

**Working Paper 260**

**Capacity Development for Policy Advocacy:  
Current thinking and approaches among agencies  
supporting Civil Society Organisations**

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# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 Current Thinking on Capacity Building</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 Definitions of capacity	2
2.2 Definitions of capacity building	3
2.3 A systems and participatory approach to capacity building	4
2.4 Capacity building in practice	6
2.5 Planning, monitoring and evaluation of capacity building efforts	7
2.6 Conclusion	7
2.7 Sources	8
<b>3 Examples of Current Approaches</b>	<b>9</b>
3.1 African Capacity Building Foundation: ACBF	9
3.2 Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development: ACORD	11
3.3 Canadian International Development Agency: CIDA	12
3.4 Center for International Forestry Research: CIFOR	13
3.5 Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa: CODESRIA	14
3.6 Enhancement of Research Capacity in Developing Countries: ENRECA	16
3.7 International Development Research Centre: IDRC	16
3.8 INTRAC Praxis Programme	18
3.9 Japan International Cooperation Agency: JICA	19
3.10 Swedish International Cooperation Agency: SIDA	21
3.11 Netherlands Development Assistance Research Council: RAWOO	23
3.12 Sources	25
<b>4 Further Information</b>	<b>26</b>
4.1 Annotated bibliography	26
4.2 Key websites	47
Table 1: Predecessors of capacity development/knowledge networks	4
Box 1: Principles for capacity development	6
Figure 1: The approach of Praxis (from Praxis leaflet)	19
Figure 2: Sida's conceptual framework	22

## Acknowledgements

ODI is Britain's leading independent think tank on international development and humanitarian issues. Our mission is to inspire and inform policy and practice which lead to the reduction of poverty, the alleviation of suffering and the achievement of sustainable livelihoods in developing countries. We do this by locking together high-quality applied research, practical policy advice, and policy-focused dissemination and debate. We work with partners in the public and private sectors, in both developing and developed countries.

ODI's Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) programme aims to improve the use of research in development policy and practice through improved knowledge about: research/policy links; improved knowledge management and learning systems; improved communication; and improved awareness of the importance of research. Further information about the programme is available at [www.odi.org.uk/rapid](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid).

This paper was written as part of the Civil Society Partnerships Programme, funded by DFID, which aims to improve the capacity of Southern civil society organisations to influence pro-poor policy. ODI is undertaking this programme between 2004 and 2011. Further information is available at <http://www.odi.org.uk/cspp>. The One World Trust promotes education, training and research into the changes required within global organisations in order to make them answerable to the people they affect and ensure that international laws are strengthened and applied equally to all. Its guiding vision is a world where all people live in peace and security and have equal access to opportunity and participation. The Trust's work is centred around three programmes: Accountability, Peace and Security, Sustainable Development.

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## Executive Summary

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are increasingly involved in development policy, and recognise the need to use evidence and engage with policy processes more effectively. ODI's Civil Society Partnerships Programme (CSPP) is designed to help them to do this. It will develop partnerships with Southern organisations which share its commitment: to the MDGs; to the importance of evidence-based policymaking; and to the value of civil society participation in the policy process. The programme will build on and develop the research findings, and techniques of knowledge management, policy advocacy, capacity-building and training materials already developed by ODI in its 40 years of development research and policy work. It will enable the lessons to be disseminated more widely; provide funding for Southern CSOs to develop their own independent capacity in this area; and strengthen existing relationships among CSOs engaged in the policy process.

Capacity building is likely to become increasingly important throughout the life of the programme. The team recognises that it is important, early on, to develop a clear understanding of current principles and practice in capacity building for Southern organisations involved in using research-based evidence in policy processes, and establish a common position and vocabulary as a starting point for engagement with potential partners. This Working Paper is meant to facilitate this process. It presents a summary of current thinking on issues of capacity building for Northern and Southern organisations involved in using research-based evidence in policy processes, and provides some examples of current practice among organisations involved in work similar to that of the CSPP.

**Section 1** offers an introduction to ODI's Civil Society Partnership Programme (CSPP) and the work the programme is focusing on designed to promote improved contribution by CSOs to poor national and international development policies.

**Section 2** focuses on issues of capacity building as they have emerged over the past few years. Traditionally, capacity-building approaches have focused on improving the leadership, management and/or operation of an organisation: the skills and systems that enable a CSO to define its mission, to gather and manage relevant resources and, ultimately, to produce the desired outcomes. The logical entry point has been at the level of the individual, through those who lead the organisations that work for change.

The more recent thinking is that capacity-building efforts need to be considered from a systems perspective, recognising the dynamics and connections among various actors and issues at different levels as part of a broader unit rather than as loosely connected factors. In this sense, capacity building encompasses institutional development but goes beyond individual organisations and institutions to cover broader systems, groups of organisations and inter-organisational networks. It addresses complex multi-faceted problems requiring the participation of various actors, organisations and institutions.

Although the term capacity building is conceptually broad, open-ended and difficult to frame, it is based on a number of generally accepted principles. To be successful, capacity building requires broad-based participation and a locally driven agenda; it needs to build on existing local capacities; it requires ongoing learning and adaptation; it is a long-term investment; and, last but not least, it needs to integrate activities at different levels to address complex problems. These principles highlight the importance of a systems perspective, long-term support based on strategic partnership, effective coherence and coordination between the actors offering capacity building and those whose

capacity is being enhanced. The question of roles and how they are negotiated is centrally important in capacity building.<sup>1</sup>

There has been a gradual evolution in support for capacity building, shaped by changes in the external development context and by the arrival of new models of development assistance delivery, ranging from sector-wide approaches, to programme-based approaches, to poverty reduction strategy papers. Yet, organisations which have been engaged on the delivery side of capacity-building efforts have collected only few lessons.

What the best approach is, what triggers successful results, and what good practice means in this field are questions yet to be answered. The lack of coherent strategies and approaches to capacity building is linked to the fact that organisations working in this field have paid little attention to monitoring and evaluation of capacity-building efforts, primarily because capacity building is often embedded in other programmes and difficult to track. As already mentioned, capacity building is also a long-term process, one which is not easily attributed to one intervention or event, or to the efforts of a particular organisation.

**Section 3** offers an overview of current capacity-building approaches in a number of agencies engaged in work similar to that of ODI. The review does not provide an evaluation of capacity-building initiatives, but seeks to highlight a number of issues which ODI can consider in designing its own approach to capacity building in the context of the CSPP.

It is not easy to identify information on capacity building available from the organisations examined as part of this review. For most, capacity building is embedded in other programme activities and therefore not tracked separately. Yet, two issues seem to emerge in practice: (i) a broader range of approaches is necessary to respond to the complexities of the current context; and (ii) no approach can be imposed on sceptical individuals, organisations or communities. Questions of survivability and sustainability have become increasingly important, as capacity-building efforts have failed when external support has been withdrawn. Factors such as leadership and local ownership must be taken into account. The process must be owned locally; costs and benefits must be acceptable to those who control the local process, and there must be agreement that the effort is both desirable and feasible. Approaches taken by 11 organisations are presented in greater length in the paper.

**Section 4** contains summaries of the most relevant publications and websites addressing the issue of capacity building for Northern and Southern organisations involved in using research-based evidence in policy processes.

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<sup>1</sup> For more on this see Blagescu M. and J. Young (2005) *Partnerships and Accountability: Current Thinking and Approaches among Agencies Supporting Civil Society Organisations*, Working Paper 255, London: ODI.

# 1 Introduction

Civil society organisations (CSOs) play a vital role in poverty eradication by empowering the poor so their voices are heard when decisions that affect their lives are made. Working in between the household, the private sector and the state, CSOs include a very wide range of institutions, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based institutions, professional associations, trade unions, research institutes and think tanks.

CSOs increasingly recognise the need to use evidence and engage with policy processes more effectively. However, many Southern university research departments have collapsed, and the development research institutes and think tanks that have replaced them are often financially insecure, have poor capacity to provide policy advice, and have weak connections.

ODI has been working with government, non-governmental and private sector organisations in the North and South for the past 40 years, and has launched a new programme designed to promote improved contribution by CSOs to pro-poor national and international development policies. The Civil Society Partnership Programme (CSPP) will focus on four outcomes:<sup>2</sup>

- CSOs understand better how evidence can contribute to pro-poor policy processes;
- Regional capacity to support Southern CSOs is established;
- Useful information on current development policy issues, and how this knowledge can contribute to pro-poor policy, is easily accessible to CSOs;
- CSOs participate actively in Southern and Northern policy networks to promote pro-poor policies.

To achieve these outcomes, the programme is seeking to work with Southern organisations that share a commitment: to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); to the importance of evidence-based policymaking; and to the value of civil society participation in the policy process. ODI has a substantial body of development policy research, and practical knowledge and experience of knowledge management, policy advocacy, capacity building and training, especially with Northern governments and agencies, but has a lot to learn about how Southern organisations influence development policy. The CSPP will provide resources for collaborative work, for the lessons to be disseminated widely, for Southern CSOs to develop their own independent capacity in this area, and to strengthen existing relationships among CSOs engaged in the policy process. For this programme to be successful, ODI will need to develop long-term equitable relationships with a wide range of Southern partner organisations.

Section 2 of this Working Paper focuses on issues of capacity building which have recently emerged following a shift from traditional approaches towards a systems perspective. Section 3 provides an overview of current capacity-building approaches in a number of agencies engaged in work similar to that of ODI. Section 4 contains an annotated bibliography summarising the key documents consulted for this study, and an overview of the information available about capacity building on the websites of some of the key organisations active in this area.

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<sup>2</sup> Full information about ODI's Civil Society Partnership Programme, and the Partnership Programme Agreement with DFID, can be found on ODI's website at: [www.odi.org.uk/cspp](http://www.odi.org.uk/cspp).

## 2 Current Thinking on Capacity Building

Capacity building of CSOs has gathered growing recognition from policymakers, grant-making bodies and international development agencies in recent years. It rests on the principle that investing in the human and social capital of marginalised individuals and groups enables them to develop the capacities needed to thrive, and to play an autonomous role in developing and renewing their communities (Bentley et al, 2003). Both concept and practice have evolved in the development communities, ranging from the institution-building approach in the 1950s, to the human resource development approach in the 1970s and 1980s, to the capacity development/knowledge networks in the 2000s.

It has been argued that capacity building remains a concept characterised by vagueness and generality (Morgan, 1998). As further described below (and in Section 3), current definitions differ in detail. However, all recent definitions share three aspects, centred around the understanding that capacity-building efforts need to be considered from a systems perspective that recognises the dynamics and connections among various actors and issues at the different levels, as part of a broader unit rather than as loosely connected factors (Baser, 2000):

- The importance of understanding the context in which the capacity-building efforts take place;
- That capacity building encompasses a hierarchy of levels (individual, organisational, network/sectoral and the overall enabling environment); and
- That to be successful, capacity-building efforts must respond to the relationship among these levels, all of which are systemically interlinked.

For capacity-building efforts to be sustainable, interventions need to adopt a participatory approach and develop into empowering partnerships for which those involved feel a high degree of ownership. In this sense, capacity building involves change and transformation of all actors involved. It becomes a two-way process in which the capacity of actors on both sides of the intervention is strengthened.

### 2.1 Definitions of capacity

The section below offers some examples of the definitions of capacity found in the recent literature. Without going into the detail and nuances implied in this term, the examples provide a fair representation of how capacity is currently being addressed.

Hilderbrand and Grindle (1994: 10) define capacity as ‘the ability to perform appropriate tasks effectively, efficiently and sustainably’. Loubser (1993: 23), on the other hand, compiles a list of the elements of capacity:

- **Specified objectives**, including vision, values, policies, strategies and interests
- **Efforts**, including will, energy, concentration, work ethic and efficiency
- **Capabilities**, including intelligence, skills, knowledge and mental sets
- **Resources**, including human, natural, technological, cultural and financial
- **Work organisation**, including planning, designing, sequencing and mobilising

Morgan (1998), who has done extensive work on capacity building and contributed to current debates and practice, defines capacity as the ‘organisational and technical abilities, relationships and values that enable countries, organisations, groups and individuals at any level of society to carry out functions and achieve their development objective over time’.



Organisations which have been engaged in the delivery side of capacity-building efforts have learnt few lessons from their experience. What the best approach is, what triggers successful results and what good practice means in this field, are concepts which are still very little understood. In recent years, this lack of understanding has been attributed to the following two causes:

- Organisations that have been delivering capacity building have paid little attention to monitoring and evaluating the impact of their work. This is mainly because capacity building is often embedded in other programmes and difficult to track down.
- Outcomes produced by the new approaches to capacity building are long term and not easily attributable to one intervention or intervener. The literature is a reflection of this; some examples of the different understandings of capacity building means are offered below.

## 2.2 Definitions of capacity building

According to Cohen (1993: 26), public sector capacity building ‘seeks to strengthen targeted human resources (managerial, professional and technical), in particular institutions, and to provide those institutions with the means whereby these resources can be marshalled and sustained effectively to perform planning, policy formulation, and implementation tasks throughout government on any priority topic’.

Berg (1993: 62-3) regards capacity building as characterised by three main activities: ‘skill upgrading – both general and job-specific; procedural improvements; and organizational strengthening’. Skill enhancement refers to general education, on-the-job training and professional strengthening of skills such as policy analysis and IT. Procedural improvements refers to context changes or system reforms. Organisation strengthening covers the process of institutional development. He concludes that capacity building is ‘...broader than organizational development in that it includes all types of skill enhancement and also procedural reforms that extend beyond the boundaries of a single organization’.

North (1992: 6), on the other hand, regards capacity building as synonymous with the term ‘development’ and argues that the concept of capacity building has in recent years taken on a new meaning: as an umbrella term to include institution building and human resource development, which are associated with ‘a developing country’s management of development policies and programmes’. Hilderbrand and Grindle (1994: 9) argue that this suggestion ‘makes operationalizing the concept in a meaningful way almost impossible’.

For Morgan (1998), the core of capacity building is wider and more holistic: there is a close relationship between human resource development and capacity development; there is an evolving relationship between training and capacity development; effective capacity development requires sustained attention over a longer period of time; capacity development attempts to move beyond administrative techniques and beyond projects; and capacity development attempts to accelerate interaction between organisations and their environment. In this sense, capacity development becomes a more complex concept than that of inputs, which is the concept most widely spread in the donor community. It refers to the approaches, strategies and methodologies used by national actors and/or outside interveners to help organisations and/or systems improve their performance (Morgan, 1998).

It is also relevant to note that, since no overall theory of capacity building exists, organisations that engage in this type of work base their approach on theories of change borrowed from the social sciences. Inevitably, this triggers the interchangeable use of terms like capacity building, capacity enhancement and capacity development. The first two seem currently to be preferred, perhaps

because ‘capacity building’ came into use earlier and still carries connotations of earlier approaches to capacity building, such as training courses in the North and technology transfer (Whyte, 2004).

