

**COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF  
DONOR-INITIATED PROGRAMMES ON  
RESEARCH CAPACITY IN THE SOUTH**

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**INTERNATIONAL REPORT**

**Report to the Directorate General of Development  
Cooperation (DGIS)**

**Research and Developing Countries Division**

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands**

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
ADESO:	Asociación para el Desarrollo Sostenible de las Segovias
APNLBP:	Andhra Pradesh-Netherlands Biotechnology Programme
CDR:	Centre for Development Research
CEBEM	Centro Boliviano de Estudios Multidisciplinarios
CEDLA	Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Laboral y Agrario
CEMAR	Centre for Natural Resources Management
CEPLAG:	Centro de Planificación y Gestión
CERES	Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social/Cochabamba
CESU	Centro de Estudios Superiores Universitarios/UMSS.
CIDA:	Canadian International Development Agency
CIDCA	Atlantic Coast Centre for Research and Documentation
CIDOB	Consejo de los Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia (Council of the Native People of Bolivia )
CIGEO	Centro de Investigaciones en Geociencias, Nicaragua
DAC	Development Assistance Council
DANIDA:	Danish International Development Agency
DGIS:	Directorate Generale of Development Cooperation
DFID:	Department for International Development-United Kingdom
EIB	Bilingual Intercultural Education
ENRECA:	Enhancing Research Capacity Programme
EPRC:	Economic Policy Research Centre
ERB:	Economic Research Bureau
EU:	European Union
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FSRP:	Farming Systems Research Programme
FTPP:	Forest, Trees and People Programme
GMC:	Gender Management Committee
GTZ:	Deutches Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit --German Cooperation Agency
HIPC	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
HDI	Human Devel
HPI:	Human Poverty Index
IDRC:	International Development Research Centre of Canada
IDS/WSG:	Institute of Development Studies, Women's Study Group
INIES	Nicaraguan Institute for Economic and Social Research
IRA:	Institute of Resource Assessment
IRCT	Integrated Rural Technology Centre
KRPLLD:	Kerala Research on Local Level Development
KSSP:	Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad
MAP:	Monitoring Adjustment of Poverty

MISR:	Makerere Institute of Social Research
MMRP:	Multiannual, Multidisciplinary Research Programme
MOSTE:	Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment
NGO:	Nongovernment organization/s
NISTPASS	National Institute of Science and Technology Policy and Strategic Studies
NITLAPÁN	Instituto de Investigación y Desarrollo. Universidad Centroamericana.- UCA - NITLAPÁN - Tiempo de Sembrar
NURRU:	Network of Ugandan Researchers and Research Users
OCS:	Open Competitive System
OECD:	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAR	Participatory Action Research; alternatively PRA Participatory Research Approach
PER	Public Expenditure Review
PIEB:	Programa de Investigación Estratégica de Bolivia
PIRN:	Proyecto de Investigaciones en Recursos Naturales
PROEIB :	Programa de Educación Intercultural de Bolivia
PRPA:	Programme for Research on Poverty Alleviation
RED/BRAC:	Research and Evaluation Division of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
REPOA:	Research for Poverty Alleviation
SAREC	Swedish Assistance for Research and Cooperation
SIDA:	Swedish International Development Agency
SUDESCA:	Consortium of three research institutions in Costa Rica's National University, the University of El Salvador, the Universidad Nacional Autonoma in Nicaragua and University of Aalborg, in Denmark
TANU:	Tanganyika African National Union
TAS	Tanzania Assistance Strategy
TASAF	Tanzania Social Action Fund
UCA	Universidad Cetro Americana
UDSM:	University of Dar es Salaam
UMSA	Universidad Mayor de San Andres/La Paz.
UMSS	Universidad Mayor de San Simon/Cochabamba
UNA	Universidad Nacional Agraria
UNAN	Universidad Nacional Autonoma
UNI	Universidad Nacional de Ingenieria, Nicaragua
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VISED:	Vietnam Sustainable Economic Development
VNRP:	Vietnam-Netherlands Research Programme
WRDP:	Women's Research and Documentation Project

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Background*

● The plan for a comparative study of donor-initiated capacity building in the South emerged in the 1997 Leusden Workshop organized by the Division for Research and Developing Countries, Directorate General of Development Cooperation (DGIS). The Workshop organisers had hoped to conceptualise a research that will enable them to obtain feedback on the implementation of the new DGIS policy regarding North-South collaboration in the area of science and technology. Initiated in 1992 by then Minister of Development Cooperation Jan Pronk, the main goal of the policy was to link research more closely to the needs and interests of the developing world, particularly the poor among its population. Since the designers of the policy attributed the insufficient orientation of Southern research toward societal problems to the prevailing asymmetric character of North-South research collaboration, it sought to minimize the possibility of domination by Northern researchers of collaboration efforts with Southern partners by calling for a shift of key responsibilities—agenda and priority setting, the conduct of research and financial accounting—from the North to the South.

● Departing radically from traditional practice, the policy resulted in the creation of the Multiannual, Multidisciplinary Research Programme (MMRP) in Latin America, Asia and Africa. For the MMRP, addressing the needs of the societies where it is found entails focusing on research problems with consequences for Southern development. The choice and handling of development-oriented research demands an understanding of problems from the perspective of multiple and often conflicting interests and perspectives. Such a nuanced grasp of issues and problems, in turn, requires the inputs of researchers in various disciplines and branches of knowledge and more importantly, interaction with users—those who will utilise the findings to formulate development-oriented policies or actions as well as those who stand to benefit from or suffer their consequences. In fine, the MMRP as designed is a research capacity building programme managed autonomously by the Southern partner, that provides long-term support for demand driven, location specific, multidisciplinary research on sustainable development.

● Reflecting on the features of the MMRP, the participants of the 1997 Leusden Workshop noted the existence of donors who fund research capacity building programmes with similar characteristics. While they may not grant long-term support or full autonomy to Southern partners, like-minded donors also support demand-driven, location-specific and multidisciplinary research on sustainable development. The common thrust of MMRP and these programmes is rooted in the changes in development perspectives and discourses over the last 50 years. By the 1990s, the democratisation of Southern countries, increasing significance of issues that require location-specific interventions (e.g., environmental concerns) and the neoliberal advocacy for linking free markets to democracy, participatory governance and the rise of civil society groups, among other factors, had provided impetus for various stakeholders in the South to define their development agenda, analyse concrete issues and address them appropriately. Through funding mechanisms, donors served as harbingers of emergent views of development and capacity building. They helped mainstream alternative development perspectives and participatory research paradigms

in universities and research institutes by pushing researchers steeped in academic concerns or in theoretical critique to forge links with external agencies, including grassroots organisations.

### *Objectives and Methodology*

● In the light of converging perspectives among donors, the research conceptualised after the Leusden Workshop aimed to compare the MMRP with other capacity building programmes in the seven countries where the former is found. From the inception of the study, its motivating spirit was one of gaining insights into the programmes, understanding their genesis and the changes they have undergone in the appropriate contexts of time, geography, political economies and cultures, including prevailing research and academic cultures. The researchers were aware that their task was not to evaluate the programmes or to render judgments regarding the superiority of one mode of research collaboration over another but to surface the common and differential features of the donor-initiated programmes and their expression at the level of implementation. Within this rather broad objective the study attempted to answer the following questions:

- Are the asymmetries reflected in the ‘conventional’ programmes of research cooperation also present in the cases under study?
- In the view of the recipient countries, is the Dutch policy for cooperation, contained in the MMRPs, any different from the ‘conventional’ forms of North-South cooperation, or from the policies adopted recently by similar agencies? What are the differences and similarities in the characteristics of these policies in terms of demand-drivenness, multidisciplinary, location-specificity and participatory practices?
- Are the characteristics and attributes of the programmes, implemented by the different donors, producing the desired results? What are these? [Here the focus is on the various types of **research capacity building** (institutional and individual; conducting and managing research; research appreciation and use); the production of results of **quality and relevance** for development objectives; establishment of scientific relationships with other countries (**international research collaboration**), etc.]
- Is the policy implemented by the Dutch government applicable only to some types of research, particularly those involving specific regional needs, or could it be adopted in a more general way in other forms of North-South research cooperation?

● Research in the three continents commenced with the conduct of regional conceptualisation Workshops, immediately followed by fieldwork in each of the seven countries. The preliminary phase of the field research focused on identifying and selecting programmes that at least shared the broad objectives of the MMRP and some of its attributes. To that end, the research support situations in the MMRP countries had to be ‘mapped’ as a local situations’ perspective—instead of a donors’ perspective—was sought. The mapping exercise revealed that most of the external agencies funded research and research institutions directly, according to their (the agencies’) priorities.

Some of them funded government research institutions or universities; others supported short-term action research lodged in NGOs. In view of this, the country researchers, in the light of the locally available options, applied a set of criteria, which varied slightly from one country study to the other. Some of the obvious variations in the choices of comparators were due to the attributes emphasized, which reflected the political economic and academic contexts of the countries and the character of the MMRPs found in them.

- At bottom, the programmes selected focused explicitly on research capacity building. Most of them entailed long-term commitment on the part of the donor agency and enjoyed some level of autonomy, minimally with respect to decisions regarding research questions to be addressed and the conduct of research; maximally with respect to the use and allocation of funds. The programmes aimed to enhance capacity either for policy studies or applied field-based research that is oriented toward specific development issues. They vary in research orientation along two scales: an academic/fundamental-applied/action research continuum and a macro policy focus-localized issues continuum, among other differences. Nevertheless, all the programmes chosen supported and advocated the need for concrete research applications that will benefit specific end users, although the intended users vary from programme to programme.

### *Country Contexts and Programmes*

- While programmes funded by the same donors across countries had common features, their implementation nevertheless varied depending on the political economic contexts and state of science and technology in the countries where they are found. On the other hand, similarities in the operationalisation and implementation of particular programmes across continents are traceable to features that are common to the countries (e.g., the significance of Marxist-inspired activist discourses and practices in Asia and Latin America).

- The seven countries covered by the research—Tanzania and Uganda in Africa, Bangladesh, India and Vietnam in Asia and Bolivia and Nicaragua in Latin America—are postcolonial societies. Political turmoil and instability in the form of a war of reunification in Vietnam, revolution and counterrevolution in Nicaragua and military coups in Bolivia, Bangladesh and Uganda characterized the post-WWII political histories of most of these countries. India and Tanzania have had relatively more stable political lives compared to the other five countries although a socialist ideology gained ground in Tanzania and in parts of India where the Communist Party won government seats through the ballot. A culture of activism, influenced by Marxist-inspired Leftist struggles in India and to some extent in Bangladesh, thrives as well in Bolivia and Nicaragua.

Interestingly, these four countries have witnessed the proliferation of NGOs and grassroots organisations in the last three decades on a scale that is certainly more significant than in Vietnam or the African countries of Uganda and Tanzania. The rapid growth of activist NGOs in the Latin American and the other Asian countries accounts for the salience of participatory frameworks and grassroots involvement in development programmes. This partly explains the more widespread acceptance of participatory

research approaches in the five countries and the infusion of participatory principles even in the academic-oriented research capacity building programmes.

As to Vietnam and Tanzania, NGO networks and Left-inspired activism in the tradition of South Asia or Latin America did not prosper despite the socialist ideology of the dominant political groups in these countries. The militaristic organisation of society due to the exigencies of the war for reunification and the subsequent reconstruction in Vietnam and the absence of any impetus to further develop a Left-leaning grassroots movement in Tanzania, given the control of the state by a socialist-oriented leadership immediately after independence, explain the relatively lacklustre development of NGOs during the 1970s and 1980s in Vietnam and Tanzania.

- At different points in their post-World War II history, all the countries covered by the study experienced serious economic crises. As a consequence, all of them underwent structural adjustments that required the adoption of neoliberal, private sector driven economic policies, albeit with varying levels of success in terms of implementation. Economically, the countries studied are among the world's poorest nations. In 1997, their GNP per capita was below that of developing societies taken collectively. With the exception of Bolivia, the per capita incomes of the countries covered ranged from \$260 (the per capita GNP of the least developed countries) to \$410. Although Bolivia fared better than the others in per capita GNP, like the rest, it was among the poorest in Latin America.

As expected poverty levels are quite significant in the seven countries. Thus, poverty alleviation is high in the agenda of all governments concerned and remains a dominant discourse within the development community. In addition to poverty alleviation, the rhetoric of neoliberal democratisation has been juxtaposed, albeit uneasily for most countries, to the revolutionary or nationalist discourses of the post-WWII period. Apart from poverty alleviation, democratisation and local development, the other discourses that shape the research thrusts and interests of the programmes in the seven countries reflect their salient problems, e.g. indigenous peoples for Bolivia and economic transition to market-oriented development for Vietnam.

- Despite differences in the academic contexts and cultures of the countries covered by the study, they share common problems. Low enrolment rates at the pre-collegiate, especially at the secondary level, problems of infrastructure, and lack of good teachers for elementary and high school plague most of the countries, although the Sub-Saharan African nations and Nicaragua suffer the most in this respect. Problems in the quality of education at the pre-collegiate levels are reflected in the declining standards of reputable universities in most of the countries, which focus primarily on teaching. Currently, the universities in the seven countries engage in very little research. Nevertheless, there exists in all the countries groups of highly trained researchers. In Asia, these researchers are found in specialised research institutions, with a few based in the universities. In Latin America and Africa, they work in research centres, NGOs and universities. Comparing research communities with a capacity to develop different thrusts, those in the Asian and to some extent in the Latin American countries are bigger than in Tanzania and Uganda. With the exception of Nicaragua, it would seem that the countries in the other continents possess a more critical mass of researchers and a relatively more developed research culture than the Sub-Saharan African countries

covered by the Report, although differences in academic traditions and research orientations exist.

- The programmes that figure in the study are as follows:

- **Bolivia**

PIEB: Programa de Investigación Estratégica de Bolivia, the local MMRP

FTTP: Forest, Trees and People

PIRN: Proyecto de Investigaciones en Recursos Naturales

SIDA/SAREC in two Universities and two research centres

PROEIB : Programa de Educación Intercultural de Bolivia

CEPLAG: Centro de Planificación y Gestión

- **Nicaragua**

ADESO: Asociación para el Desarrollo Sostenible de las Segovias, the local MMRP

IDRC: International Development Research Centre of Canada support to four NGOs

SIDA/SAREC: in four local universities

SUDESCA: a programme funded by DANIDA, the Danish cooperation agency

NITLAPÁN: a local research institute

- **Tanzania**

REPOA: Research for Poverty Alleviation, the local MMRP

ENRECA: Enhancing Research Capacity

WRDP: Women's Research and Documentation Project

IDS/WSG: Institute of Development Studies, Women's Study Group

- **Uganda**

NURRU: Network of Ugandan Researchers and Research Users, the local MMRP

EPRC: Economic Policy Research Centre

MISR: Makerere Institute of Social Research

- **Bangladesh**

PRPA: for Research on Poverty Alleviation, the local MMRP

RED/BRAC: Research and Evaluation Division of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee

MAP: Monitoring Adjustment of Poverty

- **India**

KRPLLD: Kerala Research on Local Level Development, the local MMRP

APNLBP: Andhra Pradesh Netherlands Biotechnology

UNDP: Strategies and Financing for Human Development

- **Vietnam**

VNRP: the Vietnam-Netherlands Research, the local MMRP

SIDA/SAREC FSRP: Farming Systems Research Programme

→ VISED: Vietnam Sustainable Economic Development

● With the exception of the MMRPs and the EPRC in Uganda, the programmes in Africa are all university-based. The research programmes selected for Latin America, on the other hand, consist of six university-based (SIDA/SAREC-Bolivia PROEIB, CEPLAG in Bolivia and NITLAPAN, SIDA/SAREC-Nicaragua and DANIDA-SUDESCA in Nicaragua) and five NGO-based programmes (PIEB, FTTP, PIRN in Bolivia and ADESO and IDRC in Nicaragua). Furthermore, with the exception of SIDA/SAREC-Nicaragua, which builds research capacities in the natural and engineering sciences, the programmes are mostly social science based. In Asia, only one

of the programmes is university-based (SIDA/SAREC PSRP). The rest are lodged in research institutes/centres or in independent organisations.

- The study reveals a wide range of research thrusts. Participatory and applied research models, which donor agencies began to support in the 1980s, have a more receptive audience in Bolivia, Nicaragua, India (Kerala) and Bangladesh where development NGOs and an activist culture thrive than in Uganda and Tanzania (e.g., KRPLLD, APNLBP in India; PRPA, RED-BRAC in Bangladesh; VNRP in Vietnam; ADESO, IDRC, NITLAPAN in Nicaragua and PIRN, FTTP in Bolivia). Nevertheless, for Africa, NURRU and WSRD/IDS-WSG have concentrated on building this capacity among potential Ugandan researchers as a whole and women researchers, respectively. In all countries, most of the other programmes that emphasize more academic concerns, i.e., the conceptual and methodological grounding of research, are also quite aware of and sensitive to users on the ground (e.g., SIDA/SAREC FSRP, VNRP in Vietnam; PIEB, PROIEB, CEPLAG, SIDA/SAREC in Bolivia, ENRECA, REPOA in Tanzania; SIDA/SAREC, SUDESCA in Nicaragua). Apart from pursuing participatory research and academic research with inputs from end users on the ground, the other selected programmes were oriented toward policy (VISED in Vietnam, the UNDP-funded Project in India; MAP in Bangladesh; REPOA in Tanzania, MISR and EPRC in Uganda).

- For comparative purposes, four of the programmes studied were eventually dropped. Although lessons from these programmes were incorporated into the Report, the programmes, which did not figure directly in the discussions, are RED-BRAC (Bangladesh), NITLAPAN (Nicaragua), EPRC (Uganda) and MISR (Uganda). These are research units with multiple donors rather than programmes constituted by a distinguishable set of research and capacity building activities that would not exist without donor support.

### *On the Question of Asymmetry, Autonomy from Donors, Institutional Autonomy and Sustainability*

- Two modalities emerge in terms of institutional arrangements for capacity building. Mode 1 consists of programmes linked to and administered by existing academic institutions, i.e., universities or independent research centres. Except for WRDP in Tanzania, all SIDA/SAREC and DANIDA-funded projects as well as the GTZ and Belgian-supported programmes fall under Mode I. In these cases, donor support activity is clearly distinguishable from the other activities carried out by the universities or research institutes and the local coordinators are based in the institutions involved. In contrast to the university-based programmes, all the DGIS-funded programmes (MMRPs and APNLBP) and a couple of other programmes (the IDRC-supported VISED and MAP programmes, FTTP and PIRN) bypassed established institutional structures and formed their own institutional arrangements although many of them are lodged in existing research centres. They are in principle independent of their host institutions. While independence has been sought in the MMRPs, this has not been achieved completely in Kerala, Bangladesh and Vietnam. In quite a few cases, the Programme organisers found it difficult to find a host institution, which would allow complete independence, possibly out of concern for its reputation. Operating independently requires programmes to acquire a range of management, organisational

and training/capacity building skills and to establish their own systems of rules and procedures.

- Do northern partners continue to wield as much control over programmes as they did when the first conventional programmes were established in the 1960s and 1970s? The answer is a qualified no. For the programmes analysed, donor control and, conversely, autonomy, is manifested at different levels. Common to all programmes including the MMRP is the donors' control over decisions regarding specific regions or countries to locate the programmes in and the broad field of knowledge or area of activity to be supported. Particular to the MMRP, the establishment of Steering Committees composed of researchers and representatives of government and grassroots organisations was an absolute DGIS requirement to ensure autonomy.

Beyond these areas of control, the autonomy of local partners regarding research themes and topics within a broad research field varies across programmes. A number of programmes (FTPP, PIRN and PROEIB in Bolivia; MAP in Bangladesh; VISED in Vietnam; APNLBP in India; the Women Studies programmes in Tanzania) are 'thematic', meaning that donors had made earlier decisions regarding the 'themes' to pursue. But despite this, the programmes have the freedom to decide on specific research problems to focus on and autonomy at the implementation and management level, while subjected to monitoring mechanisms established by the donors. The more academic oriented programmes are granted autonomy from donors to identify and select specific research topics and, in some instances, themes and priorities. But they do have to meet certain institutional criteria and practices; their autonomy in designing and managing the funds of the programmes are thus, circumscribed. .

- There is general agreement among the country researchers that the MMRP, UNDP Programme in India and the APNLBP exercise a greater degree of autonomy from the donor than the comparator programmes. Interestingly, it is only in the DGIS-supported programmes (MMRP and APNLBP) that the donors are not represented in governing boards, an observation consistent with the thrust of its policy of granting full autonomy to Southern partners in the determination of research directions and fund allocation. In contrast, a foreign programme advisor and representative of the funding agency sit in the two IDRC programmes in Asia—VISED and MAP. The Bolivian Country Report observes that donors participate in some instances in administrative and executive committees or in some aspects of the management of FFTP and PIRN.

- The full autonomy of the MMRPs and the APBLNP from DGIS is anchored on the existence of multistakeholder Steering Committees (SCs) and complementary bodies like Programme Advisory Committees (PAC). Multistakeholder representation in the policy-making and advisory bodies is deemed crucial for achieving an autonomous process of direction setting that is attuned to the conditions in developing societies. But ensuring representation in the highest decision making bodies has been easier to achieve in some Programmes than others. Compared to the APNLBP, which has worked well with a Biotechnology Committee of scientists, representatives and relevant government agencies and NGOs, the MMRPs have had varying levels of success in this area.

- Comparing university-based programmes with those that are either independent or autonomous of but lodged in host institutions, the latter enjoy greater

autonomy. Programmes based in universities tend to be encumbered by university regulations and constraints and are more vulnerable to academic politics. Among most of the Programmes outside the university, there is no evidence of any significant difference in the level of autonomy enjoyed by those that operate independently from any established institution and those that are lodged in institutions. Systems of governance involving highly respected members in the societies where the programmes exist, the specificity of programme frameworks, a programme's participation in bigger international networks, or the novelty of its research agenda have constrained host institutions from overturning major decisions of the programmes lodged in them. MAP is a case in point. The paradigmatic nature of the underlying theoretical framework of the Programme's efforts to monitor poverty in Bangladesh, the specificity of its methodology and its being a part of an IDRC- funded cross-country programme allow it to enjoy autonomy.

- Regarding the most suitable arrangement for purposes of institutional autonomy, there is a trade off between being an independent programme and one that is lodged in a host institution. Without exception, the credibility of the institutions the research programmes outside the university have affiliated with has contributed to their acceptance by the wider development community. For instance, PRPA's association with Grameen Trust has augured well for PRPA's reputation in the circles working on poverty alleviation in Bangladesh. Ironically, PRPA also demonstrates the need to balance the gains from being hosted by a reputable institution and autonomy from it. Informants in Bangladesh expressed concern over issues regarding the relationship between Grameen Trust and PRPA, such as the application of the NGO's administrative procedures and salary scales to programme operations and the appointment by Grameen Trust of the PRPA Steering Committee, Chair and Program Director, and their effects on the long-run development of the programme. On the other hand, programmes that are not lodged in any institution do not have to weigh the costs (to autonomy) and benefits of institutional affiliation. Independence, however, may lead to problems of accountability if a significant community that could take the form of a host institution, a research community, concrete local communities, or the imagined community of development workers in a particular region or country is not fully developed, as was the case of NURRU when it suffered serious management problems in an earlier phase in its development.

- The issue of institutional autonomy is linked to the question of sustainability. From one point of view, programmes based in universities, research centres, government agencies or NGOs have greater promise of sustainability because both the networks of researchers they have produced and the institutions they are part of could be expected to work for the survival and continuation of such programmes.

From another perspective, however, programmes that are not bogged down by the baggage of organisational and academic responsibilities have more opportunities to establish a research track record that would ensure their attractiveness to funding agencies (e.g., the REPOA case). When the issue of sustainability is raised, however, the question, which this Report cannot address adequately, is what exactly is being sustained? Is it the programme as an organisation? Is it the model of research management the Programme operationalises and the philosophical framework of development and knowledge production which underlie it? Is it the policy that creates a critical mass of development researchers who can shift gears as they produce knowledge

to improve the conditions of the poor because of their autonomy to move resources and researchers, especially on the ground? In the case of the MMRP, which is conceived to be more than a model of research management but a proponent of a philosophy of development and a particular mode of knowledge production, the choice is between developing a research movement or an organisation.

### *On Issues of Demand Drivenness, Location Specificity and Multidisciplinarity*

- The recent incorporation of participatory frameworks into international discourses has tempered the conventional mode of development intervention, in which technically superior and resource-rich external agencies provide inputs for specific projects in the developing world implemented by groups working on behalf of recipients of development assistance. The participation of intended development beneficiaries in the search for 'bottom-up' solutions has come to be accepted as vital to the dominant development paradigm.

But while donors supporting research capacity building programmes subscribe to this perspective at high levels of abstraction and espouse a participatory framework in one form or the other, they diverge on substantial theoretical and operational issues because of differences in interests, missions, visions and thrusts. They differ, for instance, in their views of the type of research capacity required by participatory development goals. Some agencies focus on building basic and nonparticipatory natural or social science research capacities that are adapted to the conditions in the developing world, convinced of the long-term contributions of science to understanding development issues and promoting people empowerment. Other agencies confine themselves to building capacities for scientific research but enhance other capabilities as well (e.g., networking) to ensure the influence of science on policy and action. Still others directly support and encourage participatory action research, pointing to the limits of conventional scientific research in informing development work and believing that knowledge production processes involving beneficiaries best serve participatory goals. Thus, research capacity building in developing societies, as inferred from the programmes studied, refers to support for a wide range of activities that are expected to contribute meaningfully to the societies where they operate.

- The programmes in the study are all development oriented and demand driven. There are nevertheless interesting similarities and differences among them in terms of how they relate to or bring in the interests of the potential users of the research since most frameworks of development cooperation consider the explicit impact of research on development processes as a criterion for support. The university-based programmes respond to demand emanating from the local universities and the society at large for academically qualified researchers and teachers in the social sciences, natural sciences or in multidisciplinary fields (e.g., environment). The research areas covered by these Programmes reflect themes that resonate the new discourses (poverty alleviation, environment, gender) as well as the salient problems of the countries concerned (e.g., democratisation issues in Bolivia, technical underdevelopment in Nicaragua, rural poverty in Vietnam). Moreover, the programmes (e.g., the natural science SIDA/SAREC in Vietnam and Nicaragua, DANIDA SUDESCA, ENRECA, GTZ-PROIEB, CEPLAG)) have developed mechanisms to consult with intended research beneficiaries outside academe or link up with them.

● The institutionalisation of links with end users in university-based academic programmes is generally constrained by the heavy demands of graduate training programmes and the prevalent view of the relationship between knowledge production and utilisation among academics. This view assumes that research on specific development issues along disciplinary lines will enlighten policy options as long as it is done according to established norms of scientific practice. Interestingly, some of the Programmes studied (e.g., the SIDA/SAREC, FSRP), have modified this view by incorporating the needs of the users into the conceptualisation of research problems but they are not as concerned with the issue of utilisation. The policy-oriented programmes outside academe (e.g., MAP, VISED, UNDP) share the assumed relationship between research and utilisation in conventional academic practice. For them, the knowledge they produce in line with the theoretical frameworks and prescribed methodologies of relevant disciplines ought to be utilised by policymakers because of their scientific validity.

● Concerned with improving the conditions in the specific areas that they serve, most Programmes outside academe (e.g., MMRP, APNBLP, FTTP, PIRN) subscribe, albeit in different degrees, to an unarticulated mode of knowledge production that differs from the traditional academic mode. This mode consists of cognitive and social practices carried out in the context of application to a concrete problem. The practices transcend the theoretical and methodological positions of collaborating research partners from different branches of knowledge and disciplines, are organisationally less hierarchical and tend to be more transient. In the course of understanding a problem, researchers go back and forth between the 'fundamental and the applied, the theoretical and the practical...the curiosity-oriented and mission-oriented research'. Being locally driven and constituted, the alternative mode of knowledge production is sensitive to local contexts, committed to the involvement of users not only in the dissemination of findings but also in the definition of the problems and the setting of research priorities. It recognizes the existence of multiple knowledge sites and views the scientific practices lodged in universities as one of many sites that are brought together in the search of solutions to particular problems. Finally, quality is assessed not only in terms of technical merit but also the usefulness or relevance of the knowledge produced. As a consequence, the emergent research practices are more socially accountable and reflexive.

Such an ideal typical depiction of an alternative mode of knowledge production enlightened the design of the MMRPs, although articulated in a slightly different way and in a less codified manner at the time the programme was established. Of all the MMRPs, however, the KRPLLD is the most aware of an inchoate alternative approach to knowledge production and is the only one that has begun to codify its experiences in terms of knowledge systems.

● Building demand-oriented and location-specific research capacity requires a multidisciplinary perspective. Of the programmes covered by the study, the MMRP is the most multidisciplinary. In practice, however, the MMRPs in the different countries are still far from achieving desirable levels of multidisciplinary. In Vietnam, where research teams are required to involve representatives from different disciplines, the level of interaction and exchange among them leaves much to be desired. The Indian Country Team noted that slightly more than half of the KRPLLD projects involve interactions with social scientists, natural scientists, engineers and government

technicians but highlights the problem of achieving multidisciplinary. It attributes the problem to the weakness of the social science community and the narrow disciplinary functioning of most universities and research institutes in India, an observation that applies to the other MMRPs as well. Although the problem is surmountable in the long run, the lack of multidisciplinary in a programme such as the MMRP is a serious drawback given its implicit agenda of synthesizing a wider range of development and research experiences that could contribute to new and grounded knowledge.

### *On Capacity Building and Issues of Output, Quality, Evaluation and Linkages*

- The university-based research programmes under Mode I build research capacity by strengthening the institutional conditions for research, supporting the formal training of researchers (Masters and Ph.D.s) and consolidating local postgraduate programmes. Their long-term goal is to focus on the more academic type of research capacity building. Within this framework, the programmes studied have had considerable institutional and individual impact. As a case in point, SIDA/SAREC has supported about 55 Masters and Ph.D. students and graduated over 25 Masters and Ph.D.s in Nicaragua in the last 10 years. In the process, the Programme has developed the faculty and laboratories for engineering, plant sciences and environmental sciences in the universities whose missions are to specialize in building development-oriented disciplines in particular branches of knowledge. The Report provides detailed evidence of the impressive achievements of most of the other university-based programmes.

- Programmes located in government institutions (VISED in Vietnam and MAP in Bangladesh) were set up with very clear ends in view: qualify personnel to do research that address policy needs. The evidence from the study is that both programmes have had considerable impact, despite their relatively short-term duration: For instance, in Bangladesh, MAP, which aims to provide policy-makers with institutional arrangements and technical capability to monitor poverty on a regular basis and analyse the impact of macroeconomic and adjustment policies at the micro level, is reported to have accomplished a rare type of capacity building in relevant government departments, namely building expertise for monitoring poverty and obtaining systematic data for policy making on poverty alleviation.

- Despite differences among the programmes that formed their own institutional set-up outside the university, the MMRPs as well as the APNLBP of India and the FTTP and PIRN of Bolivia are very similar in the type of capacity they are aiming to build. These Programmes hope to substantiate the concept of demand driven research, to popularise a participatory approach to research and institutionalise the process of learning from the masses. All the programmes reject the concept of knowledge for its own sake and emphasize the importance of dissemination to end users, whether they be policy makers at the national level as in the case of the MMRPs in Bolivia, Tanzania and Vietnam, or local community, officials and political leaders as in the case of the other programmes. Among these programmes, the MMRPs supported the most number of researcher-initiated projects on a wide range of topics, the outputs of some of which have been used as inputs to policy formulation or to the crafting of viable solutions to concrete problems.

- Unlike university-based graduate degree programmes or focused capacity building programmes like MAP, most of the MMRPs deal with inexperienced

researchers, whose studies do not usually culminate in measurable output like an M.A., M.Sc. or a Ph.D. Moreover, for many of the Programmes, the processes in the conduct of participatory research are equally important, if not more important than the output. Given these features, it is difficult to ascertain capacity building outcomes primarily on the basis of the number of individuals who obtain projects or go through training. In the absence of systematic qualitative data on individual capacities built, it is worth noting the Country Team's observations regarding the palpable effects of the MMRP on individual researchers given their low levels of baseline expertise. The Indian Team, for instance, commended the KRPLLD for building the capacity of a new breed of 'barefoot researchers' who have begun to imbibe a research culture through their involvement in the Programme. These researchers have incorporated their new learning in institutions like the Centre for Environment and Development, Sreyas (Prosperity) and Maithri (Friendship), which have spun off from the projects funded by KRPLLD.

- Like the MMRP, the APNLBP has enhanced the capacity of individual researchers, research institutions, NGOs and the grassroots sector it has worked with, i.e., farmers. The principal investigators of the APNLBP research projects included a number of junior researchers. Apart from developing the capacity of young researchers in biotechnology research, the Programme also contributed to the diversification of the activities of established research institutions and NGOs to nontraditional areas like micropropagation through tissue culture, vermiculture composting, production of bio-fertilizers and pesticides, integrated pest management systems, etc. Furthermore, the Programme exposed biotechnology scientists to the new methodology of participatory technology development.

On the other hand, the FTTP, which aims to develop and disseminate participatory methodologies for the local communities' adoption in planning sustainable forest management systems that utilise the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples, has contributed to an unspecified number of university researchers' capacity to conduct action-oriented studies that requires immersion in the indigenous communities and understanding of grassroots organising. Moreover, FTTP's training of members of the indigenous communities has produced a number of 'barefoot researchers' a few of whom have the potential to pursue careers in participatory research and planning. Institutionally, the FTTP has established national and regional networks of focal points for community forestry in its efforts to decentralise action. Finally, PIRN, with its emphasis on the local development of Bolivia's indigenous peoples by training Indians to recover and reintroduce their lost technologies, supported researchers who are accountable to the indigenous population, which decides on the extent and follow-up of projects, even as project proposals and output are subjected to peer review

- The direct impact of university-based graduate training programmes on concrete development needs of the countries where they are found is difficult to pinpoint, apart from their obvious contribution to the development of higher education institutions. Nevertheless, the local researchers interviewed in Bolivia, Nicaragua and Tanzania stressed the relevance to local needs of their Programmes' research agenda and the topics selected for study. The Vietnam country researchers also highlighted the wider application of a number of techniques developed with SIDA/SAREC support. On the question of whether the programmes outside the university address development needs in greater measure than those in the university, the Vietnam Country Team argued convincingly that the need for various skills in developing societies is so great that the

programmes have special niches. Having experienced previous training under other academic capacity building programmes, members of the Vietnam Country Team claim that they have become more appreciative of the MMRP-type of participatory and development-oriented research because of prior academic exposure to programmes like the SIDA/SAREC-funded FSRP. But while academic research training can give researchers confidence and potentially open their minds to participatory research, is not a prerequisite to the development of participatory research capacities as the KRPLLD experience shows. Nevertheless, it is imperative for barefoot researchers to learn how to conceptualise and contextualise research problems even as they expand their skills.

- Notwithstanding their achievements and the visibility they have attained within a short time, the MMRPs have criticized themselves for the uneven quality of their research output. This problem does not bother the university-based graduate research programmes as much because academic standards and systems of assuring quality are in place. The issue of quality is also less problematic for the policy-oriented research programmes of MAP, VISED and the UNDP. International academic standards for the quantitative social science disciplines constitute the yardstick of these programmes. Moreover, since the stature and competence of researchers are believed to be important for policymakers to heed the implications of policy studies, most of the researchers in the three Programmes are quite established and knowledgeable in the analytical tools of the relevant disciplines. The issue of quality is important but not as salient to the programmes closest in orientation to the MMRPs—APNLBP, PIRN and FTTP. The usefulness of the studies conducted in these programmes to concrete action is the gauge of their value. In the case of the APNLBP, technical quality is assumed by the academically rooted but evolving standards in the field of biotechnology.

- Quality assurance, however, seems to be more prominent for the MMRPs because of a distinguishable feature. With the exception of REPOA, which simultaneously undertakes substantive research and manages studies initiated by individuals and institutions outside the Programme, the MMRPs serve as research facilitators rather than convenors of multidisciplinary teams of expert researchers. The research facilitated by the Programme through a competitive selection process ranges from academically oriented studies to action research, albeit within the framework of participatory development. From one viewpoint, the wide range augurs well for the MMRP. The Indian Country Report that likens the MMRPs to the proverbial Biblical Sower of many seeds admiringly remarked on the diversity of the research issues selected by the researchers in Kerala, which the usual top-down research agenda approach could never have hoped to capture.

