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obsolete

9) rate or
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ecially

from Latin re- (expressing intensive force) + excitare
'shake out, discard'
research » verb (with obj.) seal (something) again.
reseau' r'seɒʃ, 'r'seɒʃəl/ ► noun (mass noun) (also
DERIVATIVES researchable adjective.

research ► noun (mass noun) (also
study of new facts and conclusions in order to establish
our research in chemistry / medical research / his own
researches ► as modifier engaged in or intended for
researches ► as modifier a research paper.
osb.) ► verb (with obj.) investigate systematically; she has spent
the last five years researching her people's history (no
fama. ► discover or verify information for use in (a
book, programme, etc.): I was in New York research-
ing my novel (as adj. with abstracted or researched) a
well-researched and readable account.
- DERIVATIVES researchable adjective, researcher

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o devalorise) ► verb

n noun.
n French dévaloriser.
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ple term to denote my
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her currencies the dollar

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» verb (sb.) a person who grows or nurtures sth. (most noun)
fied time or rate: I was a dew developer. ► (most noun)
a chemical agent used for treating photographic film
to make a visible image.
developing country ► noun a poor agricultural
country that is seeking to become more advanced
economically and socially.

development ► noun (mass noun) 1 the process of
becoming or being developed: she traces the devel-
opment of the novel | the paintings provide evidence of
his artistic development. 2 a specified state of growth
or advancement: the wings attain their full develop-
ment several hours after birth. ► (count noun) a new and
advanced product of ideas: the latest developments in
information technology.
2 count noun an event constituting a new stage in a
changing situation: I don't mind there have been any
new developments concerning land & new purpose
resources: land suitable for development. ► (count noun)
an area of land with new buildings on it: a major
housing development in Essex.
4 the process of starting to be affected by an ailment
or feeling: the development of brittle bones.

noun.

may.

Research for Development: Concepts and Orientation

Discussion Paper

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South Asia Regional Coordination Office

NCCR North-South

Kathmandu, Nepal

April 2012

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Dedicated to the researchers and practitioners working hard
to establish complementary relationship between the research
and development to address the broader challenges faced by
global change

Preface and acknowledgement

The world is now affected from global change processes such as climate change, demographic dynamics, new epidemics, and so on. Addressing such challenges requires collective understanding, concerted action and shifts in behaviour. The dominant paradigm of knowledge, consumerist behaviour and greed-led attitude do not meet the requirement to respond emerging challenges. Irrespective of the good intentions they have, the conventional, externally designed and loaded development interventions are unable to address these challenges. Development interventions need robust, new and transdisciplinary knowledge as well as problem-solving skills which can be generated through unconventional and development-oriented research.

In this context, it is necessary to establish functional relationship between development and research. More specifically, research for development is necessary which can provide cognitive means for effectively implementing the interventions and can be able to contribute to address the challenges. It will take time to change the attitude and perspective of the inherently cemented mind-set of decision-makers to realise the need of research for development. Therefore, the efforts of the development-oriented research community need to focus in this area.

From his 32 years of experience in development sector, teaching and research, the author has come to the conclusion that changing the world view of policy-makers and practitioners is the most difficult tasks as they are so entrenched into daily practices and procedures and therefore resistant to think further than what they are doing. Further, majority of researchers do not want to constructively engage with development community mainly because of the different disciplinary orientation and the lack of understanding on the result of the collective efforts of research and development community.

This Discussion Paper attempts to establish the relationship between the research and development and highlights the importance of collaboration between the two sectors. Many people have assisted me in developing this paper. Even though it is not possible to name all of them, I must individually acknowledge the contribution of some of the people here. Dr Anne Zimmermann has provided valuable comments in the earlier version of the paper. Mr Safal Ghimire has been constantly helping me to improve the language and strengthen logic, arguments and structure of the paper. Ms Yamuna Ghale has provided comments and insights on the manuscript. Ms Sony KC is always cooperative to find literatures and documents. I would like to sincerely thank all of them. Last but not the least, I also extend my thanks to Ms Jyoti Khatiwada and Siddhi Manandhar for their help in designing and layout of this book.

Bishnu Raj Upreti, PhD

April 2012

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Research for Development: Concepts and Orientation

1. Introduction

This Discussion Paper is the outcome of three years of research on 'Exploring Partnership Dynamics' of Swiss-funded long-term North-South research collaboration programme called National Centre of Competence in Research North-South (NCCR North-South). The aim of this paper is to facilitate policy debate on different dimensions of research partnership with special reference to role of research for development, capacity building of the research partners (at both institutional and individual levels) and lessons for refining ethical, substantial and procedural components of the future research partnership for development-oriented research.

