Leadership and Management: Case Studies in Training in Higher Education in Africa

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CHAPTER 4
UGANDA

Emuron Olupot, Pius Achanga and Abdu Kasozi

4.1 Introduction: Background

Since the 1990s, external and internal forces have brought a number of changes to universities in Uganda. These include a reduction in funding to public universities, the liberalisation of the higher education sector, and a re-organisation of the academic year from terms to semester and trimester systems. The aforementioned changes in turn affected student enrolment, staffing recruitment policies, curricula, pedagogy as well as the infrastructure. In the report of the Education Policy Review Commission\(^1\) in which 83 recommendations were made, the following was fundamental: “Privately sponsored students [should] be encouraged to join publicly-funded tertiary institutions provided they satisfy the entry requirements and the pedagogical facilities in a given institution can accommodate them”. In addition, the same Commission urged government to shift funding from higher to primary education with a further proposal: “Students and parents [should] assume full responsibility of meeting all non-instructional expenses such as [the] cost of transport to and from their homes, pocket money, feeding and dependant allowance[s]”.\(^2\) As a result of this recommendation, cost sharing, among other things, was introduced into HE in Uganda. In essence, the liberalisation of HE pre-empted public universities opening their doors to those who could afford to pay for their education. These changes transformed the roles of both universities and academics in Uganda.\(^3\)

Nationally, liberalisation has had at least two major effects on university education. Firstly, it led to an increase in the number of HEIs, which resulted in an increase in the annual output of HE and raised awareness of university education among the population generally. Subsequently, the demand for more accountability from universities also increased compared to the previous decade. This came at a time when the demand for HE had increased substantially, as evidenced by the increased student enrolments at the various universities in Uganda. However, this increase also revealed a mismatch between students and facilities. In one of the National Council on Higher Education (NCHE) reports\(^4\) to Carnegie Corporation of New York it was observed that this mismatch was exacerbated by declining government funding and the lack of leadership training and the transformational leaders who could manage this. As Senge\(^5\) explains, change is often a problem and people who are not equally progressive may find many options unacceptable. Their influence on the decisions on pedagogy, assessment and curriculum may stifle the innovative ideas of others.

Secondly, liberalisation of HE provision opened the way for the private sector to become a key player in HE in Uganda. As recently as 1987 there was only one institution with university status in Uganda, with an enrolment of about 10,000 students. But by 2013 there were 39 HEIs with degree-awarding status with some 152,805 students. When those in other tertiary institutions are added, the number exceeds 190,000. This exponential increase was to be expected as a natural consequence of the advent of the universal primary education (UPE) graduates who were now accessing the tertiary education subsector.

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2. Ibid.: 90.
A survey of HEIs by the NCHE in 2004⁶ (the data collected from HEIs in 2005 and 2006 and the Executive Director’s participation in the Presidential Visitation to public universities in 2006 and 2007) indicates that the quality of HE delivery in Uganda was declining rapidly. In many institutions, staff qualifications and experience were declining due to that fact that there were insufficient funds budgeted for educational inputs. Moreover, study areas (classrooms, laboratories, libraries) were overcrowded, staff salaries were low and there was little incentive for research. There was not enough money for the maintenance of the infrastructure and few institutions had comprehensive internal quality-assurance mechanisms. References to the same studies also indicate that most institutions had outdated curricula based on memorisation and not on problem solving, all of which were oriented towards civil-service employment (contracting).

It is worth noting that liberalisation not only lead to the opening up of new institutions, but also introduced competition into the provision of HE, and universities started marketing themselves in order to attract students. It can be argued that these changes contributed to the decline in the quality of university education in Uganda. For instance, courses within the same university were duplicated, mismanagement of academic affairs increased (for example missing coursework and examination results).⁷ The same Visitation Committee noted that top management in public universities was not in control and that they had not risen to broader challenges of strategic management that would have entailed making difficult choices for their universities. According to Shattock,⁸ if universities’ core services and systems do not work, there will be low academic morale, low public esteem of universities, a decline in institutional infrastructure, run down student residences, poor food services and maintenance backlogs. This was valid for many Ugandan universities at the time, and consequently, as observed by Mamdani,⁹ there was growing public scepticism about the capacity of universities to deliver quality education.

