Capacity development for urban development: the evolution of the integrated urban management Masters course at the Ethiopian Civil Service University

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Abstract

This paper reviews the experiences with an integrated urban management Masters course, which saw an increase from 20 participants to 400 students in a period of 5 years. After a few years it became clear that it was difficult to absorb this number of Masters students in the government sector and that their skills did not match all the requirements. The paper looks at the external factors determining the success of the integrated urban management Masters course, and the desire of the Ethiopian government to make decentralization a reality. It also analyses the internal factors leading to positive outcomes of the interventions over time. The increasing complexity of urban problems cannot be managed by general urban managers; therefore specialized Masters programmes were launched. The programme evolved over time, reflecting the priorities of the Ethiopian government. Starting as a unified programme, the course was split into a series of specializations, focusing on water-related and environmental issues. The cooperation evolved over the period of the relationship into a partnership with leadership on the Ethiopian side. This contributed to the success in terms of the capacity built, the number of people trained, and their contribution to dealing with water and environmental problems in an urban context.

\textit{Keywords}: Capacity development; Ecological issues; Ethiopia; Partnerships; Success factors; Urban management; Water sanitation

1. Introduction

This paper analyses the experiences of the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies of the Erasmus University Rotterdam (IHS/EUR) with capacity development in Ethiopia. The IHS/EUR...
has worked with the Ethiopian Civil Service College (which recently became a university: ECSU) since 2000 to build capacity at the Masters level. This paper reviews the experiences with an integrated urban management Masters course, which saw an increase from 20 participants to 400 students in a period of 5 years. The paper first analyses the institutional context, followed by the external and internal factors contributing to and hindering the success of this course.

Achieving water security is imperative for urban economic development; it involves water management, environmental protection and the provision of pro-poor drinking water and sanitation services. Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia is, like most regional capitals, a fast-growing city requiring improved service delivery, in particular drinking water and sanitation. The city also faces an enormous backlog in services. At one time, the city faced a wood shortage and plans were made to move the capital until the eucalyptus tree was introduced, making the move no longer necessary. A similar wonder is not to be expected with respect to the environmental, drinking water and sanitation problems of the capital and hence the Ethiopian government has made plans to upgrade local capacity to deal with these issues. The urban management capacity development project discussed in this paper was one of these efforts. The project trained individuals, but also contributed to the improvement of the ECSU as an organization as a whole. The focus on capacity development was intended to create urban managers who could make the government’s decentralization policy a reality. The purpose of the paper is to analyse which factors contributed to the success of this project and which acted as a barrier; and to derive key learning from the experience of working with the ECSU. Urban management is not just putting a plan into action, but rather a systematic involvement of the major stakeholders of a city in identifying and dealing with the problems of such cities. It involves improved service delivery, increased participation and investment, and finding solutions for the major challenges faced.

We first present some details on the joint urban management Masters course. We then discuss the methods used to collect data on the project. We start looking at the outcomes of the capacity development activities at the organizational, and the individual (and city) level. This is followed by a presentation of the empirical results. The paper asks the question: *what factors contributed to the success of the ECSU Masters programme and what constraints existed?* We start with the tool of mapping sector governance, scanning the institutional setup and political economy and presenting an actor assessment matrix. These answer the question of the external factors influencing the setup of the programme and the outcomes of the interventions. The following section looks at the internal factors of the programme that influence outcomes, positive and negative, before drawing some conclusions and formulating some recommendations based on the lessons drawn from this long capacity-development process.

### 1.1. The urban management Masters course

Established in 1995, the Ethiopian Civil Service University (ECSU) is a public institute involved in education, training and research activities with a mission to build the capacity of the civil service overall. The Institute for Urban Development Studies (IUDS) of the ECSU focuses on developing the capacity of civil servants in the areas of urban management and development. The Institute is concerned with countrywide urban development issues and developing the capacity of urban public institutions through appropriate programmes of a varying nature. The institute houses three departments – Urban Planning, Urban Engineering and Urban Management – and different educational programmes, including the Urban Management Masters Programme, which was set up with IHS support in 2002. Many of the
lecturers and coordinating staff in the Urban Management Masters Programme are IHS alumni. Some of these staff members have come from countries outside Ethiopia.

