

A gateway for capacity development

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## Voices of capacity development

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Why do capacity development evaluations seldom satisfy? Doug Horton examines ways of improving the evaluation process

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# Understanding capacity development from within

This November, representatives from 91 countries will attend the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan. Here they will review global progress on improving the impact of development aid. Since the previous forums on aid effectiveness in Paris (2005) and Accra (2008), capacity development has featured prominently in efforts to achieve lasting results.

Despite the progress that has undoubtedly been made, there is still a long way to go. The June 2011 issue of *Capacity.org*, 'Fighting disease or strengthening health systems', highlighted the huge backlog of work that still needs to be done to apply the principles of the Paris Declaration in the health sector.

In this issue we would like to communicate three core messages to Busan:

- Capacities develop when the initiative comes 'from within'.
- External support can provide a valuable boost to capacity development processes but only as adjunct to internal leadership, drive and commitment.
- It is possible to measure capacity development results and to demonstrate their contribution to overall development results, but realistic timelines must be set for assessing their impact. More investment is needed to develop appropriate monitoring and evaluation methodologies.



Reuters / Ho New

## Effective capacity development

In terms of developing capacity, significant progress is being made in many fields. In this issue, we invited a number of change agents to speak about their experiences in leading change processes. They all came back with stories of how investment in capacity has contributed to sustainable results.

The interviews in this issue cover a wide range of sectors and countries: achieving universal access to energy in South Africa, improved sanitation in Nepal, a more favourable business environment in Kenya, enforcing compliance with environmental laws in Zambia, and introducing active approaches to learning in Laotian schools. Through their diversity, these cases convey a set of consistent messages and patterns:

- Capacity development begins at home, building on local or domestic dynamics, ambition, leadership and commitment.
- The starting point for local actors who drive capacity development efforts is to find ways to make meaningful contributions to positive social change rather than focusing on delivering the preset targets demanded by external partners.
- Drivers of capacity development are able to mobilise multi-actor engagement for

change, which generates legitimacy and provides the basis for a viable revenue model. The WASH movement in Nepal is funded by resources of the central government, the local government and the commitment of hundreds of volunteers. The main source of income for the Kenya Association of Manufacturers is membership subscriptions and the fees it gets for services. The Environmental Council of Zambia earns most of its income from government budget allocation and licensing fees.

- The time it takes for capacity development to transform into better performance varies, and often does not correspond with a typical project cycle. Sometimes it may take more than ten years, while in other situations significant achievements can be realised in a much shorter time.

## The role of external support

External aid can provide a significant boost to country-led processes. However, if external partners focus on the performance of their own aid, policies, approaches and knowledge, their support is more likely to hinder than support a country's efforts.

The cases in this issue were not selected on the basis of whether or not capacity development support had been provided by donors. The key phrase we used in our search for interviewees was that they could talk about capacity development that has led to significant change.

We found that in all cases, external support had been instrumental. Such support consisted of knowledge brokering, facilitating multi-actor processes, twinning, financing, technical assistance or a mix of all these. Whatever the precise mix, external support appears to have been effective when it was flexible and responsive and when it combined substantive 'sector' knowledge with a sense of how to support change and build relationships. Also important in terms of effectiveness was that these efforts were underpinned by a commitment to mutual learning.

All interviewees emphasised the importance of maintaining an atmosphere of trust and openness between development partners. For this to occur, it is necessary for external partners to be willing and able to understand the capacity development process 'from within' and to try to look at circumstances from the perspective of the owners of the capacity development process.

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When processes are led by domestic actors, the role of aid becomes one of support. Such a role demands a change in thinking that many in the aid sector still find hard to accept because they are uncomfortable playing second fiddle. Nevertheless, a competent second fiddle contributes more to the music than a soloist who ignores the conductor and is out of sync with the rest of the orchestra! Capacity development results are most likely to be achieved when there is a competent local 'conductor' in place and where aid plays a constructive support role.

### Evaluating capacity development

The ability to understand the capacity development process from within depends on the ability to carry out good monitoring and evaluation of the processes and support. With regard to evaluation, we see that many aid agencies still focus their evaluations on their own interventions and pay little attention to the perspectives of the capacity development owners and to the broader context within which they must operate.

In the September 2009 issue of *Capacity.org*, Piet de Lange of the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced an evaluation with a different approach. The IOB evaluation of capacity development support would allow the evaluators to focus on how capacity has developed from within rather than to look only at what outsiders had done to support it.

At the time of going to press, the findings of the IOB evaluation had not yet been published. As soon as they are made public, we will send our e-subscribers a supplement containing interviews with Piet de Lange and others involved in this evaluation.

The IOB evaluation, with all its merits and shortcomings, as well as several other evaluations which have taken a similar approach, are pioneering initiatives in the evaluation of capacity development, a field that still remains under-explored. Considering the investment in capacity development, it is remarkable that the management-for-results-and-measurement drives remain focused on the physical results of initiatives, with less in-depth attention paid to understanding how sustainable capacity is achieved.

Yet expectations remain high that evidence of the effectiveness of capacity development support will be delivered. In the North, the socio-political context within which evaluations are conducted has become very charged. The benefits of capacity development may be evident to those who are experiencing it, but this is not enough for the aid sector. They need

to measure and quantify results in order to demonstrate to tax payers that they are getting value for their money. Policy makers are looking for hard evidence that capacity development support satisfies the policy agendas of the day. Politicians are also looking for material for sound bites that suit their short-term political tactics.

However, recipients of capacity development support, and those who lead programmes, are looking for ways to improve practice and make it more professional through learning. Evaluators are caught in between, and quickly find out that it is impossible to deliver all things to all people.

In his contribution to this issue, Doug Horton highlights the confusion that exists in this area. He explains why the evaluation process rarely satisfies and outlines ways in which those in the evaluations business 'could do better'. Doug's contribution is an evaluation in its own right, and is recommended reading for those who want to know how to approach capacity development evaluations.

### Commitment, modesty and professionalism

In the build-up to Busan, the 'voices' in this issue of *Capacity.org* offer three clear messages. The general one is simply that there are no meaningful and sustainable results without capacity. And the many examples of effective capacity growth across sectors and domains teach us that capacity growth takes place 'from within'.

- If the international community is serious about results on the ground, it must start to understand the insider perspective. The Paris Declaration's principle of ownership still stands firm. If external development partners focus on their own aid, policies, approaches and their own knowledge, they will hinder rather than support effective local dynamics.
- External support for capacity development can be significant, as long as it is responsive, relevant and based on mutual learning and trust. It has to work as an adjunct to internal leadership, drive and commitment and can be sourced increasingly from the South and the East.
- A huge leap forward is needed in the monitoring and evaluation of capacity development. In view of the money invested in capacity development, we need better, customised evaluations that tell us more about how capacity development takes place and how external partners can provide meaningful support. If we do this, evaluations will contribute to learning and to meeting mutual accountability commitments.

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Reuters / Zohra Bensemra

## Letter to the editor

The topics 'strengthening health systems' and 'vertical programming' addressed in issue 42 of *Capacity.org* struck a chord with us at St Mary's Hospital in Lacor, Northern Uganda. Lacor Hospital is a general referral hospital that focuses on diseases that are prevalent in the region it serves – mostly tropical and infectious diseases such as malaria, pneumonia, tuberculosis, intestinal parasites, etc.

The AIDS epidemic brought challenges that give some idea of the complexity of international aid. Uganda was one of the earliest and worst affected countries. In certain areas, almost 30% of the population was infected. The government faced the challenge immediately with health and education campaigns, the only options available at the time. Now the 6% prevalence of AIDS in Uganda is one of the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa.

Rapid death from HIV/AIDS is now no longer inevitable: the disease can be controlled, but at a cost that is still too high for the population to bear. Drugs are expensive, but so also is the complex structure that must be put in place in order to adequately treat patients. Luckily, some large international organisations have covered these costs.

Perhaps it was inevitable that 'vertical' or disease-specific projects created exclusively for the treatment of AIDS would be formulated without considering the often very harsh impact on local health systems. The country's health systems – which can be described as 'horizontal', because they offer general, accessible health services to the population without discrimination – had already been severely affected by the brain drain and the lack of financial resources forced upon them by dozens of years of structural adjustment policies enforced by rich countries to reduce debt. The Ugandan health system, and our hospital, experienced an acceleration of this brain drain towards these rich vertical projects.

At the time, Northern Uganda was undergoing a violent, 20-year-long civil conflict, and many people were dying from curable conditions.

Testing blood for HIV/Aids in Uganda



Alamy / Mike Goldwater

In 2003, 759 under-sixes died at the hospital. Of these, 698 deaths were caused by just six conditions: pneumonia, malaria, septicaemia, malnutrition, anaemia and diarrhoea. Lacor needed a general referral hospital.

It was in this context that Lacor Hospital was faced with a choice: it could remain a struggling and underfunded general hospital serving the whole community, it could become an AIDS hospital or it could opt to have a dedicated, independent AIDS unit. Choosing either of the latter two would have allowed access, at least in the short term, to a wealth of funding – a temptation that can be very hard to resist.

A dedicated unit would have created a much 'richer' independent section within the hospital, with better-paid staff and greater availability of diagnostic means and drugs. In the greater part of the hospital, the 'poor' part, patients would be at risk of dying from treatable diseases as a result of shortages of essential drugs and treatment. And staff here would be paid much lower salaries than those working in the AIDS unit. This would have created inequities and severely destabilised the functioning of the hospital.

The hospital therefore set itself the difficult goal of providing antiretroviral treatment for AIDS patients without neglecting the other, much more numerous patients with common diseases, who were just as much at risk of dying. In addition, we wanted to prevent the disruptive effect of having an external organisation manage a section of the staff and structure.

I think this shows that, with care, respect and consideration for local priorities, rich vertical projects can be integrated into horizontal health systems without severely destabilising the latter.

