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DIIS REPORT

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Birgitte Lind Petersen and
Lars Engberg-Pedersen

Capacity Development of Central State Institutions in Fragile Situations

DIIS Report 2013:27

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ReCom

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The analysis and conclusions in the report do not necessarily reflect the views of any of these institutions and are the sole responsibility of the author(s).

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Abstract

This report analyses foreign aid to capacity development in central state institutions in fragile situations. The report discusses five cases with relatively successful outcomes in Afghanistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia and South Sudan

These cases show that interventions tend to succeed if they *fit well* the given situation and context (donor, sector, conflict etc.). This does not imply conforming to the context. In some cases the initiative, which seems to fit the context, may be one that finds a window of opportunity to confront specific malfunctions.

Several issues appear as vital for change to occur: First, there has to be strong motivation for capacity development to occur. Second, people are central to institutional change and there is a need to pay close attention both internal and external staff. Third, working with the external relations and environment of an institution may lead to a push for institutional change. Finally, there is a need to balance change in formal systems and procedures with alteration of internal hierarchies and power relations.

List of Abbreviations

CCD: Curriculum Development Department
CCSSP: Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project
DAC: Development Assistance Committee
Danida: Danish International Development Assistance
DfID: Department for International Development
DIIS: Danish Institute for International Studies
EMIS: Education Management Information Systems
GEMAP: Governance and Economic Management Assistance
IATI: The International Aid Transparency Initiative
IGAD: The Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IGP: Inspector General of Police
IIEP: International Institute for Educational Planning
IMF: International Monetary Fund
LECBS: The Liberia Emergency Capacity Building Support Project
MDGs: Millennium Development Goals
MoE: Ministry of Education
NESP: National Education Strategic Plan
NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation
NUPI: Norwegian Institute for International Affairs
ODA: Official Development Assistance
OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAR: Public Administration Reform
P&G: Pay and Grade
PSGs: Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals
RRA: The Rwanda Revenue Authority
SES: Senior Executive Service
SLP: Sierra Leone Police
TA: Technical Assistance
TOKTEN: Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals
UK: United Kingdom
UN: United Nations
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID: United States Agency for International Development

Executive Summary

This report examines aid to capacity development of central state institutions in fragile and conflict-affected situations. It is a part of the Research and Communication Programme on Foreign Aid under the theme 'Governance and Fragility', examining 'what works in development aid'. The report analyses different approaches to capacity development that have yielded positive results in different fragile contexts.

Given the strong donor focus on statebuilding in fragile situations and support to strengthening administrative capacity of central state institutions as a way to ensure this, the study has the following objectives:

- Analyse different approaches to capacity development and their effectiveness
- Assess how the context (external and internal to the organisation/sector in question) is taken into consideration in this support
- Discuss different factors that explain why certain types of support produce relatively positive results
- Establish issues of general relevance for donors supporting capacity development in fragile situations

Capacity building is a rather broad term that potentially encompasses everything from strengthening of individual capabilities to enhancing the administrative and systemic capacities of institutions and organisations. For analytical clarity, the report draws on a very systematic and applicable approach developed by Boesen and Therkildsen for Danida in 2004. It perceives state institutions as *open systems*, distinguises between *technical–rational* and *political–power* related aspects of capacity development, and focuses on *institutional output* as a main indicator of capacity development. The study also analyses what implications various forms of capacity development have for (re)-establishing the social contract between a state and its citizens.

The report covers existing evaluations and reviews, as well as position papers and academic studies. The analysis concentrates on available, relevant, and well-documented cases of successful capacity development support: that is support which enhances institutional performance measured in output. These cases have been selected according to available independent documentation of capacity development and with the aim to discuss positive experiences with a range of applied capacity development

methods in fragile situations. In selecting the cases a secondary concern has been to represent sectors of fundamental importance to peace and statebuilding (according to the New Deal among others). The cases chosen are:

1 A multi-faceted case of capacity development within the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan, with the primary focus on aid provided by Danida and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)
2 A capacity development initiative overhauling all aspects of tax administration in Rwanda
3 A case of capacity development of the police force in Sierra Leone that was donor dependent and relied heavily on one appointed person
4 The use of diaspora and senior nationals for capacity development in Liberia
5 The case of South–South driven capacity development in South Sudan

Main findings

The need to support central state institutions in fragile situations by prioritising capacity development has recently been elevated to a shared global concern through the New Deal. Peacebuilding and statebuilding are perceived as the most important aims of aid, and capacity development is central to achieving these. The emphasis on a country-led process indicates the need to develop capacities to lead such processes. Also, the commitment to joint development of a plan, support to political dialogue and leadership, results, transparency, risk sharing, use and strengthening of country systems and finally the strengthening of capacities, all depends on or encompasses strong elements of capacity development. UNDP, a lead agency working with capacity, now explicitly states that 'Capacity *is* Development' (UNDP 2012). Capacity, in other words, is the sine qua non for any kind of improvement and change, especially in fragile situations.

There is no one right way to support or carry out capacity development in fragile situations. The literature abounds with general recommendations regarding optimising of support. These are concerned to find 'best practices'. This report adds to such general insights but concentrates on documented cases and the major lessons arising from the analysis of these. Following this analytical approach, the cases are all examples of capacity development in state institutions that have produced positive output at various levels.

Overall, the findings of this report show that there are rarely uniform best practices. Rather, there are interventions which *fit well* to the given situation and context (donor, sector, conflict etc.) This does not imply conforming to the context. In some cases, the initiative which seems to fit the need, context and situation, may be one that finds a window of opportunity to confront the specific technical–rational and not least political aspects of the context.

Capacity development: start from needs, opportunities and motivation

There are many good reasons to continue the strong focus on capacity development of state institutions when supporting fragile states. The most convincing of these is the fact that many of these countries themselves emphasise that it is a top priority. The report has found the following points to be of main importance, when capacity development is supported:

Cases of successful capacity development have started from *strong motivation and commitment by either the political leadership or key persons in the state institution*. As such, it is a demand-driven process. The cases clearly show that strong leadership and commitment are crucial factors for capacity development. In Afghanistan it was the Minister of Education and, after the advisor-driven formulation of the NESP-I, also senior management staff who were motivated to take over the process themselves. In Sierra Leone and Liberia there was direct support and a mandate from the Presidents. Finally, when donors align with and stand behind the recipient country's own policies and plans, motivation among the leadership may evolve, as has been the case in Afghanistan where, for example, Danida's flexible support has been highly appreciated. At another level motivation can be created when committed people are posted in key positions. The diaspora and national professionals brought into Liberian institutions have shown great commitment to their work, and acted in close alliance with the President.

Quickly initiated changes that break with past ways of doing things have created remarkable results. These then need to be supported in the long term to avoid setbacks. This conclusion deviates from the present agenda of capacity development where pre-assessment and slow, locally initiated changes are emphasised. We do not argue against incremental processes, but the cases show that change with great real and symbolic value (for example a massive clean-up of staff), sometimes externally initiated (but with strong local backing) have pushed institutions into a momentum

where incremental changes then started to occur. This was the case with RRA in Rwanda and with capacity development initiatives in state institutions of Liberia. Also quick visible changes such a new uniforms and equipment can have important symbolic value of indicating change and getting public support as was the case in the police in Sierra Leone.

Good things evolve, but not necessarily as results of a grand plan. The cases of the Rwanda revenue authority and Sierra Leone police reform show that the most remarkable changes have occurred without following a grand plan. All the cases show that capacity is developed through numerous incremental, small and meticulous actions and rarely as a large, designed process. Much is about momentum and finding pocket of motivated people within an organisation.

Sometimes *capacity development of an entire sector may be started by a focus on one of its branches* where motivation and backup are strong. The case of security sector reform in Sierra Leone may be used to show exactly this. Although there was a criticism that the police had received special attention compared to justice institutions, it can also be argued that it was precisely because the police were prioritised, and thus large changes could be made in a short period of time, that it became possible to motivate and start reforming other elements such as the law and court systems. In other words, capacity development initiatives need not start with an overall sector reform.

