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Richard Pring

Aga Khan University, Institute for Educational Development, Karachi

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CHAPTER 2

IED and the University Partnership: the Oxford experience

RICHARD PRING

Introduction

This study gives an account of the role of Partner Universities in the conception, planning and development of the Institute for Educational Development. Since the author was the Director of the University of Oxford Department of Educational Studies, the essay clearly reflects the Oxford story – and, no doubt, both Toronto and the IED would interpret the relationship differently. Indeed, that is one of the main lessons from a partnership between universities coming from different educational and cultural traditions. The partnership has been fruitful for each of the partners in terms of the development of knowledge, understanding, educational practice, and more recently, joint research. However, in achieving this success there were many misunderstandings along the way, which could not easily have been anticipated at the beginning. Suspicions arose from the filtering of communication through preconceived ways of seeing the other partners. It takes a long time to come to see things from the others' points of view – and eventually to reach the positions of mutual respect on which can be built genuine partnership.

Original Conception

The Aiglemont Secretariat of HH the Aga Khan established a Task Force, which, in October 1989, produced a Report on Education in Pakistan (The Aga Khan Institutions and Teachers in Pakistan, 1989). At the heart of the Report was the belief that

the education of all children in Pakistan depends upon the improvement of the performance and the elevation of the dignity

of teachers, and further that such an improvement in turn depends upon the creation of a network of teacher development, dispersed throughout Pakistan but linked with a centre of excellence of international quality. (p. 2)

The Aga Khan University (AKU) with a Faculty of Health Sciences (including a Medical College and a School of Nursing) was already established in Karachi. The Report recommended that there should be, not a second faculty, but an Institute for Educational Development (IED), which would be that 'centre of excellence of international quality' (p. 2).

The key principles governing the work of such a centre (unlike those of a conventional university) were:

1. the engagement of trainers, researchers and other scholars in the real world;
2. the creation of a number (and indeed network) of professional sites;
3. the commitment to standards of quality which would be widely recognised (p. 2).

The Institute would build upon initiatives already started: the field-based teacher development within the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) (for example, the Professional Development Center in Gilgit and the Teachers Resource Centre in Karachi) and a number of school improvement initiatives. But it would address the problems of a

critical shortage of leaders with vision and skills to carry such projects forward, a lack of any professional and intellectual association with a wider community of teachers and scholars ... and ... the absence of recognition and professional advancement for teachers undergoing such courses and experiences. (p. 3)

Therefore, the model was of a *professional base*, rather than a traditional university faculty. Such a base would provide a framework for the recognition of teachers' achievements. Hence, although a *professional base*, it would need to be *within* a university. And it would be a model of professional development, linked with professional development schools which would provide the opportunity for intensive 'clinical experience' of visiting teachers, supported by 'master teachers' or 'mentors', before they returned to their own schools. Subsequently, this has developed into an Institute in Karachi, close to the main university, located within the campus of an established Aga Khan School. There are now several cohorts of Master of Education students who, upon completion, have become professional development teachers for visiting teachers at the IED or in their respective schools. Furthermore, such 'master teachers', known as Professional Development Teachers (PDTs), are increasingly staffing professional development centres in East Africa, Northern Pakistan and countries of Central Asia.

The Task Force argued strongly against a traditional university faculty. This was to be a centre of professional development, albeit one which

demonstrated standards equal to anywhere in the world, and supported by a rigorous research tradition and academic scholarship. To achieve this professional base within a university, cooperation with reputable universities with a like-minded ‘philosophy’ was seen to be crucial for three reasons. First, there was no experience then within the AKU of such professional centres. Second, there was a need for expertise to get this enterprise off the ground. Third, international status and recognition is not easy to come by, and close association with universities which had such recognition would clearly help.

Therefore, the Task Force recommended that the AKU should with support from international agencies ..., establish a small and closely-knit partnership of universities – one in the United States, one in the United Kingdom, and one in the developing world.... This partnership, an International Consortium of Universities (ICU), would jointly operate a programme for the exchange of experts, technical bilateral assistance within a nationally agreed strategy. (p. 6)

In fact, two universities of international repute were identified: Michigan State University, which was then establishing a number of Professional Development Schools, and the University of Oxford, which had established an ‘internship model’ of teacher education and training.

