



# ACCC INTERNATIONAL

The International Magazine of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges

Vol. 11, No. 1, 2006 ISSN 1192-1846

**Risk**

**Management**

---

**Canadian**

**College**

**Partnership**

**Program**



**Editor-in-Chief:**

Lorna Malcolmson

**French Editor:**

Debby Wilson

**Editorial Assistant:**

Judy Barbeau

**Translator:**

Liane Alessi

Tom Donovan

**Printer:**

Tina & Company

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Greatest Risk: Doing Nothing	3
Risk Assessment and Management in International Education Service & Partnership Projects	4
Working Abroad - Risky Business?	9
A Partnership Experiment - Haiti National Health Project	13
CCPP Update	15
Resources and Events	16

*ACCC International*, published twice per year, provides current information on the international activities of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges. For information on items appearing in this publication, contact the Editor at 746-2222, ext. 3123 or e-mail: [accinternational@acc.ca](mailto:accinternational@acc.ca). The production of this publication is made possible through the generous financial support of the Government of Canada provided through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). ACCC is a non-share capital corporation existing pursuant to the laws of Canada.

This publication can be found on the Internet at [www.acc.ca](http://www.acc.ca)

*ACCC International*  
Association of Canadian  
Community Colleges  
200 - 1223 Michael Street N.  
Ottawa, Ontario K1J 7T2  
CANADA

**Publications Mail, Agreement No. 40008834**

# The Greatest Risk ■

## Doing Nothing

In this day and age, few international initiatives are conducted without risk. In fact, the risks are becoming increasingly numerous. The naysayers among us will say that these risks been well calculated, while those who err on the side of prudence will say that we must always be prepared for what cannot be foreseen or calculated. Some 40 years after the emergence of the inevitable movement toward globalization, the exact opposite of what seemed predictable at that time has occurred: what was supposed to simplify international relations has instead made them more complex and in many instances more dangerous.

Risk factors are on the increase. While intranational and international tensions have escalated, the need for international cooperation has become greater and more complex. Organizations have adapted. Risk prediction and management have become an essential part of the decision-making process, to the point where the notion of multi-year project planning is being replaced with a more iterative approach. The fact is, we do not know when a political or economic crisis will occur, much less a pandemic, the bankruptcy of a major corporation, a natural or ecological disaster, or an ecological, political or economic disruption. We must be prepared for any eventuality.

Without presuming to consider the issue of risk management in its entirety, this edition of *ACCC International* examines various aspects of this important topic, with the conviction that now more than ever, it must be part of an ongoing process of analysis in the development and implementation of an international development project. Managing risks effectively means first evaluating and determining various risk factors; it means preparing for risk and helping all of one's partners to do the same *together*. Perhaps even more importantly, effective risk management involves the acceptance that we must adapt to new critical conditions as they emerge; the most unpredictable condition being how you and I, as humans, will react. If there are any dimensions in the realm of risk management over which we still have a measure of control, it is our own reactions. In a spirit of cooperation, it is therefore incumbent upon us to prepare ourselves and our partners. Conversely, doing nothing remains the greatest risk of all.

Bernard Lachance  
Vice-President  
ACCC Partnership Programs



## **RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT**

### **IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE & PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS**

**By Susan Isaac  
Project Support Officer  
Canadian College Partnership Program**

*“The hope that one can produce a taxonomy, evaluation, and finally a technical fix to the problems of risk is in substance as ambitious as the program of putting all of human experience and value onto a scale of measurement for mathematical or political manipulation.”<sup>1</sup>*

In 2004, the Canadian College Partnership Program of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) commissioned a study on Risk Assessment and Management Guidelines for International Service and Project Management. The aim of the study was to provide guidance in the understanding of risk allied with international activities; suggest a cohesive process for proactively systematizing risk assessment and management; develop a generic plan, which covers the essential components in a manner compatible with accepted legal and insurance practices; produce a sound reference document; and, help harmonize procedures among institutions.

This article is a brief summary and is not intended to be comprehensive in the examination of such as broad topic of risk management. However, it does intend to explain the relevancy of particular issues and procedures in the interest of colleges and institutes and their partners involved in international education projects and services.

#### **DEFINITIONS**

**Risk:**

The chance of something happening that will have an impact upon objectives. It is measured in terms of consequences and likelihood.

[www.riskmanagement.qld.gov.au/info/guide/gls.htm](http://www.riskmanagement.qld.gov.au/info/guide/gls.htm)

**Risk Analysis:**

A systematic use of available information to determine how often specified events may occur and the magnitude of their consequences.

[www.riskmanagement.qld.gov.au/info/guide/gls.htm](http://www.riskmanagement.qld.gov.au/info/guide/gls.htm)

**Risk Management:**

The process of measuring, or assessing risk and then developing strategies to manage the risk. In general, the strategies employed include transferring the risk to another party, avoiding the risk, reducing the negative affect of the risk, and accepting some or all of the consequences of a particular risk.

