa (TrainIQAfrica) » ou « the National Multiplication Programme » (NMT) pour démultiplier les compétences dans le champ d'assurance qualité dans les IES. On va présenter ces activités en bref dans ce 2ième chapitre.

En plus des programmes externes, c'est l'Autorité Nationale d'Assurance Qualité (ANAQ) qui a développé et amélioré les approches d'assurance qualité dans les IES. Dans le 3ième chapitre, on va présenter l'ANAQ, sa mission, ses activités et les opportunités et défis à relever pour l'assurance qualité dans les IES.

2.1 Ateliers de formation en Assurance Qualité organisé par l'IIPE

Grâce à l'appui de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'Éducation, la Sciences et la Culture (UNESCO), l'Institut International de Planification de l'Éducation (IIPE) a organisé à distance et en présentiel deux ateliers en assurance qualité externe en 2008 et 2013 auxquels sept (7) responsables du MESRS de Guinée ont pu prendre. Du fait de la déperdition (décès, retraite) du personnel formé, ces formations ont eu un impact très limité sur le sous-système de l'enseignement supérieur.

2.2 Le 7ème Atelier francophone de formation en Assurance Qualité

Le 7ème Atelier francophone de formation en Assurance Qualité était organisé du 25 au 26 Novembre 2013 par le CAMES en marge de son *28ème* Colloque sur la Reconnaissance et l'Équivalence des Diplômes de Conakry.

Premier du genre en Guinée, cet atelier a permis d'échanger avec les participants venus des Institutions d'Enseignement Supérieur et de Recherche publiques et privées sur les pratiques d'Assurance Qualité en Afrique Francophone dans un contexte de mondialisation. Ainsi, après un état des lieux de l'assurance qualité dans l'enseignement supérieur de l'espace CAMES, les travaux ont porté sur les concepts, principes, buts et finalités de l'assurance qualité au supérieur. Des expériences réussies dans les évaluations internes et externes ont été partagées : politique et étapes de l'évaluation par la Conférence Internationale des Doyens des Facultés de Médecine d'Expression Française (CIDMEF) ; l'évaluation interne de l'UFR Biosciences de l'Université Félix Houphouët Boigny de Côte d'Ivoire (Sarr, 2017).

2.3 Programmes « Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies » (DIES) du DAAD

Suite à cet atelier du CAMES, un certain nombre de personnel avait été sensibilisé sur l'assurance qualité dans l'enseignement supérieur et suivent de plus en plus les opportunités de formation dans le domaine.

Ainsi, suite à un appel à candidature international, un des participants à cet atelier participera du 06 septembre 2015 au 28 octobre 2016 au programme de formation sur l'Assurance Qualité interne en Afrique de l'Ouest (TrainIQAfrica) organisée par l'Université de Duisburg-Essen (UDE) en Allemagne. Cette formation fait partie du programme DIES (Dialogue sur des stratégies novatrices de l'enseignement supérieur) qui vise à renforcer les structures des institutions de l'enseignement supérieur et de recherche pour la gestion administrative et de la gouvernance dans les pays en voie de développement. Le but final de TrainIQAfrica est de constituer une cohorte d'experts en Assurance Qualité en Afrique de l'Ouest francophone capables d'élaborer des stratégies de communication et de mise en œuvre pertinentes d'un processus de changement et d'amélioration continue au sein des institutions d'enseignement supérieur.

En 2017, la formation DIES Assurance Qualité en Afrique Centrale et de l'Ouest (DIES-AQA) (2017–2019), coordonnée par l'Université de la Sarre (Allemagne) succède aux cours TrainIQA (2013–2017), avec pour objectif principal le renforcement de l'assurance qualité au niveau de l'enseignement supérieur en Afrique Centrale et en Afrique de l'Ouest. Le programme DIES AQA du DAAD a permis de former un 2ème *alumni* guinéen en assurance qualité.

2.4 Programmes NMT

Dans le but de renforcer les anciens élèves dans leur rôle de multiplicateurs dans la gestion de l'enseignement supérieur et à promouvoir la durabilité des cours de formation, le programme DIES a développé un soutien aux formations nationales de multiplication (NMT) depuis 2013. La dernière cohorte NMT, coordonnée par le Centre for Quality Development (ZfQ) de l'Université de Potsdam en Allemagne a été achevée avec succès en 2018 avec dix équipes d'anciens élèves qui ont mis en œuvre des formations en Afrique, en Amérique latine et en Asie du Sud-Est avec plus de 200 participants au total. Le projet de démultiplication soumis par la Guinée fait partie de ces lauréats.

Le principe de ces démultiplications est fondé sur le fait que les formations doivent répondre aux besoins des établissements d'enseignement supérieur dans les pays cibles et contribuer au développement des capacités dans le domaine de la gestion de l'enseignement supérieur. *In fine,* les anciens élèves DIES auront acquis des connaissances et des compétences pour organiser des ateliers de démultiplication et fournir une expertise pertinente.

Le programme NMT encourage les anciens élèves des différentes cohortes à constituer le comité de formation chargé de coordination et de l'organisation de la formation appuyé par des experts chevronnés en assurance qualité. C'est ainsi que, sur base très concurrentielle, les projets NMT soumis par la Guinée ont été sélectionnés en 2017 et 2019. Les trois membres du comité de formation du programme NMT 2017–2018 proviennent du Mali, du Sénégal et de Guinée alors que pour 2019–2020, deux proviennent du Sénégal et deux de Guinée. A noter que trois membres du comité de formation sont issus de TrainIQAfrica et un est certifié par DIES AQA.

En vue de renforcer les capacités des membres des comités de formation dans la préparation et la mise en œuvre des sessions de démultiplication, un atelier de « Formation des Formateurs » a été organisé à leur intention par le programme DIES.

Une des exigences du programme NMT est que les participants aux ateliers de démultiplication devraient travailler sur un projet de changement individuel à mettre en œuvre dans les IES avant la fin de la formation. La définition des priorités thématiques dans le programme NMT était élaboré ensemble avec l'ANAQ, concrètement avec le Secrétaire Exécutif de l'ANAQ, qui était aussi responsable pour les formations NMT. Pour renforcer l'assurance qualité dans les IES, on s'est concentré sur deux aspects clés :

a) première formation NMT : l'évaluation de l'enseignement supérieur
b) deuxième formation NMT : Introduction et consolidation sur la mise en œuvre des structures d'assurance qualité.

Dans le cas du groupe Guinéen de 2017/18, on a organisé deux ateliers. Pendant le premier atelier, les participants ont reçu les outils et connaissances pour être capables de planifier et mettre en place leur projet. Les formateurs les ont accompagnés comme des mentors pendant les ateliers, mais aussi pendant le temps de réalisation du projet. Le but était de développer un projet qui convient à l'encadrement de l'IES de chaque participant. Comme ça, on voulait contribuer et servir aux besoins spécifiques des établissements de chaque participant. Surtout, comme l'assurance qualité n'est pas encore intégrée dans la gouvernance universitaire (cf. 1.1), cette approche devrait soutenir la sensibilisation et le renforcement de la disposition d'établir des structures stables d'assurance qualité.

Pendant la première formation NMT (2017/18) le sujet principal était l'évaluation de l'enseignement, comme c'est une des activités fondamentales pour recevoir des estimations sur la qualité de l'enseignement. Les résultats seraient une base pour pouvoir développer des objectifs et des mesures priorisées pour améliorer la qualité des enseignements. La deuxième formation (2019/20) se poursuit avec une révision plus profonde des structures d'assurance qualité dans les IES : Quels types de structures que les participants sont capables d'établir dans leur propre établissement en considérant les moyens disponibles, le personnel qualifié, le plan stratégique et les objectifs centraux de leurs IES ? Encore une fois, les participants ont choisi un petit projet à réaliser dans leur établissement. Ce projet devrait être connecté au plan stratégique de l'université. Un des défis clés était de choisir un sujet et une question, qui sont réalisables et qui soulèvent plus d'engagement sérieux dans l'IES, au lieu de rester une idée théorique. Comme dans la première formation, les formateurs restaient disponibles comme mentors et conseillers. En outre le responsable principal de la Guinée est aussi un haut cadre du système de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche scientifique. Il essaye de soutenir la liaison entre les participants du projet et les directions/la gouvernance des IES.

Grâce aux *alumnis* et à l'appui du DAAD, 52 gestionnaires de la qualité ont été formés en Guinée et sont chargés de mettre en œuvre des projets de changement individuel dans leurs établissements. Aussi les programmes NMT ont appuyé financièrement les sessions de formation et ont mis à la disposition des participants d'importantes ressources documentaires en Assurance Qualité. Les projets de changements des participants ont eu des effets sur l'assurance qualité en Guinée en ce sens qu'ils ont facilité la création de cellules internes d'assurance qualité dans les IES et ont impliqué les instances internes de gouvernance pour l'approbation des questionnaires d'évaluation des enseignements. Les participants apportent aussi un soutien à la haute direction des IES dans cette phase initiale d'introduction des mécanismes d'assurance qualité.

3. Création de l'agence nationale d'accréditation

3.1 Bref historique

Pour pouvoir renforcer une assurance qualité stable et de longue durée dans les IES de la Guinée, on a besoin d'un encadrement juridique et des acteurs reconnus qui accompagnent ce processus d'une manière responsable et sérieuse. C'était la base de création de l'Autorité Nationale d'Assurance Qualité en Guinée. Pour mieux comprendre le contexte de la création et son rôle pour l'assurance qualité pour l'enseignement supérieur, on va donner une brève introduction.

Dès 1998, le MESRS s'est doté d'un plan stratégique pour la période 2000–2010. Les orientations définies dans ce document ont déterminé la forme et la taille du réseau des institutions d'enseignement supérieur et de recherche scientifique ainsi que l'architecture des formations.

