# SYNERGY IN DEVELOPMENT 2007

## *A Decade of Higher Education Collaboration in Development*

Fairmont Hotel, Washington, D.C.
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**Sponsored by:**
United States Agency for Development (USAID)

**Organized by:**
Higher Education for Development (HED)

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## COVER PHOTO CREDITS

Upper Left: University of Texas at Austin/Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla/El Colegio Mexiquense/Instituto Tecnológico Especiales Superiores de Monterrey: Campus Ciudad de México (ITESM)/Universidad de las Américas (UDLA) -- *Partnership for Bilateral Civil Society Scholarship*

Upper right: Photo by: Dr. John Ssempebwa, Fellow-- State University of New York, Albany/Makerere University--*Partnership for a Graduate Program in Environmental Science and Health*

Center right: Submitted by Cliff Missen, University of Iowa--University of Iowa/Nigerian National Universities Commission--*Partnership for Building Digital Technical Capacity at Nigerian Universities*

Bottom right: Submitted by Dr. Bala Mohan--Michigan State University/Tamil Nadu Agricultural University – *Partnership for Building University Capacity to Improve Fruit and Vegetable Supply Chain Development and Management in India*

Bottom left: Submitted by: Dr. Brian Bailey-- Northern Kentucky University/United Arab Emirates University-- *Partnership for Strengthening English Teaching Through Service Learning*

Center: Submitted by William O. Maddocks, Institute Director-- Southern New Hampshire University/University of Limpopo--*Partnership for a South African Microenterprise Development Institute*

## INTRODUCTION

To mark the tenth anniversary of the Higher Education in Development (HED) program, HED and USAID invited more than 300 past and current program participants to Washington, D.C. for the *Synergy in Development 2007* Workshop. This meeting offered an opportunity for HED and USAID to review the contributions of higher education partnerships to poverty reduction and economic growth and to discuss how the program's impact can be enhanced and extended.

During this four-day event, international and U.S. program participants discussed the overall impact of higher education partnerships. During breakout sessions, participants explored opportunities to build on impacts through sustainable programs, scaling up, and replicating model partnerships.

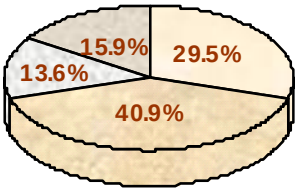
In the opening remarks, HED Executive Director called the event "a truly once in a decade experience." She acknowledged that thinking on development is changing. The effects of globalization have focused development experts on the need for advanced research to foster technological innovation and the advancement of more highly skilled workforces—all of which brings higher education and its role in a knowledge-based economy into greater prominence. She encouraged participants to add to the current debate on the role of higher education in global development by providing examples of programs and projects from their own experiences that have been successfully implemented, have had significant development impact, can be seen as models for future programs and can be expanded and sustained over the long term. The results of those discussions and debates follow.

## PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

In total, 345[1] individuals attended the *Synergy in Development 2007* Workshop. These participants represented 94 partnerships between 68 host country institutions in 43[2] countries and 93 U.S. colleges and universities—an estimated 30 percent of the more than 300 HED partnerships since 1998. Representatives from the media, private sector organizations, diplomats and government officials also participated.

**Participant Profile**

| Total Attendance | International Attendees | | U.S. Attendees | | Partnerships Represented | Countries Represented | International Colleges & Universities | U.S. Higher Education Institutions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Men* | *Women* | *Men* | *Women* | | | | |
| **345** | **72** | **29** | **137** | **109** | **94** | **44** | **68** | **93** |




**Synergy Workshop Country Distribution Within Regions**

- Africa (13)
- Asia & The Near East (18)
- Europe & Eurasia (6)
- Latin America & the Caribbean (6)

**Africa:**
Angola, Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda

**Asia & Near East:**
Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tunisia, Vietnam, West Bank/Gaza

**Europe & Eurasia:**
Central Asia, Croatia, Macedonia, Romania, Russia, Uzbekistan

**Latin America & the Caribbean:**
Bolivia, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru

[1] See complete Attendee List in Appendix A

[2] Countries listed by USAID's Country Categories Under the New Foreign Assistance Framework (http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/acvfa/framework_102506.pdf). For more information about the U.S. Foreign Assistance program areas and prioritization of international assistance, visit (http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/86291.pdf).

