How to build sustainable partnerships
- Practical experiences from AUSTRIAN funded projects

Prof. Rhoda Birech
OEAD - Alumni
University-Industry Liaison Officer
Egerton University
The APPEAR funded WATERCAP

IS A PARTNERSHIP PLATFORM FOR ACTION IN WATER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

• WATERCAP is a partner for research between Universities (PhD, MSc, MA and BSc)
• WATERCAP is a partner for learning with communities
• WATERCAP is a partner for policy participation at regional and national levels
• WATERCAP has taught us practical steps in formation and execution of partnerships at different levels
WATERCAP is “Strengthening Universities Capacities for Mitigating Climate Change Induced Water Vulnerabilities in East Africa-WATERCAP” by Ugandan, Kenyan and Austrian Universities
Background to WATERCAP

Start with the problem
• Devastating impact of CC
• Uncertain water supply for Agriculture
• Universities decided to act

Seek support
• APPEAR (Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development)
• OeAD administered funds
• Others

Form the research team
• RUFORUM (Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture) bring 17 Univ. together
• EU, MAK (East Africa)
• BOKU

Identify the beneficiary
• Smallholder Farmers
• Graduate Students
• Other Stakeholders
WATERCAP Operational Framework

Obj. 1: Identification of internal and external constraints to effective partnerships

Obj. 2: Form water innovation platforms for mutual learning on efficient use in small holder agriculture

Obj. 3: Climate Change responsive curricula, training, research and outreach approaches

Obj. 4&5: Sustainable partnerships for responding to and mitigating climate change
Step 1: Understand your country’s development challenges

• Understand development goals of your country
  • It can be agriculture, education, technology, ICT, health sector etc.

• Know the critical problem in a sector within your discipline

• Always propose home-grown solutions

In the case of WATERCAP, the problem was Water vulnerability induced by Climate Change
Step 2 - Identify a partner/ form a research team

- **Initiating partnership with individual researchers while in Austria**
  - Know someone
  - Share your thoughts with your Professors
  - Starting from your supervisor

- **Initiating partnership with an institution**
  - Talk to the international-cooperation’ office of your University in Austria
  - Seek the support of the linkages office in your home institution
  - Let your supervisor help you
  - Be aggressive – see and seize opportunities
Step 3 – Start with basics

• Do consultations through meetings, email etc
• Do agenda which should focus on the win – win for all partners
• Develop trust
• Share roles based on areas of strength and common interest of each partner
• Identify a strong coordinator to do administrative work

• In the case of WATERCAP, our team exchanged emails on possible proposals
• We all met in Makerere one fine Saturday – each of us has been in Uganda for other missions
• We identified RUFORUM as coordinator because of its influence in East and Southern Africa
Step 4 - Develop cooperation instruments with:

- Objective of the partnership
- Benefits for each partners
- Data management and information sharing
- Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)
- Supervision of students
- Contribution from each partners
- Institutions to be realistic in what they can contribute
- Put mechanisms for streamlining communication
- Incorporate aspects of institutional of penalties in case of poor-performance
- Have a reporting mechanism

Activities, outputs and reports should be time bound

I had helped Egerton renew its MoU with BOKU
There was an existing MOU between EU and MAK
EU was already part of RUFORUM

Do project specific agreements, each to make a commitment and get support of your institution’s legal advisor
Egerton – BOKU – UNESCO MoU (Support student exchange, joint degrees)

Egerton – BOKU MoU (supports student and lecturer exchange)
Step 5 - Sourcing for funds

• Be vigilant on the call for proposals by different donors
• You can initiate a dialogue with a donor
• Do internal sourcing for funds also
• Show how to sustain the projects after the funding period ends
• Be open to get extra support but inform your initial donor(s)

In the case of WATERCAP, APPEAR call was on partnership
• The call came when academia has awakened to the need for partnership to address community problem
  • APPEAR call emphasized that we put country’s priorities first, which we did
  • We convinced our government to contribute to the budget – which it did
Step 5 continued: Budgeting

• Do reasonable budgets avoiding wastages, but should be motivating to workers
  • Uphold financial transparency (involve your Institutions Finance Department)

• Put aside some money for coordination

• In the case of WATERCAP, each of the partners institutions had a lead person and a trusted, hard-working project assistant
  • Graduate students are greatly helpful in doing some side jobs
Step 6: Write a good proposal

• Jointly develop a strategy documents, master plans, strategic plans or proposals
• Follow the donor interest but your country’s priority be clear
• Be innovative – show from literature where the gaps are and why your idea is a good solution to the problem
• Clearly link the topic - to the objectives – to the tasks (activities) – to time bound deliverables – show outcomes
Step 7 - Implementation plans and execution of common projects

– Have a strong coordinator and involve dynamic research assistants
– Always try to bring a student on board
– Share activities depending on institutional advantages
– Hold regular meetings or communication forums
– Do regular reporting
– Manage the finances well
– Publish your work to make you to be known by the scientific world
– Close any source of weakness and misunderstanding

In the case of WATERCAP, we specified the following:
• How the students are hosted and supervised
• Who pays for their field work
• How to contribute to scientific publications
• However, we had changelings in coordinating international meeting
Step 8 - Sustainability

• Draw a clear exit strategy
• Create spin-off projects (new projects)
• As you close up the project, strategically position yourself and sell-out your capacities to new partners

WATERCAP has been a spring board to many initiatives:
   At the community
   At the region
GROW WITH YOUR PARTNER

THANK YOU