Starting in 2000, the IHS assisted, what was then called the Ethiopian Civil Service College, to deliver the first of a series of urban management Masters degree programmes (see Box 1). The programme was financed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This and the second round of the Urban Management Masters course were fully administered and run by the IHS with support from the ECSU. The infrastructure and facilities were provided by the ECSU, the course materials, lecturers and certification were provided by the IHS (IHS project documentation 2000–2006).

After two cycles of the 1-year Masters course, the third round of the Masters programme was jointly administered by the IHS and the ECSU. The teaching staff of the ECSU worked alongside the IHS staff in the delivery of the course. This was a big step and a learning moment for the staff and the ECSU (Mengistu, 2012).

In 2007, at the request of the government, the programme was scaled-up to take on 400 participants per year. The IHS continued to work with the ECSU and to provide on-the-job assistance. A full-time IHS programme manager worked with ECSU staff on the design and staffing of the programme, and of the management and quality systems. Staff members were hired from outside Ethiopia to teach, many of these were IHS alumni from its Masters in Urban Management and Development (IHS project documentation 2000–2006). IHS staff worked on improving the curriculum and executing the modules. For the Urban Management department at the IUDS of the ECSU, providing a Masters to scale constituted a serious challenge, in terms of scale of provision as well as programme logistics and management (Mengistu, 2012).

The second phase Masters programme was made possible by the initiative and support of the Ministry of Works and Urban Development (MoWUD) with funding from the Capacity Building for Decentralised Service Delivery Project (CBDSD) and the Public Sector Capacity Building Programme Support Project (PSCAP), a multi-donor support package supported by the World Bank (ECSU, 2012). What forms did these IHS capacity development interventions take and in what order were they executed? After the initial, seemingly unconnected activities of the IHS in Ethiopia, the support can be separated into three stages, some of which overlapped in time. Box 2 gives the phasing of the capacity development intervention by the IHS.

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**Box 1.** The features of the Urban Management Masters course at the ECSU.

- Unique feature: strong link between theory and practice.
- Modules in the Masters programme included: Introduction to Urban Management, Economic Analysis, Urban Economics, Urban Housing, Research Methods and Techniques, Urban Development Planning (I & II), Urban Environmental Management, Local Government Finance, Infrastructure Provision and Finance, Land and Real Estate Management, Urban Social Development, Urban Transport, Urban Information Systems.
- Urban water (management) is particularly relevant in the following courses: Urban Infrastructure Provision and Finance and Urban Environmental Management.
- The programme also included thesis research preparation workshops. Participants did their own specialized research project; including field work and thesis defence.
Direct support lasted from 2002 to 2008, but there is still an on-going cooperation in research activities. The IHS remained involved in four of the five urban development conferences prepared by the ECSU, but the last conference was a solo effort by the ECSU. In general, one notes the positive outcomes of the support provided, but we will now analyse the factors contributing to its success, using the methodological framework developed below.

The programme attached importance to sectoral issues, such as supplying drinking water in Addis Ababa (Van Dijk, 2006: chapter 6) or improving solid waste management (Mesfin & Van Dijk, 2012). Environmental issues were dealt with by Ethiopian staff members (Lirebo & Seyum, 2012), or through combinations of local and international teachers (Mesfin & Van Dijk, 2012). Each time, however, emphasis was placed on the importance of an integrated approach where these issues are not looked at in isolation, but linked to broader drivers such as urbanization, industrialization, population growth, economic growth and climate change. Stakeholder perspectives are also important: the identification of the problems takes place with the stakeholders; they are involved in finding appropriate solutions and where possible make a contribution to achieving the solution (Fenta, 2007).

2. Methods used

The model of capacity development was based on developing long-term relations, not just through joint education, but also through staff members receiving their MSc in Rotterdam, joint research

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**Box 2. Stages in the capacity development process with IHS.**

