Capacity Development: Rethinking the Issues of an Evolving Concept

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Introduction

Capacity development is an idea that underlies a lot of development work. However, do we really know what we mean by the term? Is our definition shared? Do we expect the same outcomes of our work? Based on a review of the literature and our own experience in the field, we would argue that there is a lack of clarity with respect to the implicit meaning of capacity development particularly as it is translated into concrete development intervention objectives. One's assumptions about the mechanisms and components of capacity development shape the very design and content of interventions, yet these assumptions are not always transparent, typically remaining below the surface.

The aim of this brief is to explore some of the conceptual and practical issues associated with capacity development as well as the fundamental aspects which appear to underlie most definitions. Although these components largely shape our expectations and guide our interventions, they are seldom formally addressed. In our view, these assumptions need enunciation if we expect development work to lead to tangible benefits, instead of simply being a rhetorical exercise whose principal result is the 'development of capacity for capacity'.

Conceptual Treatment of Capacity Development

Although the term capacity development (CD) is relatively new, emerging in the 1980s, the root meaning associated with the concept is hardly novel. CD has also been used interchangeably with the term capacity building. Over the years, different words were used to convey a meaning similar to that which is currently taken to be definitive of CD. Since with each rephrasing, new conceptual nuances came to light, one can further assume that the scope of meaning has expanded rather than attained a greater focus. As outlined in Table 1.1 below, the historical predecessors of CD include institution building, institutional strengthening, development management/administration, and institutional development. However, words like organizational development, community development, integrated rural development, technical cooperation and sustainability have also been used to represent aspects of what today is referred to as CD. In a sense, CD has become the 'in' word when referring to development work.

Another conceptual issue related to CD which has perhaps led to some confusion is its placement in relation to sustainable development. Although in international development circles, CD activities are typically understood to be a subset of the broader sustainable development project, the exact boundaries between the two are fluid and subject to numerous interpretations. Rethinking the issues related to CD invites consideration of where to position it under the umbrella of sustainable development or even under the broader concept of development.

Exhibit 1 - Conceptual Predecessors to Capacity Development*

Term, Emergence as Development Field, and Associated Meaning
Institution building (1950s and 60s) Objective was to equip developing countries with the basic inventory of public sector institutions that seemed required to manage a program of public investment. Focus was on the design and functioning of individual organizations, not broader environment or sector. Imported or transplanted models from developed countries were often used. **Institutional strengthening (1960s and 70s)** Shift from establishing to strengthening institutions. Focus was still on individual institutions and not a broader perspective. Tools were expected to help improve performance. **Development management/administration (**1970s) Objective was to reach special public or target groups previously neglected. Focus was on delivery systems of public programs and capacity of government to reach target groups. **Institutional development (1970's, early 80s)** Focus was broadened to sector level (government, NGO, private) including networks and external environment. Attention to long term processes. Emergence of issue of sustainability and move away from focus on projects. **Capacity development (1980s)**

* Morgan, 1993, pp. 2-3

In analyzing these evolving conceptualizations, we isolated both areas of convergence and divergence of meaning. In terms of convergence, one could summarize by saying that each definition essentially addressed some process of affecting (developing, building, supporting, promoting, enabling, etc.) abilities (or capabilities) in a given context.

With respect to areas of divergence, certain patterns emerged as well. Variation typically occurs in relation to five dimensions, namely: 1) unit of analysis of change; 2) projected/anticipated time frame; 3) scope/target of intervention; 4) control/ownership of the process; and 5) projected/anticipated outcome. Although common sense suggests that these four dimensions, or axes, are logically inter-linked and should not attain definition independently, in isolation of each other, this is rarely the case. Moreover, a partial view is also common; where certain dimensions are defined, whereas others go unnoticed, or are simply ignored. Finally, the linear logic between the dimensions can be ill conceived as well.