En outre, une évaluation des programmes d'études entreprise en 2001 a montré les faiblesses des relations entre les universités et le monde de l'entreprise. C'est pourquoi, il a été décidé d'entreprendre une vaste réforme curriculaire. Compte tenu des tendances internationales, il était naturel que cette réforme s'inscrive dans le cadre du système Licence-Master-Doctorat. C'est ainsi qu'à la rentrée d'octobre 2007, le Ministère en charge de l'enseignement supérieur a introduit le système Licence-Master-Doctorat.

A l'avènement de la 3ème République en 2010, les Ministères de Plan et de l'Enseignement Supérieur élaborent le Document de stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté qui reconnaît le rôle stratégique de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche scientifique dans l'atteinte des Objectifs du Millénaire pour le Développement (OMD) et l'amélioration de conditions de vie des populations (MESRS,2017). Les lettres de politique sectorielle de l'éducation ont été élaborées en 2012, les journées de concertation sur l'enseignement supérieur pour une rentrée académique réussie en août 2012 ont été organisées. Ce foisonnement d'idées a conduit à l'élaboration de façon itérative du Document de politique et de stratégie de développement de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche scientifique pour la période allant de 2013 à 2020.

Ce Document de refondation de l'éduction tertiaire a pour but de promouvoir, dans un contexte de globalisation, un enseignement supérieur, une recherche scientifique et un système d'innovation pertinent et de qualité pour faire face de manière efficace à la demande économique, sociale, culturelle et environnementale.

Le développement de la qualité de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage est un des axes stratégiques de la réforme qui place l'assurance qualité au cœur du dispositif. Ainsi la création d'une Agence Nationale d'Évaluation de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique est une des recommandations fortes du Document cité plus haut, avec pour indicateurs de performance, le nombre d'institutions possédant des cellules d'évaluation de la qualité et le nombre d'institutions et programmes accrédités.

En 2015, le projet « Booster les Compétences pour l'Employabilité des Jeunes » (BOCEJ) est lancé à l'initiative du Gouvernement Guinéen avec l'appui de l'Association Internationale de Développement (IDA) du groupe de la Banque mondiale et offre en termes d'appui institutionnel et règlementaire, entre autres la mise en place d'une Agence Nationale d'Assurance Qualité et d'Accréditation pour l'enseignement supérieur et professionnel. Dans ce cadre, avec l'accompagnement du projet BOCEJ, un comité de pilotage chargé de proposer le texte de création est constitué. L'Autorité Nationale d'Assurance Qualité dans l'enseignement, la formation et la recherche (ANAQ) est ainsi créée par le Décret du 12 janvier 2017 et un ancien élève en assurance qualité du DAAD, est nommé au poste de Secrétaire Exécutif. Un consultant international est recruté pour appuyer l'opérationnalisation de l'ANAQ.

3.2 Missions de l'ANAQ

L'ANAQ étant un organe de régulation, d'accréditation et de promotion de la culture de la qualité, est un établissement public administratif doté d'une autonomie financière, organisationnelle, réglementaire et indépendant dans ses jugements. Ses organes de gouvernance sont : le Conseil d'Administration, le Conseil Scientifique et le Secrétariat Exécutif. L'ANAQ a pour mission l'évaluation de la qualité de l'éducation et de la recherche offertes par les institutions d'enseignement supérieur et de recherche et par les institutions de formation professionnelle et technique, publiques et privées ainsi que l'accréditation des institutions et des programmes dans le but de :

- Définir, en rapport avec les Ministères en charge de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche scientifique, de l'enseignement professionnel et technique les standards de qualité à respecter par les institutions ;
- Attester la capacité de ces institutions à satisfaire les standards de qualité et les attentes des bénéficiaires ;
- Contribuer à la promotion d'une culture institutionnelle de la qualité ;
- Assurer la protection des bénéficiaires directs et indirects des programmes d'étude par la production et la dissémination d'informations systématiques, cohérentes, crédibles et accessibles publiquement sur la qualité de l'éducation ;
- Donner un avis technique aux ministères concernés (enseignement supérieur, recherche scientifique, enseignement technique et profes-

sionnel) en ce qui concerne la création, l'autorisation d'ouverture et l'accréditation des institutions ainsi que des programmes d'étude offerts par ces institutions ;
- Proposer aux ministères concernés des politiques et stratégies d'amélioration permanente de l'enseignement supérieur, de l'enseignement professionnel et technique, de la recherche scientifique ;
- Entretenir des rapports de partenariat avec des institutions similaires africaines et internationales. (Décret 007du 12 janvier 2017).

Les institutions concernées par les activités de l'ANAQ sont au nombre de 253 dont :
- 18 établissements publics d'enseignement supérieur ;
- 42 établissements privés d'enseignement supérieur ;
- 30 établissements de recherche scientifique/documentation ;
- 58 établissements publics d'enseignement technique et formation professionnelle ;
- 105 établissements privés d'enseignement technique et formation professionnelle.

3.3 Principales activités réalisées

Après s'être dotée d'un cadre statutaire et règlementaire approprié (cadre organique et fonctionnement du Secrétariat Exécutif, code d'éthique et de déontologie, manuel de gestion des procédures d'assurance qualité, modalités de création et d'ouverture des institutions et des programmes, régime d'habilitation et d'accréditation), l'ANAQ a recruté son personnel et ses experts évaluateurs par appel à candidature et a adopté ses outils et référentiels d'évaluation. Les évaluations pilotes de 2018 ont abouti à l'accréditation de cinq programmes de licence sur les onze soumis.

3.4 Activités en cours

Les principales activités en cours portent sur :
- L'évaluation de 78 programmes candidats à l'accréditation. La session d'évaluation 2020 a été lancée le 27 septembre 2019 par un Appel à Manifestation d'Intérêt qui a permis de retenir la candidature de 78 programmes sur les 80 dossiers soumis. Deux candidatures n'ont pas été acceptées pour manque d'autorisation administrative. Les évaluations internes relatives aux programmes de formation, can-

didats à l'accréditation sont achevées et les rapports d'autoévaluation sont rendus. L'évaluation externe et la validation de ses résultats constituent les dernières étapes du processus d'accréditation.
- Le renforcement de capacités institutionnelles en équipements est orienté vers la dématérialisation du processus d'évaluation par la création de la plateforme de gestion de l'évaluation en ligne ; la construction du réseau Intranet ; l'autonomie énergétique par l'acquisition d'un générateur.
- la participation en qualité de référent en Assurance Qualité au projet Internationalisation et Développement des Indicateurs pour une meilleure Gouvernance de l'Enseignement Supérieur guinéen (INDIGO). Ce projet de trois (3) ans (2019–2022), coordonné par l'Université de Paris 1, Panthéon Sorbonne est cofinancé par le programme Erasmus+ de l'Union Européenne.

3.5 Interaction avec les IES et des activités de formation continue

De nombreuses activités de formation, de sensibilisation et d'interactions ont été organisées avec les acteurs concernés par la mise en place de la démarche qualité dans les établissements publics et privés avec l'appui technique/financier de divers programmes, notamment le DAAD, le projet Booster les Compétences pour l'Employabilité des Jeunes en Guinée (BOCEJ)/Banque mondiale, l'Institut Francophone pour la Gouvernance Universitaire de l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (IFGU/OIF).

Ces formations ont été animées par d'anciens élèves du DAAD utilisant pour supports pédagogiques les ressources documentaires du TrainIAfrica. Ce sont entre autres :
- Formation et de sensibilisation de 188 recteurs, fondateurs, directeurs généraux et directeurs des établissements d'enseignement supérieur, d'enseignement professionnel et technique et de recherche ;
- Formation en assurance qualité de 50 vices recteurs et directeurs généraux adjoints ;
- Formation en assurance qualité de 52 enseignants, chercheurs et agents de l'ANAQ ;
- Présentation des procédures d'assurance qualité de l'ANAQ dans 09 IES.
- Formation à l'autoévaluation et à l'élaboration du rapport d'autoévaluation de 178 membres des comités de pilotage, des cellules internes d'assurance qualité.

- Échanges sur site avec les membres des comités de pilotage, des cellules internes d’assurance qualité et des autorités académiques pour le suivi de l’autoévaluation des 78 programmes candidats à l’accréditation. Deux cent quatre-vingt-huit (288) personnes ont bénéficié de l’appui technique de l’ANAQ dans la conduite de l’autoévaluation et l’élaboration des rapports internes.

3.6 Les opportunités et défis de l’ANAQ

Opportunités
Dans son développement, plusieurs opportunités s’offrent à l’ANAQ. Parmi celles-ci, nous pouvons citer :
- La volonté politique exprimée par les autorités ;
- L’existence de plusieurs établissements d’enseignement supérieur, d’enseignement technique et de formation professionnelle et de centres de recherche dans le portefeuille de l’ANAQ ;
- L’accompagnement de partenaires diversifiés ;
- L’atterrissage de la fibre optique pour la connexion à haut débit.

Défis
Malgré ces nombreuses opportunités, l’ANAQ est confrontée à plusieurs défis qui sont :
- La méconnaissance de l’assurance qualité par les parties prenantes ;
- La difficulté d’implication des établissements d’enseignement technique et formation professionnelle à la démarche qualité ;
- L’inexistence de l’expertise au niveau national pour évaluer certains programmes ;
- Le manque de respect des textes réglementaires ;
- L’instabilité à la tête des institutions d’enseignement supérieur ;
- La caducité de certains textes réglementaires ;
- La mise en place des contrats de performance ;
- La recherche de financements complémentaires.

