

## **Assessment of the Centre for Global Studies (CFGs) NePAD Capacity Building Initiative**

Record of the discussion at Bellagio on 11 December 2003

This meeting had been called to review the NePAD Capacity Building Initiative which had been led by the CFGS and supported by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the IDRC. It had been initiated at a meeting in Bellagio in April 2002 and was aimed at developing practical initiatives to support the NePAD objectives. The background to the review had been set out in the paper “Effective Strategies to Realize the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NePAD): Lessons Learned” by Barry Carin and Gordon Smith.

The NePAD documents and the G8 Action Plan had produced a long, encyclopedic list of things that needed to be done. Nothing had been left out (aside from some quibbles whether there was adequate attention to the problems of HIV/AIDS), but there had been little guidance on priorities.

The aim of this CFGS project had been to select specific, concrete initiatives, and demonstrate how they could be worked up and implemented. The intention was to be pragmatic, aiming to influence real decisions, rather than simply producing more papers and recommendations. The project had also deliberately been set up as a rapid process—and one lesson learnt was the limitations on how quickly work such as this could in practice be carried out.

Since the project aimed to influence decision-makers, the use of “mapping” techniques had been introduced, so as to make sure that adequate thought was given to how ideas might be promoted and implemented. In particular, Richard Hodapp’s “Decision Mapping®” process had been used, and taught to those participating in developing individual projects. One of Hodapp’s insights was how much time was often spent on design and how little time on promotion. His methodology provided clear ways of targeting “owners”, evaluators and implementers of the decisions we desire to influence in appropriate ways. This methodology had meshed in with other models for influencing governments, for example the IDRC’s action mapping process.

The original intention had been to select the proposals to be “mapped” through a competition, with a jury of prominent Africans doing the selection, with the Centre for Global Studies helping to make sure the successful proposals were plugged into the decision makers. In the event, it had not proved possible to secure funding for drawing up the full range of proposals, so the process had had to be scaled back.

Pages 7-9 of the Carin/Smith paper set out the sequence of meetings and the proposals selected. Parts of the process had gone well, and there had been enthusiasm for the selection process at the Johannesburg meeting in September 2002. But it had subsequently had become clear that some of the participants had not fully appreciated the nature of the task, or the commitment needed. This had led to the list of projects being scaled back further, before the final meeting in Addis Ababa in February 2003. That

meeting had established concrete ideas for how the remaining projects should be taken forward.

From the perspective of the Centre for Global Studies, some of the lessons presented to this meeting were:

- a process like this would not work unless the mappers were really committed and ready to act as evangelists. The process might have been more successful if more time had been built in for recruitment. In addition, more focus was needed on building larger teams led by well-known people.;
- there had been confusion whether it was institutions or individuals who were being recruited to the process. In some cases, CFGS had thought it was recruiting institutions, only to find the individuals intended to work independently;
- the planning process had not left enough time for tutoring the mappers in the techniques and processes;
- CFGS itself had not engaged properly in decision mapping, in particular in planning how best to communicate effectively with CIDA and secure their support;
- the timetable had been grossly over-optimistic.

Some points were then made about the state of play on individual projects, both from the proponents and from others at the meeting.

### **African Tertiary Institution Consortium on HIV/AIDS**

This project had arisen because of a recognition that little was being done to address the interface between students and tertiary institutions in handling the huge problems of HIV/AIDS. The project had deliberately proposed a consortium involving grass-roots ownership, rather than involving Vice Chancellors and university bureaucracies. A constitution had been agreed at a workshop in November, and the first AGM was planned for July 2004. The University of Witwatersrand had volunteered to be the secretariat, and one immediate task was to undertake the necessary fund-raising.

The aim was to help strengthen the resolve in institutions to tackle this problem effectively, and to remind all staff of the need to find ways to weave awareness into their interactions with students. Promoting discussion about the issue was important: it helped those involved to realise they were not alone. The workshop had produced some stunning anecdotes, but many students remained unwilling to acknowledge the problem for fear of shattering illusions.