Although the Institute was to be essentially a professional centre, it was also recommended that, if supported by the partnership, it should also develop a Unit for Research and Policy Studies with a small number of core faculty. The reconciliation of these two elements – professional development, on the one hand, and policy research, on the other – would be possible, first, through the increased rigour of the evaluation by the research unit of different models of field-based education, second, through the wider international framework it would provide, and, third, through the evidence-based extension of the Institute’s professional work into urban settings, rural areas and beyond Pakistan to parts of Central Asia, East Africa and India.

Finally, to ‘govern’ all this field-based teacher training, professional development schools, a network of professional development centres, and a unit for research, the Trustees were to appoint a Board of Management, which would have about ten members, including representatives of the International Consortium of Universities (subsequently referred to as the Partner Universities). But, as was stated, institutional and intellectual ties would grow and change as the AKU and the IED developed their programmes and missions (p. 6).

That is the end of the beginning. But in anticipating subsequent developments, one should note the following. First, the IED was conceived as a *professional* institute, not a faculty. Indeed, its relationship to the university, though launched as part of the AKU, was referred to as a ‘special one’ and core members of the Institute would be academic members of the

University. Second, however, as an Institute, it was still to have a unit for research and policy – the kind of unit which normally would have been associated with a university faculty. This could so easily give rise to a certain tension, since those who inherited the work of the Task Force found the distinction between the Institute and, what would normally be regarded as and called a university faculty, increasingly obscure – and possibly untenable.

Furthermore, as the distinction between ‘institute’ and ‘faculty’ became increasingly blurred, so did it seem inappropriate to maintain governance by a Board of Management, especially one which could be dominated by ‘outsiders’ including the Partner Universities (PUs). After all, a university faculty normally enjoys academic autonomy within the statutes and ordinances of a university, and is not beholden to the requirements of those outside the university structure. And, indeed, there is little doubt that the governance of the IED would remain with the Board of Trustees of AKU, and that graduate programmes would go through the University’s own Board of Graduate Studies.

Establishment of the Institute

The IED was formally established by a Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the AKU, dated 17 July 1992. But prior to its establishment and the appointment of the Director, the model adopted was much influenced by the practice of the partners within the International Consortium of Universities. The former Director of the Oxford University Department of Educational Studies (OUDES) had drafted several of the reports leading to the establishment of the Institute, drawing upon the Internship experience at Oxford University. That model was of a Professional Development School (PDS) in urban Karachi and a Professional Development Centre (PDC) in a rural area (Gilgit in the Northern Territories). The work of the PDC was to draw upon the example of clinical training in medicine:

First and foremost it locates the task of teacher training and development in the context of real schools (rather than of lecture based theory) and exploits the expertise both of practising teachers of high quality and of educational researchers and scholars. Dominant in the PDS are master teachers (or clinical instructors) who are trained to act as mentors to the less experienced teachers who attend the PDS for continuous periods of about eight weeks ... The intensive work undertaken by those teachers is overseen by the IED and, in most cases, contributes to credits for Degrees in Education now awarded by the Aga Khan University. (Judge, 1991, pp. 5-6)

Initially therefore there was to be appointed a Director and core staff to oversee:

1. establishment of the training function of the PDS (later to be referred to as the Professional Development Centre which would incorporate a school).
2. assurance that the quality of work and study undertaken by the practising teachers was such as to merit awards at the University.
3. mobilisation of support from government and international agencies for both the professional work and the unit for research and policy.
4. cooperation of the Partner Universities in providing training opportunities for Pakistani teachers – with secondments to the Partner Universities' countries.
5. design and implementation of a programme of research. (synopsis from Judge, 1991, p. 7)

Prior to the appointment of a Director with the brief to carry out these tasks, the Chairman of the Task Force approached the suggested Partner Universities, soliciting their support.

We believe it is essential that this Institute, even though it initially be of modest size, be linked both to the Aga Khan University in Karachi and to two or more universities outside Pakistan with an outstanding reputation regarding professional training for teachers. (Edwards, 1990)

The members for the programme therefore were invited to the planning process in Karachi in April 1990. That planning process would include both the possible input from the Partner Universities in complementing the expertise currently available in Karachi and the possibility of secondments of teachers to Oxford and Michigan universities and schools. From these would be selected the first ten clinical teachers who, obtaining their Master's from the AKU, would then constitute the training team at the Professional Development Centres.

