



9. Interprofessional collaboration and research networking in Global North–Global South partnerships

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Abstract In this chapter, we reflect on the benefits and challenges of cross-sector and inter-continental partnerships that work together to improve the lives of children living with disability in Tanzania. We draw on the contact hypothesis, particularly the equity dimension, as a reflection framework. Potential strategies to address these challenges and stimulate social innovation are presented.

Keywords inter-continental research partnerships | distributed responsibility | Afro European collaborations | contact hypothesis

INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM AND NEED FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION IN ORGANIZATIONS WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY

Children living with “impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions” have complex needs exacerbated by conditions of poverty and social exclusion. They require access and effective support from a range of stakeholders (e.g., services and professionals) to manage these (<https://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en/>). However, in many national contexts, Tanzania included, service provision is far from optimal and means of addressing this is poorly understood (Njelesani et al., 2011). Social innovation is required in these organizations to find new solutions to their current challenges.

BEING SOCIALLY INNOVATIVE FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY

Social innovation is a multidimensional construct that is both the process and the outcome of taking new knowledge or combining existing knowledge in new ways

or applying it to new contexts. It is about creating positive social change and public value, as well as addressing social need and improving social relations and collaborations to meet a social demand. It is a multidimensional construct of which cocreation is a central dimension (Bason, 2010). Cocreation describes the positive joint activity between two or more interdependent actors that leads to outputs with added public value. These outputs should be over and above the value of working alone in silos, and the benefits must outweigh the resources expended to achieve these (time, human, financial, etc.) (Alford, 2009; Bason, 2010; European Commission, 2013; Hartley, 2005; Hean et al., 2015).

THE NOREC PROJECT AS A PERMUTATION OF COCREATORS

Consortia, such as that brought together in the NOREC project, are spaces where this cocreation can take place. The NOREC project, described elsewhere in this volume, is a specific collaboration between Tanzanian and Norwegian partners funded by the Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation (NOREC), a part of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The project comprised a reciprocal exchange between leaders, educators, researchers, and students as part of a social educator degree programme at Molde University College in Norway and Patandi Teachers College of Special Needs Education in Tanzania. The initial project's aim was to promote international learning in the two countries in the field of inclusive education and thereby enhance the well-being of children living with disability. Activity included reciprocal student and staff exchanges and a conference held in February 2021 in Tanzania. Ongoing activity, within this initial partnership, led to an expansion of the consortium to include also one other Norwegian university (University of Stavanger) and two other Tanzanian universities (Open University Tanzania and the University of Dar e Salaam). They had a common interest in exploring the feasibility of introducing a Norwegian model of social education to special needs/inclusive education training in Tanzania.

The NOREC project consortium is an assembly and implementation of a mix of complementary and supplementary competences of a range of cocreators who are key to the generation of new solutions to the challenges facing children living with disability in Tanzania. It constitutes a space intended to foster collaborative processes and the cross-fertilization of ideas between sectors (whether these be academic versus non-academic institutions, between private and public organizations, or between nation-states). This consortium and others like it are a potential source of social capital (the accumulative gain from membership of a social network (Bourdieu, 1997)) but often play out

as disorderly interaction between a diverse set of actors (Landry et al., 2002; Vangen & Huxham, 2013).

To achieve a more ordered approach, we explore in this chapter the value of cocreation between the diverse actors in the NOREC consortium in their joint activity to improve services to children with disability in the Tanzanian context. We ask: who are best placed to be these cocreators? What permutation of cocreators is most useful for the innovation process required in this context? How can the conditions for cocreation be optimized to ensure that the best solutions are developed?

Funding organizations (such as NOREC, NORHED, and the EU) encourage permutations of cocreators, or the development of partnerships/consortia, that cross sectors of academic and non-academic institutions and nation-states. Their underlying assumptions are that putting international researchers and practice professionals in close physical proximity, during these inter-sector and international project student/staff exchanges, leads to useful knowledge exchange opportunities and enhances research-education development and international interactions. In this chapter, we critique the validity of these assumptions, maintaining that contact alone is not enough and that consideration should be given to the conditions of this contact (see Allport, 1959). We do so by exploring first *who has the responsibility* to be cocreators, i.e., an examination of the responsibility for the lives of children working with disability as distributed between many stakeholders. We specifically explore the responsibility of universities as educators, researchers, and facilitators of change. We then consider some of the challenges facing the cocreation processes between these actors and the conditions of contact between cocreators that mediate the social value these cooperations can deliver. In so doing we draw on our previous experience of working as a consortium of organizations serving other vulnerable population groups (COLAB).

