

*Seeking Better Practices for Capacity
Development: Training & Beyond*

OECD DAC – LenCD

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Table of Contents

List of Boxes	ii
List of Tables	ii
Diagram.....	ii
Abbreviations.....	iii
Preamble	iv
Executive Summary.....	1
1. Why Training and Beyond?	5
1.1 Introduction: training and learning for capacity development	5
1.2 Background context	5
1.3 An emerging consensus: a different perspective on training	6
1.4 Agreement about required shifts	9
1.5 Beyond training to broader conceptions of learning practices to support CD	10
1.6 Structure of the paper	13
2. Assessments to frame the context and inform good design	14
2.1 Introduction	14
2.2 Analysis of the context and enabling environment	16
2.3 Theoretical underpinnings for analysis.....	17
2.4 Assessment frameworks and tools	19
2.4.1 A learning perspective in assessment processes	21
3. The design of training and learning practices	23
3.1 Introduction	23
3.2 Formulating goals and objectives	23
3.3 Design decisions.....	25
3.3.1 Theories of learning	26
3.4 A selection of learning practice approaches, tools and techniques	26
3.5 Good practice for training.....	30
4. Implementation	31
4.1 Introduction	31
4.2 Relevance	32
4.3 Delivery	33
4.4 Providers	34
4.5 Monitoring and evaluation	36
5. Moving Forward: Unfinished Business.....	39
Notes.....	42
Bibliography	43
Appendix 1: Berlin Statement on International Development Training	45

Appendix 2: Approaches, Tools and Techniques to Support Learning for Capacity Development ..	48
Introduction	48
Blended Learning	49
Coaching and Mentoring.....	49
Communication.....	50
Customised Training	51
Degree Level Study Overseas.....	52
Distance Learning.....	53
E-learning	54
Experiential Learning	54
Exposure.....	58
External Training Courses	59
Knowledge Management.....	59
Leadership Development.....	60
Organisational Development (Strengthening, Change Management and Learning)	61
Partnerships and Networks.....	62
Supplementary Approaches.....	63

List of Boxes

1	Results based management versus complexity	6
2	The Berlin Statement on International Development Training	9
3	Directional shifts	10
4	The donors' role in leading change	12
5	Cross cutting issues	16
6	Some relevant models and theories	17
7	Some helpful sources of assessment tools	21
8	Some important learning theories	26
9	IEG findings on factors essential for successful training	30
10	Kirkpatrick's Four Levels model for the evaluation of training	36
11	Some resources for developing results frameworks with related indicators	37

List of Tables

1	ADB's assessment matrix	19
2	Learning Practice Approaches, Tools and Techniques	27

Diagram

1	The Limits of Training and Learning	8
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Abbreviations

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CD	Capacity development
CDRA	Community Development Resource Association
DFID	Department for International Development
DTI	Development Training Institutes
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
EC	European Commission
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LenCD	Learning Network on Capacity Development
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
PESTLE	Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal and Environmental
RBM	Results based management
TA	Technical assistance
TC	Technical cooperation
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WBI	World Bank Institute

Preamble

The OECD/DAC has considered capacity development to be a key development co-operation priority since the 2005 *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* and especially since the *Accra Third High Level Forum* in September 2008. Together with key partners such as the *Learning Network on Capacity Development* (LenCD), the OECD/DAC has sought to help the donor community to identify and apply increasingly operational forms of good practice and to support Southern voices in the on-going debate on capacity development. Post Accra, the DAC and its partners have begun to gather information and to highlight an emerging South-North understanding of good practice for capacity development, focusing on the capacity priority themes of the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA). The many AAA references to capacity have been grouped into six operational themes: 1. technical cooperation; 2. enabling environment constraints; 3. capacity of country systems; 4. integrating capacity into sector/thematic strategies; 5. the capacity development role of civil society and the private sector; and, 6. state building in fragile situations.

Regarding the first of these themes, training and learning related issues are considered by the DAC as a central aspect of its policy debate on **technical cooperation**, and, more broadly, on capacity development. OECD/DAC statistics on worldwide Official Development Assistance (ODA) suggest that training represents a major donor investment over the last 50 years. Since 1961 DAC members devoted approximately 400 billion USD – at current prices – to technical cooperation, of which training and other learning-oriented programmes constitute a prominent part. The OECD/DAC and LenCD have therefore engaged in identifying and consolidating good practices in the area of **training and learning practices to support capacity development**. They have actively followed the evolving international debate that was launched with the *High Level Retreat on the Effectiveness of International Development Training* in Berlin (June 2008) and continued with the *Improving the Results of Learning for Capacity Building Forum* in Washington (June 2009) and the recent *Learning Link* event in Turin (December 2009).

The purpose of this paper. This paper is the result of a joint effort of OECD/DAC and LenCD to assemble the critical messages about training and learning that are emerging from the current international debate. It attempts to synthesise current wisdom on this topic, and to offer a sense of direction on where the debate is going, particularly in terms of approaches to capacity development interventions at country and field levels. It is not, however, intended to address detailed implications at the implementation level. The paper is written primarily for the demand side, i.e. those in the South who request and/or are beneficiaries of capacity development activities, together with Northern donor institutions who commission and pay for the activities. The purpose is to give the demand community information about current understanding of this component of capacity development, as guidance to help them know what to expect from providers in terms of best practice. For example, it is intended to be of practical assistance to those managers and technicians who face the challenge of developing CD responses in sector-based or thematic development strategies and work plans. This information will, therefore, also be of benefit to those supply side providers who need or want to change their approaches in order to conform to what is currently known to be most effective at meeting needs.

Towards a joint South-North consensus. The international debate on the effectiveness of training and other approaches to learning for capacity development has been largely dominated by the voices of bilateral and multilateral donor agencies and Development Training Institutes from the North. Thus, it needs to be remembered that the emerging consensus described in this paper remains significantly Northern-based, although a growing effort now is being made to seek more balanced donor and partner country consensus. On the road to the *Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness* (Seoul, October 2011), the OECD/DAC and LenCD will seek to work with key Southern partners to support Southern participation in this debate and to incorporate Southern voices and perspectives as they evolve.

Executive Summary

Since the *Paris Declaration* of 2005 and *Accra Agenda for Action* in 2008 there has been growing recognition that capacity development (CD) is a multi-dimensional process that goes far beyond knowledge and skills transfer at the individual level to embrace whole organisations, sectors and systems, and the culture and context within which they all exist¹. Training has long been a central element of many CD and Technical Cooperation (TC) programmes, but studies have consistently shown that past practices have not been as effective as expected. In particular, the practice of equating training with CD is now known to be unhelpful because training is just one of many approaches that can contribute to CD. Just as training is not the way to meet all learning needs, neither is learning the universal panacea to solve all CD problems. There are many aspects of capacity that call for an array of responses beyond support to learning, and others that are beyond the scope of all external support and interventions.

Learning has been recognised as core to achieving sustainable development results (ECDPM 2008) and implicit in the management of change (Senge 2006). Using the complexity perspective to analyse development issues also indicates that constant change creates an imperative for constant learning (ODI 2008). However, learning is an organic, internal process and ultimately the outsider's role can only be to support its emergence. However the power of outsiders to influence learning is illustrated by the phenomenon known as '*regressive learning*', which is where the imbalance of power relations between donors and their recipients results in the distortion of learning because compliance with donor requirements takes precedence over important lessons from implementation of projects (Shutt 2006).

This paper works with a concept of learning for development beyond definitions that anchor it solely in the acquisition of knowledge or skills, into the realms of capabilities and sense making that lead to expanded options for action. This model is in line with current, more comprehensive conceptions of CD which places learning among the group of factors such as leadership, systems and incentives that co-exist centrally in the ever evolving dynamic of the development processes of any given institution, organisation or individual.

Before moving to discussion of the emerging consensus on training and learning it should be noted that recent developments in the CD debate have created an acute tension between two trends in thinking and practice that are essentially contradictory – results based management (RBM) and complexity. Neither is right nor wrong as both have their place and contribution to make. Just as there are needs for which RBM works and for which it would not be helpful to use complexity theories, so there are situations that are far too complex for RBM to be appropriate and helpful. Using the right approach for the situation is fundamental to making the right choice of CD response, whether training, learning or any other modality. Those making decisions need to be able to understand which approach would be best in any given circumstance.

The emerging consensus identified below is drawn primarily from the current documentation available from Northern donors and Development Training Institutes (DTI). While the views from the South thus far are generally consistent with those from the North², there remains a pressing

¹ CD theories now are generally built on the understanding that three interdependent layers need to be addressed together; these are individual, organisational and enabling environment (institutional). The levels are discussed in detail in the OECD Paper *The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working towards Good Practice* (2006). The three levels framework is the basis for situating training and learning support.

² See the joint CD Alliance and DAC secretariat Issue Brief *Southern Perspectives on Capacity Development – "Time to Act and Learn"* (2009) available at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/42/23/44386394.pdf>

need to integrate more Southern perspectives on CD issues so that they inform decisions about the way forward. Key points in the emerging consensus are:

- **In many circumstances resources are wasted on inappropriate initiatives because complex contextual factors negate the potential effectiveness of training and other learning based interventions. The design of any intervention should both be informed by in-depth understanding of local context and identification of opportunities and constraints, and appropriately aligned to broader CD initiatives;**
- **Training individuals may not be an adequate CD response and is rarely one in and of itself. Training is best used as a component of work at multiple levels of organisation and country systems, however defined;**
- **The ability to learn has been recognised as both a capability in its own right and an essential, underpinning capability for other aspects of sustainable CD. Activities need to go beyond training towards processes that support learning;**
- **Achieving sustainable CD impact calls for long-term perspectives. There is a need to make strategic links between short-term activities, such as training courses, and long-term learning and change goals for sustainable CD impact. Additionally, there is a need to facilitate the continuity of long term relationships that can make valuable contributions to success and enable persistence through difficulties;**
- **The quality of training design and training cycle management is fundamental to success**
- **Training has often been both inappropriately used and poorly implemented as the response to CD needs. A results orientation can help to ensure that proposed training activities are appropriately implemented to meet identified needs, and that progress and the contribution to overall CD needs can be monitored and evaluated;**
- **Greater attention needs to be paid to translation of resources and materials, for adaptation of concepts to local context as well as into local languages and this can be achieved through more effective use of local resource providers;**
- **Some donor agencies and DTI recognise the need to change their approach, practice or role, and understand that they need staff with soft skills³ in addition to their existing technical expertise.**

The 2008 *Berlin Statement* recognised the need for activities to go beyond training to broader conceptions of ‘*learning practices*’. However, current practices are deeply entrenched and cannot be changed easily so there is a danger that using new terms might serve only to mask the continuation of old practices. Despite what is now known about the serious limitations of training in terms of producing sustainable CD results, currently there is no incentive for service providers to change. Because donors’ policies and practices are so influential in shaping the incentive structure for service providers a great deal rests on the question of what donors will pay for. At present donors continue to fund repeated use of training as the primary approach to CD, effectively rewarding poor performance, which must be an issue given their concern about accountability for use of their resources. While practice lags dramatically behind, there is increasing acknowledgement by donors and DTI that, in order to work with different learning practices and to address organisational and institutional constraints, their staff need to have both soft and technical skills.

³ Soft skills is a term related to a person’s Emotional Intelligence Quotient, which is different to their Intelligence Quotient. Soft skills influence how we interact with each other and include abilities such as communication and listening, creativity, analytical thinking, empathy, flexibility, change-readiness, and problem solving. Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soft_skills

Service providers, including the DTI, need to make a fundamental shift from being expert providers of learning for others, to seeing themselves and their partners on a shared learning journey within broader CD approaches. Donors will need to change their own approaches and practices first if they are to influence the sector to make this change. However, it is not only a donor-driven supply side belief that training is the answer to all problems, this assumption is very strongly held by many in partner countries, and thus they also need to change how they understand CD in order for the demand side to take the lead.

This paper reviews current thinking about training and learning practices for CD under three headings: assessments to frame the context and inform good design; the design of training and learning practices; and, implementation.

The emerging consensus is that a number of **weaknesses in current assessment processes need to be addressed** because repeated failure, not only of training but also of TC initiatives generally, to understand local context before beginning activities has resulted in many wasted opportunities and resources. The issue of **contextual constraints** and their sources is currently insufficiently addressed and this is a significant gap because the potential of learning can only be understood through the identification of enabling conditions and constraints. However, steps are being taken to address the problems of assessment and many leading institutions now have tools available that can support stakeholders and change agents to achieve a sound understanding of the context. In recent years the CD sector has become aware of the need to ground all practice, starting with assessment, in **theories of capacity and change**. Without this there is a danger of CD remaining trapped in the realm of technical skills, which, while important has now been shown to be incomplete and, in some cases, irrelevant. It is ultimately the stakeholders and change agents in any given context that will have the best sense of the most promising responses for different capacity levels and needs. Adding a learning perspective to an assessment process could help to answer fundamental questions about whether or not learning practices could contribute to sustainable change.

Design is a series of decisions about domains and methods. The quality of design decision making depends on both the quality of information available to the decision makers and their understanding of appropriate learning theories. It is essential to ensure that the design of training and learning practices, whether within an RBM or complexity approach, is demand-driven, relate to broader CD agenda and priorities, and to distinguish the difference between long-term learning goals and component parts that can be more easily defined and more quickly achieved. Some types of capacity needs involve too many variables for learning goals and objectives to be specified as concrete and pre-defined outcomes, and so different formulations are needed for the purpose of activities. It would be unusual for any learning need effectively to be answered by a single learning practice; most need to be addressed by different modalities over time. There are many different approaches and practices that can be useful, for example: coaching and mentoring; experiential learning practices like action research; e-learning; knowledge management; and, organisational strengthening, to name just a few. Selecting multiple methods to achieve a *'good enough'* fit can be an effective way of maximising the strengths, and mitigating the challenges, of each component in the selection. Many of the practices described in this paper are linked or overlap and some can be considered as cross-cutting, but all can have a clear and specific role to play in particular circumstances. Integration of monitoring and evaluation needs to start with the first steps of design.

Innumerable factors can impact implementation for the better or worse. Relevance and adaptability of language, concepts and content to local culture and context must be ensured before any learning process commences. Relevance is also about matching the right participants with the right content and methods, which may be beyond the direct control of providers and calls for them to work with local decision makers to ensure effective targeting and selection of participants. The

*'transfer of learning'*⁴ from activities such as training courses into improved workplace performance is complex and needs support. Approaches to learning need to move from being focused on one-off deliveries to arrangements that incorporate follow-up as a matter of course. Evidence suggests that line managers hold the most significant key to resolving the problems of transferring learning into improved workplace performance. Monitoring and evaluating the impact of training activities is recognised by all training professionals to be a notoriously difficult task in any context, because multiple variables influence participants' performance after the training event. Nevertheless, a problem to be addressed is that the vast majority of training monitoring takes place at the participant satisfaction and learning levels, and little is done to monitor outcomes or impact.

The challenge now is about finding the best ways to make the understanding embodied in the emerging consensus a reality in terms of improved CD practices and there is much **unfinished business** that needs attention. There is much scope for changed practice at the country level. To make the right choices, stakeholders need to be concerned about the quality and relevance of assessments appreciating local context and potential, with a flexible approach to work towards long-term transformation. Stakeholders need to be aware of power relations and interests on all sides and agree on rules and safeguards for how to deal with these, including through evidence-based monitoring. Many concerned with CD need to let go their assumption that training is the appropriate response to every need – the 'I have a hammer, so every problem is a nail' syndrome. Currently provision of training and learning practices is unregulated and providers are not held to account against any agreed professional standards of practice. There have been some calls for accreditation systems, but as yet there no major initiative has taken that idea forward. Most importantly both the donors and the service providers need to undertake significant change management initiatives in order for different skills and new ways of working to be valued and rewarded within the sector. Finally, to change practice, there is a tremendous need for active learning on the issue of meaningful support to learning for CD.

⁴ *'Transfer of learning'* and *'transfer of training'* are terms being used in corporate and governments training sectors for the theory and practice of learning acquired in one setting, such as a training course, being integrated into practical usage in another setting, most usually the workplace. This is a subject of growing attention because in the past so much training has failed to achieve the desired impact. Many institutions are now using the concept of transfer of learning as the basis for evaluation of the effectiveness of training. A very informative discussion of this subject is available from **Human Resources and Social Development Canada**: *'Planning Workplace Education Programs: Transfer of Learning'* available at <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/hip/lld/nls/Publications/A/transfer-a.shtml>

1. Why Training and Beyond?

1.1 Introduction: training and learning for capacity development

Training has long been a central element of many capacity development (CD) and Technical Cooperation (TC) programmes. It is impossible to assess exactly how much has been spent on training over the last six decades, but it is undoubtedly in the range of \$US billions. However, the focus is now shifting to look beyond training to broader conceptions of, and approaches to, learning. Whatever the defined, learning is so intricately entwined in Technical Assistance (TA), TC and CD processes as to be impossible to distinguish as a totally separate entity, nor should it be. There are also aspects of the debate, for example about assessment and design, when it would be inappropriate to separate training and learning practices from other CD considerations because they should be incorporated as an integral part of an array of responses to need.

Within the substantial body of literature on TC, TA and CD generally, documented evidence and analysis of training is growing, but thus far little attention has been given to the practice of learning and how it sits within, and contributes to, any of those other processes. It is not easy to find clearly documented examples of learning practices that go beyond (but do not exclude) technical skills transfer through training. This paper focuses specifically on training and learning practices within the CD agenda and one of its purposes is to identify and disseminate the resources that do exist about learning, but, given the shortage of literature it is sometimes difficult to address learning in its own right. It has therefore been necessary to extrapolate some relevant lessons from the CD literature and apply them to learning practices.

1.2 Background context

The work on deepening understanding and effectiveness of CD has been a central theme in the aid effectiveness debates in progress since the *Paris Declaration* of 2005. The OECD paper *The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working towards Good Practice* (2006) was a milestone in drawing together documented experience and learning from multiple sources. The *Accra Agenda for Action* in 2008 urged an increasing emphasis on CD being country led and country owned, on the need to strengthen and use in-country resources more effectively, on the emergence of South-South cooperation for CD, and for a focus on sustainable outcomes. Furthermore, there is growing recognition that CD is a multi-dimensional process that goes far beyond knowledge and skills transfer at the individual level to embrace whole organisations, sectors and systems, and the enabling environment in which they all exist. The determinants of CD are not only technical but, first and foremost, political and governance related. Only when appropriate political, accountability and leadership arrangements are in place can capacity development be sustained.

The aid effectiveness debate provides an excellent opportunity to address many CD issues and needs, not least that of alignment and harmonisation, which are both key themes in the important *Berlin Statement on International Development Training* (Berlin Statement 2008). Currently there are innumerable instances of institutions, organisations, and in some cases, individuals, being involved in multiple CD activities associated with different donor projects. Invariably these activities have different purposes and use different approaches, which at best can be confusing for those on the receiving end and at worst can create conflict or a reduction of capacity. There are two major trends in thinking about approaches, which are essentially contradictory – results based management (RBM) and complexity, see Box 1 below for a discussion of these approaches. Few developing countries currently have a comprehensive CD component in macro level development plans or sector strategies; some because they do not perceive the need, and others because they do not yet have the capacity to develop them. The onus is, therefore, on the community of providers to ensure that their efforts are aligned and harmonised around joint assessments, country development

priorities and needs, and agreed approaches and standards for implementation. There is also a role for the donor community to support those countries that want to formulate more comprehensive CD strategies to acquire the capacity so to do.

