Chapter 4

Researcher as cluster facilitator: experience from Mode 2 research

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The Zanzibar Seaweed Cluster Initiative was started in 2006 working with seaweed farmers in Zanzibar on innovative farming of the seaweed and value addition. At the start, the cluster initiative had 20 members located in one village in Zanzibar, and now it has about 3,000 members located in over 11 villages in Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania. It is one of the best performing cluster initiatives in Africa. Innovation through value addition has enabled the production of seaweed value-added products by seaweed farmers in Tanzania, producing more than 30 such products. The start and continuous running of the cluster initiative is strengthened by the active involvement of its Facilitator who is a researcher at a university institute (Institute of Marine Sciences, University of Dar es Salaam), bringing her expertise both as the Facilitator and a Researcher to coordinate and ensure strong formation and involvement of the Triple Helix composition of the cluster initiative. This paper discusses the experience of the Seaweed Cluster Facilitator as a researcher and facilitator, taking the reader through the initial training of the researcher, formation of the cluster initiative and triple helix, and the remarkable outcome of the collaboration between a university and the seaweed farmers, depicting the Mode 2 Type of knowledge production.