1. IHS began by providing two full Masters programmes at the ECSU. IHS worked in the lead, but with academics from the ECSU and the Addis Ababa University; this period was also characterized by a substantial amount of funding for Ethiopian professionals to come and study at the IHS; these alumni would later become partners in the provision of capacity development services. The curriculum stressed mastery of analytical and creative skills in public management, urban environment, social development, economics and physical planning.
   a. Development and provision of ‘training of trainers’ modules for ECSC staff in adult training skills and urban management theory and practice.
   b. Development of joint (ECSC, IHS and Erasmus University) research activities in urban management, carried out in parallel with the Masters course components.
2. IHS and ECSU provided one joint Masters programme.
3. IHS assigned a programme coordinator for the Masters programme to aid in scaling up to 400 participants per year and to ensure a smooth transition from a joint ECSU–IHS programme to an ECSU standalone programme with:
   a. donor funding provided scholarships for ECSU staff to follow training at IHS, and to pursue PhDs;
   b. staff exchange to gain experience in thematic areas of interest;
   c. IHS and the ECSU following up with joint research activities and four urban management conferences.
resulting in three jointly organized conferences and subsequent publications (Van Dijk & Fransen, 2008; Akola et al., 2010; Kassahun et al., 2012) and in the PhD supervision of ECSU staff members, two of whom have defended so far (Belay File, 2012; Mengistu, 2013). Ethiopia was facing the challenges of decentralization and the roles of cities in making this process a success. These cities were facing challenges of water management, supplying drinking water, sanitation and other services and faced major environmental challenges. As a landlocked country, water problems are linked to the rains, and are apparent in polluted rivers and lakes. The challenges faced relate to how to ensure a proper supply of drinking water and the improvement of sanitary services. The Masters course was established to train leaders who could deal with these issues.

The paper analyses the outcomes of capacity development efforts in Ethiopia, and the factors leading to these. This is a case study of one project which ran over a decade (Yin, 1994). It was chosen for this paper because it was a major capacity development project, running for a long period, allowing us to gain certain insights into the factors determining its success. This case of capacity development in Ethiopia on urban management began with a series of apparently unrelated initiatives. The Institute of Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS of Erasmus University Rotterdam) was working in Ethiopia as early as 1997 on different urban projects. The intensity of the work grew in 2000, and continued for the next 10 years.

Different relevant sources of information were used to draw conclusions. The results of a survey amongst IHS alumni in 2010 were a consistent and reliable source; this was complemented with feedback from alumni, (former) staff, partners and clients. A document search provided triangulation in sources. These sources provide an idea of the long-term effects of training and capacity development efforts.

In addition, information was taken from the documents, which monitored the progress and assessed to what extent the objectives were achieved. Interviews were held with all the major stakeholders (Mengistu, 2012), and the authors themselves participated in the planning and execution of the project in different modalities. Box 2 provides an indication of the type of capacity development interventions that took place over time. Figure 1 shows the factors that potentially contribute to the success of the interventions, while the results of the analysis will be discussed in detail in the next section.

3. Outcomes of capacity development activities

This section assesses to what extent capacity development resulted in structural improvements in the performance of the staff, the institution and in the services that the ECSU provides. In assessing outcomes, the research looked at changes at the individual level, for both staff of the ECSU and alumni working as urban managers (on performance on the job in terms of improved competences and the ability to apply methods, and in career development); and at the organizational level (whether the ECSU as an organization managed to provide improved outputs and continued to attract clients) (see Figure 2). Change at the level of cities was too difficult to assess at this point.

It could be argued that it is difficult to isolate to what extent change occurred due to the intervention of the IHS. We argue, however, that in the case of establishing the Masters programme at the ECSU, the IHS was involved almost exclusively in the provision of support in the setup and initial execution of the Masters programme in Urban Management, thus it is easier to filter how much the IHS influenced outcomes.
Fig. 1. External and internal factors contributing to outcomes.

Fig. 2. Outcomes.
In this case, the outcomes are best understood by looking at the staff’s perceptions of changes and improvements. The question posed to the respondents asked them to refer to their perception of how capacity development in general and IHS inputs in particular contributed to their achievements.

The perception is that interventions by the IHS contributed to the personal development of the staff and to the institutional development of the ECSU. In addition, the perception is that the Urban Management programme at the ECSCU contributed positively to the performance of Ethiopian local governments, but urban challenges remain and there is still a long way to go. The section below provides further details.

On the critical side, one should be aware of the political support from which the ECSU has benefited, since we often see that political affiliation poses challenges to the development of critical professionals. Does the ECSU mainly produce professionals who implement policies or critical professionals who are capable of dealing more innovatively with the enormous challenges that the Ethiopian society faces?

