BRIDGING THE GAP:
ENABLING EFFECTIVE UK–AFRICA UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

International
Higher Education

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

As part of African universities' quest to improve the quality of teaching and research, and the rising interest in internationalisation among UK universities, UK–Africa university partnerships are gaining momentum. Such partnerships have considerable potential. However, more needs to be known about what makes partnerships effective. This summary report draws on a review of literature on partnerships and interviews with key stakeholders in the UK higher education sector, to identify the underlying factors, with a particular focus on teaching and learning partnerships. The report is intended to be of specific interest to UK universities as they seek to develop new and existing partnerships with African institutions.

Context

The rapid transformation of higher education in Africa and the growth of the region's economies are influencing how higher education partnerships operate, redefining the purpose of many existing collaborations, while attracting interest from new international partners. A series of pronouncements from the international community have contributed to this change: the most critical being that higher education is now recognised as playing a crucial role in poverty reduction. For this reason, current efforts by the UK government and other bilateral and multilateral development partners to build higher education collaboration with Africa are particularly pertinent, especially in a wider context in which higher education institutions are seeking to develop internationalisation strategies to strengthen their footing in the global economy and yield other benefits.

Challenges lie on the horizon, however. Despite significant growth in African universities in recent years, keeping pace with the changing international and domestic contexts is a difficult task. Lack of quality of higher education is of primary concern, as demonstrated in many institutions by limited research outputs, ineffective teaching and learning provision, and poor graduate employability. In response, teaching and learning partnerships, as a form of capacity building, are now being seen as a means of targeting some of these issues. They aim to enhance the skills of Africa's current and future workforce through innovative approaches to curriculum development and teaching methods. Yet they are still relatively underdeveloped compared to a much wider number of well-established research partnerships in Africa, not to mention more numerous partnerships with other regions of the globe. In 2008, only 3.8 per cent of UK institutions operated transnational education programmes with African institutions, compared to 43.6 per cent with Asian counterparts and only five per cent were planning for future programmes in Africa.[1] Partnership schemes such as Higher Education Links and DelPHE have provided impetus, but there is still significant unfulfilled potential.

In addition, there is limited information on the extent and nature of UK–Africa higher education collaboration. In particular, better understanding is needed of what makes university partnerships effective. This report aims to respond to this knowledge gap. Through interviews with key informants, the report assesses what is already known on effectiveness, identifies current knowledge gaps and considers what next for teaching and learning partnerships, with a particular focus on the UK higher education policy environment. It provides a brief overview of how partnerships have developed and are currently conceptualised in the UK, a typology of university partnerships and a description of different partnership schemes funded by UK bodies. Six factors will then be presented as a framework for understanding what makes partnerships effective. The interviews – 20 in total – were conducted with key UK policy makers and academics who have been engaged in higher education partnership schemes at policy or practice level.

The research forms part of the Universities, Employability and Inclusive Development project commissioned by the British Council, with a focus on Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and the UK. This summary report presents findings from the first phase of the partnerships research conducted in 2014, centring on the perspectives of the UK higher education sector. The second phase of the study will focus on African perspectives on university partnerships, involving interviews with academics and policy makers from each of the four African countries participating in the project.

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1.   Drew, S, McCaig, C, Marsden, D, Haughton, P, McBride, J, McBride, D, Willis, B and Wolstenholme, C (2008) *Transnational Education and Higher Education Institutions: Exploring Patterns of HE Institutional Activity.* London: DIUS Research Report 08 07.

Looking back

The history of UK–Africa university partnerships

UK higher education collaboration with Sub-Saharan Africa is long-standing. Some major changes to the UK higher education sector have supported the development of links, particularly during the 1980s, which saw policy efforts to rationalise the higher education system in line with market principles, leading to increased competition between universities and a search for greater financial viability. One result was increased student recruitment in some of the more economically stable Sub-Saharan African countries, although there was less UK higher education involvement in Africa than in other global regions.