[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Risk\\_management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Risk_management)

*or*

The identification, assessment, allocation, mitigation and monitoring of risks associated with a project.

[www.vgpb.vic.gov.au/CA256C450016850B/0/073B1893942AC1C9CA256C5C0006AC1D?OpenDocument#R](http://www.vgpb.vic.gov.au/CA256C450016850B/0/073B1893942AC1C9CA256C5C0006AC1D?OpenDocument#R)

*or*

The systematic process of managing an organization's risk exposures to achieve its objectives in a manner consistent with public interest, human safety, environmental factors, and the law. It consists of the planning, organizing, leading, coordinating, and

controlling activities undertaken with the intent of providing an efficient pre-loss plan that minimizes the adverse impact of risk on the organization's resources, earnings, and cash flows.

[www.netcomuk.co.uk/~rtusler/project/princip.html](http://www.netcomuk.co.uk/~rtusler/project/princip.html)

## PROJECT RISK MANAGEMENT

Every project is subject to risks. Whether you are organizing a small social event in your home community or a complex training project with an international partner, there are outside determinants that can affect the outcome of the project. Except in a laboratory setting, projects are not implemented in a controlled environment. They are subject to a broad range of external forces – political, economic, human, environmental, legal or regulatory, infrastructural and financial.

The challenge for a Project Manager is to accurately identify the events or circumstances which might occur that would prevent the project from achieving its objectives (**risk identification**); determine how often these events or circumstances may occur and the magnitude of their consequences (**risk analysis**); and, decide how to respond to these events or circumstances (**risk control**).

When the project is international in scope, risk management can become a greater challenge. An overseas project can be confronted with events we may have difficulty fathoming in a Canadian community and a response that is appropriate in St. John's or Lethbridge may not work in San Paolo or Lilongwe. However, Canadian colleges and institutes have a long history of effectively managing international projects – using the knowledge gained from their experience and from that of other Canadian organizations working internationally and overseas partners and colleagues.

## RISK IDENTIFICATION

Ideally, risk identification (the first step in Risk Management) should be undertaken by individuals as

close to the project site as possible. People within each risk area generally best understand their own risk types, sources of risk and the historical effects. Project partners bring their knowledge of their environment to the project planning process and can identify potential risks to project success. However, there is a caution in depending solely on partner input for risk identification – events seen as “normal” in an overseas environment may actually pose a risk to project success. Frequent electricity disruptions, inability to travel to certain regions of the country during, for example, the rainy season or family/social responsibilities taking precedence over work responsibilities may be considered just part of the reality of life in a given country – and thus not considered as a risk by a foreign partner institution.

It is thus critical to make explicit the important assumptions upon which the project design is based. The veracity of these assumptions should be checked through a Risk Environment Audit. This audit could be conducted by one or a combination of the following:

- (a) the overseas partner institution (probably the most cost-effective);
- (b) Canadian project staff going abroad (usually too expensive, unless built into scheduled missions already funded);
- (c) Known and trusted expatriates living or working in the overseas country (moderately effective, depending on their understanding of the project's needs, the partnership between the institutions and the overseas environment).

The Risk Environment Audit should consider both internal and external factors which could have substantial influence on the outcomes of the project. Examples include:

### Internal

- Physical Infrastructure: availability and/or reliability of electricity; availability of

*cont'd on page 6*

*cont'd from page 5*

classrooms or laboratories; transport to project sites (availability, reliability, time required), equipment (availability, age, spare parts).

- Human Resources: availability of staff/students for training, skill level of staff (including literacy skills and language skills in English/French), staff turn-over.
- Policy Framework: financial management systems of the partner institution; institutional commitment to project goals.
- Innovation Tolerance: openness to change; project “champion”.

### External

- Political: level of stability; potential for political change (either through elections or violent means); impact of international political changes (e.g. new government in Canada and change in foreign policy); ease/difficulty of obtaining visas (both for partners’ travel to Canada and CIC travel to overseas country).
- Economic: international and national markets; changes in exchange rate.
- Social: major demographic and social trends; levels of citizen engagement.
- Environmental: major climatic events (hurricanes, monsoons); progressive environmental change (rainfall levels, global warming).
- Legal and Regulatory: existence of laws that may facilitate or hinder progress towards the project’s objectives; possibility of regulatory change.
- Technological: new and emerging technologies.

The internal and external factors that can influence the outcomes of a project can be looked at from either a positive or a negative perspective: as assumptions that conditions will exist (e.g. electricity will be available, the partner institution’s Board endorses the project) or as constraints (e.g. difficulty in obtaining visas to Canada, change in senior management at partner

institution). As an essential component of project (and risk) management, the Project Management Team needs to ensure that the positive conditions continue to exist and that strategies are developed to eliminate or minimize the constraints. Risk identification must be on-going throughout the life of the project – conditions that exist during project design may be unlikely to exist three or four years later.