But precisely because they cast wider nets in societies with uneven research capacities, the MMRPs are more vulnerable to problems of research quality. To improve technical quality, the MMRPs have devised closer monitoring and mentoring schemes. As previously noted, these schemes include networks of senior researchers in agricultural institutes and the creation of two positions for senior research scientists in Vietnam; study circles of researchers in particular regions in India and Bangladesh, academic advisors for projects in Bolivia and the tutorship of junior researchers by senior researchers in Nicaragua.

- A major challenge facing MMRPs and similar programmes that aim to build capacity for demand-driven research and ultimately produce useful knowledge that

transcend disciplinary boundaries is how to measure in qualitative and quantitative terms the output of process-oriented research with multiple outcomes. For programmes that are not premised on the traditional mode of knowledge production, technical quality is only one dimension of quality—social relevance is another. Existing standards of science and scholarship exist to assess technical quality. But apprehending the nature of a specific development process that is largely invisible requires more than the usual research techniques. In addition to the traditional skills, which the research community has imbibed, a nuanced reading of development that is iterative and gradual entails ‘listening skills, the ability to combine an open and non-judgmental approach with enough understanding to make sense of and draw insight out of what one is observing’ and a capacity to reflect and intuit underlying movements. Clearly, conventional quality indicators of academic research such as peer review and publications and citations in professional journals are not very relevant to a demand-driven, participatory research.

Developing meaningful indicators would require sifting through conventional measures, unpacking the dimensions of development research, and identifying possible qualitative indicators and measures of processes that do not lend themselves easily to formalisation. Potential indicators include changes in attitudes towards research (on the part of the general population as well as policy makers); the sensitivity and receptivity of researchers to local knowledge; the awareness of the importance of self-governance and the exercise of autonomy to decide on a research agenda that meets local interests; the popularisation of the participatory approach to research and the process of learning from the masses; the commitment to the production of research results of quality and of relevance; the capacity to negotiate, design, implement and manage research programmes; and the determination to be accountable both to the local community and to the donor.

- Regarding linkages, links among the programmes within a university (CEPLAG, SIDA-SAREC in Tanzania, ENRECA) or among the universities covered by the programme in particular countries (SIDA-SAREC in Nicaragua, Bolivia and Vietnam) are well established. In Latin America, the interuniversity and inter-institution networks of SUDESCA/DANIDA and PROIEB cut across countries in the region. Moreover, innovative ways of linking Southern countries with donor facilitation have been developed. As noted earlier, the new phase of the SIDA/SAREC Programme in Bolivia will support the training of researchers in the social sciences but, instead of sending them to a university in Sweden for disciplinary training (the sandwich Master and Ph.D.), they will be pursuing graduate degrees in reputable Latin American universities.

On the other hand, for programmes lodged outside the halls of academe, links with university-based researchers have taken different forms—direct involvement of academics in the research project as researchers (MMRP, MAP), consultants or trainers (MMRP, FTTC, PIRN). As to international networks, linkages with researchers in other parts of the world are evident in the programmes. Particular researchers funded by university-based programmes have been able to present papers in conferences and establish informal links with other researchers working in the same field. Some of the programmes also maintain ongoing linkages with research networks. For instance, the EPRC in Uganda has had extensive connections with the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC). A number of programmes (MAP in Bangladesh, the APNLBP in India and the MMRPs) are part of umbrella programmes with related or similar projects

in other countries. In the case of the MMRPs, funds have been set aside and used for joint workshops and exchanges among representatives and researchers of the programmes in other countries. It is notable, however, that while the MMRPs provide the funding flexibility for programmes in different countries to interact with one another and exchange researchers, initiatives in this direction have not been as significant as one would expect.

### *On the general application of the MMRP Mode of Research Collaboration*

- The mode of North-South cooperation operationalised in the MMRPs is most appropriate for research involving regional or local needs that are as close as possible to the ground although it is important to stress the need for links to critical national and regional policy making bodies. This mode does not seem to be suitable for academic discipline-based capacity building programmes in the natural sciences such as those funded by SAREC or DANIDA. But the MMRP mode may be an appropriate model for university-based problem-oriented capacity building programmes in the social sciences and multidisciplinary and applied scientific fields such as plant breeding, biotechnology and environmental studies.

The researchers would be cautious in generalizing the MMRP mode, with autonomy as its leitmotif, and applying it to other forms of research cooperation. For one, potential partners in the developing world represent conflicting or contradictory ideological priorities and power positions. To circumvent the dilemma emanating from linking up with groups that hold divergent views of development, the choice of partners who will work closely with groups whose interests ought be served (e.g., the poor) is critical. In bilateral cooperation involving government, however, it would be a breach of protocol and an exercise of asymmetry for a donor to specify and insist on its chosen partner from among government agencies or local institutions.

### *Concluding Notes*

- Having engaged in enlightening discussions with representatives of the donor agencies and the programmes, the Country Teams could only but wish for more sharing among the resource persons of this study. It is in this light that this Report concludes with a recommendation to create a forum for international scientific cooperation programmes in the countries involved. Such a forum will not only reveal to the funding agencies and local programme managers their similarities and differences, it may also lead to an agenda setting process whereby the research needs of the country are assessed by the relevant communities in the concrete context of geography, politics, economics and culture. It is hoped that the establishment of such a forum will enhance convergence on very basic assumptions and approaches to development and capacity building in the South and respect for divergent positions.

The proposed forum is only one of possible strategies for engaging donors and the research communities in the countries concerned in a joint reflexive exercise—elaborating on the modalities of capacity building they have chosen to support or participate in, in the light of their evolving philosophies of development and knowledge production. In the process of jointly reflecting on the contributions and appropriateness of the modalities they operationalise in the context of the political economic and social milieu prevailing in the countries where they work and the

corresponding state of science and technology development there, donors and recipients are bound to reaffirm or revise the research modalities they have painstakingly developed through the years. . In so doing, they may significantly cover even more distance than they already have in pushing the current limits of capacity building for development-oriented and empowering research in the South.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background and Organisation of the Report

In November 1997 the government of the Netherlands convened twelve scholars from developing countries in Leusden to discuss the feasibility and usefulness of a comparative study of different approaches to North-South research collaboration.<sup>1</sup> The Division for Research and Developing Countries of the Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGIS) organized the Workshop as it hoped from such a study to obtain feedback on the implementation of its policy regarding North-South collaboration in the area of science and technology. Initiated in 1992 by then Minister of Development Cooperation Jan Pronk, the policy was formulated in response to the criticism that Dutch development research cooperation was insufficiently oriented to the needs of the South.<sup>2</sup> The policy attributed this to the prevailing asymmetric character of North-South research collaboration.<sup>3</sup> Framed along the academic interests and paradigms of Northern researchers, international cooperation projects are hardly linked to concrete development issues confronting the South.

Addressing the question of irrelevance, the main goal of the policy thus was to link research more closely to the needs and interests of the developing world, particularly the poor among its population. To minimize the possibility of domination by Northern researchers of collaboration efforts with Southern partners, the policy entailed support for long-term, broad-based, location-specific multidisciplinary research programmes. Furthermore, it called for a shift of key responsibilities—agenda and priority setting, the conduct of research and financial accounting—from the North to the South. This policy, which departed radically from traditional practice and generated strong reservations within the Dutch research community, resulted in the creation of Multiannual, Multidisciplinary Research Programmes (MMRPs) in Latin America (Bolivia and Nicaragua), Asia (India, Bangladesh and Vietnam) and Africa (Uganda and Tanzania).<sup>4</sup> These programmes were in operation when the Leusden Workshop was

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- 1 For a complete report on the Leusden Workshop see: DGIS-Funded Research Programmes for Development. No. 4. 1997. "Report of the Workshop: The Case of the Multiannual, Multidisciplinary Researches: A Comparative Study of Different Approaches to Development Cooperation." Leusden, The Netherlands: Division for Research and Developing Countries Directorate General of International Cooperation, The Hague.
  - 2 Directorate General of Development Cooperation. 1992. "Research and Development, White Paper." The Hague: DGIS, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
  - 3 See, for instance, Waardenburg, G. 1994. "Strategic choices for a Northern development-oriented research policy: the case of DGIS." pp. 137-146 in *Development-Related Research Collaboration: The Role of the Netherlands*, edited by C. Schweigman and I. A. van der Werf. Amsterdam: The Royal Tropical Institute.
  - 4 For a concise discussion of the 1992 policy of the Ministry of Development Cooperation and its origins in the colonial period and postcolonial transition in the Netherlands, see Spaapen, J. 1997. "Research and Policy Development in the Netherlands: A Radical Turn to the South." pp. 211-240 in *Science and Technology in a Developing World*, edited by Shinn, T et al. The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

organized. Plans for the establishment of MMRPs in Egypt, Mali and Zambia were also on the drawing board at the time.

For two productive days in Leusden, the scholars learned about the MMRPs, discussed the main features of the programmes and compared them to other donor-supported initiatives with which they were more familiar. After a series of group and plenary discussions, the participants concluded that a comparative study would be meaningful and agreed on the main questions that ought to be addressed. At the end, three participants were asked to take up those questions, as well as the suggested methodology, and develop them to a complete research proposal.

So it was that in February 1998, Cynthia Banzon Bautista [Professor, University of the Philippines, Philippines], David Kaplan [Professor, University of Capetown, South Africa], and Léa Velho [Professor University of Campinas, Brazil] met at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague and produced a research proposal that DGIS approved. Subsequently, the research began in June 1999 and ended a year later in May 2000.<sup>5</sup> The study looked at like-minded programmes but for purposes of comparison with the MMRP, the choice of the country was determined by the presence of the MMRPs. This document constitutes the final report of that research. It presents a synthesis of the findings of seven country teams (Tanzania, Uganda, Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, Bolivia and Nicaragua) as well as the insights of the above mentioned authors who also acted as coordinators for their respective continents.<sup>6</sup>

The Report is divided into four chapters. The introduction describes the context of North-South research cooperation and the conceptual framework, which provided the starting point of the study, as well as its objectives, methodology and limitations. Chapter 2 gives a comparative overview of the social, political, economic and research situations in the seven countries and presents the selected programmes in broad strokes.

The substance of the research is contained in Chapter 3, which distinguishes modalities of North-South research collaboration along several dimensions: 1) institutional arrangements and administrative mechanisms; 2) types of research capacities the programmes aim to develop and their underlying assumptions regarding development processes and knowledge production; 3) output and achievements; and 4) research linkages.

Drawing from the main points in Chapter 3 and the highlights of the Country studies, the Report concludes with preliminary answers to the questions framed in the Leusden Workshop [See Section 1.3 for the questions addressed by the study].

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<sup>5</sup> The complete research proposal is part of the document cited in note 1, pp. 20-27.

<sup>6</sup> Based on the studies in Bolivia, Nicaragua, Tanzania, Uganda, Bangladesh, India and Vietnam, the Country Reports are quite detailed and contain an enormous amount of information. The reader who is interested to learn more about the countries' context, the programmes and their comparative design and strategies for building research capacity is encouraged to refer to the Country Reports.

## 1.2 Development Context of North-South Research and Conceptual Framework of the Study

International research cooperation since the end of World War II has reflected the changes in the direction and substance of North-South relations. In the immediate aftermath of the war up to about 1970, rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union for ideological supremacy led to their stimulation of indigenous development in the countries within their spheres of influence.<sup>7</sup> For countries under the sway of Western liberal capitalism, modernization theory, which advanced the thesis of unilinear development leading to industrialisation, provided the justification for funding assistance and Northern intervention in the South. For the developing countries within the Soviet sphere, on the other hand, the need to develop socialist models of industrialisation legitimised Soviet support.

At the time, the postcolonial Southern countries, which had achieved their independence at different points between 1945 and the 1960s, suffered the dearth of an organized and critical mass of intellectuals or academics with the training to analyse development needs from their own perspectives. Since the absence of this group hampered the internal development of their societies, donor-initiated research to build capacity in the South in the 1950s and 1960s took the form of training fellowships that enabled students in the natural sciences, social sciences and the humanities in the South to pursue research or graduate degrees in Northern or socialist universities.<sup>8</sup>

Between 1970 and 1985, the first batches of scholars had returned to build an academic core in their respective societies, influenced by the dominant paradigms in the countries where they were trained. This particular historical juncture, starting from the late 1960s, coincided with the United Nations initiative to go beyond modernization theories and explore structural approaches to underdevelopment. The intense debates in the international and national development circles, spurred by increasing awareness of disparities in development trajectories and in the interests of Northern and Southern countries, saw the delineation of an interdisciplinary field of development studies or Third World Studies.<sup>9</sup> Influential perspectives from this inchoate field enlightened the pursuit by particular Southern countries of internal development paths that deviated from those espoused by the North.

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7 For a succinct discussion of the interface of development perspectives, science, technology and society studies, and North-South exchanges, see the introduction of the editors in Shinn, T. et al. (eds) (1997: 1-29). This section of the Report takes off from the periodisation and development perspectives discussed in the Introduction to Shinn et al. (eds) although different periodisations could be argued as well. Shinn's periodisation takes 1985 as the pivotal year both for neo-liberalism (structural adjustment) and the collapse of the Soviet bloc. Alternatively, neo-liberalism and structural adjustment are better traced to 1980 or 1981 and the collapse of the Soviet Union to 1989. Nevertheless, this section elaborates on the ideas in the Introduction on the basis of the experiences of the countries in the study as well as other sources.

8 The Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Fulbright-Hays Programme and Colombo Plan, for instance, provided funds for a critical mass of future professionals from developing societies to pursue training in particular disciplines. In the case of Vietnam, the training of future scholars and researchers of government institutes and universities in Russia, Eastern and in some cases, Western Europe was subsidized by the state with Soviet bloc assistance.

9 The nomenclature—Third World—was used to distinguish developing countries from the First World of industrialized capitalist nations and the Second World of socialist societies.

While the ideas that animated development debates between 1970 and 1985 focused largely on structural issues at the international level, the persistence of poverty and perpetuation of underdevelopment despite numerous donor interventions in the South led to a questioning of top-down or trickle-down approaches that ignored conditions on the ground. By the 1980s, academic-oriented scientific research in the developing world had also been critiqued for its irrelevance to pressing societal problems. With pressures to address critical issues from the perspective of development constituencies in the South, this period saw the emergence of perspectives and research practices that espoused participatory development as well as field-based participatory research methods.

Developed outside the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union, the alternative perspectives of the 1970s and 1980s have filtered into traditional academic social science discussions. Thus, the batches of Southern scholars who pursued graduate degrees in Northern educational institutions in the 1970s and 1980s were exposed to the development debates and participatory models to which Southern intellectuals and academics contributed significantly. Some of these scholars would later adopt and refine the relatively new approaches in their own analysis and research practices.

The assertiveness of Southern intellectuals in the debates on development theory in the period between 1970 and 1985 was matched by the increasing visibility of the South in international politics. The period provided more chances for them to take initiative in their own development as well as in North-South relations. Unfortunately, as Shinn et al. argue, this opportunity has been overtaken by events since 1985. The end of the Cold War led to a reduction of donor commitment to the South, although this has not spelled a difference in Northern dominance. On the contrary, in this historical juncture, the North has achieved even greater advantage over the South. The silencing of socialism and Third Worldism with the end of the Cold War, rapid technological developments, the globalisation of markets and the structural adjustment programmes that bailed many Third World countries out of economic crises, catapulted a neo-liberal ideology emanating from the North into a dominant discourse in the 1990s and 2000.<sup>10</sup>

Interestingly, however, events since the mid-1980s and neoliberalism itself have serendipitously opened up alternative windows of opportunity for the South to shape its development directions, within the limits of its links to the global economy. The democratisation of a number of Southern countries, increasing significance of environmental issues that require location-specific interventions and the neoliberal advocacy for linking free markets to democracy, governance and the rise of civil society groups have provided impetus for various stakeholders in the South to define their development agenda, analyse concrete issues and address them in a manner appropriate to their circumstances. Thus, at the interface of development encounters, counter discourses such as participatory grassroots development have found representation in the neoliberal development thinking, although highlighting equity issues in the predominantly economic discourse of globalisation remains a contentious ideological struggle.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Development discourse here refers to a more or less coherent frame of reference that defines appropriate and legitimate ways of practicing development as well as speaking and thinking about it. See Grillo, R.D. and R.L. Stirrat. 1997. "Discourses of Development: Anthropological Perspectives." Oxford and New York: Berg Publishers, p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of participatory frameworks imbedded in the discourses of donors, see Rev, A.

Crucial to the identification and solution of development problems by people in the South is their capacity to analyse their situation and organise it accordingly. Although the training of Southern academics, government personnel and scientists, funded by donor-initiated programmes in previous decades, had contributed significantly to capacity building, the management of research, technological capabilities and organisational resources to adjust to shifts in the global economy are assessed to be sorely lacking in the developing world. This gap has been used to justify the gradual reorientation of official development programmes (e.g., CIDA, OECD-DAC, USAID) from 'input-oriented approaches' emphasizing technical performance targets to programming oriented to 'capacities to be developed'.

The thrust toward capacity development among donor agencies in the 1990s resulted from a confluence of the low state of capacity in the South, pressures in the North to reduce official development assistance, and overall donor fatigue. The last two factors have made it even more imperative to develop the existing capacities of countries for institutional reform to manage, implement, evaluate and sustain their own long-term development. Budgetary constraints have also led to new approaches to capacity building that rely more and more on local resources and less on expatriate expertise.<sup>12</sup> Thus, capacity building and strengthening local organisations have increasingly become primary objectives of a number of aid programmes.

Apart from low capacity in the South, the mainstreaming of capacity building and local organisational development as ends rather than means has been justified in a number of ways. Drawing from the literature Petit cites three reasons for this thrust.<sup>13</sup> First is the evidence that when people set their own priorities and design appropriate solutions to their problems, they tend to have a high sense of ownership and are more supportive of the development process. Second, instilling problem-solving and innovative capacities including skills for networking and mobilising resources enhance responsiveness to new problems and sustainability. Finally, local organisations with enhanced capability are vital to democratisation as they hold the market and the state accountable to collective social forces.

Judging from the buzzwords of the 1990s gleaned from official documents and projections in websites, the donor community supported capacity-building programmes geared toward enhancing competitiveness, poverty alleviation, sustainable development, gender equality, local development and good governance (participatory development). With the exception of poverty alleviation, which was in vogue in the early 1970s, the other themes were articulated from the mid-1980s onwards. Interestingly, slow gains in poverty eradication in the last fifty years have put poverty alleviation back on centre stage in 2000. The United Nations, for instance, has recently embarked on an

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1997. "The Donors; Discourse: Official Social Development Knowledge in the 1980s." Pp. 81-105 in *Discourses of Development: Anthropological Perspectives*, edited by R. D. Grillo and R. L. Stirrat. Oxford and New York: Berg Publishers.

<sup>12</sup> Baser, H and J Bolger. 1996. "From technical cooperation to capacity development: changing perspectives in the Canadian International Development Agency." CIDA Website <http://www.acdicida.gc.ca/xpress/dex9608>; Qualman, A. and J Bolger. 1996. "Capacity Development: A Holistic Approach." : CIDA Website <http://www.acdicida.gc.ca/xpress/dex9608>.

<sup>13</sup> Petit, J. 2000. "Strengthening Local Organisation: "Where The Rubber Hits The Road"." *IDS Bulletin* 3:37-57; p. 57

assessment of and planning for the contribution of its various agencies to poverty alleviation in the countries where the UN is present. This would suggest that proposed development activities including research, submitted to UN agencies in the coming years, would be assessed in terms of its input to poverty alleviation.

Against the backdrop of the changing direction and content of North-South relations and discourses in the last fifty years, donor-initiated research capacity building in the South has shifted significantly from granting scholarships and extending technical assistance in the period between 1950 and 1970 to fostering collaborative research projects where Northern and Southern partners participate on equal terms in the 1980s and the 1990s. This shift coincides with the realization among some donors that the assumption of technology transfer from North to South is too simplistic. In a joint brochure of their achievements in development research, SAREC and IDRC claim that while the ideology and practice of technology transfer assume that all technologies emanate from the North, they are to some extent dependent on the cultures and environments that create them. In reality, a great deal of innovation takes place in the developing world.<sup>14</sup>

Notwithstanding such significant change in donor perspective, modes of carrying out donor-initiated research policies and their implementation remain problematic despite well-intentioned capacity strengthening programmes aimed at building collegial partnerships between Northern and Southern researchers.<sup>15</sup> At first glance, they have tended to reproduce the unequal positions of the partners in the economic and political world order. With their resources and scientific knowledge, Northern partners have been prone to believe themselves more capable of identifying the needs of those in the South and to 'teach' them how to do research. The absence of favourable conditions for the sustained growth of research in the South, on the other hand, has made researchers uncritically accept whatever offer of cooperation is presented to them.

In such a context, Northern researchers have continued to dominate research networks despite the rhetoric of collaboration. Experience and the literature provide ample evidence that research themes are decided by Northern partners to whom most of the benefits of the partnership accrue.<sup>16</sup> Depending on the modality of the collaborative research and the attitudes of the researchers involved, there have been cases of projects where Southern partners served as 'glamorised' research assistants who provided 'raw data' for analysis by academic researchers in the North. Even worse, research cooperation programmes devised in the North have frequently been accused of contributing to the consolidation of research traditions, capabilities and reward systems that are divorced from the needs of the South. In effect, research cooperation has helped build a 'peripheral' scientific community with no ties to its socioeconomic reality.

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14 SAREC and IDRC. 1991. "Knowledge in the Pursuit of Change." SAREC and IDRC, pp. 5-7.

15 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 1999. *Making North-South Research Networks Work. A Document* prepared in cooperation with the European Centre for Development Policy Management. New York and Geneva.

16 See, for instance, the case studies on the assessment of international scientific cooperation compiled in Gaillard, J. 1996. "International Scientific Cooperation." in *20th Century Sciences: Beyond the Metropolis*, vol. 7. Paris: ORSTOM Éditions.

It would not be fair to argue that Northern partners wilfully dominate North-South research cooperation. While many of them have determined the directions of research projects in the South, some may have been forced to do so by the lack of research capacity of their Southern partners. The severe constraints posed by unequal research capabilities on collegial collaboration has made it imperative to redress the imbalance by developing a critical mass of competent Southern researchers.<sup>17</sup>

The DGIS efforts to reverse the asymmetry between Northern and Southern researchers by instituting a different modality for building or enhancing research capacity, more specifically, the MMRPs that they instituted in the early 1990s, ought to be situated in the continuing dominance by Northern researchers of collaborative research networks in the South.

The MMRPs reflect a DGIS policy of North-South research cooperation characterized by the following features: long-term commitment to support research that look at long-term processes of change from the point of view of sustainable development and advocate policy formulation or reform in countries where they are found; emphasis on research priorities that are strongly imbedded in Southern social, economic and cultural contexts, set and formulated in a social process that involves various stakeholders; stress on the collaboration of researchers from various disciplines towards understanding a problem defined in a specific and localized context; and the restriction of the donor's role to that of facilitator, with the research agenda setting and implementation left to autonomous bodies in the South.<sup>18</sup> The unifying links of the MMRPs are their focus on sustainable development, demand orientation or insistence on the involvement of users, location specificity, multidisciplinary and the strengthening of the capacity of Southern researchers to pursue development- and process-oriented research.

Internal joint reviews of the MMRPs revealed variations in the research thrusts, quality and levels of effectiveness of the programmes. Nevertheless, by the time the 1997 Leusden Workshop to conceptualize the Comparative Research on Donor-Initiated Research Capacity Building in the South was first convened, the MMRPs had succeeded in establishing an identity in most of the seven countries in which they are found, enhancing the participation of stakeholders and maintaining autonomy from DGIS. It is even suggested that the long process of setting up the MMRPs in many of the countries involved could itself be seen as a contribution to national capacity building<sup>19</sup>. Convinced of the value of the MMRPs and their contribution to redressing the asymmetry in North-South research collaboration, the organizers of the 1997 Workshop had hoped to find out by means of a comparative research whether the Programme had been indeed path breaking, and whether the MMRPs do make a difference in practice in the perception of the South.

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17 Bunders, J.F.G. and C. Mukherjee. 1998. "North-South Research Partnerships". Paper presented to the Working Group on Science and Technology and Network for National Capacity Building, 28-30 September 1998. Malta. United Nations Centre for Science and Technology Development.

18 Multiannual and Multidisciplinary Research No. 5. Joint Review of the MMRP, Oegstgeest, the Netherlands, 1998 as cited by Can Thach et al. in the Vietnam Report.

19 Bakhuisen, K. 1999. "NUFU Compared. Report of a Desk Study on Comparative Research Capacity Building Programmes. Draft Report. P. 48. See the appendices of the Country Reports for brief descriptions of the inception of the MMRPs.

This comparative study of the impact of donor-initiated programmes on the research capacity of the South was undertaken in the seven countries with operative MMRPs to address the concerns of DGIS. The next section presents the specific objectives and research questions of the study.

### 1.3. Objectives and Research Questions

Since it has been argued that other donors follow approaches with similar characteristics to those of the MMRPs, the general objective of this study was to analyse comparatively the new forms of support of like-minded donors.<sup>20</sup>

From the inception of the Project, its motivating spirit was one of gaining insights into each programme, understanding their genesis and the changes they have undergone in the appropriate contexts of time, geography, political economies and cultures, including prevailing research and academic cultures. The researchers were aware that their task was not to evaluate the programmes or to render judgments regarding the superiority of one mode of research collaboration over another but to compare the main characteristics of each of the donor-initiated programmes as well as to how such characteristics are expressed at the level of implementation.

Within this rather broad objective the study attempted to answer the following questions:

- Are the asymmetries reflected in the 'conventional' programmes of research cooperation also present in the cases under study?
- In the view of the recipient countries, is the Dutch policy for cooperation, contained in the MMRPs, any different from the 'conventional' forms of North-South cooperation, or from policies recently adopted by similar agencies? How are these policies similar or different, specifically in terms of the following characteristics or attributes of programmes: autonomy in decision-making (control over policy, management and budget), duration, multidisciplinary, demand-drivenness, location-specificity and participatory practices?
- Are the characteristics and attributes of the programmes, implemented by the different donors, producing the desired results? [Here the focus is on the various types of **research capacity building** (institutional and individual; conducting and managing research; research appreciation and use); the production of results of **quality and relevance** for development objectives; establishment of scientific relationships with other countries (**international research collaboration**), etc.]

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In the Leusden Workshop an argument was maintained by some of the 12 developing country scholars to the effect that other donors, besides DGIS, were also implementing modalities of support that aim to address the asymmetry and irrelevance associated with traditional North-South cooperation.

- Is the Dutch policy implemented only adequate to some types of research, particularly those involving specific regional needs, or could it be adopted in a more general way in other forms of North-South research cooperation?

#### **1.4 Research Process and Methodology**

After the approval of the research proposal submitted in February 1998 to DGIS, the regional coordinators, accompanied by their respective project assistants, met in The Hague in May 1999 to refine the research questions and the methodology and to agree on a series of research steps which would be followed by the three regional teams. The organisation of the country teams varied across the three regions. For Africa and Asia, the coordinators subcontracted the field research to institutions and researchers in the countries concerned whereas the Latin American coordinator was directly involved in the field research and recruited researchers from Latin American countries other than those included in the study.

Research in the three continents commenced with the conduct of regional conceptualisation Workshops, immediately followed by the field research, which lasted for about six months. This field research was longer and more complex than originally planned because the researchers had to undertake a 'mapping-exercise'.<sup>21</sup> Other donor-funded research programmes, sharing some characteristics with the MMRPs, were identified in the course of the mapping.

##### **1.4.1 Programme selection**

The Country Reports describe the process of selecting the programmes that were eventually compared with the MMRPs. Even as they were conceptualising the Project, the Regional Coordinators were aware of the difficulty of finding donor-initiated research capacity building programmes comparable to the MMRPs. Indeed the mapping exercise revealed a range of programmes that were similar to the MMRPs in only one or two respects but not in other dimensions. Moreover, the contexts of the countries involved and in some instances, the specific thrusts of the MMRPs in these countries determined the attributes emphasized and consequently, the selection criteria used by the Country Teams (See Section 3.1 for details). In the end, the only common thread among the programmes selected was their concern with research capacity building in developing societies. Most of them entailed long-term commitment on the part of the donor agency and enjoyed some level of autonomy, minimally with respect to decisions regarding research questions to be addressed and the conduct of research; maximally with respect to the use and allocation of funds.<sup>22</sup> The programmes aimed to enhance

<sup>21</sup> By the time the original research proposal was written, the researchers believed it possible for DGIS to perform the "mapping-exercise" considering their access to other donors and their diplomatic representatives in the countries of the study. This did not prove feasible, given the lack of response from some donors, and unavailability of information in the countries that could be used by the Dutch representatives. In any case, the change of plans turned out to be beneficial for the researchers to the extent that the "mapping-exercise" was a way to familiarize themselves with the range of donor-funded programmes in the country and, at the same time, make contact with a number of researchers, research managers, policy makers, NGOs, grassroots organisations, etc, who provided valuable insights and possibly would not have been contacted otherwise.

<sup>22</sup> With the exception of the UNDP project in India which began in 1992 and ended in 1997, following the demise of Professor T.N. Krishnan, the driving force of the Project and one of the

capacity either for policy studies or applied field-based research that is oriented toward specific development issues. They vary in research orientation along two scales: an academic/fundamental-applied/action research continuum and a macro policy focus-localized issues continuum, among other differences. Nevertheless, all the programmes chosen supported and advocated the need for concrete research applications that will benefit specific end users, although the intended users vary from programme to programme. See the Country Reports for the process followed by each team in selecting the Programmes.

The programmes also differ in institutional arrangements and relations with Northern researchers and donor agencies. Despite the differences, however, they shared common features with the MMRPs and by serendipity, with similar programmes selected in the other countries, allowing for some cross-country and cross-programme comparisons.

The programmes that figure in this study are as follows:

• **Bolivia**

**PIEB:** Programa de Investigación Estratégica de Bolivia, the local MMRP

**FTPP:** Forest, Trees and People

**PIRN:** Proyecto de Investigaciones en Recursos Naturales

**SIDA/SAREC** in two Universities and two research centres

**PROEIB :** Programa de Educación Intercultural de Bolivia

**CEPLAG:** Centro de Planificación y Gestión

• **Nicaragua**

**ADESO:** Asociación para el Desarrollo Sostenible de las Segóvias, the local MMRP

**IDRC:** International Development Research Centre of Canada support to four NGOs

**SIDA/SAREC:** in four local universities

**SUDESCA:** a programme funded by DANIDA, the Danish cooperation agency

**NITLAPÁN:** a local research institute

• **Tanzania**

**REPOA:** Research for Poverty Alleviation, the local MMRP

**ENRECA:** Enhancing Research Capacity

**WRDP:** Women's Research and Documentation Project

**IDS/WSG:** Institute of Development Studies, Women's Study Group

• **Uganda**

**NURRU:** Network of Ugandan Researchers and Research Users, the local MMRP

**EPRC:** Economic Policy Research Centre

**MISR:** Makerere Institute of Social Research

• **Bangladesh**

**PRPA:** for Research on Poverty Alleviation, the local MMRP

**RED/BRAC:** Research and Evaluation Division of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee

**MAP:** Monitoring Adjustment of Poverty

• **India**

**KRPLLD:** Kerala Research on Local Level Development, the local MMRP

**APNLBP:** Andhra Pradesh Netherlands Biotechnology

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charismatic founders of the Centre for Development Studies [Dr. K.M. Raj is the other founder]; the VISED in Vietnam which evolved into a different programme and the IDRC support to local NGOs in Nicaragua.

**UNDP: Strategies and Financing for Human Development**  
**• Vietnam**

**VNRP: the Vietnam-Netherlands Research, the local MMRP**

**SIDA/SAREC FSRP: Farming Systems Research**

**VIRED: Vietnam Sustainable Economic Development**

The duration of the programmes, their institutional location and funding sources are enumerated in Table 1. Please refer to Chapter 2 for a brief description of the programmes and to the Country Reports for a more detailed discussion of each.

It is important to note that four of the programmes studied were eventually dropped to generate comparative insights. Although lessons from them were incorporated into the text, the programmes, which did not figure directly in the discussions starting in Section 3.3 onwards, are RED-BRAC (Bangladesh), NITLAPAN (Nicaragua), EPRC (Uganda) and MISR (Uganda). As discussed in Section 3.1, they are research units with multiple donors rather than programmes constituted by a distinguishable set of research and capacity building activities that would not exist without donor support. While they yielded interesting insights regarding the sustainability of research capacity building programmes, the difficulty of exploring the features and disaggregating the impact of specific donor supported programmes from those of others led to the decision to exclude RED-BRAC, NITLAPAN, EPRC and MISR from the comparative analysis. This decision was weighed against the absence of comparator programmes for the MMRP in Uganda and the reduction of the number of comparators in Bangladesh. In the end, however, the benefits from the decision outweighed the cost since the Country Reports that compare these Programmes with the selected Programmes in the countries involved (Uganda, Bangladesh and Nicaragua) are available to the reader.

#### **1.4.2 Data Sources and Validation of Findings**

The country teams relied on multiple data sources. For the Mapping Phase of the Project, all the teams interviewed representatives of donor and development agencies to explore possible programmes to compare with the MMRP. The Vietnam researchers were the exception. Because of their networks, they were able to comb through the detailed documents of existing programmes in the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MOSTE), the agency in charge of international research cooperation.

For the actual study, the research teams examined documents. They discussed with managers, members of the advisory boards, researchers (experienced and young, those who succeeded and did not succeed in gaining support), policy makers, research users, people engaged and knowledgeable in other areas of research and the donor community. Other data sources were mailed questionnaires; observations at meetings and different activities of the programmes (such as workshops for agenda setting), submitted research proposals and site visits (please refer to the Country Reports for detailed accounts of the methodology followed).

With the empirical data on hand, the first version of each Country Report was produced and sent to interviewed persons and other interested parties in the respective country. Validation workshops were held in Estelí, Nicaragua; in La Paz and Cochabamba, Bolivia; in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; in Makerere, Uganda and Dhaka,

Bangladesh and in Hanoi, Vietnam, in the first semester of 2000 in order to present and discuss the reports and the research findings with the local stakeholders. The workshops were attended by a significant number of people who, in the course of fruitful discussions, offered valuable insights to improve the description of the cases and the comparative analysis. While the Indian Report was not formally discussed in a validation workshop, it was nevertheless subjected to critique by the respective staff of the programmes selected.

Based on the discussions in the validation workshops, changes and amendments to the reports were made, and revised versions were produced and presented at a general workshop in Cape Town, South Africa, in May 2000.

It is important to note that the International Report has more text on the MMRPs than the other programmes. This is not due to the amount of data obtained by the Country Teams from the MMRPs compared to that of the other programmes. In almost all the countries covered by the research, the Teams started with very little familiarity with the selected programmes including the MMRPs and gained an understanding of them only in the process of data gathering. The greater coverage of the MMRPs in the Report is due instead to the study's use of the MMRP and its features as starting point. Moreover, by casting the comparative findings in terms of underlying development discourses and modes of knowledge production, which are more explicit in the MMRPs, the discussion of the MMRPs inevitably took up more space. By no means does the relatively imbalance in number of paragraphs and pages in the Report in favour of the MMRP reflect the contributions and efficacy of the non-MMRP Programmes within their frameworks and objectives.

## 2. CONTEXTS OF PROGRAMMES INVESTIGATED IN THE STUDY

### 2.1 Africa

#### 2.1.1 Political economic contexts and development discourses

Tanzania and Uganda are postcolonial societies in Sub Saharan Africa, which obtained their independence in 1961 and 1962, respectively.<sup>23</sup> In the years immediately before and after independence, both countries experienced considerable economic progress. From 1961 to 1967, Tanzania enjoyed a high rate of economic growth, averaging 6% per annum.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Uganda's economy grew rapidly at a rate of approximately 6.7% per year in the first five years following independence. Remarkable improvements in the social sector were also evident then. Unfortunately, trends were reversed in the course of a decade for both countries.

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23 In 1964, the Tanganyika, an aggrupation of tribal entities, which achieved their independence from Britain in 1961 after an interim period when it became a UN Trust Territory, signed an Act of Union with the island of Zanzibar to form the United Republic of Tanzania. Netherlands Development Cooperation. 1994. *Evaluation of the Netherlands Development Programme in Tanzania 1970-1992*. The Hague: Ministry of Development Cooperation, p. 48.