Capacity develops on an ad hoc basis. Sudden and context specific windows of opportunity arise and, when supported, have produced great results. Clearly, there needs to be a balance between having certain plans and long-term objectives and then flexibility to allow for changes in these when sudden opportunities arise. Where this has been successful, there has been a trusting partnership between the donor and recipient government/organisation (e.g. DfID in Rwanda, UK in Sierra Leone, UNDP in Liberia)

Capacity development of central state institutions should be connected to the external environment. State institutions are open systems and as such they can be influenced by and also influence the public. This is rarely considered in capacity development initiatives. The Rwanda revenue authority is an example of an institution that acknowledged this relation, and attempted to 'brand' itself in the public and thereby enhance its capacity by being perceived as a leading employer and thus attracting qualified staff. Similarly, the strong focus on creating public support through the 'Local Needs Policing', as part of the reform of the Sierra Leonean Police, increased public trust in the police and thus the motivation to perform among some staff.

Context assessment is important, but may best be based on people who have inside knowledge, people who are already there. Fragile countries and those affected by conflict are often characterised by mistrust, corruption and various malpractices in the state administration. Therefore, analysis of needs, of existing systems and capacities, of informal power relations and hierarchies are pivotal for capacity development to succeed. Such analysis is not always best done by external teams coming in and making large-scale assessments, but rather by people – external or internal – who have intimate knowledge of what goes on the ground. The British Inspector General of Police for example, had been in Sierra Leone for several years before he was chosen to lead the reform process. In Rwanda, a full-time project manager served as the link between DfID and the RRA management and helped ensure that decisions on what to support were guided by assessments of need and commitment as perceived by RRA management.

Capacity is developed by people and with people – what works when posting experts?

All the analysed cases use advisors or experts to initiate, facilitate and, in some cases, run the capacity development process. In Afghanistan the MoE received a large number of international and national advisors; in Rwanda, technical expertise played a main role; in Sierra Leone, an external expert led the process; in South Sudan, regional twins are being posted to work alongside South Sudanese staff; and in Liberia posting and appointing of diaspora professionals and national experts from various walks of life constituted a backbone of post-war capacity development. Hence, special attention is given to what has worked when using expert personnel.

Gap filling may strengthen the system considerably and be fundamental for capacity development and institutional change, especially if it makes alterations to internal politics. Deployment of Technical Advisors (TAs), although often criticised as unsustainable in terms of capacity development, has actually in some cases built capacity. TAs do not develop staff capacity unless there is direct guidance and measures to do so. However, TAs have been central in changing some systems, in formal functional–rational terms as well as challenging political hierarchies and practices. In Liberia, there has been a conscious strategy to recruit and appoint national professionals in key positions (with TA privileges) in various state institutions, and this gap filling has yielded important results in terms of output of the institutions as well as of the sections within the institutions where these experts have been posted. Being internal,

but with years of external experience, several of the senior professionals have been able to question vested interests and internal politics. In Sierra Leone, the highly UK-driven process changed fundamental procedures and policies, for example by introducing 'Local Needs Policing', which was unlikely to have been initiated without the influence of someone intertwined in the local cultural and political systems. It is a balance, however, because external experts can also create local resentment of changes and jealousy, and build up systems that collapse when they leave.

Salaries are important for staff motivation for capacity development. Not only is there a need to pay attention to salary differences between TAs and local staff to avoid demotivation, the Rwanda case also shows that prioritising a competitive salary may change the public image and standing of an institution and thus attract capable staff that push further changes along. It is worth considering whether it may in some instances be worthwhile prioritising higher salaries and fewer personnel to increase the overall capacity of an institution.

Cultural affinity and professional expertise both play a role when deployment of TAs results in capacity development of systems and staff in central state institutions. Some sort of cultural affinity as is the case with diaspora nationals, national experts and regional advisors, enables a better understanding of the challenges and potentials on the part of the advisor, and creates greater trust and acceptance for civil servants. Nonetheless, cultural affinity has also created challenges. Because advisors (whether diaspora or from a neighbouring country) and civil servants feel culturally similar, differences in payment, for example, have sometimes appeared more provocative. Clearly, cultural affinity cannot stand alone; advisors and experts are expected to bring in professional expertise, and some fresh external eyes as well. They have to be able to challenge the status quo.

It seems that *regional South–South cooperation may be the way forward*. Succinctly put, it is cheaper, and of equal professional standard to post expertise from neighbouring countries where state institutions. In addition such seconded officers are aware of the governance challenges and corruption problems and have experience with similar internal politics. Still, they have an outsiders' position. This is often combined with a 'sense of brotherhood' and thus motivation and commitment on both sides. The Sierra Leonean case counters this, but close personal affiliation to the president and a sensitive process had the same effect of generating affinity and commitment. It is argued that advisors are used to corruption in their own countries, and some may

thus be more pragmatic about it and thereby manage to make things work when posted in a fragile setting. This may enhance capacity development, as has been the case in Liberia and South Sudan.

Capacity development can help strengthening the social contract. From the cases analysed here there are a few factors that emerge to be of importance to (re)establish or strengthen the social contract between a state and the citizen: One is paying attention to changing the public image of institutions through campaigns and active institutional engagement with the public, as has been the case in with the Revenue Authority in Rwanda and the police in Sierra Leone. Another is making visible and symbolically significant changes such as building schools and enrolling girls as has been the case in Afghanistan, or by installing a host of nationally accepted personnel to indicate a sincere effort at creating change across the range of state institutions as in South Sudan and Liberia.

Balancing the change of tangible systems and internal power relations and hierarchies

The report has analysed the cases in terms of how capacity development has sought to alter functional–rational aspects as well as the political aspects of state institutions and the following conclusions emerge:

The cases have *all attempted to challenge the internal politics and power hierarchies but focussed mainly on systems and procedures to do so.* What seems to have been of great importance in several cases (Afghanistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Liberia) has been to make large-scale clean-ups of staffing and ranking systems, to rid organisations of shadow employees and to challenge outright vested interests etc. through systemic change.

Donor aided capacity development in fragile situations has (as it should have judging from the cases) a strong focus on the technical—rational aspects of an organisation. In recent years there has been a strong focus on the political aspects, the need to pay close attention to altering the informal systems and hierarchies existing within organisations, especially in fragile situations. This report contends that sometimes externally supported change of fundamental procedures, if backed by committed leadership, can spur changes and capacity development in internal politics.

None of the cases presented here started the capacity development work based on large-scale context assessments. However, those involved in decision making regarding capacity development were often insiders to the context (even an outsider like the UK citizen Keith Biddle, had worked in Sierra Leone for several years prior to being appointed Inspector General of Police). Clearly, capacity development models cannot be exported independent of context. But it seems that *context assessments need to be based to a larger degree on people who are actually there*. And rather than merely assessing needs and deficiencies (although important of course), they should look for motivation, committed people and immediate opportunities for supporting institutional change through capacity development. Again, this underpins the initial point of finding the good fit in a given situation, which may confront contextual malfunctions.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, some overall recommendations emerge that donors need to consider when supporting capacity development in fragile situations:

- *Find a good fit with the given context and situation*
  This is the overall recommendation encompassing the following

- *Build on existing good relations with a recipient country*
  When possible – build on existing partnerships as trust and long-term cooperation has proven to be a vital factor for changing the way systems and people work

- *Base support on commitment and leadership*
  Look for strongly committed institutions and persons to find appropriate pockets for initiating quick capacity development

- *Support ad hoc evolutions and on a long-term basis*
  Allow time and phase-wise definition of needs and targets to overhaul an entire organisation. Start with motivated pockets and continue on an ad hoc basis as defined by those on the ground

- *Pay specific attention to the external environment*
  Pay attention to the external linkages and the environment of an organisation and support changes in the public perception of an institution, as this may fuel internal change

- *Ensure initial, bold, symbolic changes*
  Focus on initiating some changes that markedly break with previous ways of doing things as these can lay the basis for institutional change and capacity development

- *Prioritise regional South–South capacity development*
  Judging from the example of IGAD in Southern Sudan, it is clearly recommendable to put more resources into facilitating regional South–South exchange of professionals for capacity development purposes.