It was an achievement to resist being swallowed up by gigantic projects so rich in resources. Today, as vertical projects are experiencing donor fatigue, we believe that our choice was far-sighted: care for AIDS patients that is integrated into a general hospital is less expensive and more sustainable in the long term.

The lesson we learned was that large programmes, even vertical programmes such as the AIDS programmes, are necessary. However, they must not have a negative impact on the other, horizontal, systems that take care of all other aspects of health, from vaccinations to primary health care and general and specialised care. These are just as important to the population.

It is absolutely essential to reflect very cautiously before accepting an aid project that could affect the structure of a hospital or the way it is run. It is important to ask:

- Is the project targeting the hospital's priorities?
- Is the average poor patient going to benefit from this project?
- Does this project present some organisational risks for a large, complex structure such as a hospital, which relies on a high proportion of highly qualified staff?

Yours sincerely,

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Why evaluations seldom satisfy – could we do better?

# Evaluating capacity development

As capacity development becomes mainstreamed in international development assistance programmes, demand for the systematic evaluation of capacity-development initiatives is growing. Doug Horton explains how the evaluation of capacity development can be improved.



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Evaluations now feature prominently in the governance and accountability procedures of virtually all public programmes. These are expected to generate practical information on the results of capacity-development initiatives – and offer lessons about how to improve such initiatives. But while evaluations are now routine, they seldom satisfy either donors or programme managers. Less is being learned from the evaluations than was expected, and the lack of ‘hard evidence’ on the impact of capacity development programmes may jeopardise future funding.

However, the evaluation of capacity development can be improved by clarifying the focus and purpose of evaluations, expanding professional development and knowledge-sharing among evaluators, drawing on systems thinking, and shifting attention from accountability to learning and programme improvement.

### High expectations, disappointing results

Evaluations are expected to provide information about how to improve current and future programmes, to measure the results of completed programmes and to help decision makers to choose between competing demands where public resources are scarce.

But there is growing frustration with evaluation processes and results. Programme managers and staff members complain that evaluations are intrusive and burdensome and seldom produce useful results that

improve programmes. At best, they see evaluations as costly requirements for doing business with donors – and at worst, they see them as potential threats to their programmes and their jobs.

And officials in development agencies complain that evaluations are not producing the types of ‘hard evidence’ they need to justify continued funding for capacity-development interventions.

One of the reasons for the frustration with evaluations is that different stakeholder groups expect different things from an evaluation, and the ‘multi-purpose evaluations’ that are carried out to please everybody often fail to satisfy anyone in the end.

### Four basic evaluation questions

An evaluation of capacity development can address one or more of the following, basic questions:

1. How can a capacity-development process be improved?
2. What have the results of the capacity-development process been?
3. How can support for capacity development be improved?
4. What have the results of external support been?

These four questions reflect the intersection of two different *objects* and two different *purposes* of evaluation.

### The object of the evaluation

The first two questions focus on the local, or endogenous, process of capacity

development that takes place in a particular physical and institutional context. These questions are mainly of interest to local groups with stakes in the capacity-development process. In contrast, the third and fourth questions focus on an external aid programme. These questions are mainly of interest to external groups with stakes in the aid programme.

There is seldom a one-to-one relationship between a local capacity development effort and an external aid programme. Some capacity development efforts are associated with a single external support programme, but most local efforts are associated with several external programmes. Similarly, an external support programme may focus its attention on a single local capacity-development process, or it may work with capacity developers in a number of different locations.

So evaluating a capacity-development process that operates in a specific location and institutional setting is quite a different task from evaluating a capacity-development support programme that might be working in a number of locations and operating within its own institutional setting. Assuming that a single evaluation could adequately assess both the local capacity-development effort and an international support programme using the same framework, methods and information sources, has led to much confusion and frustration in the field and to many uninspiring evaluation reports that have been shelved and quickly forgotten.

### The purpose of the evaluation

What evaluators refer to as a *formative evaluation* aims to promote learning and to improve an ongoing programme. In contrast, a *summative evaluation* aims to tally up the results of a mature or completed programme.

A summary of the evaluation types that are most appropriate for responding to the four basic evaluation questions

Object of the evaluation	Purpose of the evaluation	
	Learning and improvement	Accountability
Endogenous capacity development processes	A participatory, learning-oriented evaluation of capacity development processes	External evaluation of the costs and benefits of capacity development processes
External support for capacity development processes	A participatory, learning-oriented evaluation of support for capacity development processes	External evaluation of the costs and benefits of support for capacity development

Irrespective of whether the object of an evaluation is an endogenous capacity-development process or an external support programme, an evaluation may have a formative or summative purpose. It may aim to improve the process or programme in question, or it may seek to measure results or benefits.

Whereas questions 1 and 3 are concerned with learning and improvement, questions 2

### No matter how technically sound an evaluation is, it is not truly good unless the findings are used

and 4 are concerned with measuring results and benefits. Formative evaluations are mainly of interest to programme managers and operators, who may use their results to improve their work. In contrast, summative evaluations are mainly of interest to external stakeholders (particularly funding agencies and the tax payers or other donors who support them) who may use the results to justify past decisions or to make important decisions concerning future programming. Such decisions may involve the continuation, scaling up or termination of the programme that is being evaluated, or prompt decisions about personnel. This explains the apprehension (or sheer terror) that managers may feel when faced with a summative evaluation of their programme.

#### Evaluation designs

One size does not fit all needs. The idea of *utilisation-focused evaluation* (UFE), as elaborated by Michael Patton, provides a useful general framework for designing and managing evaluations. This framework can be applied to capacity-development processes and support programmes. A UFE is based on the principle that an evaluation should be judged by its usefulness. No matter how technically sound and methodologically elegant an evaluation is, it is not truly a good evaluation unless the findings are used.

Experience shows that learning from experience and using evaluation results to improve programmes are enhanced by the direct participation of programme stakeholders in all aspects of the evaluation. Consequently, professionally facilitated participatory evaluations are ideal for promoting learning and programme improvement.

External stakeholders, who represent tax payers and various other funders, expect accountability-oriented evaluations to be carried out by 'objective' external evaluators who operate at arm's length from the programme. Quantitative methods used by measurement specialists are generally preferred to more qualitative 'soft and fuzzy' constructivist methods.

To encourage the use of an evaluation's results, the evaluator should engage those commissioning the evaluation in decisions on evaluation methods, information sources, and presentation styles. However, the involvement of stakeholders needs to be managed carefully to prevent the results from being unduly influenced by different interest groups.

#### The challenges evaluators face

Capacity development presents a number of challenges for evaluators, and these have stymied progress in this area. Five major challenges are especially important:

- Evaluation has been mainstreamed as a tool for accountability, not improvement
- Capacity-development processes are inherently complex
- Capacity-development interventions are often badly designed
- Evaluations are often weak in their design or methods
- Knowledge sharing and professional development are often limited

#### Evaluation for accountability

Although evaluation has become a mainstream and routine administrative procedure, it has not become mainstreamed as a learning tool or a management practice aimed at improving programmes. For this reason, capacity-development efforts are usually evaluated to meet a donor agency's administrative requirements rather than to provide programme managers or staff members with information that will improve their work.

Using evaluation as an accountability tool has led to an adversarial evaluation culture in which programme managers and operators try to present themselves to external evaluators in the best possible light. External evaluators, in their turn, try to get beyond the rosy picture on the surface of the programme, and uncover its weaknesses and failures. Adversarial evaluations are seldom of much use to either the donor or the programme itself, except to confirm preconceptions or legitimise decisions that were taken before the evaluation.

#### Complexity

Anyone who has engaged in capacity development initiatives or their evaluation quickly realises that capacity development processes are inherently complex and their results unpredictable. Developing capacity – at the individual, organisational and institutional levels – involves cycles of learning through trial and error, and applying lessons learned in the next cycle of activities. Many factors that are beyond the control of programme managers influence the direction and results of capacity-development efforts. This means that managers need considerable room for manoeuvre and must react to unexpected events and adapt their strategies in response to new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

The complexity of capacity-development processes and the emergence of results from numerous unpredictable influences pose significant challenges for evaluators. This is particularly true for evaluators steeped in linear results-based planning and evaluation frameworks, such as the logical framework. To provide useful services for their clients and to learn new approaches and tools, evaluators need to move beyond such linear frameworks to systems thinking, innovation studies and developmental evaluation.

#### Weak programme design

Because capacity development processes cannot be neatly planned and implemented with predictable results, traditional objective- and indicator-based models are inappropriate for planning and evaluating capacity-development initiatives. In fact, using such models can undermine capacity development by straitjacketing managers, diverting scarce resources from programme activities to 'mindless' monitoring exercises and discouraging the revision of objectives and strategies based on learning from experience. This is why programmes that develop and implement detailed plans often contribute less to local capacity development than ones that employ more flexible, adaptive management approaches.

Although capacity developers should not invest heavily in detailed, indicator-based plans, it is important that capacity-development interventions have well-thought-out designs. Unfortunately, the planning documents for most interventions – including those containing numerous quantitative indicators for activities, outputs, outcomes and expected impacts – seldom present credible programme theories that are clear about what types of capacity are to be developed, how the programme is expected to work and how it proposes to bring about its results.

In other words, very few capacity-development interventions have design documents that state clearly how the proposed activities are expected to bring about behavioural changes that will ultimately lead to sustainable capabilities for individuals, organisations and broader systems. Having such a theory is essential for programme operators (and evaluators) to learn from experience, by comparing expectations with actual results and reflecting on the differences between them.

All capacity development interventions are based on theories of some sort. However, they tend to be theories that are implicit in the minds of those who design and implement the interventions, rather than explicit theories in the form of coherent narratives that can be discussed, debated, improved and shared. Because there is seldom a consensus among key stakeholders on the programme theory, various actors may have different – sometimes conflicting – concepts of the programme's goals and strategies and how its activities are expected to strengthen capacity.