**Table 1: Predecessors of capacity development/knowledge networks**

Term	Decade	Capacity-building approaches
Institution building	1950s and 1960s	Provide public sector institutions Focus on and design individual functioning organisations Models transplanted from the North Training in Northern universities
Institutional strengthening and development	1960s and 1970s	Shift to strengthening rather than establishing Provide tools to improve performance Focus still on individual organisations and training in the North
Development management and administration	1970s	Reach target groups previously neglected Focus on improving delivery systems and public programmes to reach target groups
Human resource development	1970s and 1980s	Development is about people; emergence of people-centred development Key sectors to target are: education, health and population
New institutionalism	1980s and 1990s	Capacity building broadened to sector level (government, NGO and private) Focus on networks and external environment Attention to shaping national economic behaviour Emergence of issues of sustainability and move away from focus on projects
Capacity development	Late 1980s and 1990s	Reassessment of the notion of technical cooperation (TC) Stressed importance of local ownership and process Participatory approaches as the key Seen as ‘the way to do development’
Capacity development/knowledge networks	2000s	Increased participation in capacity building Emphasis on continuous learning and adaptation Balancing results-based management and long-term sustainability Systems approach and emerging talk of complex systems Emphasis on needs assessment/analysis Spread of ICT-based knowledge networks Increased donor coordination

Sources: Adapted from Lusthaus et al (1995) and Whyte (2004).

### 2.3 A systems and participatory approach to capacity building<sup>3</sup>

As briefly discussed above, capacity building encompasses institutional development but goes beyond individual organisations and institutions to broader systems, groups of organisations and networks. It addresses complex multi-faceted problems requiring the participation of various actors, organisations and institutions (Qualman and Morgan, 1996).

Individuals operate within organisations, individual organisations operate within a wider sector, and these sectors operate within a broader environment. Interventions at one level need to recognise the interactions with other levels:

- **Individual level:** refers to individuals as social or organisational actors. Their skills or ability are strengthened to contribute to the realisation of development objectives. Yet, too often capacity-building projects have focused on training of individuals without paying adequate attention to organisational issues or broader processes of empowerment. Learning over the past decade suggests that this type of investment is at risks of being of limited benefit.
- **Organisational level:** focuses on organisational structures, processes, resources, and management and governance issues. This has been the preferred point of entry for bilateral donors. Yet, capacity building not only is about a thorough analysis of issues at the

<sup>3</sup> Most of this section is structured around the conceptual framework summarized in Baser (2000); UNDP (1997); Hildebrand and Grindle (1994); and Lusthaus et al (1995 in sources).

organisational level, but also is an assessment of how factors at other levels either constrain or support organisational change. Organisations are only part of the vast development picture.

- **Sector/network level:** capacity-building efforts have recently focused on this level, reflecting an increased awareness of the importance of coherent policies, strategies and effective coordination within and across sectors. Yet, change at this level poses challenges such as competing organisational priorities, lack of coordination, and lack of organisational capacity. On the positive side, change at this level can contribute to synergies and promote more effective use of existing capacities.
- **Enabling environment level:** this represents the broader context within which the development process takes place and which can either constrain or enable prospects for success. Change here takes place over a long term.

The systems approach to capacity building is a multidimensional idea, referring to a concept that is multilevel and interrelated, where each system and part is linked to another. This approach suggests that capacity building should build on what exists in order to improve it, rather than necessarily build new systems. This becomes a dynamic process through which networks of actors seek to enhance their abilities to perform, through both their own initiative and outsider support. While this approach lacks focus, it is comprehensible, flexible and emphasises linkages between elements.

Those who view development as people-centred and non-hierarchical believe that unless capacity-building interventions are participatory, empowering partnerships for which those involved feel a high degree of ownership, intended results cannot be achieved. A participatory approach to capacity building can apply at most of the above levels, although the tendency, more often than not, is again on the individual. As a result, there is a danger that interventions which, for example, focus on training, could be named capacity building because they were carried out in a participatory way though not necessarily contributing to the building of capacity in the sense that it has been developed in this paper. Donors need to internalise some of the principles learned about capacity building within their own organisations and adapt their procedures.

### Box 1: Principles for capacity development

- **Don't rush:** capacity building is a long-term process. It avoids delivery pressures, quick fixes and the search for short-term results.
- **Respect the local value system and foster self-esteem:** the imposition of foreign values can undermine confidence. Capacity builds upon respect and self esteem.
- **Scan locally and globally;** reinvent locally: there are no blueprints. Capacity building draws upon voluntary learning, with genuine commitment and interest. Knowledge cannot be transferred; it needs to be acquired.
- **Challenge mindsets and power differentials:** capacity building is not power neutral, and challenging mindsets and vested interests is difficult. Frank dialogue and a collective culture of transparency are essential steps.
- **Think and act in terms of sustainable capacity outcomes:** capacity is at the core of development; any course of action needs to promote this end.
- **Establish positive incentives:** motives and incentives need to be aligned with the objective of capacity building, including through governance systems that respect fundamental rights.
- **Integrate external inputs into local needs,** priorities, processes and systems: external inputs need to correspond to real demand and be flexible enough to respond to local needs and agendas. Local systems should be reformed and strengthened, not bypassed.
- **Build on existing capacities rather than creating new ones:** this implies the primary use of local expertise, revitalising and strengthening of existing institutions.
- **Stay engaged under difficult circumstances:** the weaker the capacity, the greater the need.
- **Remain accountable to ultimate beneficiaries:** any responsible organisation/partnership is answerable to the people it affects, and should foster participation and transparency as the foremost instruments of accountability.

Source: Adapted from Lopes and Theisohn (2003).

## 2.4 Capacity building in practice

Capacity-building approaches for CSOs have focused on improving the leadership, management and/or operation of an organisation: the skills and systems that enable a CSO to define its mission, to gather and manage relevant resources and, ultimately, to produce the outcomes it seeks. The logical entry point has been at the individual level, through those who lead the organisations that work for change. And, although there is agreement among agencies involved in human capital development that skill building is important, there is little understanding of how to do it right.

Most efforts in this field have focused on building the capacity of organisations to produce research-based evidence to enhance their own policies and strategies with a view of improving service delivery and/or delivering according to organisational mission. This is reflected in efforts to build the CSOs' capacity for *action research*, *budget tracking*, *impact assessment* and *outcome mapping*. Until a couple of years ago, the targets of such efforts were mainly large international development NGOs. It has been only in recent years that, driven by the need to find effective solutions to developmental issues, but also by increased competitiveness of the field and pressure from donors to show impact, smaller NGOs and other CSOs have started to strengthen their capacity in the fields mentioned above.

Yet, capacity-building initiatives for organisations to use research-based evidence to influence public sector, national, regional and global policies have been targeted (often indirectly) at think tanks, research and policy institutes, which have it in their mission to influence policy. Advocacy CSOs have only recently moved away from the use of moral imperatives in their work and started to focus on the need to use research-based evidence to influence policies and promote reforms.

A comprehensive analysis of what capacity-building approaches work best in this area is yet to be undertaken. So far, most donors, agencies and organisations that work in this field have embedded capacity building in other programmes. This has led to little monitoring and evaluation of capacity-building efforts; this is briefly discussed in the next section.

It is important to mention that a study undertaken at IDS concluded that funding for civil society policy advocacy has not made a major impact, although well organised and substantially funded NGOs have made a significant contribution in some circumstances. Although external interventions can facilitate access to the policy process and strengthen capacity where there are opportunities for engagement and where strong organisations already in place, these are not necessarily a critical determinant of successful policy engagement. Rather, it is an organisation's internal governance and its specific relationship to the state which are the most decisive factors in achieving policy influence (Robinson and Friedman, 2005).

This strengthens the arguments developed above and points to the need for systems thinking for capacity building in this field. And this means linking training to the broader goal of building organisations and institutions that are well managed, strategic and stable; strengthening organisations that are flexible to adapt to changes in context, be they political, technological or other; and connecting institutions for mutual reinforcement (Pitcoff, 2004).

## **2.5 Planning, monitoring and evaluation of capacity building efforts**

Until recently, capacity-building organisations have been weak in monitoring the impact of their work. What types of capacity-building interventions are most effective and what is the causal link between capacity building and outcomes are two questions that still have to be addressed. Two points seem to cut across existing literature:

- Monitoring and evaluation need to be more than a control mechanism designed mainly to satisfy donor accountability requirements. They need to be designed and managed as to encourage learning, participation and commitment.
- Without a theory of cause-effect, learning proves difficult. All actors involved in capacity building need to map out and reach some agreement on what event triggers what result, etc.

This is closely linked to institutional and needs assessments prior to the capacity-building intervention and goes back to one of the points previously made – that for capacity building to be meaningful, it must be driven by demand.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

Capacity building is fundamentally about change and transformation – at individual, organisational, sector-wide and societal levels. To ensure sustainability of results, capacity-building efforts for CSOs involved in using research-based evidence in policy processes need to take into account the following principles:

- Capacity building requires broad-based participation and a locally driven agenda
- Interventions should build on already existing local capacities
- Capacity-building organisations must be open to learning and adaptation
- Capacity building is a long-term investment
- Activities must be integrated at different levels to address complex problems

Capacity building is not just about building the capacity of researchers to do research. It is also about building researcher capacity to carry out policy-relevant research and to communicate the findings effectively to policy and decision makers. It is important to build communication and dissemination strategies during the design phase to increase the effectiveness of these activities.

Building the capacity of researchers provides new opportunities for policy and decision makers, and other practitioners and research users, to use the research and research results produced from within their own countries or regions – that is to say, to use their own evidence for policymaking. This is based on demand from within, and encourages the influence of policy from within.

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### 3 Examples of Current Approaches

A quick overview of current capacity-building organisations highlights that the breadth and variety of approaches to capacity building have increased over the last few years. This reflects the recognition that a broader range of approaches is necessary to respond to the complexities of the current context. Yet, the review also pointed out that information on capacity building that is available from such organisations is not easily identifiable; this owes to the fact that, for most, capacity building is embedded in other programme activities and therefore not tracked separately.

There seems to be wide recognition among capacity-building actors that no approach can be imposed on sceptical individuals, organisations or communities. The process must be owned locally; costs and benefits are acceptable to those who control the local process of capacity development, and they see the effort as both desirable and feasible (Morgan, 1998).

Approaches taken by a number of organisations involved in work similar to that under ODI's CSPP are discussed in detail below. The list goes beyond think tanks and research institutes and includes some examples of bilateral and multilateral donors.

#### 3.1 African Capacity Building Foundation: ACBF

The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), based in Harare, Zimbabwe, is an independent capacity-building institution established in 1991 through the collaborative efforts of three multilateral institutions – the African Development Bank, the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme – along with African governments and bilateral donors. Current membership includes the three sponsoring agencies, the International Monetary Fund, and 32 other African countries and non-African countries and institutions.

##### *Objectives*

To build and strengthen sustainable human and institutional capacity in the core public sector, in its interface areas with the private sector and civil society, in training and research institutions as well as within regional organisations, in order to spur economic growth, poverty reduction, good governance and effective participation by Africa in the global economy.

##### *Strategy*

- To mobilise and provide funding, intellectual information and research support to capacity building in Africa in areas of the Foundation's core competencies, and to promote the emergence of ACBF as a knowledge-based institution.
- To build partnership for, and stakeholders' ownership of, an inclusive and participatory approach to capacity building and development management, effective coordination of intervention, and a holistic approach in the capacity-building process.

##### *Approach*

The ACBF recognises that capacity building is a long-term process and is only worthwhile if development efforts become self sustaining; priority is for African participation (ensuring African pre-eminence in defining the capacity-building process and in playing a leading role in implementation), by taking a highly strategic approach based on the following principles which maximise the Foundation's comparative advantage and its catalytic role in the area of capacity building:

- Demand-driven approach, with emphasis on needs assessment, based on responsive intervention in capacity building and clients' participation to ensure ownership of capacity building programmes.
- Selectivity and regional balance to ensure an effective intervention and to maximise impact.
- Neutrality with respect to policy orientation in countries of intervention.
- Emphasis on using innovative and flexible capacity-building operations that can succeed in Africa's diverse institutions and political settings and that allow African governments and international donors to focus their priorities for maximum effectiveness.
- Country focus: the ACBF maintains a country focus that allows its programmes to be customised to the different needs of individual countries, based on national capacity assessment, and to build up a concentration of 'cluster' of talent and expertise in one country through various programme channels. Through this integrated or 'cluster' approach, ACBF increases the possibilities of having maximum and sustained impact in a country, thus reducing the risk of its operations being isolated or marginalised.

ACBF's core competence areas were generated through region-wide capacity needs assessment missions and are the direct result of demand expressed by countries and regional organisations for capacity in sub-Saharan Africa. These are: Economic Policy Analysis and Management; Financial Management and Accountability; Strengthening and Monitoring of National Statistics; Public Administration and Management; Strengthening of the Policy Analysis Capacity of National Parliaments; and Professionalisation of the Voices of the Private Sector and Civil Society.

Building internal capacity within ACBF to ensure effective intervention in all areas is one of the main challenges recognised by the Foundation, addressed through in-house skills development programmes to facilitate or strengthen specialisation by professional staff in one or more core competency areas and the establishment of technical advisory panels and networks to broaden the Foundation's access to a wider pool of expertise regionally and internationally.

### *Criteria for selecting countries for capacity-building interventions*

Projects and programmes seeking to access funding support are required to satisfy a combination of the criteria listed below:

- Consistency with ACBF mandate and core areas of competency.
- Relevance to country or region's core capacity needs.
- Evidence that a project will support a participatory process in capacity building and/or development management and make some contribution to poverty reduction programmes in the country or region.
- Demonstrated commitment to the sustainability of the proposed project or programme.
- Conduciveness of project environment, especially with respect to commitment to socio-political, economic and institutional reforms; commitment to the coordination of capacity-building activities; and country's participation in ACBF's activities.
- Contribution of the project or programme to the enhancement of the geographical balance of the Foundation's projects and programmes portfolio.

For a country to qualify for a Full Intervention Programme, it needs to meet a few more criteria:

- Existence of strongly felt capacity needs.
- Availability of country capacity profile and/or a national capacity-building strategy and plan.
- Availability of an institutional framework for, or commitment to, coordination of capacity building activities.



- Commitment to, or the existence of, verifiable evidence of plan/progress in the implementation of institutional, economic and socio-political reforms.
- Existence of sound, transparent and accountable budgetary and financial management systems and processes.
- Evidence of elements of good governance practice, especially participatory development process and commitment to institutional process for addressing corruption in the public sector.
- Commitment to, or progress in, the preparation of an effective programme for poverty reduction.
- In the case of post-conflict countries, evidence of complete cessation of hostility in the geographical area in which the programme is to be implemented and commitment to a programme for transition to democratic/participatory governance.

### *Impact assessment*

The Foundation measures its performance by means of performance indicators. These indicators provide measures for administrative and operational effectiveness and efficiency. The indicators are applied at the level of both the ACBF Secretariat and that of its projects, and their development is a continuing process.

### *Ensuring ownership of projects and programmes*

For ACBF, country or stakeholder ownership of project or programme is a fundamental principle in its capacity building strategy. Ownership is critical for sustainability of intervention. The ACBF ensures ownership by requiring project promoters to take responsibility for the identification and development of their project proposals. It also promotes a strong sense of ownership through counterpart funding or co-financing by project stakeholders and their participation in the project performance monitoring and evaluation process.

## **3.2 Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development: ACORD**

*‘Moving from delivering services to leveraging change’*

ACORD was established in 1976 as a consortium of international agencies headquartered in the North to provide its members with operational capacity to address poverty issues resulting from the drought in sub-Saharan Africa.

