EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

# MASTER'S PROGRAMME
# 'COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT'

*Implemented by the*
*Department of Social Communication at the Universidad San Francisco Xavier de*
*Chuquisaca, Bolivia*
*Centre for Postgraduate Studies and Research at the Universidad San Francisco Xavier*

*In collaboration with*
*Misión Alianza de Noruega Bolivia*
*Gimlekollen College, Norway*

*With funding from*
*Norwegian Mission Alliance*
*Bistandsnemda, Norway*

*Document prepared by*
*Rocío Peredo (Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, La Paz – Bolivia)*
*Esben Leifsen (Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo – Norway)*

Final report: La Paz/Oslo, 25 August 2008

**Content**

## 0. Executive Summary

In this report we present the results of the external evaluation of the Master's programme in 'Communication for Development' at the Universidad de San Francisco Xavier in Chuquisaca (USFX) held in 2006-2008. The programme has been given in three cities in the southern part of Bolivia; in Tarija, Oruro and Sucre. It was implemented by the *Centro de Estudios de Posgrado* (CEPI, Centre for Postgraduate Studies) and the Department of Social Communication at the USFX, and received academic support from two external counterparts: the Gimlekollen College in Norway and Misión Alianza Noruega, Bolivia. The Master's programme has received external funding from the Norwegian Mission Alliance and from Bistandsnemda in Norway. The terms of reference specify that the external evaluation team should analyse the achievements of the programme and recommend changes and improvements for planning a new version of the Master's programme in 'Intercultural Communication' to be implemented this fall. The evaluation team has consisted of two persons who both have long experience in teaching, supervision and research at universities in Bolivia and Norway. As part of the work methodology the team has combined conventional methods in the production of data (in-depth interviews with stakeholders, lecturers, supervisors, students; questionnaires, review and analysis of documents) with a participative strategy (by organising and conducting a workshop) in order to convert those evaluated, especially programme stakeholders, into active subjects in the evaluation process. This strategy produced excellent results especially because of the willingness and interest of those responsible for the programme in participating, reflecting and incorporating the achieved knowledge in a new process of redesigning the programme for the next version.

The report presents the following areas of evaluation: a) Objectives of the programme, their compliance and relevance, b) the strengths of the programme, and c) its weaknesses and problems. On the basis of the results of this evaluation we have formulated d) a series of specific recommendations, and e) a proposal for a new design of the curriculum of the Master's programme. f) Moreover, we identify the added values for strengthening the capacity for managing the programme. We ascertain that this programme is ambitious in its aims and scope not only because it offers the same teaching programme in three different cities in the southern part of Bolivia to students who basically are active in the labour market, and additionally offers them complete scholarships and provides them with the necessary literature in the form of mini libraries in these three cities. The programme is also ambitious because one of its main objectives is to generate a social and professional impact in the places of work of the Master students.

An assessment of the social and professional impact of the programme must necessarily form part of a future evaluation. In what we were entitled to evaluate here concerning the aims, academic content, the management and administration of the Master's programme, we identify several considerable and important strengths; in the quality of the teaching, in the contents of the subjects, and concerning the students' access to relevant literature. The programme has also been well coordinated academically, and in terms of logistics it has been solidly managed and administered. Furthermore, it has also benefited from the establishment of systematic routines for following up the management of the programme, and it has also been coordinated efficiently at the interinstitutional level. We also register as highly positive that there has been very little desertion of students from the programme, taking into account the reality of Bolivian postgraduates where the drop-out rate is high, something we think reflects a generalised attitude in the students of dedication to and interest in the programme.

The areas of weaknesses and problems identified are concentrated in the activities related to the planning and elaboration of the thesis. Here we observe a series of obstacles in the work with the planning of the thesis, in the design of its profile and structure, and in the final writing of the text. The most serious problems we encounter are related to supervision of the thesis and the relations between supervisor and student. There are also problems related to the curriculum of the programme since the actual design leaves all courses on the application of method, on doing research and writing of the thesis towards the end of the programme. Two additional problems concern a) the lack of mechanisms to apply the knowledge of the programme to the context of work in order to generate a more evident social impact through the combined academic and professional work of the student, and b) a tendency that the students do not read enough of the available literature taught in the courses; this aspect is also linked to the Bolivian educational reality.

In the specific recommendations we propose a series of changes and improvements related to the realisation of research and writing of the thesis. We recommend that the supervisor should be better integrated into the academic activities of the programme, and also recommend improving the quality of the supervision, and strengthening the relationship between student and supervisor. We also propose changes that might secure a better work with the profile of the thesis and a better system for approving it. We also recommend introducing mechanisms that might help to transfer knowledge the student has achieved in the programme to his or her context of work. Concerning teaching we recommend a better coordination between the teaching staff of the programme, with the aim of creating a common vision or understanding of the principles, contents, and objectives of the programme and also its philosophical and methodological base lines. We also propose various mechanisms in order to improve the students' willingness to read. Concerning administration of the programme we recommend improvements in the system of qualifications of the students, in the use of the internet platform for the diffusion of information about the programme, in the logistic routines, and in the promotion of future versions of the programme in public. In addition to these specific recommendations we also propose a new design of the curriculum in order to strengthen the integration of the research-thesis part in the other elements of the programme.

Finally, among the added values to strengthen the management capacity of the programme, we refer to the following points: a) Interinstitutional Committee, b) Social impact of the programme in the context, taking into account the establishment of agreements with institutions working in communication and development, establishing lines of research, and a redefinition of the role of supervision, c) a coordinated teaching team, and d) other activities supporting curriculum development.

## 1. Introduction and background

In this report we present the results and recommendations of the evaluation of the Master's programme in 'Communication for Development' at the Universidad de San Francisco Xavier (USFX) in Sucre, Bolivia. As regards planning and academic management of the programme, the USFX has worked in conjunction with two external partners, namely the Gimlekollen College from Norway and Misión Alianza de Noruega Bolivia. All references to the programme officers are references to representatives of the USFX and the external partners. The report is organised in three parts: the first part includes the reference framework and the evaluation methodology employed, the second part presents the results and an analysis of the performed evaluation, and the third part includes the principal recommendations for improving the programme as well as the added values for strengthening the programme management capacity.

The evaluation team consisted of Esben Leifsen (Norway) and Rocío Peredo (Bolivia). The field evaluation process took place during two weeks in the cities of Sucre, Tarija, Oruro, Cochabamba (airport) and La Paz. In Sucre, the evaluation was carried out with directors of the Centre for Postgraduate Studies and Research (CEPI) of the Universidad San Francisco Xavier de Chuquisaca (USFX), programme officers from the USFX and the Gimlekollen College in Norway, as well as with teaching staff, supervisors and students. In Oruro and Tarija, the evaluation was carried out with students and programme graduates. In La Paz, there were interviews with a representative of Misión Alianza de Noruega and lecturers who participated in the programme. Likewise, we used email correspondence as a written means to obtain information from lecturers and supervisors. At the end of the second week of the field evaluation, the team organised a workshop with the principal programme officers for sharing the preliminary results and recommendations. The workshop facilitated a reflection on strengths, weaknesses and the potential for improving the Master's programme. The programme officers have shown considerable willingness and interest in applying the knowledge developed in planning a new Master's programme on Intercultural Communication, to be started in the USFX in the fall of 2008.