1. Introduction

Development of institutions and capacity has constituted an important issue for many years in development cooperation. In fragile contexts statebuilding has been elevated to the crux of the matter, and capacity development is perceived as an important means to reach that end. OECD/DAC's ten principles for good international engagement in fragile situations (OECD/DAC 2007) cover a lot of ground, but the central idea in the paper, as well as in many other documents on the subject, is the importance of statebuilding. Recently, with the establishment of the New Deal for Peace and Development, peacebuilding and statebuilding are reaffirmed at the most important goals in fragile situations (www.newdeal4peace.org). The term 'statebuilding' has been anchored in state–society relations and defined "as an endogenous process to develop capacity, institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state–society relationships." (OECD/DAC 2008: 1). The basic idea is to establish a social contract in which "citizens' expectations of the state and state expectations of citizens are reconciled and brought into equilibrium with the state's capacity to deliver services." (OECD/DAC 2008: 7). Fulfilling the aspirations of populations and ambitions of governments in fragile situations for peace, stability and development, requires substantial improvement of capacities in the public sector, the private sector and civil society. This report focuses on capacity development of the public sector, which is considered to be the most essential for fulfilling aspirations. Administrative capacity of central state institutions is one important element of statebuilding in fragile situations. Broadly, this includes "a reasonably well functioning civil service and public financial management system and the ability to raise funds, particularly through taxation" (OECD/DAC 2008: 2). The present report concentrates on this administrative capacity and takes a result-oriented approach, focusing on the output (better services, more efficient procedures, transparent procedures etc.) produced by capacity development (Boesen and Therkildsen 2004, 2005).

States that are described as fragile are very diverse, some being almost non-existent, others having strong coercive forces. Strengthening the capacity of the state will in some countries be relatively straightforward and respond to people's concerns. In other countries state institutions will pursue policies unacceptable to donors, or that do not respond to the needs of the majority of the population. Accordingly, statebuilding takes a substantially different character in different contexts, and capacity development has to be analysed and approached in this light.

Most capacity development efforts in developing countries have taken place as solutions to perceived problems in specific organisations by supporting change in structures and procedures, or by providing various forms of training and technical assistance. While this has created 'islands of success' evidence shows that it has not led to broad systemic enhancement of capacity in the public sector (Boesen and Therkildsen 2004). One major reason is the tendency of donors and governments to opt for 'quick fix' solutions that concentrate on technical, formal building of capacity without considering external and internal politics and power relations that are arguably the decisive factors for whether capacity development occurs (Brinkenhoff 2010).

Fragile states are especially sensitive to capacity development attempts because existing capacity is weak and scattered, and because different systems of patronage, power hierarchies and internal politics determine how things work. This study attempts to analyse aid practices that have led to an enhanced capacity in central state institutions in specific fragile contexts, judging from their output on the core responsibilities, and their impact on state legitimacy. It will discuss what general learning can be extracted from these and provide recommendations for donors.

Objectives

Given the strong donor focus on statebuilding in fragile situations and support to strengthening administrative capacity of central state institutions as a way to ensure this, the study has the following objectives:

- Analyse the output of different approaches to capacity development
- Assess how the context (external and internal to the organisation/sector in case) is taken into consideration in this support
- Discuss different factors that explain why certain support produces relatively positive results
- Establish issues of general relevance for donors supporting capacity development in fragile situations

The study will focus on examples from fragile situations but include insights from capacity development in non-fragile contexts, where relevant.

Approach

Capacity development is a rather broad term that potentially encompasses everything from strengthening of individual capabilities to enhancing the administrative and systemic capacities of institutions and organisations. UNDP, a lead organisation on capacity development, defines it as a process "through which individuals, organisations, and societies obtain, strengthen, and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time" (UNDP 2012a:20). While this reveals the breadth of capacity development, it is unsuitable as an analytical definition. Therefore, for analytical clarity, the report draws on a very systematic and applicable approach developed by Boesen and Therkildsen for Danida in 2004. It is not developed for situations of fragility, but it is flexible and thus applicable in various situations. Following Boesen and Therkildsen (2004), capacity is 'the ability of an organisation to produce appropriate outputs', and this can be at an overall level as well as in networks of organisations and in sub-units of a specific organisation. For example, capacity development of a revenue collecting authority can be measured in its ability to collect and administer taxes. At a sub-unit level, capacity development of specific units within an organisation can be measured in the unit's ability to deliver its core tasks.

A focus on outputs (services, products) is useful as an analytical vantage point. Outcome and impact are important, but to determine the capacity of an organisation, we must consider the outputs (the outcome and impact depend, to a larger extent, on other factors than just the organisational capacity). In order to assess, whether capacity has been developed there are three elements to the output (or result) oriented approach applied here:[1]

First, organisations must be understood as *open systems*, influenced by structural and institutional factors and various agents inside and outside the organisation's realm of influence. This implies an analysis of how the context, and especially the public, influence and are influenced by the organisation. Second, *functional–rational* and *political* perspectives are both important to understand, and the relative importance of each will depend on the context and organisation at stake. Procedures, structures and staff may need upgrading, but most often it is the power relations, conflicts, pursuit of personal and vested interests and capturing of organisational resources that determine and constitute an organisation's capacity. Third, we should *avoid looking at deficiencies* but rather analyse what is actually there.

1 Output is the result of the given capacity of an organisation. Therefore, the 'result oriented' approach is essentially concerned with output (Boesen and Therkildsen 2004).

Applying this approach, the report will concentrate on documented output (at various levels) of capacity development interventions, and discuss to what extent the different approaches and practices encompass the functional–rational aspects and the political aspects of a given organisation, how context has been considered in different interventions and what lessons can be learned from the cases.

While such an approach can help analyse the impact of capacity development efforts in organisations, it does not consider impact for the population because it is difficult to make direct connections between capacity development and impact. The latter depends on several other factors (local context, people's behaviour etc.) Nonetheless, this report also discusses the implications of certain capacity development programmes for the public, and their perception of the state. Capacity development initiatives are to enhance state legitimacy thus it is important to discuss how various approaches have affected public perceptions and relations with the given institution and the state. In fragile situations where the state is extremely weak, malfunctioning and characterised by corruption and lack of, or virtually non-existent, legitimacy, capacity development must contribute to increased state legitimacy.[2] A main characteristic of fragility is a weak or dissolved social contract between the state and its citizens, and thus absence of state legitimacy. Such a social contract is the foundation for statebuilding and for ensuring peace and, therefore, ideally, capacity development of state institutions should be measured according to whether it strengthens the social contract and enhances state legitimacy (UNDP 2012a, b). The case findings will therefore be used to discuss impact on the population and the public view of the state, as well as on specific state institutions and thus issues of legitimacy and implications for the social contract.

Methodology

The report covers existing evaluations and reviews, as well as position papers and academic studies. While capacity development is an integral part of almost every programme document from international organisations, NGOs, donors and governments, documentations of the practices and the actual outputs are few and often only amount to, say, a half page in an overall country programme or sector support evaluation. There is not much thorough documentation of capacity development in fragile situations and there is generally a dearth of data on conflict-affected and fragile contexts. Moreover, capacity development support may only produce results

2 It is clearly a dilemma, that donors risk supporting attempts to create legitimacy of illegitimate states or governments in an attempt to enhance stability.

in the long run, and are thus not documented. These are challenges that affect the depth and comparability of available material. Therefore, by drawing on an analytical approach that perceives public sector organisations as open systems, embedded in specific contexts, and in which functional–rational and political aspects are equally important, the study also attempts to analyse whether evaluations and studies cover grounds that may not be linked to capacity development (in the evaluation) but still be of importance to real life capacity development.