Reuters / Chor Sokunthea

This is not necessarily a bad thing. Complex programmes need to evolve and find their way over time. However, it is useful for programme managers, staff and other key stakeholders to reflect on their theories from time to time and re-examine the changes they are attempting to bring about. In this way, they can understand the various perspectives that might exist, and move in the direction of a consensus.

## Evaluators are expected to answer several challenging questions with a single evaluation

Reflecting on a programme's underlying theories and assumptions is especially important when preparing for an evaluation. If an evaluation team arrives and does not find an explicit programme theory, the evaluators may be tempted to introduce their own theory – and so produce yet more confusion and frustration.

### Weak evaluation methods

In addition to the inherent complexity of capacity-development processes and weaknesses in the design of capacity-development interventions, the terms of reference for capacity-development

evaluations also tend to be weak. Frequently, evaluators are expected to answer several challenging evaluation questions with a single evaluation carried out over a short period of time and with limited resources.

The objectives of an evaluation may include identifying ways to improve the local capacity-development process as well as the external support programme (frequently confusing one with the other),

and also to measure the costs and benefits of the capacity-development process as well as the intervention (again confused). As already noted, different types of evaluation are needed to answer these different evaluation questions. Attempting to address all the questions within the same evaluation is a recipe for confusion and frustration during the evaluation process – and generally results in an unfocused, muddled evaluation report that fails to satisfy any of the principle stakeholder groups.

Evaluation designs for capacity-development interventions often call for evaluators to apply a range of qualitative

and quantitative methods and conduct an evaluation that is 'participatory' while conforming to general evaluation standards such as those issued by the Development Advisory Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

In a recent evaluation, the contracting agency requested that the evaluation be 'participatory' and should 'help build capacity'. It also requested that it follow the DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation. The problem was that the DAC standards – which were developed for accountability-oriented evaluations conducted by development agencies – emphasise the importance of having an evaluator who is independent of the programme management and policy-making processes. Participatory exercises that actively engage local stakeholders in the evaluation exercise – the essence of learning- and improvement-oriented evaluations – cannot logically comply with such standards.

There is no ideal set of evaluation methods. Evaluators need the freedom and the ability to select methods for collecting and analysing information and for reporting conclusions that are appropriate for each evaluation. These will depend on the evaluation's purpose, the object of the

evaluation and local circumstances such as the time and resources available.

### Limited professional development

The final challenge that has stymied progress in evaluating capacity development is the limited scope of knowledge sharing and professional development opportunities in this area. A number of international development organisations have issued guidelines for evaluating capacity development in their particular areas of interest, and these are available on the internet. However, little information is available about how these guidelines have been used and what results have been obtained.

Few reports on evaluations of capacity-development initiatives are available in the public domain. And what few papers have been published in professional journals tend to be based on a single evaluation study. There are no textbooks on the evaluation of capacity development, and practically no evaluation training programmes include a module on evaluating capacity development. One recent exception to this general rule is provided by Japan's Foundation for Advanced Studies on International Development (FASID), which offers a three-day course in evaluating capacity development.

Consequently, the current body of knowledge on evaluating capacity development consists mainly of guidelines and online manuals – the validity and usefulness of which is unknown. Very few 'exemplary evaluations' of capacity development are available, and evaluators have very little access to the implicit knowledge possessed by experienced evaluators, which can best be accessed through direct interaction in professional development workshops and in-service training.

### Priorities for improvement

The current state of practice in the evaluation of capacity development, and the challenges facing evaluators, suggest five priorities for improving practice in this area:



John Vink / Magnum / HH

- Expanding professional development
- Applying concepts and tools from systems thinking and complexity
- Conducting different types of evaluation for different user groups and needs
- Enhancing knowledge sharing among evaluators
- Shifting the emphasis of evaluation from accountability to learning and programme improvement

### Expanding professional development

The evaluation profession has grown dramatically in recent years. There are now many opportunities for evaluators to continue to develop their knowledge and skills through professional workshops. These are held at conferences of the African Evaluation Association, the American Evaluation Association, the European Evaluation Society and other professional organisations. There are also a number of more intensive training opportunities for development evaluators. However, to date there have been very few opportunities for professional development specifically related to evaluating capacity development. Given the large and growing number of evaluations that are now expected to address issues of capacity development, it is important to expand opportunities for professional development in this area.

Professional development is needed by those who conduct evaluations of capacity-development interventions, and also by those who commission and supervise such evaluations. It is not uncommon to encounter personnel in development agencies whose job it is to manage evaluations, but who have little or no

training or practical experience in carrying out evaluations. This is one reason for the poor quality of evaluation design.

### Systems thinking tools

Systems thinking has a great deal to offer to the design, management and evaluation of capacity-development interventions. Bob Williams's article, *Thinking Systemically*, which featured in issue 37 of *Capacity.org*, is a good starting point for individuals who are unfamiliar with this field. Williams and others have made this one of the most dynamic and productive sub-fields within professional evaluation, and the opportunities for professional development and knowledge sharing are expanding rapidly. Michael Patton's book, *Developmental Evaluation*, is a valuable new resource for applying complexity concepts to enhance innovation and evaluation use.

### Focusing the evaluation

Perhaps the most concrete and practical way to improve practice in this area is to recognise the need to conduct different types of evaluation for the various types of user groups and purposes. There has been a tendency to confuse the *objects* of an evaluation (endogenous versus external interventions) and the *purposes* (formative versus summative). These confusions have often led to misunderstanding and conflict during evaluation processes and to the production of evaluation reports that failed to live up to expectations or satisfy the information needs of the intended users.

Evaluators need to work with evaluation clients and other stakeholders to focus their evaluations on one question at a time. Then

### A Cuban case study

In the 1990s the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) was one of only a handful of agencies supporting efforts to improve management capacities in Cuba's national agricultural research system. After several years of working in close collaboration with researchers, ISNAR proposed an evaluation of the capacity-development initiative. But even in this case, at the request of the Cuban participants, it was decided to evaluate the local capacity development separately from the ISNAR support programme. The Cubans felt strongly – and rightly – that while the ISNAR support had been valuable, the local capacity-development process was 'theirs'.



## The evaluation machine

'As evaluation has become mainstreamed we have created "evaluation machines" that take on a life of their own. These have been designed and are operated not by evaluators but by administrators who know little about social programmes or about evaluation. As a result, evaluation systems now gather masses of routine information that is used mainly to justify decisions and ensure the continuity of the bureaucracy, rather than make decisions that actually improve the effectiveness of public programs.'

Frans Leeuw speaking at the Conference of the American Evaluation Association in Denver, Colorado in 2008

they need to select appropriate methods, information and analytical procedures for responding to each question in a way that the intended users will find convincing and useful. The strategy should be to focus the evaluation on a few key questions of interest to intended users, and to work with them throughout the process to ensure the results are used to inform decision making.

## The bureaucratisation of evaluation is present throughout the international development community – and is a general problem

It is easy to see why learning- and improvement-oriented evaluations need to be designed and conducted differently from accountability-oriented ones. To be useful, a learning-oriented evaluation needs to engage programme managers, staff and beneficiaries in a participatory exercise – always keeping in mind that the evaluation process is often more important than the report produced.

In contrast, an accountability-oriented evaluation – which seeks to assure external stakeholders that resources have been well used and that the programme has generated significant results – is best carried out by external evaluators (often measurement specialists) who operate at arm's length from programme personnel and the intended beneficiaries.

It may be less easy to see why an evaluation of a *local* capacity-development effort needs to be designed differently from an evaluation of an *external* support programme. However, because local organisations often work with many external aid programmes, evaluating local capacity-development efforts generally needs to look at complex networks of inter-organisational relations and their contributions (positive and negative) to local capacity development.

A key capacity for local organisations is the ability to manage external sources of support effectively. In contrast, an evaluation of an

external support programme needs to focus on the objectives, operations and results of the programme, which may impact on one or more local capacity-development processes. Even in those rare cases where there is a strong one-to-one relationship between an external programme and a local organisation, it has proved useful, and sometimes even essential, to separate evaluations of the support programme from those of the local capacity-development effort.

Over the years, there have been significant advances in the methods available for measuring programme costs and benefits, and these should be employed in summative evaluations of capacity-development processes and interventions. The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation and the *Journal of Development Effectiveness* are excellent places to obtain information on such methods. One important thing to note is that experimental methods for measuring impact need to be built into the intervention from the beginning rather than being tacked on at the end. In other words, the intervention itself becomes part of the evaluation, rather than the evaluation becoming part of the intervention.

There has also been a great deal of progress in using qualitative and participatory methods in learning- and

improvement-oriented evaluations. To cite just a few examples:

- the *most significant change* method has been widely used to encourage stakeholders to reflect on the results of their work, through the development and review of 'most significant change' narratives that have resulted from an intervention
- *appreciative inquiry* is being used in evaluations to help stakeholders to distinguish aspects of interventions that are working from those that are not, and to help them to build on strengths rather than focus on weaknesses
- *horizontal evaluation* is a type of participatory evaluation that promotes collective learning and knowledge sharing in the context of a network, and which is especially useful for programmes that are implemented by teams at multiple sites

### Enhancing knowledge sharing

Knowledge sharing offers an excellent opportunity for improving the evaluation of capacity development. Many evaluators have participated in evaluations of capacity development, but they are hesitant, or lack opportunities, to share their experiences. One reason for their reluctance might be that few evaluators feel proud of their efforts to evaluate capacity development and many

feel that their work has been mediocre or their experiences have been negative.

Internal evaluators may face institutional pressures not to wash dirty linen in public, and not to discuss problematic evaluations with colleagues in other organisations. Similarly, external evaluators may feel that openly discussing mediocre or problematic evaluations may hamper future job prospects.