As regards the background of the Master's programme, it is important to mention that the postgraduate programmes (at Master's Degree level) in Bolivia have not existed for a long time, maximum 16 years. At the State university Universidad San Francisco Xavier de Chuquisaca, master's programmes started only in 1998, particularly in the study fields of education and economics. Master's programmes in the field of communication and development have appeared in recent years, not only in Sucre but also in the rest of Bolivia, which is why structural transformations in this area of studies still require more time.

In this sense, the students of the Master's programme constituted a heterogeneous group, with most students working full time, having families and studying at the same time.

On the other hand, we must consider the important socio-political and economic crisis (with important poverty indices) in the country in recent years, which deepened between 2006 and 2008. The conflicts and deteriorating situation resulting from this crisis also affected activities of the universities, especially in the postgraduate courses. This crisis situation has seriously affected the social-academic link between curricular activity and the society at large, which means that the universities, particularly the Bolivian state universities, are experiencing difficulties in communicating with different sectors of society.

At the moment, due to the multiple and conflictive situations and transformations generated and developing in the Bolivian society, of which the state universities form an important part, the postgraduate programmes are going through a period of openness and discussions. This has led to a decrease of the academic quality and performance, however, at the same time this is helpful in order to lay the foundations for a new and better conceptualisation and planning of the postgraduate programmes.

Readers must be aware of these specific conditions and circumstances in Bolivia while reviewing the results of the evaluation and the proposed recommendations for improving the Master's programme.

## Part 1. Reference frameworks and evaluation methodology

## 2. Terms of reference

Within the framework of the interinstitutional cooperation agreement signed by the Universidad Mayor, Real y Pontificia de San Francisco Xavier de Bolivia, the Norwegian Gimlekollen College of Journalism and Communication and Misión Alianza de Noruega, a Master's programme in "Communication for Development" (herein called the Master's programme) was carried out since September 2006. At the moment, the students are in the final phase of thesis defence.

As part of the final phase of the Master's programme, Misión Alianza de Noruega has programmed an external evaluation with the purpose of provide information and input for the second version of the master's programme. In this sense, the Terms of Reference (see Appendix 1) were written, with the following points:

2.1. Purpose of the evaluation

- Evaluate achievements of the Master's programme in Communication for Development (2006-2008) as regards the purposes and goals specified in the programme documents.

- Provide, based on these results, constructive advice for planning the new programme that is to start in September 2008.

2.2. Specific topics

The evaluation team is asked to specifically analyse the following elements:
a) The structure and functioning of the cooperation between CEPI and the international partners.
b) The profile, content and implementation of the programme in relation to the purposes and goals.
c) Added values in terms of strengthening the administrative capacity of CEPI in relation to this programme (but also in a general sense).

2.3. Timeframe for the evaluation process

- *Prior to the fieldwork in Bolivia (Friday 20 – Sunday 22 June):*

Preliminary document review, first internal communication of the team. Three days.

- *First week in Bolivia (Monday 23 June – Sunday 29 June):*
  Planning, fieldwork in Sucre, including a possible trip to Oruro and Tarija.

- *Second week in Bolivia (Monday 30 June – Saturday 5 July):*
  Research, analysis, final meetings and suggestions, workshop on Friday 4 July.

- *After the fieldwork:*
  Write and deliver the final report (the team will be in touch by email).

2.4. Presentation of the evaluators
Esben Leifsen, Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, University of Oslo - Norway
Rocío Peredo, Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, La Paz - Bolivia


## 3. Methodology

The methodology used in the external evaluation process was as follows:

- In-depth interviews with programme officers, directors and coordinators of the master's programme (See Appendix 2 for further details of the interviews and meetings):

Director of the CEPI at the USFX,
Director of the Department of Social Communication at the USFX,
Former director of the Department of Social Communication,
Office of the CEPI planning and evaluation unit,
Programme officer,
Administrative programme assistant,
Representative of Misión Alianza in the programme's interinstitutional committee,
Academic coordinator of CEPI,
Representative of the Norwegian Gimlekollen College for Journalism and Communication,
Representative of the Centre for Development Studies of the University of Agder in Norway.


- In-depth interviews with lecturers, and an open-ended questionnaire (by email).

- Individual and group interviews with students.

- Visits to the students' places of work.

- In-depth interviews with and open-ended questionnaire (by email) for thesis supervisors.

- Workshop for a preliminary presentation of the results and recommendations, through a presentation by the evaluators and group work with the participants.

- Document review. (See Appendix 3 on reviewed documents).

The methodology of this evaluation is divided into 4 phases: 1) preparatory phase to review texts; 2) phase for collecting and producing data in the field; 3) phase for an exchange of ideas between the evaluators and the programme officers in a workshop; and 4) writing of the report. It is important to underline that the applied methodology includes a reflexive and a proactive element (phase 3) that was very positive for the evaluation as a whole. The activity in the workshop organised at the end of the second week of field research was helpful for a

detailed and in-depth exchange of ideas, experiences and criteria, which strengthened the evaluation as an instrument to create changes and improvements. The programme officers showed considerable interest and willingness to participate actively in the workshop and turn the reflections and recommendations into concrete proposals for improving a new version of the Master's programme in Intercultural Communication that will start in the fall of 2008. The first sign of this proactive attitude was seen in the workshop itself, where a preliminary proposal was prepared for a new curriculum design for the Master's programme by one of the two work groups (see Appendix G). We also saw that in the days immediately following the workshop, the representatives of the Interinstitutional Committee started to work and implement the recommendations in meetings dedicated to the planning of the new version. These initiatives show that the evaluation with the introduction of activities or mechanisms to turn the stakeholders into active subjects in the evaluation process can generate very interesting proposals and concrete actions to solve problems.

## Part 2. Results and analysis of the evaluation

Initially, the evaluation revised compliance and relevance of the end, the objective, the specific objectives and goals of the master's programme. Besides, the idea was to understand the academic and administrative aspects of the master's programme, identifying strengths and difficulties, as well as the interrelations between those aspects.

## 4. Programme objectives – structure of the modules

The expected changes which are related to a new local development paradigm depend, according to the students participating in the programme, on institutional and political changes that are outside the students' control or impact in their work. However, through the learning process the students do perceive concrete effects in their labour activities, and this impact depends on the receptivity of the context of work.

There is no clear distinction between the overall and specific objectives. The specific objectives are general and there are no concrete objectives for application in the job context of the students according to the programme. In terms of the objectives of the Study Plan in relation to the modules, no objectives have been identified by module or level in the study plan.

