

Key Messages
By Marianne Kress and Dortehea Damkjær

A) Strengthening and situating Capacity Development at the Sector Level.

Extensive efforts have taken place to discuss the generic issues of capacity development. As such, there is now a broad international consensus about key general principles of capacity development.¹ The challenge is now to bring the practical challenges and issues of Capacity Development to the next stage, i.e. strengthening sectoral and inter-sectoral focus on Capacity Development. A number of promising initiatives and practices are already in place, e.g. “Capacity Development in Environment” and the recently issued “Guidelines for Capacity Development in the Education Sector” embedded in the EFA/FTI framework. These frameworks provide good actionable devices for “how” to anchor capacity development more specifically at the sector levels.

B) Strengthening Joint Learning – development partners & partner countries

The new international development architecture presents donors and development agencies with challenges and opportunities that require development and staff training in a wide range of areas and at different levels.

Development partners have become conscious that this can be done more effectively by pooling technical and financial resources through joint initiatives in this field. Besides sharing resources and experience, joint competence development helps achieve a common understanding and language in development co-operation and fosters harmonisation between donors. In particular, experiences have shown that country-anchored, demand-driven and participatory training approaches have delivered encouraging results. Accordingly, development partners should commit to support initiatives like “Train4Dev”. Also, in organisational terms joint learning programs should be embedded within a secretariat.

C) Making TA policies consistent with Capacity Development approaches

Whilst there is now an established consensus about key principles of good practices for capacity development, there is a need to mainstream these principles into TA policies. Ownership and commitment has been largely assumed and hoped for, rather than made operational. Implementation arrangements has tended to focus on how development partners organize the delivery of “their” inputs, rather than how the partner manages own resources and donor resources.

As such, it is important to base the design of TA/CD interventions on a clear framework for capacity development, of which TA is one of several important elements. Key factors determining the context are the partner government’s policy commitment, capacity of the organization to be supported, understanding the process by which change may occur, and monitorable key factors affecting scope of capacity development. Specifically, consistency between TA policies and Capacity Development could be ensured through guiding principles based on the overall assumption that development partners are not making projects - it is supporting partner projects, programmes and processes

Marianne Kress and Dortehea Damkjær
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark

¹ See for instance, “The Challenge of Capacity Development – Working Towards Good Practice”, OECD DAC, 2006, Capacity Development: Accra and Beyond Bonn workshop 15-16 May 2008