All of these issues have implications for how bilateral and multilateral donors strategise their approach to CD and TC, and, at more operational levels, on the practices of those traditionally tasked with implementation of CD activities, particularly Development Training Institutes (DTI) and other training and learning services providers⁵.

What follows as the emerging consensus has been identified primarily from the current views of donors and others in the North, and thus it cannot be described as a global consensus. There are a limited, but increasing, number of contributions from the South in various fora and these contributions are generally consistent with the messages from Northern based analysts and commentators. It is clear, however, that there is a pressing need for Southern perspectives on all CD issues to be heard and for Southern stakeholders to become fully involved in decisions about the best ways forward. Everyone needs to take their share of responsibility for making that happen.

Box 1: Results based management versus complexity

Recent developments in CD have created an acute tension between two trends in thinking and practice that are essentially contradictory – results based management (RBM) and complexity. A focus on results and accountability requires the specification of goals and objectives as a precondition to planning and being able to assess the effectiveness, outcomes and impact of inputs and activities. A number of agencies are working on ways to apply RBM formats to CD practices. Complexity theory, on the other hand, is concerned with emergence, self-organisation, learning and adaptation in ways that are entirely contrary to the linear thinking of the RBM model. Complexity theory posits that results cannot be planned or predicted and a system will decide for itself what, if anything, will emerge as the result of an intervention or any change in its circumstances.

Currently both trends are getting a lot of attention in the CD debate. Neither is right or wrong as both have their place and contribution to make. Just as there are needs for which RBM works and for which it would not be helpful to use complexity theories, so there are situations that are far too complex for RBM to be appropriate and helpful. For example, RBM would work for a training programme for primary health providers to acquire the knowledge and skills to implement a new vaccination programme. Enabling a geographic region to rebuild its communities and livelihoods following an environmental disaster would, on the other hand, be much better supported by open learning processes that recognised the complexity of the situation and did not impose pre-conceived notions of the outcome. The issue is about those making decisions being able to understand which approach would be best in any given circumstance. This paper does not attempt specifically to follow or favour either trend, only to present some of the principles and practices of both because of their prominence in current thinking.

1.3 An emerging consensus: a different perspective on training

Key features of the training given or supported in the past are that it has most usually been linked to the need for technical skills for project implementation and to support for access to tertiary level

⁵ In the Berlin Statement Development Training Institutes are described as '*specialized training institutes as well as units of bi- and multilateral development agencies and regional development banks that are implementing development training*'. Except where there is a reason to mention them separately, in this paper the term service providers is used to cover both the DTIs and the large group of commercial and not-for-profit providers of training and learning services.

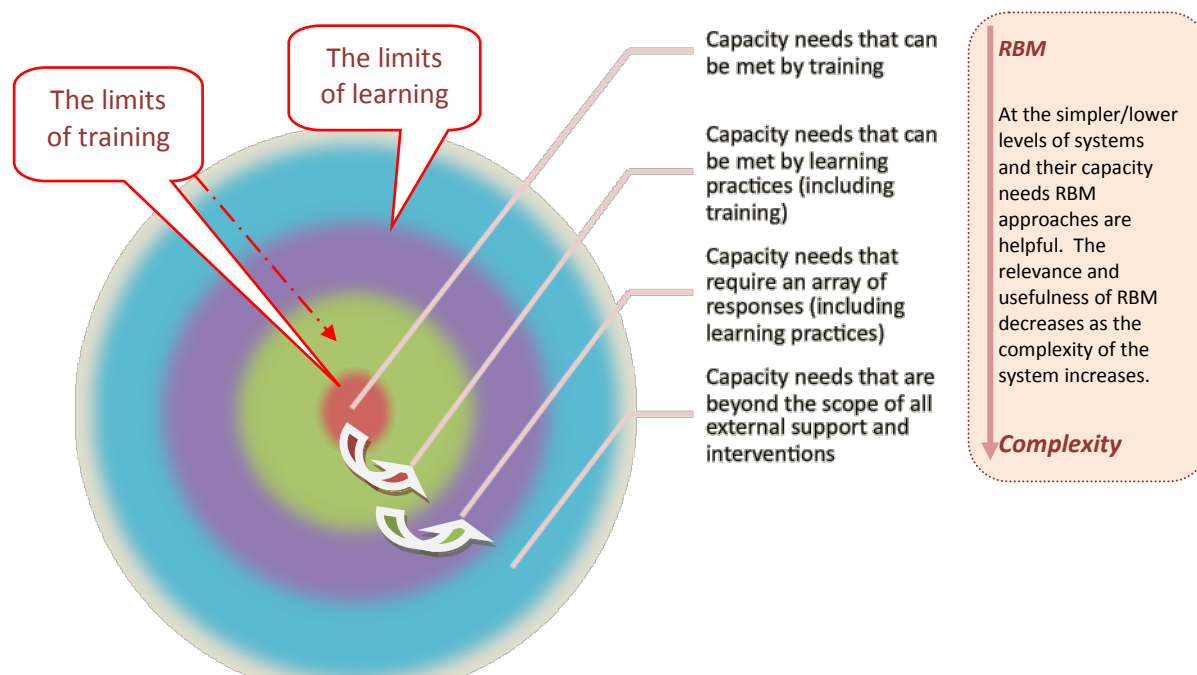
study in other countries. Training, by its very nature, has been focused on individuals rather than at organisational or institutional levels, with the primary intention being to improve knowledge and skills.

Traditionally training has not been defined, designed or evaluated within the context of comprehensive CD strategies and a number of the problems with training are the result of, and embedded in, bigger problems with the design and implementation of TC. In terms of modalities, training has most often been some form of instructive or educational process delivered by teachers, trainers or experts. The pedagogies used have been grounded in the development paradigm which holds that developed countries have knowledge and skills that developing countries need, and that training is the best way to transfer it to them. However, in recent years many agencies have published studies and initiatives that, when taken together, identify an emerging consensus that past training practices have not been as effective as they might have been.

The diagram below provides a simple visual guide to how to situate training and learning within broader conceptions of, and approaches to, CD. Most importantly for the purpose of this paper, understanding is emerging that the previous practice of equating training with CD is unhelpful because training is just one approach that can contribute to CD, and there are other approaches that can have much better impact in many circumstances. So the first important point is that training is not the answer to all problems. The second is that nor are broader learning practices discussed in this paper the universal panacea to meet all CD needs – no such solution exists. There are many capacity needs that call for other types of support, and others that no external interventions, however well designed or implemented, can meet, which makes the necessity for effective analysis of environmental influences an imperative. There is, for example, little to be gained by training teachers in methodologies to enhance girls' performance at school if a combination of culture and poverty prevent girls from attending school. Nor will coaching middle level managers in a government institution empower them to manage their staff more effectively if the overall system is gridlocked by political patronage.

To summarise, it is now understood that training can meet some capacity needs, and also contribute to learning that can contribute to the development of some aspects of capacity. But there are many aspects of capacity that call for an array of responses, and there are also aspects of capacity that are beyond the scope of all external support and interventions. The relevance of complexity perspectives increases through the levels of need.

Diagram 1: The Limits of Training and Learning



From a review of the current literature, the emerging consensus can be classified in three main themes. Firstly, about **the limits of training and learning practices as an effective modality for CD**.

- In many circumstances resources are wasted on inappropriate initiatives because complex contextual factors negate the potential effectiveness of training and other learning based interventions. The design of any intervention should be both informed by in-depth understanding of local context and identification of opportunities and constraints, and appropriately aligned to broader CD initiatives (WBI 2006, ADB 2008, Capacity Collective 2008, Berlin Statement 2008, ECPDM 2008, ODI 2008, EC 2009);
- Training individuals may not be an adequate CD response and is rarely one in and of itself. Training is best used as a component of work at multiple levels of organisation and country systems, however defined (see Diagram 1 above) (UNDP 2006, ADB 2008, Berlin Statement 2008, JICA 2008, UNDP 2009).

Secondly, about **the need for some conceptual shifts**

- The ability to learn has been recognised as both a capability in its own right and an essential, underpinning capability for other aspects of sustainable CD. Activities need to go beyond training towards processes that support learning (Berlin Statement 2008, ECPDM 2008, ODI 2008);
- Achieving sustainable CD impact calls for long-term perspectives. There is a need to make strategic links between short-term activities, such as training courses, and long-term learning and change goals for sustainable CD impact. Also to facilitate the continuity of long term relationships that can make valuable contributions to success and enable persistence through difficulties (DFID 2006, IDRC various, Capacity Collective 2008, JICA 2009, ADB 2008, IEG 2008, Southern Perspectives 2009, UNDP 2009).

Thirdly, about the **relevance and quality of the training currently being offered**:

- **The quality of training design and training cycle management is fundamental to success (DFID June 06, Berlin Statement 2008, IEG 2008);**
- **Training has often been both inappropriately used and poorly implemented as the response to CD needs. A results orientation can help to ensure that proposed training activities are appropriately implemented to meet identified needs, and that progress and the contribution to overall CD needs can be monitored and evaluated (See Box 1 above) (UNDP 2006, DFID 2006, Berlin Statement 2008, JICA 2008, IEG 2008);**
- **Greater attention needs to be paid to translation of resources and materials, for adaptation of concepts to local context as well as into local languages and this can be achieved through more effective use of local resource providers (UNDP 2006, Capacity Collective 2008, ADB 2008, Berlin Statement 2008, IEG 2008, Southern Perspectives 2009, UNDP 2009).**

1.4 Agreement about required shifts

The *Berlin Statement* (see Box 2 below for a list of the key messages in the statement and Appendix 1 for the full statement) was important for a number of reasons, one of which was that the donors and DTI who produced the statement recognised the need to broaden concepts of training to embrace ideas beyond the standard approaches of the past. This represents a key step in the important and necessary shift that must happen in both DTI and the broader community of service providers, and which will require the active support of donors. It could, however, be argued that continuing use of the word training as the main term to describe this aspect of CD might serve only to keep past training practices at the forefront of thinking, when the need is for a shift to a much broader conception of *'learning practices'*⁶ (that includes training as one of its components). But equally there is a danger that the change of terminology will not be accompanied by the necessary changes in service providers' practices and that they will continue to do the same as they have always done, only using different words to describe it. Without undertaking substantial internal change processes service providers are unlikely to adapt their mandates and practices appropriately. The *Berlin Statement* also noted the need for guidelines about improving the quality of the entire training cycle for those situations where training is deemed to be the appropriate response.

Box 2: The Berlin Statement on International Development Training

The headings of the key messages for aligning learning efforts for CD

1. Effectiveness - Training in the context of capacity development
2. Guidelines for the development of training programs
3. Metrics - Indicators and evaluation of training
4. Country Ownership - Strengthening training institutions
5. Alignment - Partner country needs assessments
6. Harmonization - International division of labor
7. Collaboration - Joint content development, sharing rosters, didactic approaches & training formats

⁶ A note about terms: Any work undertaken to support or facilitate learning can be described as an activity, intervention, project, or maybe even a programme, it might stand alone or be integrated into a set of activities for another purpose. For the sake of consistency the term learning practice/s will be used throughout this paper to cover all of those options. Similarly work under the CD banner might also be an activity, intervention, project or programme, stand alone or integrated into a TC framework. For the sake of consistency the term CD process/es will be used throughout this paper to cover all of those options.

Some major donor agencies and DTI have now recognised that, in order to be more effective, they need to change their own ways of working, and to have staff with different skill sets, most particularly people and process oriented skills, often referred to as soft skills⁷. Others have noted that it is going to take multiple shifts in the understanding, approach and practice of both Northern and Southern actors to establish a mutual learning agenda and readiness to engage in new practices, which is a prerequisite for a larger shift in CD approaches (Capacity Collective 2008). Thus a further element of the emerging consensus is that:

- **Some donor agencies and DTI recognise the need to change their approach, practice or role, and understand that they need staff with soft skills in addition to their existing technical expertise (DFID 2006, ADB 2008, EC 2009, Nelson 2009)**

As part of the ongoing dialogue the participants at the *Improving the Results of Learning for Capacity Building Forum* in Washington in June 2009 reiterated the need for change. It was noted that the DTI, in particular, need to make a shift that could be described as leaving behind their current self-conception as expert providers of learning for others, to seeing themselves and their partners on a shared learning journey within broader capacity development approaches. This was summarised as four '*Directional Shifts*' for the DTI sector, namely:

Box 3: Directional shifts (Learning Forum: WBI 2009)

- *From training institution to strategic facilitator of development;*
- *From training and structured learning for individuals to diverse learning for institutions and local change agents;*
- *From measuring learning outputs for individuals and activities to measuring learning outcomes and how they contribute to institutional level impact;*
- *From individual knowledge and results practices to knowledge exchange, piloting and implementing of results-oriented approaches that work.*

Attempts to achieve those shifts will undoubtedly have profound implications for both the mandates and practices of the DTI. Some comments on specific ways to implement these shifts are dealt with in the sections below on 2. Assessments; 3.2 A Focus on Results: Formulation of Goals and Objectives; and, 4.4 Providers.

1.5 Beyond training to broader conceptions of learning practices to support CD

An important theme in the *Berlin Statement* is the acknowledgement of the need to move from narrow notions of training towards more comprehensive conceptions of learning, though as noted above caution is needed to ensure that old practices do not continue under a new name. The word learning means different things in different contexts and cultures, and the ways in which individuals, groups and systems acquire it are innumerable. It has been recognised that the ability to learn is both core to achieving sustainable development results (ECDPM 2008) and implicit in the management of change (Senge 2006). Additionally, the increasing use of the complexity perspective

⁷ 'Soft skills' is a term related to a person's Emotional Intelligence Quotient, which is different to their Intelligence Quotient. Soft skills influence how we interact with each other and include abilities such as communication and listening, creativity, analytical thinking, empathy, flexibility, change-readiness, and problem solving. Adapted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soft_skills

to analyse and understand development issues is highlighting that constant change creates an imperative for constant learning in order to thrive and survive in complex and uncertain times (ODI 2008). Thus the ability to learn is both a capability in its own right and an essential, underpinning capability for other aspects of sustainable CD. This places learning among the group of factors such as leadership, systems and incentives that co-exist centrally in the ever evolving dynamic of the development processes of any given institution, organisation or individual.

Different agencies and disciplines each have their own definitions of learning, according to their perspective. For example UNDP defines learning as '*any improvement in behaviour, information, knowledge, understanding, attitude, values or skills*' (UNDP 2006). A more organic definition from an academic source states that, in the context of adult education, learning '*... enables people to make sense of and act on their environment, and to come to understand themselves as knowledge-creating, acting beings. ... a capacity to analyse situations contextually and act on them strategically, and an ability to examine and act on their own values and goals.*' (Foley 2001) The academic and corporate sectors both have vast bodies of knowledge and literature on learning, and especially on organisational learning, that can be helpful for development agencies. Within those sectors it is recognised that learning spans multiple dimensions from the technical aspects of how to do things, to less easily defined spheres of social and political functioning. It may be planned or unplanned, structured or informal. Concepts such as lifelong learning are now widely used to support adults in personal and professional development processes outside formal education systems.

Virtually all disciplines are unanimous that learning happens as an on-going, internal process, which may occur spontaneously from experience, or it may be stimulated, facilitated or in some other way supported by outsiders. Various perspectives also highlight the fact that learning processes unfold in very complex, frequently unpredictable, ways. Learning that happens informally as the result of events, experiences and circumstances will often be more powerful in influencing change (or resistance to it) than learning that comes from formally structured processes. The message is clear: learning is not something which external actors can do for, or to, individuals, organisations or systems: ultimately the outsider's role can only be to support learning's emergence. This has significant implications for the ways in which service providers approach their work when the goal is about learning beyond the realms of skills acquisition.

This paper moves the concept of learning for development beyond definitions that anchor it solely in study, information or knowledge transfer into the realms of capabilities and sense making that lead to expanded options for action. This concept of learning is in line with current, more comprehensive conceptions of CD. As applied to individuals, organisations and systems this model is highly contextual in recognising that the same information and processes will lead to the creation of different sense and meaning in different cultural traditions and perspectives. These are the realms in which it is necessary to work in order to achieve the desired shift to country led CD. This in turn has important implications for issues such as the spread of good practice, and scale up, and calls for all actors in the development sector to embrace new ways of working.

In the past a significant focus of training, and other CD support provided through development cooperation, has been on developing the capacity to manage donor funding and achieve required project outputs (WBI 2006). This is, of course, a valid necessity for a variety of reasons, but in the larger scheme of things this need is nowhere near as important as the need for learning and change for sustainable development results. It has been noted that the imbalance of power relations between donors and their recipients (whether governments or civil society) has resulted in a phenomenon called '*regressive learning*' i.e. that learning to comply with donor requirements takes precedence over all else, to the extent that important lessons from implementation of projects will be ignored if they do not fit with what was agreed with donors as the expected outputs and

outcomes (Shutt 2006). This illustrates the need to understand power dynamics in relation to learning and change, discussed more fully in the Section 2 on assessments below.

Box 4: The donors' role in leading change

Because donors' policies and practices are so influential in shaping the incentives of the entire CD providers industry a great deal rests on the question of what donors will pay for. All the while donors keep funding service providers repeatedly to use training as their primary approach to CD they are effectively rewarding poor performance, despite what is now known about the serious limitations of training in terms of producing sustainable CD results. Currently there is no incentive for service providers to change because donors are continuing to pay for work that repeats all the problems of the past, perpetuating the status quo rather than facilitating fundamental change and development. For donors concerned with accountability about effective use of their resources this must be an issue of considerable concern.

However, embracing the fundamental changes implicit in the emerging consensus calls for changes in donors' practices, which are likely to be just as much a challenge for them as are the changes that they hope to see in all other domains of the sector. For example:

- Changing the incentive structure calls for a very substantial change in the way donors work and at present there are no real indicators that the nature of that change is understood.
- Moving beyond highly bureaucratic RBM approaches to working in ways that respect and reflect complexity and emergence will require, among many other things, risk taking and a significant change in time frames towards longer term perspectives on CD.
- Donors must be able to demonstrate that they are changing in response to lessons learned if they want others to do the same.
- If it is accepted that significant understanding of local culture and context is an essential prerequisite to effectiveness, it must also be accepted that acquiring such understanding takes time. At present donors are not willing to pay for providers to have that time.
- Donors cannot ensure that the service providers whose work they fund have a good enough knowledge of local culture and context unless they have it themselves, which has implications for donor agency practices of mission postings, career progressions and so on.
- Donors need to recognise that their presence and role creates complications, and sometimes constraints, in the relationship between the beneficiaries and service providers, which can have a detrimental effect on both process and outcomes.