In 2009, the National Council for Higher Education therefore realised that there was a gap in its efforts to improve the delivery of quality education in institutions of higher learning in Uganda. Most of the NCHE’s prior focus for improving the quality of HE in Uganda and Africa (generally) was, understandably, on training academic staff, improving facilities, research and the physical infrastructure of institutions. Although rather late, it was realised that the governance of institutions of higher learning was equally important for delivering quality HE. Institutions of higher learning must be well managed if quality higher education is to be delivered. As it was then, and now, managers were simply extracted from classrooms or research facilities to administrative boardrooms without being trained on how to manage the education institutions they were called upon to govern. Yet management is a science to which administrators should be exposed before they are asked to lead such critical social institutions as universities and colleges. To support this, Achanga says:

[W]ithin most African states, the selection of university management and leadership has been based on academic achievement and government endorsement. In most countries, top university leadership, such as the vice-chancellors and rectors, gains access to such positions on the basis of being renowned scholars.¹⁰

Hence, in April/May 2008, the NCHE started to plan for the training of managers of institutions of higher learning. The purposes of the training were identified as follows:

- To enable new and seasoned HE administrators to learn the best practices of managing institutions of higher learning.
- To support potential managers in studying the Ugandan and regional issues that influence the administration of HEIs in eastern and central Africa.

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• To enable the administrators (current or potential) to understand global and domestic forces that affect the administration of HE.
• To empower these leaders to manage their institutions well in order to deliver quality HE.
• To create a pool of trained personnel from whom administrators could be selected as vacancies arise in the tertiary subsector.
• To facilitate potential managers to experience managing institutions of higher learning.

Therefore, in order to inform the design and development of such a training course, a needs-assessment study was conceptualised at this time. The purpose of the study was to assess the needs of current and potential managers in order to manage universities in Uganda, with the aim of enabling the NCHE to organise training workshops in leadership and managerial skills.

4.2 Needs assessment for HELM training

The needs-assessment study adopted a survey research design in order to identify the training needs of current and potential managers in universities. Universities were put into two groups, namely private and public institutions. After stratification, four public and eight private universities were randomly selected. Since certain categories of respondents could easily be identified by the name of their university, all the universities in the sample were allocated serial numbers. All the top managers (i.e. the VCs, DVCs, university secretaries, academic registrars, deans of students, and bursars) of each university were purposively selected. Middle-managers (i.e. deans of faculties, heads of departments and senior staff) were randomly sampled to participate in the study. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the study participants.

Table 4.1: Selected universities, respondents and questionnaire return rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>VC</th>
<th>Finance &amp; admin. managers</th>
<th>Academic managers</th>
<th>Deans of students</th>
<th>Potential managers (senior academic staff)</th>
<th>Total questionnaires distributed</th>
<th>Total questionnaires returned</th>
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<tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>15</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data was collected using questionnaires to ensure wide coverage, easy data collection, presentation and analysis. Five questionnaires were designed; one for VCs, the second was for administrative staff in charge of academics (this included the deputy vice-chancellor academic affairs (DVC-AA), academic registrar (AR), deans/directors and heads of departments), the third questionnaire was for administrative staff in charge of administration and finance (deputy vice-chancellor finance and administration (DVC-FA), university secretary (US), bursar, and accountants), the fourth was for deans of students and the last for senior staff. Senior staff members were targeted because they were viewed as potential managers. There were minor variations in the items in the questionnaires
but they all solicited information on four main areas: administration, leadership, human-resource roles and financial management. There were both open and close-ended questions. The close-ended section required the respondents to comment on the levels of importance of the different aspects of administrative, leadership, human-resource and financial roles, and their levels of confidence in performing them.