Below we present a revision of the end, objectives and goals of the programme, as mentioned in the project document of the Master's programme, with an analysis of the degree of compliance and relevance:

| End | Compliance | Relevance |
|---|---|---|
| Contribute to an improvement of the standard of living in the departments in the south of the country (Chuquisaca, Tarija, Oruro, Potosí) based on creation and implementation of a new local development paradigm (municipal and departmental levels) focusing basic needs, democracy and service, with full participation of the | The end of the Master's programme is specified in ideological and abstract terms, and in view of this scope a longer term is required. Because of the general and ideological perspective, the evaluation | There is no correspondence between a master's programme and a political-social project aimed at improving living conditions in the south of the country and fomenting an alternative development |

| media as an actor that encourages development of an awareness based on participation and dialogue. | of compliance of the end should be carried out in a future evaluation. | process based on structural changes. |
| --- | --- | --- |

| Overall Objective | Compliance | Relevance |
| --- | --- | --- |
| The professionals trained in the Master's programme have the skills and tools required for developing inclusive, participatory and transparent communication processes aimed at a new local development paradigm (on the municipal and departmental levels). | The graduates have achieved different levels of application of what they learned in the master's programme.<br><br>The master's programme has given rise to new knowledge, a theoretical reflection, ethical and human foundations and the capacity to apply the knowledge through a methodology that can be used not only to write the thesis but also for different projects and works.<br><br>Some graduates have taken concrete initiatives regarding activities, changes and proposals in their jobs, encouraged by and based on the learning content, instruments and strategies acquired in the master's programme, e.g. in alternative means of communication and in the Vice-ministry of Transparency. But for some graduates, there are obstacles regarding receptivity of their employers for achieving the expected changes, especially in the private media and in some public institutions, such as the Police and the Departmental Election Court. | There is a correspondence between the teaching programme of the master's programme and the possibility of the students applying their new knowledge in their jobs, with an emphasis on alternative development, proposing theoretical perspectives, methodologies, but no application strategies are found. |

| Specific Objectives | Compliance | Relevance |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1) Make a critical analysis of development paradigms and propose basic lines to contribute to local development in their departments, according to the current discussion.<br>2) Identify the key stakeholders of local development and propose processes encouraging a horizontal, inclusive, democratic and intercultural communication among these stakeholders.<br>3) Design, implement and evaluate communication programs among social and institutional local development actors, enabling the harmonisation of common goals and objectives. | The specific objectives were formulated as general objectives, with a wide and generic scope. Compliance is not possible within the time of duration of the Master's programme (1,5 year) | The specific objectives are in fact general objectives.<br><br>The specific programme objectives focus on underscoring:<br>The intention of achieving application of a new development paradigm by the student in his/her local context of work.<br><br>The specific objectives centre on activities linked |

| | | to the media. |
|---|---|---|
| 4) Make a critical analysis of the role of the mass media and propose a role according to the needs of a local development based on democracy, pluralism and service. <br> 5) Design, implement and evaluate processes for producing transparent, pertinent and pluralist information in the media, aimed at this information contributing to an inclusive and democratic local development. <br> 6) Develop ethical principles in their professional work, aimed at service and transparency. | | |

| Goals | Compliance | Relevance |
|---|---|---|
| 9 lecturers from the master's degree course are encouraged to include the following aspects in their academic dynamics: ethical principles of transparency, service and mutual respect; and they are trained to encourage a new local development paradigm in their students. | 9 lecturers have been responsible for 8 subjects of the Master's programme, and 3 facilitators have been responsible for 3 workshops: <br> - Workshop for introduction to the Master's Program <br> - Workshop for thesis topics: lines of research <br> - Qualitative research workshop <br><br> There has been no training of the lecturers within the general framework of the Master's programme. | The adjustments made through the inclusion of these workshops have been relevant. <br><br> In general, the lecturers were committed to the programme. <br><br> In one case, the students say that a lecturer has expressed and mixed personal biases with theoretical positions in his course. <br><br> The training of lecturers is pertinent if it refers to an exchange of ideas and criteria at the beginning of the programme, as the basis to plan development of the different subject matters. |
| 9 subjects are developed with their respective objectives, teaching – learning methodology, content of the topics, presentation of every topic, bibliographical support, tasks and evaluation modalities for every subject. A printed version and a CD version. | 8 subjects and 3 workshops were developed (see above). <br> The specific programme of all subjects has objectives, the content of the topics, a presentation, bibliographical support materials, tasks for all subjects. <br> The teaching-learning methodology was not specified and neither were the modalities and criteria for evaluating the subjects. | As part of the teaching-learning methodology, the modes of application of the content in the context of work of the students were not planned. |
| 60 graduates from the master's degree course (in the four departments: Chuquisaca, Oruro, Potosí, Tarija), have acquired basic skills during the teaching – learning process. | 42 Master's students are in the final process of writing their thesis. To date, only 5 students have defended their thesis. <br> The programme was not carried out in the city of Potosí. | The basic skills for design and research, as well as for writing a thesis have not been effectively developed in the teaching-learning processes. <br><br> There is no detailed description either of the basic skills or competence expected from development of the teaching- |

| | | learning processes. |
|---|---|---|
| An elementary library with basic texts for the subjects of the master's degree course, for each department. In total, there are four elementary libraries. | There are sufficient quantities of basic texts accessible to the students in the three cities: Sucre, Tarija and Oruro. There are no texts in the city of Potosí. | The establishment of mini libraries with the necessary and relevant texts for the subjects offered in the three cities has been pertinent. The fact that the coordinators in Tarija and Oruro did not have a fixed place for keeping the texts may hamper accessibility. |
| A validated study plan. | There is a study plan written and agreed upon in the Interinstitutional Committee. | There is no explicit relationship in the subjects between theory, application and research. |
| A system for follow-up and evaluation of the master's programme. | There are different evaluation mechanisms, such as mechanisms for students to evaluate the content, the lecturers and logistics; but there is no integrated system for evaluating the Master's programme. | It is necessary to have a pertinent system, which is why systematic evaluations and follow-up processes are required, with the results used as feedback for the Master's programme. |

**5. Evaluated areas**

5.1. Strengths

We have identified the following 9 major strengths and 6 minor strengths in this programme:

**-  Major strengths**

1. *Lecturers*. The programme has been carried out with a group of lecturers of high academic standing. This group contains academics that enjoy considerable prestige and recognition in Bolivian university spheres. Besides, both the Norwegian and Bolivian lecturers have qualities and skills that have significantly benefited the programme. One clear indication of the lecturers' quality is an evaluation carried out by CEPI on the students' opinion in the three cities: Oruro, Tarija and Sucre. The results confirm the impression of quality that we have noted in conversations with most master's students and in comments of the academic board and the CEPI coordination. We should underline that there has been criticism against some lecturers, though this was related to other factors than academic quality: In one case the criticism was related to the authoritarian teaching style that was not very inviting for an exchange of ideas and perspectives between students and lecturer. In another case, the criticism was related to the lecturer's difficult attitude regarding the acceptance of topics proposed for the thesis profile. A third case referred to obstacles in communication as the lecturer was insufficiently proficient in Spanish. Despite this criticism, we have no information that raises doubts regarding the lecturers' high academic level.

2. *Content*. The content of the courses in the master's programme was consistent and up-to-date. The information we obtained on the content consisted of brief descriptions of every subject with annexed bibliographies. Although this has given us an overall vision of the

programme and of the correlation between the different subjects, based on this information it has not been possible to obtain more details on the topics, the theoretical perspectives, the use of examples and methodological proposals in a field of communication and development characterised by its heterogeneity and interdisciplinarity. Despite these limitations, based on the review of the descriptive material of the subjects and the comments of the students and lecturers on the content of the programme as a whole, we have seen that the subjects focused on very relevant and diverse topics. The interrelation between the topics covered in the subjects seems to be strong and relevant in this master's programme.