As a case in point, consider the abundance of training projects which enable individuals from developing countries to gain access to training in the North. The rhetoric shaping such projects states that the capacity of developing countries will be developed in this manner. However, the chances of few individuals' enhanced capacities fueling the capacity of a nation are slim, especially given the fact that incentives and other good performance conditions are not in place in most of these countries. Consequently, many of the workers trained end up leaving the countries for greener pastures abroad. Intervention and support at numerous accompanying levels is required although rarely included in such projects. Short of coordinating the issues related to unit of analysis, scope, process and anticipated outcome, it should come as no surprise that development projects often miss their mark, lead to unanticipated effects, or leave no sustainable mark at all. It is worth exploring each of these issues separately, as follows.

Unit of Analysis of Change

Development interventions typically aspire to foster change. In terms of capacity

development ventures, the objective is changing the current level of capacity in some area of ability or activity. A means of gauging the resulting level of change needs is needed. Logically, this might be accomplished by gathering some sort of baseline data, and then following up after a certain period of time in order to see of any change occurred. However, the question which needs to be asked is what is the unit of analysis of change? Is change expected at the individual level (i.e., the career development of an individual as a result of focused training), at the organizational level (i.e. increased profits or productivity), institutional level (i.e., enabling policies), or country level (i.e., economic position relative to the past or other comparable countries)? The unit of analysis chosen for a project should logically translate into appropriate activities - activities which are likely to have an impact at the designated level.

At present, interest in country level change is growing, especially since most experts working in the field still tend to place the focus on other levels of intervention. While the macro goal may be noble, the strategies that have been used so far to achieve it are often short-sighted. For instance, assuming the goal is the improvement of health and increase in longevity in a certain country, limiting the focus on training of hospital administrators would hardly result in attainment of the broader national goal. Even under the best circumstances, an effect would be highly unlikely (it would be a 'low' probability event, to say the least). The bottom line is this: You need to understand (and define) where you are focusing when undertaking any development work. If you don't clarify where you are headed, how can you possibly map a path to your destination? Before anything else, expectations need clarification and enunciation.

Exhibit 2, provides an overview of various means of addressing change requirements at levels ranging from the individual to country or society level, and the schools of thought from which change strategies are drawn. Although there are a lot of other possible sub-units (i.e. communities), the following were selected for the sake of practical convenience in the context of this discussion.

Exhibit 2 - Levels of Change intervention and their associated means of address

UNIT OF CHANGE	MEANS OF ADDRESS / CHANGE STRATEGIES	UNDERLYING DISCIPLINE / SCHOOL OF THOUGHT
Institutional:		
Rules of the Game and their enforcement.	• technological change • political ideology change • governance / leadership change • legislation / policy change • norm, value, belief change • mass (media) communication & information change	Science & Technology Humanities and Social Sciences: • Political Science • Economics • Law • Religion • Anthropology • **Education***
Organizational:		
People gathered together for a defined purpose.	• performance change	Business Management Training (Education)*
Group:		
Sub-units of larger gatherings of people.	• interpersonal behavior change • inter-group attitude change	Applied Social Sciences Group Dynamics
Individual:		
Personal.	• behavior change • attitude change	Behavioral Sciences Psychology

Unit of Change	Means of Address / change strategies	Underlying discipline / school of thought
	• skill change	Psychiatry Education/Training*

* It is interesting to note that the education and training methods are applicable at both the macro and micro level, although it is more likely that intervention initiated at the macro, societal level will filter down to the micro, individual level than the other way around.

Anticipated Timeframe

One can also think of unit of analysis in terms of time frame - the amount of time expected to elapse before anticipated change is readily discernible. Returning to the previous example, if improvements in the overall health of a nation are expected in the short term, without the provision of accompanying health-care funding, the training of medical practitioners, the injection of additional resources , or even attempts at changing traditional attitudes about causes of illness and potential cures, the probability that the upgrading of management capacities of hospital administrators alone will lead to health improvements at a country level is low.