A number of quality control procedures were instituted to control both sampling and non-sampling errors, and to manage data quality and integrity. Questionnaires were developed in close consultation with officials from the NCHE and a consultant from South Africa. They were then pre-tested in Uganda Christian University, Mukono and Makerere University. The respondents in the pre-test were not involved in the main study. After the pilot, items that were deemed to be irrelevant or invalid were deleted. The distribution and collection of the completed questionnaires was a tedious process, involving several trips and phone calls, sometimes to no avail. Coupled with this, the study was conducted at a time when universities were busy with end-of-semester examinations. Quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 13.0).

The sample profile is predominantly male and falls into the age bracket of 30 to 59, reflecting the current demographics of university managers in Uganda.

Findings

Administrative roles
All administrative roles were considered to be very important by the respondents. However, in 13 of the 19 items, the academic managers exhibited low levels of confidence in performing specific tasks such as: coordinating community outreach programmes; representing the university to government line ministries; using IT in teaching, research, community outreach and administration; and ensuring that university equipment used in teaching, research and community outreach was maintained. However, findings from the financial and administrative managers and deans of students showed a higher level of confidence in performing administrative roles. For instance, over half of the financial and administrative managers were confident in performing seven of the 12 administrative roles. At the same time they were not confident about representing their universities to government line ministries or enforcing IT-use in university administration. Senior academic staff expressed high levels of confidence in performing administrative roles directly linked to academic affairs. However, they were less confident in performing 15 out of the 19 roles. These included formulating strategic mission and vision statements, policies and bylaws, and fostering IT-usage in teaching, research and community outreach.

Leadership roles
All leadership roles were considered very important by the respondents. Despite this ranking, half of the academic managers indicated that they were not confident in performing 13 out of the 20 items on leadership, including ensuring that the full capabilities of the university non-human resources were exploited; providing leadership in fundraising strategies, budgeting and implementing budgets; and in monitoring strategic action plans. Financial and administrative managers expressed higher levels of confidence in performing similar roles. However, half of them were not very confident in performing nine out of the 20 leadership roles including: motivating staff for their professional growth; ensuring full use of the capabilities of university human resources and non-human resources; ensuring external and internal university harmony; and building a positive institutional culture and image. Similar to their ratings on administrative roles, deans of students rated items under leadership roles highly. However, they also indicated that they did not feel very confident in monitoring university strategic action plans or providing leadership in budgeting. Senior academic staff were very confident in performing leadership roles directly linked to academic affairs. However, they expressed less confidence in performing the majority of the leadership roles (15 out of the 19) including providing leadership in fundraising, budgeting and implementing budgets, and developing and monitoring university strategic and action plans.
**Human-resource management roles**

Generally, human-resource management roles were ranked highly by deans of students and financial and administrative managers. However, less than 90% of the academic managers and senior academic staff ranked it as very important. Among the academic managers, most were confident in performing the majority (17 out of the 19) of the human-resource management roles, including: rewarding and motivating staff; conducting support supervision and monitoring staff; developing performance appraisal systems for staff; developing staff in relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes; and in organising continuous professional development and career plans for staff. Although, human-resource management roles were rated as very important, the majority of the finance and administrative managers expressed confidence in performing 13 out of the 18 items. Among these were: orienting/developing staff in relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes; developing performance appraisal systems for staff; assessing staff performance; conducting support supervision and monitoring staff; developing succession and placement plans; and organising retirement plans for staff. Among the deans of students, their level of confidence in performing human-resource management roles was slightly better than that of the financial and administrative managers. Deans of students indicated that they were not confident in performing nine of the 19 roles in this category, including rewarding and motivating staff, and developing succession and placement plans. Among the senior academic staff, over 70% rated human-resource management roles as very important. Ninety percent of the same group then also rated the specific functions of keeping-up-to-date, accurate and accessible records, assigning roles and responsibilities to staff, managing and resolving conflict, orienting staff in relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes, as well as assessing staff performance as very important, although the majority of them were less confident in being able to perform these.