Whatever the reason, it would be useful to create 'safe spaces' in which evaluators could share their knowledge and experiences of evaluating capacity development, without fear that sharing this information could have negative repercussions for them or for their organisations. Ideally, such knowledge sharing would take place in professionally facilitated face-to-face workshops, which could be organised within development agencies or for groups of organisations that are committed to learning from experience.

### Emphasising learning

In recent years, 'impact mania' and the 'evidence-based everything' movements in public management have shifted the emphasis of evaluation from learning and programme improvement to accountability.

The bureaucratisation of evaluation is present throughout the international development community, and is a general problem, not specific to the evaluation of capacity development. Advancing the use of evaluation to improve the effectiveness of capacity-development initiatives requires shifting the pendulum back from the side of accountability for accountability's sake and towards learning and programme improvement. <

### Further reading

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### About the author

Doug Horton is an independent researcher and evaluator who works on topics related to innovation and capacity development in the context of international development. He earned a PhD in economics from Cornell University (1977) and an MSc degree in agricultural economics from the University of Illinois (1967).

Doug was head of the International Potato Center's Social Science Department between 1975 and 1990, and from 1990 to 2004, he was a senior officer at the International Service for National Agricultural Research. He has participated in more than 50 evaluations and has published more than 100 articles, books, reviews and research reports in his fields of professional interest.

# Riding the green wave



**Elizabeth Dipuo Peters**  
Minister of Energy of the Republic of South Africa

Currently, about 75% of 'formal' households have access to electricity, up from 30% in 1994. *Capacity.org* spoke recently with South Africa's energy minister, Elizabeth Dipuo Peters who was attending an African ministerial conference organised by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) meeting in Abu Dhabi. Minister Peters explained that South Africa's success in meeting its energy needs is the result of its integrated approach to human development in which access to energy is viewed as a fundamental right and catalyst for achieving broader social, economic and political goals. On possible lessons for other African countries, she underlined that a country cannot develop in a vacuum and highlighted the role of regional and international initiatives in building Africa's capacity to 'ride the green wave'.

► **Minister Peters, could you please describe for us the current status of energy access in South Africa and how the country envisions its energy future?**

At the dawn of democracy, in early 1994, access to energy in South Africa was roughly 30%. Despite this, the apartheid government spoke of a power surplus, which was used to attract investors to establish smelters and other production facilities. Since the smelters created very few jobs and most of the power was exported, the incoming government realised that a new energy policy was needed that would benefit the people as a whole. We introduced an access policy called 'Free Basic Electricity Access' and its related implementation programme, the Integrated National Electrification Programme. The goal was to expand access to electricity and other energy services to the broader community of South Africa, especially the predominantly (black) African population that had been marginalised under apartheid. The programme set 2014 as the deadline for

South Africa is on track to achieve near-universal access to energy by 2015, a remarkable achievement given that 15 years ago, only 30% of the population had access to electricity. Energy Minister, Elizabeth Dipuo Peters, explains how they did it.

reaching universal access to sustainable energy services for formal households.

In 2007, the government took a step further in realising this vision when it identified the need for a low carbon trajectory as a core component of our energy policy. Since then, we have enacted a regulatory framework to encourage Independent Power Producers and private enterprises to produce about 30% of the new power generation. To create a level playing field in a situation where the state utility holds a monopoly, we have also set up the Independent Systems and Market Operator to buy power from all producers at competitive prices. We also introduced a number of related measures including the Renewable Energy White Paper and the Renewable Energy Feed In Tariff; the National Environment Management Act and the Long Term Mitigation Scenarios. South Africa through President Zuma is also committed to the Copenhagen Accord.

Providing overall guidance for these initiatives is the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) of South Africa (or Energy Mix Policy) which sets out the strategy for making use of all available resources. Our aim is to double our current capacity from about 42,000 MW to 85,000 MW.

## Our starting point was a realistic assessment of the options available to us

The IRP's goal is that 42% of this total capacity should come from renewable energy, with Wind and PV contributing 8400 MW and 1000 MW respectively over the next 20 years. Nuclear accounts for 9600 MW or 23%, while a further 15% will come from coal, with strong emphasis on clean coal. We are looking especially at underground coal gasification and carbon capture and storage technologies. All fossil fuel based plants going forward must be CCS (carbon capture and storage) ready.

► **These are very clear policy choices, but how do you break this down further into more specific programmes that have a real impact in terms of people's lives?**

Our starting point was a realistic assessment of the options available to us. Because South Africa is a water scarce country, our water availability and conservation goals informed our ability to develop that policy. We then approached specialised organisations that could help us translate these goals into tangible programmes. To give a few examples, UNDP helped us establish the South African Wind Energy Association and we also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Clinton Climate Initiative to do a feasibility study on the potential for solar. We have identified the ideal spot for a solar farm that would generate about 5000 MW over a period of 10 years.

We are also looking for technology partners to help us ensure that these new initiatives help to stimulate the local economy right from the outset. We want to make sure that we can grow our local industries because our energy policy is also informed by the need for security of supply by industry as well as household consumption. As we speak we are in the process of setting up the South African Renewable Energy Initiative, which is an instrument that will enable us to tackle issues of localisation as we try to scale up energy production from renewables to almost 20 GW of our production.

At the household level, we also have to make sure that our energy policy contributes to the 'Better Life for All' theme, which takes a holistic approach to health and economic empowerment. We focus in particular on how to improve the lives of women by reducing their household chores while also contributing to poverty eradication. With access to reliable power women can start home industries and small enterprises.

But we also realise that when South Africa has interconnectivity it will not be good for our neighbours not to be able to tap into that. That is why there was need for us to invest in grid interconnectivity for the Southern African region as part of our energy mix plan.

In short, these are the principal elements that inform our energy policy: ability to grow the economy, low carbon, water consumption, affordability for the state as well as the end consumer, as well as regional integration.

► That's a very useful summary because it encapsulates so many of the issues that African ministers of energy discussed at the IRENA high-level consultations. Currently, not all of South Africa's neighbours have the institutional capacities or economic resources to implement such integrated policies. Do you see an additional role for South Africa as a capacity builder in the broader region?

African energy ministries have access to quite a lot of platforms for exchange and technical cooperation. Some examples are the Conference of Energy Ministers of Africa, or the African Union's Commission on Infrastructure, which facilitates collaborative approaches for tackling energy issues. Many private financing institutions as well as multilateral bodies like the African Development Bank and the World Bank are regularly invited to these fora so they can understand the challenges we are dealing with and tell us the criteria for receiving loans and how to involve the private sector.

As a country, we are actively using these platforms to share South Africa's expertise and outline our national resources and priorities. For example we are currently carrying out a regional wind mapping exercise with the support of Denmark and an energy efficiency

## South-South cooperation is also an important tool in capacity development

monitoring system with the support of the Swiss Development Cooperation.

South-South cooperation is also an important tool in capacity development. We are involved in the Africa-South America (ASA) agreement where we are learning lessons on biofuels from Brazil. Within the India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) Economic bloc, we have signed a Solar Cooperation Agreement allowing us to share policies, technology and expertise.

But even capacity building needs to be targeted. We need to look at the whole range of institutions on the continent and explore ways in which they can specialise, instead of duplicating resources. For example, we took a joint decision with Lesotho to build and start manufacturing compact fluorescent bulbs in Lesotho to stimulate their economic development. We are also working with Mozambique to utilise its hydro and gas potential for power generation.

► Based on South Africa's experience, what are some of the critical measures that countries need to put in place so they can fully benefit from all these support instruments?

They must first know what their resource base is. You start with what you have and analyse how the available resources can be



A mini hydro-electric plant near Bethlehem in South Africa

used to generate power in a sustainable way. The next step is to put in place the right mix of policies and regulations to stimulate energy production. An important element in this is ensuring that your regulators are capable and independent. Once these enabling conditions are in place, you can develop an integrated resource plan that sets out what resources you have and who can help you develop these further.

But a successful energy policy is not just about producing energy. It must also be affordable. So the government must also look carefully at how it can use subsidies in the public interest, while not compromising the returns of investors.

Needless to say, we can also expect challenges. In South Africa our energy policy is informed by our New Growth Path, which aims to create 5 million jobs in the next 10 years. As the purchasing power of the population rises, demand will grow because people expect their living conditions to improve. Once they switch on power, they will also want an electric kettle, an iron, something that they didn't have. So people will have access to energy but no money to pay for it, which could lead to an energy revolution. Governments could be toppled because ordinary people cannot access electricity or liquid fuels. We know of African countries that have allowed their primary energy natural resources to be exported without investing in developing energy access. I rest my case.

► What would your message be to the international community meeting in Busan? How can they coordinate their efforts better to tackle these challenges?

International partners must be sensitive to the political dynamics, laws and regulations

and development challenges of the country they want to support. It is important that you help a person to help himself and to become self-reliant. They should not come with predetermined packages of technical support as this ends up benefiting mostly the donor country. The resources they provide should help catalyse development in the partner country.

My colleague [Minister Ogunlade Davidson] from Sierra Leone spoke at the IRENA meeting of the 'lack of' mentality in many African countries. The fact that one recognises his or her lack is capacity in itself, so we should build on that. But we must also recognise that many of Africa's natural resources have become a curse and have not benefitted its people. South Africa produces gold and diamonds, yet a local person in Kimberley cannot afford a diamond ring. We cannot allow our natural elements like sun and wind to become another curse.