For the purpose of this book, the term 'North-South' is used in a general way. North-south debate is wider in its scope. Some scholars argue that the term 'North-South' itself is divisive. In contrary, others argue that it is more practical concept that avoids loaded concept such as 'developed and developing'. Even it can be argued that why not to use East and West instead of North and South, as it has more religious, cultural and historical explanations. However, in the context of NCCR North-South, the term is used for very pragmatic reason than philosophical justification. The pragmatic reasons are linked with geographical (or even environmental) relevance. 'North-South' is the basic 'logical' framework within which all activities of the international development community have been set in the past decades. The North-South framework was more practical because of its focus on 'mitigating syndromes of global change', which is basically: 'development' means 'helping to improve or solve problems' in the 'developing world', i.e. the 'South'. This framework also motivated Swiss research community, particularly, SNSF to collaborate with the global south for scientific innovation with an international impact. In the Swiss political landscape, North-South research collaboration was meant for the significance of development-oriented research for Switzerland, both at national and international level. The use of North-South has also an environmental reason in the context of NCCR as its all research efforts are focused on context: 'highland-lowland', 'semi-arid in transition', 'urban-periurban', as seven of the nine partnership regions are in sub-tropical areas, i.e. in the south of Switzerland. The focus of research on the interaction

between humans and the natural environment has always been strong. Hence, the term 'North-South' is explained geographically (environmentally rather than politically) by the NCCR.

Research partnership is defined as an equitable relationship between the research collators (institutions and individuals) based on the shared vision and objectives, common interests, mutual respects and collective sharing of rights, resources and responsibilities.

2. The context of research partnership

Concept of North-South partnership has developed overtime and is practised through bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation arrangements. Many development cooperation policies have highlighted ethical, substantial and procedural elements of partnership (Blagescu and Young 2005). However, the partnership concept is not only limited to development cooperation but also applied in development-oriented research cooperation. For example, the Swiss Commission for Research Partnership with Developing Countries (KFPE), the Dutch Advisory Council for Scientific Research in Development Problems (RAWOO) and the Norwegian Council of Universities Programme for Development Research and Education (NUFU) are some of such arrangements created to ensure the basic ethical, substantial and procedural principles of research partnership in North-South and North-North collaboration. In this spirit, different research partnership initiatives are implemented around the world. The Swiss-funded National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South is one of such global research partnership initiatives.

Blagescu and Young (2005, p 2), referring to Brinkerhoff (2004), argues that the partnership has to have at least two characteristics: a) mutuality (that includes commitment and interdependence between the partners and equality in decision-making, rights and responsibilities), and b) maintaining organisational identity (maintaining own mission, strategies and values of each partner organisations).

3. North-South debate

In the international political discourse, 'North-South', 'First World-Third World', 'Developed country-Developing country', 'Developed World-Underdeveloped/Least Developed World', 'Industrialised Countries-Industrialising Countries' are commonly used (Taylor 2001). Hence, these terms were evolved overtime (particularly after the World War II) as part of the global political economy and the trajectory of development of southern countries.

Anne Zimmermann¹ referring to cultural and post-colonial perspective (study

¹ *The discussion in this paragraph is based on the email sent on rational of use of the term North-South on 11 November 2010.*

of power, where the analysis of the power of, and in, discourse is a central topic) argues that the use of 'North-South' can be explained historically as an attempt of the international development community to avoid previous dichotomies that were increasingly being perceived as discriminatory: 'First World/Third World', 'Developed World /Underdeveloped World', etc. Indeed, the words got replaced in such discourses as critics increasingly pointed out the discriminatory nature of the concepts of 'Third World', 'Underdeveloped world', etc. But in the end, the dichotomy is left there, along with its potential discriminatory effect, since the reality of unequal power is not changed simply by changing the terms. She concludes that this is an eminent aspect in the analysis of the dynamics of research partnership.

Discussing on the 'modernisation thesis', Taylor (2001, p 4) writes, "if the South was to follow the North into development and the chimera of higher (i.e., the northern) standards of living, then the South had to seek to replicate the North's historical trajectory'. He highlights that the 'North-South' construction is basically the outcome of modernisation and dependency theories and the international political economy.