4. Les résultats des activités de formation

4.1 Les compétences des participants acquises par la formation

Les activités de formation continue développées par l'ANAQ ont permis de faire acquérir des compétences variables selon le public cible. En outre, elles contribuent à traiter les défis mentionnés au-dessus. Ainsi formés :

- Dans leurs institutions respectives, les recteurs, fondateurs, directeurs généraux et directeurs sont capables d'implanter des cellules internes d'assurance qualité selon les bonnes pratiques en la matière et de partager les missions et objectifs de l'ANAQ ;
- Les vices recteurs et directeurs généraux adjoints des institutions participantes sont capables de surmonter les résistances aux changements, de partager les concepts d'assurance qualité et les missions et objectifs de l'ANAQ ;
- Les enseignants, chercheurs et agents de l'agence sont capables de faire évaluer leurs enseignements par les étudiants, de manager une Cellule Interne d'Assurance Qualité (CIAQ) et de partager les concepts d'assurance qualité, les missions et objectifs de l'ANAQ ;
- Les participants aux séances de formation et de sensibilisation dans les établissements sont capables d'informer correctement leur entourage sur les missions et objectifs de l'ANAQ et de ses procédures d'évaluations ;
- Les membres des comités de pilotage et des cellules internes d'assurance qualité formés en soutien au processus d'évaluation, session 2020 sont capables de faire l'autoévaluation d'un programme et d'élaborer le rapport interne selon les spécifications du manuel de gestion des procédures d'assurance qualité ;
- Les membres des comités de pilotage, des cellules internes d'assurance qualité et des autorités académiques sont capables d'améliorer le processus d'autoévaluation et de rédaction de rapport interne lors de l'évaluation des programmes.

4.2 Les conséquences actuelles pour les IES participantes

Les formations continues ont impacté positivement la gestion de la qualité au sein des établissements d’enseignement supérieur et d’enseignement professionnel et technique. Un noyau de démultiplicateurs en assurance qualité se forme et se fortifie. Les missions de l’ANAQ sont largement partagées et de plus en plus connues des parties prenantes.

Ainsi, suite à l’atelier de formation et de sensibilisation des recteurs, fondateurs et directeurs généraux et directeurs, vingt-quatre (24) établissements d’enseignement supérieur/professionnel et technique se sont dotés d’une CIAQ, garante de la gestion de la qualité. Cette structure, en plus de sa mission de mise en œuvre de la Politique Qualité de l’établissement a piloté les différentes évaluations de programmes. Dans la majorité des cas, ce sont les cadres formés en Assurance Qualité par l’ANAQ qui animent ces cellules.

L’évaluation des enseignements par les étudiants, exigence du règlement des études du LMD, jamais respectée antérieurement est devenue une réalité, ce grâce à la formation en assurance qualité de deux cohortes d’enseignants qui ont mis leurs nouvelles compétences au service de leurs institutions.

5. Perspectives

Grâce aux activités décrites dans cet article, des mesures importantes ont été prises en Guinée pendant ces dernières années pour établir un cadre approprié et stable, pour renforcer et garantir la qualité de l’enseignement, de la recherche et de l’enseignement technique. En même temps, les défis brièvement exposés en ce qui concerne les mesures lancées par l’Autorité Nationale d’Assurance Qualité (l’ANAQ) indiquent qu’il reste encore un long chemin à parcourir. Ce chemin exige beaucoup de persévérance, de motivation et d’engagement en la matière. Des structures de gouvernance stables (cf. chap. 1.1) exigent une volonté et une attitude ouverte au changement. Il est d’abord nécessaire de définir les objectifs à poursuivre dans certains délais et vérifier s’ils sont atteignables. Pour cela, on a besoin des personnes qui sont capables d’accompagner et de soutenir les processus de changement qui y sont liés.

Les formations qui ont déjà eu lieu en Guinée sont très importantes pour ce développement. On ne doit pas arrêter mais continuer les formations dans les IES pour différents groupes cibles : tout le monde, le personnel enseignant et de recherche, le personnel administratif et de soutien, les responsables académiques et aussi les étudiants et la société civile devraient apprendre et comprendre les changements pour pouvoir les soutenir.

En outre, les IES ont besoin d'un soutien supplémentaire pour renforcer leur engagement d'établir une cellule interne d'assurance qualité (CIAQ) et de poursuivre la professionnalisation de ses mécanismes de gestion de la qualité.

De plus, il serait utile de créer un réseau parmi les *Alumni* du programme NMT et d'autres programmes sur l'assurance qualité, afin d'échanger et de profiter de différentes idées et approches pour assurer et renforcer la qualité de l'enseignement et de la recherche. Enfin, il ne faut pas oublier d'assurer un financement fiable et durable, et du personnel suffisant, pour que la voie initiée de l'assurance qualité dans les IES puisse continuer et rester stable à long terme.

Si on regarde l'Europe et le temps qu'il a fallu pour professionnaliser les structures et les mécanismes de qualité, on voit bien que c'est un processus de longue durée qui a besoin beaucoup d'engagement. La Guinée montre qu'elle est prête à s'engager dans cette voie.

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Quality Assurance in Guinean Higher Education Institutions: State of Play, Development and Perspectives

ABSTRACT: Higher education institutions in Guinea face many challenges, including reporting responsibilities, globalisation, and massification. Institutional evaluations of higher education and research institutions in 2013 could not initiate the implementation of change processes within the institutions. Recently, however, various initiatives have been started to change this situation with the purpose to sensitise and raise awareness and capabilities for quality assurance structures in Guinean HEIs. So far, the emphasis has been put on quality enhancement in higher education, especially on teaching evaluation, curriculum development, as well as on establishing quality assurance structures. This article gives an overview of the state of play and takes stock of the activities that have been initiated to set up quality assurance mechanisms in higher education and research institutions, and presents perspectives for further development of the quality approach in Guinea. The project 'Quality Assurance Multiplication 2017-2018' serves as an example to describe approaches and activities in setting up stable quality assurance structures, and to strengthen and raise awareness for a 'quality culture'.

KEYWORDS: quality assurance in Guinean higher education, national quality assurance agency in Guinea, quality assurance structures, quality evaluation, quality culture

1. An Overview of Higher Education in Guinea

Among the problems that sub-Saharan countries face, the decline in the quality of education is one of primary concern. The intensity of this quality decline varies from one country to another, depending on the education policy implemented by each government and, above all, on the budgetary resources allocated to the education system (Peter, 2007). After 62 years of independence, the Republic of Guinea still faces, like other African countries do, an unsatisfactory quality of education which becomes visible especially with education standards.

Today, Guinea counts 60 higher education institutions, 42 of which are private. Since 2007, the pedagogical reference system of the Bachelor-Master-Doctorate (LMD) has been implemented in the country. However, the basic principles of this system are not applied everywhere and with the same effort.

1.1 Governance

Public higher education institutions in Guinea, except the University of Gamal Abdel Nasser in Conakry and the Higher Education Institute of Mines and Geology in Boké, do not have an Administration Board (AB). The two administration boards that exist were established through recommendations from the World Bank, which finances the implementation of Schools or Centres of Excellence projects in these institutions. The ABs determine the orientations of higher education institutions and ensure their implementation by applying state policies in the field of higher education and scientific research.

The absence of administration boards contradicts the decrees 062/063, in force since 03 April 2013, which require two governance bodies in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): an internal deliberative body, the University Council, and an external deliberative body, the Administration Board. Furthermore, the Faculty and Department Councils are very important bodies in institutional governance.

The low frequency with which the councils meet, or the quasi-non-existence of certain governing bodies, does not favour the development of a sustained quality approach within Guinean higher education institutions. To make governance more effective, the funding of institutions should be based on performance contracts with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MESRS). Such an approach is still not well known in the higher education sector as a mode of university governance, even though it is mentioned in the development policy as a strategy to strengthen the financing of higher education.

1.2 Human Resources

Guinean higher education has a real need for qualified teaching staff. According to MESRS (2019), the ratio of grade A[1] teachers to the total teaching staff is very low (0.13). At the same time, the student population (92,856)[2] and the number of higher education institutions (60) are increasing exceedingly. Teachers are often rather elderly, and they are not replaced by younger ones. Furthermore, retirements and death among senior teachers determine the current status quo.

The absence of a clearly defined recruitment policy, training, and academic preparedness of the teaching staff is another reason for the lack of quality in Guinea's Higher Education Institutions. To change this shortage of qualified teaching staff, the MESRS had, in 2018, pooled funds to finance huge amount of teacher programmes, focusing on the training of 1000 PhD students and 5000 master degree holders. This programme starts to produce its first results with master's and doctoral defences organised in Guinea and abroad.

1.3 Education and Career Opportunities

The level of education quality is very heterogeneous. Even though the harmonised LMD reference system was introduced, the comparability of the achieved diplomas is difficult. Guinean higher education institutions do not revise the curricula regularly to make them better. The involvement of professionals in the development, revision, and implementation of academic training programmes is still not very common. Furthermore, New Information and Communication Technologies (NICTs) are little used in training programmes. Another sad reality is that study programmes of Guinean higher education institutions do not sufficiently meet the needs of the labour market, nor is the composition of the different programme levels well harmonised.

The quality of laboratory equipment and documentary resources is another bottleneck in the system. The training of teachers responsible for practical work is also not provided. Similarly, the notorious lack of

1 Teachers of rung A are lecturers and full professors.

2 Student population: All students enrolled in higher education institutions in Guinea.

amphitheatres for use by large student groups makes study conditions very difficult which, in turn, negatively affects teaching quality.

Due to the absence of a formalised framework for cooperation between higher education institutions, enterprises and other companies, internships cannot be organised. Even graduates have difficulties finding employment based on their degrees. Tracer studies to monitor graduates and satisfaction surveys are still not carried out during internships or work situations.

Most higher education institutions do not have internet connections, nor possess a sufficient number of computers. Only two universities offer doctorate degrees but they are characterised by rather irregular graduations. To improve this situation, the MESRS has pooled financial resources during the academic year of 2019/2020, and has started a training programme for scientific assistants, called "1000 PhDs and 5000 Masters".