DRAWING ON THE EXPERIENCES OF OTHER HETEROGENOUS CONSORTIA

Some of the European members of the NOREC project were also part of the COLAB consortium (Horizon 2020 funded CO-LAB MSCA-RISE project number 734536), a partnership of European researchers comprising seven universities and three criminal justice–related practice organizations from Norway, Finland, the UK, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Switzerland. The COLAB research focused on building effective models for collaboration between mental health and criminal justice services with the intention of having an impact on mental illness in the prisoner population and reducing reoffending rates. The consortium combined

multiple disciplines from academic and non-academic institutions, albeit all from the Global North, specifically Europe. COLAB was a space for inter-sector and international knowledge exchange operationalized through physical reciprocal secondments between academic and practice partner organizations. Here partners were distinguished by levels of research competence and experience on the one hand and an understanding of the practice setting on the other. We use our previous analysis of the functioning of this consortium (Hean et al., 2021) to explore some of the potential strategies to foster the cocreation process and promote social innovation within the NOREC consortium between stakeholders engaged with children with disability in Tanzania.

DISTRIBUTED RESPONSIBILITY

The choice of cocreators in any effective consortium working with children with disability may be considered through the lens of distributed responsibility. This lens can act as a guide to who should participate as well as what their role should be. Responsibility for any action or individual does not lie with a single stakeholder alone (Miller, 2001). Instead, the responsibility for the marginalized or vulnerable in society, such as a child with disability, is distributed among multiple parties (Miller, 2001). The individual themselves has responsibility; however, responsibility is also assigned by capacity, has cost, and is relational. The first and most obvious responsibility is of the person performing or committing a particular act. In our scenario, we look towards the child living with the disability themselves and their responsibility to participate in education and self-care. Capacity, however, both in terms of their age and physical/cognitive challenges, may limit this. Responsibility for the support of children with disability also lies with people who do have this capacity, the average citizen without physical and cognitive challenges. But capacity is also conferred to individuals by virtue of their training and professional status. This refers to the responsibility held by professionals such as teachers, social educators, and social workers to act in the interests of children with disability by virtue of their specialist knowledge in the field. Universities and other academic institutions also have a capacity responsibility, based on their competences in training/education and research. The NOREC project is an example of students and university staff in Norwegian and Tanzanian universities and a Tanzanian teacher training college taking up their responsibilities for vulnerable children in Tanzania based on their research and training competences. But we have argued elsewhere (Hean et al., 2021) that universities also have a more active and direct responsibility than objective observers and trainers: they also can play the role as facilitators of change. Universities in the NOREC consortium, for example,

have skills in the facilitation of bottom-up development work research or action/participatory research projects (Hean et al., 2021). These offer them the potential/capacity to effect change and innovation by facilitating organizational learning, collaboration, and innovation processes between stakeholders that may eventually lead to solutions to the complex problems faced by children with disability in the Tanzanian context.

At a more macro level, capacity is interpreted in terms of economic resources and research experience. In this regard, Global North countries (such as Norway) have a responsibility to support the development of services in Tanzania related to children with disability by virtue of their economic strengths and their longer history of research and educational development. It could be argued that as some of this capacity has come from an exploitation historically of the Global South, the Global North has a moral responsibility here also. That Norway is exercising some of this responsibility, at least at face value, is demonstrated by Tanzania being one of the biggest beneficiaries of foreign aid on the continent, especially from the Nordic countries (Assié-Lumumba, 2006). It can be discussed whether it is entirely an altruistic choice by Norway to shoulder this responsibility.

However, assigning responsibility by capacity does not always take into account its costs (Miller, 2001). Tanzanian teachers have the knowledge capacity to support children with disability, for example, but not the financial or time resource needed to manage the number of these pupils they encounter. Similarly, domestic commitments in Norway may override or limit Norwegian partners' ability to work with Tanzanian colleagues in the field. Lastly, researchers working in this practice field, especially if they are in an unfamiliar national context, are vulnerable physically and emotionally, which can limit their capacity to engage.