| Rebuilding | Developing | Transforming | Sustaining | Other |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Afghanistan | Bangladesh | Bolivia | South Africa | Saudi Arabia |
| Nepal | Egypt | Honduras | Mexico | Algeria |
| | Ethiopia | India | Croatia | Angola |
| | Indonesia | Mozambique | Israel | Kazakhstan |
| | Jordan | Philippines | Lebanon | Kyrgyz Republic |
| | Kenya | Tanzania | Qatar | Laos |
| | Malawi | Ghana | Russia | Libya |
| | Nigeria | Namibia | Palestine | |
| | Peru | Nicaragua | Senegal | |
| | Rwanda | Sri Lanka | Tunisia | |
| | Uganda | Thailand | Uzbekistan | |
| | Vietnam | | | |
| | Morocco | | | |

## Opening Plenary Speakers

**M. Peter McPherson**, President of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC), stated that the primary "drivers of change" in international development have been technology, human resources, and institutional capacity building. He credited USAID for its vital role in inducing this change.

McPherson expressed that HED is by far USAID's "most innovative" partner for engaging the higher education community in international development, but recommended a more focused approach, by limiting the number of target countries and development sectors. He also suggested that HED work with "clusters" of institutions best suited to address specific development challenges.

One of the keys to sustained development impact is long-term training. He noted that such training is no longer an integral part of USAID's portfolio, as many of the world's political, economic, and social leaders received their doctorates in the United States. He urged long-term training as a larger part of the legislative agenda.

McPherson expressed the clear need for the mobilization of higher education's abundant resources – human, technological, financial, material – in international development by saying that, "No sensible person truly believes that a country can be built and grown just using high school graduates alone." He reminded the audience "the greatest results and successes occur when the host countries take the lead and the U.S. partners play a supporting role."

**Juan A.B. Belt**, Director of the Office of Infrastructure and Engineering in USAID's Bureau for Economic Growth, Agriculture, and Trade, echoed McPherson's comments, saying that the key to development is sustainability.

He cited the example of USAID's investment in faculty training through a partnership with the University of Chicago at the Universidad de Chile and the Universidad Católica de Chile in the 1960s. At the time, neither institution had any trained full-time faculty. Now there are more than 30. Following up on its success, Belt said that USAID soon expanded its faculty training efforts to Argentina, Brazil, El Salvador, and Mexico.

Seeing how the faculty and the institutions had been greatly strengthened by the relatively small investment, Belt said the governments of these countries also started investing more in higher education. He concluded by saying that "USAID got a huge bang for its "few bucks" and continues to do so through HED's numerous higher education partnerships.

## Overview of Workshop Sessions

The four-day workshop featured keynote speakers with experience in higher education, government, and international development; facilitated discussions; panel presentations; and roundtables. Human and institutional capacity building in higher education was addressed by regional needs, and across technical sectors, as well as from the perspectives of scalability, replicability, and sustainability.

The session topics were designed from a detailed pre-workshop survey that was sent to all potential attendees. A 70 percent response to the pre-workshop survey provided evidence of impact, indications of sustainability, and descriptions of noteworthy serendipitous outcomes over the past ten years. Details from the pre-workshop survey can be found in Appendix B.

Four regional roundtables examined common themes across Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Near East, or Europe and Eurasia. Other roundtables centered on topics in development such as increasing knowledge in science and technology, stimulating economic growth, enhancing the quality and relevance of higher education globally, and building on impacts at the local and regional levels.

Presentations and discussions explored *human and institutional capacity building* and the development of sustainable programs. Special sessions focused on partnership models for health in Africa and education reform in the Middle East.

Moderators led discussions on influencing agricultural policy through university partnerships, university-based academic centers for health interventions, the role of community colleges for skills development, and utilization and environmental protection as a result of university-based research and training.