One consequence of the Karachi meeting was the developing idea of the Board of Management (and with it the International Consortium of Universities). The Board was seen to be, because of its size, rather unwieldy and indeed distant from the actual activities of the IED. Furthermore, as has been said, responsibility for the governance of IED had always been seen to be within that of the University, ultimately under the Board of Trustees and working through the Board of Graduate Studies as far as graduate studies were concerned. Hence, the IED would be an Institution (not a Faculty) within the AKU, but with an Academic Advisory Council (AAC) reporting to the University Board of Trustees. On that Council would be representatives of the Partner Universities, who would also serve as advisers and consultants. The Council would (a) provide 'expert advice, sustenance and experienced guidance', and (b) exert quality assurance on behalf of the Board of Trustees (including the scrutiny of budgets).

The 'function and role' of the Partner Universities, therefore, as envisaged in the final proposal for the establishment of the IED, were

presented in a paper from the Aga Khan Foundation, 1 May 1992. According to this paper the Partner Universities should:

1. provide international validation of the IED's training programmes and research; and
2. provide a range of specialised services in teacher training.

By 'international validation', it is intended that the PU should confirm that (a) the content of the IED's teacher education programme and research, (b) the quality of the staff implementing them, and (c) the results obtained in terms of the trainees' achievements and the research writing would meet the approbation of the PU's own system of academic awards, staff promotion, research endorsement, etc.

By 'specialised services in teacher education', it is intended that the PU should complement and supplement the skills of the full-time IED staff in (a) designing and deciding course content and teaching style, (b) procedures for recruiting trainees and assessing their progress through and at the end of courses, and (c) actually delivering a variety of teacher education programmes. The process of validation and of providing services will involve:

1. participation by PU faculty over a period of years in meetings of the IED's Academic Advisory Council;
2. secondment to the IED on a short or longer term basis of faculty from the PU or from schools and school boards linked to the PU;
3. training at the PU themselves of IED staff on short study tours or award-bearing courses. (The Aga Khan Foundation, 1992, p. 3)

Furthermore, it was stated that 'partnership' meant that 'all parties would learn from each other' (p. 3). The link, therefore, was envisaged to be qualitatively different from that which often characterises the relationship between universities in the 'developed' world and those in the 'developing' worlds, where the 'learning' is often in practice seen as moving in one direction only. Indeed, from the outset, as the IED became established, so it was envisaged that the partnership would need to evolve.

Moreover, it was made clear at this stage that the IED would reserve the right to enter into linkages with other universities, should that be appropriate for meeting its needs, and indeed the Task Force was to approach other universities for specific responsibilities. For example, in 1994, Sheffield Hallam University was invited to help with the development of the Leadership and Management programme because of Sheffield's expertise in management education.

For this it was estimated that one full-time equivalent post would be required in each of the two Partner Universities, and the cost of this would be incorporated in the proposed budget.

However, partnership was also tied to funding – especially to the source of funding. Towards the end of 1991, it was apparent that, although co-funding was likely to be forthcoming from the Commission of European Communities (CEC) and from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), no such prospect was emerging from the USA. For that reason, it was finally agreed to seek a partnership agreement with the University of Toronto, Faculty of Education, instead of Michigan State University. Toronto was well known for its innovative work in teacher education, and its Dean of Education, renowned for his work on innovation and change.

Very soon, the Partner Universities were playing a part in the development of the framework of the future M.Ed. programme. They took part in the workshop held for this purpose in April 1993, at which were present the Director designate of the IED and others, including senior educators from the Aga Khan Education Services.

In brief, therefore, at this stage of the establishment of the Institute, the role of the Partner Universities was seen to be crucial – in providing teacher support at IED, in advising on field-based teacher education based on experience in their respective countries, and in giving advice, consultancy and quality assurance both directly and through the Academic Advisory Council. In return the Partner Universities would be appropriately compensated for the time which the discharge of such responsibilities would take. However, apart from the expression of hope that this partnership would benefit academically all the partners (in contrast with how the relationship between universities in the developed and developing worlds is normally seen), none of these early papers referred to the benefits, other than financial, which might accrue to the Partner Universities – and in this lay the grounds for subsequent difficulties.

But all this was prior to the appointment of the Director.