The growth of UK–Africa university partnerships, however, was also hampered by the lack of investment from international donors in the 1980s and 1990s following a series of studies[2] that showed higher returns to primary education. Higher education was systematically neglected in Sub-Saharan Africa during this period. To a degree, the volatile markets that marked many African countries at the time also provided a reason for UK universities to refrain from collaborating because of the potential financial loss and the reputational risk involved. While the Africa Action Plan: Progress Report[3] of 2003 showed commitment to Africa's universal education strategy, higher education was not included, even though many action points of the report were dependent upon a strong knowledge base that only higher education institutions could offer.[4]

From 2005 onwards, the notion that higher education could contribute towards the eradication of poverty was placed back on the agenda, particularly in support of accelerating the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. Various pronouncements in turn demonstrated renewed UK commitment. For example, the G8 Gleneagles Summit of 2005 (Gleneagles communiqué[5]) targeted efforts to enhance international aid to Africa and spoke of revitalising UK collaboration. Capacity building of universities, particularly through partnerships, was seen as one such intervention. During this time, discussions were also underway regarding the role of the Department for International Development (DFID) in higher education and the agency's role was re-examined. Furthermore, with the end of the Higher Education Links scheme – a long-standing higher education partnership initiative, a successor modality was being sought by the UK government. As a result of these developments, DFID invested in a major project known as DelPHE (Development Partnerships in Higher Education), from 2006, that facilitated and supported both North–South and South–South university partnerships.

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2. World Bank (1998) *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalization, and Expansion*. Washington DC World Bank. Psacharapoulous, G and Patrinos, H (2002) R*eturns to Investment in Education: A Further Update Policy Research Working Paper No. 2881.* Washington DC: World Bank.
3. DFID (2003) *Africa Action Plan: Progress Report*, London: DFID.
4. Roberts, L (2005) *African Higher Education Development and the International Community*. Short paper series on African higher education development: Policy Research Unit: ACU.
5. Gleneagles (2005) G8 *Gleneagles Communique on Africa, climate change, energy and sustainable development.*

Current DFID policy statements, the Education Strategy 2010–2015 [6] and the Education position paper on 2015 and beyond, [7] speak of its commitment to reform the higher education sector in Sub-Saharan Africa through skills development and policy change, with the aim of enabling it to contribute to poverty eradication. The DelPHE project completion report concludes that institutional collaboration has strengthened as a result of the project and notes that some links have continued since the project ended. [8]

The orientation of higher education globally towards internationalisation provides a further context in which UK–Africa partnerships have been established, some also driven by the UK government's Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' (BIS) recognition of the role universities play in the country's knowledge economy. [9] Various policy initiatives, including the Prime Minister's Initiative for International Education of 1999 (re-launched in 2006 [10]), and other recently commissioned reports, such as the Bone Report, [11] indicate how thinking is moving away from international student recruitment for commercial gain as the sole incentive for international engagement by UK universities. While they recognise that successful initiatives in emerging economies, including those in Sub-Saharan Africa, may provide a way of enhancing their competitive position globally, UK universities are also seeking to develop longer-term, sustainable partnerships with overseas institutions. [12]

6. DFID (2010) *Learning for all: DFID's education strategy 2010–2015*. London: DFID.
7. DFID (2012) *Education Position Paper: Improving learning, expanding opportunities*. London: Glasgow: DFID.
8. DFID Development Partnerships in Higher Education (DelPHE) Project Completion review 11543; Available online at: http://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-111543/documents/
9. BIS (2009) *Higher Ambitions: the future of universities in a knowledge economy*. London: BIS.
   BIS (2011) *Estimating the Value to the UK of Education Exports*. BIS Research Paper Number 46, June 2011. London: BIS.
   BIS (2013) *International Education: Global Growth and Prosperity*. London: BIS.
   BIS (2013) *The Wider Benefits of International Higher Education in the UK*. BIS Research Paper Number 128, September 2013. London: BIS.
10. Prime Minister's Initiative (PMI) 2006 Available online at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dius.gov.uk/dius_international/education/prime_ministers_initiative
11. Bone, D (2008) *Internationalisation of HE: A Ten-Year View*. DIUS.
12. Fielden, J (2007) *Global Horizons for UK Universities*. The Council for Industry and Higher Education.

Looking to the present

Conceptualisation of partnerships

There are a host of drivers determining how higher education partnerships between the UK and Sub-Saharan Africa have been developed [13] and currently operate. While this report does not overlook these numerous drivers, it appears that partnerships are largely conceptualised and operated in two key domains in the UK higher education sector: internationalisation and partnerships for development. These two ways of thinking inevitably influence how different government departments view the role and purpose of UK–African university partnerships and, in turn, are reflected in the design of the partnership schemes and impact how they operate within individual institutions in the UK.