### 3.1. Individual level: staff and alumni performance

At the start of the programme, the ECSU did not have the staff capacity (in terms of both experience and availability) to establish and run a Masters programme in urban management and development. The perception of staff is that IHS support resulted in a faculty that has the competences to teach effectively on the various themes of the urban sector. This involves as stated before, both didactic skills as well as substantive knowledge. The professional growth of the staff can also be seen in the fact that several ECSU staff members are finalizing their PhDs abroad, also at the IHS. Their research focused on key urban issues in Ethiopia and was linked to and contributed to the academic priorities of the ECSU (Mengistu, 2012).

The long-term improvements in performance of the graduates in solving urban problems were not evaluated systematically in this paper. A quick scan revealed that the graduates of the first two programmes are now employed in various levels of government, several have become Ministers and Mayors, and others are involved in urban management and development activities in several countries. Their new functions include managers of regional/urban planning institutes, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). These changes relate to career changes at the individual level, the current data does not provide information on whether, for instance, service provision has improved (IHS database of alumni).

### 3.2. Organizational level

The Masters was transformed into a programme which the ECSU now delivers without the support of the IHS. The IHS has slowly phased out its activities and left the management and execution of the Masters programme to the Ethiopian staff and some international educators employed at the ECSU (ECSU, 2012).

More specifically, positive outcomes included: capacity of the staff of the organization built to manage a complex and challenging programme; the setup of a complete and functional programme management system (including key regulations described in a programme handbook, course handbook, assessment handbook, thesis handbook); evaluation systems; a body of key reference materials (textbooks, readings); and facilities for the programmes. Again, the most positive outcome could be seen
in the increased capacity of the teaching staff to absorb the learning, to transform the curriculum into relevant material for Ethiopia and to provide quality education (Mengistu, 2012).

3.3. City level

Has the programme at the ECSU contributed to an improvement in the quality of life in cities in Ethiopia? Perceptions, in general, indicate yes, though this can only be proven in further research (ECSU, 2012). The project was an example of the role of leadership and capacity development across sectors, disciplines and administrative boundaries, being active at the national, regional, city and university level.

4. Current status

Overall, the programme has been successful; it has responded to a demand from society given the increasingly complex task that governments face in managing Ethiopian cities. From 2007 to September 2012, the target student numbers have been reached and 2,045 participants have graduated with a Masters in Urban Management. The Ethiopian government invested in the ECSU, which they trusted would do a good job in educating civil servants. They opted for this institution, rather than using an existing university. The preference for the ECSU is based on the mission it was entrusted from its first conception: to build the capacity of civil servants. Running different regions was by itself a critical issue when the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) took power and started to operate the government machinery. The selection of students is also quite different from other institutes which are under the Ministry of Education. Currently the ECSU is made accountable to the Civil Service Ministry.

The Masters programme in Urban Management is being provided in cooperation with the Ministry of Works and Urban Development and can be considered as a client-initiated, demand-driven programme. Developing a curriculum for this demand-driven and client-initiated, scaled up Masters programme has been challenging. How to integrate the academics with the policy orientation? The resultant outcome was a curriculum in which every course has a structure containing five parts, namely: concepts and theories, tools, best practices, federal and regional urban-related policies and strategies, and federal programmes.

However, the ECSU has shifted focus from educating the general practitioners of the past to producing specialized urban professionals (for example, in land administration, environment and infrastructure) needed in today’s cities. The Masters programme is the only one of its sort, and this gives the ECSU a strong position as a knowledge centre in urban development in the country (Mengistu, 2012). The infrastructure of the university has been improved and the number and quality of books in the library has increased significantly. The Global Learning Centre, a space with high-tech facilities, such as video-conferencing equipment, gives access to a large network of knowledge centres.

5. External factors influencing the setup and execution of the course

5.1. Mapping the sector governance

The globalization process provides the dynamic context and leads to changes in many countries. Ethiopia has an enormous human resource potential. However, the professional capacity of the
Ethiopian government and the capacity of government to create enforceable and affordable laws and regulations are limited. The country is also characterized by a low level of education and the labour force requires substantial training and capacity development. Douglas (2006) confirmed that manpower training is one of the major policy areas for bridging the gap between the rural areas and urban areas in Ethiopia. The proposed solutions for these problems in the capital, suggested by the Office for Revision of Addis Ababa Master Plan includes a mixture of increasing and improving the service provision; strengthening institutional capacity and putting sound financing mechanisms in place (ORAAMP, 2005).