The analysis concentrates on available, relevant, and well-documented cases of successful capacity development support. The aim is not to discuss cost and efficiency but to focus on documented development of capacity. To the extent possible, we have selected cases from different regions/contexts and different sectors but the main aim has been to find documentation of a number of successful approaches. Success is determined according to output of the organisation in question, and the different evaluations and studies' perceptions of successful capacity development. It is a challenge to apply a systematic analytical outline and approach to the different cases because they are very different and concentrate on a range of parameters. Some are extensive and provide documentation on a multitude of aspects, including reflections on the reasons for the findings, others more factual and only list outcomes. Others again lack systematic documentation but build on success stories and personal interviews. Some focus more on efficiency and outcome, others pay more attention to the different challenges. Some focus on systems, others draw in more qualitative information on personal relations etc. Hence, although cases are selected because they provide information on capacity development which we can learn from, they cannot be presented in a completely similar and systematic way. In terms of conclusions, the report uses the insight from the selected cases, backed by general findings, to draw out some of the most important new practices and lessons learned from capacity development in fragile states. Available evaluations and studies often concentrate on input and some documentation of outcome. They have rarely documented the impact for the population and how it affects state legitimacy. When possible, academic studies are used to supplement the findings of evaluations in the aspect of state legitimacy and social contract.

The cases are selected according to available independent documentation of capacity development and with an attempt to discuss positive experiences with a range of applied capacity development methods in fragile situations. In selecting the cases a

secondary concern has been to represent sectors of fundamental importance to peace and statebuilding (according to New Deal etc.)[3] The examples include:

1 A multi-faceted case of capacity development within the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan, with primary focus on aid provided by Danida and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)
2 A capacity development initiative overhauling all aspects of tax administration in Rwanda
3 A case of capacity development of the police in Sierra Leone which was heavily influenced by one donor and one person
4 The use of diaspora and senior nationals for capacity development of central state institutions in Liberia
5 The case of regional South–South driven capacity development in South Sudan

Capacity development in fragile situations – donor priorities

Capacity development is a primary concern emphasised by donors supporting fragile states. It is perceived as the main road to peacebuilding and statebuilding, which should be the primary aim for all support in fragile states according to the OECD-DAC and the New Deal.[4]

It has long been assumed that the main way to attain development and economic growth in developing countries was to provide skills and know-how.[5] From the 1990s the primary goal of development aid became *capacity building,* which entailed that skills and technologies were to be transferred through an externally and top-down defined process. A decade later, with a growing concern with linkages between development and statebuilding, donors realised the need to focus more on local ownership and accountability. The need for more incremental and endogenous processes was emphasised so that national capacity was developed independent of donor agendas (Brinkerhoff 2007a). The approach to capacity moved away from *capacity building* towards *capacity development* (da Costa et al. 2012b).[6] Capacity *development* entails

3 Based on the World Bank experience of capacity building in fragile situations Pradhan (2009) argues that it is important to select a few entry points for initial support where results are visible and feasible. He suggests 1) governance of resource use (revenue collection, budget management and procurement, extractive industries for example), and 2) delivery of basic services (security, health, education).
4 The World Bank (2009) and DfID have been a strong proponent of this focus e.g. Teskey 2005
5 In the 1960s development aid took the form of 'technical assistance' programmes. In the 1970s, 'technical co-operation' programmes insisted on a more equal relationship between donor and recipient, and methods included provision of short-term foreign experts and equipment as well as training courses in donor countries.
6 This conceptual change is apparent in publications of organisations such as UNDP and in project descriptions.

a country-driven process that starts from existing practices and capacities. Context has thus taken centre stage. As da Costa (et al 2012b:3) argue "the most important lesson learned from the last decades of international statebuilding is, not surprisingly, that government institutions and civil servants cannot be installed from above. Rather, responsive and functioning state institutions need to grow out of the local political, social and cultural context to embody local expectations, beliefs, practices and capacities".

The UNDP now explicitly states that 'Capacity *is* Development' (UNDP 2012). Capacity, in other words, is the sine qua non for any kind of improvement and change, especially in fragile situations. The issue of capacity is intimately linked to the notion of fragility, as weak capacity is perceived as the reason why states are fragile because it hinders peace and development. Therefore, the need to support fragile situations by prioritising capacity development has recently been elevated to a shared global concern through the New Deal (see Box). Peacebuilding and statebuilding are primary concerns and, clearly, the different points show that capacity development is central to achieve these. The emphasis on a country-led process indicates the need to develop capacities to lead such a process. The joint development of a plan, support to political dialogue and leadership, commitment for results, transparency, risk sharing, use and strengthening of country systems and finally the strengthening of capacities, all depend on or encompass strong elements of capacity development.

The New Deal

I) The Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals (PSGs) are a crucial foundation to enable progress towards the MDGs and to guide the work in fragile and conflict-affected states. The five PSGs are:

Legitimate politics: Foster inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution.

Security: Establish and strengthen people's security.

Justice: Address injustices and increase people's access to justice.

Economic Foundations: Generate employment and improve livelihoods.

Revenues & Services: Manage revenue and build capacity for accountable and fair service delivery

2) Country-led pathways out of fragility

As part of the New Deal, we commit to FOCUS on new ways of engaging with conflict-affected and fragile states including the following:

Fragility assessment
We will conduct a periodic country-led assessment on the causes and features of fragility and sources of resilience as a basis for the 'one vision, one plan' strand of the strategy. The assessment will include key national stakeholders and non-state actors and will build upon a harmonised methodology, including a fragility spectrum, to be developed by the G7+ and supported by international partners.

One vision, one plan
Donors and governments will develop and support one national vision and one plan to transition out of fragility. This vision and plan will be country-owned and led, developed in consultation with civil society and based on inputs from the fragility assessment. Plans will be flexible so as to address short, medium and long-term peacebuilding and statebuilding priorities, and they will be the guiding framework for all country-led identification of priorities. They will be monitored, reviewed and adjusted in consultation with key stakeholders on an annual basis.

Create a Compact
A compact is a key mechanism to implement the 'one vision, one plan'. It will be drawn up from a broad range of views from multiple stakeholders and the public, and be reviewed annually through a multi-stakeholder review.

Use PSGs to monitor
The PSG targets and indicators will be used to make sure that country-level progress is closely monitored.

Support political dialogue and leadership
Donors will increase support for credible and inclusive processes of political dialogue, as well as supporting global, regional and national initiatives to build the capacity of government and civil society leaders and institutions, so that they can provide genuine leadership for peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts. We will also ensure that specific support is targeted to promote youth and women's participation in political dialogue and leadership initiatives.

3) Commitment for results

Donors and governments commit to build mutual TRUST by providing aid and managing resources more effectively, and also aligning these resources for better results.

An essential precondition for progress in all of the New Deal's commitments is to foster confidence between people, communities, the state and international partners. This involves delivering visible results quickly and on a continuous basis.

Transparency
We aim to ensure a much more transparent use of aid (ODA and non-ODA) in the future. This will be done by monitoring, through the DAC, overall resource flows to fragile states, and by tracking international assistance against individual goals. On a local level, countries receiving international support will strengthen (or, where necessary, support the creation and development of) national reporting and planning systems that take into account elements such as budgets, transparency portals or aid information management systems. They will also provide support to domestic oversight mechanisms including national parliaments.

Support to greater transparency of fiscal systems in a manner consistent with capacity and context, drawing from good practice, from the G7+ and agreed international benchmarks on transparency of aid resources (such as the International Aid Transparency Initiative [IATI] compatible standards). In addition to this, citizen's views will be solicited to assess the transparency of domestic resources and aid.

Risk sharing
Acceptance of the risk of engaging during transition, recognising that the risk of non-engagement in this context can outweigh almost any risk of engagement. Identify context-specific, joint donor risk mitigation strategies, which will require different approaches to risk management and capacity development. Conduct joint assessments of the specific risks associated with working in fragile situations to identify and use joint mechanisms to reduce and better manage risks so as to build the capacity of, and enhance the use of, country systems, to step up investments for peacebuilding and statebuilding priorities, and reduce aid volatility.

Use and strengthen country systems
Do what is required to enable the expanded use and strengthening of country systems. Governments receiving help will take all reasonable measures to strengthen their public financial management systems from the ground up, and be absolutely transparent about it. The aim is to build related fiduciary and administrative capacity within country institutions at national and local levels. International partners have also agreed to increase the percentage of aid delivered through country systems on the basis of measures and targets jointly agreed at the country level, while recipient governments will look to increase the proportion of public expenditure funded by domestic revenues.