3. *Libraries*. In the three cities - Oruro, Tarija and Sucre – the students had access to mini libraries from the very beginning of the Master's programme. The libraries consist of up-to-date and relevant literature which the students could consult to find their way in and have more in-depth understandings of the central topics and approaches of the programme. The mini libraries, plus photocopied texts generally sent to the different cities on time, provided the students with reading material in all subjects. We consider that this access to the texts specified in the bibliographies of the different subjects and the additional books and studies is one of the principal strengths of this Master's programme that makes it possible for the students to complement the in-class learning with personal and in-depth reading as the key for ensuring quality in learning processes.

4. *Relation pages / credits*. This Master's programme introduced a mechanism to determine the credits of all subjects on the basis of the number of pages for reading. This implied that the students had to read a minimum number of text pages provided by the lecturer in every subject. This crediting method based on an objective standard is systematic and creates a uniform relationship between and for all subjects. As a result it is possible to avoid possible differences resulting from non-systematic and subjective manners for assigning credits to the subjects.

5. *Scope*. We consider that one of the achievements of this Master's programme is that it was carried out in 3 cities: Sucre, Tarija and Oruro. All subjects, except for the last two workshops on methodology, were given in the three regions. All subjects covered two cycles with an interval of approximately 3 weeks, meaning that every lecturer had to travel two times to each of the three cities. As Tarija and Oruro are located quite far from Sucre and as the road and air connections tend to involve a series of complications, and considering that the lecturers of this programme live in different places in Bolivia and Norway, it is a challenge and an achievement that it has been possible to carry out the programme within the times set in the timeframe. This has implied difficult logistical operations with the displacement of lecturers, texts, and the didactic materials and audiovisual materials required for the teaching process.

6. *Admission and retention*. The admission of students who had jobs when joining the programme is undoubtedly a strength. We have seen that the intention of recruiting students with a previous training in social communication and active in the labour market has been accomplished successfully as most students admitted to the Master's programme complied with these criteria. Only a very low percentage of students did not have a job when joining the programme. We think that the success of the master's programme in this sense is related to the fact that the programme has granted scholarships covering 50% of the total cost for all students. The programme achieved a good distribution of students over the three labour sectors identified as central for the field of communications, namely the media, NGOs and public entities. Compared to a market survey carried out prior to the start of the Master's programme, there is an over-representation of students employed in NGOs and too few

students employed in the media and public entities. This situation may reflect the higher demand in non governmental organisations for personnel specialised in social communication. It could also show a better acceptance in this type of organisations of having employees that are studying at the same time. Another additional positive aspect is that the drop-out rate in this programme is very low (of a total number of 47 enrolled students, only 4 students dropped out).

7. *Programme coordination*. Based on the information we received from all partners in this programme, we can conclude that coordination of the Master's programme was responsible and adequate. The lecturers, students, the directors of the Department of Social Communication and of CEPI, the administrative personnel of CEPI and representatives of the interinstitutional committee including representatives of Mission Alliance and the Gimlekollen College have affirmed that the coordinator and coordination were in accordance with their expectations and needs. We consider that the coordination of the Master's programme has contributed significantly to enhance dynamic and systematic planning, administration and management of the programme. The only doubt we have in this sense is whether integration of the supervisors into the programme has been sufficiently strong so as to ensure the optimum use of this resource with regard to planning and writing of the thesis (see section below on weaknesses for a more detailed description of the thesis and supervision in the Master's programme).

8. *Follow-up of programme management*. In the Master's programme, the academic field is subject to systematic follow-up by the Academic Coordination of CEPI. Various instruments are used in this sense, such as a system for programme approval based on a form and report, a record of all students with the thesis topics, supervision, progress information, Excel sheets for recording activities, monthly and quarterly attendance lists, and annual reports. Based on these instruments, the academic coordination of CEPI can record irregularities in management of the programme and propose adjustments and changes in the course of the programme. The collected systematic information is also helpful for the coordinators to have a clear and overall vision of the Master's programme, as an important resource for planning future programme versions.

9. *Interinstitutional coordination*. As this Master's programme involves various institutional partners both in Bolivia and in Norway, coordination is essential. The interinstitutional coordination has been carried out in regular meetings in a committee with representatives of the Gimlekollen College and Norwegian Mission Alliance, of the Department of Social Communication of the USFX and directors and academic and administrative coordinators of CEPI. In addition, the committee representatives have been in touch through the internet. The coordination has been dynamic and continuous and we have not seen any significant obstacles in the communication and cooperation between the representatives. Rather, there is a positive and cooperative attitude among the representatives that greatly enables programme planning and management. The active and central role of the programme coordinator in the committee has contributed to strengthening the interinstitutional coordination and the provision of timely solutions for requirements or variations in programmed progress.

**- Minor strengths**

1. *Learning*. In the conversations with approximately two thirds of the programme students (27 students), we have seen that in general the students are of the opinion that the Master's programme has facilitated an academic and human enrichment. One of the principal positive

aspects is that the programme did not only have a high academic level, but it also emphasised the human factor, personal and collective affectivity. We have seen that the relationship between the students and lecturers of the Master's programme is characterised by a deep human quality. We think that this human aspect is an important foundation for a learning and intellectual development process, which has contributed to strengthening the programme. Nonetheless, we have also seen that the students put more emphasis on personal learning processes and to a much lower extent on academic and human development at the professional level. When asking the students about the impact of the Master's programme, they answered that the programme has changed the dynamics and communication in personal relations; few students reflected more deeply on the actual or potential effects of their newly acquired knowledge in their context of work, i.e. how the new theoretical perspectives and methodological strategies could help them in the planning and management of labour activities and influence communication with their colleagues and superiors at work.

2. *Intended social impact*. One programme purpose consists of achieving social impact.
It is positive and interesting to see that the programme is aimed at transferring the knowledge acquired in the Master's programme to the job environment of the students. Though it is still too early to assess the effects in terms of the impact of the Master's programme in the students' labour and professional activities, we consider that this objective in itself is positive. At the same time we want to underline that the programme did not have the necessary mechanisms to ensure the transfer of academic knowledge to the professional setting. This aspect will be considered further in the section on the weaknesses of the Master's programme.

3. *Norms*. We consider that the drafting of norms for some processes of the Master's programme is a strength, e.g. for presentation of the thesis, designation of the supervisors and assignation of the scholarships. The norms help to unify and systematise the relations between students and professional and administrative personnel of the Master's programme to thus achieve a uniform and equal treatment of the students. This also helps to speed up management and administration of the Master's programme, which contributed to ensuring quality in the academic and logistical management. However, there are no norms guiding other processes, specifying procedures, obligations and rights, e.g. in the admission of students, in the relationship of supervisors with students, in the mechanisms for approving thesis profiles, for the cases of non-compliance or a lack of timely communication from the supervisor. We also consider that a guide should be drafted for lecturers to evaluate the subjects on the basis of formal criteria and application of a marks scale.

