ENHANCING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN DIRECTORS FROM THE CHINESE AND HOST INSTITUTION

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Introduction

The daily operations in Confucius Institutions are conducted jointly by a Local Director appointed by the host institution and a Chinese Director appointed by the Chinese partner University. Whereas the local director is familiar with the local regulations governing the institution and minor but significant aspects such as the local language, the local culture, the local infrastructure among others, the Chinese director is new to the country and requires support and help for smooth integration into the life in both the host institution and local community.

On the other hand, the Local Director is new to the concept of the Confucius Institute, Chinese Language and Culture, effective running of the Confucius Institute, Cultural and language activities that the students at the Institute can be engaged in. Thus, he or she will need the help of the Chinese Director in understanding these crucial features whose understanding is necessary for the smooth operation of the Confucius Institute.

The Local Director and the Chinese Director should strive to work closely to coordinate the activities at the Institute. The Institute should organize trainings on teaching methodology for the teaching staff of Confucius Institute periodically. Through the two directors, Confucius Institutes should strive to initiate and organize academic and cultural exchanges between the two collaborating Institutions. Confucius Institutes should aggressively market its programs and reach out to Chinese business communities in the local community so as to increase enrolment and raise funds for sustainability purposes. The two Directors should see to it that the Confucius Institutes engage the students more in cultural activities and also oversee the establishment of Chinese classrooms at both primary and secondary levels in the country where the Confucius Institute is located.

What the above paragraphs imply is that both the Local Director and the Chinese Director should cooperate and learn from each other if the Institute is to grow and her goals realized in the long run. The two should work together for the good of the institute. This paper, therefore, addresses ways in which collaboration between Chinese and Local Directors can be enhanced to ensure successful operation and administration of the Confucius Institute.

Ideal Director of the Confucius Institute

The ideal Director of a Confucius Institute is in charge of the Institute, being responsible for the overall operation of the Institute. The Director should be passionate about the work of the Confucius Institutes with a strong sense of mission to promote friendly relations between China and the country where the Institute is located. He should be academically qualified and competent, in addition to having served as long-term employee of the institution where the Confucius Institute is established. The Local Director should have a sound comprehension of current Chinese national issues and should be conversant in Chinese language and culture. The Chinese Director, on the other
hand, should have overseas working experience and be proficient in the languages of the countries where the Confucius Institutes are located. The Director should have relevant teaching and administrative experience. It is vital that the Director have an innovative, pioneering spirit and be capable of organizing events and mobilizing people. He or she should have a strong ability to conduct public relations and deal effectively with emergencies.

**Duties and Responsibilities of the Director**

The Director is expected to abide by the Constitution and By-laws of the Confucius Institutes at all times. He or she should have a practical understanding of the capital management regulations of the institution in which the Confucius Institute is operated and the Regulations for the Administration of Confucius Institute Headquarters Funds. The Director is expected to be able to draft development strategy, executing plans for annual projects, implementing efficacy reports, budget proposals, and final financial accounts. He or she is expected to draft regulations for personnel and financial management for the Confucius Institute, taking charge of personnel and financial management.

The Director is expected to establish and sustain archive management. The archives should include relevant agreements, minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors, annual plans and reports, important letters, files of students and instructors, registration records of fixed assets and bills, publicity materials, pictures of activities, media coverage reports and stories, among others.

The Director should be able to design a variety of curriculum schemes, instituting general regulations for admission, and organizing assessment of teaching and teacher training programs. He or she should aid in formulating market development schemes and be able to organize Chinese language and Culture promotional activities. The Director is responsible for reporting to the Confucius Institute Headquarters, submitting work briefings bi-annually, and reporting major events and their summaries as required by the Headquarters.

The Director should be good at research skills and should carry out research on local language policies and demand for Chinese language instruction. He or she should be able to conduct exchanges and collaborations with local governments, schools, enterprises, organizations, and media. The Director should attend the Confucius Institute Conferences and submit exchange materials upon request.

The Director should join the Board of Directors at the Confucius Institute for which he or she works and calling for provisional board meetings when necessary. The Director should understand the operation and functions of different departments within the Confucius Institute Headquarters, becoming familiar with the resources of the Headquarters and application procedures for books and teaching materials, instructors, volunteers, HSK test centers, Certificate for International Chinese Language Instructors test centers, Confucius Institute scholarships, summer and winter camps, expert lecturing groups, and exhibition and performing groups.