The intention was to develop a peer-review mechanism for policies to deal with HIV/AIDS in tertiary institutions, and to have a traveling roadshow to demonstrate how this could work. It was proving difficult to engage the NEPAD secretariat, but there remained real enthusiasm for the project and for its importance.

### **Multi Functional Energy Platform in West Africa**

The obstacles faced in this project (as indeed in the others) were ones that were common to many development projects in Africa. Finding appropriate partners in Africa was hard.

Institutions were often difficult interlocutors, with shifting staff and varying objectives. The focus that had been put on process, and on setting up networks, had been a commendable feature. But the real test would come in actually running and expanding the project over, say, five years.

The project itself was ongoing. UNDP was supportive, but substantial co-financing was needed. To do this would require assistance, guidance and lobbying, and the chances of success would be improved if efforts were combined. To get through the AfDB bureaucracy needed pressure both from donors and from those on the ground.

The issues were not all about money. It would be helpful to continue to work together to deal with other substantive issues. Proper monitoring and evaluation was needed—not the routine end-of-project evaluation carried out to satisfy auditors, but a real analysis of what worked and what didn't. The IDRC work on poverty at village level was a good example. The basis for a successful approach to NePAD and to donors had to be a clear and convincing proposal that set out the costs and the expected results, based on good analysis and research.

### **West African MicroCredit Fund**

This project had had its roots in proposals from the field—from Benin, Mali and Senegal for example—which PlaNet Finance had decided to support. The process had been useful, but had had its weaknesses. It had been hard at first to understand the nature of the mapping process, and six months had been a very short time to draw up plans for the size of project that was contemplated. Nonetheless, a clear product had been developed, along with a clear strategy to sell the product to sponsors.

It had not proved possible to implement this in the way envisaged, but two other related funds had been established. Even where funding approaches had not been directly successful, there had often been spin-off benefits. One of the problems had been that the IFC had been very interested but had wanted to see a different structure covering all of Africa. That was not the aim of the project, which saw a real need to establish a specifically West African fund first.

2005 had been identified as the year of microfinance. The objective was to make a start in West Africa and then to present to the G8 Summit in 2005 a proposal for expansion to other countries. Thanks to the mapping process, there was now a clearer understanding of who to target. Help was still needed on promoting the plans to the governments in Senegal and Benin in particular. Further work was also needed on marketing and on targeting other decision makers. A key lesson was that promoting projects such as these took time.

### **Resource Plunder Database for Africa**

The mapping process had been useful, though not perhaps in the way envisaged. The full Hodapp process was arguably too complicated and time-consuming given the time constraints on the project. But some of the insights had been useful, for example in the distinction between owners, evaluators and implementers. In some ways, the mapping

process might have been better aimed at the *champions* of the proposals, rather than at the *designers*.

There had also been a problem of sequencing. It had taken time to produce good projects, both in this case and others, with the result that some of the focus on process had lacked real substance without a clear idea of the project to be promoted.

The Resource Plunder Database was in many ways different from the other projects. It was not particularly difficult to implement or to fund but it was both dangerous and raised issues of litigation. So its most pressing needs were institutional immunity and political cover. The United Nations Security Council had seemed the obvious home, but caution had been expressed about the dynamics. Other institutions had therefore been examined, including the NePAD secretariat. Another factor was that the UNSC had been dominated by work on Iraq recently, though that could change before too long and open a new window of opportunity.

### **Electoral Code (Norms, Standards and Mechanisms) for the African Union**

No representative of the project could be present at the meeting, but it was noted that the initiative had progressed rapidly, with the mapper being actively involved in the work in this area being carried out by the Conference for Stability, Security, Development and Co-operation in Africa (CSSDA).