Lastly, responsibility is relational (Miller, 2001). In other words, those stakeholders closest to the child and who know them best have a responsibility for their care also. This includes the children's family and friends who can advocate and care for them. At a state level, Global South countries have a relational responsibility to develop better services for these children based on their deeper understanding of Tanzanian culture and structures.

Making explicit the distribution of responsibility across multiple stakeholders based on both capacity and relational dimensions will dictate the relevance of cocreators who need to be brought together and the role they play within any consortium intended to develop socially innovative solutions to the challenges faced by Tanzanian children living with a disability. It explains why both Tanzanian (relational responsibility) and Norwegian (capacity responsibility) institutions are partners in the NOREC consortium. We question, however, whether the capacity responsibility of the Tanzanian partners in terms of their skills in Afrocentric

education development, theories, and methods or the factors that limit the deployment of this capacity have been fully articulated.

BENEFITS OF CROSS-SECTOR INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIA

“Taking responsibility for” has an altruistic or moralistic flavour to its rhetoric. However, it is also important that all actors explicitly see the individual benefits for themselves as being part of the partnership/community of practice (Wenger et al., 2002). There are many recorded benefits of multi-sector and international consortia which include:

- Greater potential for innovation: studies of team working demonstrate that diverse interdisciplinary teams had greater potential for innovation, although these may be difficult places to work within, as cultures can clash (West et al., 2004).
- Greater insight into differing disciplinary, professional, and national priorities (Hean et al., 2021).
- An understanding and appreciation of the skills and potential of other stakeholders as collaborators, including the competences (e.g., methods and theoretical perspectives) that service users and other national researchers/professionals bring to the project (Hean et al., 2021; Munung et al., 2017).
- Personal development/competence of consortium members including cultural competences (Hean et al., 2021).
- Opportunity for further academic qualifications and job progression (Hean et al., 2021; Munung et al., 2017).
- Access to new populations and national settings to apply research and build knowledge (Munung et al., 2017).
- Opportunity to increase research outputs through co-publications, publications with enriched validity and public value (Hean et al., 2021).
- Access to alternative funding opportunities offered in different countries and sectors (Munung et al., 2017).
- A greater openness to inter-agency, inter-sector, and international working and the development of wider professional networks that arise from this (Hean et al., 2021).
- Longer-term impacts on the population of interest, i.e., improved child well-being, capacity of professionals, although the nature of this kind of impact is more difficult to measure.

Tapping into the social capital of these consortia is not without its challenges, however, and the above benefits are by no means guaranteed. It raises questions about how the benefits of Tanzanian–Nordic partnerships can be maximized and the challenges mitigated.

OPTIMAL FUNCTIONING OF A CONSORTIUM OF TANZANIAN AND NORWEGIAN PARTNERS

Funders of educational research and development (such as NOREC and the EU) show an awareness of the benefits of international consortia when stipulating the characteristics of stakeholders required in applications for their funding (e.g., an approved number of partners crossing sector and national contexts). However, less guidance is given on how the consortium should then be run and strategies for how benefits can be maximized and challenges overcome. The contact hypothesis, originating in the seminal work of Allport (1959), offers some insights here.

The contact hypothesis has been used to promote effective collaborations in numerous contexts between groups differentiated by ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, age, disability, working groups, and sexuality (e.g., Schofield & Sagar, 1977; Addeston, 1995; Beullens, 1997; Callaghan, 1997; Connolly & Maginn, 1999; Liebkind et al., 2000; Paolini, 2004; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The contact hypothesis proposes that positive intergroup relations are strengthened if direct contact between the two groups is established. However, the contact hypothesis elaborates that contact alone is not sufficient to ensure effective collaboration outcomes, and if unorchestrated, it may indeed be counterproductive. Instead, it is necessary that there are certain conditions in place during the contact if positive collaborations are to be established. The conditions are varied and are likely to vary between contexts (Allport, 1959). A range of conditions have been identified by followers of this contact approach which include:

- Each partner in the contact situation should have equal status.
- There is a cooperative atmosphere during the time of contact between partners.
- Partners work together on common goals.
- Each partner has the support from their individual institutions (institutional support).
- Partners are aware and appreciative of similarities and differences between themselves.
- Partners have positive expectations of the contact event.

- Members of each group should each perceive the representatives of the other group to be typical members of the group they represent (Allport, 1959; Barnes et al., 2006; Paluck et al., 2019).