4. Frameworks for analysis of research partnership

4.1 Research and research partnership

In a general definition, research is a systematic inquiry process that entails problem context, objectives, methodology, specific questions and finding definitive answers with interpretation and analysis of the collected data or information based on conceptual or theoretical frameworks, and generalisation of the findings. One of the aims of research is to contribute to solving individual/specific to societal problems. Science and technology become irrelevant if it is not able to address the development challenges related to global change. Hence, contemporary development-oriented research is facing pressure to contribute to addressing problems and challenges of global change. Consequently, the demand of development-oriented research is increased and efforts in this line are expanded. Research is categorised differently according to the purpose. Some are discussed here.

Fundamental research: According to the Collaborative International Dictionary of English², fundamental research is a process of inquiry or examination to seek facts or principles. In other words, it is a systematic observation of phenomena for the purpose of learning new facts or testing the application of theories to known facts. It is also referred to as a scientific research or a basic research.

² See Collaborative International Dictionary of English v.0.48 (<http://onlinedictionary.datasegment.com/word/fundamental+research>) for details.

Action research: It is a reflective process of inquiry specifically aimed at solving immediate problems faced by the people. Hence, it is the simplest form of research. This type of research is often aimed at improving day-to-day strategies, practices and knowledge. Hence, it is a process of learning about consequences of different forms of social action. It focuses on interpretative approach and social reality (reality interpreted by the people) and therefore it fits with the concept of transdisciplinary approach of solving societal problems (Hadorn et al. 2008).

Applied research: This is a scientific inquiry process which aims to solve practical everyday problems. It is quite advanced than action research.³

Development-oriented research: It is an inquiry process of generating knowledge for targeted development problems. Hence, participation of local people, development practitioners and policy-makers are fundamentally important to ensure that research findings or outcomes are accepted by the stakeholders. Hadorn et al. (2008, p 26) argue that active participation of local people in research process helps bring the diversity and complexity of social, political, economic and environmental problems into inquiry process and addresses them.

Research partnership between the north and the south is growing together with new global challenges. Effects of global changes are not only limited to developing countries, their implications are risky for developed countries as well. Developed societies, according to Beck (1992), are 'risk societies' because of the new challenges. Hadorn et al. (2008, p 19) state that "modernisation itself induces hazard and insecurities, which call for precautionary and systematic ways of dealing with hazards as essentially political issues". Hence, challenges posed by global changes are collective concerns of North and South both and need concerted efforts (in research and development) from both developed and developing countries. New agenda of action to deal with new challenges need new understanding, which research could bring from the North—South partnership. This chapter discusses such research partnerships.

The aim of research partnership shapes its course of action. Research collaboration may range from simply sharing of information to substantial engagement in concerted action, reflection and learning and sharing of mutual benefits. In the context of collaborative research, Johnson and Wilson (2006, p 71) have emphasised that partnerships can be "collaboration based on equality and mutually beneficial processes and outcomes" but can also "involve highly unequal power relations and determination of means and ends". Hence, partnership is a dynamic process through which partners have the potential to learn and thereby promote new forms and practices (Upreti et al. 2012).

³ Source: <http://psychology.about.com/od/aindex/g/appres.htm>. Retrieved on 4 November 2010.

Many organisations funding for development or development-oriented research have defined their cooperation strategies while engaging in partnership actions (both in research and development). The researchers from the Overseas Development Institute have examined the core (ethical, substantial and procedural) principles of partnership research policy of Canadian Council of International Cooperation; Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Development Research Centre of Canada, Swiss Commission of Research Partnerships in Developing Countries and Norwegian Council of Universities Programme for Development Research and Education. They have found that all of the institutions have emphasised on establishing and maintaining relationship, attitude (joint commitment), shared vision, mutual respect, compatible interests, acknowledgement of reciprocal rights and obligations, accountability and transparency, information, mutual benefits and result-oriented independence. Those were the key parameters of partnership for them (Blagescu and Young 2005, p vi).

In general, skewed resource base (in terms of knowledge, information, technology and finance) is the main source of unequal relation between the north and the south. When partners form the north and the south, often characterised by unequal relations, collaborate in research partnership, the important aspect is to minimise the gap between them. This is what Johnson and Wilson (2006) term as 'mutuality gap'. If research is jointly conceptualised and designed and collectively implemented and monitored, it enhances mutual learning and consequently contribute to minimise the mutuality gaps.

Box 1: The 11 Principles of Research Partnership
Set agenda together Be responsive Clarify responsibilities Create transparency Promote mutual learning Enhance capacities Share data and networks Disseminate results Pool profits and merits Apply results Secure outcomes

Source: KFPE, 2011

Degree of success or failure of research collaboration is largely determined by the availability of resources and capability of the research partners (Figure 1). The conducive policy context of the collaborating partner countries and responsive institutional frameworks are other key determinants to make research partnership successful.

