

A gateway for capacity development

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Fragile states



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ORGANISATIONS, NETWORKS AND INITIATIVES

This section offers a selection of organisations, networks and initiatives concerned with capacity development. A more extensive list can be found at www.capacity.org.

OECD Fragile States Group

This unique forum brings together experts on governance, conflict prevention and reconstruction to enhance development effectiveness in 'fragile states'. The group facilitates coordination between bilateral and multilateral development cooperation agencies and stimulates the sharing of good practices.

www.oecd.org

Centre for Global Studies

This centre, based in the University of Victoria, Canada, held a two-day conference in March 2007 to examine how to coordinate interventions, both at the national and international levels. Participants included representatives of NGOs, governments, international organisations, and academics.

www.failedstates.org

Search for Common Ground

Founded in 1982, Search for Common Ground works to transform the way the world deals with conflict; to move away from adversarial approaches and towards collaborative problem-solving. The organisation works with local partners to find culturally appropriate means to strengthen capacity of societies to deal with conflicts constructively.

www.sfcg.org

Saferworld

This independent NGO works to prevent armed violence and create safer communities in which people can lead peaceful and rewarding lives. Saferworld develops and carries out programmes with a range of governments and international, regional, national and local organisations to empower local partners.

www.saferworld.org.uk

Conflict and Development Program

This research project is an initiative of the Social Development Unit of the World Bank in Jakarta. This study of the conflict in Indonesia will focus on the nexus between development, poverty and conflict. The goal is to contribute to the design of development programmes which aim to reduce poverty and manage conflicts.

www.conflictanddevelopment.org

International Alert

This independent NGO works to lay the foundations for lasting peace and security in communities affected by violent conflict. The organisation works in over 20 countries and territories with people affected by violent conflict, as well as at government, EU and UN levels to shape both policy and practice in building sustainable peace.

www.international-alert.org

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

The IRC's Post-Conflict Development Initiative was created in 2002 to support communities affected by conflict and in transition to sustainable peace and development. The IRC operates in 17 countries in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe, assisting communities to find durable solutions to conflict.

www.theirc.org

Berghof Foundation for Peace Support

Established in 2004 in Berlin, Germany, the Berghof Foundation supports advocacy, networking and research initiatives that aim to prevent or improve situations of violent conflict.

www.berghof-peacesupport.org

Center for International Development and Conflict Management

This interdisciplinary research centre at the University of Maryland seeks to prevent and transform conflict, to understand the interplay between conflict and development, and to help societies create sustainable futures for themselves.

www.cidcm.umd.edu

Low-income Countries under Stress (LICUS) Initiative

The LICUS initiative is the World Bank's mechanism for coordinating its support to high-risk countries. The LICUS Initiative encourages the Bank's country teams to innovate and apply lessons drawn from practice and research; implement institutional reforms to support country-level work; and strengthen two-way linkages between external research and policy debates, and local country operations.

<http://go.worldbank.org>

CD monitor

This section highlights news and recent developments in the area of capacity development. The CD monitor is compiled in collaboration with UNDP's Capacity-Net.

UNCTAD's Least Developed Countries Report 2007

This report shows that the current pattern of technology flows to the least developed countries through international trade, foreign direct investment and intellectual property licensing does not contribute to narrowing the knowledge divide.

www.unctad.org

International Budget Watch

In June 2007, the International Budget Project and the London School of Economics organised a conference to reflect on lessons learned from the collaboration between civil society and legislatures. The August edition of the International Budget Watch newsletter includes a report on the conference, which brought together civil society organisations, legislators and donors.

www.internationalbudget.org

Capacity Development in Post-conflict Transition Situations: Lessons Learned

UNDP's Bureau for crisis prevention and recovery and the Bureau for development policy (through its capacity development group) are initiating a global study on the UNDP's experiences in capacity development in post-conflict countries. The study aims to identify factors that hinder or facilitate capacity development efforts, and to assess the relevance of existing assessment tools.

www.undp.org/cpr and www.undp.org/policy

UN Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNWDPC)

On 31 August 2007 UNWDPC was officially opened on the UN campus in Bonn, Germany. The aim of the programme is to strengthen the activities of the more than two dozen UN organisations and programmes already cooperating within the inter-agency mechanism known as UN-Water.

www.unwater.unu.edu and www.unwater.org

Stranger than Fiction? Understanding Institutional Changes and Economic Development

Ha-Joon Chang, Policy Brief 6, UNU/WIDER, 2007. This policy brief outlines the 'technology of institution building' and the case studies of experiences presented in the volume *Institutional Change and Economic Development*, edited by Ha-Joon Chang (UNU Press, 2007).

www.wider.unu.edu

Values, Vision, Proposals and Networks: Using Ideas in Leadership for Human Development: The Approach of Mahbub ul Haq

Des Gasper, Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Garnet Working Paper 436, 2007

There is very little theoretical reflection on the value and role of leadership in the success of capacity development interventions. This paper reviews the work of Mahbub ul Haq and discusses how he converted talk about 'progressive realization' of economic and social rights into practical agendas and tools.

www.garnet-eu.org

UNDP Practice Notes on Capacity Development

UNDP Capacity Development Group, 2007

Two revised practice notes. The first one looks at how external partners can support a country's development goals through capacity development initiatives. The second practice note provides UNDP's capacity assessment (CA) framework that intends to serve as a starting point for capacity assessment exercises and includes a comprehensive overview of the issues that could be addressed when assessing national capacity.

www.capacity.undp.org

Capacity development in fragile environments

The concept of the 'fragile state' entered the development discourse when, in the early 1990s, governance in Somalia disintegrated. Thousands of people fell victim to violence and millions faced starvation. Fragile states, however, were not given much attention in development policies. Donor countries concentrated their aid particularly on countries with good governance.

This changed drastically after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York on 11 September 2001. Suddenly, the issue of fragile states appeared as a priority issue on the development agenda and is likely to stay there for a long time. Before this event (which has come to be known as 9/11), working in fragile states was often considered a thankless effort and a waste of resources. However, it is now clear that the development needs of some fragile states cannot be ignored. Since 9/11 many donors have therefore developed strategies and approaches to working in and with these countries.

The causes of the instability in each country are diverse, though the resulting environment is volatile and chaotic. It is hard to know where to start to transform such insecurity into stability. As Derrick Brinkerhoff explains in the feature article, there is no blueprint for achieving development goals in fragile states, only guidelines for effective capacity development.

For the international community, the state is a key entry point. However, by definition, the fragile state is extremely limited in its absorption capacity. It is vital to carefully prioritise the targets for capacity development initiatives. Fragile states in particular are forced to decide which core capacities of the government must be strengthened in order to quickly establish its role as a national unifier.

In the short term, the need to re-establish service provision prevails over the need to strengthen the state's core capacities. In our guest column, Juana de Catheu points out that the fragility in a country can be such that in the early stages of recovery nearly all government tasks need to be outsourced. This can even include core state functions such as maintaining law and order, financial management and customs management. While taking over temporarily, the international community must be prepared to support and strengthen emerging capacity where it crystallises.

A secure national environment is vital to success. Minister Toga McIntosh, Liberia's Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs, talks about the importance of demobilising

ex-combatants in order to prevent the country from slipping back into conflict. Building the state's capacity to provide security can be a powerful source of state legitimacy. Olaf Juergensen illustrates this with the example of Mozambique. By clearing the main roads of mines, the government of Mozambique gained legitimacy which further cemented the process of restoring national peace and security. With examples from Iraq and the Moluccan Islands, Peter Brorsen shows how crucial security is to enabling a government to engage with civil society in a relationship of trust.

Public financial management and procurement is another important state capacity that needs to be strengthened at an early stage. Sanjeev Gupta of the IMF explains how fiscal institutions are a mechanism for coordinating foreign assistance; they enhance the capacity to absorb more aid and hence enable capacity development in all other sectors.

The division of roles between state and non-state actors is another recurring topic of debate on the support to fragile states. John Wood explains how, in Haiti, civil society organisations received lots of support from the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to the poor. In many cases, these organisations function parallel to state institutions. Some consider this a problem, while others see it as a solution. Minister McIntosh argues that among the non-state actors in Liberia, the division of roles can also be murky. With over 90 international NGOs and nearly 700 local NGOs in a small country, capacity development efforts in Liberia have become fragmented. This is compounded by the fact that many NGOs tend to compete with the private sector.