### RISK ANALYSIS

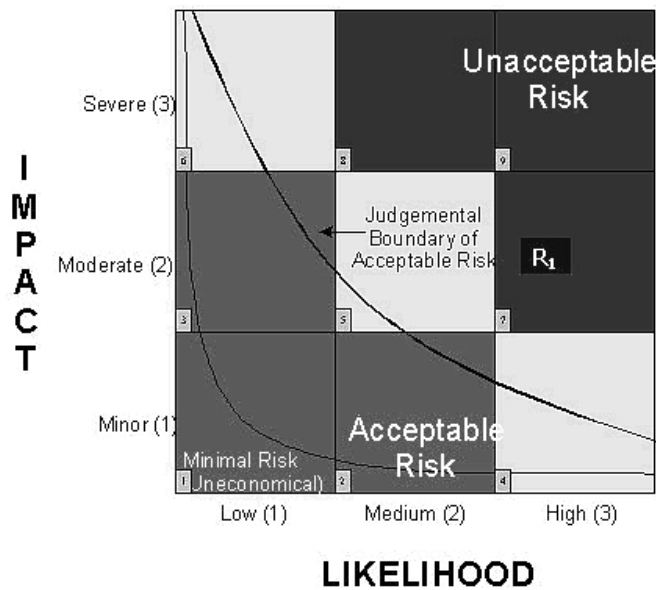
All risks are not created equal. Risks may be classified as “Extreme,” “High,” “Medium” or “Low,” based on an assessment of the probability the risk will occur and its impact on the project. Plotting risks on a matrix is one way to make this assessment, considering the probability or likelihood that the event will occur on one axis against the impact of the event on the other. Impact can include the effect of an event on the budget, the timeliness of project completion or the ability of the project to meet the users’ requirements (both the partner’s and the funder’s expectations).

This visual plotting of identified risks allows the Project Management Team to determine which risks:

- need immediate attention (high probability/high impact) – the risk needs to be neutralized, mitigated or completely avoided;
- can likely be avoided (low probability/high impact) – plans must be made to avoid encountering the risk or prevent it from interfering with the project. Risks in these quadrants require monitoring and contingency planning;
- are tolerable but require monitoring and contingency planning (high probability/low impact);
- are broadly tolerable and are not worth any investment of resources to alter (low probability/low impact).

In analyzing risks associated with a project, two additional dimensions need to be considered:

- object of the risk: who or what would be impacted by the event – the health and safety of people, the integrity of the project, project results, material or real property, institutional reputation
- institutional ability to control the risk: high (operational decisions – e.g. can defer travel until the dry season), medium (decisions involving more than one actor – e.g. although it is the decision of the Embassy to provide a visa or not, the Canadian college or institute and developing country partner can consider the probability of obtaining (or being denied) a visa in selecting who should be considered for training in Canada), low (natural disaster, governmental decree).



Source: Wiltshire Consulting's Risk Scorecard Toolkit. Risk Scorecard is a Registered Trade Mark of Wiltshire Consulting Inc. The Risk Scorecard Toolkit has been provided with the permission of Wiltshire Consulting Inc.

Even with a rational method of assessing the probability and potential impact of a risk, human judgment is still involved – the Project Management

Team determines where to plot a risk on the matrix, based on their best knowledge. This judgment needs to be corroborated by as much objective data as possible, and the objective data itself needs to be supported by subjective intuition based on experience.

## RISK CONTROL

The total elimination of risk is rarely possible. Rather, the Project Management Team needs to develop strategies on how the project will respond to risks. It is not enough to identify and analyze the risks to the project – risk control is needed as the final step in the Risk Management process. There are a range of options that can be followed:

**Risk Acceptance:** A decision to accept or live with a risk, rather than trying to mitigate it. Note that this is a decision – the consequences of the risk are known and can be accommodated in the project.

**Risk Avoidance:** A decision not to become involved in a risk situation (i.e. to choose another path, which does not encounter that risk). For example, the project may decide to relocate to another region of the country to avoid localized violence.

**Risk Mitigation:** Actions taken to reduce either the probability or the impact of an event or circumstance.

A project which encountered communication problems and difficulties delivering training activities due to electricity disruptions purchased a generator for the overseas college.

To mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on a project in Africa, the project management team has increased the number of people who participate in training activities in order to build the capacity of a maximum number of individuals. The project does not focus expertise in only a few people, given the potential risk that some staff will die of AIDS.

