Country Ownership: A Review of International Donors Perspectives on Capacity Development

Randolph A. Adams, Ph.D.
“Know thyself”

Delphic maxim

“Politics” matters in development, but how and for whom?

“Oh, a sleeping drunkard
Up in Central Park,
And a lion-hunter
In the jungle dark,
And a Chinese dentist,
And a British queen-
All fit together
In the same machine,
Nice, nice, very nice;
Nice, nice, very nice;
Nice, nice, very nice-
So many different people in the same device”

Cat’s Cradle, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

"If you have come to help, stay home. If you have come because your liberation is bound up with ours, then let us work together”

Lilia Watson
“Country Ownership”
then… and now?

Institution Building
• Non-integration of social organization levels
• Inadequate investment
• Inadequate attention to social diversity
• Insufficient integration of technical and social components of development action
Social Structure Levels for Capacity Development

- Individual
  (Family, Group, and Community)
  - Organization/Institution
  - Sector (Network or Institution)
    - System (or Society)
    - Institution
  - Enabling Environment
“You think that because you understand “one” that you must understand “two” because one and one make two. But you forget that you must also understand ‘and.’”

Sufi saying, quoted in D. Meadows, *Thinking in Systems*
SECTION V: POLICY AND PROGRAMME IMPLICATIONS

1. Integrating capacity development into programming

The five steps of the capacity development process should ideally be linked to the different steps of the Country Programming Cycle and the project cycle. The capacity development process can also be promoted for use by governments and other development practitioners as they design and implement their development plans and programmes.

In reality the capacity development process and the programming and project cycles may not always be perfectly synchronised, but there may still be opportunities to integrate capacity development in the course of a programming cycle. For example, if a country is approaching the end of the UNDP Country Programming Cycle, efforts may be focused on applying a capacity development lens in the evaluation process so that new learning is generated for the next cycle. Similarly, attention can be paid to developing the capacity of stakeholders to participate effectively in the evaluation process. This can help steer towards the use of a capacity assessment as part of the formulation of the next country programme.

Or, if a country is about to launch its annual review of the CCA/UNDAF, it may be possible to suggest a mid-course capacity assessment for key partners and formulate a capacity development response based on that. Also, at the level of individual projects, it may be feasible to incorporate the different steps of the capacity development process in the project formulation, implementation and review phases.

Figure 5. Integrating capacity development into programming

A country programme evolves from the previous cycle and rolls over to the next cycle. In the course of this process, learning and knowledge management underpin as ongoing processes. As a given country programme cycle reaches the end, lessons learned including especially from evaluations should be systematically used to shape the next programme and to decide which of the existing programmatic work would roll over and which would roll.
capacity building is an integral part of the overall HIV/AIDS monitoring and evaluation framework.

**Logical Framework: Capacity Building for HIV/AIDS Programs**

Progress toward a transition to greater country capacity and ownership should be monitored according to a defined, country-level strategic vision and overall PEPFAR targets. This includes monitoring changes in the country-level PEPFAR portfolio, such as increased investments in defined capacity building activities, and increased country capacity of national and local partners to manage and implement key program areas over time.

Following this framework, these are key questions that programs should address in planning and monitoring capacity building strategies and activities:

1. What are the overall capacity building strategy and objectives for your program? Does the approach integrate individual/workforce, organizational, and systems/policy needs? Is the priority determined by its expected effect on health outcomes and impacts?

2. What are specific priority capacity building objectives by technical area? Does each approach integrate individual/workforce, organizational, and systems/policy needs? Is the priority determined by its expected effect on health outcomes and impacts?

3. What current or new partnerships with national government, local organizations and other stakeholders will support the strategy?

4. What are the capacity building activities, outputs, and outcomes and what indicators will be used to measure these?

5. What measures are in place or will be developed to assure that quality standards remain as host countries take a greater role in leading and managing the
Intervention Approaches

Training (and technical assistance or other learning modalities)

Grassroots Development Framework (GDF)

Results-oriented Approach (ROACH)
Change Theories

"...a common view in the community development world, change happens at ‘the speed of trust.’” (Covey, 2006)
4. **Success to the Successful**

This archetype describes one dynamic that inadvertently perpetuates the domination of one group over another, whether economically, politically or socially. It also describes a scenario in which development success (rather than failure) might reinforce conflict. In this dynamic, demands by competing groups for a common resource (land, investment, education, job opportunities, etc.) are linked by two reinforcing loops. If one group (A) initially gets more resources than another equally capable group (B), it has a higher likelihood of succeeding. A’s initial success justifies devoting more resources to A, further widening the gap between A and B. Success to the successful rewards the winner of a competition with the means to win again, while potentially also penalizing the losers. An example would be domination by one group of the economy – e.g., the business sector, tourism, etc. If that group were, for example, given land under colonial times, it started with some resources. As the economy develops, they use this land to develop tourist facilities, bringing in revenue. This success brings in more investment. Infrastructure development also is concentrated in this area, as it is needed for continuing growth. In the meanwhile, the groups that did not receive land initially are disadvantaged. They have fewer means to develop businesses, and they become the employees of the businesses of the other group. Their areas become more and more disadvantaged in terms of infrastructure development, further diminishing their possibilities of economic success. If this leads to resentment and frustration, it could reinforce conflict dynamics.

5. **Mutual Threat and Vulnerability**

The mutual threat and vulnerability archetype occurs when two or more parties take action to protect or further their own interests, but in so doing create a vicious cycle of escalation of conflict. An arms race is a typical “mutual threat and vulnerability” situation. Both parties are trying to maintain a level of security that is reasonable. In response to a worsening of its security situation (perhaps relative to Party B), Party A feels threatened and responds with action that is intended to reduce the threat to itself. But Party A’s action worsens B’s security (or perception of it) and increases the sense of threat to Party B, who then takes action to improve its security.
Summary Statement

Key Dimensions for Capacity Development

• Recognition of partnership's ideological values,

• Negotiated collaborative and harmonized interactions of external support lead by local ownership,

• Commitment of local partner,

• Use of local expertise for “best fit” approach to adopt and adapt promising practices conducive to the sociopolitical environment as well as culturally situated,

• Local empowerment through inclusivity of civil society stakeholders and their engagement,
• Begin with a baseline and the end of realistic and viable capacity development targets in mind,

• With a full menu of training/technical assistance modes of interventions, sequenced with a focus on iterative experiential learning and coping with change as a mainstreamed process,

• Sector and thematic leadership,

• Holistic linking of all levels,

• Focus on results: simultaneously on outputs and outcomes (altered status, altered processes, and new products) over time, and with the ability to measure change.