The time frame allowed for results to emerge is intrinsically connected to the expected level, or unit of change. One can logically assume that the higher or more macro the level at which one places the change goal, the longer one should expect the associated time frame to be, in that the process being initiated is complex and needs to have an impact at several levels of society. Having clarified what one's goals and expectations, then defined the amount of time one expects to pass before results are evident, one can proceed to the next issue which needs to be addressed with respect to understanding the mechanisms of capacity development, namely, the scope of the intervention.

Scope

There are many levels at which one can provide development aid, starting at the individual and grassroots level, right up to a countrywide level. Thus, the first question which needs definition is which level, or combination of levels are we to target for change. The complicating factor here is the realization that the levels as described in Table 2.2, although convenient conceptually, are difficult to tease apart in practice since they are functionally interconnected. For instance, changes at a country level will usually filter their impact down to the individual level. Theoretically, it is possible for individuals to impact the collective as well, although historical evidence suggests that such a direct effect is discernible only in the case of selected individuals. However, readily apparent or not, some degree of mutual influence always occurs.

Given the interdependent nature of society, if our development goal is the development of capacity at a country level, common sense suggests we ought to intervene at several levels. Moreover, one might expect that the more macro the entry level, the further reaching the benefits. Returning to our previous health care example, the establishment of a government funded medical care system (country level, policy intervention) might radically improve public health in the short term, while educating a handful of doctors at the best Northern universities (an individual level intervention) would have no immediate impact on the populace at large. Although the macro alternative might be unattainable due to resource limitations, choosing the micro level intervention may not be the right solution either, even if affordable.

This brings up another important point with regard to the scope of development intervention. Although the availability of resources plays a large part in shaping development projects and choosing between alternative means of reaching objectives, the amount of financial aid does not have to be the principal design criteria. Even with limited resources, the impact of capacity development projects can be enhanced, in that a strategically focused approach can do a lot while costing little. Apart from 'quantity' of aid, one can also think in terms of quality - the depth, reach, or intensity of the impact, its ability to attract attention or set a precedent, etc.

To illustrate, let's assume that the objective is developing capacity to prevent the spread of infectious diseases such as AIDS. One approach might involve the launching of an expensive media campaign, along with a transfer of telecommunications technology, and the training of local people in production techniques. However, a personalized grassroots intervention, by which AIDS victims are supported as they personally sensitize and education their own communities about the issues would be cheaper, might invite further community initiative and input, and thereby emerge as the more effective, sustainable health education venture. It all depends on what the anticipated results are. Does a fully-functional television studio signify health education capacity, or a network of mobilized, committed volunteers, who are local to the region and sensitive to its characteristics, ready to make 'house calls' in order to spread their message? This leads to the next capacity development issue which needs attention, that of control, or ownership of the capacity building process.

Control

Gone are the days when foreign experts sold their know-how and developed countries spread their technology, often indiscriminately, without sufficient knowledge of the recipient's needs and circumstances. In today's development aid context, fostering local ownership and aspiring towards partnerships between northern and southern institutions is commonplace, and justly so. With respect to capacity development initiatives, some degree of control on the part of the recipient of aid is invaluable. Moreover, it may be imperative, since removing the subject, or target of capacity enhancement from the strategic visioning and planning process is hardly justifiable now that experience has taught us the significance of "self-participation".

Aside from the moral appropriateness of a measure of local control of the aid process, such an approach also makes fundamental sense from a practical perspective. After all, who is to know about their own capacity and potential gaps that need attention more intimately than the recipient? One could argue that industrial technocratic experience somehow overrides the value of local knowledge, although given the current socio-political context, such an assertion would not only be ill-advised, but short-sighted in an age where the currents of change clearly lead towards enhanced, egalitarian empowerment. The heart of the issue is that *people* are being helped to developed, and people can only be supported in their development, since the undertaking of change is entirely their privilege, right, and burden.