24 Netherlands Development Cooperation (1994:52).

**Table 1. THE STUDY PROGRAMS AND THEIR RESPECTIVE DONORS BY REGION AND COUNTRY: LATIN AMERICA**

	<b>INSTITUTIONAL STATUS/LOCATION</b>	<b>DONOR(S)</b>	<b>YEAR ESTABLISHED/DURATION</b>
<b>BOLIVIA</b>			
<i>PIEB</i>	Independent 2000: Fundación PIEB – La Paz	DGIS- (The Netherlands)	1995 - Long term (5 years each for phases I & II)
<i>FFTP/FAO</i>	Linked to CERES – an independent research centre in Cochabamba	Dutch Cooperation through FAO	1992 - Long Term – new phase under negotiation
<i>PIRN/DFID/CIDOB</i>	Linked to CIDOB in Santa Cruz de la Sierra	DFID (Great Britain)	1997 - Long term - 3.5 years phase I – Phase II under negotiation
<i>SAREC</i>	Institutional support to CEBEM in La Paz and CERES in Cochabamba (new phase: universities)	Sida/SAREC (Sweden)	1985 (CERES), 1989 (CEBEM) Long term 2000 phase II: 6 years (renewable)
<i>PROEIB</i>	Training offered at the Universidad Mayor de San Simón, Cochabamba	German Cooperation Agency - GTZ	1997 - Long term – phase I to finish in 2000 – new phase for 3 more years already approved
<i>CEPLAG</i>	Agreement: Inter-University Flemish Council and UMSS in Cochabamba	Belgian Flemish Cooperation Agency	1998 - Long term: 7 years [10 years]
<b>NICARAGUA</b>			
<i>ADESO</i>	Independent - Association of 32 member organisations - Estelí	DGIS- (The Netherlands)	1995 - Long term (5 years each for phases I & II)
<i>NITLAPÁN</i>	Administrative autonomy – operates within the Universidad Centro Americana - UCA – Managua	multiple: FIDA, EU, OXFAM, INTERMON, Christian Aid, CIFOR, APN etc	1989 - Long term and short term, depending on the agency
<i>SAREC</i>	5 programmes in 4 universities - Managua	Sida/SAREC (Sweden)	1986 - Long term –
<i>IDRC/local NGOs</i>	Support to 4 NGOs: INIES, Guises Montana, Humboldt Centre, CIDCA	IDRC (Canada)	1990s - Varies – no guarantee of long term
<i>SUDESCA</i>	Consortium: 3 universities in Central America; 1 in Denmark	DANIDA (Denmark)	1996 (1981) - Long term: 6 years renewable

**AFRICA**

<i>Programme</i>	<b>INSTITUTIONAL STATUS/LOCATION</b>	<b>DONOR(S)</b>	<b>YEAR ESTABLISHED/DURATION</b>
<b>TANZANIA</b>			
<b>REPOA</b>	Independent	DGIS-(The Netherlands)	1995 – long term
<b>IDS-WSG</b>	Study group functioning at the IDS/UDSM	Sida/SAREC	1982 – long term
<b>WRDP</b>	NGO housed at the University of Dar es Salaam	Sida/SAREC	1982 – long term
<b>ENRECA</b>	Three institutes at the University of Dar es Salaam	DANIDA	1994 – long term – phase I completed, phase II under negotiation
<b>UGANDA</b>			
<b>NURRU</b>	Independent - NGO of 25 member organisations	DGIS – the Netherlands	1994 – Long term – (10 years)
<b>EPRC</b>	Autonomous research institution	African Capacity Building Foundation, Uganda Government other donors: EU, UNDP, WB - combination of institutional and project-based support	1994 – long term from ACBF and Uganda Government – short term from other donors
<b>MISR</b>	Created in 1948; obtained a semi-autonomous status 1994, part of Makerere University	Various: USAID, DANIDA, UNDP, IDRC, WB, Ford Foundation	Long and short term

**ASIA**

<i>Programme</i>	<b>INSTITUTIONAL STATUS/LOCATION</b>	<b>DONOR(S)</b>	<b>YEAR ESTABLISHED/DURATION</b>
<b>VIETNAM</b>			
<b>VNRP</b>	Independent – operates within NISTPASS in Hanoi with a second office at the Economics University in Ho Chi Minh City	DGIS- (The Netherlands)	1994 - Long term (new agreement up to 2002)
<b>SAREC</b>	3 Universities (Agriculture and Forestry. Ho Chi Minh City, Can Tho), one research institute (National Institute of Animal Husbandry, Hanoi)	Sida/SAREC (Sweden)	1990 - Long Term – new phase began in 2000
<b>VISED</b>	Located at the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (MOSTE)	IDRC/CIDA (Canada)	From 1993, ended in 1996 medium term; evolved into Vietnam Economic and Environmental Management with other donors (e.g., Ford Foundation.)
<b>BANGLADESH</b>			
<b>PRPA</b>	Agreement between the government of the Netherlands and the Grameen Trust	DGIS- (The Netherlands)	1994 - Long term (5 years each for phases I & II)
<b>RED/BRAC</b>	A research division of an NGO which is a private development organisation	RED receives funding From BRAC	1975 - Long term and short term, depending on the agency
<b>MAP</b>	Independent-located at CIRDAP (regional body)	IDRC-CIDA	1990 -Long term
<b>INDIA</b>			
<b>KRPLLD</b>	Independent – lodged at CDS	DGIS- (The Netherlands)	1995 - Long term (4 years each for phases I & II)
<b>APNLBP</b>	Independent – lodged at the IPE – implemented in 10 villages of Andhra Pradesh	The Netherlands Bilateral Cooperation	1996 (4 years)-Long term with arrangements similar to the MMRPs
<b>UNDP</b>	Independent – lodged at CDS	UNDP, IDRC	1995 to 1997 - Short term

With the Arusha declaration in 1967, the Tanzanian government adopted a policy of socialism, self-reliance and rural development. The policy, which affirmed party control of all sectors of the economy, translated into public and cooperative ownership of

the means of production. Enshrined in the amended 1975 Constitution of the country,<sup>25</sup> the policy had among its consequences the increase in public enterprises from only 43 in 1966 to 380 in 1979 to 450 by the mid-1980s.<sup>26</sup> Economic growth also slowed down as a result of the policy: from 4.0% per annum in the 1967-1973 period; to 2.3% from 1973 to 1978; to a low of 1.5% from 1979 to 1985.<sup>27</sup> Although the country posed notable achievements in the provision of social services,<sup>28</sup> the economy nearly collapsed in the 1980s from the weight of an overexpanded public sector, overcentralized government; and a system of 'protected capitalism' for the people in power.<sup>29</sup>

In response to the economic crisis, Tanzania launched a structural adjustment programme in 1981 to restructure its economy away from public sector control towards one driven by the market. Between 1972 and 1985, the government attempted to combine economic adjustment with a socialist thrust as a transition towards market-orientation.<sup>30</sup> By 1986, the IMF and the World Bank had become involved in the country's Economic Recovery Programme. Their involvement transpired a year after Tanzania's first and socialist president, Julius Nyerere, resigned from his post to oppose the country's return to a market economy.

Like Tanzania, Uganda's impressive economic growth between 1963 and 1973, its payments surplus and low inflation were short-lived. Civil war and political instability in the early 1970s, aggravated by General Idi Amin's coup and imposition of military rule, aborted the country's upbeat post-independence economic record. Uganda's GDP growth rates declined rapidly in the Amin 'decade', falling at an average rate of 1.6% for the period from 1972 to 1978. This implied a 4.4% rate of decline of GDP per capita, given a population growth rate of 2.8%.<sup>31</sup> The expansion of the public sector in economic activity and the expulsion of members of the Asian community aggravated the economic woes of Uganda. Foreign investments declined sharply. Equipment, spare parts and raw materials became scarce. To make matters worse, the war for liberation, which ended Amin's reign in 1979, resulted in widespread destruction and looting of infrastructure and

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25 The Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), launched in 1954 and led by Julius Nyerere, Tanzania's first president, was the main political party in the country, Netherlands Development Cooperation (1994:48).

26 Bgachwa, M.S. 1985. "Toward New Initiatives in Capacity Building in Developing Countries." in *Proceedings of the Workshop on Research Programmes for Development Arusha, 19-23 June. DGIS-Funded Research Programme for Development No. 2*, edited by M. S. Bagachwa. The Hague: Directorate General for Development Cooperation, Division for Research and Developing Countries pp. 38-39.

27 Netherlands Development Cooperation (1994:52)

28 Vigorous government efforts especially in the areas of health and education after the Arusha Declaration accounted for significant improvement in average life expectancy from 41 years in 1960 to 54 in 1990 and a drop in mortality rates among children below 5 years old from 248 per 100 in 1960 to 170 per 100 in 1990. Netherlands Development Cooperation (1994:56)

29 Mlambiti, M. E. 1999. "Tanzania: Implementing Structural Adjustment Programmes-Learning from the Past." in *Agrarian Economy, State and Society in Contemporary Tanzania.*, edited by P. Forster and S. Maghimbi. Aldershot: Ashgate pp. 10-12.

30 Netherlands Development Cooperation (1994:52).

31 Hansen, H and M Twiddle. 1999. *Developing Uganda*. Oxford: James Currey and Ohio University Press, p. 38

industrial plants. Thus, when Amin fled from Uganda in 1979, the nation's GDP was only 80% of its level in 1970; real GDP per capita in 1980 was only 62% of that in 1971.<sup>32</sup> By then, Amin's erratic policies had destroyed almost all but the subsistence sector of the economy;<sup>33</sup> the country had become dependent on only one crop—coffee.<sup>34</sup>

Like Tanzania, there was a brief attempt to stabilize the Ugandan economy with donor assistance after the defeat of Idi Amin. The IMF provided support to the Obote government, which took over in 1980 from short-term governments in the interim following Amin's administration. The IMF, however, cut its funding in 1984 because of the country's lack of foreign exchange. Efforts to attract investors back to Uganda were severely hampered by the political turmoil of the early 1980s. The Obote government's military campaign against challengers to the regime proved even more devastating in terms of areas destroyed and lives lost than Amin's eight-year rule.<sup>35</sup> Negative economic growth characterized the period from 1984 to 1986, the year that the National Resistance Movement took over the reins of government.<sup>36</sup> Although guerrilla wars continued to be staged, Uganda began to slowly recoup lost ground after 1987. The country became more politically stable, creating favourable conditions for economic activities to thrive. As in Tanzania, the World Bank and IMF supported Uganda's economic recovery programme.

Politically, Uganda and Tanzania had different experiences in the 1970s and early 1980s. Tanzania had maintained stability and national legitimacy unparalleled by most countries in the region in contrast to Uganda's political upheavals.<sup>37</sup> A confluence of factors including the broad support enjoyed by the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) led by Julius Nyerere, a high degree of political consciousness and a common language (Swahili), accounted for the relative political peace in Tanzania.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand, Uganda's national disintegration in the post-World War II years may be traced to a series of divisions within Ugandan society among which are the language gulf between the North and South as well as the divide between pastoralists and agriculturists; between the centralized and despotic rule of ancient African kingdoms and the kinship-based contemporary politics; between Christians and Muslims.<sup>39</sup>

Despite fundamental differences in national unity and political climate, independent institutions on the ground such as cooperatives and grassroots organisations

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<sup>32</sup> Hansen (1999:38); Byrnes, R.M. *Uganda*. Country Study, Federal Research Division, US Library of Congress 1992.

<sup>33</sup> [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+ug0074](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+ug0074)  
Byrnes, R.M. Federal Research Division, US Library of Congress 1992. "Uganda: Country Study." US Library of Congress  
[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+ug0074\).](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+ug0074)

<sup>34</sup> Sharer, R et al. March 1995. "Uganda: Adjustment with Growth: 1987-1994." . Washington: International Monetary Fund. p. 1

<sup>35</sup> Byrnes, R.M. 1992. [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+ug0013\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+ug0013)

<sup>36</sup> Hansen (1999; 38)

<sup>37</sup> See the Tanzanian Country Report.

<sup>38</sup> Netherlands Development Cooperation (1994:48).

<sup>39</sup> Byrnes, R.M. 1992. [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+ug0013\).](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+ug0013)

did not prosper in both countries. Until the discourse of political democratisation began slowly creeping in during the late 1980s and 1990s, the opportunity for open discussion by opposition parties, trade unions, intellectuals and professional associations had been almost nil. Overcentralization of the state in both countries suppressed private initiatives at organizing and the development of a politically developed activist culture, a situation that differentiates the African countries in the comparative study from their Latin American and South Asian counterparts.

Uganda and Tanzania are among the world's poorest countries. Based on national statistics that the UNDP gathered for its 1999 Human Development Report, about 55% of Ugandans lived below the official poverty line in 1994 while the figure for Tanzania for the same year was 51%. Although Table 2 shows that the proportion of Tanzania's population living below the poverty threshold (16.4%) was much lower than Uganda's 50.0% when measured in terms of the World Bank's \$1 per day per person at 1985 purchasing power parity, nevertheless, its GNP per capita in 1997 of \$260 classifies it among the least developed countries in the world (Table 3). While higher than Tanzania, Uganda's GNP per capita for the same year (\$330) was also low, falling below that of the Sub-Saharan region as a whole.

Not only are the two African countries covered by this Report among the poorest nations, they are also among the most dependent on aid. The level of their ODA as a percentage of their respective GNPs in 1997 (13%) was higher than the 11% figure for the least developed world taken collectively (Tables 2 and 3). The two countries are also quite indebted. Tanzania's level of external debt, as a percentage of its GNP, is slightly higher (97%) than that of least developed countries (92%). In this respect, Uganda's level of indebtedness in 1997 was better than Tanzania's, being lower than the figure for Sub-Saharan Africa (Tables 2 and 3). Nonetheless, external debt constituted about half of Uganda's GNP.

The prevailing discourses in Tanzania and Uganda reflect the links of the two countries to international financial institutions and the donor community as well as the economic and political conditions in the Sub-Saharan region. Apart from structural adjustment and the bid for increasing competitiveness of the national economy, which had necessarily become part of Sub-Saharan Africa's development discourses, development workers and donor agencies in the two countries are preoccupied as well with poverty alleviation, sustainable development and gender issues. In Uganda, decentralization and devolution of responsibilities for decision-making have also assumed some prominence in public discussions.

### **2.1.2 Academic and Research Contexts**

The economic deterioration and political problems of Tanzania and Uganda from the 1970s up to the mid-1980s took their toll on the state of education during the 1990s. Both Sub-Saharan nations had relatively high literacy and school enrolments prior to the 1970s, boasting of first class universities—Makerere University in Uganda and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. But the situation had reversed by the late 1970s. By then the

physical infrastructure and quality of education had stagnated. Bagachwa noted the fall in enrolment rates in Sub-Saharan Africa, from 8.9% in the 1970s to 4.0% during the early 1980s.<sup>40</sup> He also cited the shortage of supplies of key educational inputs such as books and learning materials as indirect evidence of declining educational quality.

Even more serious than problems of infrastructure and supplies was the shortage of teachers. In Tanzania, the discrimination of colonial policy against the training of the indigenous population, which constrained the growth of a critical mass of Tanzanian teachers, aggravated the state of capacity building at the primary and secondary levels of formal education. This problem became even more apparent with the departure of the expatriate teachers. The situation was very similar in Uganda. The departure of both Ugandan and expatriate teachers during the 1970s and 1980s accounted for a high proportion (35%) of untrained teachers in 1991.<sup>41</sup>

The worsening quality of education at the pre-collegiate levels in Uganda and Tanzania is among the factors accounting for the significant decline in the standards of the two reputable Sub-Saharan universities that led the World Bank to bewail the 'state of disrepair these universities' were in.<sup>42</sup> The other factors include brain drain resulting from the migration of professionals and university-based nationals who trained in Europe and remained there or now work in other regions; declining budgets and insignificant investments in critical infrastructure and research; and poor pay scales and systems of remuneration in the universities that push good academics to augment incomes through consultancies and other activities outside academe.<sup>43</sup>

Currently, the universities in Tanzania and Uganda engage in very little research. As a consequence, the training of postgraduate students is also very limited. Thus, those who secure postgraduate degrees have very little training in or exposure to research activities. On the other hand, there exists in both countries, a very small group of highly trained researchers who are concentrated in the main urban areas—overwhelmingly in the capitals of the two countries. These researchers can readily obtain the support of donors to do research consultancies in a wide variety of areas. Many of them are linked to the universities but principally engage in consultancy. The polarization of the research community, with a few well-established and highly trained researchers turned consultants on the one hand and a large pool of potential researchers without sufficient training in the universities on the other, contributes to the continuing absence of a research culture. An undeveloped research culture was a legacy of the colonial education system and the political economic developments in the last three decades, which found the Ugandan and Tanzanian governments shifting their priorities in the 1970s and 1980s away from the education sector.

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<sup>40</sup> Bagachwa (1995:40-41).

<sup>41</sup> Byrnes, R.M. 1992 "Uganda. Country Study". Federal Research Division, US Library of Congress. [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/estdy:@field\(DOCID+ug0066\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/estdy:@field(DOCID+ug0066)).

<sup>42</sup> World Bank. *The African Capacity Building Initiative*. Washington, DC: The World Bank, 1991 as cited in Bagachwa, (1995:41).

<sup>43</sup> Bagachwa (1995:40-42).

**Table 2. SELECTED SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATISTICS FOR THE COUNTRIES COVERED BY THE STUDY**

COUNTRIES IN THE STUDY	ANNUAL POPULATION GROWTH RATE 1975-1997	URBAN POPULATION % OF TOTAL 1997	GNP ANNUAL GROWTH RATE 1975-1995 (PER CAPITA 1997 IN \$)	EXTERNAL DEBT AS % OF GNP 1997 (ODA <sup>A</sup> RECEIVED AS % OF GNP) [ODA RECEIVED IN MILLIONS OF US\$ 1997] <ODA RECEIVED PER CAPITA IN US\$ 1997>	% POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LINE \$ A DAY 1985 PPP \$ (% BELOW NATIONAL POVERTY LINE) 1994	HUMAN POVERTY INDEX <sup>B</sup> 1997	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX <sup>C</sup> 1997 (RANK OF 174 COUNTRIES)	ADULT LITERACY RATE % 1997
Bangladesh	2.2	19.4	4.4 (360)	35.1 (2.3) [1009] < 9.0>	28.5 (48.0)	44.4	.44 (150)	38.9
India	2.0	27.4	5.0 (370)	24.9 (0.4) [1678] < 1.9>	52.5 ----	35.9	.54 (132)	53.5
Vietnam	2.1	19.5	---	89.4 (4.1) [997] <14.1>	---	28.7	.66 (110)	91.9
Bolivia	2.3	62.3	---	67.6 (9.2) [717] <106.5>	7.1 ----	21.1	.65 (112)	83.6
Nicaragua	2.9	63.2	-1.2 (410)	305.6% (---) [421] < -- >	43.8 (50.0)	28.1	.62 (121)	63.4
Tanzania	3.1	25.7	---	97.2 (13.0) [963] <36.6>	16.4 (50.0)	29.8	.42 (156)	71.6
Uganda	2.7	13.2	-- (330)	56.5 (12.8) [840] < 49.7>	50.0 (55.0)	40.6	.40 (158)	64.0

Source: United Nations Development Programme. 1999. *Human Development Report*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- A. Official Development Assistance
- B. The Human Poverty Index is a composite index of deprivation in four basic dimensions of human life—long and healthy life (percent of people expected to survive to age 40), knowledge (percent of illiterates), economic provisioning (percentage of people lacking access to health services and safe water and the percentage of children under 5 who are moderately or severely undernourished) and social inclusion (long-term unemployment).
- C. The Human Development Index measures achievements in the most basic human capabilities—leading a long life, being knowledgeable and enjoying a decent standard of living. Life expectancy, educational attainment and income are three variables used to indicate the above dimensions. With normalization of the variables that make up the HDI, the values range from 0 to 1. HDI value of a country shows the distance that it has already travelled towards the maximum possible value of 1.

**Table 3. SELECTED COMPARISONS FOR THE STATISTICS IN TABLE 2**

REGIONS	ANNUAL POPULATION GROWTH RATE 1975-1997	URBAN POPULATION % OF TOTAL 1997	GNP ANNUAL GROWTH RATE 1975-1995 (PER CAPITA 1997 IN \$)	EXTERNAL DEBT AS % OF GNP 1997 (ODA <sup>A</sup> RECEIVED AS % OF GNP) [ODA RECEIVED IN MILLIONS OF US\$ 1997] <ODA RECEIVED PER CAPITA IN US\$ 1997>	HUMAN POVERTY INDEX <sup>B</sup> 1997	HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX <sup>C</sup> 1997 (RANK OF 174 COUNTRIES)
ALL DEVELOPING COUNTRIES	2.0	38.4	4.4 (1314)	36.0 (0.9) [34469T] <9.0>	27.7	0.63
LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES	2.5	23.8	2.3 (260)	92.3 (11.1) [13041T] <29.1>	44.9	0.43
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA	2.8	32.4	2.0 (522)	66.3 (6.7) [13726t] <33.5>	40.6	0.46
SOUTH ASIA	2.2	28.9	3.7 (452)	25.7 (0.7) [4335T] <3.7>	36.6	0.54
SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	2.0	24.8	6.6 (1556)	61.3 (0.5) [[4152T] <9.2>	25.0	0.69
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	2.0	74.2	2.8 (3953)	33.9 (0.5) [5265T] <11.4>	14.5	0.75
INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES	0.6	77.8	2.6 (27,174)	-----	----	0.92
ALL COUNTRIES	1.6	46.1	2.8 (5257)	-----	----	0.71

Source: United Nations Development Programme. 1999. *Human Development Report*.

A. Official Development Assistance

B. The Human Poverty Index is a composite index of deprivation in four basic dimensions of human life—long and healthy life (percent of people expected to survive to age 40), knowledge (percent of illiterates), economic provisioning (percentage of people lacking access to health services and safe water and the percentage of children under 5 who are moderately or severely undernourished) and social inclusion (long-term unemployment).

C. The Human Development Index measures achievements in the most basic human capabilities—leading a long life, being knowledgeable and enjoying a decent standard of living. Life expectancy, educational attainment and income are three variables used to indicate the above dimensions. With normalization of the variables that make up the HDI, the values range from 0 to 1. HDI value of a country shows the distance that it has already travelled towards the maximum possible value of 1.

### 2.1.3 The Programmes in Context

The need to fill a wide gap in the research capacity of the two countries motivated the establishment of the programmes selected for the study. With the exception of the MMRPs and the EPRC in Uganda, the programmes are all university-based. Donor agencies such as SIDA/SAREC and DANIDA have concentrated on building the research and training units in the main academic institutions. So have the multiple donors who support the MISR programme in Uganda. These donors justify their university-based interventions in the light of the deteriorating state of higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, given the relative absence of non-government organisations, the universities in the two countries still constitute the main source of potential researchers despite their educational quality. Hence, the reliance of non-university based research capacity building programmes like MISR and REPOA on highly trained experts in academe.

A comparative view of the selected research programmes in the two African countries vis-a-vis their Latin American and Asian counterparts reveals an interesting observation—the relative salience of policy research in Africa in relation to academic research or development-oriented grassroots research. The economic crises Tanzania and Uganda had experienced since the decade after their independence and the flow of external funds that were contingent on the adoption of structural adjustment programmes opened up demand for donor-driven research-oriented policy work in the two countries. The EPRC, REPOA and to some extent the MISR represent institutions that have responded to the gap between demand and supply for policy research. REPOA, the MMRP in Tanzania, stands out from the rest of the MMRPs because of its predilection for policy studies although it is like the rest in its focus on poverty and its agenda to address the donor-drivenness of policy research.

Preference for policy research, which usually takes the form of consultancy work, was reported to have pushed competent university researchers in Africa into a consultancy culture at the expense of research and the training of a potential pool of young researchers.<sup>44</sup> It would, however, be erroneous to conclude that policy research and the culture of consultancy it has spawned among academics are more evident in the two African countries than in Asia or Latin America. On the contrary, government and donor-driven policy research units are equally salient, if not more significant in the countries covered by the study, all of which interestingly have not escaped structural adjustments in the 1980s. With some exceptions (e.g., Nicaragua and Vietnam), consultancy cultures are also alive and well in Asia and Latin America. Compared to Africa, however, the programmes selected in most of the other countries reflect the increasing importance of other types of research.

This situation is partly due to the specific features of the MMRPs in the Asian and Latin American countries, which profoundly affected the choice of comparator programmes. But because the particularities of the MMRPs also manifest the conditions

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<sup>44</sup> See, for instance, the Tanzanian Country Report.

prevailing in the countries where they are found, it would seem that the other countries have a wider range of and support for research concerns that include participatory action research. More importantly, the community of researchers with a capacity to develop different thrusts seems to be relatively bigger in the Asian and to some extent the Latin American countries (i.e., Bolivia) than in Tanzania and Uganda, even if internal funding for the science and technology sector in the two continents is severely inadequate compared to Western Europe or North America. In other words, with the exception of Nicaragua, it would seem that the countries in the other continents possess a more critical mass of researchers and a relatively more developed research culture than the Sub-Saharan African countries covered by the Report, although differences in academic traditions and research orientations exist.

The wider range of research concerns in the Asian and Latin American countries and the existence of a constituency for them account for the relative significance of donor-initiated alternative research capacity building efforts (e.g., participatory grassroots models in Kerala, Bangladesh, Nicaragua and Bolivia; user-aware and conceptually-and methodologically grounded research programmes in Vietnam, Nicaragua and Bolivia) in the two continents. In particular, participatory and applied research strategies, which donor agencies began to support in the 1980s, seems to have had a less receptive audience among Tanzanian and Ugandan researchers than their counterparts in Bolivia, Nicaragua, India (Kerala) and Bangladesh where development NGOs and an activist culture thrive. Nevertheless, in the African study, NURRU and WSRD/IDS-WSG have concentrated on building this capacity among young Ugandan researchers and women researchers, respectively.

Whether the programmes in the two African countries are policy-oriented or otherwise, they covered research themes that reflect prevailing international discourses and the problems confronting Uganda and Tanzania. These include poverty alleviation, gender issues, privatisation and economic development. Interestingly, these themes are common to the other countries in the study.

The Programmes selected for Africa are as follows:

## **Tanzania**

### *Research for Poverty Alleviation (REPOA)*

The REPOA programme is the MMRP in Tanzania. Covering under the general umbrella theme the areas of environment, gender, public policy, sociocultural determinants and technology development, REPOA began its programme activities with public invitations to submit concept proposals on the above themes, which would be awarded proposal development funds and small research grants on a competitive basis. This Open Competitive System (OCS) was then supplemented by short courses on research methodology. REPOA later added another system of disbursing grants, where specific researchers are commissioned to work on topics that REPOA selects. Having established an impressive track record in poverty research and in mobilizing some of the

country's senior researchers, REPOA has also rendered consultancy work for government in the area of poverty alleviation. REPOA has participated in high profile national studies. It is a member of the Tanzania Assistance Strategy whose function is to provide a framework for development participation between Tanzania and donor institutions. With REPOA's reputation, the Programme has attracted donors.

#### *Enhancing Research Capacity Programme (ENRECA)*

The ENRECA programme at the University of Dar Es Salaam (UDSM) is funded by DANIDA. It is a partnership among four institutes—three at the UDSM, and the Centre for Development Research (CDR) in Copenhagen. The three UDSM institutes (Institute of Development Studies [IDS], Institute of Resource Assessment [IRA], Economic Research Bureau [ERB]) separately have had a long tradition of collaboration with CDR. In 1994, an agreement for the joint research programme was made among the four institutes, with funding provided by DANIDA. Phase I of the programme has been completed and negotiations for Phase II are underway. The purpose of the programme is to enhance research capacity within the four institutions through sponsored research on different themes for each institute: ERB: local institutions and service provision; IDS: gender, social inequalities and agrarian reforms; and IRA: farming systems and local resource management. In this regard, ENRECA has established a sandwich thesis research system in which the candidates collect their data in Tanzania and analyse them abroad. This Programme is consistent with ENRECA's preference for training young researchers.

#### *Women's Research and Documentation Programme (WRDP) and Women's Study Group, Institute of Development Studies IDS/WSG*

The Women's Research and Documentation Project (WRDP) and the Institute of Development Studies/ Women's Study Group (IDS/WSG) are similar in many respects. They have common purposes, structures and management styles; and have collaborated in some of their efforts to build research capacity. Both programmes are included in the study because WRDP is a private NGO lodged in the University, while IDS/WSG is affiliated with the university, which to some extent controls the group's resources and influences its agenda. SIDA/SAREC funds gender research in the two programmes. In the past, the two groups would apply directly to SIDA/SAREC for research funds, but with the proliferation of university gender groups, SAREC and the groups agreed on the need for a Gender Management Committee (GMC), composed of representatives from each of the 7 participating groups. It reviews small grant proposals from all the groups and selects a certain number for submission to SIDA/SAREC. Note that the WRDP is quite distinct from the other two programmes studied, in that it arose out of concern for the state of women, in the university and more broadly, prior to any donor involvement. Both WRDP and IDS/WSG are different from the other programmes in Tanzania in that they are organisations of limited membership. While they sponsor seminars and workshops that are open to others, research funds are shared only among members.

## **Uganda**

### *Network of Ugandan Researchers and Research Users (NURRU)*

NURRU was launched as a research programme in 1994 when a group of Ugandan researchers and research-users from 25 different institutions and organisations were convened to participate in the Uganda-Netherlands Research Co-operation Workshop. The institutions and organisations included academic departments and NGOs. Having participated in the workshop at Entebbe, they ultimately became the founding member organisations of NURRU. A few others were subsequently admitted into the fold. The Programme (NURRU), an NGO that is not lodged in any institution, has the explicit mandate of promoting participatory action-oriented research along the philosophy of the MMRPs. Covering the areas of household poverty and development conditions and policies, NURRU has an independent research agenda. Advertisements are placed in local newspapers calling for concept proposals and eventually full-blown research proposals. Those that fulfill the requirements win research grants to embark on research projects within the pre-set thematic areas. Once research has been completed, the results are disseminated in workshops held in different parts of the country; extracts of research findings appear in NURRU's newsletter as well.

### *Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC)*

The EPRC is an autonomous, nonprofit research institution specializing in economic policy research towards sustainable development. It was established in 1994 to enhance national policy-making capacity, promote policy-oriented research and provide a foundation for economic policy formulation, among other things. A Board of Management made up of senior administrators, leading academics and private-sector managers governs the programme. It is funded primarily by the African Capacity Building Foundation, a World Bank subsidiary, and the Uganda Government and by donors such as the Aga Khan Foundation, the European Union (EU), World Bank, UNDP, and donor agencies from Denmark and the Netherlands. Conducting research independently or in collaboration with local institutions and consulting agencies, the research agenda covers: poverty alleviation; macro-economic stability and forecasting; environment and natural resource management; privatisation and public sector management; and food security. The EPRC projects include the impact of structural adjustment on poverty and income, determinants of regional poverty in Uganda and regional growth disparities and household economic performance.

### *Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR)*

MISR is the oldest of the three research programmes covered by the study. It was established in 1948 as the East African Institute of Social Research and only became MISR in 1970. It is now an interdisciplinary centre for both academic and policy-oriented research, putting special emphasis on Uganda and other parts of Africa. The MISR research programme targets four major research areas: governance; natural resource management; health issues and social policy; and economic development. MISR mostly

engages in commissioned research on a project-by-project basis. Unlike NURRU and EPRC, MISR is not really an autonomous research institution. It has always been an integral part of Makerere University until it attained semi-autonomous status when it broke away from the Faculty of Social Sciences in 1994. The bulk of the MISR research funds originally emanated from the Uganda Government through Makerere University, with supplementary funding from outside sources. This trend is now changing, with MISR becoming less dependent on Makerere and the Uganda Government. MISR today receives the bulk of its funds from various international donors including the USAID, DANIDA, UNDP, EEC, IDRC, the World Bank and the Ford Foundation. It has pursued research on the democratic transition, decentralization reform and poverty monitoring in agriculture.

## 2.2 Asia

### 2.2. 1 Political Economic Contexts and Development Discourses

Bangladesh, India and Vietnam are postcolonial societies with different cultural, political and economic systems, although Bangladesh and India shared a common colonial history up to 1947 when Pakistan (which included Bangladesh) separated from India over religious differences.<sup>45</sup> Until recently, both India and Bangladesh had highly centralized political systems. While their systems of governance were centralized until the 1990s, the two countries reflect a history of successful grassroots mobilisation. NGOs have prospered and proliferated in both places in recent decades.<sup>46</sup>

Within India, the state of Kerala, which hosted two of the programmes in this Report (the KRPLLD and the Secretariat of the Indian UNDP Project), is distinguished from most Indian states by the communist ideology of its popularly elected leadership and the significant role of militant NGOs and People's movements in state reform. Kerala is also noted for being a model of effectively delivering social benefits to the poor despite low per capita incomes. It surpasses many developing countries and states in India with far higher per capita incomes in education, life expectancy and infant mortality.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan was obtained in 1971.

<sup>46</sup> The significant growth of Bangladesh's NGOs may be traced to donors' preference to channel development funds through them because of their ability to identify appropriate beneficiaries and to involve them in project implementation. By the mid-1990s, about 20 major bilateral and multilateral donors coursed their funds through NGOs. This number excludes international private foundations and foreign NGOs. Netherlands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1998. *Bangladesh: Evaluation of Netherlands-funded NGOs 1972-1996*. The Hague: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs p. 58. It is important to note that the dynamism of NGOs in Bangladesh does not necessarily translate to a well-developed civil society. See, for instance, Mamoon, M. and J.K. Ray. 1996. "Civil Society in Bangladesh: Resilience and Retreat." Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Ltd. Department of History, University of Calcutta.

<sup>47</sup> Franke, R and B Chasin. 1994. *Kerala: Development Through Radical Reform*. New Delhi and San Francisco: Pronilla and Co. Publishers and Institute for Food and Development Policy pp. 112-113.

As in Kerala, the number of development NGOs in Bangladesh, which have emphasized the empowerment of the poor through a process of conscientisation (i.e., a cycle of action, reflection and improved action), is significant.<sup>48</sup> The weakness of the Bangladesh state relative to that of Kerala, however, contributes to the size and the dominant presence of its NGO community in the socioeconomic life of the country. The Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee (BRAC), for instance, has grown to be among the largest NGOs in the world since its establishment in the 1970s and is almost like a parallel small state.

The experience of grassroots organizing, which Kerala (India) and Bangladesh share, is new to Vietnam. For almost two decades, from 1954 to 1975, the war for reunification absorbed the country. The exigencies of war enhanced the need for a centralized and militaristic system of governance that discouraged local initiatives. Only in the mid-1980s, with the liberalization of the economy and the adoption of *Doi Moi* or 'openness and renovation' did the inertia of a top-down system of governance slowly give way and NGOs began organizing in Vietnam.<sup>49</sup> To date, however, they are still an insignificant group.

Although Bangladesh had a premature attempt to establish a socialist society, its economy hardly approximated the Soviet model of centralized economic planning that (Kerala) India shared with Vietnam.<sup>50</sup> Until Vietnam opened up to the global economy in 1986 and a severe balance of payments crisis forced India to borrow heavily from the International Monetary Fund in 1991, the public sector had dominated the economies of both countries. Since then, Vietnam and (Kerala) India have underscored privatisation, marketisation and globalisation, albeit with some caution. Vietnam, for instance, has pursued a market economy within a socialist philosophical framework. Thus, from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, Vietnam witnessed the gradual decline of the dominance of state-owned enterprises and saw their number decrease by half, as the number of private companies increased nine-fold.<sup>51</sup>

In contrast to the transition from centralized to market-oriented economies in Vietnam and (Kerala) India, Bangladesh is liberalizing a market-oriented underdeveloped economy that has depended heavily on the external assistance of bilateral and multilateral development partners. So important are these institutions to the economy of the nation

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48 See The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 1998. *Bangladesh: Evaluation of Netherlands-funded NGOs 1972-1996*. The Hague: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs pp. 45-49

49 The *Doi Moi* policy had among its elements the decentralization of state economic management and decision making, adoption of an outward-oriented policy in external economic relations and the acceptance of the private sector as the engine of economic growth. Six years before its promulgation in 1986, the Vietnamese government had begun to experiment on readjusting economic policies, orienting the country toward trade liberalization. Murray, G. 1997. *Vietnam: Dawn of a New Market*. Surrey: China Library, p. 24-25; Anh, V.T. 1994. *Policy Reforms and Economic Growth*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, p. 7

50 It is important to note, however, that the extent of state ownership of farms and enterprises was much greater in Vietnam than in India and that Kerala has had a communist government only intermittently.