Partnership: rewards and difficulties

The undisputed facts of the partnership in practice would be the many visits of faculty from Toronto and Oxford to Karachi to help develop modules on the Master's course, to teach such modules, to support Karachi-based faculty in their teaching of the modules, and to support the students as they prepared their dissertations. Altogether eight members of the Oxford department and over 15 members of the Toronto faculty have, to different degrees, been involved – the Oxford department mainly (but not exclusively) in the teaching of, and mentoring in, mathematics and science; the Toronto faculty mainly in English and the social sciences.

This responsibility soon began to recede – partly due to the success of the partnership. For the M.Ed. class of 1995 (the first M.Ed.), the IED did not have its own mathematics educator. This situation prevailed until 2001-02 when two of that first cohort, having successfully completed their doctorates at Oxford, were appointed. In science and social studies, however, the need for assistance finished after the first M.Ed. cohort, although interest was maintained by the Partner Universities. Similarly, after the M.Ed. class of 1998, the teaching of English required no further assistance.

In some cases the visits of the Partner University faculty were many and prolonged, although clearly (whatever the terms of the contract) there were always limits as to how long visiting faculty could leave their teaching responsibilities in their home universities. And this was an issue at the IED because modules were usually of six weeks' duration. The Partner University faculty, however, were often able to free themselves from their own universities for only two weeks at a time, thereby creating difficulties in the continuity of teaching and in the mentoring of the IED faculty.

In several cases, the Partner Universities were unable to meet some of the demands, and so they arranged for support from other universities, always subject to the agreement of the IED Director. In this way, a wide range of people from several universities have come to be linked with the AKU.

Partnership, therefore, was often seen in terms of the role that the Partner Universities were to have in the development, teaching and quality assurance of the new Institute and its staff. And that role was, at the very least, the delivery of certain modules until such time as the IED was in a position to appoint its own faculty in these areas. But the Partner Universities tended to see their role as going beyond that. They had been chosen initially to help the University establish the Institute. They had been chosen because they themselves had established reputations in the very activities which the Institute was now initiating. Furthermore, having inherited the view of the Institute as portrayed by the First Task Force, namely, as a base for the professional development of teachers, they were wary of developments which seemed to go beyond that more limited vision.

Such different perceptions of that role would understandably give rise to conflict as the Institute developed under its new Director, who had not been part of the original task force or of the subsequent planning meetings or of the choice of Partner Universities. Ultimately, the Director would be held responsible if things went wrong or if the Institute failed to achieve its goals. Partnership could easily be perceived as a constraint rather than an enhancement of the Institute, as that inevitably was to be understood by a new Director. And, indeed, that might be expected where those who are charged with the responsibility of implementing the original plans were in no way part of that planning.

It was felt, however, by the Partner Universities that sometimes the members of the IED did not appreciate the constraints and demands which

the Partner Universities were having to face. These were implied in the Oxford Director's letter (2 April 1990), to the chairman of the Task Group. The newly appointed Director of the Oxford University department, who had not been party to the proposals for an Institute or to the proposed involvement of a partner university, wrote:

The involvement of members of this Department in consultation visits would have to be strictly limited because the Department is small and hard pressed to meet the teaching and research demands upon it. [The previous Director] referred to connections in research. These would need to be spelt out more clearly. But given the very active group within the Department concerned with research into teaching training and into the internship scheme particularly, there are interesting possibilities which we would want to explore. (Pring, 1990)

The same letter endorsed the attachment for a period of eight weeks per year over a period of three years of 10 IED staff (the 'clinical teachers' in training) to the Oxford University department and its internship schools.

But the quoted section of the letter needs to be enlarged upon, because it reflects an anxiety of the Partner University which seemed not to be recognised by IED – thereby leading to misunderstandings.

Major British universities are under considerable pressure to meet high and demanding standards in the two areas for which they are funded – teaching students who pay fees to be taught and conducting research. Those pressures are increased in a university like Oxford which would want to maintain its position and reputation amongst world-class universities. The Department of Educational Studies had, under the previous Director, pioneered field-based teacher education in the United Kingdom through the highly innovative Internship Scheme, and had justifiably gained an international reputation for this way of delivering teacher education. It had still to achieve similar status in the quality of its research. The question, therefore, that the new Director had to face was how far could the partnership with the IED and Toronto be integrated with main aims of the Department. How could the partnership both complement its teaching and enhance its research programme? What could not be allowed was a partnership, however worthy in itself, which distracted it from its main mission. Of course, the perception of that two-fold mission might itself evolve and be enhanced through the very partnership with the IED and Toronto faculty.