Ethiopia’s national development strategy for the 5-year period 2005/06–2009/10 was laid down in the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP). It was followed up by the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) for the years 2010–2015. The GTP continues the important strategic directions pursued under the PASDEP for infrastructure and human development, food security and capacity building. New directions are the emphasis on greater commercialization of agriculture and enhancing the role of the private sector, industry and urban development.

In 2000, urban management was not a priority of the Ethiopian government, there was no long-term funding for capacity development in the sector. This was the context in which the IHS found itself when starting work. Most interventions were ad hoc in nature and the sustainability of the initiative was questionable. In 2001, the IHS began training the Addis Ababa City government in urban planning and management, funded by the German development assistance (GTZ, later GIZ). The IHS also aided the GTZ and the Addis Ababa City government with the preparation and implementation of a national seminar on capacity development for the urban sector. The seminar brought together national and city officials and capacity development institutions to discuss the challenges faced by the government and the role of the capacity suppliers in addressing capacity needs. The output of the seminar was an outline strategy, which acted as the basis for a number of subsequent interventions (IHS project documentation, 2000–2006).

In 2003, in the context of greater decentralization to the municipal level in most regions in Ethiopia, the IHS was asked to develop a strategy for a €2 million training programme for the European Commission targeted at strengthening the leadership capabilities of municipal leaders, including urban politicians and policymakers as well as senior urban experts at national and regional levels who support municipal leaders. The strategy was backed up by a training needs assessment and included a financing proposal (IHS project documentation, 2000–2006).

This strategy was an indication of the growing interest of the national government to strengthen the management of local areas. This interest was confirmed in 2005 when a group of high-level officials came to the IHS in the Netherlands for a study tour to discuss the importance of good urban leaders and good urban management. This study tour and the discussions that took place with key public figures in the Netherlands marked a turning point for the IHS when it came to support from the Ethiopian government for capacity development services in the urban sector in Ethiopia (interviews IHS staff, 2012).

Gradually capacity development and urban issues came on to the agenda of the Ethiopian government, helped by leaders such as the Minister of Works and Urban Development, who went himself to the Netherlands to be briefed on decentralization and the opportunities it creates (Van Dijk, 2006: 20–21). In the next year, the policy environment in Ethiopia shifted to more emphasis on urban growth. The Ethiopian government came to believe that urbanization, within the context of overall development in Ethiopia, posed complex challenges. To cope with these challenges and the need for good urban managers, the government decided to invest in continuous education of the civil service.
In terms of the framework of sector governance, the political system relevant for this project was the late Prime Minister, who was aware of the importance of capacity development and his Minister of Works and Urban Development, who pursued a policy of decentralization and needed strong managers to implement the reform at the level of the Ethiopian region states and their capitals. The Ethiopian Civil Service College was the core public sector capacity development supplier for the project and received assistance from bilateral donors such as the Dutch and the Germans and important international donors such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Regional State governments and their municipalities were the frontline public agencies, in a country where the role of the private sector is not very much developed (Fenta, 2007). Some checks and balances in the system were provided by NGOs and staff of universities, the former Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute, the Ethiopian Economic Association, Forum for Social Studies (FSS) and Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA). The next section provides an institutional and political economy scan, to put the capacity development activity in its proper context.

5.2. An institutional and political economy scan

The institutions for water and urban development are in place in Ethiopia and the government has developed a strategy in which decentralization and urban development play an important role. From the Prime Minister of the country, through the Minister of Works and Urban Development to the president of the Ethiopian Civil Service University there was the conviction that this was the way to go. In fact, they were interested in accelerating the capacity development process, to scale up to high student numbers and to achieve quick results. Water-related and sanitary problems are not just technical problems but improved water governance is one of the key factors in solving these problems (Van Dijk, 2012: 139).

The dilemma of this capacity development effort was whether to focus on one issue, which, for instance, looked at a crucial issue at a particular moment (for example, dealing with unemployment or housing, or water, sanitation of environmental issues), or to promote thinking about such issues in an integrated way from an urban management perspective as proposed in Van Dijk (2006).