It is unlikely that the overall situation will change until the donors' financial power and other capacity to influence have been brought to bear on the problems. It would therefore seem that the time has come for donors to assess their own capacity to understand and work with current thinking on effective learning practices for sustainable CD. They cannot hope effectively to influence external change until they have first changed their own policies and practices.

A great deal is said about the need for, and lack of, the political will for change in developing countries, on this particular issue it would seem that similar issues apply to their development partners.

Within the current development framework donors continue to hold and exercise a great deal of power, sometimes deliberately, and at other times inadvertently, as the issue of regressive learning

illustrates. The power of the donors means that they need to take a leading role in bringing about change, as discussed in Box 4 above.

1.6 Structure of the paper

The sections that follow – Assessment, Design and Implementation – address some of the operational considerations arising from the emerging consensus and from the need for CD to be more effective by being country owned and strategy led, namely that:

- In order to ensure the relevance of design and delivery, needs assessments must go beyond consideration of technical skills and encompass more contextual dimensions of individual, organisational and system capacity and the significant relationships between them;
- Design processes must first identify long-term learning and change goals and then the short-term objectives and activities that will contribute to achievement of the goals. The choice of tools and techniques for interventions should draw on a broad range of approaches according to circumstance and need;
- Service providers adhere, and are held accountable to, the highest possible relevant professional standards;
- Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methods and tools that embrace the complexity of CD and contribute to the learning of all involved are made integral to all stages of activities.

The final section, *Moving Forward: Unfinished Business*, looks briefly at what different CD actors need to do to ensure that new understanding about appropriate approaches to support learning for sustainable CD is translated into more relevant policies and better quality implementation.

2. Assessments to frame the context and inform good design

Summary

The emerging consensus is that a number of weaknesses in current assessment processes need to be addressed, in order to embrace the wide range of systemic factors that will impact on any CD process. The repeated failure of many different actors concerned with CD processes to undertake appropriate contextual analysis before beginning activities has resulted in many wasted opportunities and resources. The issue of contextual constraints and their sources is currently insufficiently addressed and this is a significant gap because the limits of learning can only be understood through the identification of constraints. Assessment of the 'big picture' factors should include, but not be limited to: economic factors; the political context; and, culture and context. Power, in any of its multiple manifestations, is both one of the most influential factors in determining the success or failure of CD initiatives and also relevant to cross cutting issues such as gender, human rights and the environment. However, steps are being taken to redress the problem, and many leading institutions now have effective assessment tools available to use.

In recent years the DTI have become aware that their practices need to be much more clearly grounded in relevant theory of both capacity and change and in the specifics of the local context, but it is not yet clear where donors and other service providers stand on this issue. There is a danger that, unless they are grounded in appropriate theory, CD assessments and analysis will remain trapped in the realm of technical skills, which, while important have now been shown to be incomplete and, in some cases, irrelevant. It is ultimately the stakeholders and change agents in any given context that will have the best sense of the most promising responses for different capacity levels and needs. Adding a learning perspective to an assessment process could help to answer fundamental questions about whether or not learning practices could result in sustainable change.

2.1 Introduction

The majority of documented evidence on assessment tends to be focused at the level of CD, rather than at the level of training or learning practices and what follows is one of the areas where some key points have been extrapolated from the CD literature. The need is for good assessment and analysis at both levels, firstly for CD generally, and then for any approach that might be used as a component of the response. So reform of a sector, for example, clearly calls for broad assessment and analysis of multiple capacity components and contextual factors affecting them, but when consideration is being given to using training or learning practices to work with specific parts of the sector such as an individual organisation, then a more focused assessment is needed.

The emerging consensus is that a number of weaknesses in current assessment processes need to be addressed.

- First, and possibly most important, is the fact that assessments are almost exclusively done by external experts. One of the key messages of the *Berlin Statement* is that DTI should not be doing assessments, but should be building the capacity of partner countries to do it themselves, i.e. facilitating a shift towards self-assessment. Participatory self-assessment processes are both capacity building exercises in their own right, and also instrumental in building ownership for any changes that are needed. This point links to recent study findings that country-led planning of CD is more effective (JICA 2008). The implication is that donors

should have a long term objective to refocus their support towards building partner country capacity to conduct assessments and country-level planning.

- Secondly, the predominant methodology has been gap analysis which has significant weaknesses. Gap analysis has a negative bias, whereas the approach of acknowledging and then working to strengthen the capacities that already exist is much more constructive. Gap analysis also tends to focus on technical knowledge and skills and thereby fails to embrace the complexities of context. (EC 2009)
- Thirdly, assessments tend to be descriptive rather than evaluative (Capacity Collective 2008), meaning that many relevant factors are noted in assessments, but insufficient analysis is done to ensure that their relevance and importance is understood and can guide the design of effective CD and TC. In particular, more attention needs to be paid to issues such as policy structures, power dynamics and the availability of resources, in order to identify the enabling and constraining factors that would impact the success of any potential CD process.
- Fourthly, assessments are frequently undertaken without a clear purpose being specified at the start, which often means that it is not clear how the resulting diagnosis might be relevant to the needs of various decision makers (EC 2009). However, in terms of complexity thinking it may be appropriate, in some circumstances, not to be too prescriptive about the purpose, in order not to inhibit a natural flow through relevant and emergent factors.
- Finally, fragile states and post conflict societies have and present a very particular range of challenges that require special attention starting with assessment, through design to implementation. Emphasis needs to be in the appreciation and protection of existing assets that can form the foundation for supportive CD efforts. It is beyond the scope of this paper to address this set of challenges in depth. There are some helpful documents available from the OECD about work in fragile states. (1)

The need for contextual analysis can necessitate study of a wide range of systemic factors that will impact on any sector or organisational CD process. For example, an evaluation of DFID TC projects in sub-Saharan Africa found that, in three of four case studies, lack of progress in civil service reform was the most significant factor in explaining the limited CD impact achieved by training. (DFID 2006) The report went on to note that it appears to be a common problem that the issue of constraints and their sources is insufficiently addressed. This is a significant gap because the limits of learning can only be understood through the identification of constraints. Constraints can only be fully understood through study of the relevant vertical and horizontal levels of social constructs within organisations, networks and institutions, and the culture and context for the country or region. Different institutions use different levels of analysis: many use a basic '*individual, organisational, institutional/enabling environment*' framework, while others include groups, networks and society as relevant. The decisions about which levels to work with must be nuanced according to the purpose of the assessment. The dimensions of the assessment should be selected carefully in order not to create unnecessary or overwhelming amounts of information that would make the process burdensome.

A caution is needed about the use of assessment tools. Some are very complex and can firstly, be difficult to work with, and secondly, produce a lot of information that is not necessarily relevant to the task in hand. Understanding the 'big picture' may contribute very little to understanding how to tackle a specific challenge in a specific part of the system. Care is needed to ensure that those selecting the tools have an appropriate combination of contextual and technical knowledge, and understanding of the strengths and limitations of different tools, in order to choose the right tool, or maybe the right component of a tool, to meet the need. The point of doing assessments is not to

know everything about everything, but to arrive at an appropriate level of contextual analysis relevant to the sector, organisation or initiative under consideration in order to get started.

2.2 Analysis of the context and enabling environment

Power, in any of its multiple manifestations⁸, is one of the most influential factor in determining the success or failure of CD initiatives. Power must also be recognised as a primary factor in the cross cutting issues discussed below. Yet this is a dimension of context that is frequently avoided in assessment processes because of its sensitivity, often with good reason. Yet power and relational dynamics are critical to the implementation of learning and change at multiple levels. At the top it is about the political will for change, at the bottom it can simply be whether or not a manager will let a staff member implement something new that they learned on a course. (Though a manager's reluctance to allow change may equally be about their level of understanding, as about the exercise of power.) Several of the assessment approaches listed below deal with power within other dimensions such as leadership. A relatively new and flexible tool to look very specifically at the dynamics of power in any given situation is the *Power Cube* (2), which has been used in a number of different ways to help in assessment and planning processes where power dynamics were critical to change initiatives being successful.

Box 5: Cross cutting issues

One of the most important cross cutting issues is now that of harmonisation and alignment. The aid effectiveness impetus should be moving donor agencies away from commissioning assessments that meet only their own programme needs, towards support for country-owned strategies that contribute to broader development priorities and programmes. In this ideal scenario comprehensive country-led assessments conducted by partner governments would be used by all donors as the baseline for determining their programmes and projects. However, as few developing countries yet have the capacity to carry out their own assessments, whatever the level, the current situation is likely to continue for the foreseeable future, and all the while it does substantive decision making power about CD issues will remain with those funding and conducting the assessments.

Other cross cutting issues can have greater or lesser importance according to the country and circumstances. Two issues in this category are human rights and the environment, both of which can be very sensitive and require very careful consideration, which often results in them being avoided rather than addressed in assessment processes that focus on other sectors. But their sensitivity can be an indicator of their importance to any future CD processes.

The cross cutting issue most often overlooked is gender. In many developing countries there are multiple and profound gender issues which impact significantly on the opportunities and ability to build capacity at all levels of society, yet many key CD documents are gender neutral or make only passing reference to the subject. Where it is addressed the gender perspective tends to focus only on women's issues, linked to donors' programmes specifically targeting women. Whereas in many situations there are challenging issues arising from the status of men in society, for example the role of ex-combatants in post conflict societies. Some initiatives to address the gender gap are described below.

⁸ There are many theories of power that describe it in different ways, some focus on dimensions such as: political, physical (including use of weapons), resource (financial and other), traditional, position, expert and charismatic, etc. Another approach is concerned more with how power is used: power-over, power-to, power-within, and power-with.

One of the benefits of focusing on power within analysis of context is that it can help with the identification of both enabling factors such as change champions and existing change initiatives, and of constraining factors such as control of resources, corruption, and embedded relational dynamics that are both resistant to change and instrumental in blocking other changes. This area of analysis should cover the political status of both potential participants in, and supporters of, change processes and also be linked to analysis of ownership and leadership for change. Power analysis can also help to identify where the potential facilitators of learning and change sit in the political economy of the relevant system and environment, another critical factor in determining the success of initiatives.

2.3 Theoretical underpinnings for analysis

A major gap in the majority of assessments is the failure to articulate the theories of capacity and CD being used as the framework for analysis of context and needs. In recent years the theoretical understanding of many aspects of CD has advanced, which in turn has led to a growing awareness among the DTI that their practices need to be much more clearly grounded in relevant theory, but it is not yet clear where other service providers are on this issue.

Without an appropriate conception of both capacity and change there is a danger of CD assessments and analysis remaining trapped in the realm of technical skills, which, while important has now been shown to be incomplete and, in some cases, irrelevant. At the policy level, the majority of donors are converging towards a basic understanding of the concepts of capacity and CD in that they agree that the determinants of capacity development are not only technical but also political and governance related (strong political commitment, favourable incentive systems, government-wide reform). Donors also acknowledge that capacity development is multi-dimensional and that it goes beyond knowledge and skills transfer at the individual level to consider organisations, institutions, networks and the systems in which they are embedded. This consensus was consolidated in *The Challenge of Capacity Development: Working Towards Good Practice* (OECD 2006).

However, despite such consensus and growing recognition of the need to address theory there has not yet been any attempt among the donors or leading DTI to agree the theories on which they will base their approaches in order to harmonise CD processes. The result is that organisations can find themselves engaged in multiple CD programmes from different providers, all using different principles and values, most of which are assumption based rather than having clearly stated links to known theoretical foundations. All components of the different frameworks in current in CD practice, for example M&E systems, work with differing notions of how capacity is defined and can be developed, and how systems work and change. With the exception of the work done on capacity by European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) and a few others, at present much of the most significant knowledge in each of these disciplines is located not in the aid and development sector, but elsewhere, most notably in the academic and consulting communities supporting the corporate world. This includes important sources of knowledge and practice about issues such as the psychology of change and learning. Some NGOs have also begun to do interesting and informative work on alternative approaches to development, for example the Community Development Resource Association (CDRA) in South Africa with their work on M&E as organisational learning opportunities (CDRA 2006), and on action and horizontal learning processes (CDRA 2005).

Box 6: Some relevant models and theories

ECDPM: Five core capacities model

An important contribution to understanding dimensions of capacity is the work presented in the ECDPM *Capacity, Change and Performance Study Report*. This study concluded that capacity is composed of Five Core Capabilities: to commit and engage; to carry out functions or tasks; to relate and attract resources and support; to adapt and self-renew; and, to balance coherence and diversity; each of which comprises different components. The model is, at this time, too new to have been used much as the framework for assessments or the design of CD processes. However, some agencies are now working with the model as the basis for evaluating the impact of their CD programmes, and its use as a basis for assessment is likely to increase.

Complexity theory

Change theories should also be taken into account when doing assessments and analysis. The vast majority of development projects are based on LogFrame analysis and planning, which is fundamentally rooted in a cause and effect theory of change. However, new thinking emerging in recent years highlights that most realities are much more complex and messy than anything that will respond to a simple cause and effect based solution. For example complexity theory identifies three levels of problems⁹:

- **Messes:** systems or issues that do not have a well defined form or structure. There is often no clear understanding of the problem faced in such systems, because they involve multiple economic, technological, ethical and political issues that need to be dealt with simultaneously, and as a whole;
 - **Problems:** systems that do have a form or structure, in that their dimensions and variables are known. The interaction of dimensions may also be understood, even if only partially. In such systems, there is no single clear cut way of doing things – there are many alternative solutions, depending on the constraints faced;
 - **Puzzles:** well defined and well structured problems for which specific solutions can be identified.
- Even at this basic level of explanation complexity analysis highlights the need for responses to be designed in ways that reflect the level and nature of the problem.

Living systems theory

Another theory that highlights the complexities of change is Living Systems theory, which holds that all systems are self-organising and exist in a dynamic state of constant change in order to maintain stasis. This theory offers a helpful perspective on change in that it posits that only if a system recognises that external information or disturbances are important to its continued stasis and well being will it take notice and respond. If that criterion is met, then the system will internalise what it needs of the new information and change itself as it perceives necessary. However, if the external information and disturbances do not meet its criterion, the system will ignore them. This theory highlights the need truly to understand how and why a system works before attempting to intervene and change it.

UNDP framework

The UNDP have a framework for capacity that is specific to the development sector and has been in used for a number of years. This framework defines four dimensions of capacity: Institutions and incentives, Leadership, Knowledge and Accountability. This has been applied for a number of years and is described in a 2008 paper.

⁹ Adapted from ODI Working Paper 285 on complexity (2008)

Different sectoral, thematic or technical perspectives may require different conceptions of capacity and change to be used for assessment, analysis and planning. The important point is not that any one theory of capacity or change should be used, but that those conducting assessments should be clear about the foundational theories that will guide their analysis and inform their decision making about appropriate responses. The aid effectiveness agenda offers an opportunity to develop consensus about how to move beyond discussion of theory to a focus on practical, operational application.

2.4 Assessment frameworks and tools

As noted above a lot of assessments are currently undertaken by external experts, the majority of whom are chosen for their relevant technical expertise. While technical matters are, of course, an important aspect of any assessment, they are far from being the whole picture, and technical experts tend to focus specifically on their area of expertise to the exclusion of other, perhaps more, important contextual factors. This is one of the reasons why the conduct of assessment processes needs to shift from external experts to those who work and live in the systems under consideration and from piecemeal assessments serving particular projects to systemic and joined assessments. This would first of all help country stakeholders to understand the system better and make contextual decisions, as well as influence development partners to coordinate their interventions. Facilitated self-assessments can consider and accurately articulate a much broader range of factors relevant to any proposed CD process. Though a caution needs to be added that in some circumstances participants will feel constrained, for various reasons, from describing things as they really are, and the process should have elements that mitigate this potential problem. Shifting towards systemic self assessment does not imply the exclusion of technical experts, only that they need to take a different role.

Table 1: ADB's assessment matrix

<p>Design factors within ADB's Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Clear results framework or evaluability to measure and monitor CD</i> - <i>Strategic direction with realistic CD objectives</i> - <i>Adequate diagnostic baseline assessments at all CD levels (individual, organizational, network, and contextual levels)</i> - <i>Long-term continuity to institutionalize CD, careful phasing/sequencing, and exit strategy</i> - <i>Appropriate mix of modalities</i> - <i>Mainstreaming project implementation/ management unit activities into target agencies' normal operations</i> - <i>Adequate staff time and skills, and financial resources</i> - <i>Inclusive participatory approach, with strong commitment of and ownership by target agencies</i> - <i>Cooperation and harmonization with other development partners</i> 	<p>Design factors beyond ADB's Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Conducive political environment</i> - <i>Conducive economic/fiscal environment</i> - <i>Conducive policy/institutional environment</i> - <i>Conducive sector capacity</i>
<p>Implementation factors within ADB's control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Sufficient and qualified staff for implementation and supervision, including optimal use of resident missions</i> - <i>Flexibility during implementation and supervision</i> - <i>Selection of qualified consultants and limited delays in implementation</i> 	<p>Implementation factors beyond ADB's control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Continued conducive enabling environments</i> - <i>Continued commitment of and ownership by target agencies</i> - <i>Continued cooperation and harmonization with other development partners</i>

The need for appropriate contextual assessment was shown in a recent evaluation study 'Effectiveness of ADB's Capacity Development Assistance: How to Get Institutions Right (ADB 2008). This study identified factors, at both the design and implementation stages that the ADB assessed as

being of critical importance to the success of their CD initiatives in four different sectors. They went on to identify which of these factors they deemed to be within or beyond their control as the donor/implementing agency. Table 1 above is reproduced here because it highlights many of the issues discussed elsewhere in this paper.

Their findings highlight the need for assessment approaches to include thorough analysis of the context within and surrounding the target institution or sector. However, some might challenge where the ADB have put some of the factors in this table. It could be argued, for example, that *'cooperation and harmonization with other development partners'* is something that ADB can aim for and influence, but not control. The ADB have adopted this simple framework as a guide for future assessment processes, and they may review and amend it over time.

There are many different tools available to help with assessment of the 'big picture' factors, which should include, but not be limited to:

- Economic factors
- The political context – including power relations, public reforms, incentives
- Culture and context, especially constraining factors like post-conflict status and corruption

One well known tool from the business world, which has also been found relevant for development contexts, is called PESTLE (see Box 7), which stands for Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal, and Environmental. The PESTLE analysis is, effectively, an audit of an organisation's context, which can be very informative in terms of guiding decision making and highlighting factors that will be positively or negatively influential on CD processes. It is considered to be most effective when used as a self-assessment tool.

The EC Toolkit (EC 2009) works with the recognition that all organisations have both functional and political dimensions and it is necessary to assess both. The Toolkit presents several tools to support strategic level decision making and planning and for helping to ensure attention to questions such as:

- What symptoms and root causes explain the present capacity situation in sector organizations, and what does that mean for the options for CD?
- What is the effective demand for CD and change, and is it bigger than the resistance to and cost of change?
- What local capacity is available to manage a CD process?
- How can local stakeholders design an output-focused CD process?
- How can external development partners support CD?

