DAC Network on Poverty Reduction

JOINT LEARNING EVENTS ORGANISED BY THE TRAIN-4-DEV NETWORK ON PRO-POOR GROWTH AND ON SOCIAL PROTECTION - PROGRESS REPORT

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JOINT LEARNING EVENTS ORGANISED BY THE TRAIN-4-DEV NETWORK ON PRO-POOR GROWTH AND ON SOCIAL PROTECTION

PROGRESS REPORT

I. Introduction

1. Since 2006, POVNET has been collaborating with the Train4Dev Network¹ to organise joint learning events on themes related to promoting pro-poor growth. One series of events addresses issues at a more general level around promoting pro-poor growth. A second and new series of events will focus more specifically on social protection. The purpose of this note is to bring POVNET participants up to date on developments with each of these initiatives. It also seeks assistance with identifying possible locations to organise developing country-based joint learning events in the future as well as partnerships in funding.

2. POVNET members are invited to inform the staff training units of their own agencies about the Train4Dev web site (www.train4dev.net) and the two joint learning programmes on Pro-Poor Growth and on Social Protection.

II. Joint learning events on pro-poor growth

a) Background

3. POVNET is collaborating with the Train4Dev Network to organise a series of eight developing country-based joint learning events on promoting pro-poor growth. The aim of these events is to disseminate the POVNET messages and provide donors' field-level practitioners with knowledge and skills that will help them in their policy dialogue with partner countries and their programming of pro-poor growth interventions.

4. An Executive Committee oversees preparation and monitors implementation of these joint learning events (as well as a series of events on Managing for Development Results). The Executive Committee brings together POVNET participants as well as members of the Train4Dev Network willing to contribute to and finance the joint learning events on promoting pro-poor growth (namely Austria, Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland). Earnan O’Cleirigh, POVNET Vice-Chair, is Co-Chair of the Executive Committee with specific responsibility for the joint learning events on promoting pro-poor growth. GTZ acts as “Lead Agency” on behalf of the funding agencies and, amongst other things, is responsible for contracting issues.

5. The Executive Committee has agreed to hire a consortium of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and ITAD to prepare and deliver the series of joint learning events, in close collaboration with the lead donor in each developing country where an event takes place and specially hired resource persons.

¹ Further information on the Train4Dev Network is available on the Internet at: www.train4dev.net
6. Although the original ambition was to hold the eight events during the 2009-10 biennium, in practice the development of the course materials has taken longer than anticipated and the holding of events will continue into the 2011-12 biennium.

7. A pilot joint learning event took place in Tanzania from 19 to 21 October 2009. This was an important opportunity to test the programme and material that had been developed by that time. As hoped, it helped to identify what was working well and where further improvements still needed to be made in the course design and content. These issues were explored further in an After Action Review that took place on 26 November 2009.

8. In general, there was agreement that the pilot joint learning event in Tanzania had been successful in deepening participants’ knowledge and understanding of the POVNET messages on promoting pro-poor growth. At the same time, the learning events should provide more guidance on practical policy measures that support the engagement of poor women and men in economic growth. Moving more from the theoretical to the practical (“What do I do differently on Monday?”) could imply revising the draft briefing notes and PowerPoint presentations, re-examining the programme and limiting the number of modules covered or the sectoral focus. On the organisational side, a preparatory mission to the country where a joint learning event will take place would be helpful to discuss plans and ensure that, earlier on in the process, there is common understanding about the objectives of the joint learning events and more clarity on respective roles and responsibilities.

b) Recent developments

9. The Executive Committee and consultants have now developed a revised approach to the joint learning events. The intention is to move from a discussion of concepts and analysis behind pro-poor growth to a stronger focus on practical policy instruments that can and have been used for promoting pro-poor growth. This will be done by offering a course designed around a set of core policy issues and instruments from which the in-country organising group can make a selection on the basis of the country context and current priorities.

10. Concretely, the consultants will determine with the in-country lead donor and other stakeholders the key 2 or 3 sectors which are important for promoting pro-poor growth (these are likely to be drawn from agriculture, private sector development, infrastructure and trade) and, within those, the 2 or 3 key issues and the 2 or 3 policy instruments which should influence each of these. There will be a “menu” of globally relevant issues from which the in-country organising group can prioritise the most important issues. These issues should be more detailed than sectors, but more general than specific policy instruments.

11. A series of Policy Instrument Notes with case studies will support each item on the “menu” of globally relevant issues. If necessary, there will be scope to add issues to the “menu” if these are not available and are of clear relevance to the country. Currently, the “menu” of globally relevant issues comprises:

i) Using political economy analysis to implement effective pro-poor policies.

ii) Policies for marginalised small farmers with few assets.

iii) Farm input subsidies.

iv) Increasing revenue collection without damaging the livelihoods of poor people.

v) Liberalisation of export-oriented commodity markets and poor people.
vi) Labour-based approaches in the delivery and maintenance of publicly funded infrastructure.

vii) How should governments and donors encourage the private entrepreneurial activity of poor people and private sector development that is critical for pro-poor growth?

viii) Public work programmes and social protection.