These certainly were the considerations uppermost in the mind of the Oxford Director as the terms of the contract were negotiated leading up to the signing in 1993 and indeed in the re-signing of the contract in 1997 – though neither contract quite reflected this.

The partnership was legally established in a contract between the Partner Universities and the AKU. In Oxford, this was enacted on 16

September 1993, with due ceremony at Green College, signed by the then Warden of Green College, Sir Crispin Tickell, and the Chairman of the AKU Board of Trustees, General Sahabzada Yaqubkhan. The newly appointed Director of the IED, was present and at the celebratory lunch he welcomed the partnership whilst at the same time emphasising the independence of the new Institute. He clearly did not wish to be constrained by any agreements made prior to his appointment.

The contracted agreement (Agreement between Aga Khan University and University of Oxford, 16 September 1993-15 September 1996, Section 5.7, p. 8) reflected the reasons already given for the partnership. It required from each Partner University a minimum of 150 days of academic time, 120 days of which would have to be spent in Karachi, including attendance at the Academic Advisory Council. However, the AKU reserved

the right to arrange links or any other collaborative arrangement or association with other universities or centres of learning or engage the services of any consultants to further the objects of AKU and/or the Institute (Section 5.8, p. 8)

The partnership was henceforth marked by a certain degree of conflict over the role and function of the Partner Universities. Certainly they had a major part to play in the design and teaching of certain modules on the M.Ed. (Oxford teaching the mathematics and science modules, Toronto the English and Social Studies modules). But the difficulties are reflected in the IED Director's brief document 'Some Observations on Faculty Development Strategies for IED', written in 1995. There he divides the possible contribution of the Partner Universities into three: faculty development, cooperation in research, and preparation and delivery of specific modules. The PU staff should, strictly speaking, be present at the planning stage of different developments; they would need to be more familiar with the actual conditions in the Karachi schools; they would need to engage more with the IED staff in thinking about educational issues: 'professional development in such situations can best come from discussions, etc., on the assumption that the national faculty have important ideas' (Bacchus, 1995a, p. 14).

But that is not easy to achieve where the Partner Universities are so far away and where, therefore, there was not, nor could there be, the presence at much of the planning, the familiarity with the conditions in Karachi schools and the appropriate engagement with IED staff. Already one can see concern over the lack of the collegial relationship which was sought after. There is a hint of sadness in the account: 'For one reason or another, in the majority of cases the teaching of the modules never became a joint enterprise between the IED and PU faculty members' (*ibid.*, p. 14).

One major source of contention with the Director of the IED was clearly the role and constitution of the Advisory Committee – in particular, its assumption that, with the Partner Universities on board, it could and might be fairly directive in the future of the IED.

The latter problem was resolved, to the satisfaction of the IED Director, at the meeting of the Advisory Council in Chantilly in March 1995, when the Council was dissolved and, in its place, a Partner University Forum established. The Forum was to meet twice a year – in Karachi, Toronto or Oxford. When held in Karachi, it would provide an opportunity for the PU representatives to meet the Faculty and to discuss the various ways in which the partnership might progress to the advantage of all.

Also at Chantilly were other members of the IED, Toronto and Oxford, so that, outside the meetings of the Advisory Board, there were important and sometimes intensive discussions about the role and function of the partners. Toronto and Oxford expressed their deep commitment to their work with the IED, but also were anxious to ensure that the partnership addressed together the problems of field-based teacher education. In a letter, dated 21 March 1995, to the former OUDES representative on the Advisory Council, the OUDES Director said: 'I benefited greatly from the Chantilly meeting. I am fully committed to the development of these links but on a much firmer basis of partnership – that is, the partners involved in the conceptualisation of field-based teacher education' (Pring, 1995).