**Financial management roles**

This is an area that constitutes the major training need for the majority of the current managers in Ugandan universities, particularly, the academic managers, deans of students and potential managers. A substantial percentage of the financial and administrative managers were confident in performing this role. However, although over 65% of the academic managers rated financial management as very important, 60% were not confident in performing some of the very basic aspects of their jobs such as: mobilising financial resources (31%); procuring equipment and materials (31%); and ensuring IT-use in financial management (39%). In the same vein, deans of students in this study were very confident in ensuring proper use of university funds (100%) and keeping accurate accounting records (86%) but weak in ensuring IT-use in financial management (29%), in mobilising financial resources for the university (29%), and coordinating its financial affairs (43%). Senior academic staff reported that they could keep accurate records (87%) but not effectively perform all the other aspects of financial roles, including mobilising funding for their respective universities, preparing budgets, and ensuring various units follow financial regulations. Their ability to carry out these tasks were all rated below 25%.

**Discussion**

Most university managers in this study were between 30 and 49 years of age. This indicates that the bulk of the current managers could potentially serve their respective universities for some time to come. However, there are few managers in the 20 to 25 age bracket, which means there will probably be a dearth of management personnel in the next decade. Most of the top and potential managers in this study are also men, all of whom had assumed their current positions in the 2000s. This is an indication that the bulk of the managers in the next decade will continue to be male.

The majority of the respondents had not received any leadership training since their assumption of duty. Of those who had received training, such training was management-oriented. This implies that most managers learnt 'on the job', and given that many of them are not confident in performing their roles, they need formal training.

As very few managers had received any training in financial and human-resource management, their lack of confidence in performing these roles was not surprising. Conversely, in spite of not receiving training in administration and leadership, the findings showed that most of the managers were confident in performing these roles.
Financial and human-resource management roles thus constituted the key training areas. The major human-resource management challenge for all the respondents in this study was promoting staff welfare (e.g. professional growth, rewarding and motivating staff, preparing succession and retirement plans). Enforcing the use of IT in various university management functions also remains problematic.

Managers who were very confident in performing various management functions fell into the age bracket of 40 years and above. These managers clearly rely on their experience to confidently carry out their daily routines. Furthermore, managers of over sixty did not express the need for training since they were about to retire. The bulk of the managers (some deans and several heads of departments) between 20 and 39 were not very confident in performing various management roles, and expressed the need for training. It appears that most university managers delegate the roles that they are not confident in performing. For instance, many managers relied on accountants to perform various financial management roles although managers such as deans are the designated accounting officers for their respective faculties.

The study illustrated that current and potential managers find their human-resource and financial management roles difficult. As a result, it was recommended that a training programme be designed with the following contents.

**Strategic management**
- The importance of strategic management, strategy formulation and implementation, strategic management, developing a strategic vision and mission
- Leadership and change management
- Quality improvement.

**Human-resource management**
- Staff training needs-assessment and development
- Performance management (output-oriented performance monitoring)
- Motivation (especially non-financial motivation, such as rewarding good performance or group rewards)
- Occupational health and safety
- Planning for retirement.

**Financial management**
- Budgeting and budget management including information on the legal framework for the budget process, budget process, setting institutional priorities, budget consultations and budget monitoring and evaluation
- Resource allocation
- Accountability for resources
- Financial mobilisation (project identification)
- Fundraising and negotiation skills.

**IT for managers**
- Financial accounting packages
- Management information systems (MIS).
It was also recommended that the following training model be followed as far as the priority of training was concerned:

- **Academic managers:** This group should be further subdivided into DVCs of academic affairs, academic registrars and deans together, and heads of departments separately.
- **Financial and administrative managers:** Training should start with DVCs of financial affairs, university secretaries, bursars and accountants.
- **Potential managers:** Since many of the current managers are over 55, there is an urgent need to train this category.

**Follow-up meeting**

Because the overall return rate of the questionnaires was very poor, a decision was taken to hold a separate meeting in April 2009 to obtain the endorsement of the university VCs. The majority of those who attended were not VCs however, but their deputies or other members of the senior management teams who were sent to represent them. The Management and Leadership Programme (MLP) team again invited the VCs to a two-day meeting for two main reasons: firstly, to bring them up to date with what training their staff had received during the nine modules; and secondly, to bring the sustainability of the project to their attention. (This meeting was viewed as part of the needs assessment, which is an ongoing process.) This time the attendance was better, with the exception of four universities that sent members of the senior management teams rather than VCs. Also in attendance were members of the governing councils and representatives of universities that the MLP team had worked with during the training.