*cont'd on page 8*

*cont'd from page 7*

**Risk Transfer:** A decision to share the risk or transfer it to delivery partners.

**Emergency Planning:** Given the international nature of Canadian College Partnership Program projects and the potential risks involved in international travel, colleges and institutes should have in place processes and procedures for responding to emergencies which may arise. These would include:

- Establishing an International Emergency Committee whose composition, mandate and decision-making authority are predetermined.
- Developing an Emergency Contact List and Hierarchy which is given to each traveller prior to departure.
- Developing Emergency Steps to follow in the host country or in transit. Each traveller is made aware of these steps prior to departure.
- Maintaining a file on each traveller regarding his/her itinerary, hotel reservations, passport/visa information, health insurance and other essential documentation taken overseas.

## CONCLUSION

Risk management is an on-going process throughout the life of a project. It involves making decisions about how to respond to events and occurrences which could prevent the project from achieving its objectives. A good risk management decision:

- i) addresses a clearly articulated risk issue;
- ii) emerges from a decision-making process that elicits the views of all stakeholders, so that different technical assessments, public values, knowledge and perceptions are considered;
- iii) results from a careful analysis of the weight of objective as well as experienced-based subjective evidence that supports conclusions about a problem's potential risks;

- iv) stems from an examination of a range of risk management options;
- v) mitigates risk cost-effectively;
- vi) resonates as politically, socially, legally and culturally sensitive;
- vii) allows for effective, expeditious, flexible implementation with stakeholder support; and,
- viii) facilitates an iterative risk management process that can be revised when significant new information becomes available.

The alternate to Risk Management is Crisis Management or dealing with the repercussions of failing to identify the risks to a project and deciding how to respond. Building Risk Management into Project Management increases the likelihood that the project will avoid crises situations, realize its objectives and meet the expectations of the Canadian college or institute, the overseas partner, ACCC and other funding agencies.

For more information on the Canadian College Partnership Program Study on Risk Assessment and Management Guidelines for International Service and Project Management, contact Marie-Josée Fortin, Manager at tel.: 613-746-2222 ext. 3137.

## Endnotes

1. J.R. Ravetz, "Public Perceptions of Acceptable Risk as Evidence for their Cognitive, Technical and Social Structure" in Technological Risk: Its Perceptions and Handling in the European Community, ed. Meinhof Dierkes, Sam Edwards, Rob Coppock (Cambridge, Mass.: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain; and Koningstein/Ts: verlag Anton Hain, 1980, pp. 46-47.

# WORKING ABROAD

## Risky Business ?

**François Allard**  
**President**  
**Collège Montmorency**

Life certainly involves its fair share of risks – for individuals and for organizations. Every gesture, action and decision is a risky enterprise, one that can lead to mixed results. Can risk be avoided? The answer is obviously “No.” Whenever possible, risk must be recognized and managed using whatever means available. In short, as Rudyard Kipling said: “Always take the maximum amount of risks with the maximum precautions.”

A college or institute that decides to work abroad, say outside of its usual context, runs certain risks that it has to fully understand. In the following article, I will attempt to identify those risks that I believe are among the most significant and provide specific risk mitigation or avoidance strategies.

### **Risks in the Partnership or Project Development Phase**

The greatest risk in the partnership or project development phase is that of watching all of our efforts – in terms of time, money and energy – amount to negligible or no results.

This means that we invested in projects that stood only a slim chance of being completed or of convincing funders. Can we afford this kind of failure? On occasion, perhaps, but not too often, as a rapid loss of team motivation can result and interest among those who are less committed can drop dramatically. The following recommendations make it possible to considerably increase the chances of success in the development phase of projects.

**Clearly identify our internal capacities, i.e. departments and sectors that are able to carry out and support international projects** When international projects are implemented, the level of uncertainty is much higher than it is for local projects. Therefore, it is important to select sectors of excellence where resources are plentiful, flexible and highly adaptable. Equally important is ensuring that these resources in place are committed and can contribute to these kinds of projects (e.g. implementation conditions,

availability for travel abroad, intercultural capacity).

**Adequately identify potential (or probable!) sources of funding for projects—an excellent project without funding is no better than a good idea**

Potential funders are relatively limited in number. In general, they consist of the following agencies: the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the World Bank, Regional Development Banks and other national or International Financial Institutions. Consult documentation and Web sites for information on these agencies and contact persons in charge of the regions and countries targeted. All funders have priorities and strategic orientations as well as preferred target countries and intervention sectors. These aspects must be thoroughly reviewed and, if possible, travel should be arranged to meet persons in charge. It is well worth devoting time and energy to this stage.

*cont'd on page 10*

*cont'd from page 9*

**Carefully select the region or country targeted by the exploratory mission**

Once sources of funding have been identified and key intervention sectors have been validated, you can safely say, “We’re on the right track.” CIDA has identified 25 countries where two-thirds of its bilateral aid will be concentrated. In terms of partnerships, some 120 countries may be beneficiaries. The institution intent on doing business with the CIDA must have this information. It is also important to validate the dominant intervention language used by internal resources: are we able to speak the language of the country where we wish to intervene, and do we have the competence to draft the necessary documents? This element is critical and should not be taken lightly. As Diderot so aptly put it: “We risk as much by believing too much as by not believing enough.” The cultural gap should also be closely considered. For example, it is pointless to contemplate a health initiative in a country where religious fundamentalism requires that treatment be administered by members of the same sex if the internal department concerned is essentially unisex; this would clearly be a waste of time.