Ambrose James and Frances Fortune show the positive role civil society organisations have played in Sierra Leone. The authors describe the important contribution of these organisations during the elections in the country.

The collection of articles in this issue of *Capacity.org* shows that, in fragile situations, responsible leadership and the skill to unite people behind a shared vision are fundamental to achieving stability. These capabilities can neither be outsourced nor built; they must be nurtured at every available opportunity.

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Cover photo

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Dilemmas and directions



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Definitions of fragile states vary, yet all of them highlight the link between fragility and capacity deficits. Fragile states have governments that are incapable of assuring basic security for their citizens, fail to provide basic services and economic opportunities, and are unable to garner sufficient legitimacy to maintain citizens' confidence and trust. In fragile states, citizens are polarised in ethnic, religious or class-based groups, between whom there is a history of distrust, grievance and/or violent conflict. Civil society lacks the capacity to cooperate, compromise and trust each other. When these capacity deficits are extreme, states move toward failure, collapse, crisis and conflict.

'Capacity' means having the aptitudes, resources, relationships and facilitating conditions that are necessary to act effectively to achieve some intended purpose. 'Sustainable capacity' involves the endogenous processes that exist within a country, apart from whatever donors do. Capacity can be addressed at a range of levels, and a commonly used set includes the following: individuals, organisations and institutions. Institutions comprise the rules, policies, laws, customs and practices that govern how societies function. Donors sometimes refer to this level as the 'enabling environment'.

Significant interdependencies exist among these three levels of capacity. For example, the capacity of community health workers to contribute to better health outcomes is linked to the capacity of the local clinic where they are based. The capacity of that clinic to perform is influenced by its relationships with the health ministry and with other partners (e.g. private providers, communities), the technical support it

receives, and the resources it has. The capacity of the ministry and its partners to produce health outcomes for the population is affected by the resources they receive from the national government and international donors, by the policies governing how service provision is financed and managed, by the degree of corruption, by what kinds of services societal elites want, and so on.

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Fragile states and capacity development

Much of what is considered desirable for effective capacity development in general applies to fragile states as well. The differences are often a matter of degree. For example, a donor's national foreign policy objectives always influence their choice of countries, intervention strategies and funding levels. In the case of fragile states, two factors intensify the donor politics. First, fragile states engage other interested constituencies beyond the development assistance community. Second, the high visibility of some fragile states, especially post-conflict countries, mobilises public opinion and puts a media spotlight on intervention efforts.

In Afghanistan, for example, the decision to rely on local warlords to maintain security in the interests of fighting the Taliban undercut efforts to build the governance capacity of the newly elected administration of President Hamid Karzai. The highly political 'global war on terrorism' can lead donors to make decisions that are not optimal from a capacity development perspective.

There is one major difference in the environment of fragile states which affects capacity development efforts. In societies that have been fragmented by deteriorating or conflict conditions, people's trust and tolerance levels tend to be lower and their suspicion levels are heightened. They are likely to be less willing to cooperate across societal groups and to give others the 'benefit of the doubt'. Thus capacity development efforts that fail to yield quick results or that deliver benefits to one societal group and not another risk being perceived as intentionally unfair or as demonstrating favouritism.

Capacity-development dilemmas

For donors aiming to support capacity development in fragile environments, the overarching dilemma is between providing for basic needs and services in the near-term and contributing to capacity development for the long-term. Initially, little or only weak capacity may exist, yet there is an immediate need for action and results requiring some capacity. All donor programmes face the challenge of supporting the transition to country-owned and country-led development. Embodied in this challenge are several specific dilemmas which are discussed below.

State versus non-state service provision

In fragile states, donors have often made commitments to fund the delivery of basic services, and in situations where the public sector is weak the vehicle of choice is usually non-state delivery. The pressures for a quick response in post-conflict states where much

A comparison of the context of capacity development efforts in fragile states to the context in non-fragile states

Similarities

- Need to consider sustainability and reinforcement of endogenous capacity
- Long timeframe
- Change agents and champions, political will and ownership
- Importance of adapting intervention templates
- Systems perspective to capture complexity and interconnections

Differences

- Pressure to restore services and security quickly
- Short timeframe
- Limited capacity to build on
- Often not simply rebuilding, but creating new capacities
- Little trust and social capital, institutional resilience
- Hyper-politicised environment



Technical versus political strategies

Capacity builders often focus more on deficits in resources, skills and organisation than on politics, power and incentives. Outsiders have access to resources, can provide training and technical assistance, develop management systems, and support service delivery. Furthermore, national counterparts often view capacity development as a technical issue in which the lack of skills can be addressed through training of individuals, or by strengthening organisations through increased funding and equipment and improved management systems.

Providing such technical capacity development enables donors to meet performance targets and to report progress to their constituents in the donor countries. Projects funded, disbursements made, NGO grants awarded, training courses held, individuals trained, and organisations assisted are all inputs that can be counted. Performance outcomes that are the assumed result of capacity development, for example, immunisation and literacy rates, percentage of government spending on social services, can also be tallied and reported on.

Input and performance metrics lend a reassuring concreteness to capacity development. However, long-term results are contingent upon the murkier, less measurable, and less manageable realm of political and power dynamics, both those between donors and national actors, as well as among the country's societal groups themselves. Sustainable capacity depends upon changes in the enabling environment.

The selection of capacity development strategies and targets can be highly political, which may be at odds with technical considerations of where and how interventions should be pursued. For example, in Sierra Leone and in Afghanistan, one of the key political issues is the power and capacity of the centre relative to provincial and local entities. In Afghanistan, political deals are cut with local warlords partly because of the weakness of central government's outreach. In Sierra Leone, local chiefs control access to minerals and other resources. Their power hinders the nascent democratic local government structures.

Strengthening the centre is a necessary component of capacity development, but is not the complete answer. Local capacity is required as well, although developing it is difficult for a variety of reasons. Donors often tend to focus their efforts at the central government level due to logistics (it is easier to work in capital cities), choice of interlocutors (national-level actors tend to be both more visible and adept at interacting with donors), and on occasion the belief that appropriate rebuilding strategies must start there.

public service capacity is weak or destroyed drive interveners to look to alternative sources of capacity. These include foreign experts, private sector firms, international and local NGOs, or international donors themselves. On the other side of the equation is the need to rebuild sustainable public-sector capacity. The trade-off concerns what some have termed the 'two-track problem' of service delivery and public sector capacity building, where the two tracks have fundamentally different strategies, resource levels, and timeframes.

However, donors should cooperate with local governments on policy, resource allocation, and service planning, even when the majority of services are delivered by non-state providers. The dilemma tends to be diminished when donors constructively align their capacity development support, whether at the national or sub-national levels, with public-sector agencies to:

- capitalise on existing sources of capacity (even if very small) as starting points to visibly demonstrate coordination;
- structure service provider contracts to create incentives for local capacity building and partnerships with state actors; and
- as soon as is feasible, develop linkages to community groups that can begin (again even in very small ways at first) to build their capacity for oversight and to enable them to make their voices heard.

Services now versus institutional strengthening

A related trade-off is how to balance the humanitarian imperative to provide immediate services in low-capacity settings against the need to rebuild public institutions and their capacity to deliver services. The immediacy of humanitarian needs leads to a reliance on international actors (both NGOs and private contractors), and on local NGOs

(if they exist) for capacity. This strategy solves a short-term problem, but creates a long-term one. So the question arises, how can donors and capacity builders rapidly improve services while at the same time enhancing, in the long-term, the effectiveness and accountability of public institutions?

When the state is weak, responding to the immediate needs of the population takes priority over building the government's capacity to assume its lead responsibility. Debates arise regarding how to do the former without doing damage to the latter. Quick-fix and bypass interventions that ignore existing local capacity and delay paying attention to institution building are accused of creating dependency, reducing the chances for sustainability, and squandering opportunities for nascent governments to increase their capacity and legitimacy. Power and resource imbalances between donors and country governments can exacerbate this trade-off.