### *Restructuring*

ACORD has now refocused its vision, profile and strategic orientation. Based on a joint analysis with its partners of the issues and challenges that are currently facing Africa, it is building its future as a genuinely international Africa-led alliance of groups and individuals addressing aspects of rights and social justice that underlie the poverty of those on the fringes of African societies. ACORD now seeks to go beyond addressing the consequences of poverty to understanding, challenging and changing the conditions that cause poverty and exclusion through a global programme that unites practical work with advocacy. To enable ACORD to achieve its many new objectives, it is currently restructuring its 45 separate interventions in Africa into 10 to 12 larger area programmes and five crosscutting thematic programmes. It is also in the process of moving its strategic leadership, identity and management from the UK to Africa.

## *Approach*

Entitled Critical Enquiry, Analysis and Action, this involves joint analyses by ACORD and its partners of the context in which participants coexist, joint identification of critical areas for change, and joint setting of priorities for common action.

The five critical areas for change that have been identified are:

- Strengthening civil society
- Creating the conditions for resolving conflicts
- Overcoming gender and other forms of discrimination
- Improving livelihoods
- Addressing the causes and consequences of HIV/AIDS

The common actions aimed at effecting these changes include:

- Research, action and reflection
- Support to local organisations/structures
- Mobilising resources
- Influencing relevant policies, practices and attitudes
- Working in alliances with others
- Working across national boundaries where appropriate

### **3.3 Canadian International Development Agency: CIDA**

In 1987, capacity development was established as one of four pillars in Canada's development assistance charter. In the 1990s, CIDA internalised capacity building as an integral part of the participatory and systems approach to programming.

CIDA recognises four levels for capacity-building interventions: individual, organisational, sectoral/network and the enabling environment. Yet, most of the Agency's capacity-building efforts are focused at the level of the organisation. Interventions to shape the broader environment are less common and individual capacity building is not a priority, especially within the framework of the Canadian Partnership Programme.

#### *Project: building knowledge and capacity for policy influence*

A project initiated by the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC) in collaboration with CIDA.

#### *Project goal*

To promote knowledge development, learning and capacity building on the part of both CSOs and CIDA, for effective policy dialogue between government and the international voluntary sector.

#### *Key objectives*

- To broaden and deepen the skills and knowledge of CCIC members on global policy issues.
- To explore and test ways for CCIC, its members and Southern partners to develop and sustain their capacity to distil from their experience policy-relevant knowledge on global poverty issues.

- To replicate and share learning from the project within CCIC's broader membership, relevant domestic and international voluntary organisations.
- To enhance CIDA's capacity to learn from policy-relevant CSO experience and knowledge, and to define effective knowledge-based processes of engagement with Canadian and Southern CSOs, including consultations that generate high-quality policy input on specific policy matters.

### *Approach*

The project will take an iterative approach that builds on discussion and agreement between all parties on the most effective processes to be used in both the design and the implementation of the project. Project strategies will encourage collaborative sharing of knowledge and perspective, creativity, innovation and effective engagement. The project will be accompanied throughout its duration by two reference groups:

- A small member-based reference group to provide strategic and methodological advice with the inclusion of other individuals with particular expertise in international CSO policy capacity building (ideally with a Southern civil society colleague).
- A second reference group structured with representatives of CIDA and CCIC to facilitate CIDA collaboration; to agree a policy focus to orient learning and capacity-building activities.

### *Methodology*

Based on a model of 'shared learning by doing', an approach that CCIC has successfully used with its member organisations for capacity building in the past. The methodology will explicitly take account of issues arising from the North/South dimensions of the project: who sets the agenda and methodologies in the capturing of knowledge from field experience, for what purpose, and in whose interests the priorities for policy influence are structured.

## **3.4 Center for International Forestry Research: CIFOR**

CIFOR is an international research and global knowledge institution based in Indonesia committed to conserving forests and improving the livelihoods of people in the tropics. CIFOR's research helps local communities and small farmers gain their rightful share of forest resources, while increasing the production and value of forest products.

### *Mission*

Contribute to the sustained wellbeing of people in developing countries, particularly in the tropics. It achieves this through collaborative, strategic and applied research and by promoting the transfer and adoption of appropriate new technologies and social systems for national development.

### *Objectives*

- Improve the scientific basis that underpins balanced management of forests and forest lands.
- Develop policies and technologies for sustainable use and management of forest goods and services.
- Assist partner governments to improve their capacity to research and support the optimal use of forests and forestlands.

### *Impact*

Through collaborative research with partners in over 40 countries, CIFOR has contributed significantly in:

- Shaping the global forest agenda
- Influencing international policy dialogues, institutions and processes
- Informing the broader international forestry community
- Collaborating in research with governments, NGOs and universities
- Building research capacity in developing countries
- Encouraging forest policy reform
- Protecting existing forests and improving poor peoples' livelihoods
- Developing criteria and indicators for sustainable management of forests

Since most of its work is directly associated with collaborative research, CIFOR's capacity-building impact follows a similar geographic pattern as its research activities.

### *Building research capacity in developing countries*

At any given time, two or three hundred developing country researchers participate in CIFOR research projects. The center has provided most of them with some combination of methodological tools, technical backstopping, training, reference materials and funds. This has allowed many researchers to improve their skills, access more information, produce more research, disseminate their research more widely and make it more visible.

In some cases, CIFOR's collaborators have been senior researchers with substantial experience. In many other instances, collaboration has provided young researchers the opportunity, resources and technical backstopping to engage in intensive research. The level of interaction has varied from one-time short-term involvement in a specific project to continuous intensive collaboration on a variety of topics or even full-time secondment or employment at CIFOR.

CIFOR's training activities include short courses and seminars, supervision of graduate student thesis research, and in-service training. CIFOR has sponsored or cosponsored dozens of workshops and seminars on various policy and biophysical aspects related to tropical forests. Generally, these seminars feature specific new findings from research by CIFOR and its partners. They constitute one of the main sources of technical information for many of the hundreds of developing country researchers who participate.

CIFOR has also sponsored international networks, predominantly of developing country researchers, concerned with site management and productivity in tropical plantations, adaptive collaborative management, forest rehabilitation, marketed non-timber forest products, and the management of Miombo woodlands. These networks each involve between 20 and 60 researchers, and provide them with the opportunity to exchange information and experiences, and to compare research results drawn from diverse contexts.

### **3.5 Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa: CODESRIA**

The Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) is based in Dakar, Senegal. It was established in 1973 as an independent Pan-African research organisation with a primary focus on the social sciences, broadly defined.

## *Objectives*

CODESRIA's principal objectives, as spelt out in its Charter, include the facilitation of multidisciplinary research, the promotion of research-based publishing, the building of capacity among African researchers at all levels through a strong training programme, the promotion of the principle of academic freedom, and the creation of multiple fora for the exchange of views and information among African researchers. Furthermore, the Council is mandated to support the strengthening of the institutional basis of knowledge production by developing programmes of collaboration with other centres of social research in Africa whether they are national or (sub-) regional, university-based or independent.

## *Formulation of priority research agenda*

Research priorities are defined by the General Assembly which meets every three years. At this time, participants identify issues and themes deemed pertinent to an understanding of Africa and the world. They take stock of the state of the various disciplines; trends in theory and methodology; the conditions under which knowledge production in Africa and the wider international system is taking place; and challenges which all of these pose for the African academy.

## *Research facilitation and support*

The Council's Research and Documentation Programme comprises four different elements:

1. Core Research Activities integral to and derived from its Charter mandate: they are structured around and organised into the national, multinational and transnational working groups, as well as the Comparative Research Networks. The core research activities are the main framework for the Council's intervention in the African social science community.
- Policy Oriented Research Projects: serve as an important basis for the operationalisation of research findings in favour of policy actors and civil society organisations. At any one point in time, there are usually a number of Policy Oriented Research activities going on in the Secretariat. The majority of these are ad hoc in nature, designed as short and quick interventions for the achievement of a specific objective. But a few others are long term in nature and involve the mobilisation of a pan-African network of researchers and policymakers in a joint endeavour:
  - The Working Group on Education and Finance: Strategy is to conduct country case studies, establish resource centres, hold regional workshops and develop practical reports and training materials to build national capacities in education financing and management. Because the working group cuts across governments and individual country contexts, it is hoped that it will enable education and finance personnel to identify options and make decisions that will impact on the quality and access of education in their countries.
  - Academic Freedom and Human Rights: Objectives are to promote freedom of research, liberty of thought and the protection of human rights in the academy. Through its network of researchers based in African universities across the continent, the programme monitors and reports on the status of academic freedom in Africa. It seeks to promote the growth of academic freedom in Africa by supporting local initiatives to this end and encouraging dialogue and consultations between academics, university authorities, the state, civil society and donors. A legal defence fund is maintained to assist university lecturers and other researchers who are the victims of repression. The programme is also able to provide temporary relief to researchers in distress.
2. Collaborative Research Projects: undertaken from time to time in cooperation with other research organisations within and/or outside Africa, as well as with other partners such as the United Nations and its family of agencies and organisations.

3. Support services offered by the CODESRIA Information and Documentation Centre (CODICE): plays a critical role in supporting the research agenda of the Council through the provision of bibliographic and related services.

### **3.6 Enhancement of Research Capacity in Developing Countries: ENRECA**

Funded by the Danish development agency Danida, ENRECA is a partnership arrangement between Danish and host-country institutions.

#### *Purpose*

To promote mutual learning through collaborative research and research capacity enhancement.

#### *Objectives*

- To promote research of significance for the social and economic development of the country
- To improve the capacity of the country to utilise results of international research
- To improve the quality of the training offered at institutions of higher learning

ENRECA works with both institutions and individuals, supporting postgraduate education of developing country researchers, provision of research equipment, journals and literature, improvement of means of communication and publication and dissemination of research results, and exchange of researchers. ENRECA projects deal with a wide range of subjects within health, agricultural, technical, and social and natural sciences.

### **3.7 International Development Research Centre: IDRC**

*IDRC will foster and support the production, dissemination and application of research results leading to policies and technologies that enhance the lives of people in developing countries (IDRC programme directions, 2000-2005).*

IDRC is a public corporation created in 1970 to help developing countries find long-term solutions to the social, economic and environmental problems they face.

#### *Mission*

‘Empowerment through knowledge.’ IDRC aims to initiate, encourage, support and conduct research into the problems of the developing regions of the world and into the means for applying and adapting scientific, technical and other knowledge to the economic and social advancement of those regions.

#### *Objectives*

- To assist scientists in developing countries to identify sustainable long-term, practical solutions to pressing development problems.
- To mobilise and strengthen the research capacity of developing countries, particularly for policy and technologies that promote healthier and more prosperous societies, food security, biodiversity, and access to information.
- To develop links among developing country researchers, and provide them access to the results of research around the globe, in particular through developing and strengthening the electronic networking capacity of institutions in developing countries that receive IDRC funding.

- To ensure that the products from the activities it supports are used by communities in the developing world, and that existing research capacity is used effectively to solve development problems.

### *Approach*

In support of the above objectives, IDRC:

- **Funds applied research** by researchers from developing countries on the problems they identify as crucial to their communities.
- **Provides technical support** to those researchers.
- **Builds local capacity** in developing countries to undertake research and create innovations.
- **Fosters knowledge sharing** between scientific, academic and development communities in Canada and developing countries.

IDRC recognises that focusing on institutional capacity permits investors to measure the cost-effectiveness of investment choices by examining a broad range of performance criteria. In addition to its project support, IDRC supports the capacity development of its partner institutions by providing equipment, training and improved management systems. Since its 1987 review of institution-strengthening approaches, the IDRC has increasingly moved beyond direct support of research to fund such research-complementing activities as: technical training programmes; small grants programmes; procurement of journals; limited capital development; administrative and management systems; sabbatical study leaves; regional networks and workshops; consultancies; information-handling systems; libraries; non-research staff development programmes; programme/project evaluations; and core grants for operating expenses.

### *Assessing performance and capacity*

For IDRC's purposes, institutional assessments should be conducted as learning exercises for both donor and recipient institutions. They should be designed to diagnose areas of need so as to guide capacity-building efforts. In the best sense, an evaluation serves as a reforming process, seeking ways to make the institution stronger and better.

IDRC's Evaluation Unit has constructed a framework to help IDRC personnel achieve greater understanding of organisations funded by the Centre. Following this approach will help clarify important issues and guide the collection of data that will inform decisions about enhancing institutional performance and capacity (Lusthaus et al, 1995). The framework asserts that **performance is a function of the interplay of an institution's unique motivation, its organisational capacity, and forces in the external environment** and encompasses the following areas:

- **Forces in the external environment:** Administrative/legal; Technological; Political; Economic; Social and cultural; Stakeholders.
- **Institutional motivation:** History; Mission; Culture; Incentives.
- **Institutional capacity:** Strategic Leadership; Human Resources; Other Core Resources; Programme Management; Process Management; Inter-institutional Linkages.
- **Institutional performance:** Movement towards Mission; Efficient Use of Resources; Relevance.

Key forces in the environment which have a bearing on the institution's performance must be understood. These could include the host country's science/technology policy, the level (or lack) of basic infrastructure services such as electricity and water, or pressing social problems in the country which shape action research.

Donors are interested in seeing the clear-cut results of their investments. Thus, their natural tendency is to intersect an organisation at the level of ‘performance’, made visible through products, programmes and services. But before assessing an institution’s outputs, it is first necessary to gain an understanding of institutional motivation: its mission and goals and, insofar as possible, its culture and organisational incentives. These drive performance from within, and a performance assessment must address how well the organisation is fulfilling its mission. Performance is seen in the visible outputs of the research institution, namely its research and training products and services. Guides for conducting selected aspects of institutional evaluation have been described in a series of companion documents derived from the framework. These can help delineate approaches for organisational assessments lasting one to two days, as well as for large-scale assessments.

### 3.8 INTRAC Praxis Programme

The Praxis Programme was launched by INTRAC in April 2003 and is being funded by the Dutch Foreign Ministry for four years. Praxis catalyses the sharing of experiences and supports the development of innovative practices in the field of organisational capacity building. The resulting reflection and analysis is disseminated through practitioner-oriented publications and a dynamic website, as well as seminars and conferences. To support this process, Praxis engages with practitioners, academics and decision makers around critical issues in organisational capacity building, with a particular emphasis on networking with civil society support providers and local practitioners in developing and transitional societies.

#### *Aim*

To enable civil society organisations more effectively to fulfil their mission through increased generation and exchange of, as well as access to, innovative and contextually appropriate practice and research in organisational capacity building.

#### *Objectives*

1. **Capturing and nurturing innovative practice:** Innovative and/or alternative approaches and tools for organisational capacity building are developed and documented with emphasis on encouraging local research and reflection by practitioners in developing and transitional countries.
2. **Recognising and responding to culture and context:** Models and approaches to organisational capacity building that are relevant and applicable within different cultures and contexts are generated and adapted appropriately.
3. **Catalysing exchange and dissemination:** Effective and sustainable mechanisms and networks for disseminating research and practice enable the increased exchange of ideas and learning between capacity-building practitioners and organisations from local to international levels.
4. **Improving evaluation and impact assessment:** Monitoring and evaluation approaches more effectively assess the impacts of capacity-building initiatives on organisations and the quality of their programmes.