1.4 Financing

The budget system is a difficult issue for Guinean higher education institutions. These institutions depend fully on the national development budget. The budget is granted quarterly in proportion to the number of students. However, a huge part of this funding is provided for social transfers, in particular for student maintenance grants. Furthermore, these maintenance scholarships granted by the state are not selective and therefore do not encourage excellence. At the same time, the institutional development of universities also lacks funding. Within academic institutions, very few initiatives are organised to seek additional external funds for innovative projects. As a result, state subsidies are the only funding source of higher education institutions and de facto limit their management autonomy.

1.5 Collaboration

Few partnerships that offer a development windfall for Guinean higher education institutions do exist. These include public/private partnerships, cooperation between institutions at the national level, and the mobilisation of expertise of Guineans abroad. However, the opportunities that such collaborations bring is very little valued in Guinea. Functional and fruitful cooperation agreements are almost non-existent. At the national level, Guinean institutions maintain very few partnerships among themselves. Similarly, cooperation between companies and education structures seem to be shut down. However, Guinean geographical conditions would be an advantage for cooperation at the national and even sub-regional level.

1.6 Quality Assurance

Quality assurance mechanisms are a transversal and collaborative approach that a higher education institution can implement to continuously increase the level of satisfaction of all its stakeholders (students, teaching and research staff, employers, etc.) (Ganseuer & Randhahn, 2017). Before 2017, Guinean higher education institutions did not have a functional quality and change management system in place, except for the Kofi Annan University of Guinea, even though there were first approaches to strengthen quality assurance mechanisms at that time. In 2011 the MESRS sponsored institutional and study programme evaluations of private higher education institutions. In 2013 another evaluation wave for all Scientific Research Institutions (SRIs) followed, as well as for public and private HEIs.

However, in the case of the public HEIs and SRIs, the results of these evaluations on institutional and programme level have never been published and the recommendations of the assessors did not lead to change processes in the institutions. Some study programmes have been evaluated by the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES) for accreditation based on their initiative. However, these accreditations have now expired. To maintain the accreditation status in Guinea, these study programmes should now be evaluated by another accreditation structure, and then the results submitted to the National Authority for Quality Assurance in Education, Training, and Research (ANAQ) for accreditation in Guinea.

To overcome these numerous challenges, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research was restructured, enacted by Decree 004 on 12 January 2017. The National Directorates have been reorganised into a General Directorate of Higher Education and a General Directorate of Scientific Research and Technological Innovation. Furthermore, a regulatory institution, the National Authority for Quality Assurance in Education, Training and Research (ANAQ), has been created.

2. Activities of Further Education

In facing the challenges of higher education in Guinea described in the first chapter, further education activities should be strengthened with more effort to qualify and organise managers, teachers, researchers, and administrative staff in higher education institutions. Until 2017, very few activities of further education have been carried out in Guinea in the area of quality development in higher education. Corresponding to the implementation period of the LMD framework, during the years 2007 till 2017, two projects on quality assurance capacity building took place in Conakry: the 7th Francophone Quality Assurance Training Workshop and the quality assurance training workshops of the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).

During the recent years, continuing education activities have been strengthened with the support the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) such as the 'Training on Internal Quality Assurance in West Africa (TrainIQAfrica)' or the 'National Multiplication Trainings (NMT) Programme to multiply skills in the field of quality assurance in HEIs. These activities are presented briefly in the second chapter.

In addition to these external programmes, the National Authority for Quality Assurance (ANAQ) has developed and improved quality assurance approaches in HEIs. The third chapter presents the institution ANAQ, its mission, activities, and existing opportunities and challenges for quality assurance in HEIs.

2.1 Workshops on Quality Assurance Training Organised by the IIEP

Supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) organised two workshops (one distance and one face-to-face) on external quality assurance in 2008 and 2013, which were attended by seven members from the MESRS of Guinea. However, due to the loss of some trained staff (death, retirement), these training sessions created a very limited impact on the higher education subsystem.

2.2 7th Francophone Workshop on Quality Assurance Training

The 7th Francophone Workshop on Quality Assurance Training was organised from 25th to 26th November 2013 by CAMES, closely linked to its 28th Colloquium on the Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas in Conakry. It was the first workshop in Guinea that offered the possibility to exchange with participants from public and private higher education and research institutions quality assurance practices in Francophone Africa in a context of globalisation. After an introduction by CAMES on the state of the art of quality assurance in higher education in the CAMES region, the workshop focused on concepts, principles, goals, and purposes of quality assurance in higher education. Successful experiences in internal and external evaluations were shared. These were policy and stages of evaluation by the International Conference of Deans of French-speaking Medicine Faculties (CIDMEF), and the internal evaluation of the UFR Biosciences of the University Félix Houphouët Boigny from Ivory Coast (Sarr, 2017).

2.3 The 'Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies' (DIES) Programme of the DAAD

Based on the mentioned CAMES workshop, some staff had been sensitised on quality assurance in higher education and continued to follow training opportunities in this area. One person followed the international call for applications to participate in the training programme on Internal Quality Assurance in West Africa (TrainIQAfrica), organised by the University of Duisburg-Essen (UDE) from 6th September 2015 to 28th October 2016. This training was part of the DIES programme (Dialogue on Innovative Strategies in Higher Education) which aims to strengthen the structures of higher education and research institutions for administrative management and governance in developing countries. The purpose of TrainIQAfrica was to set up a cohort of experts in quality assurance in Francophone West Africa capable of developing suitable communication and implementation strategies for change processes and continuous improvement in higher education institutions.

In 2017, the DIES Quality Assurance training course in Central and West Africa (DIES-AQA) (2017–2019), coordinated by the University of Saarland (Germany), followed the TrainIQA courses, with the main objective of strengthening quality assurance in higher education in Central and West Africa. The DAAD's DIES AQA programme has enabled another Guinean alumnus to be trained in quality assurance.

2.4 NMT Programme

To strengthen alumni in their role as multipliers in higher education management and to promote the sustainability of training courses, the DIES programme offered a National Multiplier Training (NMT). Coordinated by the Centre for Quality Development (ZfQ) at the University of Potsdam in Germany, the first NMT cohort was completed in 2018 with ten alumni teams, and with more than 200 participants, implementing training courses in Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia. The multiplication project submitted by Guinea was one of these laureates.

The principal goal of these multiplier training is to meet the needs of higher education institutions in the target countries and contribute to capacity building in higher education management. Former DIES students acquired knowledge and skills to provide relevant expertise and to organise themselves into multiplier workshops.

Thus, the NMT programme encourages DIES alumni to form the training committee responsible for coordinating and organising support from experienced quality assurance experts. Thus, on a very competitive note, the NMT projects submitted by Guinea were selected in 2017 and 2019. The three members of the training committee for the NMT 2017–2018 programme were from Mali, Senegal, and Guinea (for 2019–2020, two were from Senegal and two, from Guinea). Worth mentioning here is the fact that three members of the training committee were alumni from TrainIQAfrica and one represented DIES AQA.

To strengthen the capacities of the members of the training committees in preparing and implementing the workshops, a 'Training of Trainers' workshop was organised by the DIES programme.

One of the requirements of the NMT programme is that participants in the workshops work on individual change projects for implementation in their higher education institutions before the end of the training. The thematic priorities of the NMT programme, together with ANAQ, were elaborated, specifically by the Executive Secretary-General of ANAQ, who was also responsible for the NMT training. To strengthen quality assurance in HEIs, two key aspects had been focused on:

a) the first NMT training (evaluation of teaching in HEIs), and
b) the second NMT training (introduction and consolidation of the implementation of quality assurance structures).

The Guinean group of the 2017/2018 cohort organised two workshops. During the first workshop, participants learned knowledge and tools valuable for planning and implementing their projects. The trainers accompanied them, functioning as mentors, during the workshops, but also afterwards, during project implementation. The aim was to develop a project that was suitable for the higher education institution of each participant. It was important to contribute and serve the specific needs of each participant's institution. Since quality assurance is not yet a regular part of university governance (cf. I. Governance), this approach should support awareness and strengthen the commitment to establish stable quality assurance structures.

During the first NMT training (2017/2018) the main topic was teaching evaluation, as it is one of the basic activities to validate teaching quality. The results accorded a basis for developing prioritised objectives and measures to improve education quality. The second training (2019/2020) continues with a more in-depth review of quality assurance structures in higher education institutions by answering this specific question: What kind of structures are participants able to establish in their own higher education institutions considering the available means, qualified staff, strategic plan, and central objectives? Once again, the participants chose a small project, linked to the university's strategic plan, to be carried out in their institutions. One of the key challenges was choosing a feasible topic, which raises more serious engagement in higher education institutions, over an issue that would simply remain a theoretical idea. As in the first training, the trainers made themselves available as mentors and advisors. Also, the person responsible for the training was a senior executive in the higher education and scientific research system in Guinea. His main function was to support the liaison between the project participants and the directorates of the higher education institutions.

Because of alumni contribution and the support of the DAAD, 52 quality managers have been trained in Guinea and have been made responsible for implementing individual change projects in their institutions. The NMT programmes financially supported the training sessions and gave the participants important documentary resources on quality assurance. The change projects of the participants had an impact on quality assurance in Guinea in creating internal quality assurance units in the HEIs and in involving internal governance bodies in the approval of teaching evaluation questionnaires. The participants also provided support for their HEIs' senior management in this initial phase of introducing quality assurance mechanisms.

3. Creation of the National Accreditation Agency

3.1 A Retrospect

To strengthen and maintain the long-term quality assurance structures in higher education institutions in Guinea, a legal framework and a team of recognised stakeholders were needed. This need allowed the creation of the National Authority for Quality Assurance (ANAQ). A short introduction is now given to better understand the context surrounding the establishment of ANAQ and its role in quality assurance in higher education institutions.