Immediate security versus long-term stability

In post-conflict states, the first priority is ensuring security. The United Nations-led stabilisation and reconstruction missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone are clear examples where the need to re-establish law and order was paramount following decades of war and destruction, particularly given the significant numbers of armed ex-combatants that were in place. However, concentrating capacity development largely on immediate security (disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration) does not address the factors that contribute to long-term security and stability. Capacity development needs to target service delivery and employment generation, and to seek ways to support committed government actors in providing basic services.



External actors and local capacity

Fragile states often need external actors to fill a national security deficit and to lay the foundation for peace and the restoration of law and order. However, a large influx of foreign capital can lead to corruption if local capacity to manage public resources is not strengthened.

Another issue is the brain drain from local organisations, government, civil society and the private sector as people are attracted to employment with international NGOs, consulting firms and transitional administrative units. This phenomenon has been referred to as 'capacity sucking-out'. It is important for sustainable capacity development to avoid diverting existing capacity. Over time, the islands of capacity that exist in individual donor-funded projects must be spread more broadly within the public sector.

A third challenge derives from the fact that external experts command higher wages and greater privileges than local actors. Resentment can arise, for instance, in situations where diaspora members return to their countries of origin as members of reconstruction and technical assistance teams. Sentiments of frustration and irritation are not only related to financial and power differentials; particularly in humanitarian and post-conflict crises, external actors may find it difficult to avoid a 'saviour' mentality (whether conscious or not) which can increase resentment towards the outsiders.

A fourth challenge concerns selection criteria for external capacity developers. Typically, meeting immediate needs leads to a preference for hiring 'doers', who are recruited for their technical knowledge, not expertise in technology transfer and capacity development. This pattern suggests a need to differentiate roles and related criteria for external actors. Are they to be capacity substitutes? Are they hired for targeted technology transfer? Or are they responsible for long-term capacity development? In practice, it is likely that expatriate consultants, international NGOs and contractor organisations are expected to perform all three of these functions. Realistically, faced with performance pressures, external actors will focus their

efforts on the results most easily measured: capacity substitution and gap filling.

Conclusions

Fragile states are not all alike, despite being tagged with the same label. Capacity development templates tend to lean toward conceptual homogenisation and 'one size fits all' oversimplification. They discount the impact of situational, historical and individual leadership factors. Among the lessons learned from experience is the value of leaders who can set direction, engender legitimacy for change and build constituencies. Identifying and working with such leaders is a critical step toward country-led capacity development and ownership in fragile states. Communicating actively with national actors regarding capacity development plans and programmes can help to avoid possible misunderstandings, and to engage national partners in a two-way exchange of ideas regarding capacity issues.

In summary, there is no one 'right' way to develop capacity. Yet this does not mean that there are no signposts. This article closes with five suggestions for effective capacity development in fragile states.

Successful capacity development in fragile states benefits from harmonised purposes. Harmonisation is difficult when the objectives and perspectives of the external partners vary. The difficulty in harmonising purposes derives from the blend of technical and political objectives for each donor. Capacity development in fragile states is highly political, and often politicised, although capacity development strategies tend to lean toward technical and bureaucratic approaches. Capacity development suffers when politics drives the strategies to the exclusion of considerations of technical feasibility and sustainability. On the other hand, capacity development also suffers when technical prescriptions ignore political realities. If harmonisation is not possible, then complementarity of the work of those who intervene is a next-best alternative.

Selecting the optimal organisations for capacity development is crucial. The selection of government agencies, NGOs, civil society and private firms for capacity development should take into account which ones appear likely to make the best use of external support and which are favoured by local decision makers. The choice of target organisations has implications for the speed at which service delivery will be strengthened or restored, that legitimacy will be built, and the degree of ownership and political reconciliation, that will be achieved. Endogenous capacity will best be improved when the selection process involves local decision-makers who take advantage of windows of opportunity that open with the emergence of political will.

Capacity development needs to recognise which mix of targets needs to be addressed (among resources, skills, organisation, politics and power, and incentives). Clearly all of

these aspects need to be addressed in order to create lasting development. In reality, however, the costs of improving each element, in terms of time, energy, difficulty and commitment, must be confronted. All too frequently, the difficulty of supporting capacity development efforts is underestimated. The pressures on the aid missions and their funders to demonstrate results push donors to support activities with quantifiable capacity outcomes. These strategies generally favour a focus on resource inputs, skills transfer and technical assistance. However, neglecting the socio-cultural and psychological elements of capacity development places the long-term reduction in national fragility and societal reconstruction at risk.

Capacity development needs competent capacity developers. As experience from around the world has demonstrated, not all of those who serve as members of aid agencies are equally endowed with the ability and mentality necessary to work with local actors and organisations. This can be especially true in post-conflict fragile states, when capacity development is assigned to military units whose 'can do' attitude leads soldiers to step in and 'do for' rather than 'do with' their counterparts. This attitude, however, is not limited to the military. The issue of the capacity of capacity builders in general is highly salient.

Capacity development requires in-depth knowledge and understanding of specific country contexts. Local knowledge is essential in order to move beyond standard intervention templates and generic recipes. An understanding of the local context is especially critical for country-led assistance strategies and support to endogenous capacity development. One way in which donors can increase their knowledge of local contexts is to improve their analysis and rapid reconnaissance tools. Several international actors have already invested in such tools. Another approach for donors to increase their contextual knowledge is to make better use of individuals with country-specific knowledge, both prior to intervention and as members of reconstruction efforts on the ground. This can be accomplished through greater incorporation of members of the national diaspora as well as by increasing the participation of local actors earlier in planning and implementation processes. <

Further reading

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Capacity development in post-conflict Mozambique

Ownership matters

After more than 17 years of internal conflict, Mozambique was littered with thousands of landmines. This article describes how locally recruited deminers contributed to local ownership and the state's legitimacy.

Mozambique is one of Africa's largest countries. However, by 1992 its infrastructure was totally ravaged. Most of the rural areas in Mozambique were held by the rebels while towns and cities were securely in the hands of the government. Over one million refugees had fled to neighbouring countries and a further three to four million people were internally displaced.

One of the key goals of the UN peacekeeping mission in Mozambique was to quickly repatriate displaced populations and rebuild the rural communities of the country. If trade, people and basic services could again freely move between the capital Maputo in the South and the central and northern provinces, then the chances of a successful transition from conflict to post-conflict would increase significantly.

One of the biggest impediments to rebuilding the country was the presence of landmines that blocked most roads, railways and bridges connecting Mozambique's ten provinces. Therefore, the task of demining the transportation arteries was one of the first humanitarian and political priorities of the aid and recovery efforts in the country. Shortly after the peace accord in 1992, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) helped the Mozambican interim government establish the Accelerated Demining Programme (ADP). Its 400 demobilised ex-combatants tackled the landmine threat in the southern third of the country.

The work undertaken by the ADP quickly reconnected the southern provinces where some of the largest displacements and fiercest fighting had taken place. In the beginning there were around a dozen technical advisors assigned to the ADP. This team did not do any mine clearance, but ensured that the management and field personnel were properly trained in planning the operation and in lifting mines.

The rapid establishment of the ADP as a unified, sub-national institution turned the former combatants into an important development instrument. The UNDP's investment paid off almost immediately as it enabled the delivery of goods and services, and, most importantly, allowed uprooted populations to return to their

homes after almost two decades of displacement.

As a nationally owned and operated institution that literally ploughed its way towards recovery, the ADP also helped establish the state's image as being serious about leading the transition to a better future. The ADP was able to establish trust with local communities and at the same time gained important local knowledge on the whereabouts of mines and unexploded ordnances. In rural areas this process even helped to (re)create a sense of 'Mozambicaness,' which had existed only briefly after independence before the country spiralled into its long civil war.

Although the UN mandate in Mozambique came to an end in 1994, the ADP continued to work in close partnership with major reconstruction and development (industry, tourism and infrastructure) initiatives until 2006. For example, before the multi-billion dollar Mozal aluminium smelter could be built, the ADP went in and cleared the area of landmines. During this second phase of capacity development support, the UNDP's contribution was gradually reduced to providing two technical advisors seconded from the New Zealand army.

