

alf-faa
2007

STRENGTHENING
ORGANIZATIONAL
CAPACITY

LE RENFORCEMENT
DES CAPACITÉS
ORGANISATIONNELLES

STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY THROUGH THE LENS OF RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

PBDD'S GLOBAL PROJECT AND THE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK OF WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

"Financial autonomy is a process. It requires internal capacity, institutional commitment to resource mobilization... and time to train, implement and follow-up... In eleven months ERNWACA obtained impressive results... however, such momentum must be harnessed appropriately going forward." (ERNWACA Technical Report, April 2006).

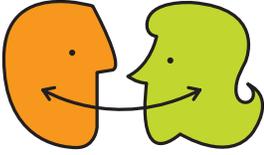
Introduction

IDRC'S PARTNERSHIP AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIVISION (PBDD) INITIATES, BUILDS, AND MAINTAINS KEY LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS WITH DONORS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS COMMITTED TO THE LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTHERN RESEARCH CAPACITIES.

It is also PBDD's mandate to strengthen the resource mobilization capacity of IDRC's research partners. Currently, it does this through a global project that envisions a research for development community capable of accessing a diversity of funding and other resources to maintain financial sustainability and to establish self-determined research agendas. This project is called Capacity Building in Resource Mobilization for IDRC Research Partners (CBRM).

CBRM began in May 2004 and has been extended to March 2009 with a budget of approximately CA\$1.6 million. CBRM is the first IDRC project of this size solely dedicated to capacity building since the 1980s. The project has worked with over 120 IDRC research partners worldwide. Generally, CBRM support is provided for periods of 6 to 12 months through two main modalities: advisory services to a single research partner based on an organizational resource mobilization (RM) self-assessment, and workshop-initiated programs with customized follow-up support to clusters of partners. CBRM draws on the assistance of regionally based advisors and trainers for project delivery. From a range of CBRM initiatives, the Mali-based Educational Research Network of West and Central Africa (ERNWACA), supported by IDRC's Acacia and Governance, Equity and Health programs and the Regional Office for West and Central Africa (WARO), emerges as an interesting case study of the RM capacity-building process.

This brief was prepared by Lisa Burley of PBDD.



The Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa (ERNWACA)

ERNWACA was founded in 1989 by African researchers, with IDRC support, in response to their precarious institutional contexts. Created to promote African expertise, ERNWACA works to foster a culture of research, increase research capacity, and enhance collaboration among researchers and practitioners to strengthen educational practices and policies on the continent. It believes that education is a driver of growth, competitiveness, and positive social development in Africa, and that education research should influence the evolution of educational systems. More specifically, ERNWACA:

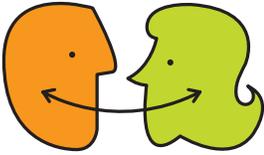
- Builds national and regional research and policy evaluation capacity;
- Improves the quality and pertinence of work carried out by research practitioners and decision-makers;
- Disseminates research findings to stimulate public dialogue and advocacy; and
- Strengthens itself as a sustainable regional institution.

The network has grown to a membership of 14 West and Central African countries, including both Francophone and Anglophone representation. Regional coordination is housed at the Institute for Training and Applied Research (ISFRA) in Bamako, Mali. National coordinators link members with national practitioners and decision-makers in the education and other related sectors. Each national chapter consists of approximately 15 to 25 individual members from national research institutes, universities, NGOs, and governments. Institutional membership is also encouraged. Members elect a volunteer national coordinator who is supported by a national steering committee and a national scientific committee. A Board of Directors determines broad network strategic orientations and a regional scientific committee oversees the quality of research and publications.

Strengthening resource mobilization capacity

The following issues are addressed by an RM capacity-building endeavour and are approached differently, depending on the nature and character of the entity (organization, network, etc.):

- i) Define the unique position or niche of the entity within its development research community, and its specific complementarity with others working in similar areas;
- ii) Elaborate a strategic program plan;
- iii) Elaborate a communication strategy to gain visibility among key groups;



- iv) Calculate funding needs and develop a fundraising plan to secure support from a diversity of sources; and
- v) Identify and mobilize existing non-monetary resources, such as board members and volunteers. Consider methods to foster commitment and ownership to encourage active contribution to the entity's cause and goals, bearing in mind questions of long-term sustainability.

It is important to note that planning documents and funding will not necessarily strengthen organizational or network capacity. This outcome is also contingent upon the quality of the processes in which staff, network members, and stakeholders engage in to foster a shared sense of direction, and to plot a joint road map for the journey. As such, CBRM promotes a learning-by-doing approach and offers external RM expertise only when it will catalyze group processes.