While the participants appreciated the training their staff had received, they were not forthcoming about the steps to be taken towards sustainability. The MLP team had wanted an unequivocal commitment from them to the continuation of the project activities but this did not happen. The recipients of the training, however, were eager to discuss further training, and they gave a variety of responses, including the suggestion of rolling out the project to others in universities who had not had these opportunities. They felt there was also an urgent need for governing councils and government to officially recognise the training that they had received. Clearly, for the participants, at least, this training had been very useful in resolving leadership and management problems and challenges faced by universities in the country.

In the following sections there is a more systematic discussion of the design and implementation of the training programme.

**4.3 Identification and selection of target groups**

The initial aim of the training programme was to identify, select, train and mentor a team of leaders of Ugandan universities. The MLP team believed that the envisaged training should be directed at the following university leadership: members of the governing council and the university management (i.e. the VCs and their deputies), the academic registrars, deans of faculties, heads of departments, senior lecturers and the senior administrators, such as the finance directors. Although the original idea was to set up target groups on the basis of their standing in organisations, the MLP team later realised that if the VCs were put together, they might focus only on the concerns of their roles and responsibilities and ignore everything else. Furthermore, they would then not be exposed to the perceptions of their juniors. After considering the prevailing perception of most HE practitioners in African states (where, for example, VCs may not be willing to share a training session with their juniors), the MLP team resolved to have mixed groups so that everyone could benefit from diverse ideas and perspectives. Although this was challenging, it created a more synergistic atmosphere for all participants.
PART TWO COUNTRY CASE STUDIES

The selection strategy
The first selection strategy did not yield satisfactory results. As the training project had not yet attracted much publicity, the university managers had very little or no knowledge of the MLP and its associated benefits. The 43 participants of the 2010 cohort had the highest number of VCs (Table 4.2).

Table: 4.2 Positions of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cohort 1</th>
<th>Cohort 2</th>
<th>Cohort 3</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>Aug-11</td>
<td>Dec-11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VCs/rectors</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>DVCs/rectors</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deans/directors</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heads of department (HODs)</td>
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<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other top university managers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(academic registrar/librarian/bursar/university secretary)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (officers, administrators, lecturers)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>62</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The initial group of scheduled participants included:

- Members of university councils, boards of governors and policy makers
- Incumbent top management (i.e. VCs and their deputies, university secretaries, academic registrars, chief planners, chief finance officers)
- Heads of departments/units; deans and other specified officers. Most of the trainees from this group were seen as potential managers from which future top administrators would be recruited.

Ironically, Cohort 1 also attracted the highest number of trainees who should not have been in the training programme. In hindsight it is evident that a clear strategy for participants’ selection had not been worked out because; the participants’ list consisted of the MLP team’s acquaintances (individuals who had participated in previous programmes). Moreover, participants were invited over the telephone and the intended trainees did not know what the training was all about. It led to a lot of curiosity and unrealistic expectations, some of which were beyond the scope of the training programme.

ERA was able to capture this anomaly in their assessment of the overall training, which was one of the factors that contributed to Carnegie Corporation of New York putting a hold on the grant.

It should also be pointed out that the MLP team (as it later became known, after the entry of ERA) initially had very poor capacity. The MLP needs assessment had failed to detect a number of crucial things, as outlined below:

- It did not have robust criteria for selecting participants. (These should have been based on the cultural characteristics of the group, ages, educational backgrounds, work experiences, gender, interests and learning styles.)
- There was limited publicity of the project, as discussed in the needs assessment.
- The communication within the programme team and between universities was dismal.