51 Murray, G. 1997. *Vietnam: Dawn of a New Market*. Surrey: China Library, p. 7.

that a journalist once identified them as stakeholders in the process of good governance in the country.<sup>52</sup> But while Bangladesh is heavily indebted, with external debts accounting for 35.1% of its GNP in 1997, Vietnam's debts constituted a much higher 89.4% of GNP in the same year. Like Bangladesh and Vietnam, India also relied on external assistance albeit at a lower level—25% of its GNP in 1997 (Table 2).

As developing societies, the three Asian countries are predominantly agricultural and poor. Compared to Latin America where less than half of the population is rural, almost 80% of the population of Bangladesh and Vietnam and 73% of India lived in rural areas in 1997 (Table 2). The share of the rural population in the three Asian countries covered by the study is similar to that in the African region.

Economically, the GNP per capita of the Asian countries is about the same level, varying slightly from a low of \$310 for Vietnam, \$360 for Bangladesh and \$370 for India in 1997 (Table 2). These figures are higher than the per capita GNP of the least developed countries (\$260), lower than that of South Asia (\$452) and way below the \$1314 figure for all developing countries and the \$1556 GNP per capita for Southeast Asia and the Pacific (Table 3). As expected, the poverty levels in the three countries remain high, although they have declined since the 1980s. In terms of the World Bank's Poverty threshold (\$1 a day parity purchasing price), India had a higher proportion of people living below the poverty line in 1997 (52.5% compared to 28.5% for Bangladesh). As Vietnam has no comparable data, its figure of 51% living below its national poverty threshold is indicative of the country's level of poverty (Table 2).

Using the Human Poverty Index (HPI), a composite index of deprivation in four basic dimensions of human life—long and healthy life (percentage of people expected to survive to age 40), knowledge (percent of illiterates), economic provisioning (percentage of people lacking access to health services and safe water and the percentage of children under 5 who are moderately or severely undernourished) and social inclusion (long-term unemployment)—Bangladesh had the highest proportion of poor people in 1997 (44.4%) while Vietnam had the lowest (28.7%). In India, slightly more than a third was poor using the HPI criterion (Table 2). On the whole, the Asian countries had higher HPI than the two Latin American countries in the study (21.1% for Bolivia and 28.1% for Nicaragua). Compared to Africa, Bangladesh had a higher poverty level (measured in HPI) than Uganda (40.6%), which surpassed the poverty index of India and Vietnam but Tanzania's poverty level in 1997 (29.8%) was lower than India and almost the same as Vietnam. Examining the Human Development Index, which has a conceptually broader scope, Vietnam ranked highest among the Asian countries (and all the other countries in the study). Bangladesh ranked lowest, although it ranked higher than the two African countries (Table 2).

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<sup>52</sup> Khan, AZM Obaidullah. "Governance Issues Loom Large" in *The Daily Star*, February 2000, Dhaka as cited in the Bangladesh Country Report. See also Reddaway, B. 1996. "The Bangladesh Economy in a World Perspective." in *State, Market and Development. Essays in Honor of Rahman Sobhan*, edited by A. Abdullah and A. Khan. Dhaka: University Press Limited pp. 297-299.

Against the above socioeconomic and political backdrop, poverty alleviation has been a dominant discourse in all three Asian countries. In Bangladesh and India, where participatory conceptual frameworks developed and prospered, the participation of the poor in programmes that aim to benefit them was integral to the discourse. For India, which had become increasingly disenchanted with an excessively centralized system of economic planning, the devolution of centralized state powers to local governments and the need for grassroots participation at this level was another significant component of the development discourses of the 1980s and 1990s. It has been particularly significant for Kerala being one of the first states in India to implement the corresponding constitutional amendment.

The prevalent discourses and the way they are expressed in the two countries reflect how the thinking of intellectuals and development workers in India and Bangladesh resonated with the evolving models of development articulated by donor agencies. As noted previously, the outcomes of development assistance extended by the North to the South had come under severe criticism worldwide in the 1980s. By then, funding agencies supporting development work began to veer away from traditional top-down approaches and explored participatory strategies. While emergent participatory discourses that donor agencies adopted incorporated the intellectual contributions and advocacies of the development community in Latin America and South Asia, the donor agencies have also significantly shaped the thinking and thrusts of development work in the South. The facilitative role of funding agencies in casting such legitimate development concerns in the South in particular concepts and frameworks, account for similarities in the thrusts or modalities of development programmes in India (Kerala) and Bangladesh as well as other Southern countries.

Unlike India and Bangladesh, the prevailing discourses in Vietnam from the mid-1980s onwards have not revolved around participatory or local level development but economic transition from socialism, poverty alleviation, rural development, and fast tracking the country's integration into a modern global economy. Participatory strategies, which had been alien to the social organisation of Vietnam in the post-World War II era, is only beginning to filter into the discourse of academics and government agents. In this respect, donor agencies and the experts they brought to Vietnam to share ideas with the development community have contributed significantly to this development.

### **2.2.2 Academic/Research contexts**

Responsibility for research and research funding in India is centralized in federal bodies such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, the Indian Council of Medical Research, the Indian Council of Social Science Research and the University Grants Commission.<sup>53</sup> Although they fund

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It is important to note that India (Kerala) has had a long and respectable tradition in the sciences. In the social sciences, Indian intellectuals and academics in the 1970s and 1980s have contributed to theoretical debates on development issues that were enlightened by Marxism but fully aware of Western social science traditions. The theoretical and anti-empiricist inclinations of prominent Indian intellectuals have nurtured a strong culture of knowledge

university researchers, many of the research councils have set up their own research institutes. The bulk of government funds for research, therefore, has gone to established researchers from such institutes and only small amounts trickle down to universities and colleges; hardly any research funds go to NGOs.<sup>54</sup> Consistent with the centralized character of India's political system, government-funded studies generally reflect national or federal research priority areas, with very few studies focusing on local issues. In this sense, Kerala constitutes a kind of exception insofar as the centrally-financed Centre for Development Studies in Trivandrum, the host of two of the selected programmes, had from its inception a mission directed strongly at local issues.

Compared to Bangladesh and Vietnam, India has a much bigger pool of researchers in the natural and social sciences. Although it has been a forerunner in theorizing participatory development, the systematic application of scientific research to the study of local issues and the solution of local problems was still at the fringe of mainstream research traditions in the mid-1980s, even as the country geared politically for greater local autonomy. Nevertheless, participatory research has developed in India and the potential for building the capacity of young researchers along such development-oriented methodologies has existed for decades now.<sup>55</sup> This situation is particularly true for the state of Kerala, which has been more aggressive than most other Indian states in experimenting with alternative models of science for development. The struggles of the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP), translated as Kerala Science Library Society, to explicitly promote a peoples' science movement is indicative of the level of participatory discourse among the organized grassroots segments of Kerala.<sup>56</sup>

In relation to the two other Asian countries, Bangladesh is closer to India than Vietnam in terms of experience with participatory development methodologies. Its research pool in the mid-1980s consisted of a mix of Western-trained university researchers and those affiliated with a few research institutes such as the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies. With the growth and increasing significance of the NGOs and the support they obtained from external funding agencies, some of the university-based researchers shifted to NGO involvement, utilizing participatory frameworks and research strategies in their work.

It is also important to note a parallel development in Bangladesh—the hiring of established researchers by an increasing number of private consultancy firms and donor agencies. This has resulted in the development of a consultancy research culture, whereby the internationally pegged monetary value of Bangladesh senior researchers had come to

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production for knowledge's sake. A critical mass of intellectuals, activist and grassroots organisations in India, however, has strongly pushed for the application of knowledge to the problems confronting the country.

<sup>54</sup> See the Indian Country Report.

<sup>55</sup> See Sathyamurthy, J.V. 1984. "Development Research and Social Sciences in India Since Independence." *DERAP Publication* 171.

<sup>56</sup> Zachariah, M and R Sooryamoorthy. 1994. *Science for Social Revolution? Achievements and Dilemmas of a Development Movement—the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad*. London: Zed Books pp. 17-18.

undermine their more extensive involvement in lower paid development research or capacity building activities. While a consultancy culture also exists in India, particularly in Delhi, the presence of a critical social science community with a strong activist tradition in Kerala has constrained the full development of such culture there. In Vietnam, more and more Vietnamese have been contracted to do consultancy work although this development is very recent. Moreover, the monetary rewards of consultancies do not seem to accrue to single individuals but tend to be shared with co-researchers and institutions.

The consultancy culture among senior researchers, which is more developed in Bangladesh than in Kerala or Vietnam, is akin to that existing in Tanzania and Uganda. The difference, however, is that unlike the two African countries in the study, Bangladesh has a thriving NGO community committed to a transformative agenda that conceptually puts people at the centre of political processes and democratised decision-making. Influencing the direction of research among academics linked to NGOs and the development community at large, such an agenda has served as a counterbalance to a consultancy culture, although perhaps not to the extent that Kerala's activist culture has foiled the development of a system of research consultancy.

With respect to the structure of research, Vietnam shares much in common with India. Funds for knowledge production are concentrated in research institutes that are lodged in government ministries. Universities, relegated to the role of teaching institutions, get very little of the pie. It is instructive to note, for instance, that the research budget of an important agricultural university in the vicinity of Hanoi was even less than that of one MMRP project in Vietnam. As a consequence, the pool of researchers in the country is found in the research institutes. The researchers from this pool, particularly those in the social sciences, have been exposed primarily to the Russian and Eastern European traditions and are just beginning to open up to new development perspectives and methodologies that evolve within Western social science frameworks.

### **2.2.3 The Programmes in Context**

All the research Programmes selected for the comparative study were location-specific, i.e., they were shaped by the political economic development and academic cultures of the countries at the time they were established. The commonalities and differences in the thrusts and institutional links of the MMRPs in Asia, for instance, reflect the appropriate national or, in the case of Kerala, the state contexts. The Bangladesh MMRP and that of India, which have longer experiences in participatory development work, established programmes that were more applied and action-oriented than the Vietnam Programme, which sought to build social science research skills along a more Western mode, whose existence could not be readily assumed because of the dominance of Russian or Eastern European academic traditions. In the light of decentralization, the Indian MMRP chose to build capacity for research attuned to the local-level needs of Kerala while the Bangladesh MMRP focused on the search for research-based policy and action solutions to poverty alleviation.

The nature of the institutional base of the Programmes in Kerala and Bangladesh also differed due to the prevailing situation in each place. As previously noted, the existence in the former of the Centre for Development Studies, an academic unit committed to promoting research and developing research capacity in fields that would address Kerala's needs, made it an optimal base for a Programme that chose to tackle decentralization, a critical issue at the time the MMRP was established in India. In Bangladesh, on the other hand, the notable work of NGOs in the 1980s and early 1990s, in developing alternatives to alleviate poverty and the academic grounding and stature of NGO leaders who have committed themselves to development work rather than the university accounted for the choice of Grameen Trust, an NGO, as the base of the MMRP secretariat.

Vietnam's political, economic and academic context explains why the MMRP in the country was lodged in the National Institute for Science and Technology Policy and Strategic Studies of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Strategic Studies and why it was bent in its initial phase on supporting basic and applied researchers from all over the country and in a wide range of research areas. Given the structure of the research community and the meager support for universities, the Vietnamese MMRP had to be situated in a credible research institute that could draw on prevailing modes of legitimacy since it was embarking on the ambitious agenda of building social science-based capacity for development research as fast as it could.

VISED in Vietnam, the UNDP-funded Project in India and MAP in Bangladesh responded to very specific needs for reliable macro-level inputs to policy formulation in the three countries. For VISED and MAP strengthening the capacity of key institutions responsible for policy and management was the main motivation behind the creation of the Programmes. In the case of VISED, Vietnam's shift to a market-oriented economy and its severe environmental problems (e.g., deforestation and ecological degradation) made it urgent to focus on economic and environment research. MAP's concern with reliable and regular monitoring of the poverty situation in Bangladesh was responsive to the needs of the country. The UNDP-funded Programme, on the other hand, was India's reaction to the overemphasis on economic growth in most macro-level studies there. The call for in-depth policy and strategy-oriented research on human development was also created in the context of India's rethinking of development models and alternatives.

It is interesting to note, however, that while VISED, MAP and the UNDP-project are contextualized in each of the countries where they are found and respond to those countries' needs, the three Programmes are less location-specific and, therefore, less diverse than the MMRPs. The Programmes, in varying degrees, seem to closely follow conceptual frameworks or strategies that are also found in other countries where the donor agency has similar Programmes. The MAP, in particular, reflects the common framework of the CIDA/IDRC-sponsored monitoring Programmes in other developing countries in Asia. Although there may be different projects, the similarities in specific projects pursued by the UNDP-sponsored Programme in India and like-minded Programmes in Asia are due largely to the convergence of disciplinary frameworks and methodologies for viewing the dimensions of human development (e.g., demographic

transition, health etc.) that were brought to the fore. VISED, on the other hand, shares the strategy of building policy research units in other government agencies in Asia that CIDA/IDRC and the Ford Foundation, among other funding agencies, supported.

Like VISED, MAP and the UNDP-sponsored Programme in India and to a lesser extent, the MMRPs, the natural science-based Programmes selected in the three Asian countries, i.e., the FSRP in Vietnam and the APNLBP in India share a common strategy for building research capacity with other countries where similar donor programmes are found. The FSRP follows the SAREC/SIDA mode of institution building in universities while the APNLBP is similar to other Programmes in four countries. They are, however, attuned to the peculiarities of the local contexts of the Programmes.

Finally, the choice of the RED Programme in BRAC can be understood in the specific context of Bangladesh, where NGOs as social institutions are more significant in scale than in India or Vietnam.

The Programmes on which the reflections are based are briefly summarized as follows.

### **Bangladesh**

#### *Programme for Research on Poverty Alleviation (PRPA) DGIS (1994-2002)*

The PRPA was the outcome of debates in Bangladesh over the relevance of research to poverty and development issues. Lodged in the Grameen Trust, PRPA is an attempt to formulate a research agenda that would impact directly on the lives of the poor in Bangladesh as well as contribute to designing innovative macro-policies and institutions that would empower them. Like the other Asian MMRPs, the PRPA has provided funding support to individual researchers and networks whose proposals are screened and selected competitively on the basis of their relevance to the research agenda formulated by the Programme in consultation with multiple stakeholders. Through the years, it has supported 190 studies on appropriate technology, gender studies, health, human rights and legal aid and land records, to name some of the wide range of areas covered. From the funded projects, the Programme seems to have had a preferential option for research whose implications for concrete action programmes or technologies are explicit and direct.

#### *Research and Extension Division, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (RED- BRAC) BRAC/Consortium of Donors, 1975-coterminous with BRAC*

Like the PRPA, RED-BRAC is a demand-driven Programme. The difference is that the priorities of BRAC define the demand, rather than an agenda formulated by the Programme in consultation with multiple stakeholders and articulated by individual research proponents as in the case of PRPA and the other MMRPs. Because of its involvement in poverty alleviation programmes in various parts of the country, BRAC would claim that its priorities are consonant with the needs of people at the grassroots.

BRAC's thrusts evolved from a relief orientation for the rehabilitation of refugees immediately after the creation of the Bangladeshi state, to community development, and the empowerment of the poor within a framework of multidimensional and sustainable development. It shares the philosophical underpinnings of Grameen Trust, the NGO hosting the PRPA. The research funds of RED-BRAC's research unit constitute 1-2% of the NGO budget that comes from a plurality of donors and income from its enterprises. In addition, RED's core of 44 trained researchers taps funds directly from donor agencies that commission it to conduct development research along its thrusts. Up to 1998, BRAC had conducted 330 studies, a third of which was on poverty issues. The rest of the research projects focused on health and nutrition, education and economics.

*Monitoring Adjustment and Poverty (MAP)*  
*IDRC/CIDA (1992-2000)*

The research agenda of MAP, like its counterparts in other countries, is to address the problem of limited data and the lack of an institutional framework for the regular monitoring of multidimensional poverty that has made it difficult for policymakers and planners in Bangladesh to assess the impact of policies and programmes including structural adjustment policies on the poor. MAP has engaged in research to develop a poverty monitoring system and in training activities to build the research capacity of national institutions involved in generating data and formulating plans and policies along very specific methodologies—economic models and the development of a computerized information system. Between 1994 and 1998, MAP contracted researchers from universities, research institutes, government offices and NGOs to undertake 35 research projects on poverty alleviation and social development. The Centre on International Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific, a regional international centre created in 1979, hosts the Programme. The Centre serves as a venue for 13 member countries to stimulate new thinking and approaches to rural development.

## **India**

*Kerala Research Programme on Local-Level Development (KRPLLD)*  
*DGIS (1995-2003)*

The Programme thrust of the KRPLLD was chosen in line with the devolution of the powers and responsibilities of the federal government to local administrative units like the Panchayats and Municipalities that was enshrined in the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments of the Indian Constitution in 1993. Like the other Asian MMRPs, the KRPLLD has provided training and funding support to individual researchers and networks whose projects are screened and selected competitively on the basis of their relevance to the research agenda formulated in consultation with multiple stakeholders in the state of Kerala. The reach of KRPLLD's applied and action-oriented research, in terms of areas covered and the number and background of the researchers has been wide. The topics covered by the 198 research projects from the Programme's inception until 1999 included health and rehabilitation, sanitation, drinking water supply, water quality, indigenous medicine, education, culture, media and the arts, housing, energy, environment and biodiversity, local level planning, women studies. On the other hand, only 45% of the researchers have research degrees; KRPLLD supported college-affiliated

teachers and activists in the NGO community as well. The Programme is lodged in the Centre for Development Studies in Trivandrum.

*Andra Pradesh-Netherlands Biotechnology Programme (APNLBP)*  
(DGIS, 1996-2000)

The APNLBP is a scientific research programme that aims to improve the status of small-scale farmers and processors through the development and application of appropriate biotechnology in the semi-arid farming systems of Andra Pradesh. The Programme advocates a participatory development discourse for science and technology. It has emerged from a critique of biotechnology development in both developed and developing countries and the asymmetry in biotechnology research between the North and the South and within the South itself. The Programme has focused on four areas: agroforestry, tree crops, horticulture and sericulture; food grains and pulses; oil seeds and animal husbandry. The Programme has called on different stakeholders including scientists, farmers and farmers' representatives in refining the priorities already identified and selecting specific projects for funding. All told, the Programme has supported 42 projects undertaken by researchers in universities, research institutes, government agencies and even NGOs. The APNLBP is hosted by the Institute of Public Enterprises (IPE), an autonomous institute engaged in research, training and consultancy in the broad areas of management and social sciences.

*Programme on Strategies and Financing for Human Development (referred to in the report as the UNDP Programme)*

The UNDP Programme aims to address poverty in India through research on aspects of human development such as education, health care, food security and social security that have been neglected in the development literature's overemphasis on economic dimensions. The Programme specifically intended to develop a research agenda on the basis of 'state of the art' papers on key areas of human development; identify qualified young social scientists from institutions across the country and commission them to do research projects on the basis of the research agenda; and involve key persons from federal and state agencies, parastatal organisations, NGOs and social activists in operationalizing research-based human development strategies. Until the untimely demise of its national project coordinator, the Programme succeeded in supporting 63 research projects in the areas of access and pricing of health and education; social protection (including food security) for vulnerable groups and demographic transition and development alternatives. The sites were heavily concentrated on Kerala, Tamilnadu, Maharashtra and New Delhi. Although a few young researchers participated in the Programme, most of the principal investigators (41) were established researchers and economists. The Centre for Development Studies in Kerala hosted the Programme.

## **Vietnam**

*Vietnam-Netherlands Research Programme (VNRP)*  
DGIS (1994-2002)

Conceptualized in the context of Vietnam's transition from a command to a market economy and the need expressed by the state for natural and social scientists who

would build development institutions that will help carry out the transition, VNRP aimed at the outset to build capacity for applied research on a wide range of development issues, that has been narrowed down from four areas (economic innovation and development, socio-economic reform, environment and development, rural development and gender and development) to sustainable rural development that incorporates gender and environmental considerations. Like the other Asian MMRPs, the VNRP has provided training and funding support to individual researchers and networks whose projects are screened and selected competitively on the basis of their relevance to the research agenda formulated in consultation with multiple stakeholders. In the first phase, the VNRP researchers came from various sectors—a significant number were nonresearchers. Problems of quality and the need for more tangible results in capacity building impelled the Programme to focus on young researchers based in universities that usually obtained meager state funds compared to research institutes. Thus, in the second phase, training, close research monitoring and initial networking among researchers became more crucial to the Programme than in the previous phase. All told, the Programme, whose Secretariat is hosted by the National Institute of Science and Technology Policy and Strategic Studies, funded a total of 91 projects since its inception.

*Farming Systems Research Programme (FSRP)*  
*SAREC/SIDA (1990-2002)*

The FSRP was established after a decade of research collaboration with Vietnamese scholars in the form of projects initiated by Swedish research institutions and subsequently managed and coordinated by the Swedes. Since the traditional mode of research collaboration did not necessarily make a dent on the research capacity of the Vietnamese counterparts, FSRP aimed to develop the research capability of collaborating research institutions—three Universities (Agriculture and Forestry, Ho Chi Minh City; Can Tho University and Hue University) and one research institute of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (National Institute of Animal Husbandry, Hanoi), through training and the provision of laboratory and other research facilities, even as it tries to improve the efficiency and productivity of livestock within the context of sustainable, integrated smallholder systems that make optimum use of locally available resources. Sensitive to emerging frameworks in agricultural research, the focus of the Programme shifted in the third phase from optimal use of local resources for feeding to integrated farming systems and from short-term research to advanced training at M.Sc. and Ph.D. levels. Scientific, on-farm/station research conducted by the faculty concerned, whose ultimate target groups are resource-poor rural farm families, constituted an integral part of the training. To break down the parochialism that characterizes region-based agricultural research in Vietnam, the FSRP aimed to enhance research cooperation among the research institutions in its network. The FSRP has trained 21 researchers in its M.Sc. and Ph.D. programmes.

*Vietnam Sustainable Development Programme (VISED)*  
*IDRC/CIDA (1992-2002)*

VISED was conceptualized by IDRC in consultation with members of the research communities and Ministries in Vietnam where the relevant research institutes (e.g., the Institute of Finance, the Institute for Economic Management) are lodged. The Programme aims to assist policy makers in Vietnam by building capacity for policy research in four priority areas: economic reform, environmental and natural resources management, science and technology management and reform and legislative reform; to strengthen key institutions responsible for policies and management in the priority areas; and to foster domestic and international research cooperation. The first phase of the Programme officially ended in 1996. Although a subsequent Programme, the Vietnam Economic and Environment Management Programme is not considered officially as the second phase of VISED, it nevertheless developed iteratively from VISED. The Programme has supported 33 projects in the course of its life. VISED is located in the Ministry of Science and Technology.

## 2.3 Latin America

### 2.3.1 Political Economic Context and Development Discourses

Like most of the other Asian and African countries in the study, Bolivia and Nicaragua are postcolonial societies with turbulent political economic histories. While Bolivia obtained its independence from Spain in 1825 after almost three centuries of colonial rule, the new republic experienced political instability and territorial wars with neighbouring countries in the 110-year period after its independence. The wars reduced the size of Bolivia and discredited the traditional oligarchy, thereby paving the way for a series of coups and the establishment in the 1930s of Bolivia's Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario—MNR).<sup>57</sup>

Popularly supported by indigenous miners and peasants, the MNR spearheaded one of Latin America's three most significant agrarian revolutions in the 20th century.<sup>58</sup> Following the economic decline and social unrest of the post-World War II years, the Mexican-inspired 1952 Bolivian Revolution instituted sweeping land reform and nationalized the tin industry, which had dominated the Bolivian economy since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>59</sup> But by the mid-1960s, the left-wing MNR control over a civilian

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57 Two wars of profound consequences were 1) the War of the Pacific [1879 to 1883] in which Bolivia lost its seacoast and rich nitrate fields to Chile [within the 1925-1935 period, Bolivia lost nearly half of its territory because of wars and bilateral agreements]; and 2) the Chaco War with Paraguay which led to the coups, the politicisation of the Indians and the formation of political groups of which the MNR was the most significant (Hudson, R.A. 1991. "Bolivia: Country Study". Federal Research Division, US Library of Congress.) <http://rs6.loc.gov/frd/cs/botoc/html>.; The Netherlands Development Assistance. 1998. *Bolivia. Evaluation of the Netherlands Development Programme with Bolivia vol. 2 Main Report*. The Hague: Ministry of Development Cooperation p. 17.

58 The Revolution led to the institution of a civilian government, universal suffrage and primary

government gave way to a series of military coups that saw ten dictators, the most notorious of whom, Garcia Meza, seized power in 1980 to prevent a democratically elected MNR leader from taking over government. Meza's brutally repressive regime and deep involvement in cocaine trafficking isolated Bolivia internationally and resulted internally in a general strike that brought the country to the brink of civil war, forcing the military to oust Meza and allow a transition to civilian rule by 1982.

Throughout the post-Revolution military coups and guerrilla warfare, the Bolivian economy nevertheless grew modestly, with a brief period of accelerated growth in the 1970s. But by the 1980s it had floundered and the bankrupt democratic transition government could not save it. Amidst widespread discontent and nationwide strikes, the country reeled from Latin America's first recorded hyperinflation (reaching as high as 24,000% in 1985). Bolivia's per capita income in 1985 had fallen below its 1965 level.<sup>60</sup>

The change of governments in mid-1985 broke the momentum of economic downturn. Subscribing to a neoliberal economic model, the Estenssoro administration implemented an austere stabilization programme that deregulated the economy, legalized dollars, eliminated subsidies, imposed a wage freeze and radically restructured the public sector. Interestingly, this was the first outright adoption of a stabilization programme in the country. Successive Bolivian governments had negotiated six tentative stabilization programmes with the IMF between 1979 and 1985 but they were not implemented because of strong opposition and lack of political continuity.

The successful reduction of the hyperinflation rate within a few months to 10%-20% in 1985 and to 6% in late 1989<sup>61</sup> reinforced the subsequent administrations' espousal of a neoliberal economic policy framework. Despite achievements associated with the stabilisation programme, the export-dependent Bolivian economy remained vulnerable to crisis. The crash of the tin market in the last quarter of 1995 broke this dominant industry's back. Together with the Estenssoro government's austerity programme, the collapse of the tin market contributed to the loss of jobs during the late 1980s of between 11.5% and 25% of the labour force. The economic distress associated with unemployment and the restiveness of those directly affected by the crisis and government's stabilisation programmes highlight two features of the contemporary Bolivian political economy: the role of the informal sector, particularly the coca and cocaine industry, in propping up the economy on the one hand<sup>62</sup> and government's

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education in the rural areas, enhancing in the process the indigenous population's identification with the Bolivian nation.

59 Mining has been an important sector in Bolivian history. Until the 1880s, the silver industry was an important feature of Bolivian colonial life, with Indians toiling in the silver mines for the Spanish coffers. However, the silver industry suffered a sharp decline in the late 1880s and was replaced by the tin industry. By the end of World War I, Bolivia was the world's second leading producer of tin, with a fifth of the world's output mined in Bolivia.

60 Hudson, 1991. [http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field\(DOCID+bo0011\)](http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field(DOCID+bo0011)); The Netherlands Development Assistance (1998: 20).

61 Hudson, 1991. [http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field\(DOCID+bo0011\)](http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field(DOCID+bo0011))

62 Majority of the dismissed workers in the state-controlled Mining Corporation of Bolivia, for instance entered the coca trade. The cocaine industry for the world's second largest source of

practice of imposing a state of siege that bans strikes, demonstrations and public meetings for 90 days in the face of impending protests, on the other.

The latter move, which government administrations have employed even in the period of neoliberal democratisation, reflects the relative strength of Bolivian civil society. Its long history of leftist-inspired struggles since the 1930s and the growth of NGOs in the 1970s in response to church initiatives in defence of peasants, have contributed to the organisation and mobilisation of various groups in the country.

In this respect, Bolivia differs from the African countries covered by the study, but shares common features with Nicaragua and the Asian countries, particularly India (specifically the state of Kerala) and Bangladesh. In Asia and Latin America, the countries studied have evolved a thickening web of grassroots organisations that form ephemeral political alliances through networks of kindred organisations<sup>63</sup>. Their discursive underpinnings include Marxism, the cooperative movement, feminism and liberation theology (in Latin America).

These discourses and the vigorous organizing activities in the post-war decades have contributed to higher levels of political consciousness among grassroots communities and sectoral groups in the Latin American and Asian countries. This does not seem to have been the case in the African countries, however. Despite similarities in the ideological underpinnings of Tanzania in the 1960s and some of the other countries in the Report, the concentration of state power immediately after independence in a political party, no matter that it was socialist in orientation, may have dampened initiatives to expand grassroots organisations, which in the other countries developed in an adversarial position to the state. For Uganda, on the other hand, the military repression led to revolts but the level of politicisation seems to have been much lower.

The roots of the Leftist-inspired grassroots organisations in Nicaragua may be traced to the liberal-conservative fighting between the forces of Augusto Cesar Sandino and Anastasio Somoza Garcia after the United States recall of its marines in the 1920s. But they grew in the late 1960s in direct opposition to Anastasio Somoza Debayle, whose family owned or controlled most of Nicaragua's strategic resources and enterprises from 1936 to 1979. The organisations were eventually established, led or consolidated by the Sandinista National Liberation Front, which engaged the state in violent struggle, forcing

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cocaine is said to be Bolivia's biggest employer. See Hudson, 1991. [http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field\(DOCID+bo0011\)](http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field(DOCID+bo0011)); Griffin, K. 1996. "The State and Economics of Cocaine: The Case Of Bolivia." in *State, Markets and Development: Essays in Honor of Rahman Sobhan*, edited by A. Abdullah and A. Khan. Dhaka: University Press Limited. Pp. 231-239.

<sup>63</sup> Annis, S. 1988. "Can Small-Scale Development Be Large-Scale Policy?" in *Direct to the Poor. Grassroots Development in Latin America*, edited by S. Annis and P. Hakim. Boulder and London: Lynne Reiner Publishers, pp. 210-213; The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1998. *Bangladesh: Evaluation of Netherlands-funded NGOs 1972-1996*. The Hague: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. pp 53-57; Franke, R and B Chasin. 1994. *Kerala: Development Through Radical Reform*. New Delhi and San Francisco: Pronilla and Co. Publishers and Institute for Food and Development Policy, p 113.

Somoza Debayle to flee Nicaragua in 1979.<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, the Sandinista revolutionary government favoured the growth of mass organisations but by then they had not yet achieved the autonomy needed to perform their role vis a-vis the Sandinista regime.<sup>65</sup> Only in the 1990s did more autonomous NGOs and grassroots organisations begin to proliferate.<sup>66</sup>

After the successful Sandinista Revolution, which saw the confiscation of Somoza's lands and the expansion of public ownership in most areas of the economy, Nicaragua went through a period of political instability brought about by the continuing tension between revolutionary and counterrevolutionary or contra forces<sup>67</sup>. The intensification of the Contra war led to the diversion of funds away from social and economic uses to counterinsurgency activities<sup>68</sup>. Sandinista tolerance for political pluralism also waned and the government found itself banning criticism and the organisation of opposition groups despite its bid to pursue a direct model of democracy<sup>69</sup> based on grassroots movements.

More devastating, however, was the overall impact of the Contra war on the unstable Nicaraguan economy. Although the rebuilding of the economy at the end of the civil war resulted in a GDP growth rate of 5% in 1980 and 1981, economic growth since declined yearly due, among many reasons, to the reluctance of foreign banks to lend money, the 1985 US total embargo on Nicaraguan goods and war expenditures which induced a hyperinflation of 14,000% annually in 1988. As a consequence of political economic acts and the damage brought about by a destructive hurricane in 1988, whatever gains were made in the first few years of the Sandinista government to enhance the quality of life of Nicaraguans were wiped out by 1990.<sup>70</sup> The economic situation had worsened to the extent that by mid-1988, the Sandinistas were forced to launch a drastic economic adjustment program as a condition for the resumption of external aid.

Furthermore, the bankruptcy of the government and loss of support from the economically suffering Soviet Union impelled the Sandinista government to move up the

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<sup>64</sup> Merrill, T. 1994. "Nicaragua: Country Study." : Federal Research Division, US Library of Congress. [http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field\(DOCID+ni0011](http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field(DOCID+ni0011); Close, D. 1988. *Nicaragua: Politics, Economics and Society*. London: Pinter Publisher pp. 2-3.

<sup>65</sup> Smith, H. 1994. *Nicaragua: Self-Determination and Survival*. London: Pluto Press. p. 42.

<sup>66</sup> The Nicaraguan Country Report notes that during the 1980s, only 114 NGOs were registered. From 1990 to 1997, however, the new NGOs numbered 1615 and served as channels for about \$316 million funds that flowed into the country

<sup>67</sup> The contra forces drew support from the United States campaign to isolate the Sandinista government and authorize its overthrow. Conducted within the period from 1981 to 1987, the US campaign against Nicaragua's revolutionary government was highlighted by an embargo on Nicaraguan goods, which the United States imposed in 1985. Merrill, T, 1994. [http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field\(DOCID+ni0011](http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field(DOCID+ni0011).

<sup>68</sup> Smith, H. (1994: pp. 250- 251.

<sup>69</sup> Smith (1994: 18; 42).

<sup>70</sup> It is said that by that year, Nicaraguans were much poorer than they were in 1970 ( Merrill, T.) (1994) [http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field\(DOCID+ni0028](http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field(DOCID+ni0028)

national elections. A new government with a neoliberal, private sector-driven economic framework took the helm in 1990. But the standard IMF policy prescriptions of the new government that were implemented in the other countries in the study met with fierce resistance from the mass groups, reflecting once again the level of politicisation and grassroots organisation in Nicaragua. The crippling strikes in the wake of the IMF-inspired 1990 economic plan made it imperative for the new Chamorro government to abandon or defer most of its proposed market reforms. In later years, government would put on hold structural adjustments not only because of widespread protests but also because of natural disasters such as Hurricane Mitch (1998), which caused \$1 billion in damages. Against this backdrop, the interface of neoliberal and Leftist discourses has not been as apparent in Nicaragua. In comparison, a neoliberal democratisation rhetoric has been uneasily juxtaposed to the Bolivian revolutionary nationalist discourse of the 1950s.<sup>71</sup>

Both Bolivia and Nicaragua are among the poorest and most indebted countries in Latin America. Although their per capita incomes are higher than the other countries in the study, Bolivia is the poorest in South America while Nicaragua is the poorest in Central America. Between the two, Nicaragua is poorer, with a GNP per capita in 1997 of only \$410 as opposed to \$970 for Bolivia [the GNP per capita of Latin America and the Caribbean was \$3953 in 1997. See Table 2.] National figures put more than half of the population in Bolivia and Nicaragua living below the poverty threshold but comparative UNDP data for all countries show on the one hand, much lower proportions of poor people in terms of the Human Poverty Index relative to the other countries in this Report and, on the other hand, higher figures compared to their Latin American and Caribbean neighbours. As to indebtedness, external debt constituted about 305.6% of the GNP of Nicaragua in 1997 and 67% of Bolivia's GNP for the same year (Table 2). Both figures are much higher than the 33.9% for Latin America and the Caribbean countries (Table 3).

Bolivia and Nicaragua differ in ethnic composition. The former is far more ethnically diverse; 60% of its population consists of indigenous peoples comprising more than 30 ethnic groups. In contrast, Nicaragua is more homogeneous, with 86% of the population consisting of ladinos or people of European or mixed European and indigenous descent who share a Hispanic culture<sup>72</sup>. This explains the salience of discourses related to indigenous peoples in Bolivia but not in Nicaragua.

On the whole, the development discourses in the two countries resonate with those found in the other sites of the study. Those related to democratisation, however, are

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<sup>71</sup> Albro, R. Spring 1998. "Introduction: A New Time and Place for Bolivian Popular Politics." *Ethnology: An International Journal of Culture and Social Anthropology* 37:99-115.