The institutional and political economy scan resulted in the picture of the governance structure given in Table 1.

This table brings out the weaknesses in sector capacity in particular in the field of urban development and water supply and sanitation and the need to work with other institutional structures in the Ethiopian situation. The institutional and political economy scan shows that the hierarchical approach to urban and water management still needs to evolve to a more participative model where adaptive management and addressing ecological issues (from the consequences of climate change to increased pollution) play a more important role.

5.2.1. An actor assessment matrix. The development of the ECSU and the Masters programme was guaranteed by several actors on the supply side, who recognized the need for funds and political commitment to capacity development. During the programme, the ECSU was accountable to the Ministry of Capacity Building (MoCB) of Ethiopia which provided substantial support. In addition to MoCB, GTZ, the World Bank and the MoWUD provided support: the World Bank and GTZ in the form of financial and material support. The MoWUD helped in the recruitment of participants for the programme and facilitated the process of ensuring that participants would still be employed after completion of the programme. All organizations provided different forms of support; their input was essential and complementary in the process of strengthening
capacity at the ECSU (Mengistu, 2012). An analysis using the actor assessment matrix resulted in the identification of the important role of leadership in this project. Not only at the level of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Works and Urban Development, but also at the level of the president of the ECSU, who had good relations with the EPRDF, the governing party, where consensus has been reached on the importance of capacity development and the road to follow to achieve the formulated goals. This helped very much in winning political support to launch and fund the programmes. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Works and Urban Development provided the legitimacy required for a rapid expansion of the ECSU and the rapid increase of its number of students, in particular in the field of urban management.

6. Internal factors influencing outcomes

What internal factors influenced outcomes in the ECSU Masters programme? Interviews revealed that a combination of internal factors, including leadership on the part of the management of the ECSU, the combination of various types of capacity development interventions over a long period, and investment in staff and facilities, led to a programme of quality (Mengistu, 2012).

The first key internal factor related to the fact that the ECSU and its Masters programme were headed by a professional who exhibited strong leadership qualities. The success was the joint effort of important personalities such as the President and Academic Vice-President of the ECSU, and the programme manager. They knew when and how to deal externally with the government and donors, were open to new ideas, and dared to take on the challenges of educating 400 students per year, a number that was too high. In 2013,
there are more than 250 participants who will complete their masters study in the summer from five different urban programmes. This type of individual was necessary for the sustainability of the programme, to maintain support for the programme, as well to keep focus amongst staff on achieving institutional goals. The long-term presence of these leaders and their consistency were essential.

Another factor was the consistency and sequencing of, variety in and long-term nature of the capacity development support. Capacity development was provided over a number of years, in what ended up taking the form of different phases (see Box 2), each of a different nature and adjusted to the context and the needs of the ECSU (see Figure 1 on the variety of interventions). Taking on 400 students per year required substantial scaling up of the number of staff members and continued support from the IHS to maintain consistency and quality in the level of education in the various modules. Interviews revealed that this resulted in a programme that is now running with a consistent level of quality.

One aspect of this factor was the sequencing and mix of capacity support. One respondent mentioned the fact that the first two Masters programmes provided with the IHS in the lead were identical to the Masters programme offered by the IHS in Rotterdam. In this phase, the IHS also trained the trainers (during a Training of Trainers, or ToT, programme and on the job). Testing this programme out in Ethiopia was essential for institutional learning. As a follow up, the design of the third Masters programme, which the IHS and ECSU delivered together, was based on a training needs assessment and was adjusted to local circumstances, making it more relevant. The sharing of tasks resulted in a very important experience for the local staff and the full-time programme manager facilitated the ‘handover’ to ECSU staff. According to the respondent, the quality, quantity and variety of the support of the IHS were good, but also the fact that the nature of the support was adjusted and provided incrementally over time (Mengistu, 2012).

Finally, the ECSU was also provided with the funds to make substantial investment in facilities and technology. This allowed the programme access to facilities that are more modern than those of most universities, and usually not available for institutions in wealthier or poorer countries. The ECSU now has the best infrastructure and facilities in Ethiopia and is therefore primed to lead the capacity development process.