So I'm happy that the Director-General of UNIDO [one of the speakers at the IRENA

## The fact that one recognises his or her lack is capacity in itself

meeting] described renewable energy as the next opportunity for Africa and stressed that Africa cannot allow itself to be left out of this green wave. We should ride this wave and make sure that it produces benefits for the people of the continent of Africa. <

*Interview by Wangu Mwangi  
Photo of Elizabeth Dipuo Peters by  
Diego Noguera, IISD Reporting Services*

## INTERVIEW

Water and sanitation in Nepal's Midwestern Region

# Changing the sanitation mindset



**Abadh Kishore Mishra**  
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Regional director, Regional Monitoring and Supervision Office of the Department of Water Supply and Sewerage in Surkhet, Nepal

Approximately 20% of the population of Nepal does not have access to safe drinking water. And sixteen million people (more than half the population) do not have toilets. The result is regular and massive outbreaks of water-related diseases that cause thousands of deaths annually.

The Millennium Development Goal targets are that by 2015, 68% of the population should have access to safe drinking water, and 53% should have access to sanitation services. These goals seem attainable, but are very modest. By contrast, Nepal's own national goal of universal water and sanitation coverage by 2017 is far more ambitious, and it is a challenge that some are determined to take on.

In 2008, Abadh K. Mishra became the Director of the Regional Monitoring and Supervision Office (RMSO) in the Midwestern Development Region of Nepal. Here, he successfully mobilised all stakeholders – including the government, development agencies and the local communities – behind one coordinated approach to improve access to sanitation. In June 2011, he was transferred to the Western Development Region to begin replicating his approach there.

*Capacity.org* asked him about water and sanitation in Nepal.

### ► What did you encounter when you started out in the Midwestern Development Region?

Soon after I arrived I was confronted with an outbreak of diarrhoea. Over the course of a month, more than 300 people died. Most of the deaths occurred in two districts, Rukum and Jajarkot. The outbreak was caused when people used contaminated water – and this was directly linked to a lack of adequate sanitation.

In the past, efforts to improve access to sanitation in Nepal's Midwestern Development Region were hampered by fragmentation and by the rigid mindset of some development agencies. This changed when the country's Regional Monitoring and Supervision Office at the Department of Water Supply and Sewerage stepped in.

The villagers did not realise that defecating in the open contaminated drinking water. They just did not make that connection.

It was the responsibility of my office to supervise all water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) activities in the region, so the onus was on me to do something about this outbreak and to prevent further outbreaks. I started talking to all stakeholders including development agencies, district governments, village governments and community-based organisations.

The first thing I discovered was that although development agencies had been working on various water and sanitation projects over the years, very little headway had been made. All these organisations had their own models and approaches, but there was no coordination between them, and each was convinced that their model was the best. They never worked jointly at any level or pursued a common goal. Even though significant resources were available for sanitation, we were not achieving results.

The second discovery I made was that WASH activities were implemented only in certain villages, and the selection of these villages was not coordinated. All the

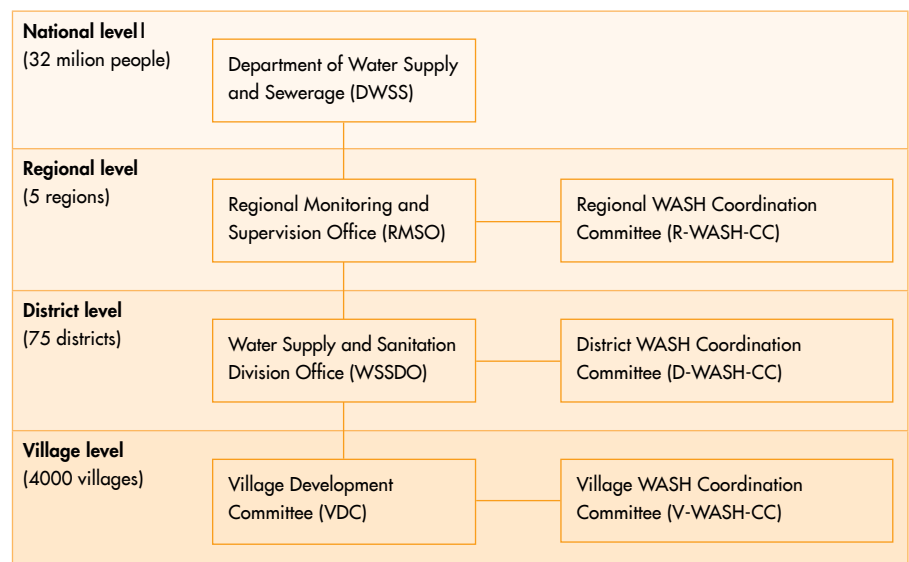
resources were being spent in some villages, while others received no funding.

The third aspect of the problem that became clear was that there was virtually no community participation. The projects were being implemented by government and development organisations, and the Village Development Committees (VDCs) were not actively involved.

### ► What did you do to change this?

We needed to change the mindset of everyone involved in WASH. Because sanitation is heavily dependent on changing behaviour, we felt that a social movement would be more effective than a series of projects. So we shifted our focus away from implementing projects and launched a social campaign.

The core values that drove this movement included health, self-respect, prestige and the formation of a civilised society. We developed a network of platforms from the regional to the village level. We did this by setting up 'coordination committees' at the regional, district and village levels, called respectively, RWASH-CC, D-WASH CC and V-WASH-CC.





The R-WASH CC brought together the main development agencies and the regional directors for education, health and forestry. We held a workshop in June 2010 with the slogan, 'Aligning the action to make diarrhoea epidemics history'. Members signed a pledge to collaborate, and to manage the resources in accordance with local needs. Actually, it was not so difficult to achieve consensus at the regional level. They were quite forthcoming. All they needed was a legitimate government agency to take the lead.

At the district level, the Water Supply and Sanitation Division offices set up the D-WASH CCs along the same lines. These committees met regularly and prepared

## The number of deaths caused by diarrhoea is decreasing steadily

strategic plans for sanitation, to which all district stakeholders were committed.

Finally, the V-WASH CCs were set up in the villages. Our aim was to start working with all the VDCs, not just with a few, as had previously been the case. Of the 575 VDCs in the region, 300 managed to establish V-WASH-CCs. But the process was far too slow for us to expect to achieve our 2017 WASH targets.

At the district and village levels, we invested a great deal in training and raising the awareness of local government staff, the media and political party leaders. There was general consensus that sanitation required a movement, not a project or programme, and that this movement should start in the villages and be led by the V-WASH CCs. And this is how it works in practice. Whatever happens in the village that is related to WASH is started by the V-WASH CCs. The VDC chairman is in charge of coordination – and they are doing a good job.

No social movement is complete without the involvement of politicians – but it was not easy to get leaders to buy in. Many thought that it was impossible to organise a movement for the construction of toilets. We convinced them by pointing out the numbers of lives that would be lost if we did nothing, and the huge economic disadvantages.

### ► How did this network of politicians and platforms trigger a social movement?

The people spearheading this movement are the sanitation facilitators in the villages. When we train people in the V-WASH CCs, we ask them to select sanitation facilitators to work at the village level. They choose energetic, dedicated and self-motivated people who are able to devote time to the society. They are given training at the district level, after which they return to their VDCs and start the work of training the local people and raising awareness of the importance of water and sanitation.

Village sanitation facilitators generally work on a voluntary basis and are usually given modest incentives such as food, lodging or transport allowances – or simply recognition by the VDC or the V-WASH CC. Sometimes the regional office gives a nominal payment for raising people's awareness and for the monitoring of every newly constructed toilet. This is to acknowledge the long hours that some village volunteers put in – sometimes working from first light until dusk. It is an arrangement that has worked very well and we have decided to replicate it in other regions.

### ► Where do the resources come from and how is allocation organised?

Our regional office is funded by central government. We also have a budget for promoting sanitation activities. This is complemented by local government contributions and the support of development partners working in WASH. The VDCs have their own budgets and we are

asking them to set aside a portion of these for water and sanitation. They used not to do this, but the training sessions persuaded villages to start allocating funds for WASH.

We try to bridge the gap where the VDCs don't have the resources to set anything aside for WASH. We have also decentralised budget allocation to the villages. This approach has generated a feeling of local ownership of sanitation, and local groups have assumed responsibility for hygiene promotions aimed at stopping defecation in the open.

Local bodies and local politicians influence local people and help to form local opinion. As a result, sanitation coverage is scaled up and there is a visible impact within a short period. In addition, competition is also created between the VDCs to declare themselves 'open-defecation-free zones' or 'ODFs'. This became a matter of pride at district level. One thing we have stopped doing is subsidising the construction of toilets. It obstructs the whole movement approach.

Because government is not providing enough funding to accelerate this movement, we need outside support. Two development partners, UNICEF and SNV, have a very important role here. Over the past 15 years, UNICEF has been involved in sanitation in eight of the 15 districts in the Midwestern Region. In the other seven, UNICEF and SNV are taking care of what is called the 'soft' part, which includes capacity-development training and workshops.

SNV does not donate funds directly. Rather it provides personnel who have expertise in the water sector and in sanitation engineering, etc. To develop the capacity to fight diarrhoea epidemics effectively and to make this movement a success, we need both financial aid and technical support.

We use a mixture of techniques to promote sanitation in the communities. These include mobilising definable groups such as youth clubs, mothers groups, culture groups, journalists, community health workers and political parties. We try to promote awareness through reward and recognition schemes, through community pressure and 'blaming-and-shaming' campaigns, and by encouraging local bodies to enforce restrictions. We have also discovered that infotainment – using entertainment to disseminate information – is an effective way of getting the message across.

### ► What results have you seen so far?

Sanitation has become an important topic. Political leaders, the media and people in the villages are talking a lot about it. The D-WASH CCs and V-WASH CCs take their responsibilities seriously and develop and implement their own strategies and action plans. Sanitation coverage is increasing day by day. According to the Midwestern Regional Health Directorate's 2009–2010 annual report, the number of deaths caused by diarrhoea is decreasing steadily. <

*Interview by Heinz Greijn*

# A well-respected voice



**Betty Maina**  
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Executive director, Kenya Association of Manufacturers

In 2007, Kenya was shaken to the core. The violence that erupted in the wake of the disputed presidential elections left more than 1000 people dead, left hundreds of thousands displaced and brought the country to the brink of anarchy. In 2010, Kenyans voted en masse for a new constitution, which many believed would bring an end to the corruption, clientelism and politically instigated violence that has marred much of Kenyan politics since independence.