<sup>72</sup> Netherlands Development Assistance (1998: 21); Merrill, T (1994)  
[http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdv@field\(DOCID+ni0033](http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdv@field(DOCID+ni0033).

far more salient in Bolivia and Nicaragua, compared to the other countries where the MMRPs are found in reality. It is also notable that the discourses and the language in which development is discussed are carried by NGOs and strong grassroots organisations, which have had a Leftist-inspired activist tradition.

### 2.3.2 Academic/Research Contexts

Interviews conducted by the Country Teams with resource persons in Bolivia and Nicaragua reveal that the higher education institutions in both countries are primarily teaching-oriented and obtain very little funding support from government. In Bolivia, for instance, the national expenditures on Science and Technology (S&T), as percentages of the GDP, were 0.1% in 1982, and 0.3% in 1992, representing about US\$20 million.<sup>73</sup> This rate remained practically at the same level in 1996: 0.33%<sup>74</sup>. In public universities, which perform about 80% of research in Bolivia, the proportion was not any better: only 7.44% of their budget in 1995 was directed to research.<sup>75</sup>

The Nicaraguan higher education institutions (HEI), on the other hand, are entitled by law to 6% of the national budget although some of the rectors interviewed for the study claim that they receive less than this amount for academic activities including research. Like Bolivian universities, the Nicaraguan HEIs are teaching-oriented. Research undertakings are quite rare given the low proportion of university faculty with graduate degrees. While resource persons estimate that only about 12% of the faculty do research in Bolivia, the figures for Nicaragua may be even lower since very few professors have M.Sc. or Ph.D. degrees and there are fewer graduate programmes in the country.<sup>76</sup>

The differences in the state of higher education and research between Bolivia and Nicaragua partly reflect the post-World War II history of their education systems. When the Sandinistas took over Nicaragua's government, they inherited one of the poorest educational systems in Latin America. Due to generalized poverty and limited spending on education during the Somoza regime, only 22% of those who enrolled in the first grade completed primary education when the revolutionaries took over. Of this group, very few enrolled in secondary school as adolescents were pushed into the labour market to help their families make ends meet. As a result, three fourths of the rural population was illiterate in 1979. While the Sandinista government drastically raised the level of its expenditure for education, launched a massive literacy campaign that reduced the

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73 Instituto Universitario Ortega y Gasset. Convenio Andrés Bello. 1998. La Reforma de la Universidad Pública de Bolivia. TM editores, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia, p 217. As cited in the Bolivia Country Report

74 ICYT-CYTED-OEA (1999) – Indicadores de Ciencia y Tecnología 1995-1998. IESCT/Grupo Redes/Univ. Quilmes. Buenos Aires, Argentina, p. 42 as cited in the Bolivia Country Report.

75 Instituto Universitario Ortega y Gasset. Convenio Andrés Bello. 1998. La Reforma de la Universidad Pública de Bolivia. TM editores, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia, p 218. As cited in the Bolivia Country Report

76 See the Nicaraguan Country Report.

illiteracy rate from 50% to 23% of the population, and promulgated a development-oriented curriculum, the Contra war eroded many of these gains. Thus, Nicaragua remained relatively undereducated as late as 1993.<sup>77</sup> Although Bolivia shares many of the education-related problems of Nicaragua, its population was relatively better educated in the 1990s. Because of pre-World War I efforts, the illiteracy rate on the eve of the 1952 Bolivian Revolution was much lower than that of Nicaragua in 1979. Moreover, the foundation for the contemporary public education system was laid more than two decades earlier in Bolivia.<sup>78</sup>

In terms of research areas, both countries provide marginal support to social science programmes compared to the natural science and technology sector, which receives larger chunks of government funds. The Bolivia Country Report, for instance, noted that around 90% of the research investment in 1984 was made in the natural and engineering sciences and about 83% of researchers and technicians in the public university system were from these fields.<sup>79</sup> As a consequence, the few graduates of social science programmes leave the country in search of professional opportunities or find employment in development NGOs, which have not always been open to research. The majority of these NGOs are aimed at direct action. Depending on foreign financial support; many of them are short-lived and the majority have no concern whatsoever for research, due to other pressing social problems they have to deal with.

Regarding the institutional base for research, research activities in Bolivia are dispersed in universities and independent research centres engaged in development-oriented work such as CEBEM, CEDLA, CERES, CESU and IISEC. NGOs have also become alternative research sites in Bolivia. For the most part, however, NGO research in the country is primarily geared toward action, much like those in PRPA and RED-BRAC in Bangladesh. Only in a few cases are the research components of projects diagnostic in approach. Judging from the proliferation of NGOs, the channelling of funding support for development work to them, the employment of Nicaragua's educated sector in these organisations and the severely inadequate funds of universities in the country, a significant proportion of the limited research activities undertaken may be conducted by NGOs.

### 2.3.3 The Programmes in Context

The research programmes selected for Latin America consist of six university-based (SAREC-Bolivia PROEIB, CEPLAG in Bolivia and NITLAPAN, SAREC-Nicaragua and DANIDA-SUDESCA in Nicaragua) and five NGO-based programmes (PIEB, FTTP, PIRN in Bolivia and ADESO and IDRC in Nicaragua). With the exception of CEPLAG and SIDA/SAREC-Nicaragua, which build research capacities in the natural

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<sup>77</sup> Merrill, T (1994) [http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field\(DOCID+ni0036](http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field(DOCID+ni0036)

<sup>78</sup> Hudson, R. (1991). [http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field\(DOCID+bo0036](http://rs6.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy@field(DOCID+bo0036).

<sup>79</sup> Instituto Universitario Ortega y Gasset. Convenio Andrés Bello. 1998. La Reforma de la Universidad Pública de Bolivia. TM editores, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia, p 218. As cited in the Bolivia Country Report

and engineering sciences, the programmes are mostly social science based. It is interesting to note that of all the SIDA/SAREC-funded programmes in the seven countries covered by the study, only the SIDA/SAREC programme in Bolivia focuses on the social sciences.

Like their counterparts in Asia and Africa, the Latin American programmes are all geared towards the needs of the countries involved and are explicitly development-oriented. Demand for them has emanated from universities, NGOs as well as local communities. As a result, their thrusts reflect the most relevant issues and discourses in the two countries. For instance, PROIEB and PIRN in Bolivia are particularly sensitive to the indigenous peoples in Bolivia, a focus that is not shared by any other programme in the study.

The explicit development orientation of the Latin American research programmes is to be expected given the high level of politicisation and activist experience of significant segments of the population in the two countries. These factors also account for the widespread acceptance of participatory frameworks even among the more academic programmes like those funded by SIDA/SAREC, DANIDA and CEPLAG, which incorporate elements of a participatory development discourse into their procedures or work plans. Interestingly, the ADESO is keen on formulating procedures that live out the principle of participatory democracy as originally envisioned by the Sandinista Revolution. It subjects major decisions on details of the research programme to a General Assembly, many of whose members are from grassroots communities. The other programmes are less radical in this respect.

While adhering to participatory development frameworks, some of the selected Latin American programmes do not concentrate on building capacities for participatory and action-oriented research per se. The SIDA/SAREC-Bolivia programme and PIEB, for instance, take pains to provide potential researchers with grounding in social science theories and empirical research methodologies. PIEB, in particular, highlights the need for development-oriented social science research with a solid substantive basis in the context of a discursive activist milieu in which journalistic or anecdotal accounts with very little conceptual and empirical grounding pass as research. Such capability for theoretically and empirically grounded studies is deemed even more imperative given the significance of NGOs as research sites in Latin America. Potential researchers with such capability can draw wider conceptual and methodological implications from NGO-sponsored studies that are often narrowly focused to guide action.

The programmes that the researchers examined in Latin America are as follows:

## **Bolivia**

### *Programa de Investigación Estratégica de Bolivia (MMRP/PIEB)*

PIEB, the MMRP in Bolivia, was officially set up in May 1995. Since then, it has pursued two main objectives: to foster the development of social sciences by the execution of research of social relevance and academic quality and, to provide an impulse

to long range strategic research which would influence both local development and the formulation of public policies. Four themes constitute the research agenda of PIEB when it began in 1995: (1) actors and social relations in their daily life; (2) productive transformation, social integration and sustainable development; (3) democratisation and State reforms in a plural society; and (4) cultural transformations and communication. PIEB has issued several national open calls for proposals with the caveat that at least two young researchers ought to be trained for each approved project. After three such calls, however, the Programme began to actively recruit and train young researchers and shift its focus to building research capacity in regions with less developed research traditions. This explains the Programme emphasis on training workshops, courses on project formulation and networks of libraries and documentation centres.

#### *Forest, Trees And People Programme (FTPP)*

The FFTP is lodged in CERES, an independent research centre with expertise in natural resource management. Funded by the FAO international programme (the support for Bolivia is part of the Dutch cooperation), FFTP, like PIEB, pursues three clusters of activities in line with its overarching goal of community-based management of forests for sustainable development: a) research, specially aimed to the development of concepts, participating methodologies, and tools to enhance community participation in planning and action for community-based forestry; (b) training to promote the development of human and institutional resources able to adequately develop and disseminate such methodologies and tools; and (c) diffusion of information. Its research and training activities focus on developing and disseminating participatory methodologies based on the exploitation and application of traditional knowledge, associated with the environmental administration for the communities. Research, within FFTP's framework, is not restricted to the analysis of the community 'problems. It also aims to develop concepts that could be used in the analysis and search for alternative ways of solving identified problems in areas ranging from food safety, gender, landholdings, and local knowledge. To reach as many of the regions in Bolivia, FFTP has promoted national and regional networks of focal points in community forestry.

#### *Proyecto de Investigaciones en Recursos Naturales (PIRN)*

The Research Project on Natural Resources/PIRN-CIDOB/Consejo de los Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia (Council of the Native People of Bolivia), is aimed at recovering the indigenous knowledge related to the sustainable use and management of natural resources, as well as promoting local development using this knowledge. This programme was developed with support from DFID, with CIDOB as its executive agency. In order to attain the final goal of local development, the programme seeks to train local Indians on the recovery and reintroduction of their lost technologies. To this end, several activities of research, training and information gathering are being carried out. PIRN works with a scientific advisory group; projects are selected by means of a competitive process that includes calls for projects and peer review; support is given for improving approved projects; and a strong commitment is demanded from the communities involved in the projects. On the whole, the indigenous population in the areas where the project is developed decide on the extent and follow up of PIRN projects.

Like PIEB and FTTP, PIRN conducts methodology and management training not only for researchers and their staff but for a few members of the indigenous population as well.

### *SIDA/SAREC Programme in Bolivia*

Unlike in Vietnam and Nicaragua, the SIDA/SAREC programme in Bolivia is in the social sciences. SIDA/SAREC originally supported capacity building efforts in CEBEM and CERES, two independent research centres. SAREC's support to CERES dates back to 1978 while its support to CEBEM began in 1989. Located in Cochabamba, CERES developed capacity for theoretical sociological work and empirical anthropological research, balancing its theoretical and empirical thrusts. Since then, CERES has engaged in research, training and consultancy, giving assistance to grassroots organisations. In addition, a centre of documentation and information functions there. Its research and training activities revolve around environmental and demographic issues. On the other hand CEBEM was created in 1989 in La Paz, with support from SIDA/SAREC to develop multidisciplinary research and teaching at the postgraduate level in the areas of democracy, state and political system; public policies and development alternatives; environmental management and urban and local development. In the new phase of cooperation between Sweden and Bolivia, the programme, which has technology and social sciences for its theme, concentrates on the Universidad Mayor de San Andres (UMSA/La Paz) and the Universidad Mayor de San Simón (UMSS/ Cochabamba). For this phase, CEBEM and CERES researchers will be involved in teaching and tutorships for students in the Master and Ph.D. programmes.

### *Bilingual Intercultural Education Programme (PROEIB)*

PROEIB is a supraregional project for the training of human resources in five Latin American countries in the Andean region: Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru (Argentina should have joined by 2000). The Bolivian component consists of the management of an M.Sc. degree course in Interlinguistic Intercultural Education carried out at the Universidad Mayor de San Simón. PROEIB Bolivia is supported by GTZ in the context of the technical cooperation between the governments of Bolivia and Germany, with the participation of the Bolivian counterparts and of the different countries involved in the course. GTZ supplies resources for the institutional infrastructure and four foreign Ph.D. professors participating in the M.Sc. programme at UMSS. This university provides the administrative personnel, four permanent and one non-permanent professor and other professors. The participating countries grant fellowships for their respective students. PROEIB fosters a network of institutions working on the subject of indigenous people, particularly on Bilingual Intercultural Education (EIB) for the Andean countries. In 1999, this network included 19 universities, 20 indigenous organisations and 5 participant Ministries (GTZ, 1999). Research is integrated into the training activities but is rather weak.

### *Centre of Planning and Management ("Centro de Planificación y Gestión" or CEPLAG)*

The bilateral cooperation between Belgium and Bolivia started in 1989, having the Universidad Mayor de San Simón (UMSS) as a partner. This programme was articulated around four focal points: (a) health—tropical pathologies— still going on

between the University of Ambers and UMSS; (b) hydraulics laboratory – directed to problems related to water and energy (University of Louvain/UMSS/Municipal Company); (c) geo-technology; (d) soil and materials. The cooperation programme is carried out with Belgian professors participating as individual researchers, according to their own interests, in projects negotiated with UMSS. This model is analogous to some other cooperation arrangements, as the Dutch cooperation through bilateral agreements, except that, in the latter, negotiations are not made at an individual level, but rather at an institutional level, by the participating universities. One of the main results expected from this cooperation is the creation of high quality research centres focusing on local interests. In the area of natural resources, the centre—CEMAR—was rapidly organized and has been operating since 1997. In the case of the CEPLAG, however, the negotiation process had been going on since 1996 but serious conflicts between Belgian and Bolivian professors account for its being launched only in early 1998. CEPLAG's objective is to develop a research culture -inside and outside the university- and an academic qualification in UMSS, in the region and in the country, mainly on planning and management activities for the social and economic improvement of the region.

## **Nicaragua**

### *Asociación Para El Desarrollo Sostenible De Las Segovias (ADESO)*

The implementation of the new Dutch cooperation policy in Nicaragua started in 1993, when DGIS officials encouraged local groups to meet and discuss the implementation of an MMRP in the Las Segovias region. The mayor of Estelí sent out invitations and seventy-two representatives of seventy local organisations attended the first meeting. After this initial effort, a series of meetings with stakeholders led to the identification of five issues that they considered crucial to the development of their region: 1) the technological and economic changes in small-scale farming; 2) gender, women, and environment; 3) natural resources and environment; 4) population and local development; and 5) small-scale industrialisation. Due to the high level of political polarization among the organizers of the programme, ADESO was created as an autonomous organisation representing 32 local organisations, which include grassroots movements, NGOs, government agencies, universities and private consultants. ADESO does not conduct research but fosters research work contributing to the development of the Las Segovias region with the characteristics of the MMRPs. Adopting a competitive call for proposals, the first years of ADESO's existence found researchers from Managua having an edge over others. Since the Programme aims to build research capacity in one region, the Programme opened parallel calls for proposals for Las Segovias and beefed up the training of local researchers in the area. In addition to supporting research, ADESO created a Documentation Centre.

### *Instituto de Investigación y Desarrollo. Universidad Centroamericana-UCA - NITLAPÁN - Tiempo de Sembrar (NITLAPAN)*

NITLAPÁN is a research and development organisation that operates within the Universidad Centro Americana - UCA, with administrative autonomy. The institute started its operation in 1989 and currently is one of the most important research and

development organisations in Nicaragua. According to NITLAPÁN's official, their main goals are: to contribute to the reactivation as well as to the structural change of the national economy by means of concrete development projects and support to social actors in terms of economic organisation and accumulation, among others. NITLAPÁN focuses its work on development projects, research projects, and capacity building. The institute tries to fulfill its mission through local development programmes, research, and consultancy toward the constitution and organisation of small and medium-sized rural and urban enterprises. In this regard, the Programme has created a credit organisation for small enterprises. NITLAPÁN's research department particularly diffuses new technologies applied to agriculture and small agribusiness. Realizing that farmers without land titles hesitate to apply for credit, NITLAPÁN introduced a juridical service to improve land tenure conditions. The Programme has had a long history of cooperation and enjoys a plurality of donors.

#### *SIDA/SAREC PROGRAMME IN NICARAGUA*

The emphasis of the Sida/Sarec programme is capacity building for development research in Nicaraguan universities. Sida/Sarec has been financing five cooperation programmes in four universities: UNI (chemical and electrical engineering); UNA (agriculture); CIGEO (geological sciences) UNAN (environmental programme); the main component of the Swedish cooperation policy is the training of faculty members. As part of this effort, Sida/Sarec has also funded two recent studies on the status of higher education in the country. One purpose of these studies was to assess the impact of the recent efforts to reform the university system, particularly the decision to group all the engineering courses in one university. In connection with an agreement between the Swedish royal institute of technology and the Universidad Nacional de Ingeniería to build local capacity in areas that are relevant to local industry, the programme established 'sandwich fellowships' in the areas of drying technology, extraction and crystallization. The Sida/Sarec programme claims to address local problems and needs.

#### *IDRC*

Unlike SIDA/SAREC, IDRC does not have an office, a programme or even a clear cooperation policy in Nicaragua. Nonetheless, this agency has an important presence in the country. IDRC has established several partnerships with local NGOs and government agencies and transferred significant funds to them. During the research fieldwork, the team visited four of IDRC's partners that conduct research activities: Centre Humboldt, Guises Montana, CIDCA, and INIES. Despite the lack of a clear cooperation policy, all the projects financed by IDRC focus on environmental issues and have a strong social science component. The Nicaraguan Institute for Economic and Social Research—INIES—is an autonomous research NGO, although academically linked to the UNAN. INIES engages in applied research and the implementation of development projects. Guises Montana works in the Rio Coco region (Southwest of the country). Its institutional mission is the improvement of the quality of life of the local population. As a consequence of this orientation, they do not only emphasize development projects but also conduct some research when they see fit. Their areas of research include local vegetal fiber, fresh water shrimp breeding, extraction of plant oils,

and genetic breeding of maize The Alexander Von Humboldt Centre works mostly with local development and environmental management. They work in partnership with NGOs and municipal governments to conduct work on participatory land use planning and local capacity building. The Atlantic Coast Centre for Research and Documentation—CIDCA, which is academically linked to the Universidad Centro Americana. CIDCA focuses its activities on the Nicaraguan Eastern Coast. The retrieval of local history is an example of CIDCA's work.

#### *DANIDA/SUDESCA Programme*

SUDESCA is an innovative research and capacity building project in the field of innovation economics and technological changes. It is a broader cooperation effort involving three institutions in Central America (Costa Rica, Nicaragua and El Salvador) and one in Denmark. In the first phase of the programme (1993-1999) two students from Nicaragua, two from El Salvador, and three from Costa Rica were trained. Five obtained Ph.D. degrees and one obtained a M.Sc. These students attended classes in Denmark and did the research work in their home countries. In the second phase, inaugurated in 1999, the effort has been to consolidate the network of researchers and institutions involved in the project. The goal is to upgrade the graduate programmes in the three Latin American Universities. In Costa Rica, where there is a Masters programme, they will create a Ph.D. programme. In Nicaragua, where there is non-degree programme, they will create a M.Sc. programme. In El Salvador they will create a non-degree graduate programme. During the first phase, the Nicaraguan researchers developed research on the forest and textile industries. In this second phase they will expand the research areas and include students in the programme. These students will receive fellowships to attend graduate school in Costa Rica.

### **3. Modalities of Donor-Initiated Research Capacity Building in the South**

#### **3.1 Towards Constructing Modalities: Preliminary Issues and Qualifications**

The designers of the MMRP conceptualised a research programme with several interrelated assumptions regarding knowledge production in the developing world. Drawing from evolving discourses, the Programme is premised on the need to build and enhance the capacity of Southern researchers to understand and clarify issues that could enlighten short-, medium- and long-term processes of transformation in their societies. From the MMRP viewpoint, the complexity of change in postcolonial societies, bogged down by poverty, illiteracy, governance problems and structural economic difficulties, requires analytical capacities grounded in the prevailing conditions and particularities of the South. Clearly for the MMRP, building the capacity for development research could no longer be conceived simply in terms of training specialists in the basic (and universal) diagnostic tools and methods of academic disciplines, expecting them to apply these tools to research problems they personally identify and pursue without touching base with research users and intended beneficiaries on the ground.

Proponents of the MMRP argue that at the very least the urgency of addressing issues of underdevelopment entails focusing on research problems with consequences for overcoming particular obstacles to Southern development. The luxury of playfulness of the academic mind in the choice of research problems, while useful every now and then to gain insights on issues, is too high a price in light of logistical and time constraints. For indeed the time for Southern societies to seize development opportunities before they are overtaken once again by rapid and overwhelming global changes is quite limited.

For the MMRP, the choice and handling of research problems demands understanding them from the perspective of multiple, and often conflicting interests and perspectives. Such a nuanced grasp of issues and problems, in turn, requires the inputs of researchers in various disciplines and branches of knowledge and more importantly, interaction with users—those who will utilise the findings to formulate development-oriented policies or actions as well as those who would benefit or suffer from the consequences of policies and actions. Invaluable insights often lie undiscovered in the knowledge reservoir of the latter group who live close to the problems at hand.

Given these assumptions, the MMRP is a complex programme. At the time the 12 scholars in the Leusden Workshop brainstormed on the Project, they focused on the features of the Programme, which in combination, the designers of MMRP considered unique to it— long-term support for demand-driven, location-specific, multidisciplinary research on sustainable development, managed autonomously by Southern partners. In the course of the discussions, the scholars noted the existence of other donor-initiated programmes they were familiar with which shared some of the assumptions and key features of the MMRP.

Taking the existence of such programmes for granted, the Project Coordinators devoted their time in subsequent Workshops to operationalising the MMRP features. Nevertheless, they were aware from the start of the impossibility of finding programmes comparable in all respects to the MMRP. Moreover, the MMRPs themselves showed considerable variation across countries and empirical research was necessary to document differences in thrusts and implementation. To enable the Project to address the aims of the study and arrive at some meaningful comparisons, it was necessary for the country teams to identify programmes that at least shared the broad objectives of the MMRP and some of its attributes. To that end, the research support situations in the MMRP countries had to be ‘mapped’ as a local situations’ perspective instead of a donors’ perspective was sought.

The mapping exercise revealed that most of the external agencies funded research and research institutions directly, according to their (the agencies’) priorities. Some of them funded government research institutions or universities; others supported short-term action research lodged in NGOs. In view of this, the country researchers, in the light of the locally available options, applied a set of criteria, which varied slightly from one country study to the other.<sup>80</sup> Some of the obvious variations in the choices of comparators

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The difficulties met and the criteria used for selecting the comparators in each country are

were due to the attributes emphasized and the context of the country. For instance, the research division of BRAC, the biggest NGO in Bangladesh, was chosen because it was similar to the PRPA, the Bangladesh MMRP, in terms of demand-drivenness and focus on research with direct implications for action. Similarly in Nicaragua, NITLAPAN, a research-cum-development organisation operating within the Universidad Centro Americana was selected because it consciously linked research to policy and actors on the ground, bridging macro and micro level analyses in their efforts. At the minimum, the selected comparators were externally funded programmes or institutions that aimed to build research capacity (of the most varied types), oriented toward specific development needs of the country or locality in which they are found.

While the inclusion of RED-BRAC and NITLAPAN in the country studies yielded insights into building capacity for research on critical development problems that would inform action, they are not actual programmes. That is, they do not constitute a distinguishable set of activities related to research and capacity building that would not exist without donor-initiated support. The two comparators are research units or institutions. Funding donors support their routine activities—some may fund specific short or long-term projects, others are more interested in consultancy work. But the fact is that the donors approach the institutions either to fund some activity that the institutions are currently developing or to engage them in some activity that the donors have interest in. This is also the case for the EPRC and the MISR in Uganda. The plurality of donors to these institutions makes it difficult to explore the impact of specific donor policies in capacity building. Thus, for purposes of this Report, the four cases are not systematically compared with the other programmes although relevant insights from them are incorporated in appropriate sections and noted accordingly.

Similarly, IDRC's support to four NGOs in Nicaragua for particular action-oriented social science research projects is excluded from the formal comparisons in this Report because they neither constitute a clear-cut programme nor a cooperation policy. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that IDRC has achieved the reputation of pushing Nicaraguan researchers to work more closely with the grassroots as they addressed environmental issues, participatory land use planning and local capacity building. The insights from these projects have contributed to the overall reflections in this Report.

Another overriding concern during the mapping exercise was identifying long-term donor-supported programmes. The reason was that research capacity building is not a once-and-for-all event. It is the result of a cumulative process of learning. Hence, the programmes for selection ought to be multiyear or multiannual with promise of support for different phases. Table 4 shows that almost all donors selected supported long-term programmes. Two comparators, however, the UNDP in Kerala, India and the IDRC/CIDA-supported VISED in Vietnam were short-lived. The UNDP, which helped mainstream social development issues in India's agenda in its brief two-year existence, was aborted by the untimely demise of its Director. On the other hand, the VISED, which was positively assessed for enhancing the skills of researchers, completed a three-year phase and evolved into a programme with a different name and funding source (Vietnam

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described in detail in the respective Country Reports.

Economic and Environmental Management). Despite the shorter duration of these programmes, they are included in the comparisons in this Report because of lessons that could be drawn from the modalities they represent.

As far as this Report is concerned, the notion of long-term donor support refers to the duration of a specific agreement between the foreign donor and the local recipient organisation, which reflects the type of capacity building being aimed for and facets of the donors' cooperation policies. The duration does not have anything to do with the length of funding of specific projects within programmes.

Examining the description of the activities funded by each programme, the distinction between long- and short-term funding is less clear-cut. The MMRPs, for example, have donor support guaranteed for at least four years at a time (all MMRPs have already negotiated a second phase) but the projects they support are short-term. As some recipients have stressed, they are often too short, leaving no time for more thorough reflection and literature preparation on the theme, cutting short what could be a more comprehensive survey, hastening (with deleterious effects on the quality) the writing up of research reports which have not sufficiently matured and, most seriously, permitting only short-term on-the-job research training for young researchers.

Of course there are good reasons for the time frame. For one, the demand-driven approach to research adopted by the MMRPs gives preference for short-term research because it is difficult to sustain the interest of stakeholders in projects with long gestation periods. Moreover, there is widespread interest in providing research opportunities to as many interested parties as possible; long-term projects would certainly decrease the number of grantees considerably.<sup>81</sup>

Depending on the defining variables, there are different ways of constructing modalities of donor-initiated research collaboration out of the programmes studied. The institutional arrangements employed, the research capacities being developed, linkages with other researchers and stakeholders within the country and relations with donor agencies and Southern partners define general modes of cooperation that may differ from each other in terms of any one of the variables. Variations observed within each modality usually result from differences in the practices of funding agencies, the conditions in the country or locality, the institutions in which the programmes are lodged and the core people implementing the research capacity-building strategy.

The following sections construct and compare various modalities, each section elaborating on the constructed modalities before it.

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<sup>81</sup> The duration of the MMRP-funded projects granted to local applicants, as well as the number of times the same person may apply and receive support is a controversial one. PIEB in Bolivia has decided that any person can receive support only once and this has been pointed out as one of the weaknesses of the programme in terms of capacity building of young researchers. REPOA in Tanzania, on the other hand, has been accused of "funding the few winners of the competition over and over" (See the Tanzania Country Report). It certainly is a trade-off and any decision must be legitimated by and made accountable to the local stakeholders. On the other hand, MMRPs and their projects were encouraged to seek a long-term development perspective on their research and motivation for it. In that sense, the research has a long-term dimension.

### **3.2 Institutional Arrangements and Administrative Mechanisms: Issues of Autonomy, Accountability and Sustainability**

Two modalities emerge in terms of institutional arrangements for capacity building. Mode 1 consists of programmes linked to and administered by existing academic institutions, i.e., universities or independent research centres. Except for WRDP in Tanzania, all SAREC and DANIDA-funded projects as well as the GTZ and Belgian-supported programmes fall under Mode I (Table 5). In all these cases, donor support activity is clearly distinguishable from the other activities carried out by the universities or research institutes and the local coordinators are based in the institutions involved.

The SIDA/SAREC-funded FSRP in Vietnam involves three agricultural universities in different regions of the country and one research institute. The Vietnamese scientists who initiated the programme, the SAREC officers and two resident foreign consultants formulate its research agenda. Coordinators in the collaborating institutions and researchers, however, contribute to the process and decide on projects to be funded or the amount allocated for each project.

Like the FSRP, Nicaraguans initiated most of the SAREC cooperation programmes in the four universities covered. The initiators and Nicaraguan coordinators of the programmes claim to have a high degree of autonomy in the implementation and management of the programmes. They select the research subjects, the members of the faculty who are to receive fellowship grants and request the purchase of equipment and materials. In all the Nicaraguan programmes studied, the researchers claim not to have experienced any interference from Swedish colleagues, or from SAREC officers regarding programme operations.

The SIDA/SAREC-funded programme in Bolivia is slightly different from those in Vietnam and Nicaragua. For one, the donor agency's support was initially channelled to CERES and CEBEM, two independent research centres working exclusively in the social sciences. A second difference is that funding for research and training in the areas of environmental problems, demographic studies, local democracy and urban administration aimed to develop transdisciplinary perspectives and to balance capacity for theoretical social science work with social action. The newest phase of the SIDA/SAREC cooperation in the social sciences in two universities will build on the capacities developed in the institutes they supported not only in terms of carrying out research but also in research management. Researchers from CEBEM and CERES, who participated in an earlier phase of the SIDA/SAREC Bolivian programme, will facilitate the links between the faculty in the two universities and relevant centres of capacity building. These researchers will also serve as teachers and tutors of Ph.D. and M.Sc. students.

**Table 4. SELECTED PROGRAMS BY RESEARCH AREAS, CAPACITY GOALS AND BENEFICIARIES  
LATIN AMERICA**

<b>PROGRAMME</b>	<b>FIELD OF KNOWLEDGE/ RESEARCH AREAS</b>	<b>CAPACITY GOALS/ RESEARCH BENEFICIARIES</b>
<b>BOLIVIA</b>		
<i><b>PIEB</b></i>	Social Sciences/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• actors and social relations in daily life</li> <li>• productive transformation, social integration and sustainable development</li> <li>• democratisation and state reform</li> <li>• cultural transformation and community studies</li> </ul>	Create a strong research community (special focus on training young researchers in process of doing research) that will contribute studies to enlighten national (subsequent focus on regional) development through its influence in public policy decision-making.
<b>FTTP</b>	Community forestry (environmental management – social sciences)	Develop researchers and train relevant publics in participatory, community-based environmental management/communities in forested areas
<b>PIRN</b>	Indigenous technical knowledge	Develop researchers and train relevant publics in participatory recovery of indigenous knowledge/indigenous peoples in Bolivia
<b>SAREC</b>	Phase I: social sciences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• democracy, state and political systems</li> <li>• environment</li> <li>• urban and local development</li> <li>• public policy and development</li> </ul> Phase II: social sciences and technology	Develop researchers and create networks for local development (e.g., Network for Action and Research for Local Development, Network for Sustainable Development, Network for Urban Development)  Conduct formal training (Masters and PhDs), strengthen institutions, consolidate postgraduate programmes; publish scientific output; establish linkages with Swedish researchers
<b>PROEIB</b>	Interlinguistic intercultural education	Develop competent teachers and researchers through bilingual Masters courses/indigenous peoples
<b>CEPLAG</b>	Social sciences/Natural Sciences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• health</li> <li>• hydraulics</li> <li>• geotechnical</li> <li>• soils</li> </ul>	Develop researchers who will conduct studies for regional planning and management/region  Conduct formal training, institutional strengthen institution, consolidate postgraduate programmes
<b>NICARAGUA</b>		
<i><b>ADESO</b></i>	Development research	Create a sense in the community of the relevance of research for development – training new researchers in the region to solve problems using research results – community participation in agenda setting
<b>SAREC*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Electrical engineering,</li> <li>•chemical engineering,</li> <li>• plant science</li> <li>• environment/geosciences</li> </ul>	Develop research on topics useful to region in the course of formal training (e.g., pollution of underground water)  Conduct formal training of researchers (Masters and PhDs), strengthen institutions, consolidate postgraduate programmes; publish scientific output; establish linkages with Swedish researchers/
<b>SUDESCA</b>	Innovation economics and technological changes	Strengthen academic research, qualify university teachers, creation of a Ph.D. programme

**ASIA**

<b>PROGRAMME</b>	<b>FIELD OF KNOWLEDGE/ RESEARCH AREAS</b>	<b>CAPACITY GOALS/ RESEARCH BENEFICIARIES</b>
<b>VIETNAM</b>		
<i>VNPR</i>	Sustainable rural development research (integrating gender and environmental issues)	Create a strong research community that will contribute studies on poverty to enlighten national development through its influence in public policy decision-making.
<b>FSRP (SAREC)</b>	Integrated farming systems Agricultural, livestock, forestry, aquaculture	Conduct training of researchers (Masters and PhDs), strengthen institutions; publish scientific output
<b>VISED</b>	Economics, environment, S&T management, legislative reform	Conduct training, strengthen institution for policy-making, project management and networking
<b>BANGLADESH</b>		
<i>PRPA</i>	Development research (poverty alleviation)	Create a strong research community that will contribute studies on poverty to enlighten national development through its influence in public policy decision-making.  Contribute long-term poverty alleviation policy for Bangladesh
<b>MAP</b>	Poverty monitoring system, poverty alleviation	Strengthen institution and conduct research training in the field of social indicators, monitoring systems and databases for policy decision
<b>INDIA</b>		
<i>KRPLLD</i>	Environment, gender and poverty alleviation within a framework of local decentralization	Create a research culture locally, train researchers, motivate non-researchers  Contribute to local development planning and policies in Kerala
<b>APNLBP</b>	Biotechnology and small scale farming-systems	Train of researchers to deal with rural development problems; develop and transfer biotechnology
<b>UNDP</b>	Electrical engineering, chemical engineering, plant science, environment, geosciences	Train young and new researchers, attract senior researchers to development, action-research

## AFRICA

PROGRAMME*	FIELD OF KNOWLEDGE/ RESEARCH AREAS	CAPACITY GOALS/ RESEARCH BENEFICIARIES
<b>TANZANIA</b>		
<b>REPOA</b>	<i>Poverty alleviation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Environment</li> <li>•Gender</li> <li>•Public policy</li> <li>•Sociocultural determinants</li> <li>•Technology development</li> </ul>	Create a strong research community that will contribute studies on poverty to enlighten national development through its influence in public policy decision-making.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop capacity for policy research</li> <li>• Develop potential researchers</li> </ul>
<b>IDS-WSG*</b>	Gender studies	Create community of women researchers/university women
<b>WRDP*</b>	Gender studies	Create community of women researchers and staff/university women
<b>ENRECA*</b>	Social sciences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•gender</li> <li>•agrarian reform</li> <li>•farming systems and resources management</li> </ul>	Conduct formal training and enhance the research experiences of researchers of participating university institutes
<b>UGANDA</b>		
<b>NURRU</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Household poverty and welfare</li> <li>•Development conditions and policies</li> </ul>	Strengthen member institutions – train researchers in member institutions to solve problems using research results

All the University-based SIDA/SAREC-funded programmes support the formal training of researchers (Masters and Ph.D.) in local institutions. To prevent inbreeding and brain drain, the more technical programmes in Vietnam and Nicaragua devised sandwich programmes that enable postgraduate students to study part of the time in a Swedish university. Revising this model slightly, the social science Programme under negotiations in Bolivia would send teachers enrolled in the sandwich Masters and Ph.D. programmes to reputable universities within Latin America. Having funded the activities of the Latin American Federation of Social Science Organizations, SIDA/SAREC would be in a position to facilitate this new form of regional exchange.

The mode of cooperation between SIDA/SAREC and the Women Studies Group of the Institute of Development Studies in Tanzania deviates from the three models in Latin America and Asia. While SIDA/SAREC has been the main source of funding for the IDS/WSG, the donor agency supports research on a project-to-project basis. With the proliferation of gender groups in the University, including the WRDP, SIDA/SAREC and the groups agreed to create a Gender Management Committee (GMC), composed of representatives from the gender groups, to review proposals for small grants and select eligible proposals for submission to SIDA/SAREC. In fine, the ultimate decision of which projects to fund rests with SIDA/SAREC.