In 1998 the MESRS adopted a strategic plan for the period 2000–2010. The framework defined in this document determined the form and size of the network of higher education and scientific research institutions as well as the configuration of further education. However, a study programme evaluation conducted in 2001 showed weaknesses of university relations compared to companies. Therefore, it was decided to organise a broad curriculum reform. Considering international trends, this reform should be based on the Bachelor-Master-Doctorate system. This was the reason why the Ministry in charge of higher education introduced the Bachelor-Master-Doctorate system for the academic year of 2007.

During the Third Republic in 2010, the Ministries of Planning and Higher Education published a Strategic Paper on Poverty Reduction which recognised the strategic role of higher education and scientific research in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in improving the living conditions of the population (MESRS, 2017). In 2012, education sector policy letters were drawn up, and the consultation days on higher education for a successful start to the academic year in August 2012 were organised. These increasing ideas led to an iterative elaboration of policy and strategy document for the development of higher education and scientific research for the periods 2013 to 2020. This document aimed to promote, in a context of globalisation, a higher education, scientific research and innovation system of high quality to respond appropriately and effectively to economic, social, cultural, and environmental needs.

One of the strategic axes of this reform process is quality assurance and the development of teaching and learning. Therefore, the strategy document mentioned above recommended the creation of a national agency for the evaluation of higher education and scientific research. As a performance indicator, it defined the number of institutions with quality evaluation units and the number of accredited institutions and programmes.

In 2015, the Guinean government launched the project 'Boosting Skills for Youth Employability' (BOCEJ), which was supported by the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank Group. This project offered institutional and regulatory support, including the establishment of a National Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation for higher and vocational education. A steering committee was created to set up the formation of this agency. The National Authority for Quality Assurance in Education, Training and Research (ANAQ) was then created by the Decree 007 of 12 January 2017. A DAAD alumnus was appointed as Executive Secretary and an international consultant is recruited to support the operationalisation of the ANAQ.

3.2 Mission of ANAQ

As a governing body for the promotion of accreditation and quality culture, ANAQ is a public administrative institution with financial, organisational, and regulatory autonomy, independent in its decision-making procedures. Its governing bodies include the Board of Directors, the Scientific Council, and the Executive Secretariat. ANAQ's mission is the evaluation of the quality of education and research offered by higher education and research institutions and by public and private vocational and technical education institutions, as well as the accreditation of institutions and programmes.

ANAQ serves to

- define the quality standards to be respected by the institutions, following the Ministries in charge of higher education and scientific research, vocational, and technical education;
- approve the capacity of these institutions to meet the quality standards and expectations of the beneficiaries;
- contribute to the promotion of an institutional culture of quality;
- ensure the protection of the direct and indirect beneficiaries of study programmes by producing and disseminating systematically coherent, credible, and publicly accessible information about the quality of education;
- provide technical advice to the ministries involved (higher education, scientific research, technical and vocational education) concerning the creation, authorisation to open, and accreditation of institutions and their study programmes;

- propose policies and strategies for the continuous improvement of higher education, vocational and technical education, and scientific research to the ministries involved; and
- maintain partnership relations with similar African and international institutions (Decree 007 of 12 January 2017).

The activities of ANAQ had been the concern of 253 institutions, which are:
- 18 public institutions of higher education,
- 42 private institutions of higher education,
- 30 scientific research institutions,
- 58 public technical education and vocational training institutions, and
- 105 private technical education and vocational training institutions.

3.3 First Activities of ANAQ

ANAQ started with adopting an appropriate statutory and regulatory framework (organisational framework and functioning of the Executive Secretariat, code of ethics and deontology, management manual of quality assurance procedures, regulations to create and open institutions and programmes, and the authority of accreditation). ANAQ recruited its staff and expert evaluators through a call for candidates and adopted its evaluation tools and the evaluation frame of reference. In 2018 the piloting evaluations resulted in the accreditation of five bachelor programmes, out of eleven, that had been submitted.

3.4 Ongoing Activities of ANAQ

The main ongoing activities of ANAQ are related to the evaluation of 78 candidate programmes for accreditation. The 2020 evaluation session was launched on 27 September 2019 by a call of application which resulted in the selection of 78, out of 80, programmes that had been submitted. Two applications were not accepted due to a lack of administrative authorisation. The internal evaluations of the study programmes and the application for accreditation have been completed, and the self-evaluation reports have been submitted. The external evaluation and the validation of its results are the final steps in this accreditation process.

The second ongoing activities are related to the institutional capacity building on infrastructure which is focused on setting up an evaluation process through the creation of an online evaluation management platform, the construction of an intranet network, and the establishment of an energy autonomy through the acquisition of a generator.

The third ongoing activities centre on participation as a quality assurance expert in the project 'Internationalisation and Development of Indicators for Better Governance of Guinean Higher Education (INDIGO)'. This three-year project (2019–2022), coordinated by the University of Paris 1, Panthéon Sorbonne, is co-financed by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

3.5 Interaction with the Higher Education Institutions and Supply with Further Education

Numerous training sessions, awareness-raising, and interaction activities have been organised with concerned stakeholders in the implementation of quality mechanisms both in public and private institutions. These stakeholders were technically and financially supported by various programmes, including the DAAD, the Boostering Skills for Youth Employability in Guinea (BOCEJ)/World Bank project, and the Francophone Institute for University Governance of the International Organisation of the Francophonie (IFGU/OIF). These training sessions were carried out by DAAD alumni, using TrainIAfrica's training material as a teaching aid. Some examples of such training activities were:

- coaching and awareness-raising for 188 rectors, founders, general directors, and directors of higher education, vocational and technical, and research institutions;
- involvement in quality assurance activities for 50 vice-rectors and deputy-general directors;
- pedagogy in quality assurance for 52 teachers, researchers and ANAQ agents;
- presentation of the ANAQ quality assurance procedures in nine higher education institutions;
- self-evaluation procedures and creation of self-evaluation reports for 178 members of strategic steering and internal quality assurance units; and
- on-site exchanges with members of the steering units, internal quality assurance units, and academic authorities for follow-up on the self-assessment of the 78 programmes applying for accreditation. ANAQ has set up technical support to ensure proper self-evaluation process and preparation of internal reports of 288 participants.

3.6 Opportunities and Challenges of ANAQ

Opportunities
Several opportunities regarding the constitution of ANAQ are worth mentioning here. They are (a) the political will as expressed by the authorities; (b) the portfolio of ANAQ which includes the broad range of higher education, technical education and vocational training, and research institutions; (c) the support of different partners; and (d) a starting optical fibre for a high-speed connection.

Challenges
Despite opportunities, ANAQ also has to face several challenges, such as the following: (a) lack of awareness for quality assurance by stakeholders, (b) the difficulty of involving technical education and vocational training institutions in the quality process, (c) lack of expertise at the national level to evaluate certain programmes, (d) lack of respect for regulatory documents, (e) instability of the directorates of higher education institutions, (f) obsolescence of certain regulatory documents, (g) the implementation of performance contracts, and (h) the search for additional funding.

4. Results of Training Activities

4.1 Participants' Skills Achieved by the Training

The activities on further education developed by ANAQ support different target groups in a variety of skills within the scope of quality assurance. These activities address the challenges mentioned above. Some results of the training activities are the following:

- Rectors, founders, general managers, and directors can set up internal quality assurance units in their institutions, based on good practices in the field and based on ANAQ's quality missions and objectives.
- Vice-rectors and deputy general directors of the participating institutions can share the concepts of quality assurance and the missions and objectives of ANAQ in their institutions, and with it, to overcome resistance to change.
- Teachers, researchers, and quality managers can organise teaching evaluations by students, and also to manage an Internal Quality As-

surance Unit (CIAQ), thus further sharing the concepts of quality assurance and the missions and objectives of ANAQ.
- Participants of the training activities and awareness-raising workshops in the institutions can properly inform the staff of their units about the missions and objectives of ANAQ and its evaluation procedures.
- The members of the steering units and internal quality assurance units trained to support the evaluation process in 2020 can carry out the self-evaluation of a study programme and to set up the internal report according to the management manual on quality assurance procedures.
- Members of the steering units, internal quality assurance units, and academic authorities can improve the process of self-evaluation, study programme evaluation, and internal reporting.

4.2 Current Impact on Participants from Higher Education Institutions

ANAQ activities on further education have a positive impact on quality management in higher education and vocational and technical education institutions. A core group of quality assurance multipliers has been trained and is continuously being strengthened. Therefore, ANAQ's missions are widely shared and are increasingly known by stakeholders.

Based on the training and awareness-raising workshops for rectors, founders and general directors, twenty-four higher education/vocational and technical education institutions have set up a quality assurance unit, as guarantor for quality management. In addition to its mission to implement an institutional quality assurance policy, these units have piloted various study programme evaluations. The majority of the quality assurance units is managed by those persons who were trained in quality assurance by ANAQ. Based on this, teaching evaluation by students, a requirement of the LMD's study regulations that was not respected before, has become a reality. Due to the training in quality assurance, two cohorts of teachers could contribute their newly gained skills at the service of their institutions.

5. Perspectives

As a result of the activities described in this article, important steps have been taken in Guinea in recent years in establishing an appropriate and stable framework to strengthen and guarantee the quality of teaching, research, and technical education. At the same time, the challenges briefly outlined the measures launched by the National Authority for Quality Assurance (ANAQ) and indicated that there is still a long way to go. This way requires a great deal of perseverance, motivation, and commitment. Stable governance structures require a willingness and an open attitude to change processes. Objectives that are to be pursued within certain time frames should be defined and checked whether they are achievable. To do so, higher education institutions need people who can support and sustain the resulting change processes.

The quality assurance training activities that have already taken place in Guinea are very important for this development to continue. Teaching and research staff, administrative and support staff, academic leaders, students, and civil society should learn and understand the changes to be able to support them. Furthermore, higher education institutions need further support to strengthen their commitment to establish an internal quality assurance unit (CIAQ) and to further professionalise their quality management mechanisms. Moreover, it would be useful to create a network among the alumni of the NMT and other programmes on quality assurance to reinforce exchange and to benefit from different ideas and approaches to ensure and enhance the quality of teaching and research. Finally, it is important to ensure reliable and sustainable funding and sufficient staff, so that the initiated path of quality assurance in higher education institutions can be continued in the long term.