Economically, a more positive spirit is emerging too. According to Kenya Vision 2030 – the country’s development blueprint for the next 20 years – Kenya aims to become a ‘middle-income country providing a high

## The Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM)

KAM represents manufacturing industries in Kenya. It was established in 1959 as the Association of Industry of East Africa when Kenya was still under colonial rule. At that time there was already a vibrant industrial sector in East Africa. After independence in 1963, the name was changed to KAM.

During its early years, membership consisted mainly of British companies. Gradually the number of Kenyan-owned companies grew. In the sixties, many Kenyan companies were owned or partially owned by the Kenyan government. Most of these are now privatised. These days, over 85% of the 700 KAM members are Kenyan-owned companies and the remaining 15% are foreign-owned, often multinationals.

KAM aspires to be ‘a World Class Business Membership Organisation that effectively delivers services to its members wherever they operate’.

For more information visit: [www.kam.co.ke](http://www.kam.co.ke)

The Kenya Association of Manufacturers has tackled a very challenging political system to bring about a more favourable business environment.

quality of life to all its citizens’. One of the strategies for making this happen is to boost manufacturing for the regional market. And that is already underway. In 2009, Kenya’s manufacturing sector still recorded a negative growth rate. But in 2010, industrialists motivated by the ongoing recovery of the economy, borrowed nearly 30 times as much as they had the previous year. These borrowings enabled them to expand their operations.

Whether Kenyan industrialists will be able to fulfil their role as an engine of economic growth will depend on how successful they are in persuading the political powers to establish a stable and favourable business environment.

Betty Maina is chief executive of the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) and a spokesperson for Kenyan industrialists. She spoke to *Capacity.org* about KAM and how it has developed its capacity over the years to serve as the voice of industry and business in Kenya.

**► Betty Maina, KAM’s membership is impressive, both numerically and in the types of company it attracts. What motivates these companies to become members? And what does KAM have to offer them?**

The main reason manufacturing companies become members of KAM is because of our influential and results-focused advocacy. Members want to lobby the government to bring about an environment that is conducive to the development of business. Much of our lobbying focuses on the types of policy needed to benefit business, on legal changes needed by business and on implementing administrative procedures that make transport more efficient. A company can lobby on its own, but it carries more weight if it lobbies as part of an influential group. As well as making sure that the voice of business is heard, KAM membership is also about creating opportunities for high-level interaction with decision makers. KAM membership can help companies to get a foot in the door, and also to get results.

The second reason companies seek membership is to avail of services that can help them to improve their business. For example, members have access to information on export markets, product sourcing, business partners in other countries

and ideas that help them to improve how they operate or engage in business-to-business partnerships.

And the third reason companies join KAM is to take advantage of our business networks to meet like-minded business people and to learn from each other.

**► KAM celebrated its fiftieth anniversary last year. How has its capacity evolved over time?**

KAM has always been owned and run by its members, who are very committed to the association. Just after I was appointed CEO, I

## KAM has always been owned and run by its members

discovered that members of the executive committee did not expect a daily allowance or to have their hotel bills covered when attending KAM events. They own KAM and they feel responsible for its financial well-being. This is commitment.

This sense of ownership is also reflected in the way KAM is organised. The annual general meeting is the highest decision-making body. It appoints an executive committee to run the organisation on a day-to-day basis. This committee is made up of 17 leading entrepreneurs in Kenyan industry. They don’t really have a lot of time to run the organisation, so they appoint a chief executive and a secretariat to deliver services in partnership with the committee and the members. Our secretariat now has 33 people with offices in six locations including the capital, Nairobi, and all the major industrial towns such as Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, Eldoret, and Athi River. Soon we will also have one in Thika.

About ten years ago, KAM made major changes in how the organisation was run. Up to then, it had depended on the voluntary efforts of its directors. This meant that the capacity of the organisation was limited and the organisational culture was very ‘clubbish’. Income did not cover the cost of running a fully fledged secretariat. Members had their own businesses, so their time was limited. The most they could do was to run a couple of

seminars or workshops a year and organise a few trips to represent KAM at meetings in the region. That was not satisfactory, and in 2000, they decided to adopt a more professional approach.

We also wanted to know how a professional business association should be managed. So we made contact with the Confederation of Danish Industry (DI), which is the largest business lobby group in Denmark. With the support of the DI we applied for and secured financial support from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). DANIDA runs a private sector development fund aimed at building the capacity of business associations in Africa.

We designed a strategy for the period from 2002 to 2005 and concentrated on giving a real boost to KAM's capacity. One of the key issues addressed in the project implementation plan was membership growth – we were struggling at that point to recruit members. Membership was vital because a large part of KAM's income comes from subscriptions. So attracting new members requires constant attention. New businesses are starting all the time and it is important to have a critical mass of companies within your membership. This gives your advocacy legitimacy. We designed a strategy for recruiting new members, and retaining existing ones. Our target was to increase membership by 20% a year between 2002 and 2005. We met these targets and we still maintain a target of increasing membership by 15% each year.

We also planned to improve our research capacity and to strengthen communication. We worked closely with the DI on this. We also kept track of how staff members were doing in their jobs.

Support from the DI and DANIDA helped us to strengthen our information system infrastructure by investing in computers, a local area network system and a telephone system. This helped KAM to become more confident and deliver services a lot faster. We persuaded DANIDA to provide salary support that would allow us to increase our staff numbers. They agreed on condition that over the three years of the project, the support would be phased out and the

## We increased membership by 20% a year

additional staff would be fully supported by KAM by 2005. We put the new staff at a salary level that we could afford, and within two years, we had generated sufficient income to pay their salaries ourselves.

The total grant we received between 2002 and 2005 amounted to about US\$800,000. It paid for us to employ DI staff as consultants. But these were not consultants who just popped in and out. We still have a close relationship with the DI. This benefits them



Alltex factory in Athi River, Kenya

too because it allows them to establish business contacts with organisations outside Denmark to help Danish businesses who want to make international contacts. For us, the DI is still a key resource for exchanging knowledge about Europe's common markets.

When the project came to an end in 2005, we came to the conclusion that sufficient capacity had been built up within KAM. Our communications are much better now, and members can see our work and the results we have achieved. Because we are stronger, we are able to advocate much more effectively. And we are bigger. Our membership grew from 330 in 2001 to about 700 this year.

### ► What are your main sources of income, and how successful have you been in establishing a solid funding base for your expanded operations?

Most of our income comes from member subscriptions and from fees for services that we deliver to our members. Combined, these cover up to 80% of our budget. The rest comes from project-related grants from the Kenyan government and from donor organisations. We charge 16% to cover our overhead costs when we implement a project.

One important aspect of DANIDA's support is that it enabled us to establish a relationship of trust. We are seen as an organisation that can be entrusted to manage resources. In the beginning, the DI was managing the resources, but now we receive the funds directly and we can buy services from the DI. Also with project funds from the EU, we are now the main grant recipients.

### ► What has KAM achieved for its members and for Kenyan society as a whole over the last ten years?

Kenya has signed up to the East African Community Customs Union (EAC-CU). Now

all goods that are traded across the region are duty free. KAM was instrumental in achieving a much simpler, three-band structure for the common external tariff (CET) that is imposed on goods imported from outside the EAC-CU. The CET is now 0% for raw materials and capital goods, 10% for semi-processed goods and 25% for finished products. The previous system had about 16 tariff bands – which made it so complicated that it was unworkable. The EAC-CU will boost trade both within the region, and between the region and the rest of the world.

KAM's second achievement concerns Kenya's infrastructural policy, especially with regard to the type of energy mix that we would like to have as a country. KAM is in favour of renewable and cheaper resources, such as geothermal energy for example. We have successfully influenced decision making in this area.

Third, KAM promotes energy efficiency. This is a programme that we have been running for eight years now. We assessed a number of companies that have undertaken energy audits and invested in energy-saving equipment and processes. These companies alone have saved the country 200 megawatts per year – the equivalent of a medium-size energy plant.

In 2010, we concentrated on getting the Kenyan business community's views on the new constitution across to the public in general. We protested against the post-election violence that erupted in December 2007 and spoke out in favour of a power-sharing deal between the rival political parties. Our voice, speaking out on behalf of Kenyan business is now very audible and well respected, both in Kenya and throughout eastern and southern Africa. <

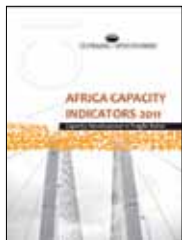
Interview by Heinz Greijn

# RESOURCES

## PUBLICATIONS

This section offers a selection of publications related to capacity development. A more extensive list can be found at [www.capacity.org](http://www.capacity.org).

### **Africa Capacity Indicators Report 2011** The African Capacity Building Foundation, 2011



This is the inaugural edition of the African Capacity Building Foundation's Africa Capacity Indicators Report (ACIR). It examines capacity development needs in Africa, and also aims to find a dynamic framework that is more applicable to the African context and the work of the foundation. The 2011 ACIR contains a strong critique of the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA) used by the World Bank. CPIA is used to assess the quality of countries' policies and institutional frameworks in terms of how conducive they are to fostering poverty reduction, sustainable growth and the effective use of development assistance.  
[www.acbf-pact.org](http://www.acbf-pact.org)

### **Impact and Aid Effectiveness: Mapping the Issues and Their Consequences**

Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Virtual Bulletin, March 2011

This free-to-download Virtual Bulletin is a compilation of ten analytical works spanning three decades. All address impact. The historical perspective they present provides a valuable insight and a clearer understanding of how some ongoing preoccupations have been shaped by their proximity to other debates or policy concerns.  
<http://tinyurl.com/impact-and-aid-effectiveness>

### **From Aid to Development Effectiveness: A Working Paper** Shannon Kindornay, The North-South Institute, January 2011

Some development actors have suggested that the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) presents an opportunity to

shift from a framework based on aid effectiveness to one characterised by development effectiveness. However, no international consensus exists on what development effectiveness entails. This paper seeks to provide some insight into the current debate on development effectiveness and the implications for aid policy and practice. The aim of this paper is to inform and prompt debates on development effectiveness in the lead up to HLF-4 in Busan, South Korea in November 2011.