ERNWACA's RM capacity-building plan

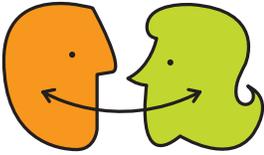
ERNWACA strongly believes that it is uniquely placed in West and Central Africa to bring research findings to bear on progress toward the 2015 Dakar goal of quality Education For All (EFA) and toward the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to education. In order to meet this challenge, ERNWACA recognizes that it must conduct and publish high quality work, develop new strategic partnerships, and solidify its funding base. These last two exigencies led to the prioritization of RM activities by network members in 2004. ERNWACA's objectives were to strengthen the network's collective understanding of a financially viable network structure, and enhance capacity to mobilize resources among various network members.

Niche and strategic planning

One of ERNWACA's objectives was to develop appropriate tools for strategic planning and improved resource mobilization, such as a business plan, a 2005-2010 action plan, fundraising strategy, preparation of donors' meeting, and follow-up. External expertise was needed by ERNWACA to develop a business plan. This plan served as the foundation for other planning processes, such as a six-point strategic resource mobilization plan. Both documents were endorsed by ERNWACA's board, which led to broad-based buy-in and ownership. An RM committee was formed to guide and facilitate the implementation of the RM plan. This group consisted of the regional coordinator, two national coordinators who attempted to promote the decentralization of RM skills and responsibilities, a junior staff member from the regional office, and an external RM advisor who, in this case, was the WARO-based PBDD officer.

Strengthening network members by decentralizing RM capacity

Efforts focused on sensitizing national coordination on the importance of RM and supporting the chapters in reviving national membership. These actions



were supported in various ways, including PBDD's assistance with the preparation of training modules and workshop delivery, national members' participation in RM training workshops, and ERNWACA regional coordination assistance to national chapters to mobilize local resources. In addition, an e-dialogue was set up to encourage the exchange of experiences and to keep network members informed of partnerships being discussed at the regional or national levels. Some members' specific achievements include:

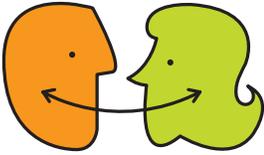
- Niger: The national team successfully mobilized resources from Plan International Niger to organize "Café ROCARE," a creative event day focused on education research which engaged national practitioners in a dialogue on the quality of education in Niger.
- Côte d'Ivoire: A meeting on resource mobilization organized by the regional and Côte d'Ivoire national teams led to the creation of "G12 Communication and Visibility," a student members' working group that identified organizations and contacts strategic to the sustainability of the network. In addition, the national chapter secured funding from the UN Development Programme and the World Bank.
- Senegal: The national chapter secured a contract from the World Food Programme for the training of its regional staff on HIV/AIDS prevention.

A dynamic entrepreneurial spirit took root among many of the national teams. While significant steps have been taken, a long road lies ahead for the network. ERNWACA believes that more time and resources must be invested in strengthening the network at the national level and decentralizing responsibility for RM initiatives. Furthermore, intranetwork dialogue on RM could be strengthened.

Strategic partners

ERNWACA's RM plan also identifies the importance of building strategic alliances on the African continent. Among a range of strategic partners, three stand out due to the impact of their collaboration with ERNWACA:

- The West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA). In response to a call for proposals and an outside evaluation, ERNWACA was recognized as a 2005-2006 Centre of Excellence. This prestigious award gave the network a significant boost in visibility and grant funds to "re-invest" in order to further strengthen national coordinators.
- ERNWACA worked hard to mobilize support from its board members, many of whom are high-level professionals working for renowned organizations. The extent of board commitment led members to draw on their own contacts to assist ERNWACA's request for support from UNESCO-BREDA (Dakar), the African Development Bank, and CODESRIA. This approach has also resulted in financial support from UNESCO-BREDA for the participation of African decision-makers and school directors in the dissemination workshop of a transnational project on the integration of ICTs in schools.



- ERNWACA developed a close collaboration with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). With PBDD support, ERNWACA held a donors' meeting on the margins of the ADEA partners' meeting to share its strategic program plan. Several good contacts were established during the meeting, which allowed ERNWACA to put forward funding proposals to selected donors.

Fundraising

Raising funds is also a main objective of ERNWACA'S RM capacity-building efforts. New funding secured by ERNWACA from donors other than IDRC includes support from:

- The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (core support)
- The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- UNESCO Institute for Education (Hamburg)
- Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA)

In addition, ERNWACA is negotiating with:

- United States Agency for International Development
- African Development Bank
- Swedish Development Cooperation

Conclusion

CBRM granted approximately CA\$65 000 to ERNWACA over 11 months. This funding and ongoing RM advice from PBDD contributed to the learning processes and relationship building that strengthened ERNWACA's RM capacity. A year ago, the network raised over CA\$2 million, which is about 35 times CBRM's monetary investment.

ERNWACA still faces many challenges in its efforts to champion the importance of education. Nonetheless, it has been able to maintain its own research agenda since the network elaborated a strategic program plan two years ago. At the close of the CBRM project in April 2006, ERNWACA was keen to explore other RM initiatives, such as a fundraising campaign (Friends of ERNWACA) and an endowment fund. ERNWACA will also share its story with other IDRC research partners at CBRM events held in West Africa.