Examining the European example and the time it had taken to professionalise quality assurance structures and mechanisms, it becomes clear that this is a long-term process that needs a lot of commitment. Guinea has proven that it is ready to go farther on this path.

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The Sustainability Mechanisms for Higher Education Quality Assurance Training in Uganda

ABSTRACT: The paper investigates the question of sustainability of capacity-building initiatives by reporting about the multiplication training in the frame of DIES NMT Programme on quality assurance in Uganda and how it could make use of the social capital within the existing quality assurance network to sustain and address challenges during its implementation. The purpose of the article is to explore the nature of networking (social and institutional) which was established by the Ugandan Universities Quality Assurance Forum (UUQAF) and share the strategies used in this training experience for future sustainable capacity building training initiatives in emerging economies. The paper employed a qualitative research method to describe and analyse the training framework based on primary and secondary documents.

KEYWORDS: social network, social capital, quality assurance, training for sustainability, benchmarking

1. Introduction

The question of sustainability of higher education initiatives has been a subject of major concern for both funding bodies and beneficiaries. This is often apparent, at least, at the conceptualisation stages of such initiatives. It is indeed not uncommon to see guidelines for calls for funding opportunities emphasising proposals that address issues of sustainability of the proposed programme. The German Academic Exchange Services (DAAD) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), in their joint Higher Education Capacity Development Programme—Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES), is no exception. The concern about the sustainability of a quality assurance training programme was also apparent to the DIES Alumni in Uganda who sought for funding support for the National Multiplication Trainings (NMT) in 2013. Core questions preoccupied the minds of the DIES Alumni at the conception of the NMT programme:

1. How can the national quality assurance training activities be sustained after the DAAD funding period?
2. What organisational structures and partnership frameworks can be used to support these training activities to ensure that they continue?
3. What training approaches should be employed to sustain this national training programme?

A fundamental decision made by these Alumni to mitigate the potential challenges of sustaining the proposed national quality assurance training programme was to embed it in an existing network of quality assurance practitioners in the country called the Ugandan Universities Quality Assurance Forum (UUQAF). It is worth noting here that the DIES Alumni who applied for the NMT funding are founding members of UUQAF and therefore chose to use the organisational framework of UUQAF to organise the NMT for Quality Assurance Managers in Uganda.

This paper investigated the question of the sustainability of capacity building training programmes for higher education managers. In the quality assurance network, UUQAF, the DIES Alumni recognised an intangible resource—*social capital*—that would address the question of sustainability of the quality assurance training activities in Uganda.

The concept of sustainability is a complex one and is widely used in economic, ecological, urban, and environmental studies. Sustainability, in its basic sense, relates to the ability to maintain or continue something at a certain rate or level well into the future. The concept is used to evaluate whether decisions made today will yield vitality and continuation into the future (Basiago, 1995). In this paper, the concept of sustainability is used to relate to the ability of the DIES Alumni and their national quality assurance network to mobilise and use social, material, and financial resources wisely without compromising the need for a programme that involves a continuous national quality assurance training for its members.

The paper explores the nature of networking (social and institutional) as established by UUQAF Constitutional order and demonstrates an operational framework of this network which informed the NMT approach adopted. In so doing, the paper documents and shares some of the strategies used in this training experience for sustainable capacity building training initiatives in developing countries. The paper adopted a case study research approach to describe and analyse the training framework used in this NMT. The case of UUQAF training framework was used to explore mechanisms for the sustainability of higher education training programmes.

Data were collected through documentary reviews of primary and secondary documents including the UUQAF Constitution, NMT Proposal, training reports, research reports, and other relevant publications. The following sections of the paper provide an analysis of the nature of the Quality Assurance Network (QA Network) to determine the source of the resources for sustainable national training, the NMT framework used, the potential challenges for sustaining training programmes, and the strategies used by UUQAF to ensure sustainability.

2. Establishment and Operation of UUQAF as a QA Network

The Ugandan Universities Quality Assurance Forum (UUQAF) is a quality assurance network founded in 2010 by a group of quality assurance officers working in different Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Uganda. Among the six founding members of the network, four of them were trained DIES Alumni under the German Academic Exchange Services (DAAD)—Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) Quality Assurance Initiative (DAAD-IUCEA QA Initiative) which began in 2006. The first and second cohorts of participants from Uganda that trained under this initiative in 2007 and 2008, respectively, expressed the need for collaboration at their new QA jobs. The same desire to work together for mutual peer support was also expressed by the other higher education quality assurance officers in the country. This desire to associate and work together is well captured in the preamble of the Constitution of UUQAF (2011) which states that:

> WHEREAS it is desired that the Quality Assurance Officers in Universities and other Degree-awarding Institutions come together to form an association to contribute towards promotion of quality higher education in Uganda;
>
> CONVINCED that through sharing of experience, expertise, and resources the members of such an association can contribute towards the promotion of quality of higher education in Uganda;
>
> Now the Quality Assurance Officers gathered here in Kampala **DO HEREBY RESOLVE** to establish by this Constitution the Ugandan Universities Quality Assurance Forum (UUQAF), hereafter referred to as The Forum. (p. 2)

As principal social actors whose relationship is defined by mutual *sharing of experiences, expertise, and resources* for the common goal of *promotion of quality of higher education in Uganda* as outlined above, the members of UUQAF set to establish a social network of quality assurance officers. A social network is understood to be webs of personal connections and relationships intended to secure favours in terms of personal and/or organisational action (Burt, 1992). A social network, according to Ho and Chiu (2011), consists of a set of actors and the relationships among them, and the actors can be individual people, groups of people, objects, or events held together by certain relationships. Following this understanding of social networks, quality assurance networks in higher education are here defined as "social organisations of individuals or groups of individual quality assurance practitioners (actors) working closely together (social ties) to enhance their capacity in undertaking quality assurance tasks (operational framework) for quality higher education (shared goals) in their institutions, countries, or regions" (Mawa, 2018, p. 42).

The growth of UUQAF as a national QA Network is largely attributed to three major components: (a) the commitment of its members, the driving force of the Network; (b) the organisational structure of the Network which allows members and their partners to participate freely, actively, and meaningfully based on their capacities; and (c) the operational framework of the Network which allows for continuous capacity building through training, benchmarking visits, mentorship, and research activities. The commitment of UUQAF members has been a major building block for the sustainability of this QA Network and its activities. The founding members of UUQAF established a culture of unswerving commitment to the goal of the QA Network. More often than not, members of UUQAF mobilised personal resources (social, material, intellectual, and financial) to support the activities of the Network.

One such demonstration of the commitment of the members was their resolve to establish what is called the *Chairman's Basket* where members voluntarily make their contributions into a common pool for a common task. The record of the meetings of UUQAF provides rich evidence of the contributions of members to the *Chairman's Basket.* Although a formal bank account for the Network has since been opened, the tradition of making voluntary contributions by members and their partners has continued to sustain many of the activities of UUQAF. It is worth acknowledging here that this tradition is akin to the African philosophy and practice of social solidarity. The African philosopher Mbiti (1969) defines this relational nature of the individual African with his/her community as one of "I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am" (p. 108).

The organisational structure of UUQAF is embedded in the Constitution and Articles of Association of the Network. The establishment of these legal norms and adherence to them by members of the Network have provided the necessary conditions for a culture of constitutionalism. Several organs and their roles are well-defined in the Constitution including the General Assembly and the Executive Committee. The General Assembly, an annual meeting of the Network, is the pinnacle of all social events for the social networking experience of the members. During the Assembly, members congregate to (a) share their experiences, expertise, and resources; (b) dialogue among themselves and with their partners; and (c) renew their loyalty to the Association. Through these mechanisms, the Network structures enable members and their partners to participate freely, actively, and meaningfully based on their capacities.

One measure for cost-effectiveness in organising these events is that all the General Assemblies and other meetings and training workshops of the Network are held in facilities of member institutions on a rotational basis. This is important for the Network especially in the absence of its physical secretariat. Moreover, the hosting of UUQAF events at member institutions on a rotational basis provides the opportunity for continuous learning through benchmarking techniques.

The operational framework of UUQAF is largely informed by the two components discussed above. The Constitution of the Network provides for a process of continuous capacity building of members through such activities as dialogue meetings, benchmarking visits, training (including mentorship), and research. These operational activities of the Network are guided by its objectives as defined under Article 5 of the UUQAF Constitution (2011), of which members are to:

1. Share experiences on quality assurance issues among Quality Assurance Officers;
2. Promote awareness on the relevance of quality assurance matters in institutions of higher learning;
3. Build the capacity of Quality Assurance Officers through training;
4. Share expertise on quality assurance processes;
5. Monitor implementation of quality assurance improvement plans;
6. Mobilise resources for quality assurance activities;
7. Mentor Quality Assurance Officers;
8. Carry on quality assurance-related issues.

The capacity building of Quality Assurance Officers (QAOs) through training and mentorship programmes has been one of the core motivations and thus key activities of UUQAF since its inception. The underlying rationale for this objective was the need to build a critical mass of knowledgeable and skilled quality assurance practitioners in higher education institutions in Uganda who will then champion the cause for quality higher education in the country. Thus, the NMT Programme goal and UUQAF objectives of the capacity building were at a perfect convergence. For UUQAF, the achievement of its capacity-building objective lies not only in the power of networking among its members but also in building sustainable partnerships with higher education organisations within the country, the East African region, and beyond. The subject of higher education partnerships will be taken up later in this chapter. However, at this point, a conclusion on the discussion on networking is warranted.