Thereafter, ERA became involved with the MLP, specifically in guiding the team on how to re-strategise the overall training direction. ERA required the MLP to ensure a number of things, as outlined below. First, the programme team had to increase its staff (from four to six people) and then redesign its participants’ selection strategy. This entailed showcasing the entire project to potential trainees at all the participating universities. That way questions or issues being raised by the potential trainees could be answered succinctly. During the university outreach the MLP team
used a carefully designed participants’ selection form that was aimed at eliciting basic, but crucial information, on potential trainees, such as their role at the institution and how many years they had worked there. This information was useful in determining the suitability of potential trainees. This was followed by a face-to-face interview with each potential trainee in order to assess his or her level of commitment towards the training project. The top university management were also asked to recommend potential trainees. In this way the most motivated trainees were selected. It was confirmed during the training sessions that this strategy had worked, as the trainees selected in this way participated fully and showed interest throughout the entire training process. Moreover, the MLP team decided that any institution that did not allow it to meet the staff and top management beforehand would be eliminated from the project. This decision was based on the premise that a willing commitment from the institution was required at the outset for participants to have any impact on their institution.

Institutions who did not respond to repeated phone calls and emails and who in some cases, even cancelled meetings when the team arrived at their premises were excluded from the programme. Other universities were so motivated and enthusiastic about the whole exercise that they begged for extra spaces on the courses. The final selection provided a well-balanced representation, as shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Institutional representation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Cohort 1</th>
<th>Cohort 2</th>
<th>Cohort 3</th>
<th>Total attended</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Islamic University in Uganda</td>
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<td>Ndejje University</td>
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<td>Nkumba University</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda Christian University</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda Management Institute</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda Martyrs University</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Twelve institutions were represented at the Cohort 3 training, more than at the previous two blocks of training. In particular, Makerere University, the first and the oldest university in the country, was not represented in the first and second cohorts due to the weakness of the first selection round. This is a clear testimony to the strength of the improved participant selection framework.

4.4 Identification of areas for training

The main aim was to target those with ‘natural’ potential for leadership and to allow them to benefit from those who were already good leaders by working together. The first training session was focused on universities and the second on non-university tertiary institutions.
The topics in the first session included, but were not limited to the following:

- Student and staff information data management
- Decision-making processes in a university context
- Budget planning and implementation
- Financial management
- Corporate and unit strategic planning
- The roles of the various organs of a university – council, senate, top management, faculty boards, department/division boards, staff unions, student unions, etc.
- Strategic planning
- Conflict resolution
- Quality assurance in a macro and institutional setting
- Research policies and management
- Postgraduate training and skills development
- Academic management including syllabus design, implementation, timetabling, examination management, results releases including transcripts
- The identification of HE problems and how to resolve them.

The training themes were partly based on the results from the needs-assessment study, partly on a review of literature and partly on baseline data. However, in retrospect, it was clear that determining the thematic areas could have been improved if there had been wider stakeholder involvement. For example, there was no collaborative initiative to determine the module themes throughout the first three modules, until ERA's intervention. At the time, the MLP team had come to accept that they did not have a clear theoretical base from which to develop a meaningful curriculum. Once this had been recognised, a new approach was implemented and an improved outline of all the pertinent issues for the training modules was established.

The following modules were decided upon:

- *African education in a globalising world.* This module was aimed at introducing participants to the concept of globalisation, and how this was having an impact on the HE landscape.
- *Leadership, institutional innovation and development.* This module was intended to equip the trainees with the crucial leadership skills relevant for managing universities.
- *Corporate governance of universities* was aimed at facilitating a deeper understanding of corporate governance in institutions of higher learning.
- *Financial management* aimed at equipping universities managers with the knowledge of resource acquisition and management.
- *Management of academic processes* looked at the processes of academic provision in universities.
- *Issues of socioeconomic development* and the notion of universities as key actors in reshaping the economic landscape of nations.
- *Human resource management.*
- *Access, equity and social justice in HE.*
- *The future of higher education.*
Selection of the modules writers

Armed with the above-mentioned module themes, the MLP team embarked on identifying module writers for each thematic area. The first three modules (globalisation, leadership, and corporate governance) did not attract many willing authors, but after an extensive search, the MLP team handpicked three respectable scholars: two writers from the staff of the NCHE, and a third who was sourced internationally. However, ERA’s findings on the first three modules indicated that although the modules were good, they required an extensive review. Three new academics, who were deeply involved in curriculum development and were all adult educators, were sourced for this assignment. The intention was for the modules to be simple, straightforward reading. The modules were later sent to an external editor for proofreading.