In anticipating the visit to IED in the following June by the Reader in OUDES, who had been the most significant contributor in Britain to the conceptualization of field-based education, the OUDES Director continued:

I see his role in June much more clearly. It will be (a) to tie up research cooperation with clear funding arrangements to be in place almost straightaway, (b) to help with the thinking about the conceptualisation of field-based teacher education. This latter is important because it will be seen much more as part of our central departmental research into teacher education. I had never before quite seen how AKU could be integrated into mainstream departmental interests. Now I can. (Pring, 1995)

Similarly, in a letter to the Director of the IED, the OUDES director again committed Oxford to a partnership 'focused on the development of field-based teacher education – how this might be conceptualised and put into practice'. He reiterated what had been said at Chantilly, namely, that Oxford would not be interested in anything less than that – 'for example, simply providing expertise in mathematics or science where that is lacking at IED'. Thus, Oxford, certainly, did not see itself as simply plugging the gaps in IED staffing. Its own thinking about field-based teacher education was inevitably constantly developing, and it saw that academic and professional collaboration with like-minded people in a very different context would enhance that thinking. And such thinking was as much about conceptualisation of field-based education as it was about practical delivery. For that to happen, the three partners needed to work more closely together – to be (harking back to the IED Director's words) – present at the planning and engaged with each other. But, in fact and inevitably (given the

institutional constraints within the Partner Universities and given the distance between all partners), the visits from the Partner Universities tended to be brief (three or four weeks' duration at the very most) with substantial gaps of time in between. Furthermore, a variety of people from other institutions, usually with the agreement of the Partner Universities, were invited to make contributions. All this inevitably made the hoped-for sharing of ideas less easy to achieve and the IED could rightly say that the Partner Universities could not give the time required to consultation in planning and evaluation except at a distance.

This, and the report from the Oxford University Reader, following his June visit, caused a lengthy and at times tense correspondence between Oxford and the IED. The central issues in this correspondence can be pitched at various levels.

At one level, it was simply a matter of how the IED and the Partner Universities respectively saw the PU roles in the partnership – or, at least, saw how the others saw these roles. On the one hand, the PUs did not see themselves simply to be 'supply teachers' – plugging the gaps where there was not the expertise in the IED faculty but rather to be responsible for developing courses with a distinctive philosophy of 'field-based teacher education'. On the other hand, the IED Director in particular, and the faculty also, saw the PUs (particularly following a report from Oxford which was critical of the way in which field-based education was developing at the IED) to be overstepping the mark, not fully appreciating the distinctive context of Pakistan (or of the 'developing world'), seeking greater influence than the essentially consultative and advisory role warranted. Indeed, the words 'neo-colonial attitudes' were used twice in subsequent conversations. On the surface, all three partners were pursuing the same agenda which was central to their own distinctive missions – namely, the conceptualization of, research into and development of 'field-based teacher education'. On the other hand, the differences lay deeper in the different perceptions over whose views should prevail and how much Toronto and Oxford should be seen, in practice, as part of the Faculty in taking on specific responsibility for course organization and delivery. Of course, in retrospect such involvement was practically impossible from such distances. And, in any case, institutions develop. The IED could not remain in the same relationship to the Partner Universities as was envisaged at the very beginning.

The first meeting of the Partner Universities in Karachi in November 1995, addressed these issues – with a view to the renewal of the contract in 1997. But the tensions remained, to the extent that Oxford University seriously considered pulling out of the partnership, as was explained in the Oxford Director's letter to the Director of the IED of 1 February 1996. The short-term 'teaching contracts' and the difficulty in arranging research cooperation made it difficult for Oxford to continue – albeit such withdrawal would be 'with the greatest reluctance'.

Clearly, the letters from Oxford and the subsequent replies from the IED Director reflected a very deep division of perception about the significance of what had been achieved, about the role and contribution of the Partner Universities, and about the value of further collaboration.

The proposal of the OUDES withdrawing, however, caused concern at the AKU, for was not one function of the Partner Universities (in the original conception) to validate the quality of the IED's work, and to give credibility on the international stage? Indeed, the Director of the OUDES was suddenly invited to meet the President of the AKU during the Board of Trustees' meeting in Paris in April 1996, to explore what the problems were and to reassure Oxford and Toronto that the partners were integral to the successful development of the IED.

The tensions between IED and the Partner Universities were explored directly or indirectly in two articles. In 'A Study of Cross-national Collaborative Research: reflecting on experience in Pakistan', two of the IED Faculty, and three representatives of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), presented their experience of collaborative research. Writing collaboratively had not been easy; even deciding the appropriate order in which to place the authors of the article was problematic (Penny et al, 2000). Since the fieldwork was necessarily conducted by the 'insiders' (who were experienced and highly qualified researchers),

it was questionable precisely why the three 'external' persons were involved in any way except to bring to the initiative some vaguely perceived form of 'external' legitimacy as part of the granting of funds to NORAD. As one of the Pakistanis remarked early on: 'Who is the grey haired man coming in telling me what to do?' (Penny et al, 2000, p. 447)

An earlier unpublished paper by two AKU-IED faculty members, Iffat Farah and Mehru Ali, presented at the OUDES research seminar in 1998 pointed to the problems of cooperation between the rather imperialistic 'Northern' universities and those within the developing world, even where the faculty in the latter were as experienced and as competent as the faculty in the former. (After all, they had pursued their doctoral training in similar or the same institutions.)