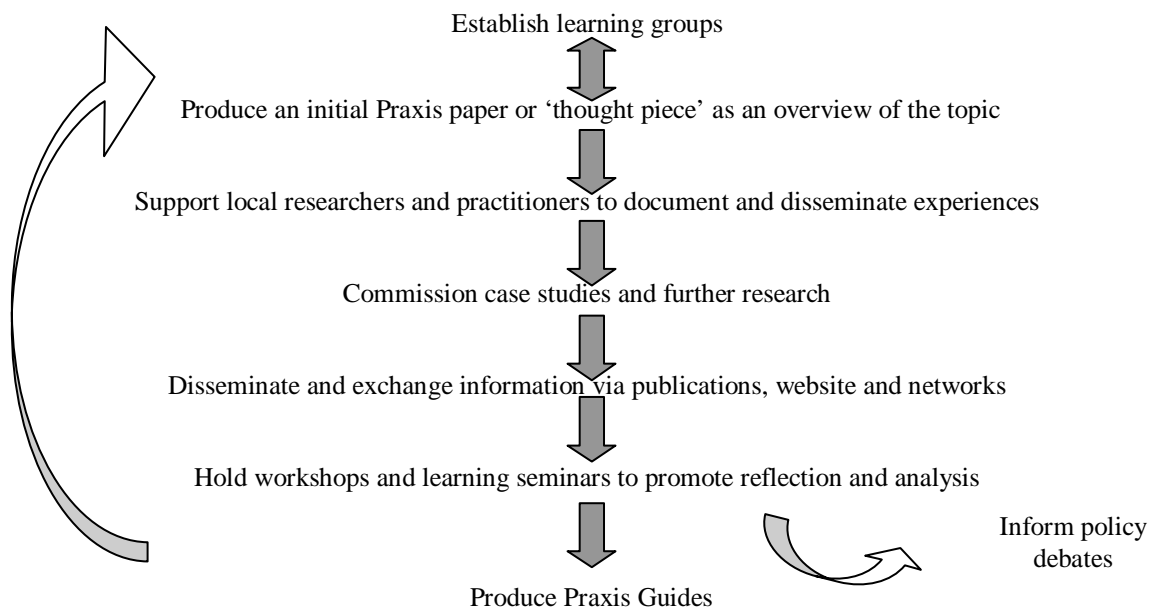
#### *Approach*

The Praxis team collaborates with a range of researchers, practitioners and organisations involved in organisational capacity building. Praxis particularly seeks to engage with Southern and Eastern practitioners, in order to highlight new and alternative approaches from different cultures and contexts. In the first year, the programme has focused its activities in Africa; the main focus in the second year is on Asia. Praxis works to:



- Produce **an overview of current thinking and practice** for each key topic identified under each objective. This thought piece aims to stimulate debate, invite reactions and begin a process of engaging people in finding solutions.
- Initiate **learning processes** for each key topic to provide a space for exchanging knowledge and analysing experiences guided by learning groups.
- Support **local researchers and practitioners** to carry out their own research and/or write up and disseminate their experiences and lessons learnt.
- Produce practitioner-orientated publications to **document and share** concepts, experiences and learning.
- **Disseminate and exchange** information through the interactive area of the website.
- Hold **workshops and seminars** to promote reflection and analysis on each topic.

**Figure 1: The approach of Praxis (from Praxis leaflet)**



### 3.9 Japan International Cooperation Agency: JICA

#### *Approach*

JICA's capacity development assistance has so far mainly adopted approaches such as learning by doing and on-the-job training at the organisational (particularly in operation/production units) and individual (particularly middle-level public officials) levels. In other words, this approach aims to encourage gradual change in the target countries and organisations through focused support. This type of approach is in some ways a reflection of the Japanese general stance of refraining from being involved in major changes in a partner country that may be considered external interference in the country's sovereignty. One of the reasons behind focusing on middle-level public officials may also reflect Japan's past experience, where middle management played strategic roles in strengthening Japanese organisations by linking top management and operation/production units.

JICA incorporates capacity building into country/priority programmes and projects, as well as into both implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Most of JICA's capacity-building support is to the public sector; the Agency emphasises that the role of the Japanese experts is not to get things

done as quickly as possible but to share experiences and to facilitate the transfer of skills with the counterparts whose capacities are being strengthened.

### *Best practice principles*

In the report 'Capacity Development and JICA's Activities' (2003), JICA reviewed several technical cooperation projects. The following factors were found to be important in the implementation phase from the capacity development perspective:

- Build trust with counterparts.
- Promote creation of networks with beneficiaries and related organisations.
- Enhance the motivation of individuals who are involved (respect for ownership through participatory decision making, sharing the significance of the project, enhancing confidence and motivation in the job by giving a sense of improving knowledge and skills, and on-the-job training).
- Share knowledge.
- Do not impose Japanese ideas on the recipient.
- Obtain a good understanding of the partner country's knowledge.
- Be flexible in reviewing the objectives and methods for achieving those objectives according to the environment.
- Explicitly prepare opportunities for hands-on learning experience in projects.

### *Incorporating capacity building into projects from the planning stage*

Key points with reference to CD perspectives:

- A holistic understanding of the environment and capacities surrounding the proposed programme/ project covering social and institutional systems, organisations and individuals.
- Participatory project planning by involving the actors in the partner country (proactive engagement and participation of the stakeholders in the partner country can enhance the local motivation and meet local needs at a low cost).
- Programme/project design that fully takes advantage of the existing knowledge in the partner country.
- Exit strategy that adequately takes into account sustainability and scaling-up aspects upon the programme/project completion.
- A strong commitment to a long-term timeframe.

### *How JICA assesses existing capacity at project level*

- It is important to gather and analyse information on the (economic/social/political/organisational etc.) environment or context in which the project takes place.
- While JICA has already undertaken stakeholder and problem analysis at the planning stage, the introduction of other capacity assessment tools such as organisational assessment and SWOT analysis will also help.
- The following points are selected capacity development aspects that require special attention:
  - Leadership of the target organisation
  - Role of the target organisation in the related sector and its credibility
  - Relationship with other organisations
  - Capacity for fiscal management
  - Technical capacity

- Incentive level of the organisation
- Capacity of individual staff to plan, implement, manage, monitor and evaluate activities
- Incentives and turnover of staff
- Human resource development programmes for staff
- It is desirable to conduct the joint capacity assessment with the stakeholders of the partner country. Projects designed without taking care of the environment tend to be unsustainable since they lack a strong commitment and ownership on the side of the partner country.
- Overseas offices play critical roles in maintaining a close relationship with the actors in the partner country and gathering important related information. These roles include the reputation of the target organisation in the sector, the political influence of the organisation, the relationship between local customs/culture and the project, and the relationship of the organisation with the stakeholders.

### 3.10 Swedish International Cooperation Agency: SIDA<sup>4</sup>

*Sida's task is to make sustainable development possible and thus make development cooperation superfluous in the long run. Our principal method is capacity and institution development. Knowledge is our most important resource* (Sida's mission statement, 1995).

Sida's task is carried out through the combined efforts of increasing support to national systems for education, training and research, through a clearer focus on capacity development in all programmes and projects and through more active collaboration with Swedish partners. The ultimate objective is to create conditions for professional sustainability of institutions and organisations, including national systems of education, training and research.

#### *Main areas of action*

- To systematically integrate capacity development as an objective in projects and programmes.
- To improve and strengthen cooperation with and professional exchange with Swedish partners.
- To give more support, financially and professionally, to the strengthening of national systems of education, training and research.
- To increase support towards the development of international competence in Sweden.
- To make Sida better equipped to work with capacity development in partnership with others.

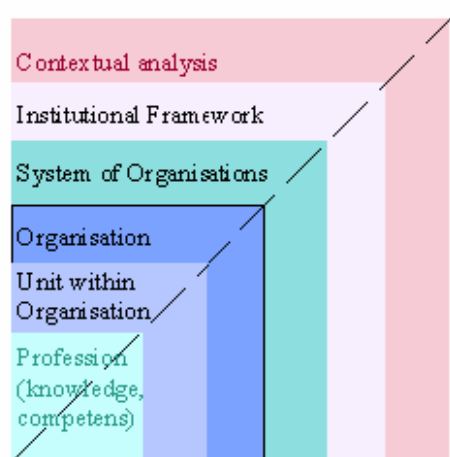
#### *Conceptual framework*

An important part of Sida's future work is to create a common understanding of concepts and approaches. Sida works:

- To develop **knowledge** and **competence** of individuals and organisations;
- To develop **organisations** and/or **systems of organisations**;
- To change and strengthen **institutional frameworks** in the form of formal policies and laws and/or other informal norms which stipulate limits where the development of individuals and organisations are concerned.

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<sup>4</sup> The text in this section includes direct excerpts from Sida (2000).

**Figure 2: Sida's conceptual framework**

**Criteria** have been developed to focus the thematic programmes on:

- The four Sida action programmes: poverty reduction, sustainable use of natural resources, gender equity, democracy and human rights;
- Research areas of particular relevance to the partner countries;
- Opportunities for linking Sida funded research and development programmes;
- Opportunities for collaboration with other agencies in important areas where large, collective contributions are needed;
- 'Marginal benefit' and innovative opportunities;
- Comparative advantages in terms of specialised skills, established programmes, networks and resource bases;
- Areas where appropriate mechanisms for scientific assessment are established.

### *Department for Research Cooperation (SAREC)*

Sida's policy on research support is that it should be focused (concentrated to a limited number of countries) and directed to areas where it has a comparative advantage (in terms of experiences, methods and special competencies) and where it may play a catalytic role. This includes a contribution to making research results available and applicable.

### *Overall objectives of research cooperation*

- To strengthen the research capacity of developing countries, through assistance to countries in building good research environments, training their own researchers, developing methods for planning and prioritising research, and allocating resources for this.
- To promote development-oriented research by providing financial and scientific resources for the purpose of producing new knowledge in areas important to developing countries, and by disseminating research results that might be of importance for their development.

### *Support for national research development*

The Sida policy is that the research cooperation should be planned to strengthen a national knowledge system, including links between research and education and between research and society in general. The cooperation is long term and is tailored to strengthen the structure and organisation of research in the partner countries and support the country's own funding and administration of research. In countries with weak research structures, support for the development of general policies and institutions for research can be considered.

Efforts to strengthen national capacity have also been supported through regional and international networks, where special attention has been given to the link between research, application, policy and management, for example in the fields of energy, small-scale industry and geosciences.

### *Support through thematic research programme*

Thematic research programmes have various different aims, including one or more of the following:

- To supplement and enhance support for national capacity development through regional or sub-regional cooperation.
- To promote research in areas where national efforts need to be supplemented with a regional or sub-regional perspective.
- To contribute to the production of new knowledge in areas of central importance and relevance to developing countries.
- To contribute to collaboration between partners in identifying research needs.

Guiding principles and conditions for SAREC cooperation include:

- National and institutional research development (not individual).
- A long-term perspective – 12+ years not uncommon (20+ in Mozambique).
- Cooperation between institutions in a developing country and those in an industrialised country – usually, but not always, Sweden.
- Use of a sandwich model to minimise risk of brain drain, also providing foundation for publishing joint papers in scientific journals.
- A move towards transferring power to the cooperating countries – giving one total agreement, for total sum of money: institution decides priorities and assesses projects to be supported.
- Emphasis on thematic research, e.g. marine sciences.
- New aspect of ‘mutual benefit’ programme – led by South Africa, which covers all own costs; Sweden covers costs for a Swedish partner selected by the South African institution.

### **3.11 Netherlands Development Assistance Research Council: RAWOO**

RAWOO was established by the Dutch government through the Ministry of Development Cooperation, and also on behalf of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality.

#### *Objectives*

RAWOO aims at building bridges in research for development to foster:

- Research which responds to the needs and problems of developing countries
- Research which addresses complex development problems by interdisciplinary work
- Equal, genuine and sustainable partnerships in North-South research cooperation

#### *Policy principles*

- **Research for development must be needs-oriented and demand-driven** if it is truly to respond to the problems and needs of the developing countries. It must aim at generating knowledge and insights that can contribute to better understanding of development issues, to better policy responses, management practices and action, and – in the end – to improved livelihoods for the poor. This means that the process of generating and applying knowledge is

placed in an application-oriented, or development-oriented, context. This can require basic research as well as applied research, and in many cases a multi- or interdisciplinary approach, since the multi-faceted nature of development issues often calls for a combination of knowledge and skills from different disciplinary and institutional backgrounds.

- **Capacity building and institutional development must be an integral part of efforts to enhance the role of research and knowledge for development in the South.** In order to be effective, the national knowledge system as a whole needs to be strengthened, not only in terms of research training and staff development, but also in terms of institutional mechanisms. Mechanisms are needed for formulating and implementing research policies; creating an enabling environment; establishing networks with the user community in government departments, NGOs and community-based organisations; increasing skills for the management of research; improving research infrastructure and facilities; and disseminating and utilising research findings through effective communication and information channels.
- **South-North research partnerships, as a vehicle for generating and applying knowledge for development in the South, must be equal, genuine and sustainable.** This means that certain imbalances that exist in South-North relationships in research will have to be corrected. A new type of research partnership is needed, based on mutual trust, understanding, sharing of experience, and a two-way learning process. In such a partnership, the various partners will work together on an equal footing at all stages and on all levels: during the process of setting the research agenda, as research programmes are designed and implemented, and in the governance and management of these programmes.

### *Approach*

Together with its overseas partners, the Council has developed a three-pronged approach to harnessing knowledge for development: interactive, process-oriented and learning-based. 'Interactive' means involving local stakeholders as the prime movers in the agenda-setting process and facilitating the creation of heterogeneous networks of researchers, policymakers, NGOs, and people at grassroots level.

### *Capacity building and partnerships*

Capacity building should be mentioned as a specific aim of the partnership, and the work plan should describe the concrete activities for this purpose. In fact, capacity strengthening needs to be addressed at three levels: at the level of the individual, at the level of the institutions, and at the level of the national science system and government (RAWOO Policy Principles and Approach).

### *Lessons learned*

- Creating developing country ownership of research programmes entails a shift of leadership responsibilities, decision-making power and resources from Northern to Southern partners.
- If asymmetries between North and South are recognised and properly addressed, ways can be found to balance the principle of ownership with the principle of partnership. But it is necessary not to be naive about this. The North needs to release control and accept considerable autonomy on the part of the Southern partner.
- A broadly based consultative process, however painstaking and time-consuming it may be, should precede any programme.
- Helping developing countries to initiate dialogue among local scholars, government policymakers and representatives of civil society on specific research needs, sets off a process of discussing change and innovation and creates a learning environment and network for all the major actors involved.
- Strengthening capacity for socially relevant research should be a specific aim of partnership.

### 3.12 Sources

- African Capacity Building Foundation website, available at: <http://www.acbf-pact.org/>.
- CCIC, Building Knowledge and Capacity for Policy Influence, available at: [http://www.ccic.ca/e/002/capacity\\_building\\_policy\\_capacity\\_for\\_poverty\\_eradication.html](http://www.ccic.ca/e/002/capacity_building_policy_capacity_for_poverty_eradication.html).
- CIFOR, Building Research Capacity in Developing Countries, available at: [http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/docs/\\_ref/aboutcifor/impact/impact4.htm](http://www.cifor.cgiar.org/docs/_ref/aboutcifor/impact/impact4.htm).
- CODESRIA, 'Information Brochure about CODESRIA and its Activities', available at: <http://www.codesria.org/Archives/ga10/info%20brochure.htm>.
- INTRAC, Praxis Programme, 'Linking Research and Practice in Organisational Capacity Building, Praxis Leaflet', available at: <http://www.intrac.org/docs.php?id=181>.
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## 4 Further Information

This section contains an annotated bibliography of the key documents consulted for this study, and an overview of the information available about capacity building on the websites of some of the key organisations active in this area.