Internationalisation

Internationalisation of higher education is generally considered through two streams;[14] first, the integration of an international dimension into the home campus of the university, mainly through attracting international staff and students; the outworking of this often entails internationalising the curriculum and enhancing global learning for preparation of students as global citizens, largely supported by the institution's international office. Second, internationalisation is identified as the process of expanding the home campus into international markets; this particular process is now commonly seen through the setting up of branch campuses abroad and overseas partners' delivering accredited courses from the home institution. There is much evidence indicating that international student recruitment remains the most common activity of internationalisation in the UK, largely influenced by the UK's increasingly marketised environment. [15]

Partnerships for development

Partnerships for development, on the other hand, aim to develop the capacity of a higher education institution of a developing country in order to accelerate poverty reduction in their local and national context and to promote sustainable development. [16] Many partnerships of this type focus on how the African institution can develop and integrate strategies that will increase access for students, introduce new degree courses, improve teaching and learning quality and enhance research outputs. They are often funded by providers of overseas development assistance. Commonly, most UK–Africa university partnerships are understood in this way.

13. Wanni, N, Hinz, S and Day, R (2010) *Good Practices in Educational Partnerships Guide: UK-Africa Higher and Further Education Partnerships.* Trident Printing Ltd: The Africa Unit.

14. Knight, J (2004) Internationalization Remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education* 8/1: 5–31.

15. Warwick, P and Moogan, Y (2013) A comparative study of perceptions of internationalisation strategies in UK universities. *Compare* 43/1: 102–23.

16. Samoff, J and Carrol, B.(2003) 'Continuities of dependence: external support to higher education in Africa'. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Comparative and International Studies Association, (LA, 12–15 March 2003).

A typology of partnerships

Broadly speaking, the types of activities of a partnership can be categorised into either research or teaching which, according to the UK Higher Education International Unit,[17] are usually operated in the following ways:

Type of partnership	Programmes/pathways
Research collaboration	• Individual, departmental and institutional collaborations. • Applied research. • Opportunities for joint funding. • Split-site PhDs.
Teaching	• Branch campuses. • Joint and dual degrees. • Programme articulation.[18] • Franchising.[19] • Validation.[20] • Corporate involvement.[21] • Flexible and distributed learning (such as distance learning or e-learning.) • English language courses and international pathway courses. • Studying abroad. • International volunteering.

Surveys[22] have begun to map the number and types of current partnerships between UK and Sub-Saharan African institutions and the African Higher Education Activities in Development (AHEAD)[23] database also documented UK university partnership activity in the past. However, there is a lack of up-to-date, collectively developed evidence on existing practice.[24]

17. Baskerville, S (2013) *A guide to UK higher education and partnerships for overseas universities*. UK Higher Education International Unit: Research Series 11.

18. 'Process whereby an HEI in the UK evaluates the provision of an overseas partner and finds that a programme of study, or elements thereof, is of an appropriate context, level and standard to be deemed equivalent to specified components (usually completion of a year-stage) on one or more of its own programmes, thereby facilitating entry with advanced standing onto year two, three or four of the programmes concerned' (pp. 28–29). Baskerville, S (2013).

19. 'Franchising assumes an organisational relationship in which a university in the UK authorizes another institution located overseas to deliver and sometimes to assess, all or part of a programme which it has approved for delivery on its own campus' (p. 29). Baskerville, S (2013).

20. 'Process by which assessors evaluate anything … that has been developed at, and will be delivered by, a partner institution and approve it as being of an appropriate standard and quality to justify an award from their own university' (p. 29). Baskerville, S (2013).

21. 'Either the UK or overseas partner … brings a corporate partner to the table with them (for) research and development programmes' (p. 30). Baskerville, S (2013).

22. McCaig, C, Drew, S, Marsden, D, Haughton, P, McBride, J, McBride, D, Willis, B and Wolstenholme, C (2008) *International Research Collaborations in UK Higher Education Institutions*. London, DIUS Research Report 08 08.
    Ibid. footnote 2.
    Woodfield, S and Middlehurst, R, with Forland, H (2009) *Universities and International Higher Education Partnerships: Making a Difference*. Million+ Group: Prepared by Kingston University.

23. Kubler, J (2005) *African Higher Education Activities in Development: the AHEAD database: short paper series on African higher education development*: Policy Research Unit.

24. Kubler, J (2005) *African and UK university partnerships: short paper series on higher education development*. Policy Research Unit: ACU.

