Case Study of the Université Cheik Anta Diop
In conversation with the authors…

Introducing Marie-Hélène Adrien

Marie-Hélène Adrien is the President of Universalia and a consultant in evaluation. She specializes in organizational evaluation and co-authored several publications on this topic with IDRC. For the past 20 years she has lead various mandates for a range of clients in the development field and she has carried out several assignments in West Africa.

The UCAD Case Study

Cheikh Anta Diop University (CADU) is one of the largest universities in West Africa. For over 15 years, it has been a partner of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), which, during that time, has invested nearly CAD$9 million in CADU. The aim of the study was to evaluate the impact of IDRC actions on CADU's organizational research capacity, and to encourage reflection on how IDRC could improve its contribution to CADU.

To perform the study, a large amount of data was collected by analyzing the literature on capacity building, and by holding a series of interviews both by telephone and in person during a visit to the Regional Office for West and Central Africa (WARO). Twenty projects (spanning from 1990 to 2005) were reviewed that were selected to give a representative sample of the different budgetary and sectoral categories

Some surprising observations

We were surprised at first by the differences between the external context for higher education in Anglophone countries and the more rigid context in francophone countries. In addition, some specific factors at CADU have contributed to the IDRC intervention having a higher degree of success than what we would have expected, more specifically the proximity of WARO and CADU, and the implementation of projects where capacity development was one of the ultimate goals. Finally, in general the case study demonstrated that capacity development took place at three levels, the individual level, the organizational level and, to a lesser extent within the Senegalese society.