Therefore, the partnership in the first few years went through some stormy periods. Both the Partner Universities and the IED felt deeply committed to their task. And they were always welcomed warmly by the IED faculty, being invited to contribute to seminars when they visited. Indeed, difficulties at the institutional level concerning the exact role of the Partner Universities did not prevent the development of close personal ties. Furthermore, the Partner Universities could be relied on by the AKU to respond to any request for help (for example, informally interviewing prospective members of faculty at the IED or being active members of the Second Task Force). And, indeed, it was generally agreed that (as was stated

in the document 'Partner Universities: Memorandum of Understanding', prepared by the IED Director in December 1995, following the first meeting of the Partner Universities Forum, see Bacchus, 1995b):

The first three years have also affected – and strengthened – the Partner Universities themselves. They have, through their investment of much time and expertise, acquired an understanding and a set of relationships which could be usefully drawn upon so the early achievements of the IED can be consolidated and built upon. (p. 4)

But the Partner Universities saw part of that task, as it had been outlined in the earlier paper, to provide international validation of IED's training programmes and research. And, in so seeing, they felt it their duty to speak frankly of developments in the IED which they thought needed critical examination.

On the other hand, the IED understandably felt that such criticisms often arose from misunderstandings, due to the infrequent visits, or from ignorance of the context in Pakistan schools – or, worse, from what was perceived to be the rather patronizing attitudes of the developed towards the developing world. There was a felt need to assert autonomy, to keep the PUs firmly within an advisory rather than executive capacity.

But as Penny et al (2000) conclude in their article:

When the intricacies of status, norms, role, equity and authority take centre stage in an international setting which brings together persons from developed and developing contexts, who is 'developed' and who is 'undeveloped' becomes glaringly problematic. Creating, managing, maintaining and sustaining the context for effective partnership and participation was an ever present challenge to us all, but the experience of it was exhilarating and personally and professionally rewarding. (p. 454)

Partnership: research

From the very beginning, research was seen as a main function of the IED and the role of the Partner Universities in cooperating in such research was acknowledged. Indeed, as must be already clear from what has been said, the development of a shared research programme, especially with field-based teacher education, was attractive to both Toronto and Oxford. Furthermore, this was in no way seen by them as their doing research on the IED. Rather they aspired to developing their research knowledge through the partnership with the IED, which was exploring a distinctive model of field-based teacher education in a very different context.

As the IED came to assume greater responsibility for its programmes, the Partner Universities could now refocus on research capacity and cooperation. This research would be supported by successful joint

applications for funding. And the cooperation over research would be built into the renewal of the contract.

There were two routes into this research partnership. The first was that of individual links, forged through the shared teaching on the IED Master's modules and through the personal relationships established during the many visits to Karachi. There are several examples of this. The Oxford lecturer, who developed and taught the mathematics modules, worked closely with Professional Development Teachers (PDTs), who were graduates of the first M.Ed. programme, to establish research between teachers and educators. The results showed important relationships developing between mathematics classroom research by PDTs and teachers, and developments in approaches to mathematics teaching and teacher education (Jaworski, 1996, 2001) Furthermore, together they developed the idea of the Mathematics Institute of Pakistan, now a thriving organisation encouraging research into and development of the teaching of mathematics.

The second route was for a more formal development of research proposals between the three institutions. To that end, members of the three universities met in Oxford for a week before Christmas 1998. A lot of work was put into the development of a major research project. But it came to nought. And that, in retrospect, seems inevitable. Good research proposals arise out of a shared idea, a shared problem which calls for solutions. It is not the other way around – a project looking for an idea.