**Carefully validate needs and priorities**

The development mission must be extremely well planned from the outset. The needs of countries targeted by international aid are immense and diverse. They may

lack infrastructure, materials, equipment and expertise. Thus, regardless of what you offer partners in these countries, chances are very good that the answer will be “Yes.” Also be mindful not to direct or guide discussions toward what *you* would like to see them accomplish. Needs and priorities must be consistent with the priorities of funders but also – and never forget this – with those of recipient countries. These priorities are usually identified in official documents. Examples of pertinent documents include Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, national strategic plans for sectoral development (health, education etc.) Most international funders also require that projects be compatible with UN Millennium Development Goals. To avoid repetition, which may work against your project, it is strongly advised that you consult lists of projects completed or underway in the countries targeted to encourage complementarities and relevance.

**Choose your partners carefully and specify the commitments of each from the outset**

During a development mission you meet many potential partners. All or almost all are keenly interested in what you have to offer, as you usually come with the expertise they are looking for and the funding needed to complete a project. In the majority of cases, partners expect you to come up with the necessary funding. Note that you may, in

reality, be the fourth delegation approaching these partners in a week. Since at this stage it is not known with whom they will sign a partnership agreement, partners must keep their options open. It is up to you to ask clear questions and research whether other institutions or agencies have approached your potential partners with similar or competing propositions.

Once you know what the spheres of activity are, contact official Canadian delegations, CIDA and the Canadian Embassy to check if the potential partner is reputable and if the project tabled is a priority, original, or again, if it is being developed by others. It is also essential to meet peripheral workers (non-governmental organizations, other groups or local associations) to validate your analysis of the partner.

To reduce the risk of failure in the development phase, all of the parameters leading to success must be properly managed. This means relying on internal strengths, identifying sources of funding and their priorities, carefully choosing the country and the partner, and taking the time to exhaustively carry out all of the preliminary verifications. You have done your homework and have secured a project to implement in a developing country. Now is the time to examine some of the risks involved in implementing projects abroad.

### Health and security risks to participants in missions abroad: legal and moral responsibilities of the college or institute

In certain countries, health and security risks should be given the highest consideration. Fortunately, relatively simple procedures and regulations exist to reduce the risks considerably.

#### Prevention

There is no point in sending people into high-risk areas of the globe unless you have determined that the intervention can avoid or mitigate risk. Sound judgment is critical. To make an informed decision, it is always a good idea to check official government Web sites for the country or region visited as well as Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs Web site (subscribe to travel updates issued by the Consular Affairs Bureau), CIDA, the ministry of international relations and Consulates and Embassies in Canada and overseas. Check and respect the warning levels, and also be aware that insurance companies consult the DFAIT Web site to confirm or deny coverage.

The following procedures should also be adopted:

- Advise participants and students that the verification process must be taken seriously and that it is important to comply with official recommendations. Well-informed individuals are better able to manage their own

concerns as well as those of people in their entourage. Never forget that loved ones can have a major impact on the confidence of persons you send abroad.

- Check for health risks (e.g. epidemics, tropical diseases) in the countries visited by consulting the appropriate Web sites. Under no circumstances should participants be given advice or recommendations concerning medications or vaccines. Instead, they should be referred to competent medical authorities, i.e. travel clinics or their family physician. Otherwise, the institution could be held accountable for an individual's medical misfortune.
- Ideally, some members of your team should have first aid and CPR training.
- Make sure that all participants have medical insurance. Adequately inform participants of this obligation and have them sign a contract stipulating that they must be insured with the minimum coverage required by CIDA or other funders. Consult the insurance companies specifically about high-risk countries.
- Check the quality of the institution's coverage as it relates to public liability insurance.
- Have an emergency evacuation plan in place for higher risk countries, and make sure the plan is developed in tandem with Canadian embassies or

consulates in the country.

- Ask students to sign a document authorizing the college or institute to contact their loved ones in the event of major problems; a simple but highly useful precaution in certain situations.
- Offer participants preparatory workshops on safe and risky behaviours in the host country.
- Establish institutional partnerships that make it possible for people from the host country to help resolve delicate situations.
- Always make sure participants' names are included in the register of Canadian nationals in the host country by contacting the Canadian embassy or the consular office, either of which can often help in the event of minor or major problems.
- If it is not possible to contact the embassy in case of emergency, DFAIT's Operations Centre may be contacted collect at (613)-996-8885; the Centre is open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.
- Make sure that participants are able to contact a person from the institution at any time, in case there is a problem. A remote presence and availability via the telephone or Internet provides reassurance.

