

sensitivities inherent in foreign involvement with a wide range of government and non-governmental institutions, special preparation and training of N-S collaborators to ensure adequate knowledge and sensitivity to local cultural and political realities is probably called for.

### **Partnership and local ownership**

The trend toward participatory development has a side that concerns the outgoing N-S collaborator very personally. The World Bank's 1991 study mentioned above stressed that, "for success, a [development project] needs to be viewed as a country's own, and nationals need to participate in its design and development."<sup>27</sup> Although this seems obvious, a variety of problems have made it difficult to achieve. Without a sense of local ownership and participation in a genuine two-way partnership — not only on the part of the immediate southern collaborator but also by the host government and institution and even stakeholders in the broader society — the commitment and enthusiasm necessary for sustainable local acquisition of skills are unlikely to exist. This principle of partnership and local ownership should permeate development activities from the concept and planning stages right through to the person-to-person relationships of N-S collaborations. To avoid the often well-meaning but destructive self-image of Western colleagues as experts, there to be consulted and heeded, requires some professional modesty and much cross-cultural sensitivity.

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27. Thomas, Vinod, *op. cit.*, p. 8.