The Political Economy and Stakeholder Analysis and Change Management Assessment tools in the EC Toolkit are of particular relevance to analysis of the enabling environment.

UNDP have developed a Capacity Assessment Framework, which has three dimensions for a systemic approach to understanding the breadth and depth of factors relevant to CD.

- *Points of entry*: the enabling environment; the organizational; and the individual
- *Core issues*: institutional arrangements; leadership; knowledge; and accountability
- *Functional and technical capacities*: engage stakeholders; assess a situation and define a vision and mandate; formulate policies and strategies; budget, manage and implement; and evaluate

This framework focuses primarily at the environmental and organisational levels, and is designed to be adaptable to local circumstances and needs.

As noted above gender is frequently overlooked in assessments. Some institutions have worked to address this problem by developing 'gender audit' tools, which can be stand-alone or part of broader

assessment exercises. For example the ILO has produced a *Participatory Gender Audit Manual* (ILO 2007), which can be adapted for use at institutional, programme or project levels. A pilot gender audit was done for DFID in Malawi and the process has been written up (DFID 2005), likewise a report on the comprehensive gender audit conducted for the 'One UN' initiative in Vietnam gives detailed information about the process and tool used (UN Vietnam 2009).

2.4.1 A learning perspective in assessment processes

To design an effective learning process requires understanding about some cultural and contextual factors that are not usually included in assessments. Analysing issues related to learning at both the macro level and in terms of the specific context could help to answer fundamental questions about whether or not learning practices could result in sustainable change. Key questions to be asked include:

- Macro level
 - o At this time is the background environment conducive to learning?
 - o What enabling factors will support learning and change – including the centrality of power to the political economy of the system?
 - o What types and sources of learning that are valued in this culture and context?
 - o What are the blocks to learning in this culture and context?
 - o What are the limits of learning in this culture and context?

- Local context
 - o Is the specific capacity need under consideration one which can be addressed by a learning practice? If yes -
 - o Who needs to learn?
 - o What do they need to learn about and how does it relate to desired change?
 - o To which higher level goals would this learning contribute?
 - o What systemic factors will support or constrain learning?
 - o What has happened/is currently happening that contributes to learning?

A learning perspective would not provide all the answers, but if used appropriately with other analytical tools, it could help to broaden other perspectives, clarify foci and prevent inappropriate initiatives that would waste resources.

Box 7: Some helpful sources of assessment tools

Change Management Assessment

The EC Toolkit has a good change management assessment tool available at <http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/toolkit-capacity-development>. The change-management website includes a toolkit that has a range of assessment tools, available at <http://www.change-management-toolbook.com/>

Gender Audit

The ILO manual is available at

<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/gender/docs/RES/536/F932374742/web%20gender%20manual.pdf>

The DFID report which includes methodology is available at

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/gender-audit-malawi2.pdf>

The UN Vietnam report, which also includes methodology is available at http://www.un.org.vn/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&Itemid=211&gid=83&lang=en

Institutional Assessment

Also from the EC, Institutional Assessment and Capacity Development: Why, What, and How? (2005) Available at http://www.pedz.uni-mannheim.de/daten/edz-h/az/05/concept_paper_final_051006_en.pdf

PESTLE analysis

A brief and useful guide to the PESTLE analysis tool is available from the CIPD at

<http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/corpstrtgry/general/pestle-analysis.htm?lsSrchRes=1>

Political Economy and Stakeholder Analysis is in the EC Toolkit available at

<http://capacity4dev.ec.europa.eu/toolkit-capacity-development>

Power Cube

The three dimensions of the cube are: Places (local, national, global); Spaces (closed/uninvited, invited, claimed/created); and Power (visible, hidden, invisible). See, for example, John Gaventa (2005) *Reflections on the Uses of the 'Power Cube': Approach for Analyzing the Spaces, Places and Dynamics of Civil Society Participation and Engagement* CFP evaluation series 2003-2006: no 4, Mfp Breed Network, available at http://www.partos.nl/uploaded_files/13-CSP-Gaventa-paper.pdf

Swedish International Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Analysis of needs for capacity development (2000) available at <http://www.sida.se/English/About-us/Sidas-Publications/>

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3. The design of training and learning practices

Summary

Many factors need to be taken into consideration when designing processes to support learning and change. An essential first step is the specification of learning goals linked to broader CD agenda and priorities. It is important to distinguish the difference between long-term learning goals and component parts that can be achieved more quickly. Some types of capacity needs involve too many variables for learning objectives to be specified as concrete and pre-defined outcomes, and so different types of goal formulation are needed, whereas for training activities it can be relevant to set objectives and indicators to ensure that they are results oriented. Integration of monitoring and evaluation needs to start with the first steps of design.

Design is a series of decisions about domains and methods, and the quality of the decisions will be related directly to the quality of information available to the decision makers and to their understanding of appropriate learning theories. It would be very unusual for any learning need to be answered by one learning practice alone. Most commonly learning and capacity needs are best addressed by bringing together a selection of different modalities over time. Selecting multiple methods to use together to achieve the 'best fit' can be a very effective way of maximising the strengths, and mitigating the challenges, of each component in the selection. Many of the practices described below are linked or overlap and some can be considered as cross-cutting, but all can have a clear and specific role to play in particular circumstances. A well formulated training programme has four key stages: defining training needs; designing and planning training; providing for the training; and, evaluating the outcome of training.

Current design practices are very deeply ingrained in institutional cultures. Changing approaches will mean that service providers who assume that every problem can be solved by training will need to let go of that assumption – the 'I have a hammer, so every problem is a nail' syndrome.

3.1 Introduction

There are many factors that need to be taken into consideration when designing processes to support learning and change. The most fundamental need is to have relevant contextual analysis, which has addressed not only knowledge and skills, but also the array of factors that might enable or inhibit successful implementation of training and learning practices. These factors may range from practical matters such as the availability of resources and other support mechanisms, and information should also be available about important cross cutting issues such as gender, power relations and the political economy for change. It is extremely unlikely that any analysis would show a situation in which there were many helpful opportunities and no constraints. The task of decision makers and designers is therefore to assess, in conjunction with key local actors, if there is a way forward that can maximise opportunities and minimise or overcome constraints. This is far from easy in complex situations and it may be necessary to experiment with pilot approaches and activities in order to find the most effective way forward. Everything that follows about design and implementation should be read keeping that fact in mind.

3.2 Formulating goals and objectives

Establishing the goal is an essential first step in any systematic planning process that is intended to achieve results. The RBM approach holds that in the same way as good practice and a results

orientation in other types of CD initiatives require the specification of goals, objectives and indicators the same is true for training and learning practices. The complexity perspective does not support that view, and holds that it is not possible to predict or control what will result from any intervention into a complex situation. Some types of capacity needs involve too many variables, most especially the different cultural and contextual interpretations that participants might bring to the process, for learning goals and objectives to be specified as concrete and pre-defined outcomes. As noted in the *Berlin Statement* the goal could validly be something like raised awareness or improved consensus, which does not preclude the setting of long-term goals so long as they are appropriately formulated in ways that reflect the fact that the outcomes of genuine learning practices cannot be predicted. In either approach it is important to distinguish between the overall learning goal and any intermediate steps that need to be taken to work towards the goal.

Learning and change generally require a long-term process orientation which implies a shift in thinking away from traditional project cycle based formulation of goals to more strategic conceptions linked to long-term visions of capacity. Good design includes an appropriate mix of both long- and short-term perspectives. Some knowledge and technical skills needed as a component of a broader CD need can be acquired relatively quickly and may be addressed through training modalities for which a LogFrame approach can be appropriate. In such circumstances technical skills can be specified at the level of objectives that are contributing to the higher level CD goal. The goal would most likely be the specification of long-term learning needs contributing to sustainable capacity enhancement, sometimes referred to as transformational change, in contrast to the shorter-term 'quick wins' objectives of performance or transactional change that would build towards the longer term goal. The IDRC Outcome Mapping (see Box 11) approach can help with decisions about what can be achieved through different processes. IDRC have also found that long term relationships have been critical to their CD practices, which indicates the need for careful consideration of the mix of longitudinal factors and the consistent availability of facilitators over time (IDRC 2009).

Goals and objectives should also relate to all relevant levels and dimensions of the capacity issues under consideration. As noted in both the Directional Shifts above, and in a recent OECD/DAC discussion note, there is a need to move the focus '*from individual skills to organizational and institutional learning needs*'. (OECD/DAC 2009) It has also been noted that too frequently it is assumed that activities targeting individuals will automatically contribute to higher level objectives, which is by no means the case (Capacity Collective 2008). Much more attention needs to be paid to integration across all levels, for example:

- Individual-level variables (motivation, existing capacity levels, specific job-training needs)
- Organization-level variables (internal reform policies, restructuring, senior management commitment), and
- Institutional environment variables (national policies, public sector investments, incentive structures) (UNDP 2006)

Even when the focus needs to be on individuals, training and learning practices should be framed as contributions to the organisational and institutional level outcomes being sought.

In some circumstances it may be relatively straightforward to identify the contribution that learning can or should make to the long-term CD goal. However, few situations are that simple but this should not prevent learning goals being put in place, so long as it is recognised that the results of a learning process cannot be predicted and frequent review and revision of the goals may be called for as the process unfolds. This can in fact be a very helpful monitoring process if done in a spirit of learning and flexibility. Without the identification of learning goals, and intermediate objectives, there is a high risk of learning practices being detached from, or unrelated to, the broader CD agenda and priorities. Another danger of not having any learning goals and objectives has been

noted in a number of evaluation studies, namely that the failure at the start to specify any desired results, whatever the approach and formulation, makes it impossible to measure and monitor the effectiveness of the learning practices and the contribution they are making to overall CD. Thinking about how to monitor and evaluate outcomes and impact needs to start with the first steps of design.

3.3 Design decisions

Design is a series of decisions, and the quality of the decisions will be related directly to the quality of information that the decision makers have about key factors in both the specific target group and the background context. In addition to knowing about the identified needs of the target group and how these will contribute to higher level goals designers also need to understand existing local learning and change processes, e.g. previous or current training, that any new initiative should align with and support. The choices to be made in the design of learning practices fall into two main areas - the domain/s in which the learning is needed and the mixture of methods with which it can be achieved. Various models can be used for identifying the domains for learning, for example the ECDPM and UNDP models noted above. The methods to be used can also be specified under many different headings, at individual, group and organisational levels. The EC Toolkit (EC 2009) has some helpful guidance, based on an 'Open Systems' approach, to look at how to work with organisations through both their functional and political dimensions, and the internal and external elements of each.

There are some cautions to be aware of at the start of the design process. Firstly, that approaches are frequently decontextualised and apolitical, working on the assumption that if the approach is 'right' the outcome will be positive. However, more nuanced perspectives are needed, especially with regard to knowledge and power, before positive outcomes can be assured (Capacity Collective 2008). The EC Toolkit cautions that it is not helpful to use gap analysis as the sole basis for design due to political factors that may prevent gap filling from being effective (EC 2009). Further, despite evidence that relationships that support joint reflection and learning are more effective, the continuing tendency is to design everything within technical or rational models. Technical skills are rarely enough on their own, for effective application they need to be supported by communication skills, a conceptual grasp of learning, reflexivity, leadership and a strong process orientation (Capacity Collective 2008). Finally, 'scale-up' can create problems, because it can never be guaranteed that practices that proved effective in one time and circumstance are automatically going to be effective at other times and in other circumstances. Adult education theory also offers guidance that should be taken into account in the design of interventions, namely:

The content of learning may be technical (about how to do a particular task); or it may be social, cultural and political (about how people relate to each other in a particular situation, or about what their actual core values are, or about who has power and how they use it). ... As people live and work they continually learn. Most of this learning is unplanned, and it is often tacit; but it is very powerful. ... But social life requires learning, and a range of roles, from manager to activist, involve the facilitation of learning. (Foley 2001)

This understanding points to the need for both assessments and design to recognise that in most cases there is already much happening in work settings that can be maximised and developed, design is not about filling emptiness. Good design recognises and builds on what exists and mobilises the right people to support activities.

Current design practices are very deeply ingrained in long held institutional cultures and minds sets. Changing to what theory and evidence now show to be the most appropriate approaches challenges the 'I have a hammer, so every problem is a nail' syndrome that characterises many service providers. The assumption that training is the appropriate response to every learning need has been found wanting and service providers must change accordingly. The *Berlin Statement* summarised this as the need to expand the definition of training to go 'beyond the classroom to include means

such as e-Learning, mentoring, coaching, and secondments, peer exchanges and experience-based learning methods.'

3.3.1 Theories of learning

Just as assessments need to be grounded in appropriate theories and concepts, so does the design of learning practices. Adult education and the corporate training world have many resources on which development agencies can draw to deepen their understanding of learning.

Box 8: Some important learning theories

Bloom's Taxonomy (3), which specifies that there are three types of learning, namely:

- *Cognitive*, mental skills (Knowledge)
- *Affective*, growth in feelings or emotional areas (Attitude), and
- *Psychomotor*, manual or physical skills (Skills).

Training programmes have traditionally been designed to focus on *cognitive* and or *psychomotor* skills, but increasingly it is being understood that *affective* capacity can be equally, if not more important, in terms of facilitating change.

Kolb's experiential learning cycle (4), in which *Concrete Experience* is followed by *Reflective Observation*, which leads to *Abstract Conceptualization* and finally to *Active Experimentation*, after which the cycle starts again. This theory is the basis for many different approaches to learning and the tools that go with them, and has been developed by others to incorporate a typology of learning styles.

Honey and Mumford's learning styles (5) which builds on Kolb's work in identifying that individuals have and favour four primary learning styles, which correlate with the experiential learning cycle as follows: *Activists (Concrete Experience)*; *Reflector (Reflective Observation)*; *Theorist (Abstract Conceptualisation)*; and, *Pragmatist (Active Experimentation)*. This is probably the best known of the learning styles theories, and is helpful for understanding that a learning process cannot be one dimensional if it is to be effective in facilitating learning for all participants.

Multiple intelligences theory (6), developed by Howard Gardner. The seven intelligences originally defined in this theory are: *Linguistic* - words and language; *Logical-Mathematical* - logic and numbers; *Musical* - music, sound, rhythm; *Bodily-Kinaesthetic* - body movement control; *Spatial-Visual* - images and space; *Interpersonal* - other people's feelings; and, *Intrapersonal* - self-awareness. This theory can be particularly valuable when designing learning practices for people in cultures or circumstances for which an intellectual, rational-cognitive approach would be inappropriate.

As with the use of theory to inform assessment processes the issue is not that any one theory should be used in preference to another, but that those designing learning practices are aware of theory that is relevant to their task and draw on it accordingly.

3.4 A selection of learning practice approaches, tools and techniques

The table below gives a brief overview of a number of learning practices that support capacity development (a much more comprehensive description of each, together with resource lists and examples, is given in the Appendix).

Many of the practices described below are linked or overlap and some can be considered as cross-cutting. However, all can have a clear and specific role to play in particular circumstances, so some can be both cross-cutting and focused. It would be very unusual for any learning need effectively to be answered by one learning practice alone. Most commonly learning and capacity needs are best addressed by bringing together a selection of different modalities over a period of time. In some circumstances such a selection could be called blended learning, but, as noted in the table, blended learning usually includes an e-learning element which is not necessarily relevant or available in many development contexts.

Selecting multiple practices to use together to achieve the ‘best fit’ can be a very effective way of maximising the strengths, and mitigating the challenges, of each component in the selection. However the combined array of needs and choices of response can be bewildering and sometimes a framework is needed to guide compilation of elements into a coherent and effective whole. The WBI are developing a framework to offer guidance on the design of learning practices by suggesting the steps to follow for a range of different levels of learning (not yet publicly available).

As with the use of tools for assessment, a caution is needed about the use of tools for learning practices. No tool can provide ‘the answer’ to a problem, it can only be what the name suggests – a device to be used as a means of achieving something. In any setting tools must be used appropriately and skilfully if they are to be helpful and that is no less true of learning tools than, for example, those used by a carpenter. Tools must be seen as a component part of bigger facilitation processes, not the means to an end in and of themselves.

Table 2: Learning Practice Approaches, Tools and Techniques

DESCRIPTION	LEVEL AND APPLICATIONS	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
<p>Blended learning: Blended learning is the combination of different training and learning technologies, activities and events. It most usually combines a mixture of e-learning and interactive human contact.</p>	<p>Individuals and Groups: For any learning need that has a mixture of theory and practice. For processes where large numbers of people in different locations need to learn the same things.</p>	<p>The blend selected can be problem focused or person focused. Enables quality assessment of e-learning processes. Enables rapid roll-out to large groups. Can be very cost effective depending on development costs.</p>	<p>It needs skilful design and management to ensure the right balance between the e- and person components of the blend. Requires a high level of (compatible) technology and study skills as prerequisites. Development costs can be high</p>
<p>Coaching and Mentoring: Coaching is generally focused on workplace challenges and issues and will be time bounded. Mentoring is generally a long-term process of supporting an individual’s career and personal development. Both are tailored and contextual and can be used for individuals and groups.</p>	<p>Individuals and Groups: As part of leadership development programmes; follow up to training activities; anywhere that managers and professionals could benefit from focussed guidance</p>	<p>Very focused way to support learning and performance improvement; can be offered by national personnel</p>	<p>Needs to be separated from line management structures; coaches and mentors need to have specific skills</p>