4. *Academic management*. To a large extent, it has been possible to comply with the timeframe for classes in the different subjects according to the specified terms. This achievement is particularly positive considering that the lecturers rotated among the cities of Sucre, Tarija and Oruro which has implied more efforts from the lecturers as well as additional challenges in terms of the academic and logistical coordination. One subject was replaced by another to avoid redundancy in topics and theoretical perspectives, but without this change causing delays. By the end of the programme, there was a difference with the timeframe as the academic coordination decided to add an extra course on methodology (Qualitative Research Workshop) so as to reinforce the research and writing of the thesis. On the students' request, this change caused delays in the term for approving and defending the theses. In general, we have seen that the students received their marks for the different subjects within the fixed terms, though some students reported certain irregularities in this sense: In some subjects, the lecturers provided comments to justify the marks, while in other subjects the lecturers simply gave the marks. Besides, it seems that the students obtained

information on the marks and comments directly from some lecturers though the CEPI is formally entrusted with the role of providing this information. The information the students received on the subjects, contents and literature of the Master's programme has been satisfactory. The lecturers also had access to information on their subject and the course in general, though there is a need to improve this so that all lecturers would have a more complete and in-depth vision of the end, principles and purposes of the Master's programme and its philosophical - methodological base lines. Besides, we have noted a lack of systematic and detailed information on the Master's programme for the supervisors. The issue of information and coordination with the lecturers and supervisors will be considered in the part concerning the weaknesses of the programme.

5. *Administrative management*. Administrative and logistical management of the programme have been efficient. In general, the students in the different cities have received the course texts on time, and the lecturers had the required didactic material and audiovisual equipment. There were some complaints concerning the texts being sent too late to the students as well as concerning some difficulties regarding the lack of technical equipment. Various lecturers also mentioned that the teaching spaces, especially in Tarija, were inadequate. The local logistical coordinator and the coordinator of the Master's programme confirm that it has been difficult to find an adequate locales for the courses in Tarija, and that they have had similar problems in Oruro. The information provided to the students on terms, changes and practical details on the organisation and management of the Master's programme has been satisfactory.

6. *Programme evaluation*. The Planning and Evaluation Unit of CEPI has carried out an evaluation of the Master's programme. The evaluation covered the quality of logistics, the content and the lecturers of the programme. A questionnaire was used for students to qualify the quality based on a scale of 1 to 6. The evaluation is a very useful instrument for detecting strengths and possible weaknesses at an aggregated level and in a statistical manner. However, as the evaluation did not record specific justifications, reflections and explanations of the students, based on the answers it was not possible to have relevant details to be used in planning future programmes. As this Master's programme had 43 effective students, it would not have been extraordinarily troublesome to have a mechanism to record individual comments.

5.2. Weaknesses or difficulties

On the other hand, we have identified 10 areas displaying weaknesses or problems in the programme, which are detailed below:

1. *Thesis writing*. The thesis was written in the last phase of the study plan, as the start of the thesis took place only in the last course of the master's programme through the "Thesis Workshop". In that course, the students prepared their thesis profile and the module ended with approval of the thesis profile. However, the thesis work itself (fieldwork, application of instruments, data gathering and categorisation techniques, techniques for analysing results, the preparation of conclusions, writing of the final thesis report) took place once the master's courses had ended. We therefore consider that the thesis work has become a post-curriculum requirement, i.e. after the subjects. This resulted in very few students (only 5) having actually finished their thesis, and having presented it within the term established by the University (May 2008). We also think that this is a consequence of a lack of systematic linking of topics presented by the students in the papers prepared for the different courses, to possible themes

for the thesis. Some lecturers did this, but informally not in a coordinated manner between the lecturers or programme modules, and not as a programme objective. At the date of our evaluation, only five students had defended their thesis and four had finished their thesis and were waiting to defend their thesis, this out of a total of 43 students who concluded the study plan.

2. *Supervision.* In this area, there are various specific points related to the writing of the thesis:

a) *Approval of the thesis profiles without participation of the supervisor.* This process was performed as part of the Thesis Workshop and was the exclusive responsibility of the lecturer of this subject. For approving the thesis profile of every student, the supervisor had not yet been assigned, and neither had the tribunal of lecturers who would review the thesis. We think that the fact that only one lecturer reviews and approves the topic of the theses is a constraint and we have heard some complaints of students regarding the lecturer's requirement of the profiles focusing on the general topic of "the media", as a condition for passing the Thesis Workshop. Hence, some students mentioned that they had to adjust or even change the profiles of their thesis.

b) *Information on the programme provided to the supervisors is insufficiently complete.* Although the information about the programme was sent to all lecturers of the subjects and was well designed and prepared, many supervisors we interviewed said they did not receive information by the programme officers, particularly information that would have been helpful for the supervision, e.g. information on the structure of the programme, the general objectives, the central contents, bibliographical references. The supervisors who had some information about the programme had obtained it at their own initiative or because they had prior knowledge of the master's programme or operation of the CEPI.

c) *Too wide and diverse bank of possible supervisors.* The CEPI has a database of possible supervisors for the students to elect from. However, this databank is too wide, not only in terms of the number of persons but also in terms of their background and experience, which are not always related to communication for development. In the databank, only some supervisors have a postgraduate diploma in communication for development, which has hampered an effective progress of the theses, due to the rigid theoretical requirements imposed by some of them, as mentioned by some of the interviewed students.

d) *Insufficient time in the student-supervisor relationship for finishing the thesis.* The time granted for writing the thesis after approval of the profile and designation of the supervisors (which was done in October and November 2007) was, in most cases, only three or four months before the deadline set for February 2008, and later postponed until May 2008. Although the term was extended, we think that the effective time the students had for working with their respective supervisors was too short, taking into account the end-of-year recess and considering that the supervisors, before being designated, had no knowledge of the topic or the content of the students' thesis profiles.

e) *Some students chose to continue working on their thesis without the supervisor.* Of the students interviewed in Tarija, Oruro and Sucre, a small number mentioned that in some cases, because of difficulties to communicate with the supervisor and in other cases because of the supervisor's rigid theoretical position, or because the feedback received was not related to the content or progress of the thesis, they decided to continue writing their thesis without a

supervisor, whereby they were prepared to assume the possible consequences of this decision when presenting and defending their thesis.

3. *Curriculum design*. The programme had a modular structure, though the modules were separate and not related (see page 25 of Appendix 6 – Workshop). Based on our analysis, we consider that this is because the curriculum structure of the master's programme initially emphasised two modules: the first one called "Paradigms of social development" and the second one called "Theories of communication". Both consist of 4 modules each. The third module, called "Applied communication" consists of only one subject, i.e. the Thesis Workshop, but an additional subject was added (to replace the one on Communication Theories that did not proceed as it was considered redundant by the programme officers) called "Qualitative Research Workshop". This subject was also given at the end of the courses (in October 2007). We think that this type of traditional curriculum structure, though giving priority to the two principal axes of the master's programme – *social development,* on the one hand, and *communication*, on the other hand - has led to postponement of the topics related to the research methodology and writing of the thesis to the end of the programme. Therefore, it has been mentioned that writing the thesis was not part of the study plan of the modules. Only planning of the thesis, through the thesis profile, was part of the curriculum.