### **General points on the process**

The meeting then considered the general points raised about the process, in particular where it had been successful and where it had not. The main points raised were:

- The aims of the program had been over-ambitious, but that was to the CFGS's credit. The outcomes had exceeded what many other comparable programs might expect to achieve in such a short period. To get several projects to the implementation stage was a noteworthy achievement. The program had rightly focused on deliverables, rather than just producing reports. Much had been learned, and there was scope for building on the process, as well as moving forward on some of the projects.
- If the program was looked at as an exercise in capacity building, it had arguably not been put together in the most appropriate way. There were some strong points: the consultation process; the investment in knowledge institutions in developing countries; the use of new knowledge management techniques. But the process had not been integrated with national processes, and there was little country ownership. It had not properly supported governance processes, or taken account of countries' roles in co-ordinating with NePAD. It had also been too donor-driven. These issues needed to be addressed in the design of future projects.
- Others disagreed, particularly on whether the process had been donor-driven. The presenters at the meeting in Addis Ababa had *all* been from African countries, and individuals from those countries had been able to take an idea and develop it. And

on capacity building more generally, there was an important agenda in improving the skills of policy entrepreneurs, independent of action taken with governments. It was in any case perhaps too ambitious to evaluate the program in terms of its success in capacity building. What the Mott Foundation had asked the CFGS to undertake was a pilot program to test whether the ideas would work in practice, rather than a fully-fledged program of capacity building.

- The process had produced a very useful contribution to the academic literature, and it would be worth conducting a more formal review of the methodology used, and the obstacles that had prevented all the objectives being achieved.
- Many of those at the meeting encouraged the CFGS to write an op-ed article for suitable publications which could explain what had been achieved and what issues had emerged. It was important to share experience, and many would be interested in this process.
- It was disappointing that it had not proved possible to get the projects endorsed by the G8 Summit in Evian, as had been hoped. But in the event, the Evian Summit had not focused on specifics in the way that the Kananaskis Summit had. The 2005 Summit in the UK had now been set as the time when the G8 would formally review progress on the G8/NePAD action plan.
- It had proved very difficult to engage with the NePAD secretariat, whose resources were very stretched. They did not have the capacity to be an operating partner. But it was nonetheless important that projects had some sort of official blessing from the secretariat. Equally, it was important to look for ways in which the secretariat's own capacity could be boosted. The secretariat could benefit from outcome mapping techniques, so as to develop a clearer focus on what needed doing to get proposals implemented.
- There was also confusion about the wider governance arrangements for NePAD, including the co-ordination between countries and the handling of national, regional and sub-regional programmes within individual countries.

## **NePAD**

These points led on to a short discussion on NePAD itself, in which the main points raised were:

- Although some scepticism had been expressed about NePAD, it was important to see it as an *African* project. Support from the G8 was secondary, and NePAD did not stand or fall depending on donor support. It was not happening overnight, but NePAD *was* changing the way Africa operated. Capacity building was only part of the problem: also important were governance, infrastructure and resources.
- It was important also not to focus exclusively on the problems faced by Africa. That only served to create a sense of “why bother?” Of course there were

problems, but there were also more positive points. Zimbabwe, for example, now had a better educated population, with six universities compared to one at independence.

- At the same time, it was right to look to NePAD to produce concrete results. It was not just a political initiative to demonstrate that Africa was taking responsibility for its future. People in Africa wanted to see change, with new ways of delivering services and a real sense that NePAD was making a difference.

### **Conclusions**

The meeting generally endorsed the conclusions and recommendations in the Carin/Smith paper, while at the same time counseling against the sense that the process had failed to deliver its goals. It was commendable to have got as many as five projects ready for implementation, and much had been learned than would be useful for future efforts.

The Mott Foundation, too, felt that much had been accomplished in a short period of time. While NePAD was about Africa helping itself, it was also about creating partnerships with the G8 and other institutions and this project had demonstrated how that might be achieved. The process also offered insights into new approaches to managing globalisation.

The CFGS, for its part, had until recently felt gloomy about the outcome of the process; that sense had been expressed in the paper. But more mature reflection—and the points made here—had increased their optimism about what had been achieved. It was welcome that so many participants felt that the lessons would be of wider interest. Nonetheless, there remained a lot of work to complete what had been begun.