

**For the Accra Agenda and beyond:
Towards a Joint Learning Package for Capacity Development
By Nils Boesen**

Over the last couple of years, there has been a convergence among donors in relation to capacity development concepts and approaches.

Now it is time to move beyond convergence and concepts, and get the CD agenda into the ongoing work that country partners and development partners are doing on the ground, in developing countries, in sectors and wider programmes.

How can this be done? Fortunately, there are good experiences to draw on. Since 2005, a group of donors have, under the umbrella of Train4Dev, offered in-country, sector specific or multi-sector learning events on Sector Wide Approaches. Government, civil society and development partners are sitting jointly in these events, taking stock of the situation and the challenges, and identifying the challenges they have to address as next steps.

In these events, the focus on “learning” as opposed to “training” is evidenced by:

- joint demand and ownership of events by partners, with joint preparation committee on the ground having the key responsibility for organization – the events are not “free gifts”.
- presentations by sector stakeholders and peers from other sectors are encouraged
- a “Next Steps” group is formed to carry messages onwards – the events are seen as part of a wider process.
- Most often, the 3-day event is followed by a half-day senior level event where the Next Step group present the findings and suggestions for action.
- The international donor group funds facilitators who also bring current lessons and concepts about Sector Wide Approaches to the table to frame discussions. They make short, focused presentation as primers for group work and plenary discussions.

For CD, a similar approach has been tested (agriculture, Mozambique, June 2007), and two headquarter based events have been held presenting the approach and discussing how it could be taken on (in Brussels in December 2007 and in Washington in 2008).

Proposal to Accra:

Building on existing promising experiences from other joint learning events, donors and partners will launch a demand-led, country and/or sector focused learning programme on CD which will enable country stakeholders to identify next steps in CD processes and joint support to such processes where needed.

Indicator: By 2011, at least 50 such learning events have been implemented and a review confirms relevance and impact beyond the events themselves.

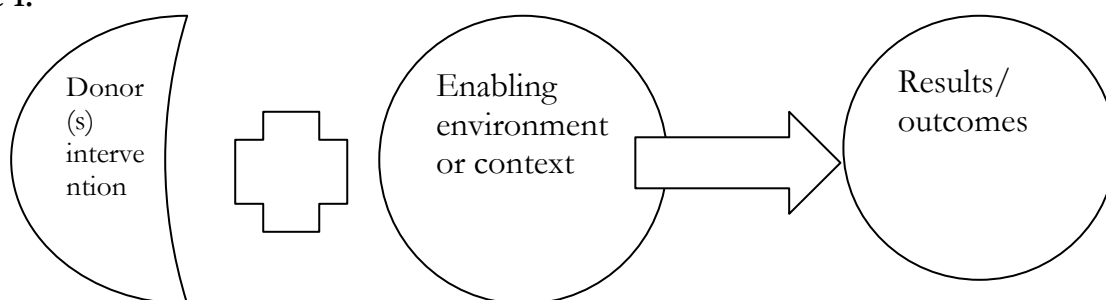
For the Accra Agenda and beyond: Reforming TC/TA for CD – a simple and effective proposal to ensure demand-led and country-owned CD processes.

By Nils Boesen

A simple, yet profoundly new model: Despite rhetoric, donor agencies continue to assume a dominant role in project preparation and supervision.

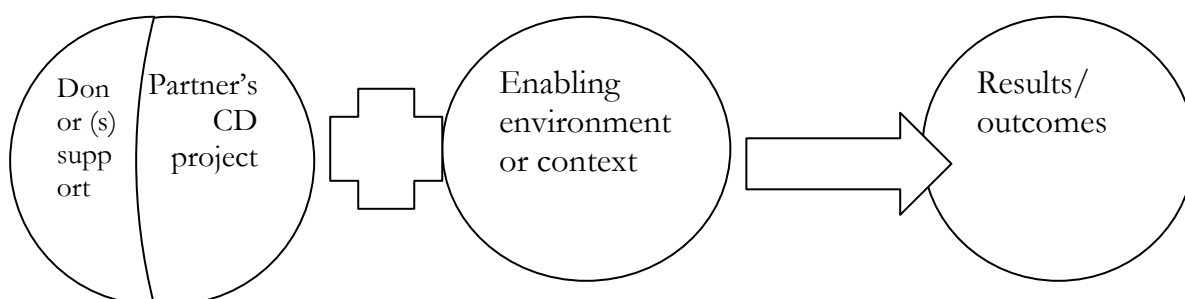
- Project and programme design is largely in the hands of donors and consultants.
- Operational logframes specify donor-funded inputs only, but not the critical inputs from partner country stakeholders like e.g. senior staff time, change management functions etc.
- Ownership and commitment is largely assumed, rather than made operational.
- Implementation arrangements focus on how donors organize the delivery of “their” inputs, rather than on how the partner manages own and donor resources

Figure 1:



A donor centered logic which has not delivered: This traditional model as shown in figure 1 has not delivered on capacity development and sustainability, because it has marginalized those who were supposed to be the “owners” of both interventions and results! Figure 2 shows how donors can work with TC/TA in the future.

Figure 2:



7. *Donors in a strictly supporting role:* In the logic in Figure 2, an intervention (a project, a programme, an initiative) is *by default* not something that donors do alone. Donors are *not* making projects – they are *supporting partner projects and processes*. As a logical consequence, logframes should in the future:

- **Specify the results and outcomes coming out of the combined deliveries by all who contribute to the intervention.**
- **Specify partner as well as donor inputs at the same level of detail.**
- Operationalize demand, ownership and commitment through the **detailing of resources to be committed and specific managerial roles to be played by the partner.**

In this logic it simply does not make sense to specify only the “donor side of the moon”. That would correspond to detailing the inputs and tasks of an assistant surgeon without considering what the chief surgeon will do!