The project, country and partners have been carefully chosen, and the necessary precautions have been taken in terms of the safety and

*cont'd on page 12*

*cont'd from page 11*

health of Canadian participants. But will the latter have the tools to work abroad?

### **Risks related to proper interaction in an intercultural context**

To reduce the risks, it is essential to carefully choose and adequately prepare participants. The following tips may be of assistance:

- Exercise good judgment in selecting participants; never take anything for granted and carry out serious interviews with potential participants, even if they happen to be long-time staff members. Not everyone has the ability to adapt to contexts with a high level of uncertainty. Put together a selection committee of at least three people. When in doubt, err on the side of caution, even if it means putting off or reorganizing a mission.

- Be well prepared for intercultural intervention and be familiar with cultural standards. Give internal workshops or call upon the services of Ottawa's Centre for Intercultural Learning.
- Personal preparation by the participants is important: the more a person knows about a country and its culture, the more he or she will be able to understand nuances and adapt to the context.
- Make sure that mission teams include people who have some field experience with newcomers. Suggest lectures for those who do not have this experience.
- Provide sound preparation and mission logistics management so that participants feel confident and know what is expected of them.
- Carry out serious post-mission assessments to ensure that new

knowledge about the country, its culture and our partners is well integrated and shared.

In this article, I have sought to sketch a picture of the risks involved in intervention abroad. I have also recommended means of reducing these risks to an acceptable level. There is one final risk I would like to mention, one that in my opinion is the most important: Thanks to the care with which you established your partnerships and organized your projects, your students and staff return to the country thrilled with their experiences. Chances are very good that they will ask to be part of other projects. Now there is a risk worth taking — don't you agree?

I leave you with a few words by Neil Simon:

*"If no one ever took risks, Michelangelo would have painted the floors of the Sistine Chapel."*

# A Partnership Experiment Haiti National Health Project

By Dr. Biamby

Director, Department of Human Resources  
Ministry of Health and Population, Haiti

The principles that determine the success of a project are often established before the project gets underway. This is particularly important when the project is implemented in a country where the partnership context is widely recognized as difficult.

However, results can be optimized if we prepare ourselves to overcome difficulties stemming from social, cultural, economic and political factors. Also essential, it seems, is taking into account potential provisions related to the organizational framework, as they can often mask constraints that may interfere with the smooth development of the project.

These types of risk assessment and planning initiatives pose challenges that the Haiti National Health project is addressing successfully. An analysis of the Haitian experiment with a consortium of three Canadian colleges (Cégep de Saint-Jérôme, Cégep régional de Lanaudière, La Cité collégiale) offers examples where opportunities are exploited, risk factors are identified from the outset and thereby mitigated, solutions are found for problems encountered during implementation and tangible success indicators are used.

## The Opportunities

The Haiti National Health Project is an uncomplicated Canadian College Partnership Program project aimed chiefly at supporting the *Écoles Nationales en Soins Infirmiers* (National Nursing Schools) in their efforts to establish a new training curriculum adapted to the country's nursing and health skills training and education requirements. Partners from Haiti and Canada have

identified the project's key elements and shown that they are determined to maximize performance and improve the quality of services so that populations can benefit from better-trained nurses.

Led by Cégep de Saint-Jérôme, the three Canadian colleges involved are already on familiar terms, having collaborated closely at the international level in the past. They have also shown an excellent capacity to coordinate by pooling their resources and experiences to serve the needs of the project.

The inception phase of the *Programme National De Santé* (National health program) coincides with the validation period for Haiti's new national program of study. This timing facilitates the integration of Canadian college representatives into existing project teams and allows school directors to benefit from lessons learned in the implementation of a similar process.

The project also offers a support and meeting framework that promotes in-depth consultation between the human resources development division, the four nursing care training schools and the World Health Organization around a common objective: the standardization of the curriculum at national nursing care training schools and the strengthening of these schools.

## Managing Risk Factors

During its first visit to Montreal, the Haitian team highlighted risk factors inherent in the project's conceptual framework. In fact, the program's

*cont'd on page 14*

*cont'd from page 13*

management approach paid little attention to the organizational framework of the project's host institution. The proposed structure placed one school above the others and failed to consider the possibility that the absence of a prior agreement could provoke administrative and cultural reticence on the part of school directors.

In response, project management on the Haitian side – the human resources development division that regulates training – is now better specified. Efforts are being made to ensure that the four schools and the human resources development division, through consensus-building, are all actively involved in the standardization and reinforcement process.

### **Obstacles to Implementation**

When a project brings together multi-cultural partners with diversified forms of expertise, as in the current project which in effect has nine partners, the probability of conflict is heightened. It is therefore important to provide balanced and sound project management and to realize that it is by no means easy to establish or to comply with a work schedule under these circumstances. In the context of the *Programme National de Santé*, innovative solutions are adopted and the agenda is adjusted in accordance with cultural and political factors, albeit still with a view to meeting

schedule targets and achieving the expected results. In elaborating program budgets, details essential to the realization of initiatives are sometimes neglected. Within the framework of this project, managers have shown discernment and taken appropriate and unified positions to solve the resulting problems.