This annotated bibliography contains summaries of the most important publications addressing the issues of capacity building for Northern and Southern organisations involved in using research-based evidence in policy processes. It is important to mention from the outset that the literature on this topic is limited. Two aspects need to be highlighted: (i) the broader capacity-building concept has not been discussed in this context but relevant issues have been unpacked at more specific levels, ranging from building capacity for evaluation, to strengthening the ability of CSOs to track budgets, to outcome mapping, etc.; and (ii) there is little evidence to support what good practice means in this field. The latter has triggered a wide range of publications on evaluation and impact assessment of capacity-building efforts; the assumption here is that in order to make recommendations for good practice a more systematic analysis of past practices and lessons learnt is necessary.

Documents that tackle capacity building in the broader sense and issues around the approaches that donors and funding agencies apply are also included here since they offer a good source from which lessons can be drawn. Sources are listed in alphabetical order.

### 4.1 Annotated bibliography

**Ayuk, E. T. and J. Basil (2005) ‘Building Institutional Capacity for Economic Policy Research in Africa: Myth or Reality?’, IDRC Paper for the International Conference of African Economic Research Institutions and Policy Development: Opportunities and Challenges, Dakar, 28-29 January 2005.**

This paper describes modalities that the Secretariat for Institutional Support for Economic Research in Africa (SISERA) has adopted in the past seven years to strengthen and build the capacity of economic research institutions (ERI) so as to enable them to play an effective role in the policymaking process. It also summarises the lessons learnt from providing support to these institutions. Drawing from seven years of continuous interaction with the centres, the paper shows that ERI have a long way to go in becoming real players in developing sound economic policies in their respective countries and regions. More efforts are needed in the areas of institutional leadership, solidifying the resource base, staff retention, increasing policy relevance of research, and developing a communication strategy and good internal management practices. This paper also indicates that recent developments in the continent provide numerous opportunities for economic research centres to play a more important role in the formulation and implementation of economic policies.

**Baklien, B., M. Haug and W. Chamindra (2005) ‘Study of the Impact of the Work of FORUT in Sri Lanka: Building Civil Society’, Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, Oslo (available at [http://www.norad.no/default.asp?V\\_ITEM\\_ID=2776](http://www.norad.no/default.asp?V_ITEM_ID=2776)).**

This report examines the impact of the work of FORUT in Sri Lanka, in relation to some of the objectives in the Norwegian guidelines for strengthening civil society. In terms of FORUT’s capacity-building efforts, the report finds that:



- The resources spent on capacity building have not been adequate;
- Capacity-building efforts are not aligned with FORUT's overall objectives;
- A series of organisational practices are in place that counteract the objectives of capacity building.

The report highlights that by working closely with state institutions, FORUT and its partners have contributed to improved coverage in the provision of services and the adoption of new practices. In this three-way relationship, under-funded government agencies provide technical expertise, FORUT provides the funding, and FORUT's partners conduct needs assessments and mobilise people for participation in community development projects. The report discusses a number of challenges for the partners of Norwegian NGOs, including:

- Financial sustainability – in response to the challenge of encouraging its partners' financial sustainability, FORUT has developed two strategies: diversification of its donor base and diversification of its income base.
- Pull towards service delivery – FORUT and its partners have been sandwiched between its own objectives and the guidelines of the Norwegian donor, on the one hand; and demands from the local contexts in which they are working, on the other. The specific challenges that are inherent in combining different roles, such as service delivery with advocacy or social mobilisation, need to be comprehensively addressed, and priorities explicitly set.
- Long implementation chains – a great deal of effort is needed to ensure compatibility between FORUT's objectives and the objectives of local organisations, if the vision of FORUT, let alone the policymakers in Oslo, is to be achieved.

**Ballantyne, P., R. Labelle and S. Rudgard (2000) *Information and Knowledge Management: challenges in capacity building*, Policy Management Brief No. 11, Maastricht: ECDPM** (available via <http://www.ecdpm.org>).

This brief explores ways to improve 'information' capacity-building activities in developing countries. Focusing on the capacity-building process, it presents some principles and key questions for actors in this area. It concludes with a call for capacity 'builders' to invest more in knowledge sharing as a way to improve the relevance of their efforts.

Capacity development is the 'process by which individuals, groups, organisations, institutions and societies develop abilities (individually and collectively) to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives'. More specifically, it is a way for groups or organisations to increase their ability to contribute to poverty elimination.

While these purposes for capacity building apply in the information 'sector', here it is argued that capacity-building approaches can be quite different here from those in other sectors. These factors suggest that capacity building in the information domain is different to capacity building in other development sectors. In particular, the potential linking and sharing characteristics of the new ICTs seem to be particularly well suited to a policy environment that emphasises the value of relationships among organisations, and puts participation and partnership first. Capacity-'building' efforts should therefore be organised around partnerships where mutually beneficial relationships are fostered and capacities are mobilised and shared.

**Bentley, T., H. McCarthy and M. Mean (2003) 'Executive Summary' in *Inside Out: Rethinking Inclusive Communities*, London: DEMOS** (available at [http://www.infed.org/archives/demos/inside\\_out.htm](http://www.infed.org/archives/demos/inside_out.htm)).

The authors argue that access to social goods, empowerment, and institutional trust can best be achieved by taking a 'capacity-building' approach to developing communities. This concept has gathered growing recognition in recent years from policymakers, grant-making bodies and international development agencies. It rests on the principle that investing in the human and social capital of marginalised individuals and groups enables them to develop the capacities needed to thrive, and to play an autonomous role in developing and renewing their communities.

The case-study projects discussed in this report achieved this through:

- Acting collectively to demand change from others, such as local officials or employers.
- Generating change internally to strengthen social cohesion and empower marginalised sub-groups, such as women or youth.

Demos identified three key conditions that need to be fostered if CBOs are to carry out successful capacity-building work:

- **Longevity:** the importance of continuing work for community organisations hoping to gain/maintain the trust of the communities they serve. This is facilitated by sustained commitment from staff over a period of years and by a stable relationship with funding bodies that cover core running costs as well as project work.
- **Leadership:** the quality of leadership that exists across the full range of stakeholders. This points to the need for both strong internal leadership, as well as resources of both formal and informal leaders in the communities they serve.
- **Leverage:** leverage on financial resources and learning opportunities. This is generated by CBOs through trust-building relationships within and beyond the community sector.

**Bessant, J., Kaplinsky R. and M. Morris (2003) 'Developing Capacity through Learning Networks', *International Journal of Technology Management and Sustainable Development* 2(1), March.**

There is widespread recognition that firms need continuous upgrading of their operations and capabilities to be able to retain a competitive edge in a highly uncertain market environment. This raises questions about the mechanisms available for them to learn and develop capability. One area of topical enquiry is that of inter-firm learning. For individual firms, the advantages of learning in a network context include access to the experiences of others and peer-group support, reduction of risks in research and development experimentation, and the potential for creativity and innovation arising as a response to competitive challenges.

Examples of such network configurations can be found in regional clusters, sector groupings, heterogeneous groups sharing a common topic of interest, and user groups concerned with learning around a particular technology or its application and in supply chain learning. Learning in such configurations does not, however, take place automatically. This paper addresses some of the management challenges involved in setting up and nurturing learning networks. It draws particularly on the case of a learning network in the timber products industry in South Africa.

**Black, L. (2003) 'Critical Review of the Capacity Building Literature and Discourse', *Development in Practice* 13(1): 116-21.**

The research summarised here addresses the ambiguities and discrepancies of the capacity-building dialect within the aid and development industry. It argues that the capacity-building literature is filled with both altruistic aspirations and contradictions. Inconsistencies are a reflection of disparate understandings, values and agendas.

The findings of this brief critical review suggest that the functionalist concept of capacity building is unlikely significantly to reduce poverty or achieve sustainable development; that the values and assumptions that underpin the capacity building discourse are part of the same ideological systems that recreate the 'systemic captivity' of the poor; and that while focusing on strengthening capacity is worthy, community development practitioners could contribute to this by stepping away from their own assumptions and looking at whether they facilitate or constrain authentic capacity.

**Boesen, J. and A. Lafontaine (1998) 'The Planning and Monitoring of Capacity Development in Environment (CDE) Initiatives', Prepared for Danida Quebec by CIDA.**

This report provides a practical and simple methodology for the planning, monitoring and development of indicators for donor-supported capacity development efforts in the environment field, built around a set of nine elements: partnership, access to information, participation, ownership, subsidiarity, flexibility, extended time scale, system's perspective and CDE as a process.

It concludes that, for such indicators to be useful in supporting overall project performance and effectiveness, they must be designed and managed to meet the following objectives:

- They must be used as part of an approach to results-based management to help set objectives and monitor progress at field level.
- They must be an important part of a process of capacity development itself.

If these two conditions are met, the indicators will:

- Become a key part of donor reporting and accountability systems.
- Be used by a number of bilateral donors to structure their contractual relationship with executive agents.

**Boesen, N. and O. Therkildsen (2005) 'A Results-Oriented Approach to Capacity Change', Evaluation Department, Danida** (available at <http://www.um.dk/da/menu/Udviklingspolitik/MaalOgResultatstyring/Evaluering/OevrigeRappporter/CapacityDevelopment.htm>).

Capacity development support is a key element in development assistance, whether aimed at specific organisations or as part of wider sector programmes, but it is generally recognised that the knowledge about how best to deliver and assess the outcome of such support has been limited or contested. This paper seeks a better understanding of what 'capacity' means, and the constraints and the options for changing and enhancing it.

It presents a 'results-oriented approach to capacity building and change' (ROACH), which builds on six key propositions:

- A focus on specific organisational results or outputs is useful both in understanding organisations and their changes, and in adopting a relevant analytical and operational vantage point.

- A wide range of factors and issues in the context in which organisations are embedded determine actual and future capacity and performance (and must be considered).
- Organisations can be understood and analysed as open systems.
- Both a 'functional-rational' and a 'political' perspective on what makes organisations perform must be applied in understanding how capacity is shaped and how it changes.
- Capacity development and change are overwhelmingly a domestic matter, and should be based on possible rather than just desirable capacity development opportunities.
- Analysis and dialogue based on the above propositions will determine if and how outsiders such as donors can support and encourage capacity development opportunities.

**Brehm, V. M. et al (2004) *Autonomy or Dependence: case studies of North-South NGO Partnerships*, Oxford: INTRAC.**

The book explores the concept and practice of 'partnership' between NGOs in the North and South. Based on a rigorous four-year study, the book draws together the perspectives of a group of European NGOs and compares these with the experiences of a selection of their partners in Brazil, Cambodia and Tanzania. The authors look ahead at how partnerships are changing as networks and alliances of Northern and Southern civil society organisations join together to work on common issues.

**Fukuda-Parr, S., C. Lopes and K. Malik (2001) *Capacity for Development: New Solutions to Old Problems*, London: Earthscan/UNDP** (available at <http://www.capacity.undp.org/indexAction.cfm?module=Library&action=GetFile&DocumentID=5017>).

The authors examine the achievements of technical cooperation and offer recommendations for reform in the context of globalisation, democratisation, the information revolution and the growth of capacities in the South. They analyse the issues from three perspectives: ownership, capacity enablers and knowledge. They argue that if technical cooperation is to work for capacity development, only institutional innovations, new models, most appropriate to today's social and economic environment, will overcome the well known constraints. This means:

- Starting with the motto 'scan globally, reinvent locally'.
- Trying out new methods, such as networks that make the best use of new types of learning.
- Trying innovations that address asymmetry in donor-recipient relationships, such as pooling technical cooperation funds and developing forums for discussion among Southern nations.

They show how the complex processes involved can be restructured to produce local involvement and empowerment, set out a normative framework for the input from society, and describe a new paradigm of knowledge for capacity building in the network age. Within this context, capacity development needs to be addressed at three levels: individual, institutional and societal.

- **Individual:** This involves enabling individuals to embark on a continuous process of learning – building on existing knowledge and skills, and extending these in new directions as fresh opportunities appear.
- **Institutional:** This too involves building on existing capacities. Rather than trying to construct new institutions, such as agricultural research centres or legal aid centres, on the basis of foreign blueprints, governments and donors instead need to seek out existing initiatives, however nascent, and encourage these to grow.
- **Societal:** This involves capacities in the society as a whole, or a transformation for development. An example is creating the kinds of opportunities, whether in the public or private sector, which enable people to use and expand their capacities to the fullest. Without such

opportunities, people will find that their skills rapidly erode or become obsolete. And with no opportunities locally, trained people will join the brain drain and take skills overseas.

**Hailey, J., R. James and R. Wrigley (2005) *Rising to the Challenges: Assessing the Impacts of Organisational Capacity Building*, Praxis Paper No. 2, Oxford: INTRAC** (available at <http://www.intrac.org/pages/PraxisPaper2.html>).

Assessing impact is a complicated process, especially when measuring the impact of intrinsically complex, intangible and often ill defined processes such as organisational capacity building. Although much progress has been made, it is clear that this is a rapidly changing field, one which is beset by definitional problems, methodological debates, contradictory criticisms, and uncertainty as to the primary purpose of such assessment processes.

This Praxis Paper offers a brief overview of current thinking and practice in relation to the impact assessment of organisational capacity-building interventions. The Paper highlights some of the conceptual, methodological and practical challenges (issues of clarity, power and culture, among others) and then goes on to provide an overview of some of the practical approaches that have been adopted by NGOs and CSOs to overcome these challenges. It is a thought piece designed to engage practitioners (particularly those from developing and transitional countries) in a fruitful debate.

The Paper identifies the key challenges towards which INTRAC's Praxis Programme could most usefully focus its future efforts. These include the need to improve understanding of the particular characteristics of the impact assessment of organisational capacity building and to generate and document innovative, adaptable and accessible approaches. A final challenge is to consider how to raise the profile of impact assessment for organisational capacity-building practitioners, so that it is seen as a vital tool to assist organisational learning, rather than a time-consuming and costly burden.

**Harrow, J. (2001) 'Capacity Building as a Public Management Goal: Myth, magic or the main chance?' in *Public Management Review* 3(2).**

The concept of 'capacity building' is explored through illustration and critique of the concept's development in the international, national and local community literature. Theoretical strands where the concept belongs partially include community development theory, agency theory and stewardship theory. The concept is examined in the context of new public management thinking, and its discovery by professionals to enhance their community roles is highlighted. Findings from micro-level case-study research among local community organisations are reported, suggesting organisational scepticism about its meaning and outcomes, and producing a preliminary typology of organisations' responses to the concept. The article concludes that the concept appears theoretically homeless. It emphasises the need for clarification of the concept's multiple meanings, so that the chances of useful evaluation of publicly funded capacity-building programmes may be enhanced.

**Horton, D. et al (2003) *Evaluating Capacity Development, Experiences from Research and Capacity Development Organisations around the World*, ISNAR/IDRC/CTA, Stevenage: EarthPrint** (available at <http://www.idrc.ca>).

This book explains how the Evaluating Capacity Development Project used an action-learning approach, bringing together people from various countries and different types of organisations to conduct six evaluation studies over the course of three years. The authors use examples and lessons drawn from the evaluation studies as a basis for making general conclusions on how capacity development efforts and evaluation can help organisations achieve their missions. Chapter 5 offers a summary of learning about partnerships between national and international organisations involved in organisational capacity building.

The international aid community is placing a growing emphasis on developing local capacity as the key to alleviating poverty and hunger in the developing world. Although ensuring the effectiveness of a capacity-building effort requires appropriate use of evaluation, few organisations have implemented a system for monitoring or evaluating the changes taking place during organisational development. In January 2000, ISNAR began the ambitious Evaluating Capacity Development Project, which aimed to improve capacity development efforts in research and development organisations through the use of evaluation.