Strengthen capacities
To ensure that fragile states can build critical capacities of civil and state institutions in a balanced manner, donors will increase the proportion of funds for capacity development through jointly administered and pool-funded facilities. They will also substantially reduce programme implementation units per institution and will target the use of external technical assistance, ensuring they report to the relevant national authority. It is also vitally important to work towards an understanding on remuneration codes of conduct between government and international partners for national experts, as well as facilitating the exchange of South–South and fragile–fragile experiences on transitions.

Timely and predictable aid
Develop simple and accountable fast-track financial management and procurement procedures to improve the speed and flexibility of aid delivery in fragile situations, and review national legal frameworks. Donors commit to increase the predictability of aid.

Source: www.newdeal4peace.org descriptions under 'Understanding the New Deal'

What does this focus imply in terms of the way donors and organisations work? According to UNDP (2010a), the most applied approaches to capacity development in fragile situations are the following:

- Staffing with diaspora
- Conventional technical assistance
- Programme management units
- Training
- Indirect capacity development: 'conflict mediation, space creation, buffering, mediation.'

New approaches are emerging, most notably South–South mentoring and coaching, while Programme Management Units, for example, are being minimised because they represent external responsibility. The cases analysed here cover some of these approaches as well as priority areas (PSGs in the box) of the New Deal. At the same time, the cases are examples of different donors' support and from a variety of contexts in order to pay attention to the emphasised importance of context.

Structure of the report

The following sections (2–6) will analyse specific cases applying the analytical approach and thus concentrate on analysing the *output* of specific interventions. The reasons behind positive results will be analysed; the challenges identified and, following the approach outlined above, the main findings and the extent to which the interventions focus on functional–rational aspects as well as political/power aspects will be discussed together with whether and how they affect the external or internal environment of the sector at stake. Finally, how the results of all the cases have influenced state legitimacy and the social contract between citizens and the state will be discussed. The last two sections (7 and 8) summarise conclusions and lessons learned based on the cases and provide recommendations for donors.

2. Multiple facets of capacity development within education in Afghanistan

Education is trumpeted as a major success story of development in Afghanistan. The large increase in school enrolments, especially for girls, is espoused as a primary reason to believe that things are changing. The case of education is special in that it focuses on capacity development of a sector that has, as its primary purpose, to build human capacity nationally. Hence, it is central to statebuilding in two ways: through capacity development of a central state institution, and through providing schooling and thus capacity to the general public who are the foundation of state legitimacy. The presented case draws on different stories of capacity development within the education sector in Afghanistan to reveal how multiple facets of capacity development may explain the success, and at the same time the immense challenges and dilemmas that come with it. The case is a success measured by its main institutional output: provision of education. In terms of capacity to deliver, it is less straightforward. One part of the case story is from a recent evaluation of Danish support to the education sector in Afghanistan (Danida 2012) and the others are from a larger study on capacity development within the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan, building on insights from the International Institute for Educational Planning, the Netherlands development cooperation (as a donor), an NGO coalition, the receiving government, and an analyst's perspectives (published by IIEP/UNESCO, ed. Sigsgaard 2011).[7] We concentrate on the IIEP and MoE contributions, as they are the most elaborate and well documented. The presented case, therefore, does not provide an exhaustive view of capacity development within the education sector in Afghanistan, but it does provide comprehensive, multifaceted and essential learning to one of recent years' most supported conflict-affected education systems. While the Danida evaluation is independent, the extensive study is not, as it is edited and partly written by IIEP staff. Nonetheless, it brings together many different voices, and actual documentation, and can thus contribute some useful learning, if cautiously analysed. For example the chapter by a representative from the Ministry of Education provides good documentation of tangible results and interesting reflections from the recipient side, a rather rose-tinted account of the more 'soft aspects' of capacity development. Similarly, IIEP and donors are interested in showing results and the editor seems to have bought into

7 There is also a section on an NGO alliance that coordinates all activities with central level directors but aims to build capacity at local level for community-based schools. This has been left out of the present study focussing on central level capacity development. DfID 2012, and Davies 2009 have also been consulted.

the positive story. A recent ReCom paper (de Weijer 2013) on Afghanistan adds a more critical view and is used in the discussion.

Context:

Afghanistan is one of the most complex and most aid-supported fragile situations of recent times. It is complex for many reasons, not least because several donor countries are involved in military interventions alongside the attempts to support development of state institutions and services.[8] Education is a central field in this regard because building schools and ensuring access, especially for girls, has provoked local resistance and required strengthened security. Education has been a priority of many donors as a means to build stability and attend to a widespread demand and grievance. Almost two decades of violent conflict followed by five years of Taliban rule until 2001 left the education system devastated. Two thirds of all schools were destroyed, female education had been banned, qualified teachers had either been killed or fled the country and the Ministry of Education had to been built from scratch (Danida 2012).[9] There was a fundamental need for capacity to reconstruct the education system, and almost complete lack of national capacity within the field. Moreover, after the fall of the Taliban, any remaining competent staff were attracted into national and international NGOs and UN agencies. In terms of the social contract, the state has been immensely distant and fundamentally illegitimate in the eyes of most Afghans, due to a history of nation building which was always only top-down, and where education was a tool for instilling the dominant ideology (Matsumoto 2011). Administration reform was planned after the collapse of the Taliban regime and the Bonn Agreement in 2001 as an essential step towards restructuring and development of the country, ensuring transparency and accountability of government institutions, and guaranteeing efficiency of service delivery. Accordingly, all government institutions, including the MoE, were subject to administration reform. The new organisational structure of the ministry was designed on the basis of the new educational needs and requirements. It is within this context that Danida, IIEP and other donors started their ambitious support to the education sector. The following implementation has taken place in a volatile security situation with constant threats, drawbacks and high staff turnover.

8 For a discussion of the security–development nexus in Danish, consult 'Dansk bistand som sikkerhedspolitisk instrument, 1992–2009, (Stepputat et al. 2012) and for the dilemma in Afghanistan 'Winning hearts and minds? Examining the relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan' by Fishstein and Wilder (2012).

9 The office building had no windows and broken doors. There was no equipment, stationary, filing cabinets, electricity, running water nor proper toilets. Only a few employees had ever used a computer, and even the most basic relevant information and statistics were lacking (Sigsgaard 2011: 60).

Objectives

Danida

Danida has supported the education sector in Afghanistan since 2003 and has committed in total 110.5 million USD up to 2013. The aim has been to enable access to schooling for all children through supporting a range of activities within the system; capacity development has been part of this but is not clearly singled out.

IIEP

The International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) has been partnered with the MoE's Department of Planning and Evaluation (DoPE) since 2002. The first major aim was to collaborate on making Afghanistan's first National Education Strategic Plan (NESP-I, 2006–2010), and its revision (NESP-II, 2010–2014). A key aim was to inspire national leadership and self-confidence in building up the education sector.

Ministry of Education

Capacity development has been a top priority of the MoE as a basis for exercising its duties.

Activities:

Danida

Danida has collaborated on management as a way to build capacity and used technical advisors, Danish and national, as the means to develop capacity within the MoE. It has also funded key staff to attend overseas training as well as their salaries and supplements. The majority of Danish support has been provided as general budget support, and thus followed MoE priorities and selected activities.[10]

IIEP

IIEP has employed a range of methods for capacity development:

- Mentoring of staff while writing the National Education Strategic Plan (NESP I 2006-2010) and, although to a lesser extent, the revision, NESP II (2010–2014). Mentoring and coaching is a primary tool for IIEP. It entails the sorting out of

10 Several donors consulted as part of the evaluation note that they find the strategy of budget support too risky.

problems and challenges in a personalised way and insists on aiding ministry staff throughout an entire plan developing process to ensure that it is participatory.[11]
- In-country training workshops
- In-depth training in educational planning and management
- Technical mentoring in the MoE during IIEP missions
- Distant support in form of guidance and comments on documents
- Permanent technical support
- Training in English and computer skills
- Placement of national TAs under the condition that their positions will be turned into permanent civil servants
- Advocacy to ensure policy support from the MoE leadership and other partners
- Dialogue with donors to ensure coordination and flexibility for a joint support to the capacity development efforts

IIEP's next task is to help the MoE develop training programmes for further domestic capacity development, including at provincial level.