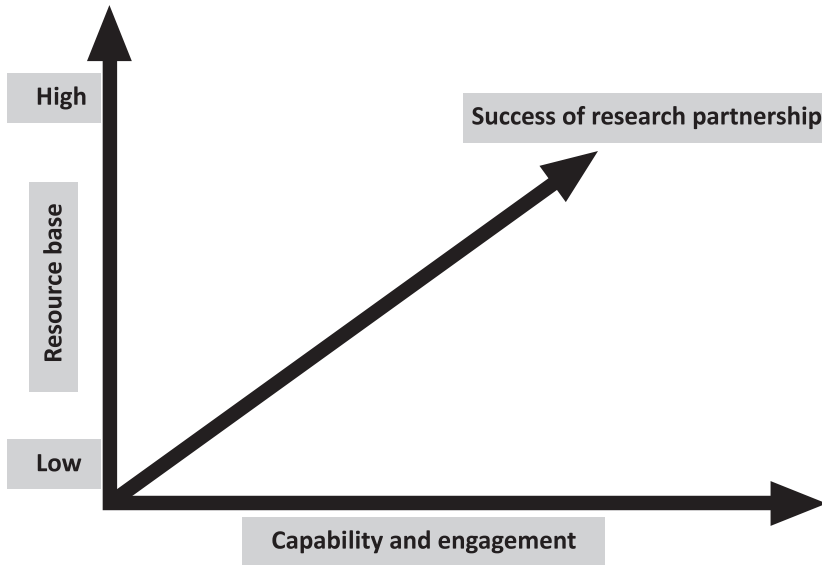


Figure 1 Success of research partnership at operational level

Other basic binding factors for a successful research partnership are shared goals and shared commitment from the research partners, which is shown in Figure 2.

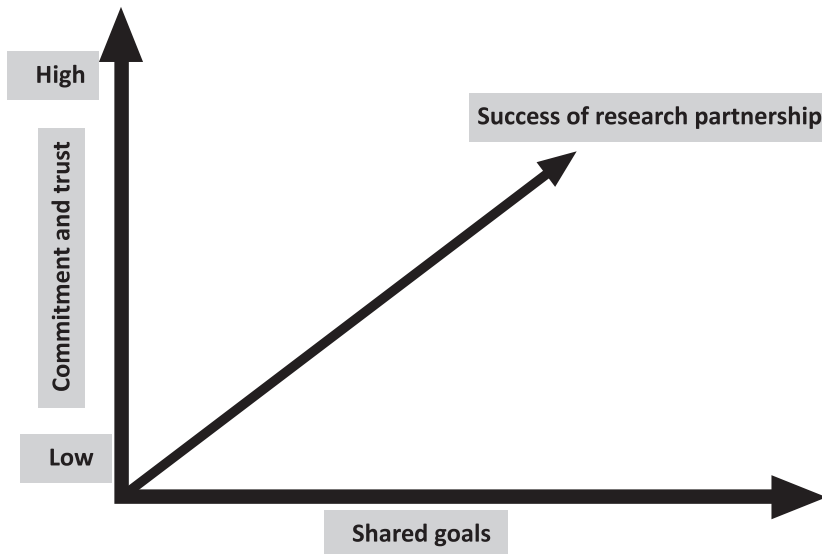


Figure 2 Success of research partnership for result orientation

Figure 1 shows the interrelationship between capability and engagement, and resource base. This, basically, has to do with the functions of institutions

while operating in research partnerships. Similarly, Figure 2 portrays the interrelationship between shared goals, and commitment and trust. Apart from Figure 1, this has to do with result-orientation. From these figures, we can generalise two facts:

The degree of interrelationship between resource base, and capability and engagement is positively correlated to the degree of success of research partnership; and

The degree of interrelationship between commitment and trust, and shared goals/objectives is positively correlated to, again, the degree of success of research partnership.

Summing up, they show that, in research partnerships, higher the intensity of the factors, greater the chance of success. Conversely, lower the intensity of their interrelationship, thinner the chance of success.

4.2 Research approaches

NCCR North-South research partnership has applied disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research approaches. For the purpose of this paper, this section briefly defines these approaches.

Disciplinary research approach:

It is an inquiry process by the experts of individual disciplines and is still dominant in the academic and research community. This approach believes that the solutions of the problems are possible from single discipline.

Multidisciplinary research approach:

Multidisciplinary approach of research, according to Pohl and Hadorn (2008, p 429), deals on the issues through the range of disciplines but each discipline works in a self-contained manner with little cross fertilisation among the disciplines, or synergy in the outcomes.