This book explains how the project used an action-learning approach, bringing together people from various countries and different types of organisations. As they conducted six evaluation studies over the course of 3 years, project participants learned a great deal about capacity development and the process of evaluation. The authors use examples and lessons drawn from the evaluation studies as a basis for making more general conclusions regarding how capacity development efforts and evaluation can help organisations to achieve their missions.

The ideas and examples given in this book move the field of evaluation forward significantly. The contributors have taken on board the concept that every evaluation of a capacity development effort should contribute to the effort itself and, ultimately, to the organisation's performance. Too many evaluations are wasted in producing bulky reports that are seldom read, or that arrive too late to influence decisions. This book shows that a greater impact and a broader vision are both needed in theory and possible in practice.

**INTRAC (1998) 'Survey of Northern NGO Approaches to Capacity Building', INTRAC Report** (available at <http://www.intrac.org/docs/SURVEY%20OF%20NORTHERN%20NGO%20APPROACHES%20TO%20CAPACITY.doc>).

This project was conducted in 1998 by INTRAC for the International Forum on Capacity Building. It examined Northern NGO (NNGO) experiences and approaches to Southern NGO (SNGO) capacity building. Responses to questionnaires and consultations came from 100 NGOs in North America, Europe and the Pacific. The survey found that Northern NGOs were extremely enthusiastic about capacity building and that most had a good understanding of the concept, although a wide range of activities fell under the general heading of capacity building.

**Isaksen, J. and G. Andersson (2002) 'Best Practice in Capacity Building in Public Finance Management in Africa: Experiences of Norad and Sida', CMI Report R2002:16, Bergen, Chr. Michelsen Institute** (available at <http://www.cmi.no/publications/2002/rep/r2002-16.pdf>).

This study was contracted by Sida and Norad for the purpose of summarising experiences in capacity building for Public Finance Management (PFM) in Africa. In particular, the two organisations' attempts to take a more comprehensive approach to PFM were to be highlighted.

An overview of the Swedish and Norwegian approach for support to PFM reveals a number of similarities between the two donors. In particular, since the seventies and eighties, their approach has moved away from the concept of 'filling holes' based on stand-alone technical assistance to PFM institutions. Presently, the donor agencies, at least in theory, approach PFM as a system. In the diagnostic phase they attempt to take a systemic view, although most interventions focus on components or sub-components.

Tentative recommendations that the authors see emerging from their examination of Sida and Norad projects as well as other sources of experience are as follows:

- Take a long view.
- Analyse the entire PFM system and to undertake interventions that are balanced between the components of PFM (planning, budgeting, auditing, accounting etc.).
- Support the education and training of economists and accountants to build up a strong professional cadre of accountants and economists.
- Improve human resource management systems (like salaries and career opportunities) to attract competent personnel for PFM.
- Institutionalise the dialogue between recipient agencies and donor agencies during both diagnostic and implementation stages.
- Ensure the development perspective guides the development of PFM.
- Ideally, enable the recipient government, not the World Bank, to provide leadership for support to PFM under joint donor ‘umbrellas’.
- Support and encourage regional organisations and networks in the PFM field.
- Consider implementation conditions such as: the level of political will to improve PFM; degree of organisational and institutional blockages; terms and conditions for key staff; capacity for capacity building.
- Link PRSP poverty reduction approaches, budgetary support and PFM improvement. The quality of PFM will be a decisive factor in ensuring that recipients’ policy decisions and agreements with donors actually lead to a greater flow of public sector resource for poverty reduction.

**Jackson, T. (2003) *Cross-Cultural Management and NGO Capacity Building: How Should Impact be Assessed Cross-Culturally?* Praxis Note No. 4, Oxford: INTRAC (available at <http://www.intrac.org/>).**

In order to build NGO capacity in an international and development context successfully it is imperative to look at issues through a cross-cultural lens. This must not be an add-on or an afterthought. It must be integrated into a capacity-building approach. The project Management and Change in Africa: A Cross-Cultural Perspective, funded by Danida and the Paris Chamber of Commerce, although focusing primarily on the commercial and public sectors, was the first of its kind to address issues of managing in a ‘developing’ region in a critical way and from a cross-cultural viewpoint. This project has important implications beyond Africa for the ‘third sector’ and for development NGOs in particular.

The four Praxis Notes outlines the approach:

- **Why is a cross-cultural approach necessary?** This outlines the cross-cultural management imperative and the importance of the project Management and Change in Africa to developing management and organisational capacity in non-governmental development organisations.
- **How can capacity be built through cross-cultural management?** This focuses on the processes and practices of capacity building, drawing on results from the project.
- **How can knowledge transferability be managed across cultures?** This addresses the important issues of transferring knowledge and best practice in the cross-cultural context within which all development NGOs work.
- **How should impact be assessed cross-culturally?** The assessment of impact involves a number of stakeholders often working within different cultural assumptions and different power relationships. Assessing impact must be considered from a cross-cultural perspective.

**James, R. (2000) 'Practical Guidelines for the Monitoring and Evaluation of Capacity Building' (OPS 36), INTRAC Occasional Paper** (available at [www.intrac.org](http://www.intrac.org)).

Capacity building and monitoring and evaluation have become two of the most important priorities of the development community during the last decade. Yet, they have tended to operate in relative isolation from each. In particular, capacity-building programmes have been consistently weak in monitoring the impact of their work.

This publication aims to help NGOs and donors involved in capacity building to develop appropriate, cost-effective and practical systems for monitoring and evaluation. While not underestimating the complexity of the tasks, the publication puts forward some practical guidelines for designing monitoring and evaluation systems based on experiences with three organisations in different parts of Africa.

**James, R. ed. (2001) *Power and Partnership? Experiences of NGO Capacity Building*, Oxford: INTRAC.**

This publication is a synthesis of papers presented at a 1999 conference: 'NGOs in a Global Future'. Contributors were invited to describe their actual experiences of NGO capacity building, to better understand how it is implemented in practice, what actually happens, what works and why.

The term 'capacity building' has become almost synonymous with 'development' in many aid circles. The World Bank, bilateral and multilateral donors, international NGOs and some local NGOs are prioritising capacity building. It is therefore critical to analyse carefully the practice of capacity building to ensure that we learn from others' experience and avoid the danger that the term becomes merely a cosmetic and meaningless addition to proposals and policies. Capacity building is a conscious approach to change which, if taken seriously, has radical and far-reaching implications, for not only skills and behaviours but also power dynamics within and between organisations.

**JICA Task Force on Aid Approaches (2004) 'Capacity Development Handbook: For Improving the Effectiveness and Sustainability of JICA's Assistance', JICA, 31 March.**

The JICA Task Force on Aid Approaches prepared this handbook to share the concept of 'Capacity Development (CD)', which provides a useful framework for improving JICA programme/project management. This preliminary handbook is intended as a starting point for discussion.

The handbook discussed some similarities and differences between the capacity development perspective and JICA's Technical Cooperation approach. It then highlights some of the major implications of CD that will help further improve JICA's TC operation in terms of greater social impact and sustainability and recommends the strategic roles of JICA as an organisation and those of individual JICA staff members, experts, and other JICA project-related staff in further improving JICA's assistance with the CD perspective in mind.

The handbook contains three useful annexes: the first overviews the definition of CD and some of its conceptual aspects; the second examines actual examples of vocational training projects and illustrates hypothetically what would have been different, how those areas would have been different, and whether changes could have been made when re-examined from the CD perspective; the third suggests how JICA staff can take action and make improvements toward CD in each step of the project cycle, including planning, implementation and evaluation.



**Kaplan, A. (1999) 'The Development of Capacity', UN-NGLS Development Dossier** (available at: <http://www.un-ngls.org/documents/publications.en/develop.dossier/dd.05/dc.contents.htm>).

The author presents a critique of current development practice and a vision of development and capacity building. Drawing on practical experience in the field of organisational development, and on insights provided by the 'new sciences', the text challenges development practitioners, whether they be NGOs, the multilateral system or bilateral donors, to deeply rethink development practice and to consciously build a shared new paradigm that opens up opportunities for new forms of development relationships and, in particular, approaches to building organisational capacity.

This means moving beyond the 'development project' and the values, relationships, activities and mentalities enshrined in this, and the current paradigm, and developing new approaches based upon different values, understandings and relationships between development practitioners.

**Linnell, D. (2003) *Evaluation for Capacity Building: Lessons from the Field*, Washington, DC: The Alliance for Non-Profit Management.**

This report is the result of research commissioned by the Alliance, and draws together the lessons learned from those who have evaluated capacity-building programmes. It asks questions such as: What are the best ways to evaluate capacity building interventions? What is the role of stakeholders in the evaluation process? Are there some helpful case studies in capacity-building evaluation?

Evaluation of capacity building is critical to achieving quality, although the practice is not very widespread. More than just research results, this report is packed with information and resources on how to effectively evaluate capacity-building programmes. It includes resources such as:

- Findings from more than 60 interviews, literature review, and scan of capacity building evaluations
- Sample logic models
- Definitions of key concepts
- Evaluation tips and checklists
- Rich case studies and lessons learned

This study illuminates many important lessons in evaluation of capacity building, but also sets the stage for the next set of questions in the field, such as: What types of capacity building interventions are most effective? Can we find the causal link between capacity building and outcomes?

**Lopes, C. and T. Theisohn (2003) 'Ownership, Leadership and Transformation: Can We Do Better for Capacity Development?'** London: Earthscan (Executive summary available at <http://www.capacity.undp.org/index.cfm?module=Library&page=Document&DocumentID=3890>).

This document introduces and analyses the concept of capacity development as an essential factor to deal with longstanding development dilemmas. It defines capacity development as an endogenous course of action that builds on existing capacities and assets, and the ability of people, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives. It is built on the idea that capacities exist in developing countries and need to be developed, and that development strategies do not have to, and indeed should not, be imported from outside.

A review of a series of case studies leads to ten default principles for capacity development:

- **Don't rush:** capacity development is a long-term process. It eludes delivery pressures, quick fixes and the search for short-term results.

- **Respect the value system and foster self esteem:** the imposition of alien values can undermine confidence. Capacity development builds upon respect and self esteem.
- **Scan locally and globally;** reinvent locally: there are no blueprints. Capacity development draws upon voluntary learning, with genuine commitment and interest. Knowledge cannot be transferred; it needs to be acquired.
- **Challenge mindsets and power differentials:** capacity development is not power neutral, and challenging mindsets and vested interests is difficult. Frank dialogue and a collective culture of transparency are essential steps.
- **Think and act in terms of sustainable capacity outcomes:** capacity is at the core of development; any course of action needs to promote this end.
- **Establish positive incentives:** motives and incentives need to be aligned with the objective of capacity development, including through governance systems that respect fundamental rights.
- **Integrate external inputs into national priorities, processes and systems:** external inputs need to correspond to real demand and be flexible enough to respond to national needs and agendas. National systems should be reformed and strengthened, not bypassed.
- **Build on existing capacities rather than creating new ones:** this implies the primary use of national expertise, resuscitation and strengthening of national institutions, as well as protection of social and cultural capital.
- **Stay engaged under difficult circumstances:** the weaker the capacity, the greater the need.
- **Remain accountable to ultimate beneficiaries:** any responsible government is answerable to its people, and should foster transparency as the foremost instrument of public accountability.

**Lusthaus, C., M. H. Adrien and M. Perstinger (1995) 'Capacity Development: Definitions, Issues and Implications for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation', *Universalial Occasional Paper*, No. 35, September.**

This paper argues that 'capacity development' has become a concept which is thought to have captured many ideas and lessons from past development activities. Yet, it is a concept still in its infancy. Research describing how the concept is being used, testing its assumptions and predicting consequences, is sparse.

This paper represents a series of papers and activities carried out by UNICEF and UNDP in an attempt to clarify the term 'capacity development' and ways to plan, monitor and evaluate capacity development interventions. Specifically, the paper reviews the recent literature on capacity development and explores some of the conceptual and practical issues associated with it in order to highlight the implications for planning, monitoring and evaluating results.

It categorises the literature into four approaches to capacity development: organisational; institutional; systems; and participatory process; and identifies seven lessons that require reflection before considering implications for planning, monitoring and evaluation of capacity development:

- More clarity in determining when a development intervention is capacity development
- More understanding with respect to the role that time plays in capacity development
- More research/evaluation to build a coherent body of knowledge on capacity development
- More consensus with respect to the purpose of capacity development
- More understanding about the role that power plays in the capacity development process
- More analysis with respect to the technologies donors use in capacity development

The authors conclude that planning, monitoring and evaluation systems:

- Need to view capacity development as both a means and an end
- Should be based on well constructed logic
- Require useful indicators that respect multi-layered values and concerns
- Need to develop indigenous capacity
- Must address the information needs of different audiences
- Must be careful not to promise more than they can deliver

**Lusthaus, C., G. Anderson and E. Murphy (1995) *Institutional Assessment: A Framework for Strengthening Organizational Capacity for IDRC's Research Partners*, Ottawa: International Development Research Center** (available at [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-9371-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-9371-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)).

This book is intended to assist both external and internal efforts to strengthen organisations and to provide a framework for documenting the effects of such efforts. It is a working document for assessing institutional capacity – ready to be tested in a variety of situations and readily adaptable in light of such testing. It combines existing knowledge in new ways to yield a comprehensive approach for diagnosing and documenting both strengths and weaknesses of various kinds of institution. Applications range from internal self assessments to external evaluations by a funding agency, from comprehensive assessments to the assembly of a few key impressions during a brief visit.

To redress any ‘capacity gaps’ in funded institutions requires taking a close look at what conditions might be constricting performance or output. The framework set out in the book is meant to serve as a guide to profiling IDRC’s partner institutions so as to generate data that will permit research-based funding decisions.

The framework touches on four main dimensions:

- Key forces in the external environment
- Organisational motivation
- Components of organisational capacity
- Aspects of organisational performance

**Maselli D., J-A. Lys and J. Schmid (2004) *Improving Impacts of Research Partnerships*, Berne: Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships (KFPE).**

North-South research partnerships are considered a powerful tool for contributing both to knowledge generation and capacity building, in the South as well as in the North. However, it appears that little is known about the impact of research partnerships, a gap which stimulated the KFPE to launch this study. The aims of the study are to: (i) provide insights into how to achieve desired impacts and avoid drawbacks; (ii) stimulate discussion of impacts; and (iii) achieve better understanding of the functioning of research partnerships. Ultimately, the study aims to help improve the design and implementation of funding schemes that support research partnerships.

This publication is based on: analysis of a number of case studies encompassing a wide variety of partnerships; discussions held during the various workshops of the Impact Assessment Working Group; and the conclusions derived. While it does not pretend to be comprehensive, it aims to stress the importance of impact planning, monitoring and assessment as elements in the design and evaluation of research projects or programmes. In addition, it is intended to help in moving from

‘proving’ to ‘improving’ impacts, thus stressing the need for ongoing mutual accountability between partners, as opposed to accountability for results.