The work undertaken by the ADP contributed to the amazing turnaround of the Mozambican economy, which grew by 10% a year for seven years running, and helped cement the transition to development. Institutionally, the ADP continued to be the leading demining operator in Mozambique. Many of its deminers and team leaders found employment in reconstruction efforts throughout Africa, Europe, and the Middle East.

Drawing on the example of the ADP does not imply that the successful Mozambican transition from a war-torn society to one that is thriving today is due to the work of 400 deminers. There were many internal and external factors that merged to build the foundations for lasting peace. However, the case of the ADP is instructive in showing how timely and strategic capacity development projects during the delicate period of post-conflict transition can play an important role at many different levels – humanitarian, nation building and recovery.



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The example of the ADP also demonstrates how a balance between the immediate need for technical service delivery (demining) and the slower process of developing core state capacities is both practically and politically possible, and indeed desirable. For it could be argued that creating true local ownership is what matters most during the fragile periods of transition when a country often teeters between a return to conflict, impasse, or a lasting recovery. <

Further reading

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Chris Steele-Perkins/Magnum/HH

Liberia's Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs

Rebuilding Liberia



Dr Toga McIntosh, a development economist and former UN consultant, returned to Liberia in 2005 and was appointed Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs in February 2006.

Minister McIntosh, what needs to be done most urgently to prevent Liberia slipping back into violence and instability?

The first issue we need to deal with is the large number of ex-combatants in our country. They need to be reintegrated into their communities and provided with tools and skills to secure their livelihoods. This integration also needs to involve ordinary people in the communities, the victims of the years of violence. We need to work with them to improve their situation in order to avoid a rise of discontent and a possible relapse to violence.

Our citizens have had limited opportunities for personal development because there have been very few opportunities for education in the last 20 years. Their expectations of how quickly their lives will improve need to be carefully managed. Furthermore, we need support from neighbouring countries to prevent conflict flowing into our country from beyond our borders. Last but not least, we need support from our international partners to assist us with supplying the resources we need to meet the people's expectations. The longer it takes for us to get support from the international community, the likelier it is that we may slip back into chaos.

What are the key capacities within the Liberian government that require strengthening?

In a country that had normal governance processes before the conflict, the task of capacity building is easier. But our country suffered decades of bad governance resulting in collapse and civil conflict. In all areas of government we have to start from

The Liberian government faces the challenge of stabilising and rebuilding the nation after two civil wars. Capacity.org interviewed Dr Toga McIntosh, Liberia's Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs.

scratch. For instance, we need to put in place a justice system and develop respect for the rule of law. Furthermore, as we advance in our reform process, we must enter into continuous dialogue with all of our country's stakeholders. This means that we have to spend a lot of time and energy in seminars or in doing paper work. The problem is that people cannot eat that. We must deliver something tangible to the people quickly. That is complicated by the fact that we do not have the public sector capacities required to plan, manage and deliver services. It means that we have to proceed simultaneously with a three-pronged approach. Firstly, we need to demobilise the combatants. Secondly, we have to put in place laws and a justice system that works. Thirdly, we must focus on delivering some limited but effective basic services. These things we must accomplish within the first three years.

How are you managing to balance between the reform process on the one hand and delivering tangibles on the other?

At the moment, we tend to be doing more talk, talk, talk... But there is a point at which we must secure the needed resources and start delivering the services that will improve people's lives – fixing the roads, rehabilitating the schools and creating jobs. Between now and December we will be forced to show some physical and tangible improvements in addition to the institutional and policy reform measures, all of which take time. That is critical because expectations out there are high and there could be negative consequences if citizens feel that nothing is being done.

Our international partners have to help us quickly. We feel they are not moving fast enough. Initially, after the peace accord, they quickly helped to set up the security framework. When it came to creating opportunities for ex-combatants the pace of assistance slowed dramatically. The international financial institutions even insist that we clear our debts before they mobilise additional resources.

How is the government working out its development agenda?

We are now embarking on formulating a 10-year capacity development programme. We have defined the broad parameters in an aide-memoire, and we are beginning with an assessment of what capacities exist. The programme will be based on four pillars: enhancing national security; revitalising the economy; strengthening governance and the rule of law; and rehabilitating the infrastructure and basic services. This development programme builds on the recommendations made by the Liberia National Human Development Report published in 2006.

At the same time we are writing the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), which involves extensive consultations and critical analyses of national capacities and priorities. Our strategy is based on a bottom-up approach, starting at the district level. The districts have articulated their development aspirations that also take into account their local resources like forests, gold deposits or rivers. Once we complete this consultative process in the 112 districts, we will bring its results to the county level, in order to formulate the county development agendas, and from there to the national level. The final report will provide an overview of the development requirements and potential strategies per

Liberia has a long history of instability. In 1980 Samuel Doe, a Liberian army sergeant, seized power in a coup, suspended the constitution and presided over an oppressive regime until 1989, when Charles Taylor and his rebel forces entered the country. After two bloody civil wars, peace was restored only in 2003, with the support of US marines and Nigerian peacekeepers. In elections in 2005, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a former World Bank economist and finance minister of Liberia, became Africa's first woman president.

district and per county across the country. This report will form our national agenda for the next four years.

What are the roles of NGOs, civil society organisations and the private sector?

In the past, the national development agenda focused on public interventions. This time around, we are looking at how public interventions can create an enabling environment for private interventions. The private sector which includes NGOs and civil society organisations currently delivers public services. We are looking at ways to strengthen the relationship between NGOs and the government and to enhance private sector investment.

What specific interventions for NGOs do you have in mind?

With regard to NGOs we have mixed feelings. NGOs, supported by donor funds, are getting involved in all kinds of activities, some of which could be better handled by the private sector. In this sense, they distort the market with unfair competition; if we are not careful this situation is going to kill the private sector. At the moment we are defining rules and policies with regard to NGOs and by the end of this year we will come up with a clear policy and regulatory framework.

NGOs should focus on programmes that support community development. There is enough to do in that field to keep them very busy. In Liberia we have too many NGOs. There are 96 international NGOs. If you look at their mandates and programmes, you will see that their activities overlap. On top of that, there are almost 700 local NGOs. Many of these sprang up because that was the way to get access to funding. If somebody wants to go into the private sector he calls himself an NGO. The actual private sector is still very weak. Not everyone has the flair and the training to be an entrepreneur. In the capacity building strategy we will address the development of entrepreneurship and business skills.

Do you consider that education and health services are the realm of the state or can others provide those services?

In Liberia, these services are currently provided by the government, the private sector and a variety of civil society organisations, including faith-based institutions. For the moment we do not want to change this situation because if you look at the costs involved, the government does not have the capacity to be the only provider. In this phase of our development that is not a critical issue. But we do want to keep an eye on the quality of their services. The government has to focus on the regulatory aspects and on monitoring quality.



'Operation Pothole': former soldiers and rebels are now employed to repair roads in Monrovia.

Is Liberian ownership of development projects in jeopardy because of the activities of the international donor and NGO community?

Over the last year or two, the feeling of ownership and responsibility has become more robust in Liberia. A critical aspect in developing ownership is the way resources are allocated by donors. Donor countries have been giving bilateral aid directly, mostly through foreign-based NGOs. The government had no idea how much money was mobilised, and for what purposes. We have now set up a mechanism to track the resources that are coming into the country and how they are being used.

It is clear that there is a serious risk that parallel institutions undermine the government's capacity. Some of the NGOs are receiving instructions from their headquarters that are not informed by what is happening here on the ground. On the other hand, we have to acknowledge that the domestic capacity to deliver those services is still weak.

Is there a brain drain from local to international organisations in Liberia? If so, how is it being dealt with?

Yes, this has been the trend over the last few years, and it has positive and negative effects. If one looks at international organisations as a potential training ground and consider that down the road the people will return to Liberian institutions, then I think it has some merit. But there is also a negative effect if it thwarts our efforts to develop our own human and institutional know-how.