Given the development context today, issues of empowerment and development process control should be central to any capacity development venture. Although the increased interest and commitment on the part of donors to the creation of partnerships and bi-lateral ventures indicates that this goal is being addressed to some degree, in our view these issues are central to capacity development and should be dealt with explicitly at each stage in the aid process - from initiative, planning, design, implementation, right up to evaluation (i.e., by having recipients undertake self-evaluations of their involvement and its outcomes).

So far we have proposed that our conceptual framework, or unit of change, the scope of the intervention, and the control or ownership of the process are fundamental capacity development issues which not only shape aid activity, but directly impact on aid outcomes and effects. The final issue which we want to address is that of anticipated results. Even if all the above are thought out and logically aligned, we still need to stake out a path and define a destination, or result.

Outcome

Today, the resources that are available to donors are far more limited than was the case in the 1970s and 80s. In today's economy accountability is a must, and altruistic goals without discernible effects are not sustainable. For instance, although investment in the construction of housing settlements for relocated slum dwellers and the homeless is a noble goal, the goal is meaningless and the money is wasted if people refuse to live in homes being provided for them. Given the context of the 1970s, such project outcomes were possible, and did occur, as was the case with a housing project in Indonesia. Given that expected results focused on project completion - houses being built for the impoverished and homeless living in Jakarta - the project was a success. However, if projected results were positioned further - at the level of local acceptance of the settlements being offered - the project hardly reached its objectives in that the settlement design was so incompatible with local customs, traditions and needs, that the settlers moved out, abandoned the fully equipped houses, and moved back to slums without water and sewage facilities.

Even if economic realities are more the reason than the accumulated lessons learned from such aid experience, Result-Based-Management (RBM) systems are becoming the norm in many development aid contexts. CIDA formally adopted its Framework of Results and Key Success Factors in 1998, providing specific reporting, monitoring and evaluation guidelines for projects to follow. Apart from addressing development (relevance, appropriateness, cost-effectiveness and sustainability) and management factors (partnership, innovation and creativity, appropriate human resource utilization, prudence and probity and informed and timely action), the framework demands a careful assessment of intended and unintended results, as well as results within a temporal context - outputs being the short-term effects, outcomes the medium term, and impacts being projections for the long-term.

Apart from being required, the expectation and projection of short, medium term, and long term results with respect to capacity development initiatives is useful and can help guide project planning and implementation. The task also demands some effort in terms of aligning a logical and feasible flow between outputs and impacts. It is at this junction that capacity development projects often go off track (i.e., when a handful of scholarship recipients are expected to impact a country upon their return home

A Working Definition

In summarizing the above discussion, let us put forward a working definition of capacity development. In our view, it is useful to think about capacity development in these terms:

Work aimed at improving the capacity of a country to engage in planned change, the goal of which is to influence its institutions and organizations (and/or their existing systemic arrangement) so that they can (better) improve the quality of life of citizens in a way that supports sustainable development.

This definition is based on a series of inter-linked notions, as follows:

- capacity is understood to represent ability to engage in 'something';

- that 'something' can be summarized under the umbrella of 'planned change';

- 'planned change' implied to formulation of expected results and projected effects;

- the goal of 'planned change' is to influence existing institutions and organizations and their arrangements;

- 'influence' implies that the existing recipient institutions and organizations do the work, while donors provide support;

- 'influence' can be accomplished via resources (infrastructure, technology, etc.) knowledge

(information, empowerment, etc.) or values (attitudes, beliefs, etc.);

- since existing institutions and organization within the recipient country are to do the real work, their partnership / ownership / control of the process is assured;

- 'influence' can include support of the creation of new organizations or the reconfiguring of established institutions if such a necessity becomes evident, but the burden of the undertaking still rests with existing institutions and organizations, implying that their partnership / ownership / control of the process is fundamental to the task.