<http://tinyurl.com/hsi-ins-kindornay>

### **Defining and Measuring Capacity Development Results** UNDP, July 2010



The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has developed a framework to better define, capture and communicate the results of capacity development.

The framework is aimed at national development goals, and focuses on two levels of results that contribute to achieving them: *outcomes*, which are measured by changes in an institution's ability to perform efficiently and effectively, sustain that performance over time, and manage change and shocks; and *outputs*, which are the products produced and services provided as a consequence of investment capacity development.

The framework can help development practitioners because it encourages a renewed focus on institutions; promotes the design of programmes that contribute to targeted institutional change and which are based on proven capacity-development responses; and enables the results of capacity development efforts to be documented and communicated.  
<http://tinyurl.com/UNDP-CDframework>

### **Evaluation of NGO Partnerships aimed at capacity development** Kingdom of Belgium, Special Evaluation Office, 2010



This report describes the results and conclusions of an evaluation of Belgian NGO partnerships and capacity development. The evaluation was carried out at the request of the Special Evaluation Office (SEO) of the Federal Public Service (FPS Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation). Its aim was to examine what major changes, if any, needed to be made in Belgian and international development, especially in terms of recognising the central role played by local actors in the development process.

<http://tinyurl.com/seo-fps>

### **Taking responsibility for complexity** Overseas Development Institute, ODI Working Papers 330, June 2011

Those whose job it is to implement development policies and programmes must deal with interdependent problems involving a diverse range of stakeholders. The point of departure of this discussion paper is that the problems faced are not in themselves intractable, but that the wrong tools are often used for the job. Rather than specify what problems should be considered 'complex', the paper aims to give readers the tools to decide for themselves whether an issue is complex, and to provide guidance on what to do if it is.  
<http://tinyurl.com/ODI-responsibility-for-complex>

### **Barefoot Guide to Learning Practices in Organisations and Social Change (BFG 2)**

The Barefoot Collective, June 2011  
Following the success of the original 'Barefoot Guide to

Working with Organisations and Social Change', a brand new Barefoot Guide to Learning Practices in Organisations and Social Change (BFG 2) has been launched. Like the first volume, it is a resource for leaders, facilitators and practitioners who want to improve and enrich their learning processes inside their organisations and in the field. It is free to download and includes a practical Companion Booklet for facilitators.  
[www.barefootguide.org](http://www.barefootguide.org)

### **Theory of Change** Hivos and UNDP, April 2011



Because we live in a complex world full of conflict, we need to use more flexible instruments to approach and measure social change. Rigid logic alone does not allow us to plan and monitor our actions in contexts that are embryonic or rapidly evolving.

The 'Theory of Change' approach, when applied to social change processes, represents a thinking-action alternative to traditional approaches based solely on logic.

This guide, 'Theory of Change: A thinking and action approach to navigate in the complexity of social change processes', synthesises the core of the methodology and introduces a step-by-step guide to a theory of change.

It was jointly published by Hivos and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and is aimed at everybody with an interest in the processes of social development and change.  
<http://www.hivos.net/Hivos-Knowledge-Programme/Publications/Pubs/Theory-of-Change>



Innovative education in Laos

# Less teaching, more learning

PADETC, the Participatory Development Training Centre, introduces active approaches to learning in Laos, where education is still based on a passive and traditional one-way transfer of knowledge from teacher to students.

**S**chooling in Laos is very traditional. The emphasis is on rote learning, and children are tested only on what they have learned by heart. This means that students do not develop the analytical and behavioural skills they need to address real-life problems in adult life.

Poor education has often been cited as one of the main obstacles to development. In many countries, innovative education methods have been developed to improve the way pupils are taught – problem-based learning, student-centered education, competence-based education and experience-based education. Sombath Somphone, Director of the Participatory Development Training Centre (PADETC), has explored these and other approaches to learning in a bid to foster education for sustainable development in Laos's schools. *Capacity.org* spoke with him.

► **Sombath Somphone, your involvement in rural development training and education spans three decades. Can you explain PADETC's vision and how it works in practice?**

In the eighties and early nineties, I worked with the Rice-based Integrated Farming System (RIFS) project, which later became PADETC. It was here that I realised that our

## PADETC

PADETC's roots go back as far as 1980 and the Rice-based Integrated Farming System (RIFS), also started by Sombath Somphone.

The main aim at that time was to improve the food security of poor rural communities in the aftermath of the war. Working with a team of three, he trained farmers, students, teachers and agricultural extension workers in integrated farming and low-input farming techniques.

By 1992, the RIFS project had eight members and the mission was broadened from agriculture and food security to rural development.

PADETC now has 50 staff members assisted by hundreds of volunteers. Its mission has broadened again, and now focuses on building the capacities of young people as agents of change for sustainable development.

education system was not equipping young people adequately. They lacked the skills to analyse and address problems, and their presentation skills were underdeveloped because traditional learning gives them no opportunity to assume anything other than a passive role. This is short-sighted. If the country wants any kind of development activity, we need capable human resources. That means less teaching and more learning.

So I started working with young people to strengthen their capacities while they were still in school. We did this first as an extracurricular activity at weekends in locations outside the school. We would go out to the community once a month to work on such projects as the prevention of malaria, basic sanitation, HIV/Aids, and the protection of endangered species. We trained students in organisational skills, leadership skills and management skills – all in a very simple and hands-on way. Our approach used activity- and experience-based learning to complement the traditional subject-based learning in the schools.

Slowly, we managed to carry out the extracurricular activities in the school, but not during class hours, and gradually, we became incorporated into the mainstream education system. Now, after ten years, the ministry of education accepts that youth volunteers can be organised in any school throughout the country, provided the trainers are trained and that there is a need for it.

At the moment, we work with about a hundred schools. We produce teaching and learning materials that are disseminated nationwide.

► **What funding is behind these activities?**

We are totally dependent on external funding. Our main donor is Oxfam Novib, with whom we have been involved right from the beginning. They always had confidence in us, and it is mainly on the basis of this trusting relationship that we survive. Our income from sources within Laos is very limited. We are learning from the Buddhist monks. They fund their programmes pretty much on their own and know better than anyone how to get support from the communities they serve.



**Sombath Somphone**  
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Director of the Participatory Development Training Centre, Laos

► **Doesn't this dependency on one donor make you very vulnerable?**

To make ourselves less vulnerable, we have decentralised into 12 smaller learning centres, which are now raising their own funds from the aid agencies, and planning to start asking for a fee for the services they deliver. I encourage them to adopt a more

**At the moment, we work with about a hundred schools**

entrepreneurial approach. For example, the media group can generate income from the production and printing of learning materials. Ecological farms can train students, teachers and farmers. They can also produce seeds on contract. They produce their own rice and fish. Two years ago, we established a private school. It is a demonstration school and collects fees, but it is still not able to cover its costs.

I am planning my retirement, and trying to 'phase myself out'. We are trying to establish a formal board so that PADETC becomes an institution that can function without me. This board should be in place before the end of the year. We aim to have a good gender balance and an even mixture of local and international members.

However, before I retire, my biggest challenge is to get those 12 learning centres standing on their own two feet, developing their own networks and attracting the funding that will allow them to continue their work without me. That is the biggest challenge. And I will do everything I can to facilitate it. <

*Interview by Heinz Greijn*



**Paul Banda**  
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 Director of the Environmental Council of Zambia

Enforcing compliance with Zambia's environment laws

# Caring into the future

Over the years, the Environmental Council of Zambia (ECZ) has developed its capacity to enforce environmental laws and advise the government on how to manage the country's environment and natural resources.

The ECZ was established in 1992, and mandated to protect Zambia's environment and control pollution. Its semi-autonomous character, along with the involvement of a wide spectrum of stakeholders, ensures objective and unbiased decision making, based on government policy and principles. It enforces the provisions of the 1990 Environmental Protection and Pollution Control Act (EPPCA), and is unique in the region.

Capacity.org talked with ECZ director, Paul Banda, who began his career as an environmental inspector in the mining industry after graduating from the University of Zambia in 1984. He first joined the ECZ in 1992 as head of the waste management unit and later as a chief inspector. In 2000, he left to work at the newly formed National Water Supply and Sanitation Council in a similar capacity. He returned to the ECZ as a consultant in pollution monitoring in 2007, and was appointed director in 2009

## Functions of the ECZ

The general purpose of the ECZ is to protect the environment and control pollution. However, more specifically, the ECZ:

- Draws up and enforces regulations related to water, air and noise pollution, pesticides and toxic substances, waste management and natural resources management.
- Advises the government on formulating policies related to good management of the environment and natural resources.
- Advises on all matters relating to environmental conservation and pollution control, including necessary policies, research investigations and training.
- Conducts studies and makes recommendations on standards related to the improvement and maintenance of sound ecological systems.
- Identifies projects, plans and policies that need environmental impact assessments.
- Monitors trends in the use of natural resources and their impact on the environment.
- Requests information on the quality, quantity and management methods of natural resources and environmental conditions in Zambia.