Possibly major and shared research projects of this kind between universities in such diverse settings are necessarily hard to establish. As the article by Penny et al (2000), pointed out, the different perspectives of people in such different contexts make it difficult for one party not to dominate the other – either because one is the 'insider', knowing the context, familiar with the issues, or the other is the 'outsider', albeit with greater political and financial clout. On the other hand, the failure of this initiative was a pity. In the shared interest in field-based teacher education, there was the possibility of each partner providing an outside perspective on the distinctive features of each other's conception and implementation of it. Too often the partners in the developing world of a partnership suffer the external, critical and often uncomprehending gaze of the observer from the developed world. Perhaps those in the so-called developed world might themselves benefit from the roles being reversed – especially as the distinction between developing and developed worlds become increasingly blurred.

'Building research capacity' was, of course, one important aspect of the research dimension to the partnership. As early as 1995, at the Faculty Retreat held on 24 October, a Ph.D. programme was being proposed by the IED. One main reason for this was the difficulty in recruiting properly qualified persons to the faculty at the IED. The help of the Partner Universities would be important. This proposal was discussed further at future meetings of the Partner Universities Forum; it received strong advocacy from Partner Universities at a meeting of a subcommittee of the

Board of Trustees meeting in Karachi in 1997. A proposal was put to the Board of Trustees, following a detailed needs analysis and a valuable overview of doctoral courses by Toronto. Initially, members of the PUs would help with the delivery of such a programme.[1]

Meanwhile, however, the building of research capacity had, rather expensively, consisted in successful Professional Development Teachers, having acquired their Master's, undertaking their doctoral studies at the Universities of Toronto or Oxford – or, in one case, Alberta. Already, having graduated, seven students have returned as members of Faculty (at the time of writing, one from Alberta, four from Toronto, two from Oxford), thereby enhancing the capacity of the Institute, and mitigating the demands upon the PUs for delivering the modules. Mathematics is one interesting case. Two of the original clinical teachers in mathematics education, one of whom had returned as a Professional Development Teacher to a school, the other as a teacher educator with AKES,P (The Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan), went to Oxford. Now they have returned to enhance the teaching which their tutor at Oxford had previously been responsible for. Furthermore, there are currently further students (future faculty or future leaders of professional development centres) preparing for their doctorates in Toronto and Oxford.

Conclusions: lessons learnt and future direction

One major lesson of the partnership is that it lies ultimately in mutual respect rather than in contractual obligation – although the latter may be an essential step for the former to occur. As the need for the PUs to teach specific modules recedes, so does the relationship change and so does the weight upon a contract recede. Relationships have been established; former suspicions have given way to mutual respect, specific shared tasks have been negotiated freely and reciprocal arrangements have been made in teaching. The IED knows that, at Oxford and Toronto, there are able and well-disposed Faculty who are familiar with and sympathetic to the work of the IED and who can be called upon (in, for example, the development of the Ph.D. programmes). The Partner Universities appreciate the distinctive qualities and expertise within the IED and, in the case of Oxford, has linked key faculty members to its department as research fellows, with invitations to contribute to its courses, particularly in international and comparative education.

Indeed, the suggestion by the (now) former Director of the IED that the PUs did not learn enough from the IED is in retrospect correct. Oxford, for example, has one of the few courses in the United Kingdom at Master's level on international and comparative education, and yet the experience and expertise of the IED hardly had any impact upon it. The experience of frequent visits both to the IED in Karachi and, in some cases, to the Professional Development Centre in Gilgit, has brought to the Partner

Universities experiences and relationships which give rise to new understandings of 'field-based education' in circumstances very different from their own. Indeed, the model established and developed in Karachi shaped the plans for a professional centre in Ramallah, Palestine, funded by the Qattan Foundation and prepared by Oxford. Unfortunately, the renewed 'intifada' has temporarily stopped the research link between that centre, the IED and the Partner Universities, as they addressed together the ideas of field-based teacher education, especially in areas of conflict and deprivation.

Furthermore, the potential benefits are being seen more clearly and urgently, as the Partner Universities themselves seek to deepen their understanding of the multicultural environment in which they exist, especially the education of Muslim children in the United Kingdom, many of whom have come from Pakistan. The potential advantage of the partnership for developments at the Partner Universities, particularly for the units concerned with comparative, international and multi-ethnic education, is only just being realised.

Certainly the PUs are different places, with a range of staff both committed to the development of field-based education with the IED and with individual initiatives flourishing. Partnerships, though established by contracts, ultimately flourish, and continue, on the drive and mutual respect of individuals.

Note

- [1] The IED's own PhD programme was launched in 2004 with PU members as part of its advisory board.

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