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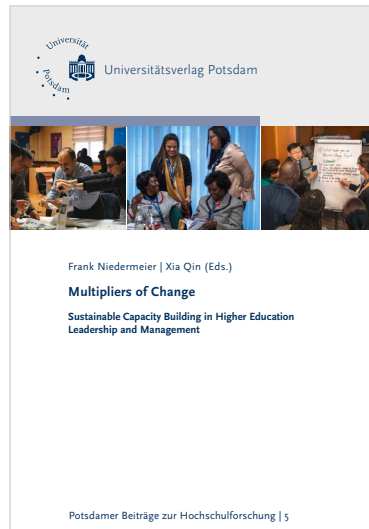
Sustainable Capacity Building in Higher
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Frank Niedermeier

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 multi-

pliers 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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