The authors stress the importance of impact planning, monitoring and assessment as elements in the design and evaluation of research projects or programmes. The publication proposes factors enabling or enhancing impact, and points to factors hindering impact. Factors to consider include:

- Initiative in project conception and design
- Interests and expectations relating to the project
- Power dynamics in designing and funding the project
- Methodological or scientific competence
- Division of roles and responsibilities
- Benefits

A revised and updated version was released in 2005 under the same name, available at [http://www.kfpe.ch/download/KFPE\\_ImpactStudy-final.pdf](http://www.kfpe.ch/download/KFPE_ImpactStudy-final.pdf). Below are its main recommendations:

*Recommendations for funding institutions*

- Pay due attention to impacts when designing new research partnership support schemes. Include the views or expectations of the target region/country.
- Make sure that the (desired/planned) impacts are monitored and their achievements facilitated. Possibly set up a steering or accompanying board composed of North and South experts, and allow for regular site visits.
- Secure continuity in policy support and funding; aim for long-term programmes and projects supporting both capacity building and sound research.
- Allow for pre-phase funding and sufficient time in order to set up the project proposal and clarify issues such as goals, intentions, roles, expectations, motivations, etc.
- Be more flexible in budget allocation.

*Recommendations for researchers and their institutions*

- Plan for impact: discuss, negotiate, and strive for impacts.
- Monitor and evaluate the (planned/desired) impacts; identify indicators.
- Select the right partner(s) who show(s) commitment, competence, continuity, and complementarity; check these characteristics during the pre-phase stage.
- Create mutual learning platforms.
- Secure internal information, communication and documentation.
- Aim for local sustainability and try to generate local resources (financial or kind).
- Address internal tensions and conflicts openly as normal features of an evolving partnership relation.

*Recommendations addressed to both funding institutions and the research community*

- Make specific, additional resources available for planning and assessing impact (finance, time, personnel).
- Promote participatory, transdisciplinary, multi-level multi-stakeholder approaches. Involve stakeholders right from the start in the design, implementation and interpretation of the project and its intended impacts.

- Create incentives (satisfactory salaries, mutual visits, etc.) and strive for an ‘enabling environment’ to promote a fruitful research culture that also enhances the inter-cultural competences of all partners and institutions involved.
- Develop a communication and dissemination strategy (feedback events). Make funds available for its implementation.

**McKinsey and Company (2001) *Effective Capacity Building in Non-Profit Organizations, Venture Philanthropy Partners, Reston, VA: Venture Philanthropy Partners*** (available at <http://vppartners.org/learning/reports/capacity/capacity.html>).

The report presents a clear framework for defining capacity as well as a tool for measuring an organisation’s capacity level. The framework and capacity assessment grid provides nonprofit managers with a practical and useful way to understand and track their own organisation’s capacity, and then develop plans to improve it.

**Mentz, J. C. N. (1997) *Personal and Institutional Factors in Capacity Building and Institutional Development, ECDPM Working Paper No. 14, Maastricht: ECDPM*** (available via <http://www.ecdpm.org>).

The central focus of this paper is an analysis of the concepts of capacity and capacity building and their role in public service management. What constitutes capacity? How is capacity developed or built? And how does capacity building fit into the process of civil service reform? Capacity building does not take place in a vacuum, but in a specific economic, social and political context. Mentz considers the context of public service management in Africa. The role of the world view of people in this process is considered. ‘Capacity’ and ‘capacity building’ have received considerable attention in current public management literature and a review of the contributions by some of the more important authors in this field is provided. An alternative framework for examining the issue of capacity is then presented. This is based on what are termed personal and non-personal dimensions of capacity.

The paper ends with some preliminary conclusions. It is suggested that the building of administrative, or corporate, capacity is one of the most important aspects of civil service reform. Capacity building is an all-important aspect of the process of administrative reform.

**Nair, K. N. and V. Menon (2002) *Capacity Building for Demand-Led Research: Issues and Priorities, ECDPM Discussion Paper No. 45, Maastricht: ECDPM***.

In the context of the failure of past development experiences and the knowledge asymmetry between North and South, this paper examines the various dimensions of the concept of demand-led research. In view of the knowledge gap and the poor material conditions in many countries in the South, considerable support from the North is required for them to build up the necessary capacity.

Even with such support, these nations face an uphill task in realising ‘capabilities’, a higher stage of subjective intrinsic abilities built up on the vital foundation of objective conditions laid down in the process of capacity building. Under conditions of freedom and civil liberties, individuals with such capabilities could actively participate in democratic processes in order to come to their own decisions on ‘patent injustices’ and how to rectify them. Demand-led research can generate the empowering knowledge that will enable individuals to reach the level of capability to make informed choices of their own, without intellectual inputs from the North. The paper suggests some actions that various agencies in the North and the South could take to promote demand-led research in the South. The distinction between ‘capacity building’ and ‘capability building’ for demand-led research is based on the understanding that capability involves the building up of subjective

intrinsic abilities on a foundation of objective material and infrastructural conditions laid down in the process of capacity building. Only when that capacity is in place, if the necessary conditions prevail, can there be debate and consensus on 'patent injustices' that need to be rectified, and on priorities that need to be addressed.

**Morgan, P. (1998) 'Capacity and Capacity Development: Some Strategies,' CIDA Policy Branch** (available at <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/>).

This note addresses some of the issues to do with capacity development and capacity. It first looks at some underlying themes that need to be kept in mind when dealing with capacity development issues. The note then sets out some of the main strategies or approaches to capacity development that project designers and participants use, implicitly or explicitly, to try and achieve capacity. It is written from the point of view of outside participants, especially staff in donor agencies, who wish to understand better the nature of the capacity development issues they are facing and who wish to intervene more effectively.

**Morgan, P. (1999) 'An Update on the Performance Monitoring of Capacity Development Programs: What Are We Learning?' Paper presented at the meeting of the DAC Informal Network on Institutional and Capacity Development held in Ottawa, 3-5 May, for the CIDA Policy Branch** (available at <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/>).

This update sets out some tentative observations about what the international development community, including participants in both funding and host countries, are learning about the interrelationships between capacity issues and monitoring. The good news is that CDM is evolving slowly beyond the initial phase, which tended to emphasise centralised direction, information extraction and methodological complexity. In particular, the development community is learning more about three key challenges:

- How to better understand capacity development issues for what they are – complex phenomena of personal, organisational and institutional change at all levels of a society.
- How to convert conventional monitoring techniques into a participant-driven activity focused on creating self-awareness and an improved ability to manage.
- How to help induce an approach to learning and experimentation on capacity development programmes.

**Morgan, P. and A. Qualman (1996) 'Institutional and Capacity Development, Results-Based Management and Organizational Performance', Document prepared for CIDA Policy Branch, May.**

This paper focuses on institutional and capacity development in the context of its interaction with the concepts and techniques of results-based management. Its overall goal is to suggest ways in which donors such as CIDA can shape and implement both these ideas in ways that are mutually reinforcing.

It concludes that the challenge for donors such as CIDA when using results-based management is to find ways to create an enabling environment within which local energy and processes of change can flourish and carry out complex programmes of organisational and institutional change. To make this assistance effective, a delicate balance must be struck. Too little involvement and CIDA loses the degree of control and access to information needed to safeguard its investment. Too much and CIDA's intrusions begin to erode local capabilities, commitment and the chances of achieving some sort of sustainable institutional impact. Setting and maintaining the right balance of facilitation and

direction – and sharing accountability, risk and credit – remains one of the most intractable challenges for donor agencies.

To do this, the appropriate role of the donor lies in the following areas:

- Supplying some of the financial and technical resources
- Using political leverage to support institutional reform
- Influencing the policy environment in which organisations operate
- Providing learning from other global experiences
- Participating in complex programme learning
- Assisting in the creation of a performance culture

The report stresses the need to increase donor coordination and collaboration in capacity building but also to build donor capacity for organisational learning.

**Qualman, A. and P. Morgan (1996) *Applying Results-Based Management to Capacity Development*, CIDA Policy Branch Working Paper, February, Ottawa: CIDA.**

This is a much shorter and more operational version of the longer document by the same authors titled 'Institutional and Capacity Development, Results-Based Management and Organizational Performance'. It represents a good starting point for understanding how to apply the RBM approach in capacity development initiatives.

The usefulness of RBM as a management technique for institutional and capacity development depends on how it is applied. If it emphasises performance measurement and donor control, it may result in more harm than good for institutional and capacity development. On the other hand, it can be a useful technique for performance management if it is used strategically, is indigenised and is supplemented by other techniques. The aim of this paper is to point practitioners in the direction as to how to apply RBM to make institutional and capacity development programming more effective.

**Pitcoff, W. (2004) *Investing in People: Building the Capacity of Community Development, Training and Social Enterprise Practitioners*, Rockefeller Foundation Series, Issue No. 1** (available at [http://www.rockfound.org/Documents/707/hicb\\_pitcoff\\_people.pdf](http://www.rockfound.org/Documents/707/hicb_pitcoff_people.pdf)).

This paper is part of a broader exercise that the Rockefeller Foundation has embarked upon to reassess their recent human and institutional capacity building activities. An assessment of the external landscape – which is what this paper offers – has been undertaken in addition to an internal assessment.

The paper points out that, traditionally, the type of capacity building supported by many funding agencies has focused more on professional skills rather than on building institutional competence. It has emphasised technical and analytical tools over problem solving and policy relevance; looked more to the pipeline production of professionals than to their career tracks and skill utilisation; promoting the strengthening of individual institutions over the sort of coordination among multiple institutions that can sustain entire professional fields.

Yet, developing human and institutional competencies requires a systems-oriented approach to change. Skilled persons do not operate in a vacuum; effective priority setting, sharing information and strengthening organisational culture have a greater influence over individual performance than additional training does. By building skills systematically across local organisations, and among organisations in different countries, funders can help facilitate an environment which makes individuals and organisations more effective. For the Rockefeller Foundation, this means increasing

ability to match knowledge and execution; linking training to the broader goal of building organisations and institutions that are well managed, strategic and stable; strengthening organisations that are flexible and quick enough to adapt to new technologies, changing political conditions and market opportunities.

The author concludes that human capital development in the fields of community development, workforce development and social enterprise is challenging, costly and difficult to evaluate. This led to human capital development being largely unsupported, with attention instead being placed on organisational development and service-delivery models.

- By supporting formal training opportunities, funders can ensure that practitioners have the basic skills they need for daily tasks.
- By promoting models such as fellowships and coaching, funders can provide practitioners with contextual opportunities to apply what they know and learn.
- By encouraging the development of networks, funders can give practitioners further opportunity to learn from each other and develop goals and policies that will further their fields; but
- Such support cannot be generic!

Successful human capital development must encourage the development of models that allow for flexibility so that lessons and skills can meet the needs of those who seek them. Investment in this needs to be broad and deep to ensure that the opportunities offered are appropriate, effective and accessible.

**Poudyal, R. (2001) *Bridging the North-South Divide: Linkages and Learning Between the South and the North*, Working Paper No. 24, London: Save the Children UK.**

The paper looks at the Save the Children experience of North-South and South-South learning, through the increasingly parallel experiences of poverty and social exclusion in both the North and the South. It also explores issues of learning, staff exchanges, and the transfer of knowledge between North and South, and a range of other linkages and initiatives.

**Rached, E. and D. Craissati eds. (2000) 'Research for Development in the Middle East and North Africa', Paper for IDRC** (available at [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-9426-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-9426-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)).

With a population of more than 250 million and a notable strategic position between the North and the South, the Arab region constitutes a distinct region of the developing world. Its future development is a matter of crucial importance to the world and to Canada. Unfortunately, however, the research environment in the Middle East and North Africa is not conducive to producing, accessing, or using development-related knowledge.

This book explores the current challenges and opportunities of research for development in the Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa. Experts from the region and development professionals from around the world provide a detailed portrait of the research environment and explore the relationship between science and policy. They also present and discuss new research initiatives in the areas of social and economic development, natural resource management, and information and communication technologies.



**Robinson, M. and S. Friedman (2005) *Civil Society, Democratisation and Foreign Aid in Africa*, IDS Discussion Paper No. 383, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies** (available at <http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/bookshop/dp/dp383.pdf>).

This paper critically examines the current donor practice of funding civil society organisations as a way to influence government policy and to create more citizen involvement in public affairs. Drawing on empirical case studies of civil society organisations in South Africa and Uganda, and related material from Ghana, it asks how politically effective these organisations are and what the impact of foreign aid on their political efficacy is. The study finds that:

- Few civil society organisations demonstrate a consistent level of direct involvement in the policy process and fewer still make a significant difference to policy outcomes.
- Organisations that are closely linked to political parties and the state have the greatest ability to exert policy influence.
- Donor funding for civil society policy advocacy has not made a major impact, though well organised and substantially funded NGOs have made a significant contribution in some circumstances.
- Foreign aid can facilitate access to the policy process and strengthen capacity where there are opportunities for engagement and strong organisations already in place but it is not the most critical determinant of successful policy engagement. Rather, it is an organisation's internal governance and its specific relationship to the state that are the most decisive factors in achieving policy influence.
- The contribution of civil society organisations to democracy is not limited to their capacity to influence public policy; they also foster voice and participation, which in turn are functions of internal governance practices.
- The capacity of civil society organisations to offer citizens a say in decisions and to enhance pluralism may be as important as their ability to influence policy and demand accountability from state actors.

**Shankland, A. (2001) 'Building capacity at the grassroots: a review of lessons from ACORD's experience in Southern Africa', Paper for ACORD** (available at [www.acord.org.uk](http://www.acord.org.uk)).

This review seeks to bring together some lessons from ACORD's own experience, which are intended to support the development of a set of principles and guidelines for their grassroots capacity development work. Drawing on a number of discussions and workshops held with ACORD field staff and grassroots partners in Tanzania, Mozambique and Angola between April and July 2000 and at the Southern Africa Regional Meeting in November 2000, it argues that in developing these guidelines and principles ACORD should take as a key theme the importance of striking a balance between 'practical' and 'strategic' capacity building. This is where ACORD's comparative advantage lies.

The process should start from a recognition that any given community will already have a variety of forms of organisation (formal or informal, traditional or created in response to more recent outside influences such as government or NGO programmes), and that any given group or individual within the community (however poor and/or marginalised) will have many existing capacities. The role of existing structures in supporting or marginalising different people and groups within the community will need to be carefully analysed before any decision on capacity-building partnerships can be made. At the same time, people's existing capacities should provide the starting-point for any subsequent work which aims to support them in developing new ones.

The capacity-building plan should be based on an analysis of what capacities are needed by the group and its members at three levels:

- The level of individual capacities includes both technical skills or knowledge and the awareness, ability to think critically, and sense of personal empowerment which will help people to challenge the social structures and processes which may be impoverishing, marginalising or oppressing them.
- The level of group capacities includes administrative skills (such as record-keeping), organisational abilities (such as planning), and interpersonal dynamics (such as mutual respect).
- The level of external relations includes both analytical capacities (such as identifying market trends) and political ones (such as building alliances). It also includes the ability to build the group's legitimacy, both among the people whose interests it may be seeking to represent and among the outsiders to whom it is relating.

How the process of building legitimacy is taken forward will depend both on the objectives of the group and on the nature of the environment within which it operates. The development of the capacity-building plan should therefore include an analysis of which actors and structures the group will have to deal with as it pursues its objectives. Including key external actors in the overall capacity-building programme can help to overcome the barriers faced by some groups in developing their external relations. By bringing different groups together, such a strategy can also increase the overall impact of a programme's capacity-building work in promoting more democratic local governance and more accountable public services.