Hean et al. (2021) used this contact hypothesis lens to explore each of the above conditions to frame their reflections on the challenges of academic/practice working partnerships in the COLAB consortium. Many of the lessons learnt there are likely to also apply to the NOREC consortium and Tanzanian–Norwegian collaborations. However, the cross-continental nature of the consortium adds extra dimensions. Whether the listed contact conditions are relevant in the NOREC consortium, the importance of one condition over the other, or the degree to which each condition is fulfilled or not are currently unexamined. This chapter begins this examination by reflecting on the first of these conditions: that of equal status. We do so because of the critique of inequalities in African–European/Global North–Global South collaborations that contrast with the stated core NOREC values of an equal reciprocal partnership.

UNEQUAL STATUS IN TANZANIAN–NORWEGIAN COLLABORATIONS

The question of equal status is relevant in any social interaction between different groupings of the population. In interprofessional working and training, for instance, the equal status of nurses and doctors is viewed as a fundamental mediator of team working and learning (Carpenter, 1995; Hean et al., 2006), and efforts are made in interprofessional education, for instance, to level out the differences in professional status that are later experienced in the workplace.

Similarly, in research consortia, the equal status of academic and non-academic institutions is a concern. In an examination of the equal status of academic and practice partners in COLAB, Hean et al. (2021) reflected that at an interpersonal level professionals engaged in practice and researchers perceived themselves to be of equal status. However, practice partners felt they were more the subjects of research rather than the co-designers of the study. This was despite efforts to engage all partners in the initial design of the partnership and later to establish a horizontal and collaborative leadership structure (VanVactor, 2012). A number of structural features accounted for this feeling of inequality. For example, differences in the numbers of practitioners from practice organizations (seven staff from three organizations) compared to researchers (23 research staff from seven research organizations) in the consortium structure meant the voices of practitioners were sometimes hard to hear. There were no established communication

channels through which goals could be shared and developed, initially, and unstructured meetings and generic requests for input were not sufficient for all voices to be equally heard in the study's design and implementation. Each member spoke of their personal competences they brought to the consortium, whether as a professional or a researcher, but they described the privileging of academic knowledge over knowledge from practice as problematic. This was attributed to joint activities being organized by academic partners and highly theoretical. This excluded practice partners who had very distinct experiences and spoke very different disciplinary languages. It meant that some practice partners often put their own expertise aside and adopted the identity of learner rather than expert. They then failed to share their own personal expertise with the rest of the consortium. The situation was exacerbated by a single Norwegian university coordinating the consortium, which contributed to the dominance of researcher knowledge in the consortium's activities. Inequalities in the consortium also arose from the hierarchies evident in participating institutions. For instance, institutional leaders signed up for the COLAB project, but more junior staff members, who were not engaged in this decision-making, were then expected to conduct the detail of work they had not signed up for personally. These individuals may be less motivated, be less empowered, or have less capacity to participate as initially intended (Hean et al., 2021).

Many of these experiences are likely to be shared with the Tanzanian–Norwegian NOREC consortium's current and future activity. During the initial activity, Patandi College and Molde University College were the only two institutions involved. However, where similar numbers of students were exchanged between institutions, there were fewer Tanzanian Patandi staff engaged in the exchange than Molde University College staff. This may compromise the level to which the Patandi voice is heard, especially when activities take place in Norway. Potential inequalities may also arise because of a perceived dominance of a university as a higher education institution over that of a college such as Patandi. This inequality is likely to increase in the expanded consortium which includes three more higher education institutions.

Further, there is a focus on the relational responsibility of Tanzanian researchers, i.e., their access and understanding of the local context. The consortium has less understanding of the alternative theories, education/research methods, and approaches that African partners bring to the table and which would expand the repertoire already contributed by the European partners. This might be attributed to a lack of equity between the Norwegian and Tanzanian partners, where the Tanzanian contingent has assumed the identity of learners, without offering up their own areas of expertise in exchange. A project conference in Arusha, Tanzania,

in 2020 overcame this to a degree. The writing of this current book is another means of readdressing the balance.

Although the NOREC project is likely to share some of the frustrations of the COLAB consortium, there are fundamental differences between the two consortia, namely, the intra-European nature of the COLAB consortium and the African–European nature of the NOREC collaboration. Implicit here is the potential impact of the colonial history of Tanzania and Africa as a whole by European powers on the consortium’s activity. A reciprocal exchange, without a decolonization analysis of this condition of contact, would not be sufficient in order to achieve the deeper level of social equality required between partners if future collaborations are to be optimized.