► **The Environmental Council of Zambia has been in existence for nearly 20 years now. Can you give a brief historical overview?**

In the early 1980s the Zambian government began to develop a national conservation strategy. Our first president, Kenneth Kaunda, was very keen to have a strategy for environmental issues. From the beginning, this was a multi-stakeholder process, coordinated by the national council for scientific research. Representatives from across a number of sectors were involved, including the private sector, government institutions, research institutes, non-governmental organisations and even the president himself.

They started by gathering information about the environment here in Zambia. This resulted in the 1985 National Conservation Strategy. This policy document outlined the key environmental issues of that time – the depletion of forests, wildlife and fisheries, and pollution control. The strategy also addressed the fact that there was no institutional framework for environmental matters. The various issues were scattered among a number of departments and they were not well coordinated. So the strategy recommended the establishment of a comprehensive legal and institutional framework to look after environmental concerns.

This process resulted in the EPPCA and also the establishment of the ECZ as an institution to deal with environmental issues. While the ECZ has continued over the years to be semi-autonomous, it is still a government institution. We are funded by the government. We also implement government policy. But when it comes to implementation, we take decisions in an independent way in accordance with government policy and the EPPCA.

As the issues have changed over the years, so too has the ECZ. The emphasis has shifted from prevention and pollution control to environmental management. Climate change has become a major issue together with strategic assessments. We need to be involved in the mainstreaming of environmental issues at all stages of the planning cycle including the design, implementation and evaluation phases. Previously we were also involved in the planning stage when environmental

impact assessments were done, but these were project related. Now we start at the strategic programme level. All government departments are now mainstreaming environmental concerns in their activities.

► **The enforcement of environmental regulations is at the top of your list of functions. What instruments do you have for enforcement?**

We have a number of tools. First we have the licences. No activity that impacts on the environment can take place without a licence. Everything has to be approved and have conditions attached. These conditions are inserted to ensure sustainability, and then we engage in inspections to monitor compliance. Where there is non-compliance, we take corrective action in terms of advising the person or organisation who is in breach. If that does not work, we can stop activities until the situation is rectified. Sometimes we have to prosecute.

But we never lose sight of the fact that environmental education and raising awareness are key elements of ensuring good environmental management and compliance with standards.

► **What do you consider to be the main achievements of the Council?**

All new projects of a certain size – whether they are run by the government, the private sector or any other type of organisation – must be assessed to ensure that the activities they involve comply with environmental norms and standards. I think that is a big achievement.

Of course, it does not mean that there is no pollution any more. In the mining sector, there are many facilities that pre-date the EPPCA. They were not compliant and very polluting, so we started to bring them in line by, for example, obliging them to retro-fit smelters to capture emissions. We have been able to achieve significant improvements here, although we have not yet reached full compliance. Many of these plants are expected to be in full compliance in the next three to five years. Because we have reduced emission levels overall, there is now an option to build more plants with much lower levels



A lead-smelting plant at Kabwe in Zambia

of emissions. This is good for the economy, for society and for the environment.

Our capacity to enforce has improved tremendously. Our staff has become much more professional over the years, the equipment we work with has improved and the regulations governing environmental issues have developed. The level of awareness has also increased. There is a lot of interest in and concern about environmental issues. Sometimes that backfires on us because people expect more now and are demanding better environmental performance.

Gathering and processing data is still a major capacity gap for us, especially at the

## Our capacity to enforce has improved tremendously

local government level. The information we have is not adequate for the decisions we have to make or the regulations we need to adopt. There is also a need for more research.

### ► What external support did you get to bring ECZ to where it is today?

In the 1980s, when the National Conservation Strategy was being developed, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) became involved. At that time, conservation was fashionable and the government invited the IUCN to assist.

NORAD, the Norwegian development agency, was also involved at that stage, and gave support for data management. Later, they helped us to develop an ICT-based management tool that would give us easy access to updated pollution-relevant information. We used this for enforcement purposes. Their support was a mix of

funding and technical assistance. They linked us up with the environmental regulatory agency in Norway.

We also asked for capacity-building support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). NORAD and CIDA were the two key partners over the years. CIDA support consisted of technical assistance from two consultants who were based in our office and who gave us communications support. NORAD provided back-up on issues such as pollution prevention and protection by linking us with a similar institution in Norway.

The CIDA and NORAD approaches differed in the way funds were allocated. The CIDA support came through a private-sector organisation. We would sit together, draw up plans, agree on them and funds would be advanced for the implementation of that activity. With NORAD, the resources were managed and administered by us. We would make a plan with a budget for a specific period and funds would be released. We would report and account for how the funds were being spent. Every year, there was a review, which was sometimes conducted by a Norwegian expert and sometimes by a Zambian expert. Although both the CIDA and NORAD approaches were responsive to our needs, we preferred the NORAD approach in which we were entrusted with the management and administration of the resources. This helped us to develop technically, and taught us how to account for the resources we were given.

We also received support from the World Bank to help us to improve our environmental auditing skills – which are essential for effective compliance-monitoring of environmental management plans in the mining sector. We had had a weakness there in negotiating compliance tools. The problem with World Bank support was the time it took to get an answer from their headquarters in Washington. Sometimes the

responses, which gave us the go-ahead for a project, were hugely delayed.

We also received study support grants for our staff from a variety of donors. About 50% of our staff who now have post-graduate degrees obtained them with donor support. The fact that they worked with ECZ made them eligible for scholarships. This opportunity for access to higher education makes ECZ attractive as an employer.

In order to get the support you need, you have to negotiate. People's perceptions of what you are supposed to be doing vary considerably. Donors may see our capacity development needs from a completely different angle. So you have to talk in order to reach common ground. For example, the equipment that we have accumulated over the years enables us to do sampling and on-site testing. But we felt that in order to do our work well, we needed a full laboratory. We asked for support for this, but donors were of the opinion that this was too costly. They wanted us to concentrate on monitoring and inspection. We agreed to meet halfway. An inventory was made of all the existing laboratories in the country and donors agreed to assist in developing the capacity of a selection of the laboratories we needed most. They were upgraded to do the work that meets our needs.

### ► What are your main sources of income, and to what extent do you depend on donor support?

The EPPCA allows us to get funds from a number of sources including government, donors and statutory fees. Each of these sources constitutes about a third of our income. We report to parliament every year about our activities and about how we spend the finances allocated to us by them. On the basis of this report, a grant is allocated to us. Donor funds are channelled through the government, but we also report directly to the donors. Statutory fees refer to income we get from licensing; for example through environmental impact statements, review fees and pollution control licences.

### ► What do you think are the main challenges lying ahead for ECZ?

Because we are a developing country, poverty and capacity pose particular impediments to achieving a healthy environment. You may have noticed that the people in the communities do not know where to dispose of their garbage. It is not collected on time, and sometimes it is not collected at all. We need to develop our capacity in that area. While there is an increase in the level of overall environmental awareness, there are also people and institutions who pass on the costs of environmental degradation to others. You will see that littering is still an issue in our community, and some industries still do not demonstrate the type of commitment to the environment that is expected of them. <

# Avoid the failure trap



**Peter Malinga**  
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 Coordinator of technical services at the Government of Rwanda Public Sector Capacity Building Secretariat (PSCBS)

Every year, members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) contribute some \$25 billion to developing countries, much of which is aimed at delivering what is increasingly being referred to as 'capacity development'. However, many of these interventions do not demonstrate any clear evidence that they are having the desired impact.

A number of studies based on evaluations of the impact of capacity development programmes support this concern and highlight shortcomings in the efforts of development partners. These studies make it clear that despite substantial international investment, there is little evidence of clear development outcomes.

At the Government of Rwanda Public Sector Capacity Building Secretariat (PSCBS), designing and coordinating the implementation of capacity development programmes has taught us many valuable lessons. We learned that technical assistance does not produce the desired development outcomes in cases where:

- It has become a channel for 'gap filling' or providing substitutes for Rwandan staff. This results in poor knowledge transfer and a lack of sustainable impact.
- No genuine capacity development assessments have been undertaken. This causes the capacity-development component of the programme to be too generalised or equated only with formal training.
- The programme is rushed by fly-in fly-out consultants whose assignments are based on producing a report rather than on providing the necessary coaching, mentoring, and skills or knowledge transfer.

- There is a lack of clear coordination between beneficiary institutions. This results in overlap, duplication and a waste of resources. Although international support for capacity development has no ready-made blueprint, in order to avoid the trap of failed capacity development, it is imperative that each recipient country should apply the following benchmarks:

1. Countries should take the lead and assume ownership of the design and delivery of programmes. To do this, they should define their priorities, clearly express their need for support and reflect on the lessons learned from previous programmes. They should also draw from the experience of best practices at home and abroad. It is vital that a country's leadership is at the helm of the process, because they know the background and context of their own national issues and can define their priorities.
2. Technical assistance should always include a component of knowledge and skills transfer to local teams. The design of the programme should show clear evidence of how skills and knowledge will actually be transferred. Experts brought in from other countries should be recruited on the basis of their experience and skills in coaching, as well as their technical skills.
3. To ensure value for money, strong public financial management systems and mechanisms should be set up. Development partners should feel confident that their support is well used, and the citizens of the country should be able to see the clear benefits of this support.
4. Robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks need to be put in place to drive the quality of the programmes. This will help them to be more accountable to the recipient country.

The Rwandan government has used these benchmarks in developing its Strategic Capacity Building Initiative. This aims to improve the performance in four priority sectors including agricultural productivity, electricity generation and distribution, and the mining sector.

To achieve harmonisation of the efforts of the various development partners, a Government and Development Partner's Coordination Group has been established. This group is guided by an aid policy that sets out how the government wishes to see the country's aid architecture develop. It outlines preferences in terms of the type of aid it wishes to attract from abroad, and ensures that the country gets the kind of technical assistance that genuinely supports capacity development. <

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