**Table 5. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OF PROGRAMMES FIGURING IN THE COMPARATIVE STUDY**

<b>Institutional Arrangements /Institutional Host</b>	<b>Mode I</b> Linked to and administered by universities and research centres	<b>Mode II</b> Lodged in but independent of the host institution
University	<p><i>SAREC:</i> •Vietnam •Bolivia (new phase) •Nicaragua •IDS/WSG-Tanzania</p> <p><i>DANIDA:</i> •SUDESCA-Nicaragua •ENRECA-Tanzania</p> <p><i>GTZ:</i> •PROEIB-Bolivia</p> <p><i>Belgian Flemish Cooperation Agency:</i> •CEPLAG-Bolivia</p>	<p><i>SAREC:</i>  •WRDP-Tanzania</p>
Research Centre Outside the University	<p><i>SAREC:</i>  •Bolivia (previous phase with CERES and CEBEM)</p>	<p><i>DGIS MMRP:</i> •KRPLLD-India <i>DGIS:</i> •APNLBP-India <i>UNDP:</i> •UNDP-India <i>FAO:</i> •FTTP-Bolivia <i>DFID:</i> •PIRN-CIDOB - Bolivia</p>
Government Agency		<p><i>DGIS MMRP:</i> •VNRP-Vietnam <i>CIDA/IDRC:</i> •VISED-Vietnam <i>CIDA/IDRC:</i> •MAP-Bangladesh</p>
Non-government Organisation		<p><i>DGIS MMRP:</i> •PRPA-Bangladesh</p>
Independent / Research Network		<p><i>DGIS MMRP:</i> •ADESO-Nicaragua •REPOA-Tanzania •NURRU-Uganda •PIEB-Bolivia</p>

The DANIDA-supported programmes are quite similar to those of SIDA/SAREC. In Nicaragua, SUDESCA, which hopes to enhance the competitiveness of the national economies within the coverage of the Project and seek economic alternatives to small communities, has a design similar to the SIDA/SAREC programmes. On the one hand, however, it is smaller in scope and scale, but on the other hand, it represents a broader cooperation effort involving three research institutions in Central America. SUDESCA

supports the attendance by researchers of classes in Denmark and the conduct of research in Nicaragua.

Like SIDA/SAREC and SUDESCA, ENRECA in Tanzania, a partnership between a Danish research centre and three institutes at the University of Dar es Salaam, features a sandwich thesis research system where Tanzanian researchers gather data or conduct field research in Tanzania and analyse and write up their findings abroad. In addition, the programme issues open calls for proposals and supports small projects of young researchers. The day-to-day operations of the programme lie individually and collectively with the coordinators of the institutes. They compose the Joint Research Committee that decides on funds and budgets.

Both SIDA/SAREC and DANIDA have relegated the management of the programmes to partner institutions, although in some of them resident consultants are present for technical support. The coordinators of SIDA/SAREC's and DANIDA's programmes in the local universities covered by the study claim to enjoy a high degree of autonomy in the management of their programmes. They themselves, however, point out to a series of important decisions previously made by the donors, such as which fields of knowledge are to be given priority, in some cases, at the initiative of or with inputs from the local researchers. Nevertheless, within these general fields, the resource persons agreed that both agencies leave the identification and selection of research topics entirely in the hands of the local partners.

Compared to the DANIDA and SIDA/SAREC system of programme administration, the Belgian-funded CEPLAG employs a permanent representative of the Agency to jointly manage the budget and activities (research and fellowships for Master degrees) of the programme together with a Bolivian coordinator. In terms of research agenda, the funding agency is involved in setting priorities although Bolivians negotiate research themes selected through participatory processes.

Apart from administration, the Belgium Flemish Cooperation Programme also differs from the SIDA/SAREC and DANIDA programmes covered in the study in the nature of cooperation with northern researchers. Carried out through projects coursed through the Universidad San Simon Cochabamba, Bolivia, in four focal points: health tropical pathologies, hydraulics, geo-technology; and soil and materials, the programme ensures the participation of Belgian academics as individual researchers in line with their own interests. The practice has been that projects designed in Bolivia are selected for presentation to the Flemish Inter University Council, which seeks professors interested in developing and undertaking the projects with Bolivian researchers. To some extent support for the projects depended on whether Belgian academics would participate in their development. Interestingly, while SIDA/SAREC and DANIDA would send Swedish or Danish scientists for technical backstopping, these were usually coursed institutionally. On the other hand, CEPLAG, which is the new Belgium Flemish Cooperation Programme included in this study, departs from its usual practice, using participatory processes for identifying research themes and even funding projects which do not succeed in getting the interest of Belgium researchers.

The final university-based programme under Mode I is the GTZ-supported Bilingual Intercultural Education (PROEIB) in the Andean region. At the request of the Bolivian Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, GTZ supplies resources for the institutional infrastructure. Four foreign Ph.D. professors participate in the M.Sc. degree course in Interlinguistic Intercultural Education, which Bolivia administers and to which Colombia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru send their students for training. While the Programme documents identify research as a fundamental activity, in practice, it is integrated into the training course and depends completely on the personal initiatives of Bolivian professors.

In contrast to the university-based programmes, all the DGIS-funded programmes (MMRPs and APNLBP) and a couple of other programmes (the IDRC-supported VISED and MAP programmes, FTTP and PIRN) bypassed established institutional structures and formed their own institutional arrangements although most of them are lodged in existing research centres.<sup>82</sup> They are in principle independent of their host institutions. While independence has been sought in the MMRPs, this has not been achieved completely in Kerala, Bangladesh and Vietnam. In quite a few cases, the Programme organisers found it difficult to find a host institution, which would allow complete independence, possibly out of concern for its reputation. Operating independently requires these programmes to acquire a range of management, organisational and training/capacity building skills and to establish their own systems of rules and procedures.

The DGIS-supported programmes maintain their autonomy from their hosts through agreements that define programme parameters, the structures of governance including independent Steering Committees, mechanisms of agenda setting and project selection, as well as research monitoring and evaluation processes. For instance, the MMRPs and the APNLBP have multistakeholder Steering Committees with members of known probity and a Secretariat in charge of day-to-day programme management. Similar local bodies referred to as Steering Committees, Executive Committees or Advisory Committees governed the other programmes and coordinated with the funding agency.

It is important to note, however, that while an independent system of governance is a prerequisite to autonomy from host institutions, it is not necessarily associated with autonomy from donors. Interestingly, it is only in the DGIS-supported programmes under Mode II that the donors are not represented in governing boards, an observation consistent with the thrust of its policy of granting full autonomy to Southern partners in the determination of research directions and fund allocation. In contrast, a foreign programme advisor and representative of the funding agency sit in the two IDRC

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82 KRLPPD in the Centre for Development Studies (CDS), UNDP in CDS, APNLBP in the Institute of Public Enterprises (IPE), FTTP in Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social/Cochabamba (CERES), PIEB in SINERGIA, PRPA in Grameen Trust, VISED in the Ministry of Science and Technology, VNRP in the National Institute of Strategic Studies, Ministry of Science and Technology, MAP in the Center for International Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific and PIRN in Consejo de los Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia (Council of the Native People of Bolivia).

programmes in Asia—VISED and MAP. The Bolivian Country Report observes that donors participate in some instances in administrative and executive committees or in some aspects of the management of FTTP and PIRN. The case of the UNDP programme is unique. Like the MMRPs and the APNLBP, it had no donor representation in its Steering Committee. A representative of the Harvard Centre for Population and Development Studies, however, sat in the Steering Committee presumably for substantive contributions since it had no power over funds.

Two points on the DGIS-supported Programmes in which the donor does not sit in any governing board are worth mentioning. By way of a background, the autonomy of the MMRPs and the APBLNP is anchored on the existence of multistakeholder Steering Committees (SCs) and complementary bodies like Programme Advisory Committees (PAC). Ironically, the establishment of Steering Committees composed of researchers and representatives of government and grassroots organisations was an absolute DGIS requirement to ensure autonomy. With projected inputs from various sectors, the SCs, assisted by PACs (in Programmes where they exist) are expected to set research thrusts in response to their assessment of the country or locality's development needs. For some MMRPs, which are independent of any institutional base, the thrusts set by the SCs are further confirmed by a General Assembly of organisations constituting the Programme.

The first point regarding the DGIS-funded programmes has to do with the composition of the SCs and PACs. Multistakeholder representation in the policy-making and advisory bodies is deemed crucial for achieving an autonomous process of direction setting that is attuned to the conditions in developing societies. But ensuring representation in the highest decision making bodies has been easier to achieve in some Programmes than in others. Compared to the APNLBP, which has worked well with a Biotechnology Committee of scientists, representatives and relevant government agencies and NGOs, the MMRPs have had varying levels of success in this area. MMRPs range from the dominance of academic interests in determining research thrusts and policies to the supremacy of grassroots organisations with veto powers over SC decisions.

Apart from nonacademic representation, the DGIS Programmes assume the efficacy of the SCs in providing appropriate policy directions and management oversight as integral to capturing the gains of donor autonomy. The difficulty to convene the SCs because of the busy schedules of their members suggests that much of the organisational and substantive work that has accounted for the relative success in the management of some of these Programmes has fallen on particular committed members of the SC or on the Secretariat. As in the other donor-initiated research programmes covered by the Report, a high level of commitment and sense of purpose among critical actors in the local leadership are indispensable to ensuring programme success and sustainability. This demand becomes even more imperative when the full responsibility for an iterative research programme rests on the partners in the South.

Apart from systems of governance involving highly respected members in the societies where the programmes exist, the specificity of programme frameworks, a programme's participation in bigger international networks, or the novelty of its research agenda have constrained host institutions from overturning programme decisions on

priorities or replacing them with their own. MAP, FTTP and VISED are cases in point. The paradigmatic nature of the underlying theoretical framework of MAP's efforts to monitor poverty in Bangladesh, the specificity of its methodology and its being a part of an IDRC-funded cross-country programme, protect its autonomy from its host, which is a regional body for Asia and the Pacific. Similarly, the fact that FTTP is part of an international programme supported by the Food and Agriculture Organisation's multidonor fiduciary funds enhances its autonomy from CERES. On the other hand, the novelty of neoliberal discourse in a country shifting from a command to a market economy has made VISED autonomous of Vietnam's Ministry of Science and Technology.

While the programmes under Mode II have built-in mechanisms to ensure autonomy from their hosts, autonomy constitutes only half of the picture. The other half consists of the benefits from the association of the programmes with their respective institutes. In general, the credibility of the institutions they affiliated with has contributed to the acceptance of the Programmes under Mode II. For instance, the position of the Institute of Public Enterprises in India as an outsider to agricultural research institutions has made it an impartial and neutral player; making the APNLPB more acceptable to the research organisations and the wider community. In the case of the KRPLLD, its location at the Centre of Development Studies, a staunch advocate of decentralization and an academic institution with a reputation for independence, has served the Programme well. Ironically for Vietnam, the location of VNRP in the Ministry of Science and Technology provides legitimacy for the Programmes and acceptance by the state. This, in turn, has helped it enjoy its current relative autonomy from the bureaucracy. FTTP's association with CERES, with tremendous experience in the management of natural resources and the analysis of environmental impacts, has boosted its identity while PRPA's association with Grameen Trust has augured well for its reputation in the circles working on poverty alleviation.

It is, nevertheless, important to point out the need to balance the gains from the programmes' association with strong and reputable institutions and their autonomy, despite the existence of formal mechanisms to ensure the latter. Autonomy is not a permanently assured thing. The line between autonomy and incorporation into a host organisation's agenda or operations becomes tenuous when a programme's leadership weakens or when mechanisms for independent decision-making or financial administration are not fully institutionalised. This is why informants expressed concern over the integration of the PRPA into the agenda of Grameen Trust when the leadership post in the PRPA Secretariat was vacated. In this connection, they were anxious that the Programme would not be able to maintain an identity independent of the host institution. Moreover, they were worried about the effects of the application of the NGO's administrative procedures and salary scales to programme operations on the long-run objective of PRPA, which is to provide immediate research-enlightened solutions to long-term processes of change (e.g., poverty alleviation policy) in Bangladesh. The fact that Grameen Trust appoints the PRPA Steering Committee, Chair and Program Director further adds to the apprehension over the institutional autonomy of the Programme.

Of the Mode II programmes, those that are not lodged in any institution do not have to weigh the costs (to autonomy) and benefits of institutional affiliation. They are independent. But full autonomy for the four MMRP Programmes under this category—REPOA, NURRU, PIEB and ADESO—has meant establishing an identity without any help from reputable institutions. Of the four, REPOA and PIEB have achieved greater success in carving some niche for themselves nationally in Tanzania and Bolivia. ADESO has institutionalised itself in the minds of a local rather than a national public although it is more concerned at the moment in showing local institutions the need for research in their search of solutions to local problems. NURRU started off with a secretariat at the Centre for Basic Research, a private foundation, but chose to form its own separate foundation in 1998. It has lagged behind the other two in terms of a consistent identity within Uganda because of management problems, but which have been resolved by a change in leadership.

Apart from the greater challenge of identity building and projection, full autonomy also entails greater responsibility and accountability. Autonomous programmes lodged in existing institutions tend, wittingly or unwittingly, to take not only their respective publics or stakeholders into account, but also the publics or community of the institution that hosts them. Usually, these publics overlap since the programme and the host institution share domain assumptions. The pressures for administrative accountability, and more importantly, for the moral responsibility to fulfil a programme's *raison d'être* or mission emanate as well from the wider community of the institutional host. The more aware they are of their responsibility to a wider community, concretised in the people they work with, the more programmes become vigilant of their direction and performance. For instance, the existence of KRPLLD in CDS would make it unthinkable for this MMRP to take the thrust of consultancy work usual in New Delhi, or mismanage finances. After all, the grassroots commitment of CDS resonates with and reinforces the same commitment in KRPLLD.

In the absence of a significant community that may take the form of the host institution, a research community, concrete local communities, or the imagined community of development workers in a particular region or country, full autonomy puts the burden of establishing ties with a relevant wider group on the programme. Among the four programmes without institutional homes, REPOA, PIEB and ADESO established ties in greater measure with their significant communities and have been more accountable to them than NURRU has been. In the course of defining its niche, REPOA has found itself working with the wider community of policymakers, international researchers and consultants on the one hand and development workers and grassroots researchers on the other. While it is now in the process of determining the identity of the poverty research institution it is building, it has had no problems with administrative accountability.

PIEB's significant others were confined in the initial phase of the Programme's evolution to Bolivia's social science community. The community, however, widened to include local community leaders and representatives of the universities, research centres and NGOs, which the Programme has consulted and through which it has issued calls for

proposals. This enlarged community has helped PIEB redefine its focus at different points in its development and keep up with a growing reputation for quality research in Bolivia. ADESO, on the other hand, draws on the community of grassroots organisations that has been significant in Nicaragua. It is this community that has kept ADESO on the track of participatory research and governance. In such a context, it has attained a high level of transparency and accountability. In the case of NURRU, the episode of mismanagement occurred because of the absence of a clear community in Uganda to which the leadership was accountable, apart from the DGIS. It was neither accountable to a university, a host research centre, or to a real or imagined development community.

In terms of institutional autonomy, the MMRPs that are not lodged in any centre or NGO enjoy full independence even from the funding agency. The rest of the programmes under Mode II have the flexibility and independence from the centres that host them except perhaps for PRPA whose long-term development may be subsumed substantively or administratively because of the overwhelming influence of its host, the Grameen Trust. In comparison, programmes under Mode I that involve institutions bound by university rules tend to be encumbered by university regulations and constraints and more vulnerable to academic politics.

The issue of institutional autonomy has been linked to the question of sustainability. From one point of view, programmes based in institutions like universities, research centres, government agencies or NGOs have greater promise of sustainability because both the networks of researchers they have produced and the institution they are part of would work for the survival and continuation of such programmes. From another perspective, however, programmes, which are not bogged down by the baggage of organisational and academic responsibilities, could have greater opportunities to establish a research track record that would ensure their attractiveness to funding agencies. Among the MMRPs, REPOA would seem to be on the path of sustainability as an institution. With its track record and the connections it has fostered, REPOA has become attractive to a number of funding agencies and is quite capable of obtaining contracts from a plurality of donors. Since donors cluster around particular types of studies such as policy research, however, the direction of the programme, caught as it is now between a macro-oriented policy research culture and a location-specific culture of grassroots poverty research, may be profoundly shaped by the practicality of survival as an organisation.

The concern of programmes like the FTTP, which have established a track record in community-based environmental research, however, is the seeming absence of sustained funding support for ground-level work. To obtain funds in light of changes in FAO funding and survive as a programme, FTTP may have to sacrifice its autonomy and link up with existing government agencies. Most of the MMRP programmes on the ground share the same anxiety. In addition to fears of little support for location-specific development research, they also worry about losing the autonomy that enhanced their learning. Will the level of autonomy of the programmes or the programmes themselves, for example, be maintained when DGIS withdraws its financial support? Will other donors permit the same level of self-governance or local partners?

When the issue of sustainability is raised the question, which this Report cannot address adequately, is what exactly is being sustained? Is it the programme as an organisation? Is it the model of research management the Programme operationalises and the philosophical framework of development and knowledge production which underlie it? Is it the policy that facilitates such a process and creates a critical mass of development researchers who can shift gears as they produce knowledge to improve the conditions of the poor facilitated by the autonomy to move resources and researchers at different levels, but most especially on the ground?

As a social experiment, the MMRPs advance a model of research collaboration and management that has worked in particular countries. In the case of Vietnam, the VNRP model of research management may even be adopted by the Ministry of Science and Technology for its international research cooperation programmes.

But to look at the MMRPs simply as models of research management is to miss the value of the philosophy it is espousing and the mode of knowledge production it is beginning to articulate. While the sustainability of particular Programmes may be at stake, the hope is that the ideas behind the Programmes will not only be sustained but also developed through networks of researchers who have been touched by it. In the end, the choice is between developing a research movement or an organisation.

While there are no easy answers to the questions regarding sustainability, it is instructive to end this section and begin Section 3.3 with a reflection from the ADESO experience as described in the Nicaraguan Report.

*From the moment ADESO was convened in the poor region of Las Segovias, the representatives of the local community acquired considerable decision-making powers vis-a-vis the whole programme: from its administrative organisation, including planning and budgeting, to its research agenda, selection criteria and quality evaluation.*

*This form of academic and administrative autonomy had no precedents in the cooperation programmes in the country and was even a cause of astonishment among the local social actors. Some of the participants in the initial negotiations for the establishment of the MMRP interviewed said that they viewed the Dutch representatives with suspicion, wondering what their ulterior motives were because they did not disclose their interests and refused to make demands regarding the implementation of the programme. Many of the local participants thought that they were being tested, although they were ignorant as to what they were being tested about.*

*Even today some members of ADESO have difficulties in comprehending the autonomy bestowed upon them by the Dutch. A couple of interviewees argued that the Dutch ought to have outlined clearer objectives for the programme. This complaint reveals that the habit of working, in cooperation agreements, in accordance with the priorities set by the donor agency, is deeply rooted among the recipients of research or development cooperation. It is also noteworthy that this complaint was raised at the point when the difficulties of establishing ADESO's research agenda and defining the criteria for selection of research proposals was being discussed. As there is a natural difficulty in working in an environment where more than thirty organisations are represented, some*

*members feel the need for an arbiter in resolving disputes. In exasperation and impatience with unresolved questions, some would express the hope that the foreign donor agency would act as arbiter.*

*The internal disputes originate in the diversity of interests of the organisations composing the general assembly of ADESO. Few of them have any experience in carrying out research activities or using research results and, therefore, experience difficulty in understanding and managing such a programme. There is, however, a positive side to this divergence. Because the decision structure of ADESO ensures that all member organisations are represented in the general assembly, the divergence becomes explicit in such forums and a healthy negotiation of interests takes place. In the course of this process, ADESO is building up its identity, refining its mission and exercising its autonomy while attaining a certain measure of sustainability. Thus if ADESO's existence is financially dependent on Dutch resources and therefore ADESO's autonomy was, at first, a concession of the donor, now autonomy has become part of their lived principles, a *modus operandi* or *vivendi*. The members are beginning to realize the meaning of research for local development, the importance of being able to express their own demands and needs for research, the procedures to ensure that the research process will produce results of quality and relevance.*

*The objective of the Dutch policy has never been simply the short-term implementation of an efficient research programme, but rather to invest in the building up of a capacity to generate, manage and carry out research programmes, which are meaningful for local development. In this sense, the learning process, which, undoubtedly, has taken place among ADESO's members, directors and employees, fulfils the objectives of the programme. And, as this know-how takes root, it is very likely that sustainability will be achieved. Even if ADESO does not, in the long run, continue to exist as a programme, the interviewees made it clear that its policy assumptions—the role of research in development, the local ownership of research design, implementation and management—have been incorporated into the local people's mental repertoire. In a sense, this reflects the sustainability of the policy, if not of the institution.*

### **3.3 Building Capacity for Development-Oriented Research: Issues of Relevance, Location-Specificity and Multidisciplinarity**

#### **3.3.1 Discursive Context**

Regardless of institutional arrangements, the donor-initiated programmes in the study were shaped in varying degrees by the changes in development discourses outlined in Section 1.2. Without exception, these programmes aim to build capacity for research that tackles development problems in the countries where they are found. Their documents and specific practices reveal that none of them adhere to the idea of knowledge for its own sake despite the academic moorings of the programmes under Mode I.

This observation is not surprising. After pouring resources into the disciplinary training of Southern scholars in Northern universities from 1946 to the 1970s, funding agencies shifted their support to research that is intimately linked to development goals. This thrust affected research programmes under bilateral or multilateral development

cooperation as well as those funded by private foundations (e.g., the Ford Foundation). A confluence of factors facilitated the shift in donor training priorities.

In the developing world, social scientists as early as the late 1950s, pointed to the wide gap between the dominant Western perspectives and theories they learned in the North and imparted in the Southern universities where they taught and the complex realities confronting their postcolonial societies. In response to the lack of congruence between theory and lived experience, Southern academics in countries that were not distracted by wars consciously expended efforts to indigenise their perspectives and methodologies. Indigenisation took a variety of meanings and forms at the time. It included, on the one hand, the search for indigenous concepts and perspectives and the grounding or adaptation of applicable Western perspectives and models on the other hand. Together with the worldwide protest movements in the 1970s, which harped on structural development issues and immersion with the masses, the indigenisation movement opened up social science communities in the South to problem-oriented, multidisciplinary development research that respects the views of those at the grassroots. Funding support in this direction merely nurtured the seeds of change within academic practice.

Indigenisation did not take root in the natural sciences because of the paradigmatic nature of the disciplines. But even as research institutes fed into the larger corpus of universal scientific works, the question of relevance impelled them to undertake location-specific studies that would help solve real problems. In the context of Southern agrarian economies, agricultural scientists were more pressured than their counterparts in the other basic disciplines to link research to the act of feeding the poor majority in their midst. Given the nature of their field, agriculturists were also more open to multidisciplinary links among the relevant natural sciences (e.g., plant breeding and of late, biotechnology) in search of greater productivity. Peasant resistance to scientific agricultural innovations further pushed natural scientists to widen their research network and link up with social scientists as early as the 1970s. By the mid-1980s, interactions between agriculturists and social scientists had become more significant. Thus, by the late 1980s, the frameworks of an increasing number of agriculturists had slowly shifted away from the view of peasants as irrational and ignorant to one as source of scientific input.

At the international level, changing paradigms contributed to the policy of support for development-related research. To a significant extent, donor agencies became harbingers of up-and-coming development policies and discourses. By making funds available to nurture proponents of emergent types of research or stimulate interest among traditional researchers, donors have helped in mainstreaming alternative development perspectives and participatory research paradigms, which Southern intellectuals and scholars have helped develop, in universities and research institutes. Through funding mechanisms, donors have also pushed researchers steeped in academic concerns or in theoretical critique to forge links with external agencies, including grassroots organisations.

While donor agencies have facilitated the exposure of Southern researchers to changing discourses and have themselves contributed to the debates, the motivation and stimulus among researchers in developing societies to undertake new modes of research do not necessarily derive from donors. As noted previously, the seeds for change had begun to sprout in the South at the point of interface with the donors. Furthermore, Southern actors have themselves contributed to the complex process of shaping international discourses.

As frameworks with real consequences for interpreting and operationalising development, international discourses are outcomes of struggles, debates and the intense advocacies of sectors from different countries and networks that contend in the international arena. The United Nations-sponsored Conferences such as the 1995 Conference in Beijing on gender, the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Conference on the environment and the 1995 Copenhagen Conference on human development have served as important venues for the struggles. The agreements reached in such Conferences have come to bind nations in the North and with them, the donor agencies that incorporate new concerns into the terms of their grants (e.g., gender and environmental concerns in funding for development activities and research).<sup>83</sup> But apart from compliance with international agreements, new views from donor agencies that affect research in the South often result from close interaction and intensive discussions between individuals in the agency and Southern colleagues.

Thus far, this Report has highlighted the significant contributions of evolving international discourses to changes in the orientation of donor-initiated research capacity building programs in the South—from direct training of Southern researchers in Northern institutions to collaborative research where end users participate in the process of identifying and conceptualising problems. The observed changes in discourses that enlighten development work, however, ought to be qualified by their operationalisation in practice.

While development perspectives over the years have shifted from modernization theory and structuralist political economic analysis to participatory development and good governance frameworks, ‘paradigmatic assumptions’ underlying earlier perspectives continue to inform the contemporary practice of the development community.<sup>84</sup> Kaplan identifies several assumptions held by development agencies to

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83 This explains the complaints of NGOs in Nicaragua regarding the changing themes and interests of donors and their corresponding efforts to undertake research in the areas for which funds were available.

84 Kaplan, A. 1999. *The Development of Capacity*. Geneva: UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service, pp. 5-7. The tenacity of these assumptions derives partly from the dominance of rational, science-based planning or intervention models that underlie the ideologically divergent development perspectives of modernization theory and Marxist-enlightened structuralist political economic analysis. Both positions converge on the view that development and social change emanate ‘primarily from centres of power in the form of intervention by state or international interests and following some broadly determined development path’. See Long, N. and A. Long (eds). 1992. *Battlefields of Knowledge: The Interlocking of Theory and Practice in Social Research and Development*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp. 18-20.

which even those who subscribe to participatory views unconsciously adhere. They may be summarized as follows.

First and foremost, development can be engineered through interventions that facilitate the delivery of resources to poor beneficiaries. The interventions presuppose a rational understanding of their conditions. Emphasis on understanding, in turn, puts high premium on the transfer of technical knowledge and expertise through training of development subjects, who are seen to be on the receiving end of a one-way flow of technical inputs. Assuming a direct line between input and output, the ultimate targets of development are expected to develop commensurately to the inputs of third parties who are presumably more developed. Following this line of reasoning, development programmes and projects are evaluated in terms of stipulated outputs given specific inputs.

The recent incorporation of participatory frameworks into international discourses has tempered the conventional banking mode of development intervention, in which technically superior and resource-rich external agencies provide inputs for specific projects undertaken in the developing world by groups working on behalf of recipients of development assistance. The participation of intended beneficiaries of development in the search for 'bottom-up' solutions has come to be accepted as vital to the dominant development paradigm. Nevertheless, Kaplan asserts that participation within this paradigm has tended to be seen as a means to achieve development goals rather than an end in itself.

Counterposing a different development reading, Kaplan argues that the whole point of development is to enable people, as its subjects, to participate in the governance of their own lives. Thus, participation is an end, not simply a means in a process that exists independently of third parties. It flows out of the development experiences of those seeking to develop. Moreover, development is nonlinear, unpredictable and occasionally, anarchic. Particular interventions produce myriad outcomes, both expected and unplanned, depending 'upon a complicated array of factors including the precise relationship between inputs and the development processes being intervened upon'.<sup>85</sup> This happens because targeted development beneficiaries are not 'passive recipients of intervention but active participants who process information and strategize in their dealings with local actors as well as with outside institutions and personnel'.<sup>86</sup>

Seen against this light, the direction of change and its significance cannot be imposed from the outside. Nor can it be explained by a structural logic. This suggests that development is open-ended since effective interventions open things up rather than close

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<sup>85</sup> Kaplan (1999: 17).

<sup>86</sup> See Long, N. and A. Long (eds). (1992: 21). Long and his associates have advanced actor-oriented approaches as counterpoint to structural analysis. This approach recognizes the central role of human action and consciousness in development. In the view of the proponents of this approach, intervention ought to be viewed not as the implementation of a plan of action but as 'an ongoing transformational process in which different actor interests and struggles are located'. An understanding of the processes by which knowledge is negotiated and jointly created and of power dynamics is crucial to the approach (Long 1992:9).

them down. These assumptions suggest that the evaluation of development interventions in the form of projects and programmes for Kaplan ought to take place 'against the background of the specific development process which has been intervened into, not against the ends stipulated in a project document'.<sup>87</sup>

What do the alternative domain assumptions imply for capacity building in general and research capacity building in particular? Since development agents do not deliver development but intervene into existing processes, understanding the location of individuals, organisations and communities in their own development path constitutes the most important challenge for development workers and researchers. They are required to enhance their openness and ability to observe acutely, suspending preconceptions to be able to render an appropriate development reading.<sup>88</sup> There is the catalytic function and facilitative role of listeners imbued with the commitment to enhance the self-consciousness of the marginalized so that they can develop their capacities and transform their environment through their own praxis.<sup>89</sup> With regards to research, participatory action research approaches (PAR) with their underlying theoretical standpoint are conceptually in sync with the alternative domain assumptions outlined above.<sup>90</sup> Thus, building the capacity for PAR could potentially bridge the assumptions of an inchoate alternative perspective and development practice.

On the whole, there is a lack of congruence between development perspectives (i.e., the increasingly participatory frameworks imbedded in the changing discourses of international agencies and donors and their evolving definition of development as empowerment) and the dominant paradigmatic assumptions that inform development practice. This reality is even more obviously reflected in the gap between the participatory/empowerment/democratisation goals in international development discourses and the research capacities being built. If conceptual congruence were the only consideration, then one would expect that building the capacity for applied research, in particular, for PAR would be a paramount goal to which academic research training (in disciplinary or multidisciplinary fields) would contribute. But a cursory review of the capacity-building programmes in developing countries reflects an emphasis on developing other skills, including training in traditional disciplinary scientific research.

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<sup>87</sup> Kaplan (1999: 19).

<sup>88</sup> Kaplan (1999: 11).

<sup>89</sup> Fals-Borda, O, and M..A. Rahman. 1991. *Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with Participatory Action Research*. New York: Apex Press, p. 12

<sup>90</sup> In PAR, practitioners in an organisation or in the case of the development community, development beneficiaries (e.g. the poor and marginalized) participate actively through the research-action process from project design on to the implementation of the research conclusions in an action program or agenda.

The lack of congruence reflects the complexity of development realities and the differences in the interests, missions, visions and thrusts of development agents whose discourses may converge at very high levels of abstraction but diverge on substantial theoretical and operational issues. To illustrate, most research donors will agree on the vital role of grassroots participation in the development process; their documents usually espouse a participatory framework in one form or the other. They may however, differ implicitly, in their views of the type of research capacity required by participatory development goals. Some agencies, for instance, focus on building basic and non participatory natural or social science research capacities that are adapted to the conditions in the developing world, convinced of the long run contributions of science to understanding development issues and promoting people empowerment. Accepting this view of science and developing societies, other agencies also confine themselves to building capacities for scientific research but enhance other capabilities as well (e.g., networking) to ensure the influence of science on government and NGO development policies or grassroots action. Still others directly support and encourage participatory action research, pointing to the limits of conventional scientific research in informing development work and believing that knowledge production processes involving beneficiaries best serve participatory goals.

### 3.3.2 Issues of Relevance, Location Specificity and Multidisciplinarity

Against the qualified relationship between changing international discourses and development practices, research capacity building in developing societies has come to mean support for a wide range of activities that shed light on socioeconomic, political and technical change in developing countries or in North-South relations. This includes problem raising (basic research) and problem solving research (applied, policy research).<sup>91</sup> With regards to the programmes under study, one finds a common concern with building research capacity that will contribute meaningfully to the societies where they are located, despite differences in higher education and research systems.<sup>92</sup> The programmes are officially justified by their objective of addressing research needs that are identified by the Southern partners or expected research users to be critical to their society's development. As far as programme documents and managers are concerned, therefore, the programmes in the study are demand-driven.

This Report accepts programme claims of societal relevance although it is aware of some of the issues in assessing what is socially relevant research. As elaborated in the

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<sup>91</sup> Manor, J., in collaboration with De Kadt, E. 1990. *Organising Development Research. Insights for the Netherlands from Four Other Western Countries*. Zoetermeer: Ministry of Education and Science. As cited in Boer and Box (1994: 161).

<sup>92</sup> Some countries like Nicaragua have highly underdeveloped research and higher education systems. In the region of Las Segovias, where ADESO was established, research is a word hardly heard of and very few people in the region would call themselves researchers. In India the situation is very different: "There was no dearth of researchers to meet these demands by the research programmes in view of the spread of higher education in the state and sensitization of people, thanks to the state's history of social reforms and political mobilization" (See the India Country Report).

Bolivian Report, actors in recipient countries representing a multiplicity of interests would have divergent views on priority needs and the choice of actors by donor agencies is a function of the nature of the cooperation. Programmes oriented toward strengthening particular fields of study would privilege the priorities identified by experts in the discipline or related areas and validate these priorities with Northern academics known to have sufficient understanding of the country. On the other hand, programmes which seek to address the needs of local communities or groups in specific localities would devise more participatory processes involving multiple actors in the communities in addition to expert researchers. Whose participation and how much of it would render a resulting programme demand-driven is an ideological question, the answers to which would vary depending on the underlying philosophy of development. The other question is how much weight should the participation of relevant publics have in the outcome of the negotiations between the donor and Southern partners for a programme to be considered demand-driven.

Granting that the programmes in the study are driven by demand, there are nevertheless interesting similarities and differences among them in terms of how they relate to or bring in the interests of the potential users of the research since most frameworks of development cooperation consider the explicit impact of research on development processes as a criterion for support. It makes sense to organise the discussion of these similarities and differences along the modalities of institutional arrangements discussed in Section 3.2.

The university-based programmes under Mode I respond to demand emanating from the local universities and the society at large for academically qualified researchers and teachers in the social sciences, natural sciences or in multidisciplinary fields (e.g., environment). At one level, the programmes respond to the academic needs of partner institutions. For instance, the SIDA/SAREC programme in Nicaragua was created at the initiative of the local universities, which prioritised the need for training and research in the undeveloped fields of engineering in the country. But because the view that research ought to be grounded in the conditions in the South has become part of the donor community's framework, the academic-oriented Mode I programmes aim at another level to encourage researchers and those under formal training to consult with their respective communities regarding the problems to tackle.

The research areas of the Mode I programmes in Table 5 reflect themes that resonate the new discourses (poverty alleviation, environment, gender) as well as the salient problems of the countries concerned (e.g., democratisation issues in Bolivia, technical underdevelopment in Nicaragua, rural poverty in Vietnam) [Table 4]. Moreover, some of the programmes have developed mechanisms to consult with intended research beneficiaries outside academe. The SIDA/SAREC-funded natural science-based programmes in Vietnam and Nicaragua, for example, have benefited from consultations with farmers and representatives of chemical firms and local planners, respectively. The study of pollution of underground waters and impact of pesticides under the SIDA/SAREC's Nicaraguan programme, in particular, was formulated in light of the environmental problems of the area. In the social sciences, the SIDA/SAREC programme

in Bolivia forged links between researchers and research users in the process of forming various networks (e.g., the Network for Action and Research in Local Development). Presumably, the participants in these networks have contributed to the research agenda and topics supported by the programme. As to the SAREC-supported gender programmes in Tanzania, linkages with grassroots women who figure in research are very much a part of feminist participatory strategies and could be assumed to be a mode of doing research in the programme.

The topics pursued by researchers under training in the DANIDA-funded SUDESCA programme were also informed by local needs since one of its major objectives is to formulate economic alternatives for small communities in Nicaragua. The field-based research required by the themes of the DANIDA ENRECA programme in Tanzania would have also called for some links with potential users, albeit informal, although the Tanzanian Country team noted that it operated like any traditional academic cooperation programme, with hardly any connection to end users. In contrast, the GTZ-funded PROIEB MS programme in Bolivia is closely associated with the network of scholars working on the subject of indigenous peoples and include indigenous peoples within the ambit of its training.