A DECOLONIZATION ANALYSIS: THE NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE

Although colonization has historical, political, and geographical dimensions, it is more broadly defined as the takeover of a local culture by that of a dominant external one, the latter of which may not be appropriate for the contextual setting and its inhabitants’ well-being. A distinction is drawn at this point between colonization (the rule of one nation over another) and coloniality that outlasts colonialism and describes the patterns of inequality and dominance that are reproduced and perpetuated long after the withdrawal of the colonizer (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Walton, 2018).

Although there is evidence of the colonization of Tanzania by a range of countries of Asian, Arab, and Bantu cultures, European influence and control began with Portugal in the late 15th century, followed by the German takeover in the late 18th century, and lastly British rule after the First World War. Tanzania regained its independence in 1962 under the leadership of Julius Nyerere, who followed a policy of socialism and self-sufficiency thereafter (Britannica, 2021).

Norway, as the European partner in the NOREC consortium, is not traditionally seen as a colonial power, having a self-identity founded on being one of the poorest countries in Europe until the late sixties or in fact on being a colony themselves of Sweden and Denmark (Kjerland & Bertelsen, 2014). Norwegian engagement is ostensibly driven by national humanitarian values and a history of mediation and peace-making activity. However, Kjerland and Bertelsen (2014) critique this identity as one that ignores the impact and possible dominance of Norwegian culture in other ways:

- Through Norwegian settlers and traders, subconsciously connecting with Norwegian traders and the dominant colonial power, rather than local community.

- The dominance of Norwegian maritime activity (at its pinnacle in the 1890s) and religious activity (e.g., in Tanzania beginning in the 1950s).
- The engagement in trade such as plantations, whaling, trading, and engagement in the oil industry (in Tanzania since the 1990s).
- The presence in Tanzania of Norwegian NGOs such as the Norwegian Church Aid, the Royal Norwegian Society for Development, and the Norwegian Refugee Council.

Coloniality, and the processes of decolonialization that seek to redress these influences, is more than simply an issue of self-governance and regaining physical freedom and control over one's own resources. It is an examination also of the "representations ... and images" (Kjerland & Bertelsen, 2021, p. 22) left behind by colonial influencers. Coloniality has three main dimensions: the coloniality of knowledge, of power, and of being (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Walton, 2018).

Coloniality of knowledge

Coloniality of knowledge is illustrated in the dominance of Global North perspectives, theories, and methods, course materials, and use of English as a non-mother tongue in the activity of educators and researchers in African settings (e.g., publications, funding applications, curricula, educational materials) and to the exclusion of local perspectives (Walton, 2018). Weltzien (Chapter 8, this volume) illustrates this point in greater depth by exploring how the research literature on the well-being of children with disability is dominated by Western norms that ignore the impact of local culture.

Coloniality of power

Coloniality of power is illustrated in the influence of economically stronger states over those with fewer resources. The provision of foreign aid is typical of this. Here wealthier countries and institutions provide aid but in doing so hold influence over which projects they sponsor and which they do not. This means they then directly and indirectly impact the receivers' national activity and internal national policies (Walton, 2018). In other words, funders, by deciding which international projects to sponsor, direct the priorities of beneficiary (Assié-Lumumba, 2006). This is particularly relevant for Tanzania as the recipient of Norwegian development aid (NOK 373.7 million in 2017), with the Tanzanian public sector as the main partner for cooperation (<https://www.norad.no/en/front/countries/africa/tanzania/>). NOREC, therefore, in funding the work of the NOREC consortium, has

directed a range of activities pertaining to inclusive education and other aspects related to children living with disability in Tanzania, albeit that the engagement of Tanzania partners in the design of the project may have been stipulated by the funder as an important assessment criterium.

These funding systems can also set up a benefactor–beneficiary relationship between states that may transfer to relations between partners in the consortium. Hereby, the voice of the donor country (Norway) becomes privileged over that of the receiver country (Tanzania) in the consortium’s activity.