- the work should lead to broad effects in the long term;

- these broad effects are logically and tangibly linked to planned change (results);

- the work should support sustainable development and improve the quality of life at a country level.

In a sense, this working definition is circular and dynamic. It implies the need for thinking through the full length of the anticipated process, taking into account issues of control and leadership, and being able to discern appropriate results which are likely to support and lead to defined, needed country level changes. The definition further implies the need to intervene at several levels simultaneously in order to initiate a system (country) wide effect, and the need for a thorough assessment of the context and its immediate and long term demands. This leads us to another aspect of capacity development, one which is rarely placed centrally in definitions of the work. We are referring to institutional and organization assessment (IOA).

Repositioning IOA in Capacity Development Work

It is easy to criticize after the fact - once the investment is past and effects do not emerge as planned. Even the lessons learned from such experience are not sufficient to guide future development actions in that the myriad of specifics associated with different contexts can never be fully mapped. From this perspective, diagnosis of those contexts is imperative. In our view, such diagnostic analysis, or what we refer to as Institutional and Organizational Assessment (IOA), is a fundamental cornerstone of capacity development work. By means of IOA, results can be envisioned and defined. These results in turn will guide the design and implementation of the intervention. Short of such focused preliminary work, the only result achieved may be the "building of capacity for capacity" - which looks great on paper, but hardly improves the quality of life.

Although IOA is not seen as being a formal component of capacity development work, donors typically undertake some form of institutional and organizational diagnosis during the project approval phase. Perhaps this is due to the fact that IOA is typically linked with the capacity development project process rather than project design, content, or implementation. However, since IOA is, in fact, intrinsic to the work, it should be repositioned conceptually - moved from its peripheral, preliminary placement, to one that is central not only to project process but to project content as well.

Before going further, it is useful to outline briefly what we mean by IOA (for a more detailed description please see Lusthaus ……). Essentially, the IOA framework allows one to take a close look at institutions or organizations and identify their strengths and weaknesses, as well as constraints and opportunities. Based on the level of understanding that results from such an analysis, one can then have a better sense of which institutions or organizations to target for partnership in the undertaking of development interventions, in order to maximize the quantity and quality of results. The framework addresses several institutional and organizational factors, including:

- **performance**: defined in terms of effectiveness (i.e., mission fulfillment), efficiency, ongoing relevance (the extent to which the organization adapts to changing conditions in its environment), and financial viability.

- **Environment**: Organizations exist within certain external contexts or environments that facilitate or impede their performance. Key factors in the policy or regulatory environment, and in the economic, political, socio-cultural, environmental and technological contexts, affect how the organization does its work, or the work it does.

- **Motivation**: Internally, performance is driven by the organization's motivation to perform, which refers to the organizational culture, history, mission, values and incentive systems. These factors affect the quality of work, the nature of how the organization competes, and the degree of involvement of internal stakeholders in decision-making processes.

- **Capacity**: Performance is driven, in part, by organizational capacity, which we now understand as existing in seven basic areas: strategic leadership, human resources, financial resources, infrastructure, programming and process management, and inter-institutional linkages. Each of these seven capacity areas may be described in sub-components, as for example in the organization's strategic leadership capacity which is understood as its structure, governance, leadership, strategic plans and niche management. Human resources, financial resources and infrastructure are seen as resources as well as the management of these resources. Organizations also have capacities that result from the relations, partnerships and alliances they have established with other organizations—referred to as inter-institutional linkages

The following diagram, Exhibit 3, illustrates our IOA framework and the institutional and organizational aspects it targets for analysis.