Ministry of Education (MoE)

MoE have recruited hundreds of TAs funded by donors (exact number unknown as some TAs are recruited directly by donors), mostly Afghan refugees in neighbouring countries with English and computer skills and some sort of higher education. MoE bought capacity by recruiting international advisors, either directly or through international donors. The aim was to get technical advice and assistance in the daily performance of the MoE, and help with developing the capacities of the civil servants. The Ministry assessed the performance of all TAs in 2008 and terminated the contracts of a large number of them, especially in the Curriculum Development Department (CDD), as part of a strategy to use only a small and effective team of TAs to build the capacity of the system and of the civil servants and mentor the civil servants implementing the new systems.

The MoE has recruited the services of NGOs and private contractors in order to complement its capacity and accelerate service delivery. It has also contracted local, national and international companies for school construction and supply of educational materials and equipment.

11 IIEP work with learning through practice as "there is no blueprint for the planning process: it needs to be rediscovered empirically almost every time. Hence, no university-style training can teach MoE staff how to prepare a plan in a participatory way" (Gay and Sigsgaard 2012:77).

Output – capacity and performance:
Although not entirely feasible, the output from the different programmes will be listed separately. Each donor has had priority areas, but clearly, the overall achievement in school enrolments and the like cannot be attributed to a single programme.

Danida
Clear improvement in core output of the institution. The Danida evaluation notes that records for Danish programme outputs are scarce, but that it is evident that "Afghan education outcomes improved substantially and Danida clearly contributed"(2012:16). By 2008 for example, there were almost 8000 more schools, and six times as many enrolled students as in 2001. There were 170,000 teachers and education administration staff in 2008 compared to 64,000 in 2001, and 87 million text books were printed, which was a high priority of Danish aid. The evaluation notes that Danish aid contributed to textbook printing, while distribution continues to be a challenge.

Danida helped to *improve management capacity at the level of policy, strategy and systems.* The output indicating such capacity development is improved staff management, collection of school surveys and the fact that since 2008 the MoE has produced an Education Management Information System and has been able to start gathering and presenting data at the provincial level. The MoE also began to analyse issues of quality and access, which is a major achievement as analytical skills were previously completely absent (Sigsgaard 2012). Danida has thus contributed to increasing MoE capacity to collect and analyse data on national needs and performance. This has further justified *less earmarking from donors in recent programmes.*

IIEP
The major output resulting from IIEP support was *development of the NESP-I and NESP-II* (i.e. both the process and the product). This was achieved despite the fact that numerous attacks and threats to the MoE and schools took place during the plan development processes, which diverted the attention of the Minister and other core players. It is described as a great victory to have developed the first national education plan in decades, but as the study argues, "it was more of a utopian vision of what the education sector could look like than a clearly prioritised plan that stood a realistic chance of reaching its goals"(Gay and Sigsgaard 2011:78).

NESP-II was produced with less technical assistance and with 'remarkable strength and self-confidence' from the Department of Planning and Evaluation (Gay and Sigsgaard 2011:82), which may be a result of the experience gained during NESP-I.

MoE departments were consulted and contributed actively to the process of drafting the plan. This again ensured stronger situational analysis and formulation of policies and strategies by those who were, in fact, to implement them afterwards. Many advisors from various agencies were still aiding the process, commenting on drafts. But Gay and Sigsgaard (2011:83) argue that the fact that the first draft of NESP-II was written in Dari is in itself a sign of an MoE-driven process.[12]

At a less intangible level, it is noted that the *MoE is 'demonstrating the will and capacity' to lead the donor group* as of 2010 (Gay and Sigsgaard 2012:85).

MoE – the recipient point of view[13]

In terms of its end output, the MoE has *expanded the provision of schooling* from 1 million children in 2001 to 7 million in 2009 – that is a seven-fold increase in eight years. This is a remarkable success because as Arefee notes (2011:96) "few organisations in more 'normal' contexts expand the scale of their programmes beyond 30 per cent each, since developing capacity to cater for expansion is usually not feasible".

The MoE counterpart of the IIEP project lists the following output:

- Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) developed
- Public Administration Reform (PAR) launched
- A staffing incentive scheme called Pay and Grade (P&G) created
- Coordination mechanisms such as the Human Resource Development Board in place
- Planning processes and plan documents (NESP-I and -II) finalised.

The initial administration reform led to a restructuring, which included structural expansion of the ministry its services and the development of new rules, regulations and procedures, including terms of reference for departments and individuals at all levels (Arefee 2011:109).

MoE has been supported to *establish a National Institute for Capacity Development* within the Human Resource Department in 2009. The institute is to train MoE staff at central and local levels in administration and management as well as in computer

12 One of Afghanistan's two national languages, and the one traditionally used in state administration.

13 Although there are overlaps with output listed under Danida and IIEP, the MoE view is presented because it is valuable to understand how a receiving institution perceives capacity development achievements.

skills and English language. As of 2010, 20% of central level staff had been trained (Arefee 2011:114), but there is no indication of whether the learning is being applied.

In many cases, *the strategy to subcontract construction, supply of materials and delivery of education to NGOs and others, has been successful and cost effective in addressing the supply side capacity gap.* For example, the MoE itself was unable to build thousands of schools without deploying private construction companies. Children would remain without access to education for many years if CBE were not supported by NGOs in rural areas.

The MoE asserts that *the use of TAs has had temporary positive effects in addressing the urgent needs* of the education system by enabling fast implementation of development projects such as teacher training, textbook development, construction projects, and provision of support services such as procurement and financial management.

The fact that Danida and IIEP collaborated with MoE on documents such as the EMIS and NESP engendered some capacity development and enabled donor coordination at the same time. The IIEP study notes that the MoE gained self-confidence in the process which is arguably a prerequisite for the ability to commit and engage, but exactly who this applies to and how widespread such self-confidence is, is not clear.

Factors explaining the positive results

National commitment and dedicated leadership within the education sector have been key in the positive change taking place. IIEP highlights the central role played by Education Minister Amitsar (which is not similarly emphasised in the Danida evaluation). A strong and committed leader, Minister Amitsar, was indispensable to having the NESP formulated and reform processes started.

Trustful partnerships are required for high-level political backing, and these take time to develop. Decade-long engagements in Afghanistan allowed both agencies to gain credibility and develop trusting partnerships with the MoE. Besides lengthy engagement, donors and partners with flexible approaches that allow for ad hoc adjustments and delivering support when need arises, builds trust and enables rapid responses (both IIEP and Danida). In addition, Danida is praised for being non-bureaucratic by MoE staff.

Donor flexibility, pragmatism and long-term commitment have been helpful. Both

donors are praised for showing flexibility, and taking 'responsible risks', e.g. by permitting sudden project changes and accepting participatory design instead of long-term plans. This case reveals that pragmatic and basic solutions have been sought. There is no right way or overarching script. It is important to start where there is a need and a commitment initially, even if priorities may seem mundane. The capacity development partnerships with the MoE often began with basic infrastructure, such as supplying office space or teaching generic skills like English and computer literacy. Pragmatic compromises were constantly necessary.[14]

The *MoE put capacity development at the top of its agenda,* and made a real effort to take over responsibility for own planning and development as seen in the change of driving seat from the NESP-I to NESP-II.

Placement and funding of a large number of TAs, also in key positions, has clearly ensured a great leap forward in the MoE's capacity to perform various tasks. The Danida evaluation notes that one specific Danida TA, for example, was vital in achieving the results. It is debatable whether such capacity remains and develops further, or whether Afghanistan is caught in a donor induced 'capability trap' (de Weijer 2013). Nonetheless, new systems are in place and with a continuing strong public demand for education, there may be considerable incentives to continue.