The MLP team had learnt much from the process of developing the first three modules and were motivated to take a more structured and robust approach in developing the next three modules, using ERA’s feedback on the previous training courses and themes from the university outreach initiative. The team then advertised widely for expert module writers and eventually six suitable writers were selected.

A module writers’ workshop was organised with the six writers to initiate and streamline the module direction. Specifically, the module writers were given the module guidelines that had been designed by the MLP team and approved by ERA.

A series of meetings took place where the MLP team discussed the crucial issues in depth with the writers. These included the type of case studies to be used, their relevance and likely benefits to the trainees. The modules were sent to ERA and later to Carnegie Corporation of New York for their input.

4.5 Uptake and impact

In the period 2010 to 2013, the MLP team rolled out nine modules to over a hundred carefully selected participants of the management and leadership training. This section describes the training uptake by the MLP team and the impact the training had on the participants and their institutions.

Each module of the management training programme was designed to last for three days. The programme material encouraged an adult-learning approach and so the sessions were very interactive. After providing some background, an MLP team member then handed each session over to the selected expert, but remained on hand to give clarity on policy issues if required. Facilitators were asked to present for not more than thirty minutes, whereafter participants could respond to the issues presented. Participants would then work in groups for about an hour. Group presentations would then follow, and the day would end with a talk by an invited guest speaker. The guest speakers were distinguished professionals who had all made significant contributions in their respective fields, and their role was to refocus the attention of the participants on key management lessons.

Impact of the training programme

From its inception the training programme had an impact. Three cohorts of middle and top managers were trained and, in each case, the project organisers witnessed great participant enthusiasm and openness to revising their worldview and to learn new things. A summary of the participants’ evaluation forms is shown in Tables 4.4 and 4.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall assessment of the sessions</th>
<th>Too theoretical</th>
<th>Too practical</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort 3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The majority (65%) of participants reported that the training was more practical than theoretical. A fair proportion (27%) thought the theoretical and practical elements were balanced. Eight percent of participants of Cohort 3 reported that the training was more theoretical than practical, however, Cohort 2 tended to lean more towards the “too practical” end of the scale. Furthermore, all aspects of the training were rated highly, with the venue being rated as the highest quality aspect (4.9 out of 5) and training materials receiving the lowest, albeit still high, rating of 4.1 as demonstrated in Table 4.4. The participants’ eagerness to implement reforms in their respective universities promised outstanding future success for the project. Other feedback revealed that participants found it difficult to distinguish the roles and relationships between the various stakeholders in HE, but showed a good degree of analytical assessment and they left determined to chart strategies for the future. There was also a mentorship component at universities (for leaders) where teaching assistants shadowed senior lecturers as well as administrators. There was also evidence of new staff development initiatives at the institutions involving staff and members of the governing councils.

Table 4.5: Quality of the training sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Average score out of 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1 = Very poor; 5 = Excellent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course content</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training materials</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenters</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venue</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall organisation</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sustainability of the training programme

The notion of sustainability in any improvement initiative has always attracted significant amounts of money and raises both theoretical and practical questions. The MLP team was very aware that the financial base of the project had been a once-off donation. As a result, the MLP had to ensure sustainability in its project planning. At an earlier stage, when the project had just been launched, the programme developers had started to identify a potential institution to take over the project once the first phase was completed. Three institutions were invited to discuss this at different times. However, it soon became apparent that the first institution did not have the capacity to handle a project of such magnitude and the second institution seemed disinterested because it was applying for other funding from Carnegie Corporation for a similar project. The third institution initially showed a lot of interest in collaborating, but later on seemed to lose interest. To the surprise of the MLP developers, the institution had simply been gathering all their material in order to start a parallel programme of their own! The collaboration collapsed and a lot of time and effort was wasted. Nonetheless, the developers gained enormous experience, motivation and credibility while carrying out this intervention, which meant that many individuals and organisations now wish to align themselves with the MLP in various ways.

