

- an overwhelming concentration on the public sectors of developing countries, that is, both government departments and publicly-owned enterprises (“parastatals”).

The above does not imply that there have not been variations on these features in the past, nor that all features have been adhered to in practice — in particular, there have been many deviations from the training or “transfer of skills” purpose. While the on-the-job training methodology of TC is not by itself a problem, the way it has worked in practice has been widely criticized over the years by both developing countries and independent observers. The fundamental problem of technical cooperation as it has worked in practice is arguably that to be effective it depends on the presence of advisors with certain interpersonal skills and sensitivities, and on counterparts with certain motivations -both of which have often been in short supply. Many Western advisors have held attitudes which made the relationship with their counterparts one of “expert and apprentice” rather than of working partners and mutual learners. And many host country counterparts have been indifferent about the project or preoccupied with other job or family priorities. The result was that these relationships were often characterized by substantial distance, minimal understanding, and limited trust between the northern and southern parties.

It would be possible to change some of the seven traditional features of TC without violating the essence of TC: the use of expatriate experts working in a developing country to help counterparts acquire developmentally-relevant skills and knowledge. For example, one alternative that is emerging to the traditional project model is that of “twinning”, sometimes called “institutional cooperation”.³¹ It

31. Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), *Strategies for Bilateral Development Cooperation. Part II: Basic Principles*. (NORAD, Oslo, 1992), p. 38.