### **Tangible Symbols of Success**

It is useful to remind ourselves that altruism is not always the sole consideration in the area of international cooperation. Each organization has its own objectives: the recipient institution needs resources and technical assistance to strengthen itself; and, the donor agency, meanwhile, builds on its experiences and bolsters its credibility. Reminding ourselves of this often makes it easier to secure collaboration.

Conflicts of interest or cultural conflicts are avoidable. When they occur, they are dealt with swiftly and with considerable flexibility. Relations between partners are not tutorial by nature but are part of a process of exchange carried out in a spirit of respect for cultural differences. The participation of players in decision-making leads to greater involvement and to true engagement in the realization of activities and, most importantly, meeting the needs expressed by project beneficiaries.

### Program Development Fund Activities in 2006

Forty-six missions were approved, including:

- three missions in Eastern Europe
- 11 missions in Asia
- four missions in the Americas
- 28 missions in Africa

Missions are distributed as follows:

#### Eastern Europe

- Georgia: 1
- Ukraine: 2

#### Asia

- Bangladesh: 1
- Cambodia: 2
- Indonesia: 3
- Laos: 1
- Vietnam: 1
- Sri Lanka: 3

#### Americas

- Bolivia: 1
- Dominican Republic: 1
- Paraguay: 1
- Peru: 1

#### Africa

- Benin: 1
- Burkina Faso: 1
- Cameroon: 3
- Comoros: 1
- Ghana: 1
- Kenya: 1
- Madagascar: 2
- Mali: 1
- Mauritania: 1
- Mozambique: 1
- Niger: 1
- Congo: 2
- Senegal: 6
- South Africa: 1
- Tanzania: 3
- Chad: 1
- Yemen: 1

The missions ended on March 24, 2006 and reports were submitted by April 7, 2006.

### 2006 Request for Proposals Timetable

#### April 18 to 21

- The Secretariat reviews proposals to determine their eligibility.

#### April 21

- Memos on the eligibility status of proposals are forwarded to Canadian colleges and institutes.
- All eligible proposals are forwarded to members of the Program Steering Committee (PSC) for evaluation.

#### April 24 to June 2

- Members of the PSC evaluate project proposals individually based on the selection criteria.

#### June 5 to 9

- The ACCC Secretariat compiles the evaluations of the PSC
- The ACCC Secretariat completes the evaluation of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, the preparation of proposal summaries and the PSC comments.

#### June 12 and 13

- The PSC meets to deliberate and determine the final list of proposals to recommend to CIDA for approval.

#### June 16

- The ACCC Secretariat submits the recommended proposals to CIDA for internal analysis and final approval.

#### July

- The Minister of International Cooperation approves the final list of new projects.
- After securing approval from the Minister, ACCC prepares the agreements for signature by the Canadian colleges and institutes involved. For each proposal, ACCC prepares a summary of the PSC evaluation to send to the principal Canadian partner.

#### August

- After the agreement is signed, Canadian colleges and institutes and their overseas partners prepare an annual work plan and a budget, integrating all of the changes recommended in the initial work plan and budget.

#### September

- The implementation of new projects begins.

### CCPP Forum

If the projects begin in September as planned, a three-day CCPP forum will be held in Ottawa in November, 2006.

## Events

### **CBIE Annual Conference**

November 12 – 15, 2006

Québec City

“Convergent Views: Cooperating for Results”

The Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) is both a leader in shaping Canada’s international education agenda and a highly recognized provider of professional development programs for Canada’s international educators. The Annual Conference offers practical and theoretical sessions on international education in its broadest sense. For more information, visit:

[www.cbie.ca/conference/index\\_e.cfm?page=annual\\_e](http://www.cbie.ca/conference/index_e.cfm?page=annual_e)

### **Mosaic.net International Inc.**

#### **Workshops**

Mosaic.net International Inc., a private consulting firm based in Ottawa, Canada will offer three summer workshops focused on urban and rural Participatory Development: planning, needs assessment, monitoring and evaluation using “Participatory, Learning and Action” and “Participatory Rural/Rapid Appraisal” methods (July 10 – 15, 2006); Results-based Management, Appreciative Inquiry and Open Space (July 17 – 21, 2006); and Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (July 24 – 29, 2006). For more information, visit: [www.mosaic-net-intl.ca](http://www.mosaic-net-intl.ca)