Partnership schemes

Partnership schemes have fostered a large number of UK–African collaborations over the past few decades and reviews of these programmes are starting to add to the evidence base. Furthermore, some of the reviews concluded that the projects have given rise to improved teaching and learning. Four schemes have been funded by either DFID or BIS[25] and managed by one of the UK's key partnership agencies, the British Council, which has long experience of operating abroad and facilitating higher education collaboration. The schemes are described in chronological order.

Partnership scheme	Description of its operation	Funds input	Programme duration	Objectives	Output
Higher Education Links scheme	• Funded by DFID. • Longest-standing programme. • Ended due to the UK government's shift of priority towards achievement of the MDGs and poverty eradication.[26]	Approximately £3 million a year.	1981–2006	To mobilise resources, promote innovative initiatives, foster partnerships and transfer knowledge and skills from the UK to developing countries.	3,200 links established with higher education institutions in 48 countries.
England–Africa Partnerships	• Funded by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills. • Managed by the British Council. • Developed in response to the Gleneagles Summit.	£3 million, of which £1 million was allocated for South African higher education partnerships.	2006–08	To support strategic partnerships which contribute to employability, particularly in relation to entrepreneurship, social enterprise and the critical skills needed to enable social and economic development.[27]	Two rounds of the project, resulting in 11 projects in South Africa and 21 in other Sub-Saharan African countries.
Education Partnerships in Africa	• Funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS). • Managed by the British Council.	£4.5 million.	2008–11	To enhance institutional capacity, building greater potential for entrepreneurship, social enterprise and enhance employability.	Funded 72 new and existing partnerships.

25. Higher education has become the responsibility of different departments under successive UK governments. Initially, the Department for Education dealt with higher education and skills. The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) was created in 2007. In 2009, under the coalition government, the DIUS was merged into the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

26. Allsop, T, Bennell, P and Forrester, D (2003) *DFID's Higher Education Links Scheme: Review and Possible Future Options for Higher Education Partnerships, March 2003.*

27. For more information, see: www.britishcouncil.org/learning-epa.htm

Partnership scheme	Description of its operation	Funds input	Programme duration	Objectives	Output
Development Partnerships for Higher Education (DelPHE)	• Funded by DFID. • Managed by the British Council with support from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), which provided assistance on South–South partnerships.	Approximately. £15 million. Grants were allocated for three years, with funding ranging from £10,000 to £50,000 per project.	2006–13	To support partnerships between higher education institutions (HEIs) to build and strengthen the capacity of HEIs in DFID's priority countries to: • Contribute towards achievement of the MDGs. • Promote science and technology-related knowledge and skills. • Influence relevant national policy and practice. • Build academic and research capacity at both institutional and individual levels.[28]	Three outcome indicators (all of which were exceeded on project completion): 1. A minimum of 20 MDG-related research outputs from partnerships, influencing local, regional or national policy. 2. A minimum of 120 departments performing internationally recognised research, in support of the MDGs and science and technology. 3. A minimum of 60 partnerships developed through DelPHE funding are sustained or intend to be sustained at least one year after completion of the DelPHE project.

Now that DelPHE, the UK's most recent partnership scheme, has come to an end and a new partnership scheme from DFID[29] is in the pipeline, it is an opportune moment to take stock of the achievements and challenges of university partnerships.

28. Project Completion Review of Development Partnerships in Higher Education (DelPHE).
29. http://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-203166/

Effective university partnerships

While effectiveness can be interpreted in many ways, a useful definition is provided in the Good Practices guide from the Africa Unit: [30]

'An effective educational partnership is a dynamic collaborative process between educational institutions that brings mutual though not necessarily symmetrical benefits to the parties engaged in the partnership. Partners share ownership of the projects. Their relationship is based on respect, trust, transparency and reciprocity. They understand each other's cultural and working environment. Decisions are taken jointly after real negotiations take place between the partners. Each partner is open and clear about what they are bringing to the partnership and what their expectations are from it. Successful partnerships tend to change and evolve over time.'