DESCRIPTION	LEVEL AND APPLICATIONS	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
<p>Communication: Processes that bring groups together to connect and surface their collective knowledge and wisdom, and by so doing enhance and support learning and change within those groups. Considered by some to be a cross cutting element of all other processes, and by others to be a component of Knowledge Management.</p>	<p>Groups, Organisations and Sectors: For working on issues that have a defined stakeholder group whose knowledge and wisdom can contribute to identification and solution of problems within their domain; best used for challenges that do not have technical solutions</p>	Surfaces the implicit knowledge and wisdom embedded in groups; ensures that all stakeholders have voice in decisions that concern them; empowers participants; creates ownership and commitment to action	Can be countercultural and create resistance; requires skilful facilitation; can raise inappropriate expectations
<p>Customised training: Training that has been commissioned for the needs of a specific group</p>	<p>Individuals and Groups: For specific technical skills for project implementation; for system compliance needs</p>	Focused on the specific needs of participants	Relevance and success depends on the quality of the needs assessment and design processes, which often are inadequate and does not involve adequate follow up
<p>Degree level study overseas: Most usually scholarships for graduates to study at masters and doctoral levels at overseas universities</p>	<p>Individuals: For young professionals; where a sector lacks a pool of personnel with academic level knowledge of its technical needs</p>	Individual learning which results in positive and quantifiable impacts at both individual and organisational level	Covering positions and workload during absences of years; adaptation and application of new knowledge on return to workplace; risk of brain drain
<p>Distance learning: Academic study programmes offered by overseas universities for participants to follow from home.</p>	<p>Individuals: For people who do not have high quality tertiary education available to them locally and whose financial or personal circumstances do not allow them to study overseas</p>	Give high level academic opportunities for people who are not able to go overseas; flexible timing	Students are isolated; requires high level of English and study skills; needs good quality and affordable Internet access; little support for adaptation and application of new learning in the workplace
<p>E-learning: Any technology-supported or web based learning system. E-learning can happen across distances and borders or within one organisation and not therefore, at a distance.</p>	<p>Individuals and Groups: For learning needs that have high knowledge or technical components. For working on processes with groups who are geographically distant.</p>	Offers individual and flexible learning opportunities without requiring direct human interaction so good for people who do not have easy access to learning resources or facilitators. Can be very cost effective	Students are isolated; requires high level of study skills and facility in the language of instruction; needs good quality and affordable Internet access; little support for adaptation and application of new learning in the workplace
<p>Experiential learning: Generic heading for numerous structured and semi-structured processes which can support individuals to learn from their workplace experiences</p>	<p>Individuals and Groups: For advisors to build capacity of counterparts and teams; for training follow up activities; as monitoring tools</p>	Starts where the participant is in their own experience; grounds learning into workplace practice; works well for those not academically inclined	Can create resistance because countercultural; requires strong facilitation skills; not so good for technical needs
<p>Exposure: Exposure visits take people to see what others are doing in similar work situations to themselves. Attending conferences and other events provide exposure to new knowledge, ideas and influences within sectors.</p>	<p>Individuals and Groups: For those who will benefit from seeing new or different ideas in action. For those who would benefit from introduction to new knowledge, ideas and practices</p>	Makes learning about new ideas more practical and grounded in reality. Stimulates the spread of good practice and the fertilisation of innovation	If it involves international travel exposure can be expensive and not cost effective. Needs to have very clear learning objectives specified at the start, and effective follow up afterwards if new ideas are to be applied

DESCRIPTION	LEVEL AND APPLICATIONS	STRENGTHS	CHALLENGES
<p>External training courses: Courses for which the content and curriculum are predefined by the provider, who may be a private company, a training institute, or not-for-profit organisation</p>	<p>Individuals: Technical subjects such as accounting, computer and ICT skills: language development</p>	<p>Relatively inexpensive and readily available</p>	<p>Cannot be specifically tailored to participant needs; rarely have any pre-testing or follow-up activities; impact is difficult to assess; limited support for participants to apply learning in the workplace</p>
<p>Knowledge Management: Considered by some to be a cross cutting issue in CD it is the process by which organisations generate value from their intellectual and knowledge-based assets by documenting what staff and stakeholders know about the organisation's areas of interest, and then sharing that collected data back to those who need it to enhance their job performance</p>	<p>Groups, Organisations and Sectors: For sectors with rapid advances in knowledge e.g. health; sector's that are knowledge based e.g. education and training; in multi-disciplinary/stakeholder processes, such as decentralisation</p>	<p>Enhances communication and connection within systems to ensure that they are using all the available knowledge assets to best effect</p>	<p>Can be very complex and time consuming to implement; requires constant attention and updating; can become overly technical and dependent on data management systems</p>
<p>Leadership Development: Processes designed to enhance the leadership skills of existing and potential leaders within systems. Most effective if a combination of training modules and supplementary activities such as exposure visits, and coaching or mentoring</p>	<p>Individuals and groups: For development of the next generation of leaders; where new challenges are emerging for which no experience sector leadership yet exists; to help women overcome the glass ceiling that prevents their professional advancement</p>	<p>Gives emerging leaders the skills and confidence to step into leadership roles</p>	<p>Requires the background political economy to be such that participants can practice what they learn in order to bring about change in their own performance or within their organisations</p>
<p>Organisational strengthening: There are three interrelated disciplines known as: organisational development, change management and organisational learning. In summary working with coordinated learning and change techniques to move organisations towards the levels of capacity necessary to be effective and fulfil organisational/sectoral mandates</p>	<p>Organisations and sectors: For any organisation or system that does not yet have the capacity to fulfil its mandate; best used when the development of capacity calls for multiple aspects of the system to be learning and developing in tandem</p>	<p>Works at the level of whole systems and therefore ensures that learning, change and development are simultaneous across the whole organisation or sector</p>	<p>Very complex, requiring high levels of conceptual and strategic thinking to be transferred to operational realities, multiple concurrent interventions, and strong facilitation skills; needs support of enabling environment</p>
<p>Partnerships and Networks: Mechanisms through which diverse actors with mutual interests come together in order to achieve a common goal. This can include twinning organisations and institutions with similar mandates, and the same or different levels of capacity.</p>	<p>Organisations and sectors: For sharing knowledge and experience across borders; for developing research capacity</p>	<p>Provides opportunities for sharing knowledge and experience across borders; offer opportunities for mutual learning</p>	<p>Can be difficult to coordinate and keep functional; power relations can become unbalanced, having a negative impact on opportunities for learning</p>

3.5 Good practice for training

If it is determined that training is indeed the right approach, or one of a selection of approaches, for the capacity need under consideration, then it is necessary to ensure that the training given adheres to the highest possible standards. A good starting point for understanding what training quality looks like is the ISO *Quality Management – Guidelines for Training* (1999). According to these ISO standards a well formulated training programme has four key stages: defining training needs; designing and planning training; providing for the training; and, evaluating the outcome of training. Monitoring should be integral to both the delivery and follow up stages, in addition to any longitudinal evaluation study undertaken to assess outcomes or impact.

The IEG 2008 evaluation study found the issue of training design to be of critical importance, and within that ***Targeting of training content was found to be the most important training design factor driving training success. For training to be well targeted, organizational and institutional capacity gaps need to be correctly diagnosed, specific training needs must be assessed, and participants should be selected in a strategic manner.*** As a result of their deliberations the IEG evaluation team identified the following factors as essential for successful training, all of which are issues that can and should be addressed in the design stage, as illustrated in Box 9 below.

Box 9: IEG findings on factors essential for successful training

Good pedagogy

- Professional curriculum design matched to training needs
- Didactic methods are varied and appropriate for participant-level and training goals

Adequate support for transfer of learning to workplace

- In-class preparation to facilitate implementation of learning in the workplace through action learning and practical exercises
- On-the-job follow-up support

Adequate targeting of training to organizational needs

- Organizational capacity diagnosis (What capacity gaps exist? Is training an appropriate means of addressing these gaps?)
- Training-needs assessment (What is the present capacity of those to be trained? What training is needed to address existing capacity gaps?)
- Strategic participant selection (Who should be trained to meet organizational goals?)

It is worth noting, however, that both of these documents rely on the concept of capacity gaps to outline their approach. While the capacity gap is considered to be an unhelpful starting point in many circumstances, as discussed elsewhere in this paper, it can nevertheless serve a useful purpose for some of the very specific, technical skill needs, for which training may be the most effective response.

The next section on Implementation deals with the related subjects of relevance and translation, transfer of training, and M&E.

4. Implementation

Summary

Innumerable factors can impact implementation for the better or worse. It is essential to ensure relevance and adaptability of language, concepts and content to local culture and context before delivery starts through careful assessment and by working with local experts. Relevance is also about matching the right participants with the right content and methods, which may be beyond the direct control of the providers and calls for them to work with local decision makers to ensure effective targeting and selection of participants. Taking time to build relationships before and during implementation can be critical to helping people engage with new learning practices and new ways, especially in difficult and challenging change processes. Concepts of delivery need to move from being event focused to incorporate follow-up as a matter of course. Transfer of training is complex and needs support, and evidence suggests that line managers hold the most significant key to resolving the problems of transfer.

Many DTI now acknowledge that in order to address organisational and institutional constraints, their staff need to have both soft and technical skills, but that even these skills will be of limited benefit unless combined with relevant understanding of the local and organisational culture and context. Both donors and service providers will need to undertake substantive change management initiatives so that new skills and ways of working are valued and rewarded within organisational cultures. However, it is not only a donor-driven supply side belief that training is the answer to all problems, this assumption is very strongly held by many in partner countries, and thus they also need change incentives. Currently provision of training and learning practices is unregulated and providers are not held to account against any agreed professional standards of practice. There have been some calls for accreditation systems, but as yet no major initiative has taken that idea forward.

Monitoring and evaluating the impact of training activities is recognised by training professionals worldwide to be a notoriously difficult task in any context, because of the multitude of variables that can influence participants' performance after the training event. The vast majority of monitoring of training takes place at the level of participant satisfaction and learning, and little is done to monitor outcomes or impact. Current thinking is that M&E also need some significant shifts in focus, including ensuring that the formulation of indicators incorporates Southern perspectives and needs as well as those of donors. There is an acknowledged need for research to build on what is already known in order to find ways to monitor and evaluate more effectively, with a particular focus on outcomes and impact at organisational, policy and systems levels.

4.1 Introduction

If design has been done well, then theoretically implementation should be a relatively straightforward process. The reality, of course, is that no matter how well something has been planned, innumerable factors can impact its implementation for the better or worse, especially in complex situations such as post conflict societies. The need for quality is equally as important for implementation as for design, and arguably more so, because this is the part of the process where learning practices move from the conceptual to live interventions that will affect individuals, organisations and institutions. A lot of good can result from a well facilitated process, but one that is not done well can be damaging. Some of the factors that determine the quality of implementation

are dealt with here under the headings of *Relevance, Delivery, Providers, and Monitoring and Evaluation*.

Although covered separately in this paper, in practice design and implementation are not neatly separated steps. Some aspects of design, for example deciding the precise content of a training module, or the detailed focus of a coaching programme, need to be done at the implementation stage. Further, as implementation is underway the design should be under constant review for relevance and effectiveness, and where necessary changed and adapted. If, for example, a mentoring programme falters because the mentors do not engage sufficiently well or maybe become unavailable, then an alternative should be developed to fill the need. If M&E practices are effective then information from this type of scenario will eventually serve to add to learning about what works in different circumstances, i.e. close the learning loop on design and implementation. Several other issues discussed below are interlinked with the design stage. For example, design needs to take account of adaptability and translation, not only of language but also of concepts, to make content relevant and understandable. It is included in this section because it is one of the big challenges of implementation and also links strongly to the issue of providers.

4.2 Relevance

Before delivery begins two aspects of relevance need particular attention. The first, gaining increasing recognition across the DTI sector and noted in many of their recent documents, is the need for translation and adaptability to local culture and context. This means not only translation of language, but also of concepts. There are many good resources available in several European languages, but they can have multiple drawbacks. The first is that many aspects of the content are based on social constructs and theories from developed countries that do not necessarily have meaning or resonance for developing countries. One example of this is in all the work done in recent years on good governance, aspects of which are about citizenship and social accountability. While these concepts make perfect sense in countries that have long histories of democratic government, this is not the case in other societies. In a country where, for example, an individual's primary loyalty is to tribe or clan the notion of national citizenship has little meaning and alternate entry points are needed for projects that seek to engage the population in social accountability issues. Similarly, feminist studies are beginning to highlight that women in different cultures are developing their own ideas about what women's empowerment looks like, and their thinking about, and application of, gender concepts is often significantly different from that of women in Northern countries. It is only through careful assessment of the culture and context, and by working with local experts, that ideas from one culture can be translated and made relevant and helpful in another.

Language translation is another factor that needs careful consideration. Much of what is written in Northern agencies makes frequent use of high level, sometimes academic standard, English, which is not easily translated to local languages. Additionally, some words and phrases in common currency in the development sector are value and concept laden, and many other cultures and languages have no direct equivalent. Notions such as civil society, good governance and the like can create significant problems when attempts are made to translate the words for use in CD processes. Again it is only by working with local experts that these challenges can be addressed and overcome.

One of the problems of the past has been that services providers, most notably the DTI, have undertaken some or all of these translation matters for its own work in different countries without reference to what others may have already done in the same sector. The result is that partners can find themselves having to deal with a confusing array of translations and interpretations of concepts from different agencies. This is one very practical way in which the DTI could begin to operationalise the key messages in the *Berlin Statement* about harmonisation and collaboration.

The second major area of relevance, noted in the Design section above, is about targeting the right participants with the right content and methods. This is so important it warrants restating the IEG finding '*Targeting of training content was found to be the most important training design factor driving training success.*', which they found was inextricably linked to the strategic selection of the right participants. Adult education pedagogy also has clear messages about this subject and holds that one of the key factors in motivating adults to learn is the relevance of the content to their work. Training courses and learning programmes that focus on theoretical content will not be as effective as those that work with real life needs from the participants' workplace by incorporating case studies and review of personal experiences into the design. In order to be more effective external providers need to spend much more time than previously learning for themselves about the culture and specific context in which the learners work. Clearly this has resource implications as it calls for providers to spend more time on preparation, and they need to do it in ways that are not burdensome for the beneficiaries, but the likelihood is that ultimately the increased relevance and quality would prove to be more cost effective in terms of final impact.

Selection of participants is frequently an element of CD processes that is beyond the direct control of the providers. The need to give more attention to relevance means that at the point of delivery local decision makers, providers and donors need to work together more effectively to discuss the targeting and selection of participants. Perverse incentives, such as the desire to attend events because of the per diem, are pitfalls that are not easy to dispense with in situations where unhelpful expectations have already become embedded and currently local decision makers are often caught up in these problems. Until challenges such as this are dealt with they will continue to have a negative impact because they interfere with the right people getting to events. Ultimately this problem will only be dealt with when beneficiary organisations have ownership of the full CD process and both want, and have the ability, to get the right people engaged in the right activities.

4.3 Delivery

Delivery in this context means the stage of learning practices where participants and providers are directly working together. This may be in a training course, in mentoring meetings, online tutorials, arrangement of exposure visits, or any other form of contact in which the provider is facilitating a learning experience for the participant.

A newly emerging understanding among the DTI, as noted in the *Berlin Statement*, is that there needs to be some standards for training cycle management. The same need exists for other learning practices. Some of the issues that such standards might cover, for example assessment, design and delivery, are dealt with in many recent reports, as well as in this paper. A number of interrelated factors are relevant to the quality and success of delivery, but the DTI have yet to come together to agree what standards they believe should be in place for various learning methods, technology, etc.

One challenge to bringing about change in approaches to learning is the expectation about how CD should happen. It is not only a donor-driven supply side belief that training is the answer to all problems, as this assumption is also very strongly held by many in partner countries. Educational experiences and cultural beliefs result in many people only valuing learning that is delivered in a classroom by an expert lecturer. When the expectations are that participation in CD activities equates with attendance at events conducted in traditional teaching methodologies, it can be extremely difficult to get anyone to accept that working in another way is going to be more beneficial to their own, or their organisation's, development. These attitudes are embedded at organisational and institutional level just as much as in individuals. The result is that it remains much more comfortable for everyone to stay stuck in old ways rather than try new methods such as mentoring, coaching for on the job learning, twinning, embedding the action learning cycle into routine work practices, action research, and so on. Dealing with this challenge calls for a range of initiatives and incentives.

Taking time to build relationships before and during implementation might seem, to some, to be an unnecessary luxury, but can be critical to helping people change to new ways. When evaluating its own CD practices IDRC found that trust is foundational to the facilitation of change and that trust only comes over time through mutually respectful relationships. A number of reports also note the importance of being able to stay with the process when implementation becomes difficult, which is often the case in complex change scenarios. Again this relates to the issue of providers, whether they are from an international DTI or service provider, meeting the participants only for the duration of one short-term event, or international personnel committed to supporting long term processes, or from a local DTI and also available for long-term support, will be of vital importance to the nature of the relationship they develop with participants. The more difficult and challenging the process and change needed, the more important the quality of the relationship between the participants and providers becomes.

The growing body of knowledge on the subject of *'transfer of learning'*¹⁰, which is concerned with the effective application of learning acquired in one setting to other settings, indicates very clearly the need for concepts of delivery to move from being event focused to incorporate follow-up as a matter of course. Transfer of learning from a training course to the workplace is complex and needs support, and there is much evidence to suggest that line managers hold the most significant key to resolving the problems of transfer, and thus attention should be paid to both engaging their involvement and ensuring their capacity to support participants. In part the issues are as much about the removal or reduction of workplace barriers to implementation as about any other factor, and this can happen before, during or after the learning event or process. It is also important to understand that follow up is most effective when done as a long-term process rather than as a one-off event at a particular point in time after the participant returns to the workplace.

Understanding follow up and transfer of learning leads to identification of another feature of good delivery practice which is to establish clarity at the start with all involved, especially participants' managers, about their different roles and responsibilities. For participants this might be to prepare them for the practices with which they will be expected to engage. If, for example, the participants' previous experience has led them to expect formal lectures they will find it hard to engage with new methods, such as action research, where they have to become active and reflective learners, unless they are properly oriented beforehand. Managers need to be committed to giving active support to ensure that participants have the opportunities and resources they need to implement their learning when they return to the workplace, as well as to removing workplace blocks. Managers who can clearly see that the learning is likely to contribute to their plans and goals are more likely to engage with these needs than those who cannot see any obvious benefits.

4.4 Providers

Thinking about providers is another aspect of CD that is currently experiencing a fundamental shift. Again the Berlin Statement summarises some current ideas when it states that *'DTIs should re-invigorate efforts to strengthen existing national training institutes; promote peer learning among national and regional training institutes and provide a comparative perspective.'* Changes for providers are also summarised in the directional shifts noted in the Introduction section, particularly

¹⁰ *'Transfer of learning'* and *'transfer of training'* are terms being used in corporate and governments training sectors for the theory and practice of learning acquired in one setting, such as a training course, being integrated into practical usage in another setting, most usually the workplace. This is a subject of growing attention because in the past so much training has failed to achieve the desired impact. Many institutions are now using the concept of transfer of learning as the basis for evaluation of the effectiveness of training. A very informative discussion of this subject is available from Human Resources and Social Development Canada: *'Planning Workplace Education Programs: Transfer of Learning'* available at <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/hip/lld/nls/Publications/A/transfer-a.shtml>

'From training institution to strategic facilitator of development'. In practice this creates a very complex set of challenges.

Among the DTI there is now an emerging acknowledgement that while technical skills remain important they aren't enough and that, in order to address organisational and institutional constraints, DTI staff need to have additional skill sets beyond those previously considered sufficient. The DTI now need staff with soft skills such as the ability to support the management of complex change processes, to mentor and coach internal change champions, and to facilitate dialogue and problem solving. However, even these skills will be of limited benefit unless combined with deep understanding of the local culture and context. It is something of an irony that some of the DTI are talking of 'training' programmes for their staff to acquire these skills, when the very problem they are trying to address is that training, in and of itself, does not guarantee the development of the soft skills that are now needed. The essential pre-conditions to soft skills are in an individual's inherent characteristics, which is an issue of recruitment rather than training at a later stage. It is also likely to need very significant change management initiatives within both donors and service providers before new and different skills and ways of working are valued and rewarded within organisational cultures. As noted in Box 4 some of these changes need to start with the donors.