Interdisciplinary research approach:

Hadorn et al. (2008, p 28), referring to National Academics (2005), defines interdisciplinary research approach as "a mode of research by teams of individuals that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialised knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice".

Transdisciplinary research approach:

It is relevant when disciplinary or scientific or expert knowledge alone is not enough to tackle with the societal uncertainties or problems and require

bringing societal actors to grasp complexity of dealing with different perception of life-world situations together with scientific perception of problems (Pohl and Hadorn 2008). Different research approaches in the partnership are presented in Figure 3.

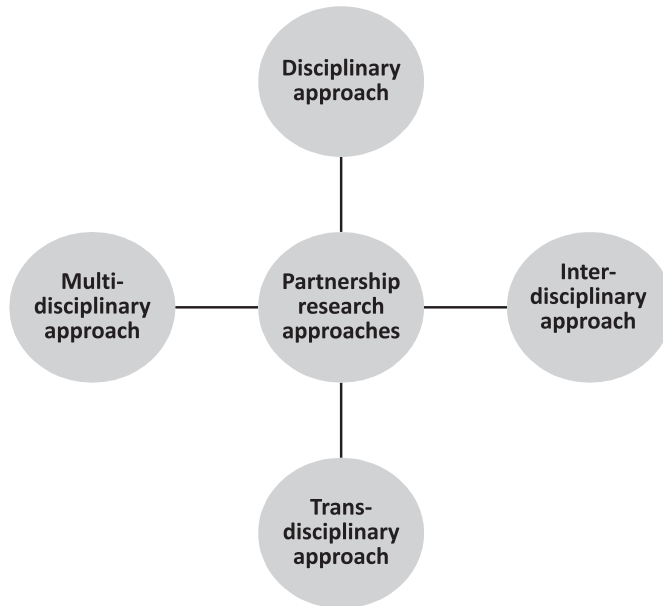


Figure 3 Summary of the partnership research approaches

4.3 Focuses of development-oriented research

Societies are facing different challenges from the global change process. These challenges can be categorised into:

- a) socio-economic, which are related to poverty, inequality, access to basic services (health, education etc),
- b) environmental, which includes climate change effects, pollution, degradation of natural resources, and
- c) political, which includes armed conflict and civil wars, corruption and mal-governance etc.

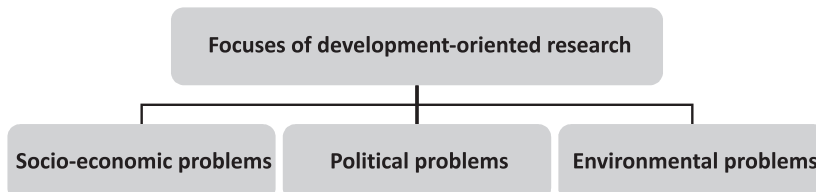


Figure 4 Focuses of development-oriented research

4.4 Knowledge dimension in partnership research

Knowledge is defined as a human faculty resulting from interpreted information, an understanding that germinates from combination of information, experience and individual interpretation. It is a capacity of individuals to act effectively. Of course, knowledge is contextual. But, often, the purpose of generating knowledge is debated in two ways. The first school of thought focuses on knowledge for understanding (generally anthropological perspective). The second one goes beyond the understanding and focuses on 'knowledge for understanding and understanding for action'. Hence, the second school of thought is directly related to development-oriented research.

Pohl and Hadorn (2007) have categorised knowledge from the perspective of transdisciplinary research into systems knowledge (understanding functioning of a system in a society), target knowledge (understanding specific problems to find solutions), and transformation knowledge (changing situation through corrective actions). It is presented in Figure 5.

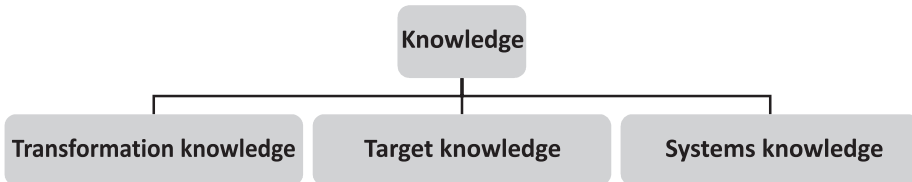


Figure 5 Categories of knowledge

4.5 Development-oriented research for sustainable development

When development sector encountered with the sustainability challenges, there rose the need of development-oriented research. Consequently, practice of linking research to development began. These days, it is getting priority from the governments overtime in developed to developing countries.