It was observed earlier in this chapter that in addressing the questions of sustainability of the proposed NMT programme, the DIES Alumni sought recourse in an intangible resource called *social capital* which is found in networking. The importance of networking in higher education cannot be understated. For in networking, "there lies an intrinsic power in social and professional relationships necessary for the establishment and development of sustainable systems and cultural norms for quality promotion" (Mawa, 2018, p. 46). This intrinsic power of networking is recognised as *social capital,* which, according to Bourdieu (1985), is understood to be the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or group, by possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. According to Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), social capital is "the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit. Social capital thus comprises both the network and the assets that may be mobilised through that network" (p. 243).

UUQAF has been a necessary vehicle through which the quality assurance practitioners have been able to mobilise and put to use social, material, intellectual, and financial resources necessary to achieve its objectives. The conceptualisation and implementation of the NMT programme in Uganda were thus informed by the availability of this intangible resource.

3. A Description of the NMT Programme in Uganda

3.1 The Uganda NMT Rationale, Goals, and Expected Learning Outcomes

The call made by DAAD to DIES Alumni in Uganda to conduct national multiplication training in 2013 was received with great excitement and enthusiasm. The DIES Alumni in Uganda, who had participated in the DIES Higher Education Quality Assurance Trainings, proposed an NMT title: *Quality Assurance Training For QA Directors in Uganda* and used their QA Network UUQAF as a body to apply for and organise this capacity building training. The training sessions were proposed to be held in November 2013 and March 2014.

It is worth noting here that the Uganda NMT programme was proposed based on a training approach adopted by UUQAF in 2012. This UUQAF capacity-building event had introduced sustainability mechanisms which included institutional support, cost-sharing by participants, and partnerships with national, regional, and international agencies for financial support and nomination of training experts. Indeed, these, and other measures, became the benchmarks for developing and implementing the NMT programme in Uganda. The major justification for the NMT programme in Uganda was the lack of skilled QA managers in HEIs and the need to achieve this through national QA training. This was clearly articulated in the Uganda NMT proposal (2013):

> … institutions in Uganda have shown great commitment to enhance the quality of education in the country except for the evident lack of trained QA Officers to guide the process of establishing IQA systems. Efforts by IUCEA and DAAD to train some Quality Assurance Officers in the region have certainly increased the demand for trained quality assurance officers by many universities. These efforts can only be sustained through continuous national QA training. (p. 1)

The NMT programme in Uganda was conceived from a real need to address the shortage of knowledgeable and skilled personnel to establish and manage internal quality assurance systems in HEIs. The desired goal was to have a pool of QA experts to drive the establishment and management of quality assurance systems in HEIs in the country. Based on this broad goal, the following expected learning outcomes were defined for the NMT Programme in Uganda (2013):

1. Demonstration of a capacity to establish Internal Quality Assurance Systems;
2. Development of QA Policies, procedures, and evaluation/monitoring instruments;
3. Organisation and conduct of institutional self-assessment of IQA systems;
4. Development of quality institutional self-assessment reports of their IQA systems for quality improvement.

3.2 Training Methodology and Approach

The Training Methodology and Approach adopted in the NMT programme paid attention to adult learning which employed both workshop-based sessions and practical self-assessments exercises. Several pre- and post-training activities, including assessments, reporting, and reflections were conducted. As a pre-training activity, participants were required to write brief, five-page reports on the status of QA System in their institutions to show the pre-training status of QA Systems in HEIs in Uganda. This individual writing allowed the participants to observe and reflect on their concrete experiences in ensuring quality in their institutions. The training methodology was also one of action base in which participants were required to develop and implement action plans that would lead to self-assessment and improvement of the internal quality assurance system in their institutions. A thorough analysis of the outcomes in the implementation of the action plans for this training is desirable but is not the focus of this chapter. The scope of this chapter is the sustainability of the training beyond the NMT programme timelines. Therefore, a description of the training phase is necessary here.

A two-phased training workshop approach was adopted. The first phase of the workshops focused on the establishment and management of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) systems. The four-day training session covered topics such as the concept of quality and quality assurance in HEIs, aspects of IQA System including QA Policies and Procedures, QA Units, and IQA Mechanisms and Instruments. The second phase of the workshop sessions covered aspects of Assessment of Internal QA Systems. In the sessions, participants were introduced to the concept of self-assessment, the organisation and management of self-assessment processes, the tool and criteria for assessing IQA systems in HEIs, and the development of a quality self-assessment report.

3.3 The Uganda NMT Programme Participants and Trainers

The programme aimed to train the staff who were working or who were expected to work as quality assurance officers or managers from 20 universities and degree-awarding institutions in Uganda. It was expected that each institution would send two representatives for the training thus a total of 40 participants was expected to be trained. However, the actual total number of participants rose to 48 because some HEIs expressed commitment to fully support a bigger number of their staff.

A team of 6 principal trainers and 4 mentees were mobilised. The six experts included three national experts supported by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), two regional experts supported by IUCEA, and one international expert supported by DAAD. All the six trainers were themselves quality assurance experts who were actively involved in the East African Quality Assurance initiative as training experts and peer assessors. This blend of national, regional, and international experts served well to enrich learning experiences and to build local capacity for continuous quality assurance training programme in Uganda.

4. Potential Challenges for Sustaining NMT Programmes

The task of conceptualisation of the quality assurance training in terms of defining its objectives, content, and methodology was largely an easy one for the Organising Committee of the NMT programme in Uganda. The reason for this was that the Team had a good grounding of such training methodologies and had access to sufficient training materials. However, the task of envisioning the potential challenges of, and setting strategic mechanisms to sustain these national training programmes, was a daunting one. Following intense planning discussions among the Team members on the potential challenges of sustaining DIES training programmes in East Africa, it was noted that the absence of a somewhat formal organisational structure and support, the high training costs, and total reliance on external agencies for funding and training experts are all potential challenges.

4.1 Absence of a Clear Organisational Support Structure

It was observed that several higher education managers in the region had participated in different DIES training programmes in Germany including the Deans' Course and organised similar training sessions upon their return. But these alumni-organised training activities did not continue after the inaugural sessions largely because of the absence of a formal alumni organisation to support continuity. Cognisant of this observed phenomenon, the DIES Alumni who organised the NMT for quality assurance in Uganda, looked to its national quality assurance network, the UUQAF, for an organisational and operational support framework.

4.2 High Training Costs

The training of higher education managers is often an expensive undertaking. This is particularly true when the managers are called from different HEIs into residential training workshops in hotel venues. The cost of transport, boarding, and other logistical requirements can be prohibitive in the participation of many higher education managers from financially-challenged institutions. Indeed, on drawing experiences from national training programmes organised under UUQAF, many HEIs in Uganda are financially constrained to support more than one staff for higher education management training courses. With the availability of support from other sources, many HEIs are indeed committed to send their staff for management training. Unfortunately, such external funding opportunities for capacity building are often specific, one that continues only as long as the training project lasts. Moreover, the overall cost of organising national training supported by external trainers can be high. All these present serious challenges in sustaining capacity building for higher education managers and therefore require the implementation of strategic measures.

5. Strategic Mechanisms for Sustainable National Training

5.1 Cost-sharing Mechanisms

One of the strategic decisions made by the Organising Committee for the NMT programme in Uganda was the infusion of cost-sharing mechanisms. All participants and their institutions were required to cover certain costs including their transport and personal expenses. This requirement was communicated clearly in the call for participation and was embraced by participants since it had been a continuing practice in UUQAF. The cost-sharing paradigm in this particular case of the NMT Programme had yet another dimension—it offered an opportunity to some UUQAF Member Institutions with the financial capacity to support additional staff for the training. From the perspective of UUQAF, the cost-sharing mechanism was motivated by the considerations of equity, efficiency, and necessity.

The principle of equity was applied in determining institutions that allowed the nomination of additional participants. The Organising Committee reviewed the level of participation of all institutions in previous national and regional quality assurance training programmes. For the sake of equity, institutions that had no record of participation in previous quality assurance training were given additional places for participants whose costs of lodging and food, and other costs mentioned above, had to be borne by the sending institutions. The efficiency consideration was based on the fact that space was adequate and that mentors were available to train up to 50 participants. It was therefore efficient to have additional training participants within the overall cost of NMT programme training sessions than to organise other similar training for another group of participants. Finally, it was deemed necessary to share costs and expand the pool of trained UUQAF members to increase the national representation for quality higher education in Uganda.

5.2 Social Networking Events and Commitment to the QA Network

A fundamental argument of this paper has been that the sustainability of alumni-organised training lies in their own recognised and established organisational and operational structures such as an alumni network. One way to strengthen this power of networking is to integrate social networking events in the training programmes, one of the several sustainability strategies considered in the NMT programme of quality assurance training in Uganda.

Social networking events, such as games and sports, cultural events, and organised dinners, were therefore organised as part of the training strategy. It was reasoned that through these social events, certain qualities and competencies of quality assurance officers such as planning, organising, coordination, negotiation, communication, and teamwork are equally enhanced. Moreover, these events gave the training participants not only the opportunity to build effective bonds among themselves but the social space to nurture a commitment to the Network, a necessary organisational structure for continued personal and professional development in the quality assurance work.

Accordingly, the intense social networking experience of the participants of the NMT has not only strengthened the bonds among the UUQAF members, but has also helped to sustain a strong commitment to, and support of, the QA Network. This has, in turn, enhanced the capacity of the QA Network to organise QA training on an annual basis. Since 2014, UUQAF has been able to organise five national quality assurance training workshops covering different aspects of higher education quality assurance including data management and use for quality improvement, self-assessment at the institutional level, and curriculum development, review and programme assessment.