For a partnership to be deemed effective, the type and number of outcomes a partnership produces is often commonly recognised as the key indicator. Such outcomes include improved curricula, increased research publications and additional research projects. There is much evidence that shows effectiveness of a partnership through quantifiable outcomes. However, as the above definition suggests, there are a variety of complex, ongoing processes underpinning effective partnerships. While outcomes reveal part of the picture, examination of the design and implementation of a partnership is also needed to demonstrate what types of conditions support mutuality, ownership and sustainability, for example, to facilitate existing and future partnerships. The evidence base in this area is particularly lacking. Furthermore, considering how partnerships have been developed and negotiated within the UK institutional context from experiences and perceptions of those involved in partnerships is essential as part of the evaluative process.

This section presents six lessons on what makes effective partnerships, drawing on original data, with the particular aim to explore teaching and learning university partnerships and to highlight examples of good practice. The research explicitly focused on the UK institutional and policy environments rather than the African context. During 2014, interviews were conducted with 20 participants from various UK policy agencies and UK institutions who have been involved in some capacity with partnerships in policy and/or practice. Ten of the participants came from UK policy agencies, including governmental departments, university associations and representative bodies. The remaining participants came from UK higher education institutions: the majority as academics involved in partnerships, some in senior management or international offices, and from different institutional types including new universities and the Russell Group.

While some spoke of long-standing challenges and others highlighted the new challenges arising from the changing landscape of Sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st century, the key lessons that emerged were common across the UK higher education sector. Six of these key factors are identified here, along with some illustrative cases, followed by a discussion of their implications for policy and practice.

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30. The Africa Unit set up by the ACU ran from 2006 to 2010 as a partnerships and research office. It was funded by BIS and the Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland with the intention that it: 'act as a centralised database holding systematic information on partnerships; create a manual that highlighted lessons learnt and identified gaps and good practice; and support and promote the development of partnerships between UK and African higher education institutions as a means of helping to address Africa's capacity deficit'.

Six factors for bridging the gap

1. Avoiding blinkered boxes: developing multi-faceted partnerships with wide support

Often, partnerships are initially based on contacts between individuals, whether senior managers, departmental heads or individual members of staff, who are seen as international enthusiasts. These contacts provide an entry point and can help to develop mutual trust, but dependency on these contacts can also result in partnerships operating in very narrow, blinkered boxes that fail to win wider support within the institution and result in lack of awareness of the residual benefits partnerships can bring. The objectives of some partnership schemes are also not harmonised with the mission of the UK institution or its wider culture. The UK's business interests are influential in this regard, particularly for senior-level buy-in, placing pressures on partnerships to demonstrate financial viability rather than just reliance on goodwill for their sustainability. As one participant noted, partnership projects can be regarded as 'loss leaders, not high strategy, not high prestige, not high-income projects' and fail to engage senior staff. All these factors may prevent ownership from developing and discourage future engagement.

For partnerships to become well-established and sustainable, they need to demonstrate how they:

- fit in with a university's overall strategy
- have the support of a wide range of staff.

2. Managing mutuality

In the past, many partnerships were established by and in the interests of the Northern partner, which sourced the funding and had more power than the Southern partner. Contemporary partnerships aim at a different dynamic. The DelPHE programme, for example, sought to avoid such power imbalances by encouraging not only North–South but also South–South partnerships. Various partnership schemes have also been clear that unless both partners can identify incentives for and benefits from participation, problems of sustainability will arise. Nevertheless, mutuality continues to be an problem.

Participants in the research suggested that African partner institutions tend to be more rigorous in considering their needs and wants from a partnership and, to an extent, more willing to acknowledge their strengths and limitations than UK institutions. However, they also noted that UK universities may not recognise the capacities of Southern partners to drive partnerships and may continue to adopt paternalistic attitudes. Partnerships are sensitive to operate because cultural and social factors influence behaviour and motivations, with teaching and learning partnerships potentially even more sensitive than research collaboration because they may infer that one partner is less well developed professionally than the other.

Partnerships need to be based on mutuality to ensure:

- incentives and benefits are explicitly defined and relevant to both partners based on a thorough understanding of the different institutional, economic and cultural contexts
- a willingness to share decision-making equally between the partners
- efforts to build trust, as a basis for self-reflective approaches to assessing and evaluating the achievements and challenges of the partnership and what the residual benefits have been in both institutions.

3. Balancing the funding factor

Programmes such as DelPHE aimed to ensure that partnerships attracted additional funds and some succeeded in doing so. However, in many instances, the initial project funding was seen as being unrealistic, given the ambitious objectives and short timescales of the partnerships. To a large extent, financial incentives have not been great enough to attract UK institutions to participate. It was also acknowledged that teaching and learning partnerships take longer to establish than research partnerships, a factor that was not always taken into account by the funding scheme.