The thoughts on sustainable development started when world leaders gathered in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 to attend the UN Conference on Environment and Development and discussed the challenges of it. Since then, the debate of sustainable development widened. Citing the World Commission on Environment and Development (1990), Hadorn et al. (2008, pp 26-27) define sustainable development as a "global socio-political model for changing practices and institutions in order to achieve more equitable opportunities within and between generations while taking into account the limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisations on the environment's ability to meet the present and future needs". This definition demonstrates that the notion of sustainable development is inherently complex and therefore narrow and compartmentalised. Disciplinary research approach cannot address challenges of sustainable development and requires

transdisciplinary approach. Thus, working together with policy- and decision-makers, researchers, academics, practitioners and civil society members is essential to promote science-policy practice continuum.

Three building blocks are essential to contribute to sustainable development. They are social, economic and environmental sustainability as shown in Figure 6.

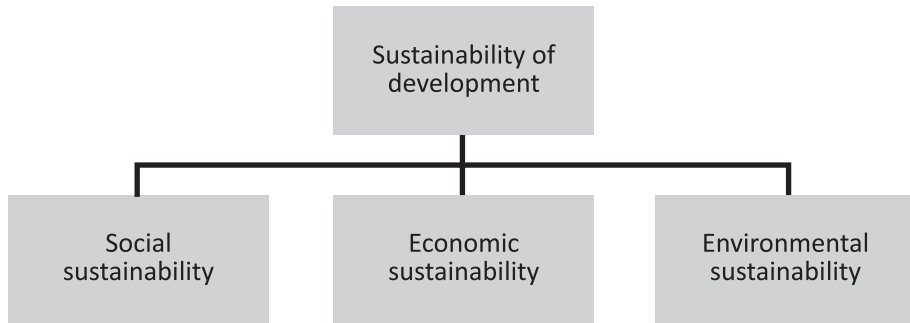


Figure 6 Sustainability of development

The World Summit on Sustainable Development-2002 in Johannesburg had emphasised on the importance of integrating science and policy, social orientation of research (or in other words- involvement of stakeholders into research process), which was hoped to promote collective actions and mutual learning. In essence, it is production of system, target and transformation knowledge. Therefore, in the changing society, purpose of knowledge production must be for the societal solutions and change. This is also the spirit of the NCCR North-South research collaboration (Hurni et al. 2004).

4.6 Social learning from development-oriented research partnership

Social learning is by and large collective with the virtue of observation, interaction and reflection among the people in a particular context where they live in. People can develop understanding and knowledge by observing actions and behaviour. Social learning is therefore a type of observational or interactive learning (with context and society). Hence, it is also adaptive in nature, intending to obtain desired result from observing social interactions, imitation, adaptation, filtration and selection of certain patterns of behaviour.

In the discourse of learning, various terms such as social learning, mutual learning, collective learning, experiential learning and organisational learning are used in development-oriented research. Aims of all these concepts are to provide conceptual framework for a collective way of addressing problems related to sustainable development. Hence, they are closely interrelated with development-oriented research.

Sources of social learning are the interactions between different systems, i.e. human system, eco-system and management system. Messerli and Messerli (2008, p 61) has identified three key elements to contribute to sustainable mountain development through research as: natural systems or ecosystems, human systems and management systems. These concepts are powerful in managing partnership research, which largely interacts with all these systems.

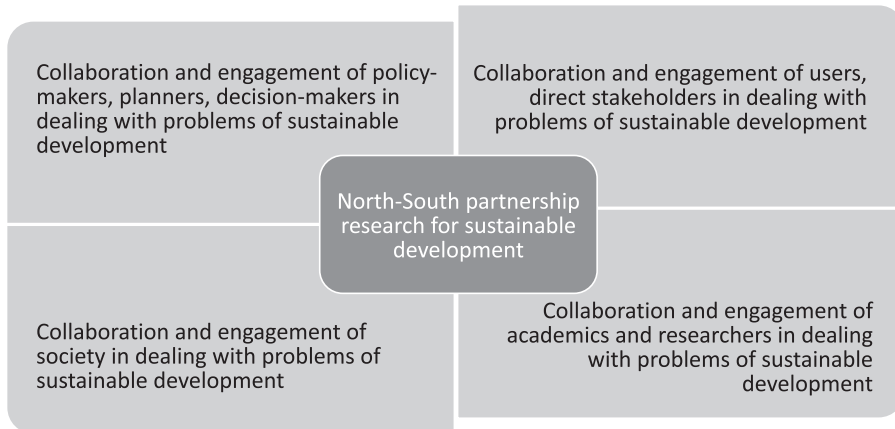


Figure 7 Concerted efforts to address challenges of sustainable development

Development-oriented research crosses disciplinary boundaries and brings all stakeholders (policy- and decision-makers, users, practitioners, academics and researchers) to generate societal knowledge and to search for innovative solutions of developmental problems (Figure 7).