4. *Application in the context of work*. Based on references provided by the interviewed students, who were asked how they have applied what they learned in the Master's programme, we have concluded that application of the content in the job context has been very limited. In some cases, as the institutions where they work have policies and principles with a more rigid or traditional perspective, for some students it was difficult to implement transformations because their employers did not agree or because the institutional policies did not permit structural or functional changes (as is the case of the Police or the Departmental Election Court). But in other cases, we think that the difficulty for applying the acquired knowledge is related to the lack of strategies or skills in the students, which are necessary for this transformation, as these were not acquired or developed in the master's programme. This is because the teaching-learning activities focused rather on reflection, analysis and argumentation through the writing of papers, leaving aside practical and application-oriented skills. We have reached this preliminary conclusion though we share the programme officers' viewpoint that it is too early still to assess the social impact of the programme. Our conclusion is based on the fact that in the review of the master's programme, no objectives, purposes or other curricular aspects were found regarding the teaching process and the methodological strategies of the different subjects to ensure an impact in the context. In other words, our comments on this point do not refer to a review of results in labour settings, but to the non-existence of academic or curricular strategies and mechanisms in the programme itself for generating a social impact. In the recommendations, we therefore propose to implement specific mechanisms and a new curricular design to find new ways to achieve application of the knowledge acquired in the programme in the context of work of the students.

5. *Evaluations of the subjects*. All subjects, except for the Thesis Workshop and the Qualitative Research Workshop, were evaluated through papers to be written by the students at the end of each subject based on reading of the bibliographical material assigned by the lecturer. In this sense, and coinciding with the previous point, the evaluations of the subjects focused on promoting reading and the already mentioned intellectual capacities, but they did not promote application in the context of work or other social contexts. They did not promote the development of practical skills either, such as the use of field techniques, the application

of practical activities or instruments, or research skills, e.g. to collect information, classify data, register and file data etc.

Moreover, it is important to mention that the evaluations through papers were not based on previously established criteria with a prescribed uniform format, structure and content. Rather, the evaluation depended on the criterion and opinion of the different lecturers. In this sense, the students said that they had to ask each lecturer separately about the criteria for writing and presenting the paper. These criteria differed, not only as regards writing the papers but also concerning the rating of the papers. Based on a review of the projects of the master's programme, we have not found any guidelines, purposes or aspects related to the evaluation process or methodology for the different subjects.

6. *Feedback for the students on their papers*. In the first half of the programme, the lecturers were not asked to provide the students with feedback on their papers. This requirement was introduced as a requirement as from the Module on "Communication Theories". From then on the lecturers were required to send feedback to the students on their work, specifying not only the marks but also comments on the topic, content, development and conclusions. However, three quarters of the interviewed students said that they had not received this feedback though most lecturers delivered this in the administrative office of the programme. The students who received feedback on their papers said they were given the comments after repeated insistence with the administrative assistant of the programme, though when they finally got the feedback this was too late. On the other hand, it is important to underline that all students received feedback on the thesis profile prepared in the Thesis Workshop.

7. *Coordination among the lecturers and between lecturers and supervisors*. The interviewed lecturers, as well as the programme officers mentioned that there have been no coordination meetings, though this was planned before the beginning of the programme. There were no meetings either during development of the master's programme. The programme officers sent general information to all lecturers on the master's programme and on the subject for which they were responsible. However, this information was incomplete as regards the study plan and the content of the programme and of the subjects, which hindered vertical and horizontal coordination of the subjects so as to avoid repetition or leaps in the progress of some specific topics. I should be mentioned that a meeting of the lecturers was planned by the end of the master's programme as no previous meetings were held. However, no date was set for that meeting. Two relevant aspects as a result of the lack of coordination between the lecturers were mentioned by the students; one regarding difficulties related to the depth of the contents and the use of didactic strategies that were not in accordance with the lower academic level of some students, especially from Tarija and Oruro (particularly at the beginning of the programme); and the other regarding the requirement of adopting the topic of "the media" for preparing the thesis profile, which is why some students mentioned that they changed their thesis topic, including the media topic, so as to meet this requirement and pass the Thesis Workshop. However, they did so with the intention of changing their profile or resuming their previous topic once they passed the Thesis Workshop.

No coordination activities were planned or carried out between the lecturers responsible for the subjects and the supervisors of the theses, with the aim of supporting the supervisors and ensuring adequate development of the theses.

We should underline here that the coordination meetings with lecturers and supervisors are not part of the habitual administrative – academic practice in CEPI and that this is not very common either as a mechanism for planning and improving the quality of master's programmes in Bolivian state universities, partly out of respect for autonomy of the chair. As a consequence, the interest of the programme in coordination meetings seems not to have

corresponded to expectations of (Bolivian) lecturers and supervisors and of the academic and administrative coordinators of CEPI. An administrative trend of responding relatively late to needs arising in the programme besides obvious logistical difficulties in organising a meeting of lecturers and supervisors who do not all live and work in Bolivia, may have contributed to the lack of meetings. However, our opinion is that this type of meetings is an important tool for planning and improving the quality which the CEPI should make use of both in future versions of this programme and in other programmes for which it is responsible (also see the section on recommendations).

8. *Reading of bibliographical material*. Although the programme had a new and up-to-date library, with two and even three copies of many books, both in the city of Sucre and in the cities of Oruro and Tarija, the students and some of the interviewed lecturers said that reading of the bibliography mainly centred on the compulsory texts for each subject. Hence, many students referred to the scarce literature included in the bibliography of the study plan, despite the existence and availability of much more material. Although reading is a decision and responsibility of every student, we think that the programme did not resort to additional strategies to foment reading in the students.

9. *Internet Platform*. Even though the programme had an internet platform for sending and receiving papers, and for communicating with lecturers and for the students to communicate among themselves, this means was not fully taken advantage of. The students and lecturers we spoke with indicated that in some cases the platform did not function correctly as it was impossible to upload or download papers. In other cases they referred to their lack of habit and skill in using this technological tool. Even though an introduction in management and use of the platform was offered at the beginning of the programme, not everyone participated (because of the delays in enrolment and the delayed participation of some students). The persons who participated in this training said they did not fully understand and use this tool.

10. *Programme Promotion*. Before the beginning of the programme, promotion was insufficient as the students enrolled after the beginning of the programme and some of the already enrolled students mentioned that the information or advertising on the programme reached them late or by accident, especially in the cities of Tarija and Oruro. We consider that this was partly due to the use of mainly written means such as fliers, announcements and in newspapers, but without using other media of a wider scope.

**Part 3. Recommendations**

Based on our observations and the identification of strengths, weaknesses and difficulties, we propose the following recommendations in 14 specific points related to teaching-learning, research and administration. Besides, we propose a new curricular design in which we systematically consider the key aspects of the Master's programme with the purpose of achieving a general improvement. Finally, the added values that can strengthen and improve the programme management capacity are included.