Exhibit 3 - The IOA Framework
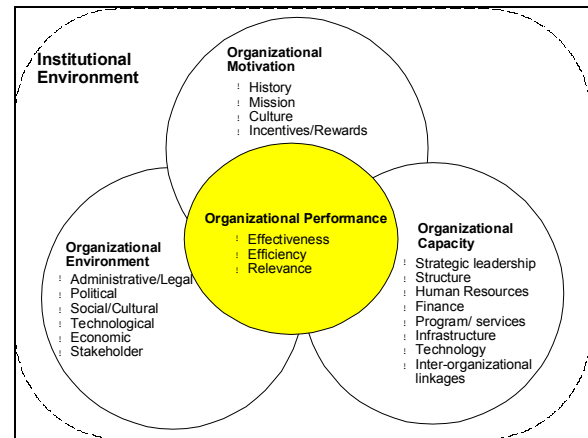
Our argument that there is a need to conceptually reposition IOA within the capacity development process is based on a series of assumptions which are inexorably linked with the working definition offered in Section 3, as well as the issues discussed throughout this paper. These assumptions are:

- Institutions and organizations are the ideal unit of analysis of change or level at which to introduce capacity development interventions.

- Organizations are tangible, discrete entities that are manageable to donors.

- Institutions and organizations are positioned midway between the macro and micro level (see Table 2.2), therefore they can potentially touch both ends of spectrum and maximize the scope of the resulting impact.

- Institutions and organizations are owned by the recipient partner/country, thereby assuring that beneficiaries of aid investments have ownership and control of the capacity development process.

The IOA process itself can strengthen capacity development initiatives in a variety of ways, for instance:

- The process allows one to and operationalize the development problem and identify the optimum means of approach.

- The process allows one to consider the full scope/implications of any planned change actions.

- The process assesses beneficiary motivation for change and thereby opens a dialogue and thereby fosters local initiative, participation, and ownership of the change process.

- By taking stock of existing capacities, the process helps one identify gaps and define appropriate and feasible results both in the short and long term.

- By analyzing the environment, the process provides a view as to trends and other influencing factors which can determine the course of an intervention to some extent.

- By analyzing Institutional and organization performance, the process supports the deepening of one's understanding of the demands of sustainability and ways of working towards it.

We believe that the formal integration of this process within our evolving conceptualization of capacity development can lead to a variety of practical and sustainable benefits. It will allow us to move further away from thinking of development work simply in terms of discrete projects and programs, and closer to the notion of development as activity in support of a broader global commitment to fostering sustainable growth.

Addressing the "How" Aspects of Capacity Development–An Integrated Systemic Approach

In addressing the issue of capacity development in a pragmatic way, we view the problem as requiring three distinct but interrelated sets of interventions, which may need to be undertaken simultaneously or in a planned sequential manner to have the desired positive effects on performance and development outcomes. These interventions are in the areas of institutional reform, organizational strengthening and human resource development. Often, capacity development efforts in developing countries have been undertaken in a disjointed way with little attention to the need for coordination among various initiatives supported by

different donors, or among various organizational and institutional units that are instrumental for the success of any one initiative. Moreover, underlying the various interventions are certain skewed assumptions that engender a discrete and narrow focus on the problem of capacity development. For example, those who assume that human resource development is the logical site for CD single out training activities as their target for developing capacity; and those who focus discretely on organizational strengthening do so on the assumptions that administrative structures and pecuniary rewards determine organizational and individual performance, and that organizations work well when structures and control mechanisms are in place. Today, however, experience has shown that even the most ambitious initiatives in these areas can fail to yield satisfactory results unless binding constraints imposed by the broader institutional environment are recognized and explicitly taken into account in the design and implementation of CD programs. In the rest of this section, we discuss the issues we consider crucial for successful capacity development in developing counties, some of which have been given little or no attention in the past.