Addressing challenges of sustainable development requires collective and concerted efforts of policy-makers, decision-makers, researchers, academics, development practitioners, and members of society. Societal problems are complex and fuzzy in nature. So, researchers and policy- and decision-makers have to engage in dialogue with local people and vice versa to solve such problems. Such dialogues become social process and forms of interface between science and society as well as policy and practice, which ultimately become platform for societal problem solving. This is also called as transdisciplinary approach of problem solving that entails joint definition of problem, mutual learning and reflections, changing attitude and behaviour, developing individual and collective competencies and ownership and technological development (Hadorn et al. 2008).

4.7 Capacity enhancement in partnership research

Often development literatures (for example, OECD 2006) discuss capacity development or capacity building instead of capacity enhancement. OECD (2006) defines capacity development as the 'process by which individuals, groups and organisations, institutions and countries develop, enhance

and organise their systems, resources and knowledge; all reflected in their abilities, individually and/or collectively, to perform functions, solve problems and achieve objectives. However, in this book, we are using the term capacity enhancement instead of capacity development to give more neutral meaning. Capacity building or capacity development assumes that there is no capacity and external/internal intervention has to develop or build it. But, every individual has inherent capacity that has to be enhanced to make him/her capable of accomplishing defined goals and objectives. Capacity enhancement is described as a process by which individuals or organisations advance their knowledge, skills and resources. It is also the operating environment to achieve their goals, assigned responsibilities or to address the problems they are facing. The enhanced capacity is reflected in their performance.

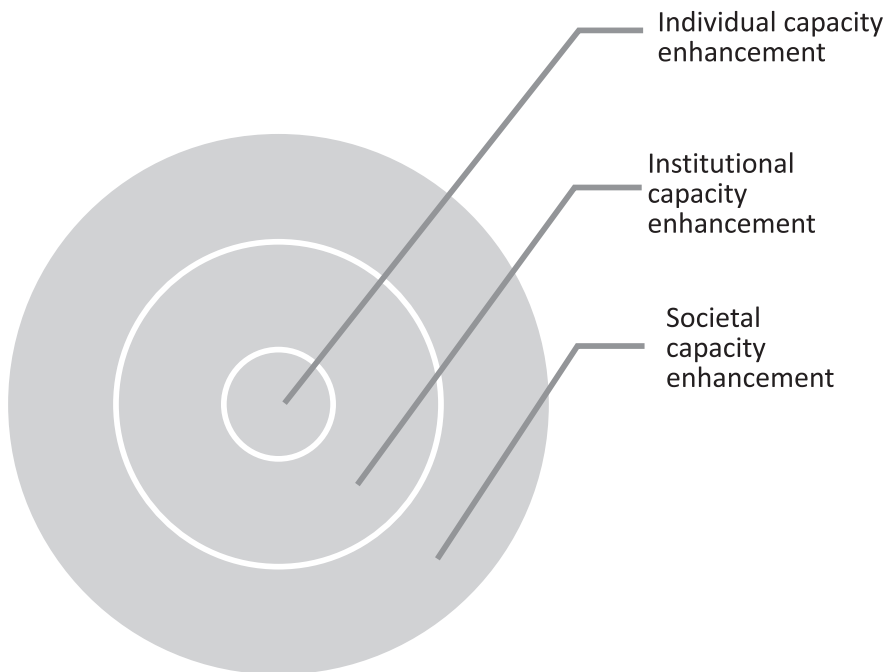


Figure 8 Levels of capacity enhancement

Figure 8 shows that there are three levels of capacity enhancement in the context of sustainable development oriented research which starts from individual capacity enhancement as core building block. The second level is the capacity enhancement of institutions (we used institutions to denote organisations in this book) and the third level is enhancement of the societal level. Many of sustainable development related challenges are societal in nature and collective efforts of individuals, institutions and society are required to address them. Enhancing capacity of individuals working in the

institutions enhances their capacity and collective capacity enhancement of individuals and institution ultimately enhance societal capacity to deal the societal problem.