Differentials in economic strength between partner countries can be problematic not only because of any donor/receiver hierarchy but also because the stronger economic power may lack an empathic understanding of the challenges of the other. In a comparison of NORAD-funded projects in sub-Saharan Africa with similar interventions supported by the Cuban state, Breidlid (2013a, 2013b) critiques the Norwegian-funded interventions and their contribution to global education architecture as perpetuating a domination of Western philosophy. In contrast, he describes a more context-relevant Cuban influence on global education. This he believes arises from the ability of Cuba, as a country with limited economic resources itself, to understand empathically the needs of countries they support. Further, he attributes their success to their avoidance of the uncritical transfer of Cuban education models to their partner-developing countries, since collaborations are preceded by a thorough examination of the receiver country’s problems and context. The latter he attributes to the grounding of Cuba’s educational discourse in a counter-hegemonic, anti-capitalist ideology. He points out, however, that Cuba’s “socialist orientation and their lack of economic success, at least from a capitalist perspective, is less attractive to the elites and decision makers in the Southern partner countries” (Breidlid, 2013b, p. 159). But this aside, Cuba’s non-colonial, counter-hegemonic philosophy and similar economic status means the power differentials between partners are reduced and the contact condition of “equal status” between partners more easily achieved.

Lastly, at a project level, differentials in financial and time resources mean that Tanzanian and Norwegian collaborators in research consortia such as the NOREC project are not entering the activity of the consortium on a level playing field. As summarized by Assié-Lumumba (2006):

The scarcity of resources and its numerous social constraints tends to leave little time for the innovative impulse to be stimulated. Academics have to struggle to secure the means of living, as salaries lose their buying power, are irregularly paid, or are actually cut down, and cannot carry out their duties in a routine manner. The high student-to-teacher ratios tend to exacerbate their problem.

Coloniality of being

The coloniality of being relates to the taken for granted images within the psyche of the former colony that harken back to the influence of the previous colonizing power. Walton (2018), for example, talks of the presence of school uniforms, registration, and graduation ceremonies in South African education as being reminiscent of the colonial influence and perspective on educational systems. The norms and values that frame the leadership and division of labour, that might be subject to a coloniality of being within the NOREC consortium, remain unexamined.

WAYS FORWARD AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary there are a variety of challenges facing Norwegian–Tanzanian collaborations such as the NOREC project, challenges that may impact the quality and quantity of innovation the consortium can deliver. We end this chapter with some of the strategies that could address specifically the contact condition of equal status. Equality of partners could be achieved through the following ways:

Consideration of the disparities in number and size of participating institutions

Aakjær (2018) suggests that where one partner is in danger of dominating, there may be an argument for greater numbers of the less dominant group to be included in the consortium. We reflect then on the need for an increased ratio of Tanzanian to Norwegian partners, particularly organizations working directly with children with disability (NGOs, teacher training colleagues). We recommend that a greater number of Tanzanian staff and Tanzanian-led organizations be included in the exchanges especially.

Improving awareness of national and institutional priorities and constraints

Each partner should make their specific needs explicit, and the ways to achieve these should be carefully negotiated by the consortium members in such a way that each partner's needs and values are uncompromised. This means that no single partner's priorities are privileged over another's but that a third way is found through which neither party need compromise on key values and needs (Hean et al., 2021). An awareness of each other's working constraints is also important

as it means partners, if mutually aware of these, can work together to accommodate them. Walton (2018), talking about cowriting between partner institutes, describes their experiences of the differences in the flexibility and time available in the workplans of African and European academics engaged in this cooperation. This was overcome by their project introducing writing retreats for authors where African staff were able to gain the space and time they needed to complete their writing commitments

Improving awareness of key competences/interests within the consortium

Partners should be made aware of the importance of social innovation, the necessity for interdisciplinary and international perspectives to this process and the equal value of these, and the importance of articulating each member's competences and its contribution. This should especially include the theoretical and methodological skills/capacity that the Tanzanian partners bring to the table rather than only their relational contribution (i.e., knowing the population and context). Similarly, researchers in the consortium should reconsider their role in the NOREC consortia that go beyond the generation of new knowledge and being neutral/objective bystanders and instead consider a value-driven and more active stance in which they facilitate social innovation processes/action research type projects as well. Making explicit these competences and, leading on from this, roles and responsibilities could include discussion on who is best placed to conduct data collection, design curricula, and make choices of which methods to choose that might be best suited for the Tanzanian context. For instance, it might be that Tanzanian colleagues are better placed to design, collect, and analyse data on children with disabilities, while Norwegian partners use their skills for innovation and the facilitation of social innovation events and Tanzanian colleagues choose the means and content of data collection or solutions within these events. The consortium should avoid, however, falling into patterns of some African-European consortia (Munung et al., 2017) where local researchers collect data, but European researchers analyse and publish the results. Although there will be variations in research/development experience, it is important that all partners are able to gain from the cooperation. Ndlovu Gatsheni (2013) discusses the challenges of breaking down these patterns and the redistribution of roles in African-European partnerships, not least because African partners can also be locked into colonial ways of thinking and lose faith in European colleagues if the Europeans favour a more democratic approach and do not take an authoritative role in the cooperation.