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**Prior to Arrival of Chinese Director**

The Chinese Director comes to the host University for the good of the Confucius Institute. The Local Director should offer a helping hand in welcoming the Chinese Director and ensure that the Chinese Director gets integrated into the daily running of the Institute and the host University fast. Prior to the arrival of the Chinese Director, it is prudent to ensure there is regular communication with him or her with briefs on weather, important information on the host university, the language used in the country, specifically highlighting some useful expressions in that language. For example in Kenya,
the local language is Swahili. As a Local Director, I should inform the expected Chinese Director of some formulaic Swahili expressions for greetings, goodbye, courtesy words among others.

Upon Arrival
The Chinese Director should be assisted in settling down as quickly as possible. The Local Director should arrange for the Chinese Director pick-up from the airport, and if possible, be at the airport to welcome him, perhaps with a bouquet of flowers. The accommodation should be arranged in advance and the office the Chinese Director will be occupying should be equipped, cleaned and well ventilated.

There are bound to be some cultural differences. The Local Director should take into account any emerging language and cultural differences between him/her and the Chinese Director and should be sensitive to this aspect. Both should try as much as possible to tolerate each other and communicate regularly to understand each other’s culture.

The two Directors should note that the relationship between them and their two institutions is that of cooperation and collaboration. None is the boss of the other. The two have a shared vision for the Confucius Institute and their goal is to collaborate closely to ensure the success of the Institute.

Meetings and Familiarization Tours
The Local Director should arrange for the Chinese Director to meet with the senior management of the Host University. For example, it will be necessary for the Chinese Director to meet with the University President /Vice Chancellor, Deputy Presidents/Deputy Vice Chancellors, Board of the Confucius Institute, related faculty and other University officers. In addition, the Local Director should organize welcoming dinners for the Chinese Director. After some time, the Chinese Director should visit other campuses of the Host University, if any.

The Chinese Director needs to know the location of grocery stores, supermarkets, and other important amenities such as hospitals and recreation facilities. It is also vital that the Chinese Director visits the local Chinese Embassy, regional Confucius Institutes and local Chinese community. The Local Director should facilitate for these visits.

Tours to various cultural centers and other important sites in the country should be arranged so that the Chinese Director can experience the beauty of the country. For example, in Kenya, we organized tours by the Chinese Director to national parks that house beautiful wildlife, the coastal town of Mombasa, the Equator, among others.

Integrating the Chinese Director into the Host Institution
The Local Director should brief the Chinese Director on the daily running of the Confucius Institute and on the laws and regulations that govern the Host University. Any difficulties that the Chinese Director is facing in settling down should be discussed and suggestions on countering them given and implemented.

The two should discuss and agree on job description. For instance, the Chinese Director should be in charge of curriculum design and development since he or she has a better understanding of Chinese studies. Further, he or she should be the link between the Confucius Institute and Chinese partner University. The Local Director, on the other hand, should act as a bridge between the Host University and the Confucius Institute.
The two directors should also come up with a schedule for meetings as they should have regular meetings and consultation. Openness should be cultivated through constant communication. The goal should be to work harmoniously for the benefit of the Confucius Institute.

The Chinese Director should be involved in University activities. His or her potential should be utilized. If he or she is good at a certain sporting activity, he or she can become a coach. If there is need for Chinese translation during visits to the University by Chinese delegations, he or she can be the interpreter/translator.

The Chinese Director should take charge of major events at the Institute, especially cultural events. In conjunction with the Local Director, the Chinese Director should ensure that the Confucius Institute is represented in University events such as the Culture Week celebrations, Graduation ceremonies, and University anniversary celebrations, among others. The students at the Institute can prepare some performances during such events.

The Chinese Director should be involved in planned visits to elementary and high schools for popularization of Chinese language and possible establishment of Chinese classrooms in such schools. The Chinese Director should help in the formation and establishment of a Chinese corner and club in the University.

**Resolving Conflicts**

There is a likelihood that some conflicts will emerge as the Local Director and Chinese Director collaborate and work together. In case this happens, the two should communicate openly and candidly, and with mutual respect resolve the ensuing conflict amicably. Backbiting should be avoided at all costs. In case the two directors find it hard to work together, then the Board of the Institute should be informed and solutions found.

**Conclusion**

The Confucius Institute is an invaluable bridge between the Host Nation and the People’s Republic of China. Both partner Universities should collaborate to strengthen the collaboration between them and in the long run, enhance cordial relations between China and the world. There must be mutual respect and trust between the Local Director and Chinese Director for the Confucius Institute to propel forward. There is a bright future for the Confucius Institutes when all stakeholders work as a winning team.