Our efforts to deal with the brain drain dilemma have focused on remuneration because that is the main reason why individuals leave to work for international organisations. We have put in place three emergency capacity building programmes to attract and retain people. We have what we call the Liberia Emergency Capacity Building programme through which a number of top level professionals with special skills are recruited and given adequate compensation to spearhead the

reforms. We also have the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN), a project managed in collaboration with UNDP, through which we recruit expatriate Liberians, to undertake specific short-term assignments. These contracts often range from three to six months. The project provides them with a return ticket and meets their local costs. Finally, we have just set up what we call the Senior Executive Service (SES). Through this programme we want to recruit 100 very competent Liberians, in batches over a three-year period, to help bolster the capacity of the public sector to deliver services.

The quicker we get the private sector going, the better it is because it does not matter to me whether a competent Liberian works for the UN or for a mining company, as long as they are improving the economy.

In your view, what are the key characteristics of a good capacity building (practitioner)?

A good capacity builder has a good understanding of local needs. Capacity builders need to be able to work in teams made up of those who can design the strategies and the programmes and those that can implement them and deliver results. Furthermore, a good capacity builder has the ability to see and have an appreciation for the broader picture. Within that context, a good capacity builder sees how his or her specific activities fit into the development of the whole country. <

Interview by Heinz Greijn

Further reading

- *Mobilizing Capacity for Reconstruction and Human Development: Liberia National Human Development Report 2006*, Government of Liberia with support from the UNDP: www.lr.undp.org.
- I. Smillie (2001) *Patronage or Partnership: Local Capacity Building in Humanitarian Crises*, Kumarian Press

Links

- Government of the Republic of Liberia: www.emansion.gov.lr

Rebuilding fiscal institutions in a post-conflict setting

Developing economic stabilisation



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Countries that are emerging from a period of conflict are typically faced with a significant loss in real output, high rates of inflation and low foreign reserves. The population is reluctant to hold local currency to conduct daily transactions and there is a large flight of capital from the country. Conflicts also damage a country's fiscal institutions, which can make the task of stabilisation and growth even more challenging.

The reconstruction of fiscal institutions does not have to wait until the economy is fully stabilised; rather, these two processes can go hand in hand. In fact, efforts to strengthen these institutions can contribute to macroeconomic stabilisation, which in turn provides a conducive environment for further institution building. Well functioning institutions and sound economic policies also reduce the risk of future conflicts and allow these countries to absorb more aid.

Key elements

In any strategy to rebuild fiscal institutions in a post-conflict setting, the principal objective is to make fiscal policy and management effective and transparent. The first element in such a strategy is the creation of a proper legal and regulatory framework for fiscal policy. For example, if a new constitution is prepared after the conflict ends, the powers of different levels of government to raise taxes will need to be defined within it. Tax and budget laws may need to be established from scratch or revised in order to take into account the complexity of implementing and administering these laws in a post-conflict situation.

The second element in rebuilding fiscal institutions is to establish or strengthen the ministry of finance as the central fiscal

The reconstruction of fiscal institutions can contribute to macroeconomic stabilisation and create a conducive environment for further institution building.

authority and a mechanism for coordinating foreign assistance. Ideally, such a ministry should include a budget department, a treasury department, and customs and revenue administrations. Some countries have also found it useful to set up a separate unit for coordinating donor support within the ministry of finance.

The final element of the strategy is to reform revenue and expenditure policies, as well as the associated administrative arrangements, and to ensure the most effective use of scarce human resources.

This three-step approach is generally valid for all post-conflict countries. The order in which the steps are taken, however, will vary according to the starting conditions and needs in each case. In some countries, rebuilding the basic infrastructure of the ministry of finance comes first, and only later creating or strengthening the proper legal framework for fiscal policy. In other countries, the legal system may have been unscathed by the conflict, allowing them to immediately move to such steps as implementing measures to simplify existing systems and to make the fiscal regime more market friendly. Whatever their sequence, the reforms should be realistic, consistent with the country's situation, and should take into account the existing human resource capacity for implementing the plan. The strategy should lay out a plan of action setting out priorities and identifying technical assistance requirements. This plan should also facilitate the coordination of donor activities.

Fiscal decentralization

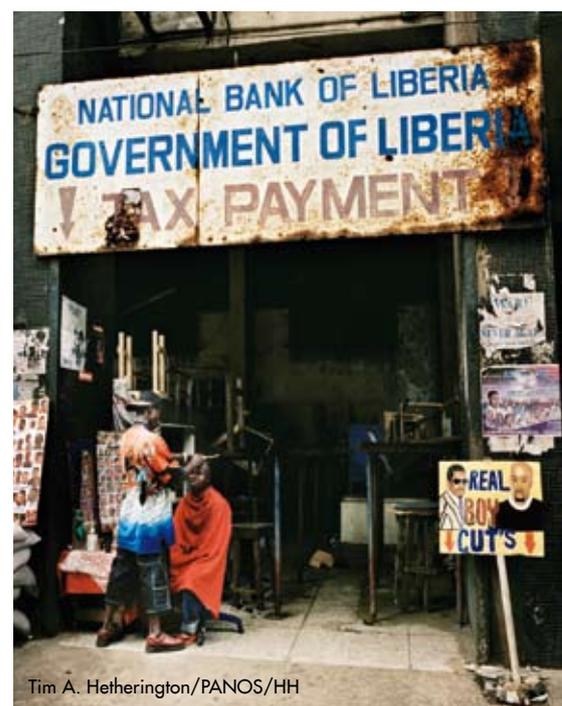
In some countries, the issue of fiscal decentralization is an integral part of the peace process. For decentralization to be successful, it is important that sub-national governments have the administrative and institutional capacity to implement spending programmes. In this regard, donors may have to assist sub-national governments to build this capacity as revenues and spending responsibilities are transferred to lower levels of government. In some cases, it may become necessary to clarify revenue and expenditure assignments among the different levels of government and to ensure that they have the means to fulfil their obligations.

A phased-in approach

Initial steps to rebuild fiscal institutions and systems have to take into account the weak administrative capacity that exists in post-conflict countries. This implies beginning the process with simple policies and administrative procedures which can be upgraded as national capacity improves. In the early post-conflict stages, countries may have to resort to taxes that are suboptimal from an efficiency point of view to help finance immediate spending needs. For example, some countries have introduced a withholding tax on wages and a presumptive tax on small businesses. Others have imposed an export tax or an import surcharge. These should be viewed as short-term measures to be refined later as a country's institutional capacity develops further. To the extent possible, these short-term measures have to be consistent with the long-term objective of moving towards an efficient and modern fiscal system. <

Further reading

- This article is drawn from S. Gupta, S. Tareq, B. Clements, A. Segura-Ulbierto, R. Bhattacharya, and T. Mattina (2005) *Rebuilding Fiscal Institutions in Postconflict Countries*, Occasional Paper 247, IMF: www.imf.org.



Tim A. Hetherington/PANOS/HH

An opportunity for coordinating capacity building in Haiti

Parallel service delivery in a fragile state

During Haiti's 200 years of independence it has remained an extremely weak state, characterised by the absence of functional institutions. Recent political developments raise the issue of the impact of parallel service delivery on the emerging state structure.



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Haiti: children in front of their school.

workable complementarity between the state, CSOs and the international community. The approach currently being taken in the Poverty Reduction Strategy is to engage both the government and CSOs as partners in the pursuit of common goals. This strategy aims to enhance the capacity of the government while recognising the existing social functions, independence and the political advocacy role of the CSOs.

Within this approach, the goal of all capacity development programmes must be to strengthen the ability of those trained to contribute to the construction of democracy in the country. The international community's capacity development approaches must therefore focus on confidence building, and on providing tools for creating consensus in the country. A 'hands-on', direct assistance approach to the development process in Haiti could put the entire process in jeopardy. <

Links

- Canada's Parliamentary Centre is the executing agency for the Haiti Parliamentary Support Project (HPSP). The goal of the project is to increase the effectiveness of the Haitian legislature.
www.parlcent.ca/americas/haiti.

Haiti faces levels of poverty and human development that are the worst in the Western hemisphere. The country has a primitive, closed economy and class strife and is extremely vulnerable to natural disasters aggravated by environmental degradation. The only factors that traditionally contribute to conflict and instability in other countries but are lacking in Haiti's case are the absence of ethnically related conflicts and threats to its sovereignty from the outside.