Challenges

This case has been successful in producing results within an almost impossible context, yet numerous challenges abound:

Danida

Danida has collaborated with the MoE on management to develop capacity. Programme management was planned to build primarily on Afghan systems but in reality TAs, especially one particular Danish TA, carried it out. To this day, *capacity within the MoE rests almost entirely with TA staff* (foreign as well as national/expatriate). Capacity has not been built into systems, neither is there any evidence of growing capacity among TA's MoE counterparts. As the Danida evaluation states, 'TA numbers remain very large and key staff are paid by donors under different systems with unclear links between salary and performance" (2012:20). There is a risk, as has been

14 See also the recent ReCom report by Bourguin et al. (2013) on pragmatic approaches.

experienced in other fragile contexts, that the bought-in capacity will leave the system when outside funding reduces.

IIEP

Like the Danida evaluation, the IIEP study argues that although there is no doubt that TAs contributed to strengthening the capacity of the MoE in the short term, and that this was an absolutely necessary first move, the *sustainability is debateable*. Several IIEP-paid TAs served the MoE well but used it as a springboard to do master's degrees abroad. However, the study states that although a bad short-term investment this may be excellent in the longer term, as such people may later find incentives to return to Afghanistan to serve the education sector (Gay and Sigsgaard 2011).

Despite progress, the study notes that the *capacity of individuals remains larger than that of the MoE as an institution.* Capacity gap filling has helped but is not sustainable and at provincial level the capacity is still immensely weak, and even gap filling is not possible because of the security situation.

NESP-I was written almost exclusively by the Minister, international advisors and national technical advisors, which *hampered a sense of ownership.* This was changed during the writing of NESP II, so that several agencies in the education sector were represented.

Girls' education is a major focus of schooling support programmes, and IIEP states that gender is important for capacity development in MoE. The IIEP study notes that gender is also a human resource issue and so far only 26 per cent of all MoE employees are female, which is a challenge to legitimacy when there is a strong advocacy for getting girls in school.

MoE point of view

The Ministry has implemented many capacity development programmes, it has been a first priority of the MoE, yet the *lack of a monitoring and evaluation system* means that training has not been based on needs assessment, nor has it been properly designed and organised (Arefee 2011:104).

The widespread use of TAs has created challenges. The *salary disparities between TAs and civil servants aroused jealousy and mistrust among civil servants.* They felt discriminated against by the MoE, and many of them gradually became passive and demoralised. Some measures have been taken. Arefee (2011:107) notes: 'The salaries

of civil servants have at least doubled since implementation of the P&G scheme. This double increase will not fill the disparity between TA salaries and civil servants, but it is a positive measure per se". Nonetheless, the MoE calls on donors and various agencies to improve aid effectiveness by collaborating with the MoE to map and harmonise TA salaries.

TA salaries are expensive. According to Sigsgaard (2011) citing an internal report by the MoE's Department of Finance, the total cost of TA salaries in 2009 was approximately US$9.4 million per year for around 1,000 TAs (an average of US$783 per TA per month), compared with US$281 million for 214,000 civil servants (an average of US$109 per civil servant per month). Individual TAs thus receive salaries around seven times those of individual civil servants. TA salaries are secured through the core and external development budgets. This is not sustainable, as their recruitment and salaries depend on donor commitment.

TAs are often short term and the MoE feels that *TAs are not committed to the Ministry.* They leave abruptly if they find a better job opportunity or when their contracts end. CD by the MoE has been stalled when NGOs have recruited MoE staff, offering higher salaries, to work on their projects (Sigsgaard 2011). In a similar vein, a constant challenge for the MoE is that *TAs and civil servants with proper capacity are both apt to leave the Ministry,* though the civil servants are expected to stay, especially after implementation of a scheme that increases staff salaries.

Linked to the above points, *civil servants are perceived as incompetent and thus marginalised in decision making.* This is an unfortunate effect of the presence of a large number of TAs, which has been demoralising for civil servants.

International advisors have been competent but problematic. Although the Danida evaluation states that one Danish TA had a strong influence, it is generally noted that most were unfamiliar with the national and local languages and culture and the socio-political situation of Afghanistan. They needed a translator/interpreter to communicate with the Ministry staff, which was time-consuming, and it took a long time for them to get familiar with the education situation and be able to provide proper advice. This is in contrast with the fact that they were mostly recruited on short-term contracts. That has left little time and possibility to support civil servants' capacities. International advisors are also immensely expensive, both affecting the budget and further fuelling civil servants' resentment. Finally, the security situation has affected international consultants and advisors more than the national staff and

TAs, because they were not able to travel beyond the capital as they have been targets for the insurgents.

The strategy of sub-contracting to NGOs and private companies has partly undermined the system. Although subcontracting was necessary in order to improve access, these strategies have often ignored government systems and coordination mechanisms. Moreover, piecemeal education projects have been funded without being aligned with the NESP, which undermines the administrative capacity and legitimacy of the MoE.

Afghanistan cannot achieve its national development objectives without external funding. It can be argued that support to MoE capacity development is an investment in national capacity at large, which again is seen as a precondition for nation building and socio-economic growth. It is expensive to ensure education for the 42 per cent of children who are still of out of school, which is the aim of the ambitious NESP II.

Focus on the central level distorts MoE capacity development. While some capacity has been developed at central level there is still a strong need at provincial level, and the IIEP study argues that decentralised authorities are best positioned to assess local capacity needs (Arafee 2011:115).

Concluding remarks:

Clearly, the Danida evaluation and the IIEP study reveal how complex capacity development in fragile settings can be. Education support in Afghanistan has been espoused as successful due to the high number of enrolled pupils and especially girls. Coming from a point of absolutely no capacity, clearly this is an indication that *MoE now has some ability to work despite numerous challenges.* That said, it is obvious that most of the achievements within the MoE are due to the fact that externally paid, technical advisors occupy many important positions such as the Deputy Director of Planning, Head of the EMIS Section and Deputy Head of the Research and Evaluation Unit. TAs have still not become trainers per se for MoE staff, although they work informally with each other, which has led some to fear that the institution will be left non-functioning when the TAs leave (de Weijer 2013). There is a lack of structures to ensure training and mentoring, and IIEP will now help the MoE create a national training programme in educational planning, funded by Danida.

The necessary gap filling and use of TAs in an un-ideal world. We know from a number of contexts that there is a great demand for education among parents and children when conflicts end or oppressive systems change (Petersen 2013). Hence, there is a need to consider the great dilemma of capacity development within education: sustainable capacity development takes time, often a long time, especially in a context where work starts from nothing. Therefore, if services should be delivered by a capable national system, as is ideal, one or two generations may lose the opportunity to become educated while this capacity is developed. This, of course, is not viable; hence *gap filling continues to be needed to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to deliver education and thus national capacity development.*

We also know that quick delivery of service in war-torn societies may greatly contribute to nation building as it helps establish the social contract of rights and responsibilities between them (Matsumoto 2011:158). Formal education plays a key role in making the state relevant to its citizens, and from several contexts it has been found that who delivers this is less important that the quality of the education provided (Nhuratsu 2012). Although implemented by NGOs, provision of education helps establish the social contract between state and citizens (Petersen 2013). In the end it is a matter of capacity. It is however, a irreconcilable dilemma that donors have to decide whether to: "sacrifice a degree of capacity to deliver a programme in a timely fashion or sacrifice a degree of the original programme goals to try to work towards capacity development" (Matsumoto 2011:157).

It seems sometimes to be neglected that although working on different contracts and salaries, the large number of Afghan TAs posted in the MoE is a strengthening of capacity. They may not stay in the MoE forever, but they contribute to elevating the quality of a national service, and bring their experience into other walks of Afghan life afterwards. In a similar vein, Sigsgaard (2011) argues that it may not be a problem that national TAs use their positions to be qualified for further studies abroad, as many of them are likely to return and then bring additional capacity back to the country.

A recent ReCom study by de Weijer (2013) argues that Afghanistan may have fallen into a 'capability trap' where state institutions are highly depend on external and technical expertise and with limited internal capacity or will to preserve the changes if funding disappears. Clearly, there are risks of drawbacks but the strengthening of the social contract which has occurred due to expanded provision of education, is likely to create a lasting demand from the public for proper education for their children,

and thus an external pressure for capacity development within the sector.[15] The IIEP study concludes: "People come and go, but systems remain. Service delivery and implementation of MoE policy hinges on systems. They enable planning based on facts, and can reduce corruption and reliance on individuals". Similarly, De Grauwe (2009 in Matsumoto 2011) argues that improvements in public administration are absolutely necessary for effective capacity development. But improved public administration is capacity development, which is also why improved systems, although initiated by TAs, can qualify as improved capacity.