7. Factors that acted as barriers to outcomes

Staff remain somewhat critical, indicating that certain internal factors created challenges and put at risk the achievements sought. For one, the programme was forced to undergo an unprecedented rate of growth. The increase of student numbers to 400 participants per year occurred in the fourth year, as staff were only beginning to apply the capacity developed. The decision to do so was a result of external political pressure to go to scale.

The sheer scale of the teaching load was a difficult challenge to meet, with potential implications for success in terms of the quality of the programme. The sheer magnitude of the teaching load put pressure on the quality of the teaching and had some effects on the motivation levels of a significant number of staff and participants. Participants perceived that individual attention has been difficult to get and that they ‘get lost in the shuffle’. Lecturers are assessed on the number of courses they provide, rather than on the quality of the courses provided.

This did not encourage a stimulating environment in which to study. One of the qualities of adult education and the development of effective urban managers is using methods to stimulate debate and critical thinking. There are some hindering factors to creating such an academic environment. One of the most critical issues is the motivation of the students/participants. Firstly, recruitment of students for the
yearly intakes was not through competition. Entrance exams were conducted in the IUDS only recently. Students were civil servants drawn from public organizations in the regions and city administrations who had to meet some qualification standards. Participants do not apply by themselves. They certainly know that their former positions or even better positions are guaranteed after they have completed their studies.

Expectations (from both the government and society) were another source of motivation for graduates. There was an ambiguity, were they just filling the vacant positions or expected to solve critical urban development issues? This ambiguity did not help to create a stimulating environment in which to study. This has hindered ‘real success’ (Mengistu, 2012). This poses a challenge to the development of critical professionals who are capable of dealing more innovatively with the enormous urban problems that Ethiopian cities face. With specialized Masters programmes on urban land development and management, urban planning and development, infrastructure provision, environment and climate change along with a parallel programme on urban management, participants are anxious about their future career. Participants often do not receive a warm welcome when they get back to their former organizations. Their anxieties arise from two factors. First, they are often considered as a threat to the existing status quo in terms of reallocation of positions held and vacancies. Their other anxiety arises from the lack of mainstreaming of the various specialization programmes in the career structure. Architects, planners, engineers and currently urban managers have become familiar professions. What is a land manager’s, an infrastructure planner’s, or an environment manager’s task description and salary scale? Therefore, participants are repeatedly requesting the management to mainstream their graduate profile to the career structure.

8. Interaction between factors

Figure 1 stresses the importance of the interaction between internal and external factors. The key message behind the figure is that, in many cases, the internal factors were dependent on the existence of external factors, and vice versa.

One example of such an interaction is in the existence of leadership both internally and externally. While internal leadership was necessary to keep the Masters programme developing and evolving, long-term leadership within the national government in the form of support for urban and for capacity development was also essential.

Another example relates to the fact that structural and long-term capacity development support was only possible, in the context of Ethiopia, because of the political support and commitment from the national government to capacity development for urban managers. This political support also ensured that there was long-term donor and financial support to the programme and to investment in staff training and professional growth.

In addition, as a public university mandated with the task to build an effective public service, the ECSU has benefited from the political value attached to this mandate; this has allowed it to obtain access to a substantial amount of long-term funding, and to gain easy access to global networks.

9. Discussion on the evolution of relations between the ECSU and IHS

The thematic focus of the ECSU is guided by the MoWUD of Ethiopia. The MoWUD functions as a client of the ECSU. The focus of the MoWUD is guided by the interests and priorities of the Minister of Works and Urban Development in power. In the past, the Ministry focused on integrated housing
programmes, currently it is focused on land management issues. The focus is expected to change, possibly to transport. Independently, the ECSU has identified key thematic areas in which to cooperate with the IHS: namely in urban renewal and participation, land value capture and land resource mobilization. The future relationship has yet to be defined.

One of the greatest measures of success is when offspring become independent, competitors and/or partners in provision. Has the relationship with the ECSU taken on these characteristics? The current mode of cooperation between the IHS and the ECSU has changed and moved more towards a partnership. Even though this process has not yet fully crystallized, new conditions for capacity development have emerged.

The relationship between the IHS and the ECSU can be defined as somewhere between a client–consultant relationship and a partnership. One characteristic of a partnership is evident in the willingness of the IHS to cover its own expenses while carrying out common research. However, there are some elements missing. The respondent pointed out: ‘Partnership involves identifying joint cooperation areas that could be initiated by either party.’ This implies that partnership involves running joint programmes, running common activities, searching for funding together and sharing the benefits and risks. Currently the IHS and the ECSU are undertaking no structural efforts to identify joint cooperation areas (Mengistu, 2012).