Need for a Systems Approach

Capacity development in the sustainable sense is essentially a dynamic process whereby intricate networks of actors (individuals, communities/groups and organizations) seek to enhance their abilities to perform what they do, both by their own initiatives in the evolving scheme of things and through the support of outsiders. According to the Task Force on Capacity Development in the Environment set up by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD, "capacity systems are seen as dynamic, interconnected patterns that develop over time along certain dimensions toward greater complexity, coordination, flexibility, pluralism, interdependence and holism". Therefore,

developing such systems in an effective way requires a systems approach which should also draw on structural engineering to develop processes of conflict resolution, value consensus and communication. This is true for both the specific task/intervention level and the higher overall CD level embracing multiple interventions.

Any single or specific intervention to develop capacity typically requires the participation of a network of organizations (ministries, governmental agencies, NGOs, and even private sector organizations) that must work together to accomplish the task at hand. In this context, success or failure in the endeavor is affected as much by the extent to which such networks encourage communication and coordination as by the ability of individual organizations within the network to perform their work effectively. Identifying primary organizations that play the main role in carrying out the given task, secondary organizations that complement the work of primary organizations, and supporting organizations that provide essential services to facilitate the task, and the ways and means by which they can interact to achieve specific task objectives, is an important step toward ensuring the success of the whole endeavor.

At the macro level, there is an obvious need to coordinate and harmonize the multitudes of donor-supported capacity development initiatives undertaken in any one country. This helps minimize wastage of resources through duplication of initiatives, avoids dysfunctional outcomes, and thereby ensures that the overall CD goals are attained in a more efficient and effective manner. We believe that a good way of achieving this harmonization is to set up an aid coordination bureau/body which, in collaboration with donors, affected organizations and/or program management:

- Conducts Capacity Mapping to identify capacity gaps;

- Carries out Context Analysis to assess the socio-cultural, political and economic subsystems of the delimited environment;

- Provides useful information that serve as the basis for aid requests for CD;

- Screens in-coming aids relating to CD; and

- Helps in specifying objectives, and designing and coordinating task networks among organizations and institutions that must interact and cooperate in implementing specific CD initiatives.

While the above discussion is more akin to aid recipients' perspective, it is also in line with how we think donors should perceive their CD efforts in order to have maximum impact on performance and development outcomes. When donors view and analyze their individual CD effort in terms of the cumulative marginal or incremental effects it will have in relation to other CD initiatives, and not in isolation, then some kind of congruence is created between donor and recipient perspectives. The existence of an effective overall coordinating body will enhance greater donor coordination and considerably reduce the complexity and difficulty of implementing this systemic approach to CD.

Need to Take "Context" into Acccount

The development community, including donors, generally agree that the success of any CD effort is predicated largely on the broader socio-cultural, political and economic contexts within which it takes place. However, few have explicitly taken into account these broader contexts in the design and implementation of CD initiatives, and it is becoming increasingly clear that this omission is largely responsible for the woeful performance of most CD programs. Of particular importance here is the institutional context of the public sector, which includes "rules and procedures set for government operations and public officials, the financial resources government has to carry

out its activities, the responsibilities government assumes for development initiatives, concurrent policies, and structures of formal and informal influence that affect how the public sector functions" (Mary E. Hilderbrand and Merilee S. Grindle in Getting Good Government, 199…). The wider action environment, consisting of such factors as political stability, class structures, social conflicts, and general economic growth influences this intermediate public- sector environment.

Various strategies have been used to develop capacity in low-income countries. These include:

- Supply of more resources, both physical and financial;

- Provision of more training, including systems improvement and better working conditions;

- Transfer of technology and promotion of innovation;

- Creation of an Enabling Environment (including help to improve institutions and broader socio-political patterns); and

- Provision of more performance incentives.

The success or failure of any of these strategies depends on the broader context in which it is applied. Therefore, we suggest that selection of a strategy or combination of strategies should be based on the results of a thorough context analysis that identifies environmental constraints and facilitators. Too often, donors have pumped large amounts of financial and physical resources in developing countries to create or enhance capacity at the individual and organizational levels without thorough analyses of environmental factors that would have pointed to the imminence of some kind of civil unrest or political turmoil. In some of these cases, strategies geared toward improving the action environment would most likely have been more useful than those addressing other dimensions of capacity development. For example, in their analysis of factors that affect capacity in six developing

countries, Hilderbrabd and Grindle (199..) state that "the Central African Republic left little doubt that until basic conditions of economic development, political commitment, and social stability are put in place, little can be done along other dimensions…".