In the past, Haiti was governed by families whose interests were protected by military power. Among Haitians, there is little or no sense of 'nation' and certainly no consensus on what should be the role of 'government' in daily life. There is little public enthusiasm for the role of the state in providing public services because such services were historically subverted or exploited by the political and economic elite. Due to the lack of dependable public institutions, survival in Haiti has been basically a personal responsibility in which everyone looks out for his or her own interests.

In the last two decades, a great number and variety of civil society organisations (CSOs) have sprung up with strong support from the international development community. Originally instruments of humanitarian assistance and survival for the poor and disadvantaged, these CSOs have now become institutionalised as instruments of change. They act as a countervailing political force and run a parallel form of many state functions, including the protection of human rights and the provision of basic services such as water, food, energy, education and health.

Twenty years ago, the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship was quickly followed by the adoption of a strong constitution. This event signalled the beginning of large-scale external aid programmes in the country. Despite this support, Haiti has remained in crisis.

Fortunately, the international development community has seen Haiti as

'a difficult but not impossible partner', and has committed itself to long-term engagement. This commitment is significant in a country where maintaining the status quo can be seen as 'success' since it outweighs the costs of abandoning the effort. Currently, Haiti has a democratically elected government which enjoys fairly good public support and is strongly backed by the international community.

Cooperation is necessary

Haiti cannot successfully combat poverty and get on the path towards sustainable development until it overcomes the major weaknesses in its political and social institutions. To do this, the three main actors – the state, civil society and the international community – must move into much tighter forms of collective action.

This, however, is not easy. There is a permanent debate between those who favour parallel solutions (such as creation of public services outside the formal political system, even with the danger that they become permanent), and those who emphasise institutional reforms from within the formal system.

Parallel solutions have led to a situation in which certain services have developed completely outside the realm of the state. To take one example, the Ministry of Education has basically lost control over the core issues of quality and access in a national education system in which over 80% of schools are now private institutions.

At present, given that there is a legitimate government in place, efforts are focusing on government reforms. At the same time, the national administration recognises that Haitian CSOs and participatory forms of development are crucial at the local level. In terms of security, for instance, Haitian CSOs are instrumental in documenting crime and anti-social activities, they initiate preventive measures at the community level and engage in conflict resolution.

The challenge for everyone involved in the development effort is to achieve a

Building institutional capacity through civil society organisations

Credible elections in Sierra Leone



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On 11 August 2007, Sierra Leoneans cast their votes for the country's parliament and president with a record turnout of 76%. The turnout was similar for the 8 September presidential run-off. These national elections marked a critical benchmark in Sierra Leone's transition from its brutal, decade-long conflict towards consolidated peace and stability. A few limited incidents of violence were reported, particularly in the capital, and campaigning and intimidation were noted around some polling stations. Overall, however, the elections were hailed as free and fair by both domestic and international observers.

Civil society organisations played an important role in achieving this peaceful outcome. Elections can easily turn violent as a result of rumour-mongering and inflammatory propaganda. To help prevent such violence, the NGO Search for Common Ground Sierra Leone (SFCG), supported two civil society initiatives that focused on creating transparency in the elections: the Independent Radio Network (IRN) and National Election Watch (NEW).

Community radio

The first CSO supported by SFCG was a community radio network. Established in 2002 specifically to support that year's national elections, the IRN has grown into a national network of 21 community and private radio stations. Each member station in the country's 14 districts feeds local news to a central hub and production studio in Freetown, where news programming is packaged for simultaneous broadcast across the network. In addition, member stations

Civil society organisations have a very important contribution to make in the process of transforming fragile states into peaceful and stable nations. Frances Fortune and Ambrose James describe the experiences of Sierra Leone during past elections.

carry SFCG programming to inform and entertain their listeners on key social and political issues.

The IRN is developed by SFCG in partnership with the Media Foundation for Peace and Development and with technical support from the BBC World Service Trust. The long-term aim of the network is the creation of West Africa's first self-supporting national public information network.

For the 2007 poll, SFCG and IRN placed 420 roving election reporters into areas where high tension existed between rival parties and in remote regions that otherwise had no broadcast coverage. The reporters, members of SFCG's staff and IRN member stations, were requested to report on the conditions they observed.

Throughout election day, stories poured in to IRN headquarters in Freetown. This live news service gave a clear view of how the elections were progressing throughout the country at district level. Since reporters informed both the national IRN network and their local radio station, ordinary people were in effect reporting to each other. They provided authentic, eye-witness reports on the district activities. Their individual stories bolstered confidence in the process and helped to ensure a peaceful outcome.

As voting drew to a close at the end of election day, SFCG and IRN led the independent media's shadow count of

electoral votes. The 420 election reporters across the country called in the unofficial voting results as they were announced at each poll centre. Volunteers manned the phones at the Freetown hub and staff members input the results in a database. Working at a pace of around 1% of total votes per hour, the tallies were broadcast to listeners around the nation.

Two days later, as the National Electoral Commission (NEC) began issuing consolidated results, SFCG and IRN adjusted their strategy and focused on providing reports that analysed and explained the results as they emerged. The goal was to help manage the populations' expectations and enhance their understanding of the results. Overall, the analyses provided by IRN did contribute to the people's comprehension of the results as well as to the patience the public exhibited while waiting for the final result.

The approach of gradually releasing information in the period between the closing of the polls and the NEC's initial announcements of the results (which was three days later for the presidential run-off) was a key element in reducing tension around the country. At the same time, it gave the public confidence that there was an independent watchdog monitoring the process in case the official results differed significantly from the individual counts. The

Rumour management

Behind the scenes, IRN producers in Freetown were making key decisions on the stories that should go on the air. They attempted to strike a balance between reporting news that people deserved to hear about their own country, and making sure that passions were not inflamed by news reports that did not reflect the general trend around the country.

In one example, by late morning an inflammatory story broke that had potentially serious implications for the peaceful outcome of the election in Freetown, the opposition stronghold. From a police station in the capital, reports began to surface that a ballot box had been found stuffed with papers and election materials. IRN rapidly dispatched a reporter to the scene who found youths already surrounding the station. Allegations that the government-controlled police were intervening to alter the result in Freetown created mounting tension. IRN sent a second reporter to record the contents of the box on video, which turned out to be old training materials and not electoral ballots. IRN's executive producer made the decision to put the reporters live on the air to explain the situation and describe the contents of the box to the nation. With voters around the capital glued to their radio sets, IRN proved its capacity to calm fears and set the tone through credible media reporting. This approach proved to be important in allowing for a peaceful and fair election.

IRN broadcasts during the elections were a real test of the ability of the local media to contribute to the political process with mature and constructive reporting, without resorting to inflammatory propaganda.

Throughout the election period, IRN reacted rapidly to the constantly changing news without compromising its core principles of supporting a peaceful and credible elections process. In so doing, it won respect from independent media monitors as well as providing a crucial resource to the people of Sierra Leone. Recognising the volatility of the situation between the first round vote and the highly competitive run-off vote for the president, IRN invited leading political analysts and electoral experts to share their views with the public. In this way they ensured that credible information and a clear voice was injected into the highly charged public debate.

The National Election Watch

The second CSO supported by SFCG during the elections was the National Election Watch (NEW), a coalition of over 375 diverse local and international civil society organisations including SFCG, Oxfam and the Sierra Leonean teachers' union and farmers' association. Based on its experiences during the 2002 and 2004 elections, NEW developed a strategy to guide its engagement in the 2007. The organisation focused on transforming its organisational structure and capacity in order to be able to:

- deploy a trained observer at every polling station;
- implement a rapid reporting mechanism to get a clear snapshot of activities across the country; and
- conduct a parallel vote count.

The SFCG, working with energetic and dedicated individuals from all its member organisations, coordinated and provided technical assistance to one of the most extensive election monitoring efforts ever undertaken in Africa. Under the broad leadership of a strategic management committee, and a decentralised decision-making structure, NEW effectively achieved all three of its strategic goals over the election period, none of which had been achieved before in Sierra Leone.