## 6. Specific recommendations

6.1. Teaching

1. In this programme, it is neither necessary nor pertinent to train lecturers in the communication and local development approach, as the lecturers have considerable experience and enjoy prestige in their field. But we do recommend meetings from the very beginning to create a shared vision of the programme in which it is possible to exchange both differences and coincidences regarding the principles, contents and objectives of the programme and its philosophical – methodological base lines. We underscore that for improving the quality and coordination of the teaching process in the Master's programme, it is necessary to establish better contact between the lecturers and the programme officers. Taking into account that not all lecturers live in Bolivia, it is necessary to identify a meeting strategy in the form of, for example, seminars or debates in which the lecturers and programme officers can meet in a physical and/or virtual space.

2. For strengthening a coordinated and specific teaching process, we recommend elaborating, as part of the programme's curricular design, criteria as regards what is expected of the student in terms of theoretical and empirical contents, besides techniques and methods applied in the academic activities in every subject. This type of criteria will help to concretise the way in which each subject contributes to the programme as a whole and in relation to the other subjects. Besides, this would help to define the academic level and objectives pursued by the Master's programme.

3. We consider it is also important to propose mechanisms for increasing and improving reading in the students. One mechanism in this regard could be the introduction of literature seminars in which some students provide summaries of selected texts while others prepare arguments against and for the theoretical arguments identified in the texts. This type of seminars would oblige the students to read the text on beforehand, and this would also help the students to develop a critical and dynamic reading. We also think that the teaching of techniques, methods and technologies for finding relevant references and databases could strengthen the students' capacity to actively find relevant literature on specific topics. As regards forms of evaluating learning in the subjects that contribute to enhance reading, we think that the papers based on a book or texts could be complemented with exams with short and open-ended questions. Reading prior to the exam would be a condition for the student to be able to answer the questions in this type of written exams.

4. We recommend that the programme use different forms of evaluating the knowledge acquired by the students in the subjects aimed at fomenting the development of different skills, not only intellectual skills, but also methodological and practical skills, as well as enhanced reading. This type of practical skills would also enhance capacity-building in application of the acquired knowledge in the social context, and particularly in the work environment. Besides the papers, we propose the use of written development exams and practical exercises: mini fieldwork, case studies, and the use of different techniques.

5. We consider it is necessary to design a system for providing feedback on the results of the evaluation of the subject through the internet platform, ensuring that the lecturer provides information or comments for all students on his/her papers. These comments must specify

why the student was granted a certain mark. This will certainly help the student to deepen his/her knowledge.

6.2. Research

6. For ensuring relevance in elaboration of the thesis profile, and in the thesis itself, we recommend defining lines of research on beforehand in accordance with the objectives and scope of the programme. The lines of research would help to put in place a framework for the students to choose analytical approaches and themes for their thesis, and at the same time they would enhance flexibility in individual development of the thesis in view of the students' particular interests, knowledge and experience. (This aspect is also included in the added values, in section 8, point 8.2. paragraph b, pp. 23).

7. We do not think it is pertinent for the thesis profiles to be approved by only one lecturer, and we therefore recommend that the profiles be approved by an evaluation tribunal composed of programme lecturers with an academic profile and experience in the topic of the thesis profile.

8. For improving supervision in this programme, we have the following recommendations:
a) Designation of supervisors before the student is preparing his/her thesis profile.
b) The supervisor must participate in the preparation of the thesis profile.
c) Have a limited group of supervisors trained in and with links to the field covered in the Master's programme.
d) Provide more information to the supervisors on the objectives, contents and bibliography of the Master's programme. We propose meetings from the beginning of the programme among supervisors, lecturers and programme officers so as to create a common vision of the programme content and objectives and its philosophical – methodological base lines. These meetings could take place after and in coordination with meetings of the lecturers (see point 1 in recommendations).

9. To ensure application of the thesis in the context of work, we propose the following mechanisms:
a) Include activities (works or practices) in the subjects aimed at promoting application, for example, mini fieldwork, practical exercises, case studies.
b) Recommend links between the research activity of the thesis with the context of work of the student.
c) Enter into agreements with public and private institutions for ensuring access to and consent for elaboration of the thesis or of some practices in those institutions.

6.3. Administration

10. For uniting the evaluation of the learning acquired by the students in the different subjects we propose developing general standards and designing a guide for the lecturers in evaluation of the subjects based on formal criteria and a marks scale.
A guide of this type would be applicable in most master's programmes administered by the CEPI. Therefore, we consider that the emphasis must be on the initiative and participation of CEPI to ensure an evaluation with academic quality criteria, based on a consensus and agreement with the programme lecturers.

11. For improving use of the internet platform as an instrument in teaching and communication, we recommend:
a) More training for lecturers, supervisors and students in use of the platform.
b) A more diversified use of the platform, creating more needs for consultation and the exchange of information.

12. For strengthening promotion of the Master's programme, we recommend that programme coordinators:
a) Consider announcements in different means of communication, such as <u>television</u>, radio and newspapers.
b) Promote participation of indigenous Quechua and Aymara students in the Master's programme.

13. For future evaluations, we recommend that the programme coordinators also consider employers (leaders, directors, supervisors) to verify the scope and achievement of the impact of the students' learning in their context of work.

14. For future versions of this Master's programme, we recommend working to establish permanent learning spaces in all places where the programme is offered. Permanent spaces would also ensure stability and accessibility of the texts of the mini libraries.

## 7. Proposal for a new curricular design

The principal weaknesses we have identified in this Master's programme are related to the research part, i.e. the thesis work; planning, the profile design, the fieldwork, supervision, data processing, analysis and elaboration of the final text or draft. We think that the way in which the curriculum of the programme is designed at the moment does not sufficiently contribute to facilitate and enhance dynamism of the thesis work. As specified in section 5.2. point 3 (pp. 15 of this report), at the moment the programme is organised in three separate components, by modules; 1º) paradigms of social development, 2º) theories of communication, and 3º) research methodology and thesis writing. In this structure, the thesis does not form part of the curricular plan of the other two modules. Our opinion is that this structure is problematic as it postpones the subjects related to research to the end of the programme.

In response to these problems, we propose a new curricular design that ensures integration of the three programme components during the time of the academic activity. Instead of separating the Master's programme into three different modules, we propose dividing the programme into cycles with each containing a subject of each component or module. In the workshop with the partners of the Master's programme, which was organised and developed by the external evaluators on 4 July of this year, we gave a detailed presentation of the new proposal using power point (see Appendix 6). After receiving comments and exchanging ideas with workshop participants, we made some adjustments to the proposal. The central aspects of the proposal are:

a) *First cycle*. This cycle includes three subjects; one in "Development", one in "Communication" and one in "Research"; each subject will be taught during two weekends.

What we want to achieve with this structure is a better interrelation between the theoretical content presented in the first two subjects as well as a better relationship of these two subjects with the subjects in research, which focuses on methodological practices.

In the first weekend of the research topic, it would be necessary to cover different concrete methodological strategies, such as qualitative and quantitative tools, systematic data gathering forms, routines for data registration and filing, as well as reflections on the relationship between the researcher and the informant.

The second weekend should centre on preparatory activities for the fieldwork; an identification and statement of research problems, a delimitation of the research field, a proposal for the fieldwork in the student's place of work and initial work for preparing the thesis topic and profile.

We recommend evaluating learning in this subject through a written exam with open-ended questions.