At the moment there is a tendency from the ECSU to focus more on using local resources and fostering local capacity. The IHS’s involvement is slowly fading. Looking at this objectively, perhaps this is the clearest sign of positive outcomes: that the ECSU no longer requires capacity support, although it remains interested in strategic partnerships with other educational institutions. There is still a willingness on the part of both parties to work together in conferences, research programmes, publishing books, etc. For a successful partnership, it seems crucial to keep the momentum of cooperation going.

10. Conclusions

Ethiopia faces the challenge of dealing with a rapidly growing population, a high level of urbanization and an agricultural sector with low productivity. The analysis of the ECSU and IHS relationship shows a positive effect of capacity development at the institutional level and that capacity development can lead to institutional development. In Ethiopia, the institutions appear to increasingly operate successfully and independently. Capacity development was identified by respondents as one of the key factors making this possible. What stands out in this case is the role of leadership. At the national level, at the sectoral and at the university level there were champions for this type of capacity development and structures were envisaged to be reinforced by the people trained in the project. Existing capacity was leveraged by bringing in foreign expertise. It is necessary to increase the adaptive capacity of water and urban governance structures and to satisfy at the same time the criterion of good governance, a key to sustainable development. A partnership developed between the ministry, the ECSU and the IHS in which the local coordinator of the IHS and some of the academic staff members played an important role by teaching regularly, by undertaking joint research or through PhD supervision. It meant they would visit the country regularly and have local counterparts to work with over a longer period of time.

However, capacity development alone was not enough. In the case of Ethiopia, there was also financial and institutional support and strong political support. In fact, launching of the urban management programme in Ethiopia was a political decision and the ECSU has political ties to the current government. In Ethiopia, the ECSU responded to societal needs. These needs were defined locally and not by outsiders such as international organizations. The project also makes clear the need for resilient
integrated and adaptive approaches to urban and water management and the benefits of looking at them in an integrated way.

The relationship was long term and the intervention incremental and of a varying nature. For instance, in Ethiopia, the IHS held a rather dominant role and operated as a consultant and lead executer of the programme during the initial Masters at the ECSU. The role of the IHS reduced over time and the programme is now run by the ECSU alone. The relationship has evolved but is somewhere between a consultant–client and a partnership.

11. What lessons can be drawn from this long-term process of capacity development?

Ideally capacity development efforts are based on a needs assessment that addresses all dimensions of capacity development (including human resource development and the organizational, as well as the institutional and national context), and that identifies the barriers that can constrain capacity development interventions. It is important that such an assessment is carried out jointly by a capacity development service provider (or consultant) and the recipient (client). The fact that needs are multidimensional and occur at different levels implies that capacity development should tackle the dimensions in an integrated way: thus with coordinated and multiple efforts that are mutually supporting.

Capacity development efforts should always have commitment and cooperation from the top management of the organization and efforts should address the whole organization rather than one layer or an individual in the organization only. The top management should have a genuine desire to use new capacity and should seek cooperation from all actors by providing adequate information and planning of special interventions that will motivate staff to cooperate. Eventually the work of professionals who receive training should be stimulating and the rewards attached (including salary) sufficient to keep good staff. One of the IHS’s staff members was quoted in a publication (UN Habitat, 2010):

‘There’s one side of the whole situation, which is training and building up capacity in urban management and our experience is that you can really get quite far with this. The other side of the equation is the institutions that people have to work in and quite often we find that trained individuals return to their institutions and become frustrated as they are perhaps very badly paid for a job which is, arguably, one of the most important management jobs in the world, managing a major city. It is extremely difficult for a highly qualified and motivated person to make a real difference when they are working in an entirely unaccommodating environment.’

However, motivation does not only come from incentives and support frameworks; it is also fuelled by passion and dedication. Many urban development professionals who make a difference are visionary and internally motivated individuals who have a genuine desire to make their cities work (better). Furthermore, creativity, flexibility and the ability to innovate together with partners determine to a great extent how well organizations and individuals can absorb and make use of capacity development interventions.

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