One of the common reasons of weak performance of research in the south is inadequate capacity of individual and institutions engaged in research. Consequently, interest in enhancing the capacity of the south is gaining momentum (Pohl and Hadorn 2008). Capacity enhancement is a process, an approach, a strategy and an outcome which aims to better perform the objectives at different (individual, organisational and societal) level of responsibilities (Figure 8).

5. Conceptual framework

The following conceptual framework is used in analysing the North-South research partnership.

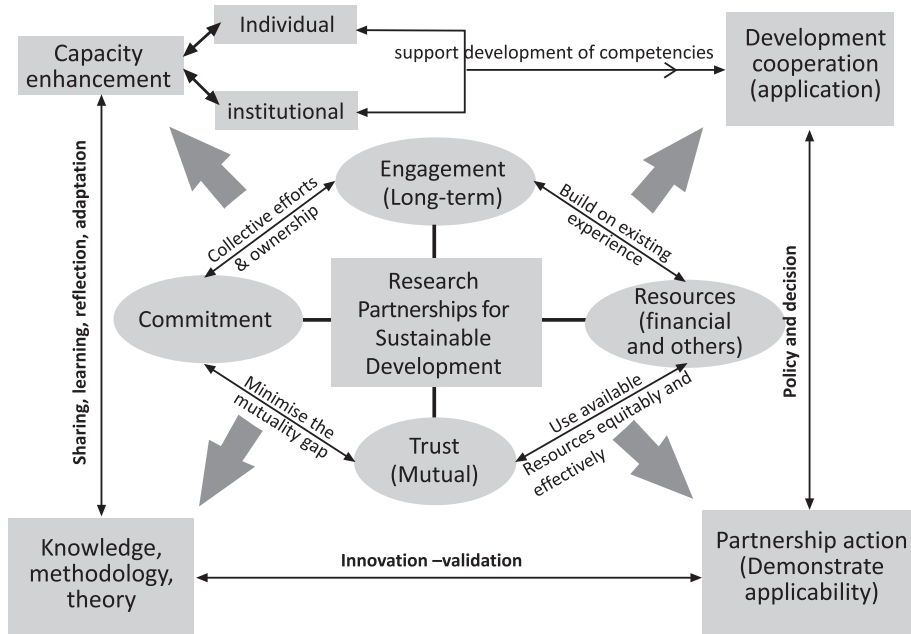


Figure 9 Conceptual framework

Analysis of research partnerships for sustainable development or of development-oriented research collaboration requires at least four fundamental pillars. We believe that resources (financial and other), commitment from all stakeholders, (long-term) engagement and mutual trusts are foundations on which development-oriented partnership research stands.

Trust and commitment are fundamentally important concepts in partnership research. Trust is a mental and an emotional trait of individuals expressed in mutual faith and confidence, reliability, integrity, confidentiality, trustworthiness and responsibility. Commitment is an individual's intellectual and emotional determination to accomplish some objectives such as satisfaction, gaining power and resources, recognition and positions. By its nature, this type of partnership research involves more number of stakeholders, deals with complex issues/concerns, and therefore requires more resources. Once there are a number of stakeholders involved, space for suspicion as well as trust expands. Hence, mutual trust is fundamentally important.

The four pillars are closely interrelated and sometimes they complement each other. Enhancing local capacity is crucial. Similarly, equitable and effective use of resources is another base for partnership research. Development-oriented partnership research has to support development of competencies for sustainable development, as it is the ultimate rationale of partnership research.

Development-oriented partnership relates with four broader areas, i.e. (a) theories, knowledge, information and methodology, (b) action orientation (In NCCR North-South, it is delivered through partnership action for mitigating syndromes projects. Operationally, small projects that are implemented to apply the research findings into action to demonstrate their applicability and bring different actors together), (c) development cooperation agencies (issues to be researched that are relevant to the development actors and development problems) and (d) capability to generate knowledge/theories/ methodologies to address the problems faced by the development agencies in specific and the society in general. In this process, mutual trusts, long-term engagement, individual and institutional commitments and availability of resources (both financial and non-financial) serve as the foundations. To make the development-oriented research partnership successful, minimising the gap between resourceful and resource-deficit, knowledgeable and knowledge-deficit, powerful and powerless, accessible and inaccessible, and strong and weak partners is essential. It can be done by using available resources equitably and effectively, by developing collective efforts and ownership and by strengthening existing experiences.

While planning, implementing and monitoring development-oriented partnership research, engaging with policy- and decision-makers is equally important as sharing, learning, reflection, and adaptation are. These all processes require flexibility, transparency and accountability. Last but not the least, development-oriented partnership research has to support development competencies of the implementing agencies through innovation and validation.

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