### **International Cooperation Days 2006**

October 30 – November 1, 2006  
Ottawa, Ontario

International Cooperation Days 2006 (ICD 2006) is the 4th international forum organized by CIDA for its partners. Based on attendance from previous years, more than 1,000 representatives from the non-governmental, voluntary, public and private sectors are expected to meet with international development experts and professionals from around the world. ICD provides participants with an opportunity to: debate with stimulating speakers in plenary and panel sessions; exchange perspectives on the future of international cooperation; network with participants from all sectors; and interact with representatives from CIDA, other government departments, and international donors. For more information, visit [www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cida\\_ind.nsf/vall/81B346838B14F42085257023003E55AA?OpenDocument](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cida_ind.nsf/vall/81B346838B14F42085257023003E55AA?OpenDocument)

### **Risk Management in International Education**

June 14, Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario

Instructors: Wayne Myles, Lynne Mitchell

Registration Deadline: June 1

This workshop will focus on approaches to managing the risks inherent in student mobility programs. Whether recruiting, admitting, hosting and educating international students for academic programs, or selecting, orienting,

delivering and educating domestic students for exchange and study abroad experiences, the health and safety of the students is of paramount importance. While much can go wrong with policies and programs, the risks associated with international education activities can be minimized through advanced planning, educational programs and strategic management in times of crisis. For more information, visit [www.queensu.ca/quic/ietp/courses.php#risk](http://www.queensu.ca/quic/ietp/courses.php#risk)

## Resources

### Risk Management Resources

#### **Risk Management**

An on-line practical guide offered by the Government of Queensland, Australia and applicable to other contexts is designed to help business as well as community, sporting or other not-for-profit organizations manage, reduce or control risks in their activities.

[www.riskmanagement.qld.gov.au/index.htm](http://www.riskmanagement.qld.gov.au/index.htm)

#### **Information and Assistance for Canadians Abroad**

As a gateway to a wealth of information for the Canadian traveller, this website includes: Travel Reports which contain information about safety and security conditions, health questions and entry requirements for countries around the world; Country Profiles of over 200 destinations; an on-line form

for registering with a Canadian Embassy when travelling; and, a number of publications on current issues. Travel Reports include any warnings issued by Foreign Affairs Canada about travel to a country or to a specified region of a country. The site includes information on emergency procedures and strategies for dealing with difficult situations that might be encountered while travelling internationally.

[www.voyage.gc.ca](http://www.voyage.gc.ca)

### Government Advisories (non-Canadian)

**Australia:**

[www.dfat.gov.au/geo/](http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/)

**Britain:**

[www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk) (select Travel Advice)

**United States:**

[www.travel.state.gov/](http://www.travel.state.gov/)

**France:**

[www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/conseils-aux-voyageurs\\_909/index.html](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/conseils-aux-voyageurs_909/index.html) (in french only)

### Country Research Information

#### International News Sources

AlertNet is hosted by the Reuters Foundation alerting humanitarians to emergencies around the world. It aims to keep relief professionals and the wider public up-to-date on humanitarian crises.

[www.alertnet.org/](http://www.alertnet.org/)

Administered by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), ReliefWeb is a gateway to information (documents and maps)

on humanitarian emergencies and disasters. News can be accessed by country or sector in the language in which the articles were originally published. [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)

### In-depth Country Analysis

#### Country Indicators for Foreign Policy:

This site offers a number of Risk Assessment reports for high-risk countries, and assesses issues related to domestic armed conflict, governance and political instability, militarization, religious and ethnic diversity, demographic stress, economic performance, human development, environmental stress and international linkages.

[www.carleton.ca/cifp/](http://www.carleton.ca/cifp/)

**International Crisis Group:** This site offers in-depth analytical reports on countries at risk of outbreak, escalation or recurrence of violent conflict. Also available is CrisisWatch, a 12-page monthly bulletin, which provides a succinct and regular update on the state of play in all the most significant situations of conflict or potential conflict around the world.

[www.crisisgroup.org](http://www.crisisgroup.org)

### Travel Health Information

**Travel Medicine Program:** The Public Health Agency of Canada website offers information for travellers, including Travel Health Advisories and recommendations and addresses for Travel Clinics across Canada.

[www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/pub\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/pub_e.html)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** For country-specific information, tips on safe food and water, dealing with injury and illness abroad, etc.

[www.cdc.gov/travel/](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/)

### Other Resources

**Prendre le temps d'atterrir : Carnet de retour de l'étranger**

*Le Carnet de retour* by Annie Lord is a unique and innovative tool meant for travellers who want to re-examine their international experience after a stay abroad. Published in collaboration with Plan Nagua in 2005, the Guide costs \$18.69. More information can be found at <http://pages.globetrotter.net/carnetderetour/>

### Écritures du désert

Composed of 13 literary texts written by students from Quebec and Tunisia, *Écritures du désert* is the result of a two-year CCPP collaboration between Cégep de Thetford (Québec) and L'Institut supérieur des études technologiques de Gafsa (Tunisia). The works in this collection take root in cultural parallels that converge around unifying themes. Available at the *Cégep de Thetford* bookstore at a cost of \$10. All funds raised will go toward the Cégep's next literary contest.