Encouraging Afro European reciprocity and making explicit the mutual benefit to both national states, organizations, and individuals

A key condition of effective communities of practice (Wenger et al., 2002), a community that learns from each other as they work together, is that the benefit of being part of this learning community is made explicit to its members. As a community of practice, NOREC members need to be clear of the benefits partners accrue by being part of this partnership. By all partners being seen to benefit, the disempowering receiver-giver dynamic is likely to be broken down. For example, consortium members might discuss what Norway as a state gets out of funding this project (trade advantages, regional stability) or the advantage for Molde University College (e.g., testing a curriculum model in a novel population). There are some inroads already in establishing a sense of the reciprocal exchange during which Patandi students visit Molde University College as well as the reverse. This could be taken a step further, for instance, if there is examination of how current practices in Tanzania can inform the current Norwegian Social Educator Curriculum, offering Norwegian educators particular insights perhaps into working with marginalized and vulnerable populations.

Creating a safe space for consortium activity

The vulnerability of all participating in organizational change must be acknowledged, and special attention should be paid to researchers who are new to the national context. This is not only physical vulnerability when visiting each other's countries but the vulnerability when working at interdisciplinary and national interfaces that are known to be challenging places to engage within and facilitate but where levels of trust and democratic values should be encouraged (Darsø, 2012).

Ongoing evaluation/reflections on the consortium and its social innovation processes

Following on from this, there is a need to evaluate the process of team working and social innovation taking place within the consortium on an ongoing basis. Hean et al. (2021), for example, explored COLAB members' experiences using the contact hypothesis as theoretical underpinning. Examining the key conditions of contact, equity especially, at regular intervals through the lifetime of the consortium allowed for better mutual understanding of project deliverables and milestones. Similar evaluations of the NOREC project are required to specifically

explore whether both European and African partners felt themselves to be equal partners in educational development with an equal say on path development.

Part of the evaluation should be an explicit and ongoing examination of the consortium's discourse exploring the "representations ... and images" in their previous and current activity, i.e., the degree to which the Global South, including Norwegian trade and religious activity, has affected or continues to have an impact on Tanzanian society, in particular on the way inclusive education is delivered and the appropriateness of this influence. It would mean examining the underlying elements of knowledge and power and the coloniality of being in the interplay between African and European partners. They both need to consciously decide to make the familiar strange, to disrupt current perspectives of how Afro European consortia should work and also about how children with disability and inclusive education should be delivered (Aakjær, 2018). Members should look explicitly for instances where the NOREC consortium has inadvertently privileged the voice of the researcher over practitioner knowledge or the Norwegian over the Tanzanian perspective. Part of this might involve re-examining the idea of importing a social educator programme into the Tanzanian context and, instead, as Munung et al. (2017) state, evaluating the importance of building capacity (e.g., research skills, educational programme design) amongst Tanzanian researchers and curriculum developers in the Tanzanian context.

The above would constitute an active decolonization process that could confront any dominant discourse of the previous colonial powers that continues to direct current practices in such a way that local cultures are ignored (Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2018). This decolonization process could focus first on the decolonization of knowledge: members of the consortium, in all the phases of their activity (proposal writing, publication, etc.), should examine the theories and methods they are deploying, exploring, and critiquing. They should attempt to balance the use of northern perspectives by seeking to include or privilege Africanist approaches since these may be more valid. Researchers and educators should be cogent of the research literature in their publications, applications, and course materials to ensure they make an explicit effort to include the African perspective within these. The lack of material in the local languages and an absence of published material about the Tanzanian field may be a challenge. In seeking to include more Africanist approaches, there is scope, for example, to explore the concept of Ubuntu (or Ujamaa in Tanzania). Ubuntu describes the Nguni Bantu African philosophy of collective responsibility, in keeping with ideas of inclusiveness, community cohesion, equity and equality, and a common sense of humanity. This is a philosophy that hinges on the interrelatedness of all individuals in society and the importance of one to the other. An examination of the Ubuntu concept and