5.3 Institutional Benchmarking Visits

A key training strategy adopted in the NMT Programme in Uganda was benchmarking. Schofield (1998) has observed

> that the desire to learn from each other and to share aspects of good practice is almost as old as the university itself. Such desires have traditionally manifested themselves in numerous ways: professional associations, both academic and non-academic; meetings to share common interests; and numerous visits by delegations from one higher education system to examine practice in another. (p. 6)

Today, benchmarking is a major quality enhancement technique used by many higher education managers to learn and improve on the quality of their institutions. Although benchmarking has many meanings, it is broadly defined as "a continuous and systematic process for evaluating the product, service, and work processes of organisations that are recognised as representing best practices for organisational improvement" (Spendolini, 1992, p. 91).

Within the context of the NMT programme and in the practice of UUQAF, benchmarking involves quality assurance officers visiting a higher education institution to learn from it the quality assurance mechanisms set in place, such as processes, structures, tools, and facilities (the totality of the QA system), and then, based on their findings, improve on the QA system of their institutions. The training approach here was a practical one, that is, an exposure of the training participants to the QA system of a member institution not merely to copy what is in another institution but to compare processes, structures, and tools with their own and thereby learn new ideas and best practices for improvement. The process for the benchmarking visit involved four key activity steps: planning the visit, conducting the visit, analysing the findings, and adopting best practices for improvement. These steps are akin to the Deming Cycle marked by Plan—Do—Check—Act (PDCA) (Deming, 1989).

During the planning process, the participants were exposed to the national and regional QA standards and tools, mechanisms, and processes. The Organising Committee sought permission from the institution to be visited and informed it about the scope and expectations of the benchmarking visit. The host institution was expected to prepare information materials to share, make presentations, and conduct discussions with participants about the internal quality assurance system and to organise facility tour. The visit was planned to last a full day to enable participants to have a thorough learning inquiry of the QA system of the host institution. Upon returning to the training venue, participants were given opportunities to discuss their findings in small groups and in plenary. Emerging best practices were identified, analysed, and recommended for adoption, adaption, or improvement by the different institutions. It should be noted here that the NMT participants expressed great satisfaction with the benchmarking experience. It enabled the practitioners to search for best practices and learn from the institutions visited.

Following the successful benchmarking experience during the implementation of the NMT, UUQAF has made this practice part of all its training activities. It is now firmly established in the practice of UUQAF that its training activities are held in member institutions to give host institutions direct exposure to benchmarking purposes and procedures.

5.4 Mentorship of National Resource Persons (Trainers)

Mentorship of Quality Assurance Officers is one strategic objective of UUQAF that has remained core to the sustainability mechanisms of the Network. Although UUQAF has no formal programme of mentorship, the mentoring process is made a practice in the conduct of all activities of the Network including training. The rationale for this mechanism is to build internal capacity among UUQAF members to create a pool of quality assurance experts who can play more meaningful roles in the activities of the Network. The methodological approach to this mentoring strategy is based on the philosophy of *learning by doing.* Holliday (2001) has defined such methodology for achieving successful mentoring process for adults in the following statements:

> True learning works the same way with adults. When you tell an adult how to do something, she will remember 10 per cent of what you say. If you show an adult how to do something, she will remember 60 per cent. But if you do something with that same adult, she will remember 90 per cent or more. Mentoring is about doing and about understanding. (p. 142)

In addition to the philosophy of learning-by-doing highlighted above, the NMT programme in Uganda has been influenced fundamentally by the four-stage model of experiential learning introduced by Kolb (1984) that is now widely used in adult education. According to Kolb, learners need four different kinds of abilities to be more effective: "concrete experience abilities (CE), reflective observation abilities (RO), abstract conceptualizing abilities (AC), and active experimentation abilities (AE)" (p. 30). The two interrelated concepts of experience and reflection are particularly central to the learning process and thus affect the ability to actively participate in the training. As Miettinen (2000) has rightly observed, experiential learning is significant to adult educators because

> it combines spontaneity, feeling, and deep individual insights with the possibility of rational thought and reflection. It maintains the humanistic belief in every individual's capacity to grow and learn, so important for the concept of lifelong learning. It comprises a positive ideology that is evidently important for adult education. (p. 70)

In the context of the NMT programme in Uganda, the mentoring process involved pairing the experienced national, regional, and international quality assurance expert trainers with new but potentially quality assurance officers. A short protocol for the mentor-mentee engagement was developed and shared with the trainers and identified mentees. The protocol provided for joint planning and execution of presentations, group discussions, reflection and feedback sessions for an improved learning experience. Like any other mentorship activity, the NMT programme mentors were expected to provide support, advice, encouragement, and even friendship to their mentees to give them a sense of connectedness to the wider community of expert QA practitioners. This way, mentors helped to develop the competencies and interests of the mentees in quality assurance as evidenced by the growth of numbers, from four to ten national quality assurance trainers in Uganda. On top of this, four quality assurance officers are pursuing PhD studies and professional career development in higher education quality assurance.

5.5 Partnerships with National and Regional Institutions

The establishment and development of educational partnerships have become a common practice. Recognized in different forms and for different reasons, educational partnerships with local regional and international agencies have remained important today as they were before. Nowadays, global relationships and partnerships are essential to an institution's growth and development (Chou, 2012). A key tenet of partnering is that a benefit comes from creating a collaboration based on the ideal that the individual partners cannot accomplish their goals on their own: the partnership creates the ultimate win-win situation (Eddy, 2010).

The creation of partnerships through networking and collaboration with educational institutions and agencies for capacity enhancement has been at the core of UUQAF's strategic sustainability mechanisms. The implementation of the NMT Programme under the DIES initiative was a perfect opportunity for UUQAF to bolster the existing partnerships with the NCHE, IUCEA and DAAD, all of whom have a common goal of promoting quality higher education. Moreover, the building of trust between UUQAF and its partners, enhanced by clear and continuous communication between the key decision-makers of the partner organisations, has helped to sustain the partnerships and achievement of the quality assurance capacity building objective.

As already highlighted in this paper, UUQAF benefited in this partnership framework through the availability of training resources (materials, experts, and funds). Since 2012, UUQAF has continued to benefit from the support of its partners. The NCHE has institutionalised its support for UUQAF in the annual budget of the Quality Assurance Directorate of the Council. The Annual Quality Assurance Forum of the IUCEA continues to offer opportunities for professional growth of UUQAF members who are active in the regional East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN).

5.6 Research and Documentation

Research and documentation are mechanisms through which UUQAF has sustained its capacity building programme. Research, understood here as the search for pertinent information, on the status of quality assurance in HEIs in Uganda, has defined the strategic actions and training scope of UUQAF. For instance, the formulation of the UUQAF 2012 training and the 2013 NMT programme was based on the findings of a Quality Assurance Personel Training Needs Assessment conducted in 2011. The needs assessment survey report concluded that the "QA officers of the UUQAF member institutions are quite certain of the training needs of the QA staff/personnel in their respective institutions. These needs are spread across various areas of competence" (UUQAF, 2011, p. 7).

Also, as part of the selection criteria, all NMT programme participants were required to submit write-ups on the status of quality assurance in their respective institutions. This baseline survey provided useful insights into the status of QA in member institutions. This tradition of collecting and documenting information about QA in HEIs in Uganda has continued and has since been formalised with the establishment of the UUQAF Magazine in 2016 and the production of a major research report in 2018. In the Foreword to the First Edition of the UUQAF Magazine (2016), the Founding President of the Network observed that

> UUQAF was established, among other core functions, to support the development and dissemination of innovative quality assurance practices and to collect and collate information on important quality assurance case studies as a basis for benchmarking, information exchange and capacity building. The quality assurance experiences and practices shared by the different institutions in this edition provide a rich source of information on quality assurance activities, mechanisms, systems, and practices. (p. 1)

A continuous process of learning has, therefore, been established through research and documentation for sustainable national quality assurance capacity building.

6. Conclusion

The challenges of a weak organisational framework and high costs to sustain higher education capacity building training are real. Overcoming these challenges requires investment in, and implementation of, strategic sustainability measures that include (a) instituting cost-sharing measures; (b) creating social networking; (c) establishing strong partnerships; and (d) setting up of a framework for a continued process of benchmarking, mentorship, research, and documentation. Nevertheless, the presence of a strong network of higher education managers remains a vital resource for sustainable training programmes for these managers.

The NMT programme for quality assurance training in Uganda paid great attention to the power of social networks as it employed the above strategies to sustain national quality assurance training in the country. A decision was made, as well, by the DIES Alumni in this programme to entrench their proposal on the objectives of UUQAF. The training philosophy and approach adopted in this NMT was thus anchored on the existing social and institutional bonds and training framework established by the QA network.

Furthermore, the partnership envisioned in the NMT framework and the training programme strategies adopted have all helped to build an enhanced framework for sustainable national quality assurance training and mentorship process. The national quality assurance training has continued since 2014 on an annual basis and so has the number of national QA experts who can train more quality assurance managers in the country increased.

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Higher education leadership and management have become increasingly important throughout the years due to the complexities that have to be addressed by universities worldwide. This can be seen not only in professionalisation in fields such as faculty management or in areas of quality assurance and internationalisation, but also in the need for exchange and training in academic leadership, such as that of deans or study deans, or of university leadership in general.

The Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES) is addressing this need in emerging countries by building platforms of exchange and offering training courses. Not only is the programme supporting capacity building of human resources, but it is also specifically focusing on inducing change within the universities, such as introducing new instruments or tools in the area of quality assurance and internationalisation, and addressing specific challenges or setting up new structures in the form of projects in the frame of the training. The 'National Multiplication Trainings' Programme under DIES is addressing the sustainability and multiplication of the DIES Programme, that is, alumni are enabled to implement capacity building in higher education leadership and management in their national context.

The articles within this volume of the "Potsdamer Beiträge zur Hochschulforschung" (Potsdam Contributions to Higher Education Research) analyse and share the experiences of such training programmes held in Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Malaysia, Kenya, and Uganda. They all revolve around the best ways to address the needs and challenges in higher education leadership and management, and in building capacities in these areas.

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