A related understanding is that the new emphasis on enabling national, regional and South-South providers to take a more prominent role in supporting learning calls for Northern service providers to change both their target group and what they do with them. Some Southern training institutions have a wealth of knowledge on non-traditional learning practices within local culture and thus are much better placed to know what will work with participants. However some of these Southern institutes are small and have previously been overlooked as potential partners in service provision. The need is for the Northern service providers to seek out and listen to local knowledge as a preamble to moving into roles where they act in partnership with, or support of, their Southern counterparts. One way that the big, well resourced, DTI could help all actors in the sector is to join in processes of mutual learning, for example by piloting new practices, as noted in the fourth directional shift *'From individual knowledge and results practices to knowledge exchange, piloting and implementing of results-oriented approaches that work.'* Changes of this nature, especially to more reflective shared learning practices (see also *Monitoring and Evaluation* below), take time and will not happen unless deliberately factored into both strategic and implementation planning.

Currently training and learning practices within CD are totally unregulated in the sense that no service providers, Southern or Northern, who donors might contract on CD processes are held to account against any agreed professional standards of practice. This has led some agencies to call for accreditation systems to be applied, but as yet there has been no major initiative to take that idea forward, and in fact some express strong resistance to the idea. Yet this is a sector which could be regulated, though given its global nature, it would take considerable negotiation to agree on the who and how of regulation mechanisms. There are accreditation standards available from other sources that could be used to begin the process of defining the criteria for service providers in the development context. For example the UK government has developed a national certification framework called the *Training Quality Standard*¹¹. Use of the framework is twofold, firstly to assess providers, who can be either internal departments or external, against rigorous criteria for their ability to respond to the needs of individual customers, and to develop and deploy products to address particular sector needs. Secondly, the framework gives employers or other purchasers of training services criteria by which to judge the quality of potential suppliers. Many professional disciplines such as education and social work also have comprehensive accreditation schemes for various areas of practice which could be used to inform the development of accreditation standards

¹¹ Full details of the scheme are available at www.trainingqualitystandard.co.uk/

and criteria for DTI. Further, some academic institutes have worked with the ISO standards to develop processes of application to the provision of training.¹²

4.5 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluating the outcomes and impact of training activities is recognised by training professionals worldwide to be a notoriously difficult task in any context, because of the multitude of variables that can influence participants' performance after the training event. Given the amount of money spent on training each year in the development sector an increasing amount of attention is now being given to finding ways to overcome the challenges of M&E in order reach some understanding of what works and what represents a good investment of resources. What follows about the M&E of training can equally be applied to many of the other learning practices described in this paper. Probably the best known framework, and arguably the training industry standard, for assessing training is the Kirkpatrick 'Four Levels' model (7).

Box 10: Kirkpatrick's Four Levels model for the evaluation of training

- Level 1 **Reaction**: the immediate impressions of the participants and trainers, what they thought and felt about the training
- Level 2 **Learning**: the developments in knowledge, skills and attitudes resulting from the training process
- Level 3 **Behaviour**: the extent of behaviour and capability improvement and demonstrated application of the new learning within the work setting
- Level 4 **Results**: the impact on work results; the return on the training investment

The vast majority of monitoring of training takes place at level one, and to a lesser extent level two, because these are both the easiest and least resource intensive levels. However, levels one and two provide very limited information by which to assess the overall effectiveness of training and whether or not it was a good use of resources. In order to assess how learning has contributed to behaviour change in the workplace, and any impact this might have produced, requires longitudinal follow up at levels three and four. Follow up assessments can be difficult, time consuming and expensive, factors that have traditionally been seen as blocks to doing them. However the demand for greater accountability and more effective use of resources is creating the demand for methodologies that look to the higher levels of change resulting from training and learning activities.

The current shifts in thinking about training and learning practices for CD call for a concomitant shift in thinking about M&E, and some of the emerging themes are:

- The need to ensure that the formulation of indicators incorporates Southern perspectives and needs as well as those of donors;
- The need to adopt methods that go beyond the level of outputs (often as reporting requirements), to participatory methodologies that involve all stakeholders in reflective learning. It is in this area that service providers, and research institutes, could play an important role in helping to close learning loops by finding ways to ensure that learning from M&E processes is used not only to review and refine current implementation, but also to contribute to ongoing development of theory and future design. The DTI have recognised

¹² See for example the work of the Center on Education and Training for Employment at the Ohio State University (2006) available at <http://www.cete.org/services/pdfdocs/ISO%2010015%20-%20Interpretation.pdf>

that they need to do more to share information on methodologies and the results of training evaluations;

- The need to refine understanding of the links between learning and change across multiple dimensions of any organisation or system. Even if implementation is only taking place in one horizontal or vertical domain, there is a need for constant monitoring of relevant factors in other domains to understand what responses are emerging in the surrounding systems that might impact the ongoing process. If the learning is creating change, is it the expected change? If not, how is the difference to be understood? What cultural and contextual factors are relevant? What adjustments are necessary to go forward?
- The usefulness of agreements that specify learning goals and indicators before the start of any process. Learning agreements can be very helpful for both participants and their organisations, but need the early engagement of participants' managers for them to be an effective tool. At the individual level learning agreements connect training to work performance, and give managers criteria by which to assess improvement. Beyond this, well formulated learning agreements can be effective in linking work with individuals to organisational level learning needs.

Many different tools and techniques can be used for M&E. Among the most effective are some of the experiential learning methodologies described elsewhere in this paper, because they involve the ongoing review of everyday experiences to distil learning and apply it back to the work. Whichever methodology is chosen the two important factors that should be remembered are that:

- M&E needs to be built into the learning practice from the first step of the design stage, and
- M&E should be constant and ongoing both through the delivery period and beyond

In summary, the emerging consensus is that there is an urgent need for research to build on what is already known in order to find ways to monitor and evaluate more effectively. Impact evaluation can be both complex and very expensive and is not therefore, universally practical. Approaches like the IDRC Outcome Mapping (see Box 11 below), while still complex at times, are more easily able to provide valuable information on the results of inputs and activities at organisational, policy and systems levels.

Box 11: Some resources for developing results frameworks with related indicators

Capacity.Org Issue 29 Monitoring and Evaluation

This issue of Capacity.org offers an overview of the different methods and techniques that add new dimensions to results-based M&E. Some allow, for example, the observation of changes over a longer period of time, and offer ways to make such changes more tangible. Other innovative forms of M&E can themselves contribute to capacity building. In this issue, practitioners who have developed such methods describe and explain how they have used them. Available at http://www.capacity.org/en/journal/archives/monitoring_and_evaluation

IDRC: Evaluation Web-site

IDRC recognizes that evaluation makes an essential contribution to learning and acquiring knowledge about effective approaches to research for development. This webpage provides access to publications, programmes, methodologies, tools and links related to IDRCs work on evaluation. Available at http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26266-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

IDRC: Outcome mapping

Various documents about IDCR's Outcome Mapping model are available at http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26586-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

UNDP

Resource Catalogue on Measuring Capacities: An Illustrative Guide to Benchmarks and Indicators (2005). Capacity Development Group, Bureau for Development Policy - United Nations Development Programme available at http://www.undp.org/capacity/guide_toolkits.shtml

WBI have a new results framework for capacity development, available at http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTCDRC/Resources/CDRF_Paper.pdf?resourceurlname=CDRF_Paper.pdf

WBI IEG: Has a section with materials on M&E of training, available at <http://www.worldbank.org/ieg/training/monitoring.html>

5. Moving Forward: Unfinished Business

Systems thinking tells us that when a system is stuck it may be because the 'solution' is in fact contributing to maintenance of the problem. Einstein also said that *"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."* Much of the practice of CD, especially the emphasis on training, does indeed represent a stuck system and most of the thinking about solutions comes from the kind of thinking that created it. To achieve a strategic change in the practice of CD requires dialogue and action at multiple levels of engagement within the global aid and development systems because current practices are deeply entrenched and cannot be changed easily or quickly.

The emerging consensus summarised in this paper represents the first swell of movement in a sea change in the way that donors, DTI, other service providers and, to a more limited extent, Southern partners are beginning to engage with the challenges of training and learning practices for sustainable CD. An overview of what needs to happen has already been identified in the important statements from the *Berlin Retreat* and *Washington Forum*. **The challenge now is about finding the best ways to make those statements a reality – moving from the *what* to the *how*.** There are some messages for all stakeholders, and additionally some specific messages for donors and DTIs, as follows:

Messages for stakeholders making choices about CD support at country level

Decisions at country level are made by stakeholder groups that seek adequate responses to identified capacity development needs. These stakeholder groups, such as sector working groups or thematic task forces, have the responsibility and power to take informed choices about what kind of support is needed:

- Everyone, from domestic stakeholders, through beneficiaries, donors, DTI and service providers, needs to get past the assumption that training is the answer to all CD needs. For capacity development to be effective, learning support is one option and training is one modality that complements other measures;
- Stakeholders therefore need to seek an informed engagement around the question of CD support to make the right choices of combined measures at the individual, organisational and enabling environment level that are likely to lead to sustainable results;
- Stakeholders need to be concerned about the quality and relevance of assessments and analysis. These need to appreciate well the local context, existing assets and potential;
- The stakeholder group needs to plan strategically. Learning support for the development of sustainable capacity is a complex and long-term process. Learning processes need, therefore, to reflect contextual complexity and be flexible enough to adapt in response to changing circumstances and emerging learning;
- Stakeholders need to be aware of power relations and interests on all sides and agree on rules and safeguards for how to deal with these to avoid agreeing on projects that are bound to yield weak results;
- Evidence-based independent monitoring of CD efforts helps to draw lessons for better practice in learning support and enhances trust and ownership.

Messages for donors

Donors must first be able to change their own practices in response to lessons learned before they will be able to understand and support the changes that others need to make. Some components of these changes are the need for donors to:

- Move beyond highly bureaucratic RBM and project cycle approaches and timeframes to modalities that respect and reflect complexity and emergence, including taking a much longer term perspective on CD;

- Change the incentive structure to stop rewarding the use of unhelpful approaches and start rewarding work that is grounded in current understanding of effective practice;
- Identify and support ways to ensure that both their own staff and contracted service providers have a sufficient depth of knowledge about local culture and context to work effectively;
- Understand that their presence can have a powerful influence, not always for the good, on many CD processes, and find ways to mitigate that influence.

Messages for Southern Partners.

- Partner countries receiving support need to be encouraged to take ownership of their own CD processes – including decision-making as to when and how to address learning needs, in line with their own strategies and priorities. They should be provided with sufficient information and the criteria to diversify their options for choosing their source of support;
- Southern donors should join efforts with Northern donors to identify and promote good practices. They can mobilize better Southern expertise and experience to support the learning process through South-South cooperation – especially given their familiarity with development challenges and conditions in developing countries.

Messages for DTI and other service providers

The big Northern-based DTI are very influential in the sector and can play an important role in facilitating the necessary changes to training and learning for CD if they are able change themselves first. They may move towards a facilitation role and increasingly support Southern providers to engage in providing support. In order to embrace the messages of the emerging consensus both DTI and other service providers need to:

- Change their internal policies and approaches to reflect current understanding of effectiveness. For some this will call for substantive changes to both operational mandates and the type of skill sets that are used and valued within their organisations;
- Do more to integrate their work with broader development interventions that address the non-human aspects of capacity (policies, resources, etc). This calls for, among other things, much more active engagement in partnerships at all levels of operations;
- Work to improve the quality of implementation to reflect current understanding of good practice and better integration into broader CD goals and processes.

Global dialogue and learning

- Southern perspectives need to be integrated so that eventually the consensus is global with an appropriate focus on demand rather than supply. In particular there is a need to learn more from Southern training institutes because they hold important knowledge about what works in local contexts;
- The tensions that exist between the prevalent results management paradigm and systems thinking need to be better understood to use both in sensible ways within their limitations and potential;
- Ongoing research is needed to inform both policy and practice with evidence about what works. One focus for research could be how to bridge the gap between local, small scale, innovations that have been effective and the need, in many sectors and systems, for large scale interventions;
- Service providers need to be held to account for the quality of their work in light of what is now known about effective approaches to support learning for sustainable CD. Work needs to start on the development of standards for implementation and an accreditation system.
- To change practice, there is a tremendous need for active learning on the issue of meaningful support to learning for CD. Such learning can be promoted through a range of platforms that convene different constituencies.

Some donors and institutions already have their own change initiatives underway, for example the EC's *Backbone Strategy* and *Toolkit*, the ADB's implementation of the findings from its *Special Evaluation Study* on its CD practices, and the WBI work on a *Results Framework for Capacity Development*. Another important development is the commitment to collaborate on sharing experiences and practices in order to learn from each other and begin the complex process of trying to harmonise and align approaches, as in the *Learning Link* event hosted by the ILO's International Training Centre in Turin in December 2009. As these initiatives continue careful attention needs to be paid to what emerges from them so that learning is shared as widely as possible in order to inform the development of relevant and responsive practices.

It is striking how many of these messages are similar to the messages about moving forward on unfinished business set out at the end of *the Challenge of Capacity Development: working towards Good Practice* (OECD 2006), which appears to be a reflection of the fact that, while understanding about the issues has deepened, in terms of practice and implementation little has changed in the interim. **The time has come to move from words to action.**

Notes

- (1) The OECD has published some important studies on work in fragile states, two that may be of interest in the context of capacity building are *Concepts and Dilemmas of State Building in Fragile Situations (2008)* available at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/59/51/41100930.pdf> and *State-building in fragile situations – How can donors ‘do no harm’ and maximise their positive impact? Summary of the country case studies* available at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/8/32/44409926.pdf>
- (2) The Power Cube has been developed by John Gaventa and colleagues in the Participation, Power and Social Change team at IDS, <http://www.ids.ac.uk/go/research-teams/participation>. A case study about its use as an analytical tool is available at http://community.eldis.org/.59bc5248/Kerala_Devolution_of_Power
- (3) 'Bloom's Taxonomy' was originally created in and for an academic context, (the development commencing in 1948), when Benjamin Bloom chaired a committee of educational psychologists, based in American education, whose aim was to develop a system of categories of learning behaviour to assist in the design and assessment of educational learning. A good summary is available at www.learningandteaching.info/learning/bloomtax.htm
- (4) Kolb's theory was originally inspired by the work of psychologist Kurt Lewin. A very comprehensive write up of Kolb's original theory and how it has been developed to by others to incorporate a typology of learning styles, most notably by Honey and Mumford, is available at ATHERTON J S (2009) *Learning and Teaching; Experiential Learning* [On-line] UK: <http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/experience.htm>
- (5) Honey and Mumford's work to extend understanding the experiential learning cycle to understanding the different ways in which people learn is summarised at <http://www.engsc.ac.uk/er/theory/learningstyles.asp>
- (6) Gardner, Howard. Various resources are available on Professor Gardner's website <http://www.howardgardner.com/MI/mi.html>
- (7) Donald Kirkpatrick was Professor Emeritus at the University Of Wisconsin. He first published his ideas about evaluation of training in 1959, in a series of articles in the Journal of American Society of Training Directors. He has subsequently written other significant works about training and evaluation. A brief summary of the model is available at <http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/Articles/k4levels/index.htm>

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Appendix 1: Berlin Statement on International Development Training

Berlin Statement on International Development Training *Final Declaration of the High Level Retreat on the Effectiveness of International Development Training, Berlin, 4.-5. June 2008*

Purpose

While development agencies generally meet under the auspices of the networks of the OECD Development Assistance Committee, there is no joint agenda on International Development Training. Therefore, a group of development training institutes (DTIs)¹³ met for a High Level Retreat on the Effectiveness of International Development Training, in Berlin on 4th-5th of June 2008 to develop this agenda.

Background

All development actors have a responsibility to promote the objectives of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and the development training institutions sought ways to promote the pillars of that declaration. In particular they discussed ways to increase country ownership in the provision of training, to align training provided by DTIs with country needs and systems, to work towards common standards, to facilitate learning about what works in different contexts, and to collaborate in joint program development where feasible. Because several recent evaluation studies have brought specific areas of training practice into question, it was opportune for the DTIs to review common issues of Operational Effectiveness. Retreat participants engaged with the issues raised by these critiques, exchanged views and good practices, and identified specific issues for follow-up in the coming months.

Key Messages

The retreat led to several key messages with respect to the Operational Effectiveness of DTIs and to the Aid Effectiveness of training. These messages were formulated with the explicit recognition of the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and are to be submitted for the consideration of the Accra High-Level Forum in September 2008.

1. Effectiveness - Training in the context of capacity development

Training addresses not only learning at the individual level, but must be integrated into a wider capacity development effort to include capacity gaps at the organizational and institutional levels. Effectiveness of training requires matching training to the capacity needs identified in specific contexts and specifying the type of learning outcomes to be achieved, such as enhanced skills, raised awareness or improved consensus. It equally requires that trained staff can be retained and institutions are thus effectively strengthened. The risk of a brain drain of trained staff needs to be taken into regard. DTIs are well placed to implement training and other forms of capacity development. Whether training or other forms of capacity development are the most effective means to address capacity gaps must be determined beforehand in the capacity needs assessment.

2. Guidelines for the development of training programs

DTIs note the widespread need for general directions on training cycle management. This need should be addressed through tools that provide orientation and inspiration, rather than formal rules and standards. Developing such tools could start with an exchange of successful practices among DTIs. In addition, the issues of learning methods and modes, including the use of technology, require further analytical work and discussion, including research or disseminating research results. In doing so, the definition of training should be expanded beyond the classroom to include means such as eLearning, mentoring, coaching, and secondments, peer exchanges and experience-based learning methods.

3. Metrics - Indicators for and evaluation of training

The metrics of training programs is an area for urgent research, with a particular focus on the impact of training on organizations, policies and other institutional structures and systems, based on clearly formulated

¹³ The term DTI is meant to include specialized training institutes as well as units of bi- and multilateral development agencies and regional development banks that are implementing development training.

and articulated objectives and change processes (see Key Message 1). Monitoring and evaluation are to be seen as continuous activities. More work needs to be done into distilling lessons from training evaluations such as the recent World Bank IEG evaluation of training, seeking to determine what works best in what context. Participating DTIs noted that mechanisms should be found for more information-sharing on methodologies and results of training evaluations. While metrics should be project- or program-specific, they also need to be formulated on the basis of general guidelines that partner governments and donors agree on (see Key Message 4).

4. Country Ownership - Strengthening training institutions

DTIs should re-invigorate efforts to strengthen existing national training institutes; promote peer learning among national and regional training institutes and provide a comparative perspective. Promising approaches are: Giving support for national champions and for centres of excellence, and linking them to DTIs; training of trainers; making increasing use of national training experts in DTIs' own programs; and providing salary and budget support to improve staff retention rates. Most training materials must be adapted for local use and rooted in the country context - translating them is often not sufficient. Closing capacity gaps at the organizational and institutional levels requires getting a buy-in from the trainees' institutions. In doing so, ownership should not be limited to the public sector and the government, but include other important actors, most notably civil society and the private sector.

5. Alignment - Partner country needs assessments

DTIs need to align to partner countries' needs assessment systems. It is important that partner institutions themselves undertake the capacity needs assessment; if necessary DTIs should first strengthen the partner capacity to do so. While the details of the assessments will reflect the diversity of partner institutions, all partners will need to meet certain criteria: to have a clear development strategy; to determine the level at which the assessment be done (micro, meso, or macro); to identify local institutions and stakeholders that would participate in the assessment; to link assessments to results and outcomes; and (most importantly) to set clear priorities among the needs identified. The retreat also discussed how DTIs could best support the assessment process.