its application in the Tanzanian special/inclusive education field is now required, mirroring similar analyses of inclusive education in other Bantu-dominated countries (e.g., Muthukrishna & Engelbrecht, 2018; Pather, 2019; Walton, 2021). Such analyses, applying the values of Ubuntu philosophy, present children with a disability as individuals with a role and contribution to make to Tanzanian society and as such as deserving of dignity, respect, and support like any other member of the community. Hence, Ubuntu could potentially be used as an Africanist approach to combat some of the entrenched attitudes that stigmatise and ridicule people with disabilities. It could help to counter the negative myths about disabilities being the result of the wrongdoing of the individual or their parents. The Ubuntu philosophy has global resonance with wider ideas about the inclusion of children with a disability as spelt out in the Salamanca Statement (1994), for example, related to the importance of inclusive education and including children with a disability in education. There is further scope also to compare and contrast Ubuntu to concepts with an origin in the Global North such as concepts of social capital (Bourdieu, 1997) and distributed responsibility (Miller, 2001). Both the philosophy of Ubuntu and the concept of distributed responsibility suggest that numerous stakeholders have a responsibility to society and the well-being of its members.

The NOREC consortium provides a means through which this responsibility, as well as the right to participate, can be exercised and as such should include children with a disability, their parents, and Tanzanian members of the public, as well as teachers, professionals from the public, private, and voluntary spheres, as well as researchers and educators from higher education institutions. Together they can act to exercise the collective responsibility Ubuntu promotes. The use of the Ubuntu term is not without criticism however, as it is in danger of taking on a utopian flavour and is difficult to operationalize in reality, especially in larger communities (Walton, 2018).

The NOREC consortium should also explore processes of decolonization related to power, the power of external funding bodies being a particular point in question. Although true of any funding body whether intra or inter-European, the NOREC project represents the influence of a Norwegian funder over Tanzanian national activity, through which funding is provided and decisions are made about which projects gets funded and which ones do not. Consequently, they exert a measure of control over the internal policies of Tanzania related to children with a disability that are potentially incompatible with the Tanzanian reality and difficult to implement in terms of the human and financial resources available to Tanzanians on the ground. It is important therefore that Tanzanian representatives sit on the board of key external funders such as NOREC in order to bridge

the gap between Norwegian priorities and those of the local community. Further, as funders' decisions dictate the direction of travel, the consortium could dilute Norwegian influence by exploring at least partially matched funding from pan-African funding bodies such as the Council for the Development of Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA).

Finally, in seeking to overcome the coloniality of being, the consortium should encourage themselves, other stakeholders, and society in general to reflect on the status quo in current Tanzanian society and to explore and challenge what is seen as normal and what is viewed as deviant. The remit of this is a broader societal problem beyond that of the consortium and its members alone and points to a need for the wider involvement of the public, other researchers, teachers, etc., in the consortium's decolonization activities.

The above decolonization processes should be an explicit task for someone to manage within the NOREC consortium. The need for such dedicated roles is raised by Darsø (2012) when exploring the structures of a team that promote the innovation process, structures in which shared understanding and positive relations between disciplines and nationalities are promoted. She advocates the creation of roles within the team to foster these, including responsibility explicitly to accomplish the following:

- Nurture relations between participants (e.g., trust-building), paying particular attention to the methods used for communication channels between partners and methods through which project goals are negotiated.
- Pinpoint what is not known within the project's activity.
- Stimulate the group to ask questions, to disrupt current ways of thinking, and to propose ideas (ignorance).
- Encourage the group to describe and illustrate information and knowledge in different ways (concepts).
- Establish the current knowledge of participants and the contribution this knowledge makes to the task (knowledge) (Huxom & Vangen, 2000; Vangen & Huxham, 2013; Hean et al., 2015).

The NOREC consortium would benefit from these roles. However, because of the African–European nature of the partnership, we should also promote an additional leadership role in this Afro European partnership that focuses on achieving equity amongst team members, especially as it pertains to coloniality. These leaders would need to encourage members to re-examine the images and discourse they employ and disrupt their views on what Afro European relations should look like.

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