The result was either that the objectives were not fully achieved or the institution had to subsidise project activities. An insufficiently funded project may not attract senior management support, may restrict the ability of the African partner to achieve appreciable improvements and may hinder longer-term collaboration.

In order to secure university support for and ensure long-term sustainability of partnerships:

- the time scale and funding of the initial project needs to be sufficient to enable it to achieve its aims
- plans for securing further funding should form part of the project proposal, with funds allocated to the appropriate groundwork and academic mobility of UK staff.

4. Prioritising politics

Politics strongly influences whether and how the UK government supports the development of partnerships between UK and African institutions, in particular the extent to which they are prioritised within the development agenda. While co-ordination between the relevant UK government bodies is needed to ensure that partnership schemes are approached strategically, some participants thought that the UK policy environment is not amenable to radical change, hindering not only such co-ordination but also the continuation of funding for established partnerships. The termination or re-orientation of funding has negative impacts on African universities. Understanding more how in-country governance, financing and institutional structures are underpinned by various political drivers and policy conditions would contribute towards the sustainability of partnerships. Enhancing awareness of the political economy at the micro

and macro levels would also ensure that partnerships could become more robust and develop plans that are more nuanced to what the daily life of partnerships entails.

5. Filling the information gap

Some information regarding various UK–Africa university activities, as well as how universities can engage with projects offered by different governmental agencies, is circulated within and between various UK institutions. Yet there are relatively few opportunities for networking and sharing information about the characteristics of partnerships, their outcomes and ways of addressing challenges. As a result, there is insufficient learning from the experience of others and UK universities often fail to see the potential for incorporating partnership building with African universities into their institutional strategies.

UK universities are increasingly aware of each others' and governmental activities in international partnerships but more could be done to enable:

- lessons to be shared
- the well-informed selection of partners.

6. Working for sustainability beyond the project framework

The project frameworks used for partnership schemes have helped to

formulate a vision and define mutual benefits. They have ensured that the objectives of the partnership are understood by both partners and that the language used is meaningful to both. The project-oriented nature of the funding schemes has certainly provided a strong incentive for the institutions involved to develop clear financial planning and well-defined structures for project management. The schemes have enhanced skills and expertise, particularly in the Southern institutions involved, increasing understanding of project management and enabling institutions to apply for external funding with a view to sustaining collaboration in the longer term. However, the short-term nature of some partnership schemes has had an impact on sustainability, re-orienting partnerships towards a product-focused bias rather than other possible benefits that take longer to accrue, particularly bringing implications for teaching and learning partnerships that may not be deemed immediately effective.

Projects should be seen as launch pads for longer-term collaboration and sustained capacity building, but to realise this aim:

- wider recognition of the returns to higher education needs to be fostered
- Northern institutions need to look beyond project-based partnerships and recognise that higher education capacity-building partnerships are worth investing in for the long-term.

Looking to the future

It is clear that a series of bridges needs to be crossed in order to continue building effective university partnerships. First, learning from past experiences of university partnerships is critical in order to ensure the risks, challenges and achievements are taken into account for future design and implementation. The lessons presented here are just a few to be learned from the everyday realities of partnerships. Furthermore, while UK–African collaboration is strengthening, there is another bridge to be crossed from within the UK higher education context itself: that of in-country collaboration. It appears that the sharing of practice is a missed opportunity that could enable greater policy dialogue, exchange of ideas, in-country support for selecting a suitable partner, and attracting a wider number of stakeholders to scale up the partnership. Third, it appears that a final bridge now needs to be crossed to target more specifically why teaching and learning partnerships are slow to develop and what can be done to foster their growth. Respondents indicated the need for continued consideration of the design and implementation process that teaching and learning partnerships require, since outcomes may take much longer to accrue in comparison to research partnerships. Fundamentally, while

Africa's changing landscape will inevitably bring promises and pitfalls for the future of UK–Africa university partnerships, collaborative efforts from within the UK higher education sector will enable more robust relationships to adapt and respond to the various changes and realise the fundamental aim that all partnerships seek to achieve: that of mutually beneficial exchange.

In 2008, only 3.8 per cent of UK institutions operated transnational education programmes with African institutions, compared to 43.6 per cent with Asian counterparts.