Panel discussions provided opportunities for participants to interact and network with public sector partners and foundations to build synergies and stimulate ideas for engaging various stakeholders in international development.

## EMERGENT THEMES FROM THE CLOSING PLENARY: TOWN HALL MEETING

The closing plenary, designed as a "town meeting" or an open forum, elicited participants' suggestions about what influences the success of higher education partnerships and how these partnerships can be leveraged for maximum impact. The topics for discussion were generated by an end-of-workshop evaluative survey completed by participating attendees at the USAID/HED 2007 Synergy Workshop. Through the survey, HED requested participants' input and guidance regarding ways to enhance the impact, sustainability, scalability and replicability of higher education partnerships. The input targeted three primary audiences—higher education institutions, Higher Education for Development (HED), and USAID. For a summary of the end of workshop survey results, see Appendix D.

Outcomes from this open discussion have been summarized by the following categories: partners relations, rooting partnerships in the community, increasing impact, sustaining and extending impact, advocacy and communication, and additional program ideas and requests. The following section outlines workshop discussions and recommendations supporting these identified themes.

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### Partner Relationships

The relationship between the US and host country (HCN) higher education institutions (HEIs) was identified as a crucial factor for project success. Many participants highlighted different aspects of this relationship.

#### *Institutional support*

- Partnership projects need to be supported by the participating higher education institutions in the US and the host country. Partnerships work best when they are part of a university or college's long-term strategy, and both institutions are committed to nurturing and extending the relationship.

  Institutional support is strengthened when the leadership of the college or university understands that international development activities and collaborations are important for promoting understanding of the global society and developing a globally competitive workforce.

*Institutional Capacity*

- In addition to institutional commitment, host country partners must have adequate infrastructure and capacity to support the partnership activities. In particular, their governance and money management systems should be in line with USAID standards.

*Defining the relationship*

- The working relationship between the partner institutions should be well defined at the beginning. One important component of this relationship is to articulate clearly the motives and incentives that bring each partner to the table, and to structure the partnership in a mutually beneficial way to prevent tension and dissatisfaction in the future.

- Another important component of defining the relationship is setting the parameters for fiscal and operational accountability. Partners should agree upon mutual expectations and reporting mechanisms. In particular, different governance and fiscal management procedures may need to be reconciled so that the relationship can work smoothly.

- Many of these factors point toward the need to vet potential partners carefully and define the working relationship at the outset of the partnership. Pre-planning requires time, and it is often easier for U.S. universities to submit proposals with existing, tried-and-true partners. HED might encourage better partner exploration and pre-partnership negotiation by specifically allocating time for this work. One participant suggested that HED should structure the solicitation in two phases. In the first phase, interested U.S. universities should submit a concept paper for the proposed work. Once that is accepted, the grantee should then have additional time to finalize a detailed work proposal with host country partners.

## Rooting Partnerships in the Community

The success of a partnership also depends on its responsiveness to local and /or regional needs and its ability to engage relevant stakeholders. USAID would like to see higher education partnerships result in "community" projects where a higher education institution is one of several groups invested in the partnership. Some workshop participants elaborated on the "outside-the-university" connections that are needed for partnership success.

*Practical solutions for communities*

- HED partnerships are most successful when they translate learning into practical solutions and share new ideas and technologies outside the university, be it communities, governments, or NGOs. Undertaking community extension partnerships is both appropriate and valuable for higher education institutions and HED's work should promote service learning for faculty and students. It is also important for higher education faculty to reach out to non-academic stakeholders and explain the partnership and its benefits in language that is readily understood.

*Aligning partnerships with country needs*

- The range of host country stakeholders that might be engaged depends on the nature of the partnership. For most partnerships, however, it helps to get buy-in and support from the USAID Mission and the relevant host country government ministries as part of the planning process. Some partnerships also need permission and approval of state and local governments, and others might require data or information from specific government authorities that is not always easy to secure.