In order to deploy a trained observer at every polling station, NEW was able to use the knowledge and networks of its member organisations. Through the network, they mobilised observers in every town and village. They also placed trained civil society observers in 97% of the polling stations around the country.

'In the polling centres in the rural areas, many of the people look at the polling centre manager as the boss', noted NEW member Andrew Sellu. 'The presence of NEW changed that. Our observers in their black t-shirts made people aware that they could vote their own mind. The NEC officials said



Election observers at a polling station in Freetown.

it was good that NEW was there.' Members of a two-person EU delegation in the remote frontier Kailahun district later remarked on the encouraging sight of black-shirted NEW observers in every post they visited.

'Incident report coordinators' were part of NEW's presence at the district level. Their role was to solve problems at the local level and lodge reports on serious incidents for inclusion in the NEW database. These coordinators effectively filtered out the problems that were likely to impede or affect a fair vote from other more manageable problems. In this way, the incident coordinators were able to act as conflict managers and improve the speed at which genuine concerns could be raised with the appropriate district authorities. In the second round of voting, 32 incidents of multiple voting were observed and recorded in the database in the NEW headquarters. After the elections, the NEC was able to use the information in the database to assist in investigations of allegations of voter fraud.

NEW succeeded in its second goal of creating and operating a rapid reporting system for electoral observers. With technical support from the National Democratic Institute, NEW randomly selected a representative sample of polling stations, referred to as 'priority centres'. From this sample, trained observers were to send a telephone text message to NEW's database. Each observer gave answers to selected questions on the 'observer checklist'. Over one-third of these stations were in areas which did not have mobile phone coverage. This meant that some observers had to walk for hours to participate in the exercise, while others had to cross rivers and flooded areas in boats. Nevertheless, within the first 36 hours after the polls closed in the first round, NEW had received information from 72% of the priority centres; this figure rose to 93% during the second round.

This rapid response gave the leadership of NEW an almost instant snapshot of the

situation across the country. Based on this data they were able to deliver a credible and timely preliminary report to the media, declaring the first round 'free, fair and credible', and the run off 'calm and credible'.

The third goal NEW achieved was in mounting a successful parallel vote count. Over both rounds, and using the data sent in by the priority centre observers within the first hours, NEW was able to confirm the final result announced by the NEC; on each occasion the government's results matched NEW's snapshot. This fact lent credence to the integrity of NEC's data and also demonstrated the high degree of accuracy in NEW's rapid reporting system.

By achieving these three goals during the elections, NEW came of age as a national civil society movement. NEW's success was recognised by nearly all the international observer missions. ECOWAS, the European Union and the National Democratic Institute praised NEW and Sierra Leone's civil society organisations for their valuable contributions to ensuring the transparency of the elections.

Lasting results

Beyond the development of NEW and IRN and the peaceful outcome of the elections, the long-term legacy of the 2007 poll will be the confidence and energy created by successfully bringing together a civilian army of civil society poll watchers.

In the past, civil society tended to be dominated by an unchanging elite, unrepresentative of the wider voices in Sierra Leone. This election brought forward a new generation of civil society organization that are energised and ready to participate in the development of their country. By fostering new partnerships at the local, regional and national levels, the real impact of the work of the SFCG, IRN and NEW will be seen over the next few years as new projects, synergies and ideas emerge from the crucible of the 2007 elections. <

Accountability builds legitimate government



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One characteristic of fragile states is the existence of weak accountability loops between a government apparatus and its people. Overcoming such accountability gaps is one of the challenges in the process of achieving stability of the state. In this endeavour, efforts to develop the capacity of local governments are vital. This article looks at an example in Mosul, Iraq and another in the Moluccan islands in Indonesia.

Ideally, an effective state delivers public goods and services, provides an enabling environment for growth and ensures peace and security. In turn, an engaged society participates in public decision making and holds authorities accountable for their actions.

In post-conflict communities, these roles are severely constrained. The World Bank model (see box) illustrates the importance of strengthening the accountability links between an effective state (left), and an engaged society (right). Together they aim for peace and prosperity at the institutional level (top). The outcomes at the organisational level (middle) are a result of the processes at the human resource level (bottom).

Local government in Mosul, Iraq

Following the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the government of the city of Mosul could no longer provide services because administrators had been fired and supplies looted. Local council members, appointed by the occupying forces, did not have the capacity to govern and had little political will to engage with each other.

Most international efforts focused on boosting local governance. Local power brokers, who were suddenly appointed to positions of official authority, were invited to prioritise foreign assistance programmes in sectors, such as education, health or transport.

Strengthening the accountability of government officials to their constituents provides an important impetus to boosting their capacity to govern effectively. However, as examples from Iraq and Indonesia show, the legitimacy of the government is an important criterion for success.

Without bureaucratic training and supporting institutions, however, they mostly failed to provide coherent government services. They also had little support from foreign organisations, which employed many humanitarian assistance personnel with little development experience. State effectiveness was hampered by political instability, constant battling in the governing councils and violence across the country. Local officials were replaced in rapid succession. Brief spurts of progress were followed by constant setbacks.

As a result of the limited capacity and the abrupt process by which its authority had been established, the new government did not have legitimacy in the eyes of the local population. It was thus necessary to create accountability links between state and citizens. Public awareness campaigns were initiated whereby the public was invited to step forward and engage in civic matters. Before the invasion this had been a risky activity monitored by the state police. Now, education and dissemination of information about the core concepts of democracy started to generate interest in public decision making. Officials were challenged to justify their policies, and they quickly proved either capable or illegitimate. Unfortunately, given the continued unrest across the country, many ineffective officials were not replaced, but were kept in power to support short-term stability objectives.

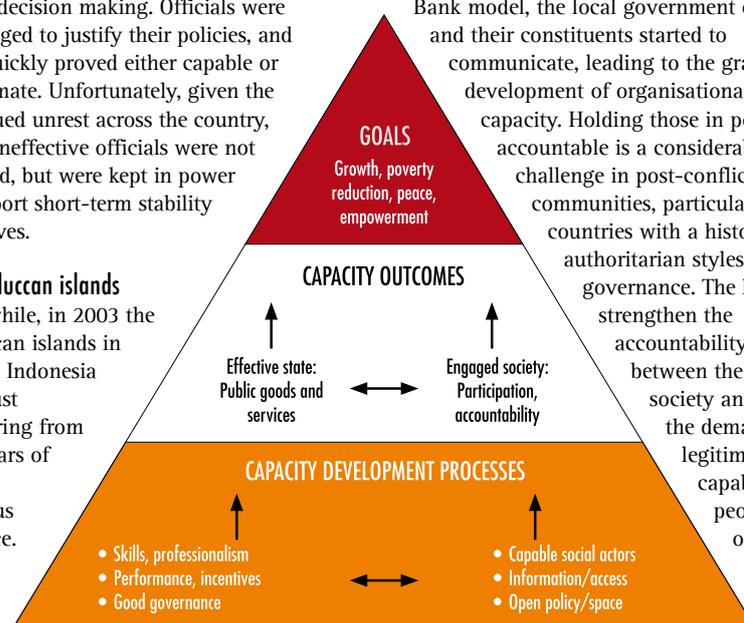
The Moluccan islands

Meanwhile, in 2003 the Moluccan islands in eastern Indonesia were just recovering from five years of inter-religious violence.

The security situation was much better than in Iraq. Here, UNDP supported a project of Mercy Corps, an American NGO, to bring together Christian and Muslim communities for the first time since violence erupted. After assessing the networks, norms, and trust levels in both communities and running several successful workshops to reconcile the former antagonists, work with local authorities began.

After years of centralised governance, local government (at district and provincial levels) had lost its legitimacy. In order to address this credibility issue, Mercy Corps' peace building project organised workshops that brought together groups of local government officials with activists from their constituencies. Possibly for the first time ever, civil society organisations were able to present their concerns to government officials in a safe and constructive space. At the same time, the authorities were able to admit their shortcomings and reach out for cooperation with civil society and the international organisations. Step by step, starting from an acknowledged common ground at the human resource level, and in line with the World Bank model, the local government officials and their constituents started to

communicate, leading to the gradual development of organisational capacity. Holding those in power accountable is a considerable challenge in post-conflict communities, particularly in countries with a history of authoritarian styles of governance. The key is to strengthen the accountability links between the state and society and support the demands for legitimate and capable people in office. <



PUBLICATIONS

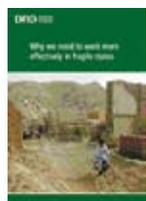
This section offers a selection of publications related to capacity development. A more extensive list can be found at www.capacity.org.