Interestingly, among the Mode I programmes, the Belgian-supported CEPLAG is unique for developing more systematically a way of building in the views of a cross-section of Bolivian society, among them potential research users, in identifying thematic guidelines and needs for projects. CEPLAG recently devised public opinion polls of the research community, specialists and institutions in the economic and social areas, the government and NGOs. At the end of this process, a Workshop involving experts, researchers interested in projects and representatives from local institutions, consolidated the results of the consultations and defined the guidelines and projects.

From a development perspective, however, the formal or informal consultations with end users for most of the academically oriented programmes under Mode I is a move toward bridging the gap between academe and society. The heavy demands of graduate training programmes have generally constrained the institutionalisation of links to end users. Thus, while consultations during project conceptualisation or while a project is ongoing are notable, managers of academic programmes have usually set the dissemination of research findings to end users to a later period, if they had thought of it at all. In most instances, however, the timing of academic work has not permitted such a 'luxury' and the implications of a study are confined to a few paragraphs at the end of a report, without the benefit of feedback and consequent refinement.

That the end user is hardly imagined or is usually conceived as marginal to the entire research process is understandable within the typical academic frame of mind, given the mode of knowledge production underlying research practice in universities. In an ideal typical depiction of this mode, problems are set and knowledge is produced in a context governed largely by the academic interests of specific communities.<sup>93</sup> These

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<sup>93</sup> For a cogent articulation of a mode of research and knowledge production that differs from the

communities are organised by disciplines and lodged in artificially delineated academic departments. Within these homogenous disciplinary communities, knowledge is produced along dominant theoretical and methodological paradigms. Quality is determined through a peer review process, which is an effective form of cognitive and social control that reinforces a discipline's definitions of what problems and techniques are deemed important to work on. Finally, disciplines are organised hierarchically, with the basic disciplines presumed to develop or discover the theories to be adopted by the more applied fields. In this ideal typical mode of knowledge production, research utilisation is not of primary interest to an academic. Understandably, within this framework, the user is relegated to the end of a knowledge production process, which researchers often have no compulsion to see through. For to their minds, theirs is the singular task of producing theories and evolving methodologies.

The university-based programmes covered by the study take for granted the prevalent view of the relationship between knowledge production and utilisation. It assumes that research on specific development issues along disciplinary lines will enlighten policy options as long as the research is done according to established norms of scientific practice. Interestingly, however, the programmes do not completely adhere to the assumptions of the traditional mode of knowledge production as depicted in an ideal typical manner above. For instance, by building capacity for agricultural research that is sensitive to the practical needs of poor farmers at the micro-level, the SIDA/SAREC-funded FSRP in Vietnam has moved slightly beyond the assumption that the proper application of basic disciplinary theories and methods will automatically result in useful output. Consideration of the needs of farmers and the incorporation of their ideas and other insights from the field into the usual disciplinary approach seem to have enhanced the FSRP's scientific research as evidenced by the 30 articles published by the Programme in international journals. Nevertheless, while FSRP has been quite successful in developing research capacity that is more sensitive to the inputs of users, the output of the Programme in terms of the knowledge produced lies within the sub-disciplines of agriculture. Moreover, without deliberate efforts to integrate dialogue between researchers and end users into the research process, the Programme still shares the assumption held by academics that quality academic output will eventually input into policy and practice.

The Mode II programmes that are lodged outside the university differ in their tacit or outright acceptance of the assumptions of the traditional academic mode of knowledge production. The UNDP Programme in India and the two IDRC-funded programmes in Vietnam and Bangladesh—VISED and MAP, all aim to build capacity for applied and policy-oriented research at the macro level. The research community and end users in the three countries deem these programmes extremely relevant. The research focus is new

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traditional disciplinary mode in the way it is produced, 'how it is produced, the context in which it is pursued, the way it is organised, the reward system it utilises and the mechanisms that control the quality of that which is produced' see Gibbons, M. et al. 1999. *The New Production of Knowledge. The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage Publications.

for researchers in all the countries studied. Their approach, however, is not. It is essentially disciplinary. The programmes implicitly advocate the applications of existing frameworks and methodologies to development issues at the macro level.

MAP draws primarily from the theoretical framework and techniques of neoclassical economic analysis as well as developments in research on social and poverty indicators. VISED's approach seems to be broader than MAP because of its focus on economics in its first year, environment and natural resources in its second year, and the social issues arising from economic development in its third year. Nevertheless, the preference for imparting the disciplinary skills of economic analysis, which the Vietnamese consider of primary importance in the country's transition to a market-oriented economy, is apparent in the reconfiguration of the Programme into one that would concentrate on economic management on the one hand, and environmental management, on the other. Of the three Programmes, India's UNDP Programme was the most multidisciplinary in scope. Like VISED and MAP, however, the projects were mostly conducted along disciplinary lines, i.e., as applications of economic, sociological and demographic analysis to specific issues.

On the surface, the APNLBP and the FSRP are similar as both Programmes aim to do scientific work and develop appropriate technology that will improve the lives of poor farmers. A closer examination of the goals of APNLBP and its implementation, however, suggests a difference in the implicit assumptions about knowledge production, although the assumptions may not be articulated as such. The objective of APNLBP is not stated in terms of research capacity building but 'improving the status of small-scale farmers and processors through the application of biotechnologies in semi-arid farming systems in Andhra Pradesh'. More specifically, the objective is to mitigate some of the negative effects of the asymmetric application of biotechnology, which are already being felt by resource poor farmers in developing societies. Meeting the Programme's objectives requires a shift from a supply-driven transfer of technology approach to a demand-driven perspective that takes the situation of the farmers holistically. Although the end result is the development of appropriate biotechnology for arid places, the knowledge produced has the potential of transcending the natural science disciplines that intersect in biotechnology, the social sciences and possibly the engineering sciences. Whether this potential is starting to be fulfilled, however, could not be ascertained because the research team did not look into the insipient transdisciplinarity of the APNLBP's output. Rather, it commended the Programme for the technical quality of its work, as judged by peer reviewers within agriculture.

Like the APNLBP, the FTTP and PIRN in Bolivia are equally concerned with improving the conditions in the areas they serve. The FTTP hopes to benefit both the environment and people living near Bolivian forests by advocating community-based forestry management. In the process of its work, the FTTP facilitates the strong interaction between researchers and multiple actors involved in community forestry. The networks it has forged involve specialists on the subjects related to the programme goals as well as members of traditional local communities where it operates. Necessarily, the social scientists and those in the more technical sciences work together in FTTP. The

initial tensions have slowly been resolved in the process of addressing a common problem.

Working with indigenous communities, PIRN, on the other hand, fosters close links among Indian communities, the scientific community, government technicians and political representatives. The linkages are established through workshops on relevant topics such as intellectual property rights, and legislation regarding Bolivia's natural resources. The scientific community participates through agreements and contracts with research institutions to provide research-based advice and assistance (e.g., cataloguing of plants, organisation of collections and archives, etc).

The unarticulated alternative mode of knowledge production underlying the objectives and practices of APNLBP, FTTP and PIRN characterizes the evolution of research areas at the frontier of science and technology such as computer, materials, biomedical and environmental sciences, fields that essentially produced demand-driven knowledge lying in the interstices of academic disciplines. For the social sciences, development studies, which cannot be encompassed by any discipline lends itself more easily to the alternative mode. This mode consists of cognitive and social practices carried out in the context of application to a concrete problem. The practices transcend the theoretical and methodological positions of collaborating research partners from different branches of knowledge and disciplines, are organisationally less hierarchical and tend to be more transient. In the course of understanding a problem, researchers go back and forth between the 'fundamental and the applied, the theoretical and the practical...the curiosity-oriented and mission-oriented research'.<sup>94</sup> Being locally driven and constituted, the alternative mode of knowledge production is sensitive to local contexts, committed to the involvement of users not only in the dissemination of findings but also in the definition of the problems and the setting of research priorities. It recognizes the existence of multiple knowledge sites and views the scientific practices lodged in universities as one of many sites that are brought together in the search of solutions to particular problems. Finally, quality is assessed not only in terms of technical merit but also the usefulness or relevance of the knowledge produced<sup>95</sup>. As a consequence, the emergent research practices are more socially accountable and reflexive.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Gibbons et al. (1999: 23).

<sup>95</sup> Interestingly, some academics consider participatory research approaches (PRA), which have been utilised for process- and development-oriented research a rigorous research strategy, which has expanded the scope of scientific inquiry in fields like agriculture (e.g. farming systems research). As a form of action research, it can potentially produce even more scientific results than conventional social science because it pursues iterative cycles of thought and action, which have marked successful research in the natural sciences. See for instance Whyte, W.F. 1991. *Social Theory for Action: How Individuals and Organisations Learn to Change*. London: Sage Publications pp. 282-285. Critiquing the ideal research model in the behavioral sciences, Whyte makes a scientific case for participatory action research. He claims that no other research strategy can match the standard model for rigor in terms of getting the facts straight. See Greenwood, D., and M. Levin. 1998. *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*. San Francisco: Sage Publications pp. 54-66, which discusses action research under which PAR falls.

<sup>96</sup> Gibbons et al. (1999: 5)

The alternative mode of knowledge production enlightened the design of the MMRPs, although articulated in a slightly different way and in a less codified manner at the time the programme was established.<sup>97</sup> The MMRP documents in the initial years refer to the importance of tapping and contributing to knowledge reservoirs to ensure that development knowledge is transferred and fully utilised.<sup>98</sup> De Lange expands the notion of the reservoir to include nonscientific inputs from various actors, which may be tapped for action-oriented results and secondarily for scientific documentation.

Viewing research as an interactive process of producing, storing, diffusing and utilising knowledge, the MMRP considers the role of non-researchers, especially those on the ground, as critical in determining the content of the knowledge reservoir. The development processes they engage in produces valuable experiential knowledge that may be equivalent to, if not worth more than academic expertise. For this reason, the Programme stresses the involvement of stakeholders in setting priorities. It espouses the participation of the intended beneficiaries of development, who possess knowledge that ought to be liberated and incorporated into the reservoir and who stand to benefit from tapping into it, in the process of creating or recreating knowledge locally. In terms of research capacity, the Programme hopes to develop researchers with organic links to communities of stakeholders, receptive to knowledge on the ground, capable of combining local, national and global knowledge and producing quality work. In fine, the MMRP is conceived to develop potential knowledge sites (being itself a potential knowledge site) outside the formal institutions of universities, NGOs and the state.

The vision of the MMRPs cast in terms of a knowledge perspective of development is evolving and would eventually require codification of the experiences of the Programmes. For the moment, the articulation of the MMRP on the ground is in terms of the research thrusts of each Programme, its unifying features and operational experiences, with the exception of the KRPLLD in India, which has begun to codify its experiences in terms of knowledge systems.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Other donors have also begun to explore this dimension.

<sup>98</sup> De Lange, Piet. 1995. "Societal Direction and Utilisation of Research: Rethinking the Role of Non-researchers." Pp. 67-74 in *Proceedings of the Workshop on Research Programmes for Development Arusha, 19-23 June. DGIS-Funded Research Programme for Development No. 2*, edited by M. S. Bagachwa. The Hague: Directorate General for Development Cooperation, Division for Research and Developing Countries, p. 70. De Lange further asserts that epistemic communities ought to be carriers of the knowledge reservoir. Such communities include 'all institutes and individuals who carry the knowledge and fulfill the function essential for its utilisation. De Lange (1995:71).

<sup>99</sup> The KRPLLD seems to be the most aware among the MMRPs of its role in setting up knowledge sites. In its 2000 Annual Report, the Programme has translated its approach to development into a knowledge perspective. The Report liberally cites the World Bank 1998 Report entitled *Knowledge for Development*, which incorporates the alternative view of knowledge production.

The MMRPs reflect a wider range of focus and orientation, compared to the other donor-initiated programmes found in the different countries in the study (e.g., SIDA/SAREC, DANIDA). This is the result of the political economic and research contexts of the countries where the Programmes were established, the institutions where they were lodged and the personalities of the core initiators of the Programmes. It is also a consequence of autonomy within the cooperation framework with DGIS and the related requirement that each MMRP organise a Steering group composed not only of researchers but also representatives of grassroots organisations and possibly government bodies, all in their personal capacities. As previously mentioned, this absolute requirement, in which the MMRPs had no autonomy from the donor, provided the mechanism for autonomous formulation and implementation of research agendas. Hence, the variations found among the MMRPs.

The PRPA in Bangladesh, KRPLLD in India, NURRU in Uganda and ADESO in Nicaragua are action-oriented programmes although they have supported basic research with implications for problem solving. In a continuum where academic orientation is at one extreme and action orientation at the other, the PRPA would lie closest to the action-orientation than the other three programmes. In terms of demand drivenness, NURRU has the lowest level of linkages with the grassroots although NGOs constitute one of its stakeholder groups. The Ugandan Report notes that the Programme 'has not succeeded in involving a wide array of local stakeholders in its activities' although with the change of leadership, plans are under way to move into rural areas and set up benchmark sites where the active involvement of communities in research will be tapped.

While most of the projects of the four action-oriented Programmes have been conducted at the micro level, PRPA and KRPLLD have also aimed to contribute to policy formulation, at the national level for PRPA, and at the local state level for KRPLLD. In this regard, the KRPLLD seems to have been more successful, having worked closely with the state in its bid for decentralized planning. While the joint review of PRPA acknowledged the close relationship between its action research projects and their application, the search for long-term solutions to poverty or a policy framework for poverty alleviation, a major objective of the Programme, has yet to be fully undertaken.

In the light of the institutional weaknesses of the Bolivian educational system and the Soviet-oriented character of Vietnamese social science, both PIEB and VNRP were keen on developing the social sciences in their respective countries through the relevant studies of the researchers whose capacities they hope to build. In its initial phase, the VNRP funded applied and some basic research conducted in different parts of the country along four research areas. But it eventually chose to focus on rural development in particular regions so as not to dissipate its resources. The same situation holds for PIEB, which originally had national targets and has since chosen to focus on more marginal regions. Both programmes are less action-oriented than PRPA or KRPLLD (in that order of action orientation). PIEB's overriding concern at its inception was developing the

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theoretical and empirical grounding for long-range strategic research that will influence local development and policy formulation, which was lacking in Bolivia. While Vietnam shares the same orientation, it has increasingly supported participatory action research in local communities and has just begun to consider support for pilot studies on farming solutions to unproductive lands among the poor minority ethnic groups in the highlands.

At first blush, REPOA in Tanzania would seem to be cast in the same mold as PIEB and VNRP. Upon closer examination, however, their similarity ends with their long-run interest in influencing local development and policy formulation. PIEB and VNRP have not systematically established links with government although VNRP is lodged in the Vietnamese Ministry of Science and Technology. On the other hand, REPOA's 'client' for research and its definition of poverty indicators is central government. This has framed the nature of REPOA's research outputs significantly — principally policy papers and reports. It has also influenced the Programme's concept of capacity building, i.e., support and training of researchers capable of policy research and the training of state functionaries to enable them to more effectively absorb and assimilate research output. Given their own understanding of their vision and mission, REPOA is responsive to its main stakeholder's needs. Central government, through a variety of interactions, has participated in defining the Programme's research objective. In this connection, REPOA is indeed demand-driven. The measurement of the effectiveness of its research output would focus on policy influence as effected through a variety of channels such as briefing papers and reports, informal contacts and meetings, training sessions for state functionaries etc. Underlying this increasingly dominant thrust in REPOA's direction is the view that development and poverty alleviation are best effected through government.

REPOA has been very effective in what it does. It has participated in high profile national studies such as the Public Expenditure Review (PER). It is a member of the Tanzania Assistance Strategy (TAS), whose function is to provide a framework for development partnership between Tanzania and its donors. It contributed to the poverty reduction strategy paper for HIPC debt relief initiative and is involved in a task force to formulate and establish the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF). This World Bank-financed fund provides financial support to the local level to enhance and facilitate development.

In terms of linkages with government, REPOA is developing along the lines of other policy-oriented institutions that are supported by other donors, including the World Bank. The participation of central government in the definition of the research agenda of policy-oriented research units and capacity building institutions ensures the demand-drivenness of this type of research. Exercising its autonomy *vis-a-vis* DGIS, REPOA, which is evidently effective in the policy field, has argued for maintaining its research policy window on grounds of sustainability as it is now successfully diversifying its sources of support.

Because REPOA is an MMRP Programme, however, with its critique of the trickle-down models of development and view that long-term sustainable development

can only be achieved with the participation and access to knowledge reservoirs of people on the ground, REPOA is also pulled in the other direction. In its programme document (1999-2004), reaching the poor is identified as a priority area. The Tanzanian Country Report, however, observes that a strategic plan dealing with the disenfranchised poor had not yet been formulated at the time of the study. Without specific plans, the identity of the Programme would seem to favour its role as a government think tank.

The balance between providing policy inputs to government and grassroots development has been much easier to maintain for KRPLLD because of the prevalent activist culture of India, particularly of Kerala. The Programme has provided substantial inputs into the state government's planning process in the context of its ambitious bid for decentralized planning through a programme implemented by the Integrated Rural Technology Centre of the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Pariskat. The very name of the programme, *Campaign for People's Planning*, indicates its orientation. As such, working for the local government does not pose serious ideological tensions and angst within KRPLLD. In its work for the state, KRPLLD had involved local people who helped gather a variety of socioeconomic data, information on services and infrastructure and data for resource mapping.

A final point: the MMRPs aim to build demand-oriented and location-specific research capacity. Because of the complexity of Southern problems, this project requires a multidisciplinary perspective. The research teams observed that compared to some of the selected programmes, the MMRPs are the most multidisciplinary. But they are still far from achieving desirable levels of multidisciplinaryity. In Vietnam, where research teams are required to involve representatives from different disciplines, the level of interaction and exchange among them, while insufficiently documented, would seem to have ample room for improvement. The Indian team noted that slightly more than half of the KRPLLD projects involve interactions with social scientists, natural scientists, engineers and government technicians but highlights the problem of achieving multidisciplinaryity. It attributes the problem to the weakness of the social science community and the narrow disciplinary functioning of most universities and research institutes in India, an observation that applies to the other MMRPs as well.

Although the problem is surmountable in the long run, the lack of multidisciplinaryity in a programme such as the MMRP is a serious drawback. In its discourse, the MMRPs promise to represent a more radical break from the traditional notion of knowledge production, (i.e., the application of appropriate theoretical and methodological disciplinary frameworks to development issues in order to produce useful knowledge). For unlike programmes like the APNLBP or the university-based natural science programmes, which are confined to specific fields, MMRP has the potentials of synthesizing a wider range of knowledge. Ideally, the synergy of multidisciplinary teams of researchers working on different problems, in interaction with users, who themselves have substantial ideas to contribute, would lead to new and valid knowledge that transcend disciplines.

The challenge to the MMRPs in the future is how to methodically formulate and conduct multidisciplinary studies of high quality that are linked to viable solutions to development problems. In this regard, there may be a need to balance the Programme's support for inexperienced researchers with funding for multidisciplinary teams composed of experts assisted by younger researchers. A proactive identification of such experts who are willing to forego consultancy work or high paying research projects for the excitement of this relatively uncharted field may be worth the try. They would be in a position to produce within a shorter time frame quality studies that shed light on critical problems in the South. A critical mass of such studies would serve not only as models for the relatively inexperienced researchers, but also as the raw materials for constructing and codifying elements of emergent theories and methods into new knowledge.

### **3.4 Building Capacity for Development-Oriented Research: Issues of Output, Quality and Evaluation**

Sections 3.2 and 3.3 reveal programme differences in terms of institutional arrangements, types of capacities being built and underlying assumptions of development and knowledge production. These differences, as well as variations in country contexts, programme size, duration, organization and history, critically affect capacity building outcomes. Aware of fundamental programme differences that make an outright comparison of their outputs inappropriate, this section nevertheless explores some of the effects of particular modalities of North-South research cooperation on research capacity building to generate issues that arise from the achievements and limitations of the programmes.

#### **3.4.1 Programme Effects on Individuals, Institutions and State/National Policies**

The university-based research programmes under Mode I build research capacity by strengthening the institutional conditions for research, supporting the formal training of researchers (Masters and PhDs) and consolidating local postgraduate programmes. Their long-term goal is to focus on the more academic type of research capacity building. Within this framework, the programmes studied have had considerable institutional and individual impact. SIDA/SAREC, for instance, has supported about 55 Masters and PhD students and graduated over 25 Masters and PhDs in Nicaragua in the last 10 years. In the process, the Programme has developed the faculty and laboratories for engineering, plant sciences and environmental sciences in the universities whose missions are to specialize in building development-oriented disciplines in particular branches of knowledge.

The same donor has strongly supported the research and training activities of the two most important independent research institutes for the social sciences in Bolivia since their establishments. These research Centres have established track records in development-oriented research and action. An unspecified number of individuals have gone through research training workshops in the two Centres and a Masters Programme in Local Development Public Administration. SAREC/SIDA in Bolivia has since moved on to build university-based social science graduate and research programmes (with equipment and access to bibliographic sources) in two universities, the UMSA in La Paz

and the UMSS in Cochabamba. At the time of the study, at least 30 Ph.D. candidates from UMSS had gone through a preparatory course prior to a regional socioeconomic analysis at the time of the research.

In Vietnam, SIDA/SAREC has supported the training of almost 30 Masters and Ph.D. holders from the four flagship agricultural training institutions of the country. These graduate students have produced about 30 papers in international professional journals in the last 10 years, strengthening the strategic agricultural research units in the northern, central and southern regions of Vietnam.<sup>100</sup> SIDA/SAREC's contribution to the development of individual agriculturists and institution building is noteworthy in light of inadequate government support in the past for the three university-based institutions. Deviating from the organization of its support in Bolivia, Nicaragua and Vietnam, SIDA/SAREC has nevertheless helped build capacities for women studies and feminist networking among 45 and 40 individual members respectively of a university research unit (IDS/UDSM) and an independent NGO lodged in the same university (WRDP).

On a much smaller scale, DANIDA supported two students from Nicaragua under the SUDESCA programme, together with two students from El Salvador and three from Costa Rica from 1993 to 1999. Through a sandwich programme, five of these graduate students obtained PhDs and one finished a Master's degree. While the number of individuals trained in Nicaragua may be too small to constitute a critical mass for institution building, the DANIDA programme nonetheless launched Nicaraguan research on the forest and textile industries in line with its focus on the local economy, established a consortium network of research institutes in the three Central American countries and laid the groundwork for upgrading graduate programmes in each of the three countries (MSc for Nicaragua). On the other hand, the DANIDA-funded ENRECA Programme in Tanzania affected more individuals than SUDESCA. From 1995 to 1998, the Programme supported 23 research projects, most of which were conducted by young researchers and touched on farming systems and local resource management. Moreover, ENRECA's sandwich graduate programme had produced 2 Masters and 3 Ph.Ds by 1999<sup>101</sup>.

Like some of the SIDA/SAREC- and DANIDA-funded programmes, the GTZ-supported Bilingual Intercultural Education (EIB) in the Andean region has made headway in training and networking. It has fostered a network of 19 universities, 20 indigenous organisations and 5 participant government Ministries working on the subject of indigenous peoples. In particular, the PROIEB in Bolivia counted 50 individuals from 9 indigenous communities and 5 countries among its students in the UMSS EIB MSc programme at the time of the study.

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<sup>100</sup> As noted previously, SAREC's support to the two Women Studies Groups in Tanzania (WRDP and IDS/WSG) of the nine women study groups in Tanzania operates differently from its programmes in Nicaragua, Bolivia and Vietnam. It does not involve formal degree training, but aims at supporting research or research training.

<sup>101</sup> Although the country researchers consider this number too low, it is important to keep in mind that ENRECA started in Tanzania in 1994 and the data was obtained in 1999. The average number of years for completion of a Ph.D. in the United States is over seven years.

Finally, of the programmes under Mode I, the individual and institutional effects of the Belgian-funded CEPLAG are the most difficult to ascertain because the delay in the launching of the Programme due to conflicts between Bolivian and Belgian professors stalled the process of creating a research culture in the area of planning and management. At the time data were gathered in Bolivia, six projects that will see Bolivian researchers working with Belgian academics had been approved for presentation to the Flemish Inter University Council and plans for supporting graduate student research were being drawn. Resource persons expressed hope, however, that CEPLAG will take off in much the same way that another Belgian-supported research centre in the area of natural resources, CEMAR, did in 1997.

Programmes located in government institutions (VISED in Vietnam and MAP in Bangladesh) were set up with very clear ends in view: qualify personnel to do research that address policy needs. The evidence from the study is that both programmes have had considerable impact, despite their relatively short-term duration: VISED had supported 33 research projects on economic, environmental and science and technology issues by 1999. In addition, the Programme had trained about 1000 persons in short-term management courses and sent 70 individuals abroad to establish linkages with research institutions and individuals working along similar lines. VISED has also produced, though research, a significant number of reports, articles and books which are claimed have been used for policy purposes. More importantly, it has contributed to the creation of a "culture" in which research is seen as important to policy making.

In Bangladesh, MAP, which aims to provide policymakers with institutional arrangements and technical capability to monitor poverty on a regular basis and analyse the impact of macroeconomic and adjustment policies at the micro level, supported 11 focus studies on poverty. It is reported to have accomplished a rare type of capacity building in relevant government departments, namely building expertise for monitoring poverty and obtaining systematic data for policy making on poverty alleviation. In this connection, MAP has trained an unspecified number of government professionals at the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics through seminars on poverty indicators and 10 hands-on surveys. Members of the General Economic Department of the Bangladesh Planning Commission also underwent training in handling the Computable General Equilibrium Model, the Social Accounting Matrix and the General Algebraic Modelling System. By 1999, MAP had also established a network of line agencies, institutions, departments and NGOs involved in poverty studies and monitoring.

India's UNDP-funded Programme was not as focused as MAP but within its aborted time frame, the Programme supported 63 projects. Although 41 of the principal investigators were established researchers, representing established institutions in regions where research capacities are relatively more developed, new capacities were built among senior researchers and a few young ones while expanding the definition and areas of development beyond the economic. Given the academic bent of most of the researchers and their professional status, the Programme produced 62 reports, discussion papers and several books.

Despite differences among the Mode II programmes that formed their own institutional set-up outside the university, the MMRPs as well as the APNLBP of India and the FTTP and PIRN of Bolivia are very similar in the type of capacity they are aiming to build. As discussed previously, these Programmes hope to substantiate the concept of demand driven research, to popularise a participatory approach to research and institutionalise the process of learning from the masses. All the programmes reject the concept of knowledge for its own sake and emphasize the importance of dissemination to end users, whether they be policy makers at the national level as in the case of the MMRPs in Bolivia, Tanzania and Vietnam, or local community, officials and political leaders as in the case of the other programmes.

Among these programmes, the MMRPs supported the most number of researcher-initiated projects (about 641 projects) on a wide range of topics, the outputs of some of which have been used as inputs to policy formulation or to the crafting of viable solutions to concrete problems. Although there have been a number of failed projects and research quality has been uneven, as of 1999, MMRP research involved at least 765 individuals. Since many of these individuals had very little research experience in the subject of their study either because they were young, originated from NGOs or had no exposure to participatory methodologies, the MMRPs built capacities through training workshops covering a range of topics related to research methodology. Informal training also occurred in study circles where researchers came together to discuss the progress of their work (KRPLLD, PRPA) or in systems of tutorship or mentoring of junior researchers by senior researchers (e.g., VNRP, PIEB, ADESO). Apart from training project directors on the job, the MMRPs also reached other young researchers who did not actually conduct MMRP studies in the regions or countries where the Programme operated. As a case in point, PIEB had trained in 13 courses on project formulation as many as 537 participants, many of whose proposals were not considered for programme funding.

Unlike university-based graduate degree programmes or focused capacity building programmes like MAP, most of the MMRPs deal with inexperienced researchers, whose studies do not usually culminate in measurable output like an MA, MSc or a PhD. Moreover, for many of the Programmes, the processes in the conduct of participatory research are equally important, if not more important than the output. Given these features, it is difficult to ascertain capacity building outcomes primarily on the basis of the number of individuals who obtain projects or go through training. In the absence of systematic qualitative data on individual capacities built, it is worth noting the Country Team's observations regarding the palpable effects of the MMRP on individual researchers given their low levels of baseline expertise. The Indian Team, for instance, commended the KRPLLD for building the capacity a new breed of 'bare foot researchers' who have begun to imbibe a research culture through their involvement in the Programme. These researchers have incorporated their new learning in institutions like the Centre for Environment and Development, Sreyas (Prosperity) and Maithri (Friendship), which have spun off from the projects funded by KRPLLD.

The institutional impact of each of the MMRPs is notable. In addition to the above institutions in Kerala, the Institute for Communicative and Cognitive Neuro

Sciences and the Limnological Association of Kerala spun off from the dissemination of KRPLLD research findings. By funding half of its projects, the KRPLLD also helped strengthen the Integrated Rural Technology Centre (IRTC), the research institute set up by the Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP) to develop state capability for local planning. In Bangladesh, PRPA has established research circles, forging a network of five research institutions. Similarly, the VNRP has established a network of researchers in different regions of the country and an effective research management system that has led the Ministry of Science and Technology to consider it a model to adopt for other research cooperation programmes.

In Latin America, PIEB has set up regional libraries and documentation centres in 19 institutions in 7 different cities in Bolivia. This contribution is in addition to institutionalising mechanisms for reaching potential researchers in deprived areas while maintaining a national presence to influence policy. ADESO has established a public agenda-setting process as a 'counterfoil to the reinstitution of clientelist procedures. In Africa, REPOA has built itself into an important institution for poverty research in Tanzania. Not only does it facilitate and manage poverty research involving relatively inexperienced researchers; it also convenes senior researchers to undertake policy studies. NURRU's initial management problems made it lag behind the other MMRPs in enhancing its own network of local institutions. Nevertheless, this network has been established and its new leadership vows to set the processes of proposing and pursuing research in place.

On the whole, the MMRPs have built an institutional capacity to manage research programmes that are autonomous of host institutions and donors. Despite issues of autonomy from particular host institutions, leadership problems and understaffing, in general, the Steering Committees have ably directed the MMRPs while the Secretariat of individual Programmes have iteratively developed effective systems of research management and financial administration

Like the MMRP, the APNLBP has enhanced the capacity of individual researchers, research institutions, NGOs and the grassroots sector in has worked with—farmers. The Indian Country Report notes that while many of the principal investigators in the 42 APNLBP research projects were middle-level scientists, the project teams included a number of junior researchers, many of whom were women. Apart from developing the capacity of young researchers in biotechnology research, the Programme also contributed to the diversification of the activities of established research institutions and NGOs to non-traditional areas like micro-propagation through tissue culture, vermiculture composting, production of bio-fertilizers and pesticides, integrated pest management systems etc. Furthermore, the Programme exposed biotechnology scientists to the new methodology of participatory technology development. Institutionally, the APNLBP has established very good rapport with relevant research institutions in Andhra Pradesh and its government departments, with the Indian government's Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the Department of Biotechnology, with other research institutions in India and with the collaborating research programmes in Kenya and Zimbabwe.

The FTTP aims to develop and disseminate participatory methodologies for the local communities' adoption in planning sustainable forest management systems that utilise the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples living around the forests. Studies by university researchers constitute about 30% of FTTP's activities. FTTP has encouraged capacity building for research and action of graduate students as well as members of indigenous communities. Insofar as university-based researchers are concerned, the Programme has contributed to an unspecified number of individuals' capacity to conduct action-oriented studies that requires immersion in the indigenous communities and understanding of grassroots organising. The training of members of the indigenous communities, on the other hand, has produced a number of 'barefoot researchers' a few of whom have the potential to pursue careers in participatory research and planning. Institutionally, the FTTP has established national and regional networks of focal points for community forestry in its efforts to decentralise action. The networks, which meet annually at the national level, operate through electronic conferences, debates about the projects, and other interactive events. Regarding capacity building, FTTP's activities are carried out in collaboration with social organizations and research centres in Bolivia, such as the UMSS, CIDOB, the University of Nur and PIEB itself, among others.

PIRN's ultimate agenda is the local development of Bolivia's indigenous peoples by training Indians to recover and reintroduce their lost technologies. The Programme has supported at least 21 research teams that are accountable to the indigenous population, which decides on the extent and follow-up of projects, even as the team's proposals and output are subjected to peer review. PIRN/CIDOB provides researchers involved in the projects with tailor-made training courses on research methodology and techniques such as computing skills, handling of information, photography, videos, and other audio-visual equipment that may be required by their studies. Interestingly, the teams are also given training in project management (accounting, dealing with bank accounts, elaboration of research reports, etc). By extending such training, PIRN has begun to institutionalise research management systems. It is notable that some members of the indigenous communities have participated in the research and management training activities.

All the programmes covered in this Report seek to build and enhance capability either for academically oriented or action-oriented research. Three points are worth noting regarding the above discussion. While the study highlights varying achievements in enhancing individual and institutional capacities as indicated by the number of graduate degrees obtained, hands-on involvement in research, participation in training workshops and qualitative signs of personal or institutional development, it is unable to compare different modes of capacity building in terms of their effects on individual researchers and institutions. Although there are significant overlaps because research is essentially an intellectual exercise, the types of capacities being built and the contexts within which they are being developed are different. Because of this and the belief that the capacities enhanced by the programmes are all needed in developing societies, the research team decided to refrain from making judgments regarding which programmes are more effective in enhancing capabilities.

The second point has to do with training and capability building. The assumption of all programmes is that training, broadly conceived, builds individual research capacities. While this is generally true, the nature and methodology of the training, the sensitisation of individual researchers to new experiences, their ability to integrate new learning and their personalities, among other factors, determine outcomes in terms of capacities developed. Thus, the extent to which training—whether in the form of hands-on research or specialised skills workshop—enhances capacity cannot be assessed conclusively. Without baseline information, the programme’s training activities constitute only one of many possible factors accounting for programme achievements in capacity building or lack of them. Having made this qualification, however, the findings of the comparative research show that in the countries where they are found, the Programmes, through their research and training activities, have contributed to the appreciation of research for development in general and the evolution of different research cultures in particular. Whether such cultures will further evolve from the seeds sown by the Programmes is the ultimate test of their efficacy in research capacity building. In this connection, there is enough evidence from a cursory look at the current crop of established Southern researchers produced by past donor-initiated programmes to hope that the research and development community will build on the gains made in the Programmes studied.

The third point deals with the impact of the Programmes on the capacity of researchers and research institutions to influence policy and/or satisfy the needs of the larger societies in which they are found. Without exception, the programmes aim to address development needs and influence policy, whether this be national or regional policy on specific public issues or science and technology policy at different levels (including the methodologies to use under particular conditions). Even programmes that are not aware of their interests in influencing policy, such as the university-based degree-related research programmes, may virtually contribute to shaping national S and T policy in their substantive areas. Some of the programmes, however, are more salient than others in the field of national or regional policy-making in the more visible arena of political economy.

MAP in Bangladesh and VISED in Vietnam explicitly link their research and training activities to policy making on economic and environmental issues. Both programmes tie up with the highest planning offices of their respective governments and encourage policy makers to utilise their output (e.g., the Social Accounting Matrix and Poverty Monitoring System of MAP). Among the MMRPs, the Tanzanian government recognizes REPOA for its actual or potential inputs to public policy on poverty alleviation. Depending on the issue, the PRPA has also provided inputs to legislation. Its research and advocacy on gender violence has particularly shaped the Women and Child Repression Prevention Act, which was enacted in 1995 and revised in 2000. As discussed previously, KRPLD has been a major influence in planning and policy making in the state of Kerala on issues within the program’s expertise. In Latin America, two of the PIEB’s concluded research projects have contributed to the elaboration of public policies on education reform and the military.

Having qualified the achievements of the Programmes in terms of capacity building, what is their impact on the development needs of the countries where they operate? The desired and actual effects of the programmes under Mode II on specific development needs are more obvious. Some of these effects may be gleaned from the discussions in the previous sections. Nevertheless, a few points regarding the impact of policy research on prevailing conditions in developing societies are worth mentioning. It is important, for instance, to be aware of the pitfalls of thinking that policy research will necessarily translate into actual policy.

Whether one is dealing with Northern or Southern countries, it is usually difficult to assess the impact of research on policy because the intended and unintended outcomes usually result from the interplay of multiple factors. But problems of attribution are more pronounced in developing countries where planning and policy formulation deviate considerably from the models of rational policy-making found in the literature. While a genuinely rational planning process may be an illusion, there are societies where the parameters and processes of decision-making, albeit irrational in many respects, are more transparent, primarily because of adherence to common principles and rules and the existence of strong constituencies that demand participation and accountability. In such societies, research policy units are in a better position to specify how their inputs have shaped thinking on particular issues and helped craft policies to address them.