- It was, therefore, suggested that partnership solicitations be aligned with host country strategies and priorities to enhance collaboration of relevant government agencies so that outcomes are more likely to be accepted and appreciated. In addition, HED could help forge stronger links between higher education partnerships and USAID Missions; for example, by

inviting Mission staff to HED meetings and keeping them informed about partnerships in their country. The Executive Director of HED explained that HED is already working more closely with USAID Missions to align HED partnerships with national development objectives and to engage relevant government stakeholders.

*Engaging relevant private sector actors*

- It is also important to engage private sector stakeholders from appropriate U.S. and host country industries. Appropriate private sector input can improve the quality of the partnership by making the research and student training more relevant and practical. In addition, the private sector can provide resources for sustaining the partnership or extending its impact. It was suggested that private sector participation start even before the grant is awarded, for example by including relevant private sector experts in structuring the solicitation and evaluating proposals.

*Regional cooperation*

- Finally, some participants called for greater regional cooperation and information sharing. HED can facilitate this collaboration via regional workshops that bring together higher education partners and significant regional public and private sector stakeholders. Participants suggested that these meetings would facilitate meaningful discussion of the challenges and progress in that region and promote cross-border connections and collaborations.

## Increasing Impact

Many participants at the meeting seemed to agree about the need for better monitoring and evaluation of higher education partnerships. There was some concern, however, about using appropriate indicators to capture the full impact of the partnership results.

*Constraints*

- First, some results of higher education partnerships are direct and measurable in the short term, but others become apparent over a much longer time frame. Particularly in education, systemic changes are often the result of incremental efforts, and it is sometimes difficult to trace them to a specific partnership. Nevertheless, these effects are real and important. In fact, many workshop participants seemed to suggest that the long-term secondary and tertiary effects of higher education partnerships are more significant than those that are recorded and immediately reported.

- Second, the short time frame of HED partnerships is the biggest constraint on demonstrating impact. Because of the nature of these partnerships, the impact and even the "outcomes" of the partnership activity (e.g. healthcare workers trained, graduate degrees awarded, new technologies developed) may not be realized until after the partnership is over.

*Setting clear objectives*

- Impact assessments should be tied to specific and realistic objectives. No single partnership can be expected to radically alter host country policies or practices, although some HED partnerships have been scaled up into long-term programs with systemic, policy-level effects. It is important to monitor and communicate long-term success stories, but it is also important to recognize the value of achieving limited, short-term partnership objectives.

## Sustaining and Extending Impact

HED awards are intended to be seed grants that should be leveraged into larger partnerships and longer-term relationships. Most partnerships, however, find it challenging, since academics are not full-time fundraisers, to access additional funds to sustain the partnerships beyond the initial grant period or scale up the partnership for broader impact. Workshop participants offered

USAID/HED the following suggestions for sustaining and extending the impact of HED partnerships.

*Sustaining the relationship*

- Even when the formal collaboration between higher education institutions has ended, the relationship and academic ties often can be maintained at little or no cost. One way of continuing this relationship is by instituting joint degree programs and working on joint research and publications. "Sandwich" degrees are also a cost-effective way to foster joint instruction.

*"Scale-up" funds from HED*

- HED could consider starting a separate program that provides funds for continuing activities in highly successful programs. This program would not provide grants to continue existing partnerships; rather, the applicant would have to present a detailed plan to build on what has been achieved.

- In some cases, it is not the partnership itself that should be sustained, but ongoing activity in the host country. USAID/USG should provide limited follow-up funding e.g. fellowships for host country institutions to sustain and extend the results that were made through the partnership effort.

*Assistance for seeking alternative funds*

- HED was requested to assist grantees to secure additional funds for continuing their partnerships. Participants' requests included:
    - Devote some part of the annual meeting to discussion of alternative funding sources and strategies.
    - Develop an on-line database to share how HED partnerships have developed other revenue streams, and connect grantees to other potential funders e.g. other foundations, bilateral and multi-lateral aid agencies, corporations that are interested in particular sectors and regions.
    - Provide pre-packaged marketing materials and messages that convey the value of higher education partnerships. Conduct training and workshops on how to talk to policy-makers and funders about program impacts.
    - Connect successful partnerships to USAID Missions. Assist grantees to better understand USAID Mission priorities, and help them to approach USAID Missions with unsolicited proposals when appropriate.
    - Find ways to "outsource" this function. Not all academics can be successful fund-raisers, even if their partnerships are highly successful and valuable and their technical credentials are unquestionable. Perhaps HED can assist a limited number of grantees in hiring business development professionals to develop different revenue streams for a proposed partnership.