An Adequate EU Response Strategy to Address Situations of Fragility and Difficult Environments

F. Faria and P. M. Ferreira, 2007
This study, prepared for the Portuguese presidency of the European Union, explores the ways to improve the European Union's approach and response to crisis prevention and its support of fragile states.
www.ecdpm.org/

Why We Need to Work More Effectively in Fragile States

UK Department for International Development (DFID), 2005



This policy paper brings together the latest analyses by DFID and others on how to make development more effective in fragile states. It sets out some objectives and indicates how DFID will work differently in the future.
www.dfid.gov.uk

Parliaments and Security Sector Oversight: An Emerging Area for Capacity Development

C. Kowalik, Parliamentary Centre, 2006
This paper, prepared for the Governance Knowledge Network Project, looks at what role should parliament have in security and what implications this has for Canadian development assistance policies.
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Education in Fragile States: Capturing Lessons and Identifying Good Practice

M. Greeley and P. Rose, report for the DAC Fragile States Group, Institute of Development Studies, 2006
This paper examines how, in fragile situations, development assistance can enhance access to quality basic education for the poor and vulnerable. It also shows that improving governance mitigates the risks of fragility, and thus increases the effectiveness of future aid
www.ids.ac.uk

Whole of Government Approaches to Fragile States

L.L.P. van de Goor and M. van Beijnum, OECD-DAC Fragile States Group, 2006



This study assesses the existing projects which have adapted a 'whole-of-government' approach, drawing upon the recent experiences of a number of OECD countries in fragile states
www.oecd.org

Greater than the Sum of its Parts? Assessing 'Whole Of Government' Approaches to Fragile State

S. Patrick and K. Brown, Centre for Global Development, 2007
The authors look at how seven governments (Australia, Canada, France Germany, Sweden, the UK and the USA) are undertaking a 'whole of government' approach to development assistance in fragile states. Despite a few promising innovations and pilot projects, individual governments still struggle to define and apply this approach effectively.
www.cgdev.org

Aid and Conflict in Uganda

S. Bayne, Saferworld, 2007



This paper examines how far issues of conflict and armed violence have been integrated within development frameworks in Uganda. It analyses the nature and impacts of conflict and armed violence, and examines the approaches taken by the government and donors, both in their reporting and in practice.
www.saferworld.org.uk

Participatory Capacity Building in Action in Colombia

J. Zapater, Forced Migration Review, issue 28, 2007
The southwestern Colombian department of Nariño has developed an innovative, demand-led and participatory initiative for the local integration of internally displaced persons. The long-term sustainability of partnerships between the local administration and grassroots communities hinges on the ability to influence national and international financial flows.
www.fmreview.org

Patronage or Partnership: Local Capacity Building in Humanitarian Crises

I. Smillie (ed.), Humanitarianism and War Project, Kumarian Press, 2001



This book examines the dynamics of what actually happens during and after emergencies. Case studies written by international aid practitioners and journalists are enhanced by commentary from the point of view of the people and organisations most affected by wars. Case studies from Bosnia, Guatemala, Haiti, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, and Sri Lanka.
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Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Elements of PSD/SED Programmes

A. Mierke, GTZ, 2006
This paper examines the potential of private sector development (PSD)/sustainable economic development (SED) interventions to contribute to conflict prevention and peace building. The paper is based on desk research, discussions with practitioners and three case studies from Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo.
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Peace and Security

Expert Paper Series 5, International Taskforce on Global

Public Goods, Stockholm, Sweden, 2006
Without an effective collective security system, war, terrorism and other forms of strife will increase, and international prosperity will be at risk. This paper explores strategies for reducing conflict, combating international terrorism, and nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The paper also discusses the capacity-building aspects of peace and security.
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Fragile States: Defining Difficult Environments for Poverty Reduction

M.M. Torres and M. Anderson, PRDE Working Paper 1, UK Department for International Development (DFID), 2004
The paper identifies four environments: those with strong capacity and reasonable political will; those where government capacity is an obstacle to implementing policy; those where state capacity is directed to achieving development goals; and those where both state capacity and political will are lacking.
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Mobilizing Capacity for Reconstruction and Human Development: Liberia National Human Development Report 200

Government of Liberia/UNDP, 2006
This report addresses the importance of human capacity for Liberia's development, and proposes a seven-point agenda to serve as the road map to development.
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Post-Conflict Recovery: How Should Policies be Distinctive?

P. Collier, Centre for the Study of African Economies, Oxford University, 2007
This paper suggests that policies which address post-conflict countries need to be distinctive for two reasons. First, reducing the risk of further conflict is the over-riding priority in post-conflict countries and this affects policy choices, and second, the economic consequences of conflict create both constraints and opportunities that are distinctive.
<http://users.ox.ac.uk>

The challenges of ownership and aid coordination

Water in the sand



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In 2005, more than 100 donors, partner countries, international organisations and civil society organisations signed the groundbreaking Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The declaration recognises that aid is more effective when partner countries exercise effective leadership over their own development policies and strategies and coordinate their actions. It also underlines the fact that donors must align their overall support according to the strategies, institutions and procedures of their national partners. These principles mark a departure from the traditional model of UN missions and the direct service delivery approach. In the context of fragile states in particular, this new approach ensures a focus on both the long-term goal of building effective states, as well as on the short-term goal of service delivery.

In fragile states, however, issues of national ownership and the alignment of donor support pose special challenges. First, national ownership can be an abstraction when societies are divided and government is not representative. Second, when the state is illegitimate or too weak, the alignment of donor support is not feasible (and sometimes not desirable either).

A common approach

The concept of co-production is a model in which elements of national sovereignty are entrusted to international actors. International experience shows that temporary co-production between states and international actors is the norm rather than the exception, and has been the dominant model in the recent transitions in Afghanistan, Burundi, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Timor-Leste. Co-production can range from shared sovereignty (e.g. the UN Interim

Administration Mission in Kosovo) and shared management (e.g. Liberia's Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme), to the outsourcing of core state functions (e.g. customs management by Crown Agents in Mozambique) or the delivery of services in sectors such as education, health and water, which is often outsourced to NGOs and private companies.

Co-production can have several benefits. If a programme or project is particularly sensitive, for example, it may best be designed and or managed by an outsider. Army, police and judicial reform, and anti-corruption programmes are typical examples. Co-production can also allow for the management of donor funds by auditable, accountable organisations such as independent firms, UN agencies or international NGOs. Implementing agencies (international and local) can bid to provide services in sectors like health and education.

However, if co-production does not explicitly aim to build capacity, it is like pouring water in the sand. Opting for direct service delivery because of weak state capacity and accountability to society will not in itself contribute to remedying such weaknesses. Co-production can in fact undermine the state.

Two approaches to improve engagement

Donors can use two approaches to improve their engagement in fragile states. First, co-production must be adapted as capacity and accountability improve. In Haiti, for example, donors were used to provide services directly. As of 2007, however, the elected government has adopted a capacity development strategy that permit donors to move away from direct service delivery and concentrate on building national capacity.

Second, donors must keep in mind that capacity development is the end goal. They should therefore resort to direct policy-setting and programme management only in exceptional circumstances. A politically sensitive programme is best designed by reform-minded stakeholders, with international technical assistance as necessary, rather than by outsiders in Washington or Geneva. While this may be difficult and time consuming, it creates space for appropriate political settlements. In cases of corruption, it is usually more constructive in the long run to address the issue than simply to suspend aid. Direct service delivery should be framed by sector and regional policies, where they exist, and implementing agencies should inform and empower local authorities whenever possible.

Aligning donor strategies and creating national ownership are difficult in fragile states. Smart co-production can contribute to service delivery while creating a more capable and accountable state. <

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