The contributions of the Programmes to policy notwithstanding, the question of whether the more policy-oriented among them have figured in policy-making ought to be seen in the context of the policy environment of developing societies. More often than not, decisions are made arbitrarily, without the benefit of systematic information. Even when consultative discussions with experts are held, these are frequently used to legitimise predetermined decisions made in the interest of particular groups. Within such an environment, policy researchers and advocates spend considerable time lobbying, negotiating, building networks, doing a lot of spadework in the background including writing for politicians who may not grasp the essence of the bills they champion or the administrative orders they issue. Researchers are pressured to perform such multiple tasks often without clear indications of whether their efforts have borne fruit.

In the frenzy of dealing with important actors in the national scene, some researchers have come to think that their work is valued and of consequence to policy making. Many, however, awake from their illusions when they realize much later that the policy outcome is different from what they had hoped for. Others, whose policy recommendations are adopted, discover for themselves, the absence of institutional continuity, with policies revised after every change in leadership. In very rare instances, policy researchers and advocates succeed in influencing policy perspectives and drafting specific recommendations that are eventually owned and adopted by policymakers. Many of them come to think their work is done, only to become painfully aware of the chasm between policy formulation and practice. But because many of the policymakers in developing societies are academics, advocacy for proper implementation no longer seems to fall within their scope of work. Far too often, therefore, the post-policy phase, which

spells the difference in terms of impact on development, is left to chance except for particular issues and research areas where linkages among academics, committed government officials, civil society groups, members of the private sector and media exist.

The direct impact of Mode I programmes that build research capacity through graduate training on the development needs of the countries where they are found is difficult to pinpoint, apart from their obvious contribution to the development of higher education institutions. Nevertheless, the local researchers interviewed in Bolivia, Nicaragua and Tanzania stressed the relevance to local needs of their Programmes' research agenda and the topics selected for study. The Vietnam country researchers also highlighted the wider application of a number of techniques developed with SIDA/SAREC support. On the question of whether the Mode II programmes address development needs in greater measure than the academic Mode I programmes, the deliberations of the Vietnam Country Team regarding the relative strengths and weaknesses of various programmes in the country are instructive. The Country Team discussed the difficulty of judging the advantage of one programme over another in terms of relevance to development. They argued convincingly that the need for various skills in developing societies is so great that the programmes have special niches. Having experienced previous training under more academic capacity building programmes, the members of the Vietnam Team claim that they have become more appreciative of the MMRP-type of participatory and development-oriented research because of prior academic exposure to programmes like the SIDA/SAREC-funded FSRP.

This insight raises the question of whether a critical mass of previously trained researchers to draw from or reorient would provide more chances for success in the MMRP mode of research capacity building. The problems confronted by NURRU in Uganda or the difficulty REPOA has faced in developing capacity for bottom-up research in Tanzania, because the researchers it had assumed existed were not there, seem to suggest that previous training is a prerequisite. This position is bolstered by experiences in countries like the Philippines where the staunch proponents of mainstreaming participatory approaches in academe were themselves leading social scientists trained in quantitative social science. On the other hand, the experience of KRPLD in India, which produced barefoot researchers out of committed activists without any prior research training, qualifies this thinking. While training may be necessary to give pioneering researchers the confidence to shift mental frames and the credibility for others to follow suit, it does not seem to be a prerequisite to building participatory research skills. The differential outcomes in Africa, on the one hand, and India and Nicaragua, on the other hand, may be due to the culture of activism and affinity with work at the grassroots in the latter two countries. How to support potential researchers in Africa to cross the bridge is the challenge to the MMRPs in the region.

The Tanzanian and Ugandan reports allude to the lack of mentoring of potential researchers. Indeed, the research condition in the two African countries is polarized. There are very few well-trained, well-established, and experienced researchers and they tend to be engaged in consultancy work. On the other hand, a much larger number of 'potential' researchers who have postgraduate degrees but have had very little training or possibility to undertake research makes the challenge of devising mentoring schemes

more daunting than say, in Vietnam, Bolivia or the other countries where MMRPs are found. Moreover, the African Country Reports note that members of the research community consider the involvement of people in research at the grassroots as the work of activists and thus, may undermine the value neutrality of science.

Having argued that previous formal training in research is not a prerequisite to the development of capabilities in participatory research, it is nevertheless important to emphasize that not all activists, grassroots community members, local officials or technicians on the ground can be turned into barefoot researchers. Those, however, with the potential to pursue their personal missions or careers in development-oriented research ought to develop in other respects. Even the Indian Report, which documented the relative success of KRPLD in producing barefoot researchers, asserts that if the enormity of the tasks ahead is taken into account, the efforts to develop raw researchers have touched only the fringe of the problem. They require training not only in particular skills but also in conceptualising and contextualising research problems. For this, the MMRPs will need more time for reflection and theoretical work.

Interestingly, in countries like Vietnam, which has well-organised geographic communities but an undeveloped participatory culture, the potential development-oriented researchers may be difficult to find on the ground. Neither can they be found among the elite researchers in government institutes. At this juncture, the potential researchers are in the agricultural universities, which have obtained very little research support from the state. In the situation VNRP is beginning to face, the development of conceptualisation and theoretical skills may be easier because of the academic background of the researchers; the greater challenge is building participatory cultures in the wider research community as studies are pursued in specific localities.

The issue of building the capability of young researchers for field-based development research is important, if not more important, to the MMRPs than the other programmes under Mode II. Programmes like FTTP and PIRN, for instance, focus more on the substance and capacity of research to enlighten actions that contribute to the solution of identified community problems than on the number of researchers trained.<sup>102</sup> On the other hand, VISED in Vietnam and MAP in Bangladesh were set up to undertake research that address policy needs.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> In addition to the methodologies transferred to the traditional communities, the number of people trained in the courses it organised, the number of participants in the network, FTTP is also evaluated in terms of number of thesis tutorships it has provided. PIRN, on the other hand is assessed in terms of indicators such as recovered and organised traditional knowledge—number of collected and catalogued plants; organisation of knowledge related to the traditional use of such plants; publications; trained people; number of local trained people, academic grades; thesis; research management skills; research assistants, and researchers.

<sup>103</sup> The evidence here is that both programmes have had considerable impact, despite being short term: VISED was able to train some 400 persons in short-term management courses and to have produced, though research, a significant number of reports, articles and books which have been used for policy purposes. More importantly, it has created a “culture” in which research is seen as important to inform policy making. MAP is reported to have served the need for data and information of the policy makers.

The MMRP does not only aim to find such solutions in the medium and long-term nor to provide specialized data for policymakers; it hopes to build a community or even a movement of development researchers committed to a particular mode of doing research in a developing society. It is in this context that the Asian and Latin American MMRPs monitor their gaps in mentoring despite the considerable gains they have achieved in terms of number of young researchers trained and research projects successfully completed.<sup>104</sup>

### 3.4.2 Issues of Quality and Evaluation

Notwithstanding their achievements and the visibility they have attained within a short time, the MMRPs have criticized themselves for the uneven quality of their research output. This problem does not bother the university-based graduate research programmes as much because academic standards and systems of assuring quality are in place. The only problem facing these programmes is ensuring compliance with the standards set by the disciplines and the universities nationally and internationally. The capacity of young researchers in particular Programmes to present papers in conferences or even publish in international journals singly or together with Northern co-authors reflect the quality of their work as judged by peers.

The issue of quality is also less problematic for the policy-oriented research programmes of MAP, VISED and the UNDP. International academic standards for the quantitative social science disciplines constitute the yardstick of these programmes. Moreover, since the stature and competence of researchers are believed to be important for policymakers to heed the implications of policy studies, most of the researchers in the three Programmes are quite established and knowledgeable in the analytical tools of the relevant disciplines.

The issue of quality is important but not as salient to the programmes closest in orientation to the MMRPs—APNLBP, PIRN and FTTP. The usefulness of the studies conducted in these programmes to concrete action, whether in the form of adoption by farmers of new technologies developed with their inputs or the implementation of community-based forestry management schemes and recovery of indigenous knowledge and technologies, is the gauge of their value. In the case of the APNLBP, technical quality is assumed by the academically rooted but evolving standards in the field of biotechnology.

Quality assurance seems to be more prominent in the consciousness of the MMRPs because of a distinguishable feature. With the exception of REPOA, which simultaneously undertakes substantive research and manages studies initiated by individuals and institutions outside the Programme, the MMRPs do not aim to perform research, but only to promote and fund, ideally, high quality and socially relevant

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<sup>104</sup> Three of the Country Reports—those of Tanzania, Uganda and Bangladesh—are very critical of the capacity building of new researchers in the framework of the MMRPs and report that no mentoring of new researchers by experienced ones was provided.

research, conducted preferably by young researchers. Selected on a competitive basis with extensive use of peer review, the research projects fall within the ambit of a research agenda that is broader than those of the more focused development-oriented and participatory programmes in the study. Moreover, the projects range from academically oriented studies to action research, albeit within the framework of participatory development.

The character of the MMRPs as facilitators of research rather than convenors of multidisciplinary teams of expert researchers assigned to address specific development issues constitutes its niche. The Indian Country Report that likens the MMRPs to the proverbial Biblical Sower of many seeds, admiringly remarked on the diversity of the research issues selected by the researchers is Kerala, which the usual top-down research agenda approach could never have hoped to capture. But precisely because they cast wider nets in societies with uneven research capacities, the MMRPs are more vulnerable to problems of research quality.

To improve technical quality, the MMRPs have devised closer monitoring and mentoring schemes. As previously noted, these schemes include networks of senior researchers in agricultural institutes and the creation of two positions for senior research scientists in Vietnam; study circles of researchers in particular regions in India and Bangladesh, academic advisors for projects in Bolivia and the tutorship of junior researchers by senior researchers in Nicaragua.

A major challenge facing MMRPs and similar programme that aim to build capacity for demand-driven research and ultimately produce useful knowledge that transcend disciplinary boundaries is how to measure in qualitative and quantitative terms the output of process-oriented research with multiple outcomes. In the MMRP mode of knowledge production technical quality is only one dimension of quality. Social relevance is the other. Existing standards of science and scholarship exist to assess technical quality and the MMRPs do utilise such measures when they say the quality of their output is uneven. But how much weight to give to technical quality and how much to relevance is not easy to spell out for high impact projects, which are not easy to define as research in the conventional sense. Take the following example:

*Among the research projects financed by ADESO, the most successful in terms of social impact was probably the simplest and least pretentious. In 1996, a researcher from EAG (Escuela de Agricultura y Ganadería—School of Agriculture and Livestock), member of ADESO's general assembly, presented a proposal to study the effects of earthworms in the diet of house chickens. The researchers already knew that earthworms were a good source of proteins that could increase the production of eggs. Their challenge, therefore, was to let potential users discover the advantages of this technology on their own. To accomplish this objective, the researchers from EAG selected a group of 12 residents of one of the poorest communities in the region. All were women who traditionally took care of the backyard production of the household. The researchers gave wooden boxes and worms to the participants, and taught them*

*how to breed the worms using the manure available in the property. The participants were instructed to feed some of their chickens using variable amounts of worms, and then to log the number of eggs laid on a daily basis. The results were very positive: the egg production increased and the worms also provided a valuable organic residue that could be used in the home gardens. As these effects became obvious, the participants not only adopted this new technology but also invited their neighbours to repeat the experiment. In less than two years, about forty families were successfully breeding earthworms.*

The usual standards of technical quality cannot be applied to this case since conducting quality research by conventional standards was not the objective of the researchers. In spite or perhaps because of its simplicity, this project is an exemplary case of participatory research with a gender approach. Moreover, this research was very relevant to the local community (which needed to identify more reliable sources of protein).

As they are evolving, most of the MMRPs as well as PIRN, FTPP and APNLBP, are part of a movement based on democratisation of knowledge, development and the state. This movement stresses cultural diversity within a global perspective, humanity within and as part of nature, a view of development that permits people to discover the realities of their life and make decisions to transform it and a mode of governance that promotes autonomy, initiative and capability.<sup>105</sup> Apprehending the nature of a specific development process that is largely invisible requires more than the usual research techniques. In addition to the traditional skills, which the research community has imbibed, a nuanced reading of development that is iterative and gradual entails 'listening skills, the ability to combine an open and non-judgmental approach with enough understanding to make sense of and draw insight out of what one is observing' and a capacity to reflect and intuit underlying movements.<sup>106</sup>

Clearly, conventional quality indicators of academic research such as peer review, publications and citations in professional journals are not very relevant to a demand-driven, participatory research. New indicators of quality and social relevance may have to be slowly incorporated into existing evaluation indicators. The Indian Report suggests, for instance, nonscientific publications, public discussions based on research output, the discovery of new products and processes, and societal peer pressure as among possible indicators. The Latin American Reports suggest other indicators of intermediate and qualitative outcomes such as the dissemination of research values and relevance, demonstrated by changes in attitudes towards research (on the part of the general population as well as policy makers); the sensitivity and receptivity of researchers to local knowledge; the awareness of the importance of self-governance and the exercise of autonomy to decide on a research agenda that meets local interests; the popularisation of the participatory approach to research and the process of learning from the masses; the commitment to the production of research results of quality and of relevance; the

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<sup>105</sup> Smith, S. and D. Willms. 1997. *Nurtured by Knowledge: Learning to Do Participatory Action Research*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, pp 2-6.

<sup>106</sup> Kaplan, A. (1999: 25)

capacity to negotiate, design, implement and manage research programmes; the determination to be accountable both to the local community and to the donor.

Developing meaningful indicators is a tall order and would require sifting through conventional measures, unpacking the dimensions of development research, and identifying possible qualitative indicators and measures of processes that do not lend themselves easily to formalisation. Fortunately, MMRP and similar programmes need not start from scratch. The literature regarding some of the methodological issues surrounding participatory research provides a good starting point.<sup>107</sup>

### 3.5 Linkages of Donor-Initiated Programmes

The programmes covered by the study established or maintained various linkages with donors, stakeholders in the locality and other communities of researchers. The participation of the donor in programme activities was discussed in Section 3.2 and is summarized in the Concluding Remarks. Linkages with various stakeholders in the country, on the other hand, were dealt with in Section 3.3.

This section gives a brief overview of the linkages of the programmes with the traditionally delineated knowledge sites in the relevant society, i.e., universities and other research networks in the South. With respect to the first linkage, the university-based programmes reviewed are intimately linked to building the capacity of academic programmes that hope to produce knowledge in particular disciplines or multidisciplinary fields (e.g. environment). Links among the programmes within a university (CEPLAG, SIDA-SAREC in Tanzania, ENRECA) or among the universities covered by the programme in particular countries (SIDA-SAREC in Nicaragua, Bolivia and Vietnam) are well established. In Latin America, the interuniversity and inter-institution networks of SUDESCA/DANIDA and PROIEB cut across countries in the region. Moreover, innovative ways of linking Southern countries facilitated by donors have been developed. As noted earlier, the new phase of the SIDA/SAREC Programme in Bolivia will support the training of researchers in the social sciences, but instead of sending them to a university in Sweden for disciplinary training (the sandwich Master and Ph.D.), they will be pursuing graduate degrees in reputable Latin American universities.

On the other hand, for programmes lodged outside the halls of academe, links with university-based researchers have taken different forms—direct involvement of academics in the research project as researchers (MMRP, MAP), consultants or trainers (MMRP, FTTC, PIRN). Except for Tanzania, informants from the research community, many of whom are university-based, have generally appreciated MMRP support for researchers from academe. From the perspective of some informants, the MMRPs have contributed directly or indirectly to building institutions in universities that would otherwise give lip service to research but concentrate all efforts on teaching. For instance, the rectors of the agricultural universities in Vietnam, who do not receive significant

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See for instance Lather, P. 1986. "Issues of Validity in Openly Ideological Research: Between Rock and a Soft Place." *Interchange* 17:64-84.

research funds from the state, have favourably noted the improvements in their faculty's performance, skills and work ethic as a result of their involvement in the VNRP.

In the case of Tanzania, the Country research team draws attention to the potentially weakening effect of REPOA on the local universities. This situation is unique to REPOA. As noted previously, the Programme is the only one among the MMRPs engaged directly in research. With its focus on establishing a track record in quality research, REPOA has involved experienced university researchers in contracts and projects. Some resource persons perceive this practice as taking senior faculty members away from their mentoring functions or from building research institutions within the university.

As to international networks, linkages with researchers in other parts of the world are evident in the programmes. Particular researchers funded by university-based programmes have been able to present papers in conferences and establish informal links with other researchers working in the same field. Some of the programmes also maintain ongoing linkages with research networks. For instance, the EPRC in Uganda has had extensive connections with the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC).

A number of programmes (MAP in Bangladesh, the APNLBP in India and the MMRPs) are part of umbrella programmes with related or similar projects in other countries. The Country Teams noted international workshops and seminars where projects are conceptualised or common issues are discussed. For action-oriented programmes like PIRN and FTTP, their participation in international initiatives have not necessarily focused on research, but on a wider range of issues related to indigenous peoples or community forestry, respectively.

In the case of the MMRPs, funds have been set aside and used for joint workshops and exchanges among representatives and researchers of the programmes. Apart from annual Coordinators' meetings, there have been joint activities among MMRPs. As a case in point, the three Asian MMRPs took turns in hosting regional workshops where papers prepared by project directors from the three countries were read. Two of the workshops were held in Kerala, India and Vietnam in 1998; the Bangladesh Workshop was held in 2000. Attended by representatives of the Steering Committee, the Secretariat and selected project directors, the Workshops were fruitful intellectual and institutional exchanges. The last Workshop in Bangladesh led to discussions on a common framework of collaboration among the three countries and plans for two initiatives: the organization of a thematic workshop on a rice-fish farming model of agriculture in Vietnam in September 2000; and a joint review of poverty alleviation activities in the three countries.<sup>108</sup> Joint activities such as these, however, have been infrequent. It is notable that while the MMRPs provide the funding flexibility for programmes in different countries to interact with one another and exchange researchers, initiatives in this direction have not been as

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<sup>108</sup> VNRP Newsletter, 2000. "Three Countries Regional Workshop of Netherlands Funded Programs." 12:6. p. 63.

significant as one would expect. Apart from the busy schedules and imperatives facing Southern researchers and the preoccupation of the MMRPs with establishing their identities in their own countries, this observation may also suggest that establishing genuine connections among Southern researchers would require more than the mediation of donors and the provision of funds. Among other things, it would entail changing the mindset of Southern researchers.

Shaped by the asymmetries of colonialism and development and the consequent asymmetric control over knowledge, a prevailing mindset oriented to the North and oblivious to other Southern countries is extremely difficult to break. Nevertheless, because of their common concern and intimate links with the problems of their societies, development-oriented researchers working on the ground ought to find it easier to slowly change the orientation. Seen in this light, the MMRPs are an experiment in changing a South-North orientation and forging collegial ties among like-minded researchers who share the same spirit of development. The substantive exchanges among MMRP managers in coordinators' workshops indicate the positive effects of collaboration. But the low level of exchange across MMRP researchers despite the availability of funds suggests constraints on South-South collaboration that ought to be explored and addressed.

#### 4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The highlights of the comparative study are summed up in the Executive Summary. This section further encapsulates the answers to the four questions for reflection that the initiators and designers of the MMRPs asked of themselves in the course of implementing a major policy shift in donor-initiated capacity building.

- *Are the asymmetries reflected in the 'conventional' programmes of research cooperation also present in the cases under study?*

The level of asymmetry in research cooperation reflects the changes in the direction of North-South relations, world politics, international discourses and donor budgets for research. In the light of these developments and the consequent changes in donor policy, conventional forms of research cooperation moved away from the provision of development funds for training grants in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s to the establishment of programmes within the South with varying links to the North.

The issue of power and control lie at the heart of the question of asymmetry. The designers of the MMRP contend that the autonomy of Southern partners in the collaboration is essential to ensure that research priorities, agenda setting and research activities will meet the demands or needs of the recipients. The assumption here is that the adequate perception of needs is to be found among the recipients and potential beneficiaries and not among the donors. A decision making process conducted autonomously by the recipients is considered the most adequate means to capture that demand.

Against this backdrop, do northern partners continue to wield as much control over programmes as they did when the first conventional programmes were established in the

1970s and 1980s? Judging from the experience of programmes compared in the study, the answer is a qualified no. In the cases analysed, donor control and, conversely, autonomy, is manifested at different levels. Common to all programmes including the MMRP is the donors' control over decisions regarding specific regions or countries to locate the programmes in and the broad field of knowledge or area of activity to be supported. Particular to the MMRP, the establishment of a Steering Committee with representation from various stakeholders was a non-negotiable requirement of the DGIS grant. Recipients would consider donor control over these decisions a legitimate level of intervention on the part of donors.

Beyond the choice of countries, partner institutions/groups and broad areas to support, the autonomy of local partners regarding research themes and topics within a broad research field varies across programmes. A number of programmes (FTPP, PIRN and PROEIB in Bolivia; MAP in Bangladesh; VISED in Vietnam; APNLBP in India; the Women Studies programmes in Tanzania) are 'thematic', meaning that donors had made decisions earlier regarding the "themes" to pursue. The themes, largely influenced by international discourses and their interface with conditions in particular countries, range from gender to economic reform, to biotechnology for small farmers, etc. Despite donor decisions on thematic concerns, however, the programmes decide on specific research problems to focus on and enjoy autonomy at the implementation and management level, while subjected to monitoring mechanisms established by the donors.

The more academic programmes implemented by universities and research institutes have autonomy from donors to identify and select specific research topics and, in some instances, themes and priorities. At the same time, however, they have to conform to existing university /research centre criteria and practices and their goals are institutionally circumscribed. Thus, their autonomy to design and manage the funds of the programmes is restricted.

There is general agreement among the country researchers that the MMRPs in each respective country, exercise a far greater degree of autonomy than the comparator programmes. The local network established in each case has ample decision-making powers on all aspects of the programme: from its design and purpose, administrative organisation including planning and budget, research agenda, type of capacity building aimed for, selection criteria, to its monitoring and evaluation. This form of strategic, academic and administrative autonomy has no precedent in the history of research collaboration in the countries. As such, the local stakeholders who were interviewed expressed appreciation for it.

A final note on institutional autonomy, Comparing university-based programmes with those that are either independent or autonomous of but lodged in host institutions, the latter enjoy greater autonomy. Programmes based in universities tend to be encumbered by university regulations and constraints and are more vulnerable to academic politics. On the other hand, among most of the Programmes outside the university, there is no evidence of any difference in the level of autonomy enjoyed by those that operate independently from any established institution and those that are

lodged in institutions. Systems of governance involving highly respected members in the societies where the programmes exist, the specificity of programme frameworks, a programme's participation in bigger international networks, or the novelty of its research agenda have constrained host institutions from overturning major decisions of the programmes lodged in them. MAP is a case in point. The paradigmatic nature of the underlying theoretical framework of the Programme's efforts to monitor poverty in Bangladesh, the specificity of its methodology and its being a part of an IDRC- funded cross-country programme protect its autonomy from its host institution.

Regarding the most suitable arrangement for purposes of institutional autonomy, there is a trade off between being an independent programme and being lodged in a host institution. Without exception, the credibility of the institutions the research programmes outside the university have affiliated with has contributed to their acceptance by the wider development community. For instance, PRPA's association with Grameen Trust has augured well for its reputation in circles working on poverty alleviation in Bangladesh. Ironically, PRPA also demonstrates the need to balance the gains from being hosted by a reputable institution and autonomy. Informants in Bangladesh expressed concern over issues regarding the relationship between Grameen Trust and PRPA (e.g., the application of the NGO's administrative procedures and salary scales to programme operations and the appointment by Grameen Trust of the PRPA Steering Committee, Chair and Program Director) and its effects on the long- term development of the programme.

On the other hand, programmes that are not lodged in any institution do not have to weigh the costs (to autonomy) and benefits of institutional affiliation. Independence, however, may lead to problems of accountability if a significant community that could take the form of a host institution, a research community, concrete local communities, or the imagined community of development workers in a particular region or country is not fully developed as was the case of NURRU when it suffered serious management problems in an earlier phase in its development.

Has full autonomy enabled the programmes to develop capabilities, which they would not have developed otherwise? The answer of the MMRP, which is the only programme enjoying full autonomy, is in the affirmative. The space or autonomy to substantiate the Programme has boosted the capacity of the Southern partners for programme design and management. The MMRPs have the leeway to experiment with organisational structures and effect new systems of project selection and monitoring. In this connection, full responsibility for programme design and management gives the MMRPs the opportunity to learn iteratively and shift gears when the situation warranted it, changing procedures, making amendments, redirecting resources when indicated by the assessment of results by stakeholders or by unforeseen events. A number of such occasions occurred in the "history" of the programmes, but perhaps the most outstanding examples are the African MMRPs, which have made profound changes in their objectives and organisation in an attempt to play the role they have defined for themselves. In fine, many of the systems and structures that have evolved since the implementation of the Programme are innovative and have served as models for other cooperation programmes in particular countries (e.g, Vietnam).

Autonomy also enhanced the MMRPs focus on major local issues, some of which had been given lower priority in previous research and development efforts. The issues of concern to the programmes such as poverty, social protection, gender and environment became even more visible in the areas where the Programme is found. It could be argued that the donor community has picked up these issues. Indeed, in some of these countries, funding agencies have supported projects in these areas. Picking up a critical issue, however, is not only what the MMRPs aim at—of greater importance is bringing these issues to the attention of local communities which have had to organise themselves, reflect on and negotiate their needs and try to translate them into researchable topics. The skills and mind frame associated with building a participatory culture among researchers and end users is certainly one type of capacity that can only be built with autonomy to adjust research activities to unfolding and empowering processes.

Finally, the autonomy granted to the MMRPs to design programmes suited to the conditions of countries makes for an interesting variation in the character and focus of each programme. For instance, PIEB and ADESO represent very different thrusts. So do the VNRP and the KRPLD. In turn, the individual autonomy to choose research topics within the areas defined by the Programme and the character of most of the MMRPs as research facilitators rather than convenors of research teams have allowed a 'hundred flowers to bloom'. The research facilitated by the Programmes through a competitive selection process ranges from academically oriented studies to action research, albeit within the framework of participatory development. From one viewpoint, the wide range augurs well for the MMRP. Reiterating a point made earlier, the Indian Country Report that likens the MMRPs to the proverbial Biblical Sower of many seeds, admirably remarked on the diversity of the research issues selected by the researchers in Kerala, which the usual top-down research agenda approach could never have hoped to capture.

*• In the view of the recipient countries, is the Dutch policy for cooperation, contained in the MMRPs, any different from the 'conventional' forms of North-South cooperation, or from the policies adopted recently by similar agencies? What are the differences and similarities in the characteristics of these policies in terms of demand-drivenness, multidisciplinary, location-specificity and participatory practices?*

The MMRP locates itself in an ongoing debate regarding development and how it ought to be brought about. On one side of the debate is the position that growth is an important goal for the South and that its achievement will result in development and poverty reduction with minimum interventions on behalf of equity concerns.<sup>109</sup> On the other hand, while economic growth is deemed important, the other position would argue against the simplistic notion that any achieved growth in the South will trickle down. Proponents of this position would argue that political economic structures operating in

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109 The growth and equity debate is not new but the discourses emerging in this era of globalization and rapid technological changes have couched the terms of the debate differently.

developing countries constrain the distribution of the benefits of growth to the larger population.

From its documents and practices, the MMRP would seem to be found on the equity side of this debate. But the development strategy it implicitly espouses emanates from the interplay of other discourses.

The implicit MMRP development strategy assumes that structural transformation or development in the South requires more than government action or the intervention of the elite. It entails the organisation and mobilization of resources and people at the grassroots because in the end, the outcomes of development programmes would depend on whether people on the ground have a sense of ownership of the process. Moreover, the sustainability of the development process would rest on the empowerment of the citizens of developing societies, particularly the poor who constitute significant segments of the population.

What would it take to empower the poor? In the 1970s and 1980s, the organisation of sectors and communities was the strategy for popular empowerment in the developing world. But in societies that have become increasingly knowledge-based, the organising process toward empowerment ought to go hand in hand with access by the poor to knowledge reservoirs, and the capacity of relevant groups to integrate existing knowledge pools on the ground and produce new knowledge if necessary. But the capacity to produce new knowledge in the conventional knowledge sites (universities) of the South is constrained by the limits of a conventional disciplinary mode of knowledge production in the face of development problems. In this discursive context, the MMRP has called for a problem-oriented (demand driven), location specific and multidisciplinary (preferably participatory) research. Its evolving experiment with an alternative mode of knowledge production has put the MMRP theoretically in a position to produce meaningful knowledge at the frontiers of development the way research areas have evolved in computer, materials, biomedical and environmental sciences, the frontiers of science and technology.

The MMRP at the programme level is oriented towards research-based solutions to development problems. As such, it is oriented toward action and policy changes. The Programme, however, is also academically oriented in so far as it aims to contribute to the knowledge reservoir and to the development of an alternative mode of knowledge production.

The MMRP shares many common characteristics with the programmes lodged outside the university. For all intents and purposes, the APBNLP is an MMRP. The PIRN and FTTP also share basic assumptions regarding development strategies and knowledge production although they do not cast their work in a knowledge perspective. They differ from the MMRP in the scale of coverage and their specialization in particular issues. The MMRP covers a much wider range. On the other hand, the university-based programmes share in different degrees the demand orientation of the MMRP. At the same time, they differ fundamentally from it in terms of the mode and thrust of knowledge production and the nature of their programmes.

In fine, the MMRP is unique because of the potential level of integration and coherence of its philosophy of development and knowledge, design, and the leeway it gives the local partners to implement the Programme iteratively. But the MMRPs in the seven countries have not yet leveled off fully in terms of how they fit in the operationalisation of the unifying links of the Programme and the evolving articulation of its underlying philosophies.

- *Are the characteristics and attributes of the programmes implemented by the different donors producing the desired results? What are these? [Here the focus is on the various types of research capacity building (institutional and individual; conducting and managing research; research appreciation and use); the production of results of quality and relevance for development objectives; establishment of scientific relationships with other countries (international research collaboration), etc.]*

On the whole, the research teams were impressed by the achievements of the research capacity building programmes they reviewed. Seen against the yardstick of the objectives they set for themselves, the Programmes have performed well, with a few exceptions. The details of these achievements are found in various parts of the Report and the Country Reports.

The results of the programmes have varied with the nature of the research cooperation. Again, the details are in the text and the Country Reports. But to summarize, the University-based programmes produced researchers with formal graduate degrees and several publications in local and international journals. Researchers in collaborating institutions have formed networks or incipient communities of researchers, which in the case of Latin America crossed national borders. The specialized programmes (VISED and MAP) have trained a significant number of researchers and, in the case of MAP, produced indicators for poverty monitoring.

The action-oriented programmes PIRN and FTTP have made a dent in the training of researchers working in the areas of indigenous peoples and community forestry. The APNLBP and the MMRPs in turn have made inroads in producing relevant research. They have instituted mechanisms to ensure that they are sensitive to the needs of the locality where they are found and responsive to systems of quality control. The fact that processes of agenda setting, project calls and proposal evaluations are totally in the hands of the local partners constitutes a major departure from traditional modes of research cooperation.

A final note on the achievements of the MMRP, of all the programmes studied, the MMRP is the most ambitious. Not only does it require of its researchers immersion in the development processes in the localities where they are doing the study but more importantly, a change in mindset and willingness to explore knowledge production at the frontiers without clear-cut guidelines. Given what it ultimately wants to achieve, the MMRP is admittedly still far from its long-term capacity-building goals despite its remarkable successes within the short period of its existence.

One must be cautious about underestimating the amount of time involved in meeting the rather nontraditional and ambitious objectives of innovative programmes such as the MMRPs. The time span required is definitely longer than in conventional undertakings where the objective is only to commission a few projects preferably by established researchers. In the case of MMRPs, the objective is not only to conduct research, but also to build capacity, not for 'conventional' research, but for demand driven and multidisciplinary research. Agenda setting processes that involve research users requires a long preparatory phase. It also takes time to put in place new institutional structures outside the established research systems. Unlike conventional research, therefore, there is greater need for review and consolidation at every stage in the MMRP.

*• Is the policy implemented by the Dutch government applicable only to some types of research, particularly those involving specific regional needs, or could it be adopted in a more general way in other forms of North-South research cooperation?*

The mode of North-South cooperation operationalised in the MMRPs is most appropriate for research involving regional or local needs that are as close as possible to the ground, although it is important to stress the need for links to critical national and regional policy making bodies. This mode does not seem to be suitable for academic discipline-based capacity building programmes in the natural sciences such as those funded by SIDA/SAREC or DANIDA. The MMRP mode, however, may be an appropriate model for university-based problem-oriented capacity building programmes in the social sciences and multidisciplinary and applied scientific fields such as plant breeding, biotechnology and environmental studies.

The researchers would be cautious in generalizing the MMRP mode, with autonomy as its leitmotif, and applying it to other forms of research cooperation. For one, potential partners in the developing world represent conflicting or contradictory ideological priorities and power positions. To circumvent the dilemma emanating from linking up with groups that hold divergent views of development, the choice of partners who will work closely with groups whose interests ought be served (e.g., the poor) is critical.<sup>110</sup> In bilateral cooperation involving government, however, it would be a breach of protocol and an exercise of asymmetry for a donor to specify and insist on its chosen partner from among government agencies or local institutions.

*In conclusion*, the international scientific cooperation programmes covered in this study present a diversity of forms of cooperation. Although funding agencies have their own policies and priorities, most of them have tried to balance their interest and those of Northern researchers and universities with those of their Southern partners. There are strong indications from the programmes studied that they are increasingly becoming sensitive to the sensibilities of their local partners and the needs of the locality in which

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110 Pronk, J. 1989 'Development research never can be neutral: a conference review' In Schweigman and U.T. Bosma. *Research and Development: The Role of the Netherlands Cooperation*. Netherlands: Royal Tropical Institute.

their programmes are found. Moreover, local partners have gained more autonomy in agenda setting and the management of their donor-initiated programmes than their counterparts two decades ago.

As science and technology in most of the countries covered are in an embryonic stage and the needs in these countries are many, the diversity of scientific cooperation is a positive development welcomed by the recipient countries. At the moment, donor-initiated capacity programmes have found particular niches in the South.

Paradoxically, the observation in the Nicaraguan Report regarding the challenge posed by this diversity for the development of science in the country applies to the other countries covered as well. Even though there are many agencies acting in the different countries, their resources are modest. The fragmentation of these resources may mean that the development of the scientific sector is less efficient than it could be under ideal conditions. Despite the fact that the Southern partners in the foreign cooperation programmes enjoy academic and administrative autonomy, the foreign agencies usually end up taking many decisions, which are crucial to the cooperation (such as which research areas, geographical regions and types of institutions are to receive priority). Lack of communication and coordination among the donors and the leaders of the different programmes exacerbate the fragmentation.

Having engaged in enlightening discussions with representatives of the donor agencies and the programmes, the regional coordinators of the comparative study could only but wish for more sharing among the resource persons of this study. It is in this light that this Report concludes with a recommendation to create a forum for international scientific cooperation programmes in the countries involved. Such a forum will reveal to the funding agencies and local programme managers their similarities and differences. It may also lead to an agenda-setting process whereby the research needs of the country are assessed in the concrete context of geography, politics, economics and culture. It is hoped that the establishment of such a forum will enhance convergence on very basic assumptions and approaches to development and capacity building in the South and respect for divergent positions. In some of the countries studied, the national governments may be in the best position to convene critical players in the development research community (e.g. the Ministry of Science and Technology's international cooperation or linkages division in Vietnam). For other countries, the convenors may be an emerging network of government agencies, research institutions/universities, donors and end-users.

All told, the proposed forum is only one of many possible strategies for engaging donors and the research communities in the countries concerned in a joint reflexive exercise that will elaborate on the modalities of capacity building they have chosen to support or participate in, in the light of their evolving philosophies of development and knowledge production. In the process of jointly reflecting on the contributions and appropriateness of the modalities they operationalise in the context of the political economic and social milieu prevailing in the countries where they work and the corresponding state of science and technology development there, donors and recipients are bound to reaffirm or revise the research modalities they have painstakingly developed

through the years. In so doing, they may significantly cover even more distance than they already have in pushing the current limits of capacity building for development-oriented and empowering research in the South.

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