Although the MLP did not achieve its objective of successfully identifying a partner to carry the training programme beyond Carnegie Corporation funding, their quest gave the MLP and the NCHE a measure of respectability. In addition, the institution who wanted to copy the programme will now have to pay an independent provider for a service that the MLP had previously rendered free of charge. Institutions and individuals will also now have to show even more commitment, since they will be investing their own funds in such training. As the NCHE remains a regulator of HE, it can still dictate that all potential managers intending to assume positions of seniority within Ugandan universities must undergo training on management and leadership courses.
4.6 Conclusions

Designing a successful training programme that is capable of reshaping institutional management and leadership structures is complex and requires concerted effort. The MLP training initiative has demonstrated the significance of developing a structured training programme that provides a holistic and measurable impact. A number of lessons have been learnt by the MLP while carrying out the training programme:

- It is imperative for a project of this magnitude to have a broadly based planning team, who hold diverse perspectives. This expands the ownership of the project, and lends it external credibility.

- A conceptual framework should be designed at the project-proposal stage, as this provides the building blocks for the entire project design. This was not done in the MLP training project; many weaknesses subsequently became apparent.

- A needs assessment is a participatory process, and this ought to have been conducted prior to the submission of the project proposal. It is clear that the MLP erred by excluding a large number of stakeholders in its needs-assessment drive. Involving different stakeholders at the initial stages of the project proposal would have eliminated several unforeseen hitches. For example, the team did not consider the challenges involved in meeting the requirements of government policies such as the Public Procurement and Disposable Assets (PPDA), which states that organisations may not source services or products exceeding USD 800 without following the PPDA rules. This meant that no module writer could be sourced directly even if the MLP developers knew of his or her credibility. The Solicitor-General would also have been consulted if a proper stakeholders’ consultation had taken place. This was a crucial omission, as the MLP could not use its budget without seeking approval at almost every stage of the operation. However, to compensate for the error of not making proper consultative engagement with the stakeholders, the MLP developers decided to organise a VCs seminar to review the training that had taken place over the three years. This became a wonderful opportunity to market the project further and to regain credibility. Although the MLP exerts no control over what happens to participants in their institutions, they can now be put into contact with various groups in the country.

- The involvement of an external evaluator such as ERA is very beneficial. ERA arrived when the project was already underway, and ironically, this initially engendered uncertainty, as almost everything had to be overhauled. ERA urged a review of the entire MLP framework for delivery after the first workshop. The first training session was critically evaluated in order to make improvements. The MLP team was also required to examine its capacity for implementing the programme, taking possible administrative changes into consideration (e.g. resignations) which could disrupt the team’s performance. The quality of training in terms of selection of participants, content, delivery and logistics was a major point of consideration by ERA. It should be pointed out that ERA used mainly qualitative research methods for streamlining these analyses. For example, by distributing a questionnaire to the MLP members and collating the data, ERA was quickly able to draw up an Action Plan.

- The MLP team has realised that conducting a training exercise of such magnitude requires an appropriate training methodology for it to be successful. It therefore follows that those being selected to roll out the modules as training facilitators needed to be skilled in the art of assisting adults to learn through self-discovery. The approach used should be governed by the notion of self-directed learning, which is appropriate for adults. Secondly, facilitators are guides, not lecturers, and are participants in the learning situation ‘with’ learners. They are responsible for and accountable to the group. The main goal is to equip participants for self-development and to control learning. Thirdly, presenters (guest speakers) are experts with a clear separation from the learner; here learners are passive recipients of knowledge and the goal is to transmit knowledge clearly.
• A logic model is needed to visualise how a problem is linked to the proposed interventions. A team must be trained in this so that they share a common mental picture of how the project will run once the implementation begins.

• Moreover, in identifying and selecting facilitators, the MLP developers had wanted to first observe the applicants teaching in their own universities. Unfortunately due to too much work and insufficient staff members at the NCHE, this did not happen. The idea was to gauge their teaching styles, depth of knowledge and their interpersonal skills with their students. This would have given a useful sense of the contribution potential facilitators could make.