*Not all partnerships should be sustained*

Partnership sustainability should not be an end in itself; rather, partnerships should aim for defined impacts within realistic time frames and plans should include logical end points and exit strategies. Partnerships should end when they reach their logical conclusion. Furthermore, scaling up a successful partnership is not always feasible or desirable. Many people want to join a successful partnership but that may change the nature of the partnership and impede the accomplishment of initial objectives.

## Advocacy and Communication

Many workshop participants addressed the need for increased advocacy and communication to maintain the health of the HED program, and to enhance the prestige and impact of its partnerships and partners.

- On the U.S. side, better internal communication is needed for building the required institutional commitment inside the participating universities. In particular, participants said that the value of these partnerships needs to be better communicated to senior decision-makers and trustees of U.S. universities.

- U.S. Congressional support is important for maintaining program funding. University partners can play an important role by talking about the value of the program with their Members of Congress. Publicizing HED's accomplishments via appropriate mass media outlets (e.g. public radio) could also help build public and Congressional support for the program.

- All USAID programs are subject to Congressional and Administration oversight and USAID Office of Education staff is under pressure to show substantive program impacts. HED works with USAID to compile program information to show cumulative impact and make the case for continuing the program.

- In host countries, it is important to demonstrate to policy-makers about these partnerships to:
    1) promote development of and investment in the higher education sector, and
    2) ensure that host country policies are informed by the work done by the partnerships.

- One participant asked if it might be unreasonable to expect HED to advocate for higher education partnerships, given that USAID is restricted from lobbying lawmakers. HED Executive Director, Christine Morfit, responded that HED is beginning to advocate for higher education partnerships more actively through the six presidential higher education associations. The presidents of these six associations serve on HED's Governing Board and are committing resources to promote higher education partnerships via their lobbying efforts. Martin Hewitt of USAID's Office of Education added that while USAID cannot directly lobby Congress, he reports program results before Congressional committees. Managing relationships with relevant Congressional leaders and keeping them informed about program successes is important for maintaining funding for the program.

## Additional Program Ideas and Requests

Some participants offered specific suggestions about how HED could help them address the challenges they face. Some of these have already been mentioned, but additional comments are listed here.

### *Suggestions for future meetings*

- Future HED meetings and workshops should include fora where participants can learn from the experiences of others. Specifically, these fora should encourage discussants to share the mistakes that they made and the lessons they learned from those mistakes. A frank, open discussion of "what not to do" will be particularly useful to new grantees.

- A related idea was to design a workshop session around a detailed discussion of challenges encountered by one partnership. The host country institution and the U.S. institution could each describe the problems that they encountered (with each other and in their environment), how they decided to address them, and how well those solutions worked.

- This workshop was valuable for participants. Because many sessions were held concurrently, participants were not able to attend all relevant sessions. HED was requested to distribute summaries of workshop proceedings to all participants, which they do via the website

*Making connections*

- Journal publications are important for most academics. HED could encourage program grantees to share their accomplishments and learning by publishing a journal or monograph. (*Moderator's note: It may also be possible to sponsor a special edition of an existing journal.*)

- HED should make an effort to connect small groups of like-minded academics in a particular region or sector. This connection can be done through periodic meetings, special sessions at the annual meeting, or by hosting virtual communities.

- Existing program dollars might go farther if HED/USAID partnerships tap into other programs or services that serve their region. This additional funding would include, for example, organizations that provide textbooks, medical supplies, computers, expert volunteer support. HED should maintain an on-line database of these organizations and help its grantees connect with them as appropriate.

- End -