12. The intention is that a given country can pick a number of these and suggest up to two more issues on which additional course material will be prepared. The course structure will then be adjusted according to the issues that have been chosen. Consequently, as the programme progresses, the menu of Policy Instrument Notes will grow as countries request content on issues of specific importance to their context. By the end of the programme, there should be 12 Policy Instruments Notes.

c) Next steps

13. A new pilot joint learning event will provide a useful opportunity to test and fine tune this revised approach. With the support of GTZ as in-country lead donor, a pilot joint learning event will be held in Benin from 23 to 25 November 2011. Given the pilot nature of the event, participants will be asked to provide feedback through a more intensive evaluation process than would normally be adopted and a representative of the Executive Committee will attend.

14. Two other joint learning events are in the pipeline after the Benin pilot. Irish Aid and GTZ are joining forces to support organising an event in Uganda, possibly before the end of 2010. Some interest has also been expressed in organising an event in Nicaragua.

15. There is an urgent need to identify the locations for the remaining joint learning events. POVNET members are invited to contact their country offices to explore the possibility of supporting organisation of a developing country-based joint learning event. Further information is available on the Train4Dev web site or by contacting Angela Langenkamp (at: angela.langenkamp@gtz.de) or Juliane Weymann (at: juliane.weymann@gtz.de).

III. Joint learning events on social protection

a) Background

16. At its meeting in October 2009, POVNET agreed to focus on a limited number of specific activities in order to pursue its objective of encouraging more effective implementation of the POVNET messages on promoting pro-poor growth. One of these activities was preparation of a proposal for the Train4Dev Network to consider at its annual meeting in 2010 to develop a joint learning event on social protection.

17. A POVNET Interest Group was subsequently formed which developed such a proposal, in the form of a concept note. This concept note was circulated to members of the Train4Dev Network and discussed at Train4Dev’s Annual Meeting in Marseille in June 2010.

2. Specifically at:  
http://www.train4dev.net/index.php?id=68&tx_mjseventpro_pi1[showUid]=267&cHash=9deb737657&recentView=listView

3. The concept note is available on the Train4Dev web site at:  
http://www.train4dev.net/fileadmin/Resources/Meetings_documents/ConceptNoteSocialProtection.pdf
18. At its Annual Meeting, the Train4Dev Network agreed to the formation of a new Sub-Group on Social Protection, to develop a joint learning event and encourage the opening up to other donors of existing courses on social protection. Representatives from Austria, EuropeAid, Finland, Germany, the ILO, Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the World Bank Institute expressed their support for this initiative, some indicating a readiness to provide financial support. Timo Voipio from Finland was asked to convene the first meeting of the Sub-Group.

b) Recent developments

19. The Train4Dev Sub-Group on Social Protection met for the first time on 29 September 2010, at the OECD. Representatives from EuropeAid, Finland, Germany, the United Kingdom, ILO-ITC, OECD, UNRISD and HelpAge International participated. Austria and Ireland sent their apologies.

20. The Sub-Group elected Timo Voipio (POVNET Vice-Chair) as its Chair (initially until the Train4Dev Annual Meeting in mid 2011) and asked Germany to take the lead on behalf of the Sub-Group (initially until the Train4Dev Annual Meeting in mid 2011).

21. As a first step, the Sub-Group agreed to approach some experienced trainers who are already delivering courses on social protection to ask them to build on this experience and existing materials (including materials based on POVNET work) to develop a pilot Train4Dev module on Social Protection. The specificity of the Train4Dev module would be that it is three days in duration, takes place in a developing country, involves a range of stakeholders from government, civil society and the donor community and goes beyond cash transfers to cover broader issues of policy, political economy, capacity and the institutional processes needed to build or strengthen national systems of social protection. It could also include a regional dimension.

22. The Sub-Group also asked the OECD to investigate how existing courses on social protection of interest to other donors can be announced on the Train4Dev web site.

c) Next steps

23. All POVNET members able to contribute to and finance the joint learning events on social protection are invited to join the new Train4Dev Sub-Group. This can be done by contacting the Chair Timo Voipio (at: timo.voipio@formin.fi) or the Lead Agency Co-ordinator, Christian Pfleiderer (at: christian.pfleiderer@gtz.de).

24. The Sub-Group plans to meet again in November/early December to take forward preparations of a pilot joint learning event on Social Protection. By that time, a response from the invited consultants is expected, a location for a pilot event may have been identified and there should be more information on the financial resources available to support this initiative.

25. Sub-Group members have been informed of the procedure for announcing their own courses on social protection on the Train4Dev web site (www.train4dev.net). Other POVNET members are invited to use the Train4Dev website as well to announce information about training events and training materials that they have developed and used on social protection (or indeed on any of the other themes on which the Train4Dev Network is currently engaged).