6. Harmonization - International division of labour

DTIs generally agree on the need to improve harmonization of their work to reduce duplication and burdens on partners, and to build synergies among themselves. DTIs are open to rely on common principles of complementarity, comparative advantage, proximity to client, additionality, and effective coordination. Harmonization can thus account for DTIs having different mandates and are operating in different contexts. Getting to know each other better among DTIs is an important starting point for harmonization. A first step would be to take stock of the major institutions providing training as part of official development cooperation, the type and scale of their operations, and competencies.

7. Collaboration - Joint content development, sharing rosters, didactical approaches & training formats

International Development Training materials developed with public funds should be disseminated as widely as possible. Sharing existing materials or expert rosters could be an effective first step for collaboration, being less time consuming and resource intensive than joint development. Sharing of training programs and of capacity development resources should first be piloted to identify, in a practical setting, any issues on intellectual property rights, privacy, quality control, and business model. In this context, alternative models and licensing options could be explored. Progress on joint development would best be achieved through specific collaborative initiatives that generate experiences and help to identify approaches that can be realized effectively. Making their own materials available to the public or starting specific joint content development initiatives can be done by DTIs individually. Addressing collective issues will require larger DTIs to take over some of the investments and development work (e.g. setting up and managing a website for sharing materials).

Follow-Up for Implementation

Recognizing the importance of maintaining momentum on the key issues, several of which had emerged separately in different roundtables, the Retreat welcomed the offers of participants to share ideas on the follow up items with the following working titles:

(A) How-To Guide on Training Programs

Participating DTIs intend to take up the need for general directions on training cycle management and jointly work on the development of a "how-to guide"¹⁴ on training programs, in response to key messages from sections 1 and 2 of the Berlin Statement. There are existing good practices and these need to be shared and adopted. The nature and scope and the most appropriate term for the product will be decided by the collaborating partners. Potential issues that were discussed at the retreat and could be included are: (i) How to match the capacity building measure - training or other forms - to the capacity needs identified in specific contexts? (ii) How to distinguish training that is critical to a change process from the skills building that is required for the normal and efficient running of an organization? (iii) How to capture training cycle management in a concise set of general guidelines? (iv) How to develop toolkits for training cycle management? InWEnt offered to be the initial convening champion for this follow up, to collect ideas and suggestions and to coordinate next steps. Interested DTIs may contact Günther Taube (guenther.taube@inwent.org).

(B) Certification Standards and Programs

Further work on certification standards and programs was proposed by several participants. A focal point of contact would be needed to initially convene interested partners and collaborate in response to key messages from sections 4 and 5 of the Berlin Statement.

(C) Sharing Capacity Development Resources

The first step in response to key messages from section 7 of the Berlin Statement for sharing training materials or expert rosters will require individual efforts of DTIs to make their own materials as widely available as possible. Participating DTIs expressed their interest to follow-up on this in a future forum.

(D) Metrics

Distilling lessons from training evaluations and promoting metrics that go beyond effects on individuals were identified as important follow-up steps to key messages in section 3 of the Berlin Statement. WBI offered to collaborate with participant organizations on this and Samuel Otoo (sotoo@worldbank.org) would initially convene interested parties.

(E) Mapping of Development Training Institutions

Getting to know each other better among DTIs was identified as an important step towards harmonization responding to relevant key messages in section 6 of the Berlin Statement. Undertaking a mapping of Development Training Institutions would require someone to take the lead as well as the collaboration of all involved. Participant DTIs interested in exploring these issues are invited to contact others with a proposal. The more far-reaching consideration to develop a database or a network of DTIs could be taken up in a follow-up meeting.

¹⁴ The terms "Guidelines," "Orientation Map," and "How-To Guide" had all been used.

Appendix 2: Approaches, Tools and Techniques to Support Learning for Capacity Development

Introduction

This section gives a brief introduction to many different approaches, tools and techniques that can support learning for individuals, through groups and organisations, to sectors. It is important to note that the approaches, tools and techniques listed below go beyond the realms of formal study and training. What is offered here is based on a much broader concept of learning and acquiring knowledge to align with the broader concepts of CD now prevalent. There is an assumption that, in the context of CD, learning and change are inextricably linked.

The list is organised simply in alphabetic order, with indications given in each approach about the level at which it would most likely be effective. Those levels, which have multiple linkages between them, are broadly as follows:

- **Learning Practices for Individuals**
Training individuals has long been a core element of many CD initiatives. However, as noted in the introduction to the guidelines, there is now an emerging consensus that this is not necessarily the most effective use of resources, and that while this approach will always have its place, it is most appropriately situated as just one option in a range in use within CD strategies.
- **Learning Practices for Individuals and Groups**
Approaches in this group can support learning for both individuals and groups. The list is not exhaustive, and there might be overlap with other domains. The selection of approaches given can be considered when the capacity need is to support the learning of individuals and peer groups, either within an organisation, or across multiple organisations.
- **Learning Practices for Organisations and Sectors**
Generally these processes are more complex because they are dealing with a higher order of system complexity, whether applied to single organisations, or a large and diverse group across a sector. Any comprehensive intervention at organisational or sector level is likely to use a range of different tools and techniques, which may include, but not be limited to, training and other practices targeted at individuals and groups in order to contribute to higher level goals. Care is needed in planning, designing and implementing any intervention to ensure the right combination from the vast array of tools and techniques available

There is a great deal of overlap between many of the approaches described below. For example, degree level study of individuals can, in the right circumstances, contribute a great deal to the learning in their organisations. And an organisational development process might result in a great deal of learning for the individuals and groups who participate in the activities. The enabling environment is influenced by factors that go beyond the scope of learning, most notably political will, economic factors and the socio-cultural context. In general these factors need to be addressed in different ways, but learning programmes have the potential for positive impact even at the broader environmental level.

Some approaches listed below, especially communication and knowledge management, can be considered as cross-cutting. However, because each can have a clear and specific role to play in particular circumstances, they are dealt with here as approaches within the array of choice, in order to present some specific tools and resources.

The final point to note is that many of the resources list below are from academic and corporate sources. Where possible links are given to development based or oriented resources and case studies, where they have been identified. Unfortunately, as yet, for many of the approaches, tools and techniques offered below, it would appear that they have yet to be written up in the development context.

Blended Learning

Application level: Individuals and groups

Blended learning is helpful for any need that needs to be addressed through both theory and practice. It is also helpful for processes where large numbers of people in different locations need to learn the same thing.

Blended learning is the combination of different training and learning technologies, activities and events. It most usually combines a mixture of e-learning and interactive human contact. The blend selected can be problem focused or person focused. Benefits of blended learning are that it enables quality assessment of e-learning processes and can facilitate rapid roll-out of learning programmes to large groups. It can be very cost effective, but this depends significantly the development costs. Disadvantages are similar to those for e-learning and distance learning, namely that it requires reliable Internet access, and that relatively high levels of English language and study skills are usually a prerequisite. It needs skilful design and management to ensure the right balance between the e-learning and face-to-face interaction components of the blend.

<i>Resources</i>
<i>Examples</i>

Coaching and Mentoring

Application level: Individuals and Groups

Coaching and mentoring can be useful in many settings, especially as part of leadership development programmes, as follow up to training activities and anywhere that young or middle level managers and professionals could benefit from focused and structured guidance from more experienced colleagues.

Coaching and mentoring are both activities that have long been a central feature of management, professional and leadership development programmes in the corporate world, and they are increasingly being use within development agencies. There are many different definitions and applications of the words, and each can be used to describe a range of different activities and approaches. A useful overview of both subjects can be found on the UK based Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development website.

In general, though not definitively, coaching tends to be more focused on workplace challenges and issues and will be time bounded. Mentoring is more often a long-term process of supporting an individual's career and personal development. The coach or mentor needs to be a knowledgeable and experienced person who is able to give regular, though not necessarily frequent, time to support

the development of an individual or group. Both processes are dialogues focused on improvement of performance, and or the achievement of professional or personal goals. Both may be concerned with a broad spectrum of needs from working to close technical knowledge gaps, through advising and motivating, to unleashing potentials.

While line managers may use coaching and mentoring techniques in the course of routine staff supervision, coaches and mentors are generally people from outside the individual's line management structure. Also, while advisors may adopt coaching and mentoring techniques, it is often national or regional personnel of seniority and maturity who are the best placed to be coaches and mentors to their young colleagues. These individuals may be in other organisations, or even in other countries, as in the example of the International Policy Fellowship in Eastern Europe.

A variation on the standard coaching approach is peer coaching, wherein two or more people working at the same level come together regularly and use a structured review process to help each other reflect on work activities.

Resources

<http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/lrnanddev/coachmntor/?area=hs>

Examples

The case study of the innovative International Policy Fellowships (IPF) mentoring programme is written up in: *Ownership, Leadership and Transformation: Can We Do Better for Capacity Development?* 2003 Carlos Lopez and Thomas Theisohn, UNDP-Earthscan, available at <http://www.capacity.undp.org/index.cfm?module=Library&page=Document&DocumentID=5015>

Communication

Application level: Groups, Organisations and Sectors

The communication techniques below are powerful tools to use for working on issues that have a defined stakeholder group who have local knowledge and wisdom to contribute to both the identification and solution of problems within their domain. They are best used for challenges that cannot be resolved by technical solutions. Communication processes can be used with any group, organisation or community where there are long-term, or emerging, problems that affect their circumstances and for which their engagement will be essential to successful resolution.

Multiple aspects of CD, TC and TA require the experts and facilitators involved to have communication skills as one of their core capacities. Communication is also one of the essential underpinning foundations of change management. The focus in this section is on communication techniques that bring groups together to connect and surface their collective knowledge and wisdom, and by so doing enhance and support learning and change within those groups.

The World Café is a conversation process that enables people to link together and build on their collective ideas to discover new insights into the questions or problems under consideration. One of the assumptions in the World Café approach is that any group of people has a collective intelligence that can be brought to bear on the issues that are of concern to them. Through its use of relationships and cross-pollination of ideas World Café style conversations enable groups to share and learn together.

Open Space Technology is a process for allowing participants in a meeting to work on the issues of most concern to them, relevant to the main subject of the meeting. It is most usually associated with large meetings called for specific purpose, but it can also be a useful technique for groups who meet regularly. Its particular use for learning is that it can be used to allow participants to explore emergent learning from their experience together with colleagues.

Future Search is a large group planning process that works on a whole system approach, by bringing together all the people connected to a task or challenge. The process involves the group identifying their shared past, present and values, and using these as a springboard to visioning and planning a future that is grounded in their own history and reality. This is again a process that works on the basis of surfacing collective wisdom and it relies on mutual learning by stakeholders as the catalyst for voluntary follow-up action.

Resources

www.theworldcafe.com

www.openspaceworld.com is the website of the Harrison Owen, the originator of Open Space Technology. www.openspaceworld.org is another comprehensive resource site run by volunteers.

www.futuresearch.net

Examples

Customised Training

Application level: Individuals and Groups

Customised training is very effective for the development of specific technical skills needed for project implementation, for example, a vaccination component of a health project. They are also useful in circumstances where system compliance is needed, for example training finance staff to have sufficient technical knowledge and understanding of a donor's systems to be able to ensure accurate financial management and reporting.

As noted above, training has long been a favoured methodology within technical cooperation. The approaches in the section for learning practices for individuals can also be applied to groups within organisations. More common however, when the target audience is a group rather than an individual, is for customised training to be commissioned. In theory customised training should be more focused on the needs of the participants, but this depends very much on the quality of both the training needs assessment, and the design of the training. The most substantive and up-to-date assessment of training and its impact is available in the World Bank Institute's Internal Evaluation Group's 2008 study *'Using Training to Build Capacity'*. This report has identified some of the critical gaps in the planning and implementation of training for capacity development and suggests ways to make training a more effective tool. Some of the report's findings link to the issues of *'transfer of learning/training'* discussed in the **'External Training Courses'** section above.

The majority of courses offered are, for a variety of reasons, stand alone events. Modular programmes, that offer training inputs in conjunction with other activities, may offer more potential for positive impact. One of the most important aspects of well designed modular programmes is that they allow time for implementation between modules. If, when the participants return for the next module, they are given time to discuss the successes and challenges of their implementation of

learning, it helps both to solve any challenges and to ground the learning. Another feature that can be built into modular programmes is a reflection process, based on the experiential approaches discussed above. This too can help to consolidate and ground learning, at the same time as overcoming implementation challenges. Another supportive strategy for modular programmes is to have the organisation appoint 'training mentors' who are able to offer both practical and theoretical support to the participants between modules as they attempt to implement their learning.

Resources

Using Training to Build Capacity: evaluation study report available at http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTTRABUICAPDEV/Resources/full_doc.pdf

Examples

Degree Level Study Overseas

Application level: Individuals

Tertiary study overseas is most appropriate for young professionals whose development will be enhanced by academic study opportunities that are not available to them in their own country. Also where there is no pool of personnel with a sufficiently high level of academic knowledge to contribute to the technical development of sectors.

Giving scholarships for individuals for degree level study at a university overseas has long been a central feature of many donors' technical cooperation programmes. Most usually, but not exclusively, the focus is on graduates being enabled to study at masters and doctoral levels. A very comprehensive review of the benefits and drawbacks of this approach is offered in the study '*Generations of Quiet Progress: An Impact Assessment of ATLAS/AFGRAD*', which looked at the impact of 40 years of USAID scholarship support for degree level study in the US. The conclusions of this study were that, long term, degree training at US universities resulted in many positive and quantifiable impacts at both individual and organisational level, with some qualification of results according to sector and other circumstances. The study did not find evidence of significant brain drain, which is an oft cited criticism of such schemes. Other bi-lateral donors, for example France, are assessing and re-thinking their scholarship programmes.

Some of the disadvantages arising from overseas study programmes are the problems covering positions and workload during absences of years, brain drain, and about how individuals are able to adapt and use their new knowledge on return in cases where the study programme was not a direct fit with their work responsibilities, or where the environment is resistant to the introduction of new ideas.

Resources

Generations of Quiet Progress: An Impact Assessment of ATLAS/AFGRAD available at http://www.aionline.org/files/ATLAS_AFGRAD_Generations_of_Quiet_Progress.pdf

Examples

Distance Learning

Application level: Individuals

Distance learning works best for people who do not have high quality tertiary education available to them locally, who need higher education in order to develop potential and advance in their professional careers but whose financial or personal circumstances do not allow them to go abroad to study.

Many universities - a very impressive example is the University of South Africa (UNISA) which is a dedicated, open distance learning institution - now offer a wide range of distance learning opportunities for people who are not able to attend study programmes in person. Many people in these circumstances join very similar programmes to those who can go abroad and in this way they can both gain knowledge and earn qualifications. (However it has to be noted that distance learning programmes can also be relatively expensive, and the extent to which donors may be supporting this type of learning has not yet been documented.)

The way that study programmes are structured can depend on a number of factors, most notably the subject and length of the course. With the continuing development of communication technology distance learning programmes are increasingly incorporating features such as online tutorials and group seminars. There is often flexibility about the timing of the study, which is helpful to people with demanding commitments. The drawbacks are that students do not get the benefits of being part of a student group and can often feel isolated. While one important requirement for this type of programme is reliable and affordable access to the Internet there are others that are equally important. First is language skills, many programmes are in English and a high level of reading and writing ability is needed for academic study. The other important factor is to have a pre-existing level of study skills. Many people in developing countries have not had an educational experience that equips them to make effective use of what is on offer in distance learning programmes and they can struggle without support. There are ways to ensure that all of these requirements are met, but they all take time and resources to put in place before embarking on the main study programme.

The term e-learning can be used for distance learning programmes. It can also be used to describe any technology-supported learning system, which may take place within one organisation, and not therefore, necessarily at a distance.

Resources

Probably the world's largest distance learning facility is www.unisa.ac.za

Examples

The work of the Global Development Learning Network as a source of distance learning is written up in: *Ownership, Leadership and Transformation: Can We Do Better for Capacity Development?* 2003 Carlos Lopez and Thomas Theisohn, UNDP-Earthscan, available at <http://www.capacity.undp.org/index.cfm?module=Library&page=Document&DocumentID=5015>

E-learning

Application level: Individuals and Groups:

For learning needs that have high knowledge or technical components. For working on processes with groups who are geographically distant.

E-learning is the term that classifies a range of technology-supported and web based learning systems. These learning systems offer individual and flexible learning opportunities without requiring direct human interaction so they are good for people who do not have easy access to learning resources or facilitators. E-learning can happen across distances and borders or within one organisation and not therefore, at a distance. While e-learning can be very cost effective it does have drawbacks in that students are isolated and need to have a high level of English language and study skills, together with good quality and affordable Internet access. The other problem is that e-learning offers little in the way of support for adaptation and application of new learning in the workplace.

Resources

InWent have a learning platform *Global Campus 21*. It serves as a platform for courses on both e-learning and e-pedagogy and also for different sectoral content. Additionally it is a portal for different fora and alumni networks. Within the GC21 InWent are establishing an E-Academy with management courses. www.gc21.de

Examples

Experiential Learning

Application level: Individuals and Groups

All of the experiential learning processes listed under this heading are very useful for advisors who are working alongside counterparts, and or tasked with building the capacity of teams, and need tools to ground learning into everyday work practices. Experiential learning processes are also good for training follow up activities. Another very effective application is as tools for participatory monitoring of project activities, not only for learning activities, but for all aspects of implementation.

Experiential learning is a broad generic heading for numerous structured processes which can support individuals to learn from their workplace experiences. The common feature of all the practical applications of experiential learning that follow is that they are concerned with workplace learning. They are all processes which support individuals and groups to use their daily working experiences as sources of learning in order to improve their work practices. The processes all need to be set up and structured in order to give participants an introduction to the ideas and how to use them, and this will usually require a skilled facilitator to get things started. The introduction and facilitation of first applications can be done very effectively in the workplace and does not require attendance at an external training course. Once learned, many of these processes can be implemented without further external facilitation. Another important, and useful, feature of these processes is that, if properly structured and facilitated, they can provide safe settings for individuals to share and work on problems without risking any blame or loss of face.

Resources

The concept of workplace experience as a source of learning and development was first introduced in 1984 by Professor David Kolb, who specialises in organisational behaviour. Since then his work has been developed and adapted in numerous ways in both the corporate and education worlds. It has also spawned some theories of different learning styles which have also been applied to many different disciplines. More about Kolb's theories can be found on <http://www.learningfromexperience.com/>. The Research Library section of this site contains many useful documents, including the original article on the experiential learning cycle and a 2008 paper on management learning. Many other websites also have information and explanations about Kolb's work. A very comprehensive and practical generic resource for learning and teaching can be found on <http://www.learningandteaching.info/index.html>

Action-Reflection-Learning-Planning Cycle (ARLP)

The ARLP has been developed to overcome the frequently observed problem of activities leading straight to the planning of more activities without any time being taken to reflect on and learn from those already completed. It is, therefore, a simple but very effective model for structuring reflection and learning processes in order to ensure that future planning reflects learning from what has gone before. The Community Development Resource Association in South Africa has worked with this model extensively and has been influential in introducing its use to many development organisations.