What has been done, What can be done, and How they can be done?

Research has shown that large numbers of capacity development efforts in developing countries have failed to produce any significant results, and that investments in these initiatives have generally not resulted in improved overall effectiveness or higher levels of performance (…). In Exhibit 4 below, we present the main capacity development strategies that have been used in the past and then propose new or additional initiatives and how they can be applied to strengthen capacity.

Exhibit 4 - Current and Proposed Capacity Development Strategies

CD DIMENSION	AREAS OF FOCUS IN THE PAST	PROPOSED ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES	HOW PROPOSED INITIATIVES CAN BE EFFECTIVELY APPLIED
Organizational Strengthening	Restructure Management Systems to improve performance of specific tasks and functions by: • Structuring work • Defining missions • Providing Clear job descriptions	• Provide meaningful jobs • Send clear 'messages' that performance matters • Provide incentives for goal-focused performance • Inculcate an organizational mystique among professional staff • Encourage problem-solving orientation toward work	• Introduce induction training with a strong component of mission-focused curriculum and discussion • Introduce probationary periods for newly hired personnel and make confirmation contingent on good performance • Make appointment/recruitment contractual, renewable after one year depending on performance • Make promotion and salary increases continent on performance, not seniority • Encourage team-work • Introduce friendly competitions • Give public sector organizations more autonomy
Human Resource development	Supply of more professional and technical personnel: • More (ad-hoc) in-service training • More scholarships for university and technical education • More study leaves for people to study abroad (based on their length of service) • Higher salaries (most times they make blanket increases, or relate it to years of service)	• Try to achieve effective utilization of human resources • Provide job satisfaction • Inculcate sense of organizational mission and involvement • Give worker s the 'right' work (where they use their talents to accomplish tasks they consider worthwhile or meaningful)	• Introduce task-specific induction training that inculcate organizational mystique • Make appointments or recruitment contractual, renewable after one year depending on performance • Make promotion and salary increases contingent on performance, not seniority • Introduce open and competitive recruitment procedures (with public announcement and transparent selection methods)

CD DIMENSION	AREAS OF FOCUS IN THE PAST	PROPOSED ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES	HOW PROPOSED INITIATIVES CAN BE EFFECTIVELY APPLIED
Institutional Reform	Institutions and Systems; macrostructure. Development Administration. • Creating detailed sets of rules, procedures, and other mechanisms to control activities of public organizations and behavior of public officials. • Cutting back on the size of the civil service	• Creation of an enabling institutional environment. • De-politicize the organizational environment (where appointments, promotions etc. are often based on political affiliation and contacts, and influenced by ministers) • Improved governance and democratization	• Set standards of good performance and use them consistently. • Give public sector organizations greater autonomy to hire and fire personnel within well-defined general standards set for the public service
Organizational Networking	(Generally not addressed)	Create means by which organizations involved in capacity-development efforts can interact and communicate in a better way.	• Create a permanent coordinating/overseeing body (e.g., the aid coordinating bureau suggested earlier) • Form high-level and technical-level committees composing of representatives from primary, secondary and supporting organizations • Create interlocking boards of directors or advisors • Organize joint workshops and seminars, and joint training activities.

We conclude by noting that the success of a good number of the existing and proposed strategies to develop and strengthen capacity in developing countries depends on political will and commitment on the part of the leaders. Therefore, an important part of the problem of capacity development in these countries is the difficulty of developing the capability of the political system to produce the kind of "leadership that can take advantage of opportunities offered by foreign technical assistance…" (Gray and Hoover 1995, p. 231).

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