**Sida (2000) *Capacity Development as a Strategic Question in Development Cooperation: Policy and Guidelines for SIDA*, Sida Working Paper No. 8, Policy Secretariat for Sector Departments, Stockholm: Sida** (available at <http://www.sida.se/Sida/articles/12400-12499/12457/Wp8.pdf>).

Knowledge, competence and well functioning organisations and institutions are keys to poverty reduction through social and economic development. This conviction is widely shared by governments, enterprises and organisations in the civil society all over the world today.

But, while increasing investments are made in the rich countries in the development of knowledge and of competence, there is no equivalent in the poor countries. The differences between rich and poor countries and between individuals within poor countries are widening rather than narrowing also in this respect. This alarming situation calls for renewed efforts by Sida to increase its support to capacity development, defined as the combined efforts to support the development of knowledge, competence and well functioning organisations and institutions. It is also necessary to review and to develop existing modalities and work practises, including the need to develop Sida's competence and that of Swedish cooperation partners to deal more efficiently with questions of capacity development. After more than 30 years of experience of support to capacity development, there is still recurring criticism from partner countries against present approaches for capacity development.

**Sorgenfrei, M. (2004) 'Capacity Building from a French Perspective,' Paper for INTRAC** (available at <http://www.intrac.org/pages/PraxisPaper1.html>).

This paper depicts how French NGOs perceive the notion of capacity building, and how they apply the concept in practice – both in their own organisations and in the South. An introduction to the large and diverse French NGO sector and its changing relationship with the state is followed by a mapping of French capacity-building providers as well as a synthesis of current capacity-building needs, trends and challenges in France and in the South, as expressed by a sample of French NGOs.

**UNDP (1997) *Capacity Development, Management Development and Governance Division, Technical Advisory Paper No. 2, New York: UNDP*** (available at <http://mirror.undp.org/magnet/Docs/cap/Capdeven.pdf>).

This publication presents the lessons from four decades of technical cooperation – and the fundamental changes that UNDP has instituted to capitalise on the potential contributions of capacity development. Towards this end, UNDP’s mission for Sustainable Human Development – a cross-sector strategy for poverty eradication, sustainable livelihoods, environmental regeneration and gender mainstreaming – is made operational through processes based on partnerships with both government and civil society. These processes are designed through facilitative and participatory approaches, and they are responsive and accountable to national priorities and objectives. These characteristics are not only the core principles of good governance in society; they also renew the main goals of development cooperation: long-term sustainability and an enabling environment that facilitates human development.

**UNDP (2005) ‘A Brief Review of 20 Tools to Assess Capacity’, UNDP** (Available online at <http://www.capacity.undp.org>).

This brief review of institutional assessment tools is meant to serve as a preliminary resource for development practitioners in the area of organisational capacity assessment. It is exhaustive in neither breadth nor depth of tools studied. 20 tools were surveyed, drawing from publicly available resources of non-profit organisations, management consultancies, United Nations agencies and other donor organisations. The purpose or application of these tools varies from thematic, institutional or enabling environment levels.

**Whyte, A. (2004) *Landscape Analysis of Donor Trends in International Development, A Rockefeller Foundation Series, Issue No. 2*** (available at [http://www.rockfound.org/Documents/707/hicb\\_whyte\\_donortrends.pdf](http://www.rockfound.org/Documents/707/hicb_whyte_donortrends.pdf)).

This report is the second in a series that intends to stimulate thinking and reflection among funders, NGOs, universities and other public-interest organisations on the future of human and institutional capacity building.

It provides a comprehensive analysis of some of the international donors involved in human and institutional capacity building and the different approaches that they have adopted. The review looks at donor organisations and the different capacity-building tools that they use, and links the two in terms of donor ‘cultures’ and the assumptions that underlie their capacity-building strategies, without providing an evaluation of donor activities. The report is divided in four parts:

- A review of historic trends in donor support and the evolution of the capacity building concept.
- A review of the main approaches used by donors to build professional competencies.
- A review of some of the main donor agencies involved in building professional capacities organised by multilateral organisations, bilateral donors, foundations and others.
- A concluding section on some issues raised by the review and some emerging principles for capacity building to provide an agenda for discussion for the Rockefeller Foundation as it design its future strategy for capacity building.

Below are some of the conclusions highlighted in the review:

- One of the most important principles is to assess local commitment and ownership and identify that it is not just an expression of interest at the highest level. Local ownership of the process is a sine qua non for success.

- Capacity building should be grounded in institutional appraisal, situation analysis and stakeholder analysis.
- By focusing on achieving performance, donors have established parallel or new monitoring and evaluation systems rather than ensuring that these are institutionalised, defeating capacity building in the long run for short-term results.
- Donors need to internalise some of the principles learned about capacity building within their own organisations and adapt their procedures to create some room for innovation and risk taking (such as creating incentives for staff to spend time to design capacity-building initiatives for the context in which they will be used).
- Building individual capacities will only be sustainable if the organisations in which they work are also strengthened.

**World Bank (2005) *Capacity Building in Africa: An OEC Evaluation of World Bank Support*, Washington, DC: World Bank** (available at [http://www.worldbank.org/oed/africa\\_capacity\\_building/](http://www.worldbank.org/oed/africa_capacity_building/)).

African countries need to improve the performance of their public sectors if they are going to achieve their goals of growth, poverty reduction, and the provision of better services for their citizens. Between 1995 and 2004, the Bank provided some US\$9 billion in lending and close to US\$900 million in grants and administrative budgets to support public sector capacity building in Africa.

This evaluation assesses Bank support for public sector capacity building in Africa over these past 10 years. It is based on six country studies, assessments of country strategies and operations across the region, and a review of the work of the World Bank Institute, the Institutional Development Fund, and the Bank-supported African Capacity Building Foundation. It highlights three main findings:

- The Bank has made its support for capacity building in Africa more relevant by extending its traditional focus beyond building organisations and individual skills to strengthening institutions and demand for improved public services, and by shifting to programmatic support. Still, most support for capacity building in country programmes remains fragmented – designed and managed project-by-project. This makes it difficult to capture cross-sectoral issues and opportunities, and to learn lessons across operations.
- The challenges of capacity building vary markedly across countries and sectors. While the Bank is moving to better customise its capacity-building approaches to country conditions, it needs to develop sector-specific guidance on diagnosing capacity needs and evaluating capacity-building measures.
- The Bank does not apply the same rigorous business practices to its capacity-building work that it applies in other areas. Its tools – notably technical assistance and training – are not effectively used, and its range of instruments – notably programmatic support, economic and sector work, and activities of the World Bank Institute – are not fully utilised. Moreover, most activities lack standard quality assurance processes at the design stage, and they are not routinely tracked, monitored, and evaluated.

**WHO (2000) ‘A Focused Research Agenda to Influence Policy and Practice in Home Management for Malaria’, UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research & Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR), Report of Meeting held on 8-11 May in Kilifi, Kenya** (available at <http://www.who.int/tdr/publications/publications/pdf/home.pdf>).

The Task Force on Malaria Home Management wanted to make a careful assessment of priorities and needs and to update the malaria home management research agenda. To accomplish these tasks, approximately 30 representatives were invited from: universities, institutions and groups likely to undertake the research; groups actively involved in intervention research; advisors/experts in areas relevant to home management of malaria; global, regional and country policy decision makers; and other partners.

The group identified research gaps, selected areas where TDR has a comparative advantage and can make a difference in the new international drive for Rolling Back Malaria, and developed draft calls for proposals. Priorities were also identified for strengthening appropriate research capacity. The outcome was a well defined research agenda for improving malaria home management, which was presented to TDR’s steering committees, scientific advisory board and governing bodies, and shaped the workplan for 2001 onwards.

## **4.2 Key websites**

### **African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)**

**<http://www.acbf-pact.org/index.asp>**

The African Capacity Building Foundation seeks to mobilise and provide funding, intellectual, information and research support to capacity building in Africa. It aims to build partnership for, and stakeholders’ ownership of, an inclusive and participatory approach to capacity building and development management, effective coordination of intervention, and a holistic approach in the capacity-building process. The institution was established in 1991 through the collaborative efforts of three multilateral institutions (the African Development Bank, the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme), African Governments and bilateral donors.

### **Alliance for Nonprofit Management**

**[www.allianceonline.org](http://www.allianceonline.org)**

The Alliance for Nonprofit Management is the professional association of individuals and organisations devoted to improving the management and governance capacity of nonprofits – to assist nonprofits in fulfilling their mission. The Alliance is a learning community that promotes quality in nonprofit capacity building. It convenes a major annual conference, networks colleagues year-round online, and provides member discounts on books and other publications. The website offers access to information about capacity and capacity building through its ‘Find a Consultant or Service Provider’ directory, the People of Color Roster, and the print membership directory. It has a special page on capacity building and organisational effectiveness.

### **Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis – BIDPA**

**<http://www.bidpa.bw/>**

BIDPA is a non-governmental research organisation whose key areas of interest are development policy analysis and capacity building. Its aim is to promote policy analysis through research, capacity building, assisting organisations or individuals where appropriate, monitoring the country’s economic performance and disseminating policy research results. The website offer access to a report on regulatory reforms for infrastructure and utility sectors in Botswana.

## **CAPACITY**

**<http://www.capacity.org>**

Capacity.org offers a quarterly newsletter, a platform for exchange and access to a wealth of background reading on capacity development. Issue 6 of the Newsletter, in particular, throws some light on the concept and practice of partnership in a particular realm of development cooperation – ‘twinning’ – the institutional cooperation between Northern and Southern training, research and public sector organisations. The focus is on the understanding given to partnership by the different partners involved, and especially on how partnership is seen to support capacity mobilisation and capacity building.

### **Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR)**

**<http://www.cawtar.org.tn/>**

The Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) is an international non-governmental institution established on 7 March 1993 and located in Tunis, Tunisia. It aims to promote Arab women’s participation in development by providing gender training, research, clearing house services and advisory services. The main missions of the Center are: to establish a Reference Center in the Arab World in charge of advocacy and capacity building on gender; and to establish networks and partnership between different governmental and non-governmental institutions, media and organisations working in the field of gender.

### **Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA)**

**<http://www.cpalanka.org/>**

The Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) was formed in the firm belief that there is an urgent need to strengthen institution and capacity building for good governance and conflict transformation in Sri Lanka and that non-partisan civil society groups have an important and constructive contribution to make to this process. The primary role envisaged for the Centre in the field of public policy is a pro-active and interventionary one, aimed at the dissemination and advocacy of policy alternatives for non-violent conflict resolution and democratic governance. Accordingly, the work of the Centre involves a major research component through which the policy alternatives advocated are identified and developed.

### **CIVICUS: Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit**

**<http://www.civicus.org/new/media/Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation.doc>**

This toolkit deals with the basics of setting up and using a monitoring and evaluation system for a project or an organisation. It clarifies what monitoring and evaluation are, how you plan to do them, how you design a system that helps you monitor and an evaluation process that brings it all together usefully. It looks at how you collect the information you need and then how you save yourself from drowning in data by analysing the information in a relatively straightforward way. Finally, it raises, and attempts to address, some of the issues to do with taking action on the basis of what you have learned.

### **The Impact Alliance**

**[www.impactalliance.org](http://www.impactalliance.org)**

The Impact Alliance offers information to capacity-building service providers to access the approaches within and across different sectors globally. It offers comprehensive information on capacity building through its online resource centre.

### **International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)**

**<http://www.iisd.org/>**

The International Institute for Sustainable Development advances policy recommendations on international trade and investment, economic policy, climate change, measurement and indicators, and natural resource management to make development sustainable. By using Internet

communications, we cover and report on international negotiations and broker knowledge gained through collaborative projects with global partners, resulting in more rigorous research, capacity building in developing countries and a better dialogue between North and South.

### **International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC)**

<http://www.intrac.org>

INTRAC – the International NGO Training and Research Centre – supports NGOs and CSOs around the world by exploring policy issues, and strengthening management and organisational effectiveness. The site provides a variety of resources on capacity building. A large number of in-house publications are also available.

### **Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis – KIPPRA**

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

KIPPRA is an autonomous public institute whose primary mission is to provide quality public policy advice to the government of Kenya and to the private sector by conducting objective research and analysis, and through capacity building, in order to contribute to the achievement of national development goals. The Institute aims to contribute to economic growth, wealth creation and poverty reduction by providing information to policymakers in the government, to the private sector, and to the civil society in order to improve public policymaking and implementation. The publications section is of particular interest.

### **MERCY CORPS, Organizational Commitment to Local Partnership and Capacity Building**

<http://www.mercycorps.org/items/2013/>

Mercy Corps' approach to strengthening civil society puts the utmost priority on working with local partners. They believe that local partnerships help their programmes generate sustainable legacies. Because partnering with local entities often includes capacity building, they address both issues of capacity building and partnership. While acknowledging that every programme is different depending on context and objectives, the site recommends some characteristics of success to keep in mind when working with local partners: be strategic; be transparent; ensure true partnership; maintain separate identities; respect their mission; consider the future; offer training; and outsource capacity building locally.

### **Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information – PERI**

<http://www.inasp.info/peri/index.shtml>

Hosted by INASP, the multi-donor funded PERI programme supports capacity building in the research sector in developing and transitional countries by strengthening the production, access and dissemination of information and knowledge. PERI helps bring 'global' content to researchers in developing countries; it stimulates and supports in-country research publishing and local content; and it provides ICT skills training for local researchers, practitioners, librarians, and publishers.

### **Research ICT Africa!**

<http://www.researchictafrica.net/>

Research ICT Africa! seeks to fulfil a strategic gap in the development of a sustainable information society and knowledge economy on the African continent by building information communication technology (ICT) policy and regulatory research capacity in Africa needed to inform effective governance. Through a network of African researchers it will generate the information and analysis needed to inform appropriate but visionary policy formulation and effective regulation of ICTs across Africa. It will embark on sustained and rigorous research to provide decision makers with the data and analysis to make informed decisions in the public interest.

**SNV Netherlands****<http://portal.snvworld.org/public>**

SNV is a Netherlands-based international development organisation that provides advisory services to nearly 1,800 local organisations in over 30 developing countries to support their fight against poverty. The website contains useful information on capacity building.

**Trade and Industrial Policy Strategies (TIPS)****<http://www.tips.org.za/>**

TIPS is a centre for trade and industrial policy research in Southern Africa. The main functions of the Trade and Industrial Policy Secretariat are: (i) serve as a clearing house for the South African Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) by effectively assisting in harnessing all relevant trade and industrial policy research for the DTI's policy considerations, which will strengthen and enhance the capacity for policy analysis in the DTI; (ii) strengthen the capacity outside of government to construct research on trade and industrial policy in order to enlarge the pool of researchers; (iii) play an increasingly important role in research capacity building in Southern Africa. The site provides information and links to policy papers, periodicals, conference information and data, among other resources.

**Trade Knowledge Network****<http://www.tradeknowledgenetwork.net/>**

The Trade Knowledge Network (TKN) is part of a project aimed at building long-term capacity to address the issues of trade and sustainable development in developing country research institutions, non-governmental organisations and governments, through increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of the issues. The TKN will link network members and consolidate new and existing research on trade and sustainable development.

**World Bank Policy Research and Capacity Building****<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/TRADE/0,,contentMDK:20554716~menuPK:169541~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:239071,00.html>**

This site provides an overview of the Policy Research and Capacity Building (conferences and training) provided by the World Bank Institute and Trade Team in coordination with other regional and multilateral organisations. The site contains background information, links and papers on a number of topics including trade and growth, trade and poverty, goods and services trade, standards, intellectual property rights, and export promotion.