

Katherine - pse see note in first para:

Session 7: Workshop 4

Title: A Challenge to Universities in the South: new ways of approaching partnerships

Presenter: H.E. Professor Senake Bandaranayake, Sri Lanka High Commissioner to India and former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kelaniya

Chair: Professor John Tarrant, Vice-Chancellor, University of Huddersfield

Rapporteur: Dr Jonathan Jenkins, ACU

Abstract of Workshop

Professor Bandaranayake had been asked to give (a shortened version of) a paper previously presented at an ACU colloquium at the University of Strathclyde in February 2000, which readers may be interested to access in full. ([link to full text?](#) **KS: If this is not possible, I shall have to edit this para.**). The author's development of the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology (PGIAR) in Sri Lanka was used as a case study and was suggested as a new model for the development of a faculty research programme. He challenged Executive Heads to change their university culture and to approach management practice through a more flexible, non-bureaucratic, non-legalistic and non-restrictive mind-set.

Presentation

Professor Bandaranayake described the management philosophy of PGIAR in its development in the mid 80s and beyond. The philosophy lay behind the assumptions that the future of university education and research lies in the adoption of Northern models for development of departmental teaching and research teams and in the development of partnerships outside the university with business, industry, research institutes, state agencies, NGOs and development projects.

In team building, it was suggested that the standard Southern practice of offering tenured posts to recent graduates in a type of 'milk-round' should be replaced by a system of evaluation of staff over a fixed time of appointment, where the individual, in addition to carrying out projected (and contracted) research, could develop skills through examination or specialisation whilst mapping a future career, either within the institute or externally. The institute in turn would use the time to evaluate staff and to find resources to employ those individuals who could expand its scope and team composition.

In the archaeological context, the sites were managed (as opposed to a structured training of staff). Staff would consider themselves researchers first, with the university as a convenient employer. Only those suited to the teaching environment would be retained as permanent staff. Staff and technicians would be brought in on associateships and fellowships, as needed, and paid appropriately. The institute itself was run by a multi-university management board (with a UGC grant) covering the multi-disciplinary areas of archaeology, heritage management and history, anthropology and environmental studies. It engaged university departments, government agencies, research institutes and professional

organisations. Many joint international programmes were developed, such as that with SIDA, which is still in operation.

In the Sri Lankan context many other disciplines also exhibit university to government agency relationships with mutual benefit, though the partnership process is not fully recognised. In areas such as laboratory investigation, engineering and management consultancy, on the other hand, the university to private sector partnership is acknowledged.

Professor Bandaranayake concluded by stressing the importance of fundamental research in the knowledge economy and the need for international partnerships. He went on to say, however, that if the knowledge gap between North and South is not to widen then one objective of any North-South partnership must be capacity building in the southern partner relative to its counterpart.

Discussion Points

Much of the discussion centred around the detail of some of the point raised in the talk. In particular, for Indian Executive Heads, the notion of litigation following non-renewal of contracts (perceived as dismissal of staff) was sufficient to block any radical thoughts of restructuring. Similar issues such as the systematic training of lecturing staff and the difficulty of the evaluation of staff through the assessment of multi-authored papers challenged the proposed model. Regarding South-South exchanges, Professor Bandaranayake conceded that protectionism hindered co-operation and that the South needed to learn to work together to develop networks. However, there was potential for partnerships between Africa and Asia, within the SADC countries and within the sub-continent.

In concluding, the Chair remarked that exciting developments frequently came from interdisciplinary study. He reminded us that we needed to learn and embrace new ways of thinking and practice and to open up dialogue outside the university sector.