We think it is necessary to select and assign supervisors to the students in the first cycle before the beginning of the second cycle.

b) *Second cycle*. We continue with the same cycle structure for subjects 4 (Development), 5 (Communication) and 6 (Research). We recommend that subject 6 – in Research – consists of two components; a work process that ends with preparation of the thesis profile and one concrete data gathering exercise.

The first weekend would focus on preparation for writing the thesis profile; with lessons on design of the profiles – the objectives, theoretical support, methodological support and timeframe. Besides, the students participate in activities for preparing a mini fieldwork; selection of a context or place (preferably the place of work), proposal of the topic or problem to be investigated, data collection methods and data classification mechanisms.

Between the first and the second weekend (with an interval of more or less 3 weeks) the student will perform the two activities started in the courses in conjunction with his/her supervisor, i.e. a mini fieldwork (maximum one week) and preparation of the thesis profile.

In the second weekend, the central activities include two presentations: one on the results of the mini fieldwork and one on the thesis profile. These presentations must be made in the group of students, with guidance from the lecturer and in coordination with the supervisors. Approval or refusal of the presentation of the mini fieldwork could be one of the two forms for evaluating the student in this subject. The other would be approval of the thesis profile, which we propose to be done by a tribunal of evaluators composed of programme lecturers.

c) *Third cycle*. The programming of subjects 7 (in Development), 8 (in Communication) and 9 (in Research) is slightly different from the two previous cycles as we propose having a time interval of around two months between subjects 8 and 9, with no classes, for the students to do their fieldwork. From the beginning, the fieldwork must be guided actively by the supervisor. The supervisor must also give assistance in the introductory part of the fieldwork so as to facilitate the student's access to informants and data for his/her project (for example, through letters of recommendation or direct contact with authorities/key persons in the research context).

Subject 9 (Research) would focus on practical and theoretical preparatory activities for writing the thesis.

The first weekend would focus on techniques of classifying, processing and analyzing the collected data and information. We propose that the lecturer integrate materials of the students' projects as examples so as to show how an analysis can be developed on the basis of these samples. This type of classes could be combined with work in small groups of students with lecturer guidance.

In the second weekend, the students will participate in classes on how to formally structure the thesis, as well as on wording and style of the thesis. These classes should be combined with individual or group work on structuring of the thesis. For this activity, the lecturer should coordinate his/her guide to evaluate the students with the supervisors.

The evaluation of the subject can be based on a written and formal presentation of progress of the work prepared by the student related to the chapter "preliminary presentation and analysis of results", which would later become a chapter in the thesis. This presentation would go hand in hand with a brief presentation by the student before a small tribunal composed of the subject lecturer, the supervisor and an invited lecturer involved in the thesis topic. After this presentation, the student would receive the feedback required for making corrections and adjustments as well as recommendations for writing the final draft of the thesis.

d) _Last phase_. This last phase delimits the time between the end of classes and formal presentation of the thesis for review and defence, acording to the norms and terms of CEPI. In this time, the student would prepare a draft of the thesis to be submitted to the supervisor for corrections and adjustments. It is necessary for the supervisor to work actively with the student in this period and we consider that the lecturer or the lecturers who taught the research subjects could also support the students in writing their theses, if necessary, until formal presentation of the final draft to the corresponding instance.

## 8. Added values to strengthen the programme's management capacity

Based on the evaluation, and as a result of reflection on and analysis of the opportunities for improvement and capacity-building of the Master's programme administration, we propose the following points:

8.1. _Interinstitutional committee_. Operation of the committee has been adequate and the relationship between the different instances has been positive and proactive. However, we consider it would be vitally important to establish norms for the functioning and the scope of this committee, taking into account that the scope of its participation and involvement must be clear, so as to ensure continuity and sustainability of the programme over time.

8.2. _Social impact of the programme in the context_. This is an opportunity that has not been completely taken advantage of. The programme has purposes and objectives aiming at achieving a local development paradigm that can be applied in the participants' context of work, but the administrative mechanisms to ensure this impact must be managed and supervised so as to ensure achievement of this goal within a reasonable time. We can mention the following mechanisms in this sense:

a) _Agreement with institutions working in communication and development_. With the objective of ensuring that the students can apply what they learned in the Master's programme in their own institutions, it would be very important to formalise agreements between CEPI and the Norwegian cooperation with those institutions that would benefit from application of the acquired knowledge by their employees-students of the Master's programme. These agreements could not only cover practices or fieldwork, but even the thesis with an applicative approach.

b) _Establishment of lines of research_. With the objective of ensuring that the research works and theses of the student respond to local development needs in communication topics, the Interinstitutional Committee can establish lines of research of an applicative nature gicing

priority to themes that are considered an answer to local demands and requirements. The students could choose from the lines in accordance to their education and professional experience, though especially in relation to their field of work, so that the thesis would be a true contribution and enrichment of the social context.

c) *Redefinition of the supervision function*. The supervisors are an important component of the programme, and their role is fundamental to support progress and conclusion of the students' thesis. In this regard, it is necessary to redefine the supervision function, not only in terms of starting supervision when the profile is prepared or for approval of the thesis profile, but also for giving advice on planning of the research in accordance with the established lines of research and in compliance with the applied research work aimed at achieving the expected social impact. Moreover, the supervisors must help the students to progress in a sustained manner in the thesis research, participating in the elected line of research and avoiding unnecessary changes in the thesis topic. Therefore, it is important to prepare a highly coordinated, committed team of supervisors who have appropriated the philosophy, objectives, contents and scope of the programme.

8.3. *Coordinated team of lecturers*. One key success factor of all academic programmes is a highly coordinated teaching staff committed to the philosophy, purposes, objectives, contents and scope of the master's programme. In this sense, it is fundamental to have an interdisciplinary teaching team that shares the programme vision and ends and that can ensure, through reflection and coordination sessions, the best possible mechanisms and processes for the student to acquire the established competence and objectives, not only concerning the different subjects but fundamentally as regards compliance of the complete programme. Likewise, the lecturers must appropriate the lines of research and ensure that their subject can support planning or progress of the students' thesis work.

8.4. *Activities in support of curricular development*. The organisation of conferences, panels, round tables or other specific activities of a limited duration that, though not being part of the Master's study plan can enrich and widen development of the programme content and foment understanding of the established lines of research.

8.5. *Periodic evaluation*. With the purpose of ensuring that the improvements or changes in the academic and administrative management of the programme are carried out as planned, it is important for the Interinstitutional Committee to perform periodic or partial evaluations (or appoint someone to do so) of the progress and achievements in implementation of the improvements, as well as to consider the adjustments needed to ensure that all participants (programme officers, lecturers, supervisors) know and comply with their tasks in the best possible manner. This task and initiative at the executive level must be coordinated by CEPI, through its programme evaluation bodies, so as to ensure evaluations with standards focusing on the attainment of academic quality, with an in-depth analysis of the processes and not only of the results.

## Part 4. Appendices

A   Terms of Reference
B   Timeframe of interviews and meetings
C   Detailed overview of reviewed documents
D   Description of the Master's programme in Communication for Development

E   Description of the Master's programme in Intercultural Communication for building a Pluri and Multicultural State

F   Preliminary document with an analysis and recommendations, presented in the Workshop held on 4 July.

G   Document of group 2, improvements to the programme