Resources

See www.cdra.org.za Bookshop and Dialogue Resources sections

Action Learning Sets (ALS)

An Action Learning Set (ALS) is typically a group of 5 or 6 people who work together, or who are from different departments or organisations but have similar work interests. The ALS works best for people who are dealing with problems that do not have clear cut technical solutions. The ALS members will meet together every few weeks for a day or half a day. The basic principle is grounded in ARLP (above) and the structure gives each person in the group a turn to present a current challenge in their work. The key feature of the ALS is that group members cannot give advice when they have heard about a problem, they can only ask questions of the presenter. Because giving advice, rather than asking questions, is such a common feature of how people respond when hearing about a problem, it is helpful to have a facilitator in the first instance, someone who can introduce and maintain the rules and discipline of ALS. Guidance notes for using ALS can be found on the website of Bond.

Resources

Bond is the UK membership body for NGOs working in international development: the guidelines for ALS can be accessed at <http://www.bond.org.uk/resources.php/463/action-learning-set>

Action Research

Action research is a learning and change methodology now in use in many different disciplines where professional development is needed. It is particularly well established as a methodology in education and health sectors worldwide. It can be used by individuals and groups. It is a tool for learning by reflection and at its simplest action research starts with the question 'How can I/we improve my work?' As with all such tools over the years many different variations have been

developed, some prioritising technical aspects of the methodology, while others focussing more on values. There is no one right method, the choice should be made depending on circumstances.

Action research is an appropriate tool to use with people who already have a level of technical skills and competence in their area of operations, but have a need or desire to overcome specific challenges within their sphere of responsibility. It could, therefore, be used with middle level managers who are struggling with staff problems, or with educators who want to adapt their teaching practice to be more relevant for their students.

Resources

The origins of action research came from psychologist Kurt Lewin, who identified a cycle of research, reflection and action: identify a general or initial idea, reconnaissance or fact finding, planning, take first action step, evaluation, amended plan, take second step – return to evaluation. A very helpful summary of action research for beginning practitioners is offered by educator and long term action research practitioner Jean McNiff, <http://www.jeanmcniff.com/booklet1.html>

Examples

Two case studies from about staff professional development in a Ugandan school, available at <http://www.waier.org.au/forums/2004/earnest.html> and the second as part of an education reform programme in the Middle East, available at <http://www.aare.edu.au/07pap/ste07250.pdf>

Critical Incident Analysis (CIA)

This tool can be used either by individuals or groups to help reflect on something that has happened in order to learn from the experience. It is used in many different disciplines, including teaching and medicine, emergency response and leadership development. The critical incident can be any type of problem or challenge that has arisen in the person or group's work. It does not necessarily have to be a problem, it might be an event that was interesting, has provoked an emotional response, or exposed a gap in understanding. It might be a problem that has already been solved, but understanding about its cause is needed to help to prevent reoccurrence. The process involves working through a series of questions designed to help analyse the causes, the person or group's response, and then identify what can be learned from what happened. Many websites carry information about, and examples of, Critical Incident Analysis.

Resources

For a guide to critical incident analysis and examples of how it has been used in practice see <http://www.leap.org.za/>.

Also, on the US Government's Education Resources Information Center's website <http://www.eric.ed.gov/> - document EJ504450 - *The Value of Critical Incident Analysis as an Educational Tool and Its Relationship to Experiential Learning*

Examples

See LEAP (above) which is a South African voluntary organisation using learning approaches to deal with land tenure problems for poor and vulnerable farmers.

On-the-job

On-the-job training could also be included in the *Experiential Learning* section above. Key features of on-the-job training is that it happens in the trainee's workplace, on a one-to-one basis, using all the documents, tools and other resources that they will need to use for their work when they are fully trained. The process should have a clear set of learning objectives and a structured set of inputs and activities to achieve them. This process takes place over time, and requires understanding that the trainee will not be able to deliver on the tasks in question until the training is finished.

On-the-job training is generally believed to be most effective for vocational and technical skills development. This can include accounting skills. On-the-job training is also one the most effective mechanisms to follow up transfer of learning/training after and external or customised course, in situations where it is understood that the trainee will face practical implementation challenges.

Resources
A helpful discussion of on-the-job training is available from CIPD at http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/lrnanddev/designdelivery/otjtrain.htm
Examples

Work-based learning

Work-based learning is an emerging discipline for experiential learning in the workplace. This theory is based on the model of eight different types of intelligence (verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, body-kinaesthetic, spatial, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalistic), through which everyday experiences produce implicit knowledge. Various reflection techniques, including action research, are then used to make implicit knowledge explicit and from this to construct meaning and concepts which can be applied into the work.

Resources
A good introductory discussion of different definitions of work-based learning, and links to other sources is available at http://www.icvet.tafensw.edu.au/resources/workbased_learning.htm
Examples

Work/Job shadowing

Work or job shadowing is the term used to describe one person in close observation of another doing their routine work. It is an activity often used in management training programmes as a practical way of giving a new or potential managers some understanding of the challenges that managers face. It requires an experienced manager to be willing to have someone accompany them throughout their working day, and to discuss the events and issues that have arisen. This might be done in different periods of time depending on circumstances, perhaps one day a week for a few months, or a block of weeks or months together.

Work shadowing is good for any situation where there are experienced managers who are willing to have new or potential managers shadow their routine activities. This type of activity is best utilised as part of a large development programme, rather than as a stand alone event.

Resources
Examples

Whole person learning

Whole person learning approaches recognise that when individuals make choices and act (or not) it is on the basis of much more than their intellectual capacity. Some approaches work with the emotional-spiritual-physical-intellectual model, while other use the eight different intelligences mentioned in the ‘**Work-based Learning**’ section above. A facilitator working with the whole person approach will draw on a much broader range of tools and activities, for example art and drama, than one who is using standard training techniques that target only intellectual ability.

Whole person learning is a very important approach for audiences whose capacity to learn and change is blocked by strong cultural or experiential influences – this could include women who have been socialised into positions of disadvantage, or survivors of conflict who are traumatised by their experiences.

Resources
Examples

Exposure

Application level: Individuals and Groups
For anyone who could benefit from seeing new or different ideas in action. For those who would benefit from introduction to new ideas and practices

Exposure visits take people to see what others are doing in similar work situations to themselves. Attending conferences and other events provide exposure to new ideas and influences within sectors. Exposure visits can make learning about new ideas more practical and grounded in reality. Bringing people together in this way is a good approach for stimulating the spread of good practice and the fertilisation of innovation. They are most effective when clear learning objectives have been specified at the start, the visit is appropriately structured, and there is effective follow up afterwards to support the application of new ideas.

The drawbacks are that exposure visits can be expensive and far from cost effective, as often they are structured around clear learning objectives, and there is no follow up. Unfortunately exposure visits have also become part of the *perverse incentives* of CD practice, as they are frequently listed as an expectation by potential participants, who appear to be more interested in the travel than the learning.

Resources
Examples

External Training Courses

Application level: Individuals

External training courses are very useful for a number of capacity development needs that individual staff may have, particularly in technical subjects such as accounting and computer and ICT skills. They are also good for the foreign language development necessary for negotiating with and reporting to donors, most notably English.

External training courses are those offered by providers outside the individual's organisation, either in country or overseas. The provider may be a private company or not-for-profit organisation. The content and curriculum of the courses will be predefined by the provider and advertised for open access registration of participants, who may come from a wide range of different backgrounds. The course length will vary according to the subject, and may be full or part time depending on the target audience and amount of content to be covered. For example study for a financial qualification may be offered in the evenings, over a period of years, depending on the level of the qualification. Other subject such as staff management might be offered as a one-week full time event. There are two main drawbacks to most external training courses. Firstly, they cannot be specifically tailored to the particular needs of each participant. Secondly, they rarely have any pre-testing or follow-up activities built in, which means that their impact is difficult to gauge, and very often the participants have little or no support in trying to apply their learning in the workplace.

There is now a body of study, knowledge and practice developing around the subject of '*transfer of learning*' or '*transfer of training*'. This work has identified the factors within the work setting and actions by others that are needed to support individuals to transfer their learning from an external learning situation, e.g. a training course, to their work. A training consultant in America, Don Clark, has made his experience of this issue available on his website.

Resources

Don Clark has information about Transfer of Training and many other related subjects on his website <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/learning/transfer.html>

Examples

Knowledge Management

Application level: Organisations and Sectors

Knowledge management is particularly relevant in sectors where there are rapid advances in knowledge, e.g. health; where the sector's mandate is knowledge based, e.g. education and training. It is also an important mechanism to ensure cohesion in multi-disciplinary sectors with multiple stakeholders, such as decentralisation processes. Knowledge management approaches can also be effective tools for monitoring and evaluation in complex environments.

Knowledge management is something that has a very simple description and a very complex reality. There is no one universally agreed definition of knowledge management, and the discipline is growing and developing constantly. A summary definition is the process by '*which organizations generate value from their intellectual and knowledge-based assets*'. This creates the need to gather

together and document what staff and other stakeholders know about the organisation's areas of interest, and then finding ways to share that collected data back to those who need it to enhance their job performance. Knowledge management often depends heavily on technology, but it is a much broader concept than the technological aspects of application. The UNDP Capacity Development Resource, *Knowledge Services and Learning*, analysed the relevance of knowledge management for development organisations.

In the corporate world attention is now being paid to the subject of **Social Capital** as an important factor in an organisation's capacity to manage knowledge. The emerging theory is that, in the context of ever increasing complexity of operating environments, it is no longer only staff skills that are an important resource, but also their knowledge based relationships and networks that add value to their performance.

Resources http://www.cio.com/article/40343/Knowledge_Management_Definition_and_Solutions
Examples

Leadership Development

Application level: Individuals and Groups
LDP are helpful in situations where there is a general need to develop the next generation of leaders, for example where there is not yet an obvious group of potential and eventual successors to the current leadership. LDP also work in situations where new challenges are emerging, for which no one yet has the experience to offer sector leadership, for example in a country's response to an emerging HIV AIDS epidemic. Another effective use of LDP is to help women overcome the glass ceiling that prevents them from having voice and influence, and from holding senior positions within organisations and institutions.

Leadership development programmes (LDP) are processes designed to enhance the leadership skills of existing and potential leaders within systems. To be effective LDP need, firstly, to be specifically tailored to the culture and context of the participants and, secondly, to happen in the context of an enabling environment. In this context an enabling environment is one that allows sufficient operating space for the participants to implement their learning in support of both personal and organisational development. There is little point in sending people on LDP if the political environment in which they work is such that they have no opportunity to practice what they are learning in order to bring about change in their own performance or within their organisations.

The most effective LDP will comprise not only training modules, but also supplementary activities such as exposure visits, and coaching or mentoring. They will also be long-term and modular, allowing time for the application of techniques to be followed by review and reflections between inputs and activities. There are innumerable leadership theories available to form the basis of what is offered in an LDP. In the corporate world the Situational Leadership and Emotional Intelligence models are popular, often in combination. Some programmes also introduce Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as a very effective leadership tool.

Resources

Examples

The report of a leadership development programme at the local level in Central America is available at

http://content.undp.org/go/cms-service/download/asset/?asset_id=1634034

Organisational Development (Strengthening, Change Management and Learning)

Application level: Organisations and Sectors

Organisational development, which includes organisational strengthening, change management and organisational learning approaches can be considered for any organisation or system that is not performing to optimal levels and does not yet have the capacity to fulfil its mandate. These approaches are best used when the development of capacity calls for multiple aspects of the system to be learning and developing in tandem.

There are three primary bodies of knowledge and practice that need to be taken into consideration in the design and planning of any intervention that has a primary purpose of developing an organisation or sector. Organisational development theory is inextricably linked with that of change management and organisational learning (which is also approached under the heading of learning organisations). All of these subjects are far too vast and complex to be covered in depth here. What follows is, therefore, a brief description of each with some links to helpful website and resources. After that there are short descriptions of some tools and techniques that have been found to be useful and effective in many different settings.

Organisational strengthening

Organisational strengthening can be defined as the discipline aimed at improving the effectiveness of organisations by means of systematically planned interventions. Many of the principles involved can be applied to sectors. An effective organisation is defined as one in which both the organisation and the individual can grow and develop. The UK based Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development has a helpful summary introduction to the subject and its academic origins on its website.

Resources

<http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/corpstrgy/orgdevelmt/orgdev.htm>

Change management

Change management is the term for describing planned processes for moving a group, organisation or sector from its current state to a future desired state. Facilitators may be internal or external to the system that needs to change, and they will call on a wide range of tools and techniques to implement their plans. In the past much change management work was rooted in very logical and linear cause and effect thinking, which has recently come under substantive challenge from various sources. Many now argue that change cannot be managed; it can only be stimulated and facilitated. Both living systems theories and complexity theories are now being used to illustrate the very complex web of elements and their relationships which must be taken into consideration in any attempt to facilitate change within a system, whatever its size, nature and purpose.

Increasingly people seeking to initiate and implement projects that intervene into systems are being required to be able to articulate their **theory of change**. There are various ways in which a theory of change can be defined, the most common elements in all of them are: the desired results or goal; the assumptions underpinning the plan, which may arise from a particular choice of theory about the situation under consideration; and, the interventions that will be used to achieve the results. These are put together to describe the overall change framework. Many projects are planned without any articulation of the change theory being used, if indeed one exists. The lack of a clear theoretical basis for the choice of project modalities may be one factor contributing to poor impact.

Resources

The ECDPM Study *'Capacity, Change and Performance'* offers analysis of current systems thinking on change in relation to capacity development. Another helpful resource is the ODI Working Paper 285 *'Exploring the science of complexity: Ideas and implications for development and humanitarian efforts'* <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=3855&title=odi-working-papers>

Organisational learning – learning organisations

Peter Senge, the person generally considered to be the world's leading expert on organisational learning says that the term was originally coined to point out *'How a group of people collectively enhance their capacities to produce the outcome they really wanted to produce.'* In practical terms organisational learning means embedding learning practices into all aspects of an organisation's functioning in order that it can constantly and routinely learn from its everyday work and thereby improving the quality and relevance of what it does. The work on organisational learning now encompasses a vast body of academic study and practice. The Society for Organisational Learning (SoL) that Senge founded has a very comprehensive website with many resources and links offered by a broad community of individuals and organisations concerned with its study and practice.

The most comprehensive study specifically focussing on organisational learning in the development sector is *'Development and the Learning Organisation'* a joint publication of Oxfam GB, Oxfam America and IDS. Application of organisational learning practices in NGOs is covered in some of the papers and practice notes on the INTRAC Praxis Programme website, some of which offer a useful cross-cultural perspective.

Resources

<http://www.solonline.org/>

Roper, Laura with Jethro Pettit and Deborah Eade *Development and the Learning Organisation: A Development in Practice Reader* 2003 Oxfam GB, Oxford

<http://www.intrac.org/pages/en/praxis-publications.html>

Examples

Partnerships and Networks

Application level: Organisations and Sectors

Partnerships and networks work to address many different needs, at multiple levels from local to global initiatives. Both are particularly helpful for sharing knowledge and experience across borders, and networks are emerging as an important mechanism for developing research capacity.

The emphasis on the Accra Agenda for Action on the development of South-South cooperation and support for capacity development calls for new approaches to partnerships and networks. When appropriately structured, and based on a genuine desire for two-way learning in support of capacity development objectives, partnerships provide unique opportunities for mutual learning, especially between Southern and Northern actors. Networks are increasingly being seen as valuable structures for learning, especially for research.

Partnerships can take many forms and at their best represent the coming together of diverse actors with mutual interests and the ability to share and work together towards achieving a common goal. At the highest level an example is the India-Brazil-South Africa Trilateral partnership promoting coordination on global issues. At the grassroots a partnership may be a group of civil society organisations agreeing to work together to deal with a crisis in the geographic area they work in. Partnerships are important mechanisms for supporting learning because they can make knowledge and resources, human and other, available across borders and connect peers with mutual interests. Networks also offer opportunities for generation of knowledge through sharing experiences and providing a forum for debate and the exchange of good practices. There are many examples of both partnerships and networks where one member has offered training and other capacity development support to other members. The WBI has recently published some interesting Capacity Development Briefs on understanding the contribution that partnerships and networks can make to capacity development.

Resources

WBI Capacity Development Briefs are available at <http://www.worldbank.org/capacity>

Examples

A case study about twinning academic institutes in Tanzania and Norway is written up in: *Ownership, Leadership and Transformation: Can We Do Better for Capacity Development?* 2003 Carlos Lopez and Thomas Theisohn, UNDP-Earthscan, available at <http://www.capacity.undp.org/index.cfm?module=Library&page=Document&DocumentID=5015>

Supplementary Approaches

Participatory self assessment is about involving the whole organisation in assessment of its own strengths and weaknesses, current challenges and future needs. This can be a time consuming process because it might require many people to participate in a range of different assessment activities. However the benefits of this, as opposed to the more habit of having external experts do assessments, is that it gives a much more accurate picture of the existing knowledge, skills, values and understanding within the system. One of the arguments against this approach is that a system might not know enough to do a comprehensive assessment of its capacity. The important point is that identifying the level at which an organisation is able to assess itself is a very important factor in reaching an accurate assessment. Participatory self assessments have two other important benefits. Firstly if done correctly they are learning exercises in and of themselves, and secondly, they build ownership of the changes that need to be made, from a realistic starting point. There are many ways in which this can be done, see some examples in the links below.

Resources

[Lusthaus, Adrian et al. \(2002\) Organisational Assessment, A Framework for Improved Performance, IDB/IDRC paper](#). And <http://www.comminit.com/en/node/201165/36>

Examples

<http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/2009-028.pdf>

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is described by the people who developed the method, David Cooperrider and Diane Whitney, as being *'the coevolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them'*. As a method it approaches problem solving and future planning from a positive, *'what if the best happened?'* perspective, rather than by analysing the problem and its causes, which can create negative and demoralising side effects. AI uses carefully constructed questions to surface a system's potential to imagine and innovate as a way of unleashing positive potential. AI is a very popular approach in the corporate world where it is used for many purposes, including leadership development. Practical application of AI can take many forms: a model called the 4 D is one of the most common tools for putting AI into practice. The four Ds are Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny (some say Delivery). Another model is the 4 I – Initiate, Inquire, Imagine and Innovate.

Team building is a popular tool in many corporate setting. Team building is generally concerned with two key issues. Firstly, building relationships between individuals in order to improve their everyday communication in the workplace. Equally important is the issue of bringing all members of a team together to inspire them with a common goal to which they can commit. There are many different team theories through which team functioning can be viewed, and each of those might indicate a different approach to team building activities. Team building is often an important objective of organisational retreats, especially in cases where staff normally work in different locations.

Resources

<http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/> , <http://www.strengthsbasedpractice.com.au/>

Examples