Symbolic changes have made a difference. Development of a plan can be a statement of will and self-confidence, even if it seems overly ambitious. The NESP-I was criticised for being unrealistic. However, in Afghanistan's political process ambitious national plans signal a will for drastic change, and may create hope and self-confidence – invaluable resources when everything is a priority and everything a challenge (Sigsgaard 2011).

Functional–rational aspects have clearly dominated over attention to politics
It has been a high priority for Danida, IIEP and MoE to improve the systems, procedures, plans and structures and thus focus on the functional–rational aspects of capacity development. It is unclear how internal politics, vested interests and power relations have been dealt with, but it has been loudly voiced in the Danish media recently that corruption still exists on a much larger scale than assumed, which puts the success of education support in Afghanistan into question.

MoE and its external environment – the essence of education delivery
All support to the MoE in Afghanistan has had a firm focus on delivery of its core service of school provision. Education is ideally to be for the public at large and thus there is an inevitable connection with the external environment when supporting the MoE. There has been a concern to involve communities in school provision in an attempt to increase ownership and build trust. In fact, this is possibly the most direct attempt at enhancing state legitimacy and establishing a hitherto non-existent social contract. The capacity development work at central level seems not to have aimed directly at these external relations.

15 A recent study from DfID (Ndaruhutse 2012) argues that it is much more important that proper services are delivered than who delivers them. Their case studies show that in these instances delivery of primary services, not least education, increases state legitimacy.

Context has defined what is possible

In the case of developing capacity within the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan context has played an important role, but not always been considered. The highly unstable security situation has often been the defining factor in what was achievable in terms of output. At another level, context seems to have been completely forgotten. The large exercise of creating the NESP-I, which was overwhelmingly ambitious and in fact unrealistic, shows that a realistic analysis of what was possible in the given context was not part of the planning exercise.

3. Capacity development in all aspects of tax administration in Rwanda

A state's ability to collect revenues is fundamental to its ability to function and deliver security and service to the population and thus important for state legitimacy. Therefore, revenues are also singled out in the peacebuilding and statebuilding goals (PSGs) in the New Deal. This example is of DfID-supported capacity development for tax administration in Rwanda, encompassing an entire organisation. Although it took place a while ago now, it provides great learning and is very well documented. The case is useful because it is extraordinarily extensive in its scope. It encompasses almost all employees and functions of an institution, including a consideration of the relations with the external environment. It is an example of successful support to improving capacity in governance of revenues and reveals the importance of long-term commitment and of a pragmatic and incremental process. The case as presented here builds on an independent study of the DfID intervention, which is impressively thorough in its qualitative measures and coverage of the initial seven years of support (Land 2004). It is supported by findings from similar institutions in other Southern African countries, including Uganda, which share a destiny of war with Rwanda (Fjeldstad and Moore 2013).

Context

The Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) was established in 1997, three years after the infamous genocide that preceded a devastating civil war. The RRA was charged with administering the collection of taxes and customs and excise duties on behalf of the government, and was, as such, an independent authority. The RRA had to start operating in a country devastatingly destroyed by war and where state legitimacy was virtually non-existent, which meant that it faced immense challenges. On the positive side, the RRA enjoyed the full support of the Rwandan government and the donor community. In order to make a clear break with the past there was a need to create an entirely new organisation that was capable of performing. It needed to be guided by clear goals and objectives, and driven by management and governance principles of responsiveness and transparency, and supported by professional staff and modern business processes. There was also a realisation that RRA needed to transform the image and standing of the revenue service and seek to establish a new relationship with its stakeholders, based on trust and cooperation. In a context where public trust had vanished, state institutions were perceived as illegitimate, and where much of the

leadership sprang from a possibly embittered and discriminating elite, the government and the RRA realised that the first priority must be to establish the social contract. A major effort was needed to change the attitude of the public towards the very idea of paying taxes, and the ticket it provides for holding government accountable. On this basis, DfID opted for support to RRA to make such fundamental changes. DfID has been the RRA's principal partner and supported the RRA since 1997 when it was founded. DfID has provided financial and technical support of around £15 million.

Objectives

DfID supported RRA with the aim of creating a well-functioning and independent revenue authority, changing the public perception of tax collection and thus increasing revenues.

Activities

Without being pre-planned as such, the study argues that different activities were launched which appear as three phases of capacity development:

The first phase concerned agency creation and consolidation. An expatriate commissioner officer was hired to establish new practices, break with patronage and have time to find a suitable Rwandan national to take over in order to ensure national ownership. There was a massive change in employees to ensure a new start, and staff were rewarded with remuneration packages. At the same time, campaigns were launched to change the public perceptions of tax and revenue.

The second phase had special focus on expansion and performance improvement. This phase included more profound changes, with an overhaul of senior management, expansion of operations, more intensive and hands-on technical assistance, and evidence of performance improvement in relation to amounts of revenue collected. Technical assistance (TA) personnel were posted in various management positions, combining advisory and training functions with selected implementation responsibilities. Advisors were also posted to work alongside senior management to assist in developing stronger management systems and corporate planning and monitoring processes.

The third phase fully embraced modernisation and transformation. This phase has seen the introduction of more transformative change with a refocusing of the organisation towards the customer, the modernisation of business processes including

automation, and a greater focus on performance-based human resources management. Meanwhile the focus of TA has shifted from long-term to short-term support. This third phase in the transformation of the RRA can be associated with the decision to rethink the way in which the organisation should approach its core business. Beginning with an internal process of reflection that started in 2002 but which took off in 2003, the RRA adopted a customer-oriented or service delivery approach, which meant fundamentally rethinking how the organisation should function.

Three things stand out as highly prioritised during these phases:

Project management support
A full-time project manager functioned as a neutral interlocutor between DfID and RRA management. Some core responsibilities included:

Administrative functions related to the deployment, supervision and monitoring of financial and technical resources (including supervision of TAs)

Advisory functions related to substantive matters to do with tax policy and administration as well as the management of the change process

The appointment of an experienced tax professional as project manager in 2002 has enabled both DfID and RRA management to take a more critical and strategic look at the organisation's development. The project manager has been instrumental in shaping the capacity development process.

Technical assistance (TA)
Technical assistance has been a core element of the support provided by DfID to the RRA. TA has performed a variety of functions, including providing advice and mentoring services, performing selected line management functions, supporting the design and implementation of new systems and procedures, and providing classroom and on-the-job training.

Management of the external environment
The RRA recognised that its capacity to perform was partly conditioned by external factors that it may to some extent be able to influence. As a result, there have been many efforts to manage the external environment of the organisation, both the public and the business environments, as well as other relevant stakeholders and factors. Initially this involved conducting public relations and mass sensitisation campaigns.

Later, it has involved the wholesale orientation of business processes towards the provision of services tailored to different customer groups and, in a process of increasing transparency and accountability, to end users.

Output – capacity and performance

The initial years were characterised by rapid transformation from a failing government department into a functioning and performing organisation.

In six years *revenues increased* from 9% (1998) to 13% (2003) of GDP. The study (Land 2004) argues that management emerged with a stronger sense of purpose and ownership of the organisation and a growing understanding of the relationship between change, capacity and performance. It is also noted that since 2001 the RRA has consistently exceeded the revenue targets set by the Ministry of Finance. Like several countries with a similar story (for example Uganda), Rwanda has now reached a revenue collection of around 15% of GDP, which is the regional average (and the level existing before the war) (Fjeldstad and Moore 2013).

The public image of tax and revenue collection and of taxpayers' obligations changed, as did the way of handling public contact of the RRA. RRA 'branded' itself as a performing and credible organisation. Previously, RRA was seen as corrupt and malfunctioning. Many key stakeholders changed their view and now have positive attitude towards the RRA.

By the time the evaluation was carried out the *RRA's standing in government circles had become positive.* It has often been held up as a model of good practice. The government and political leadership continue to extend goodwill to the organisation, which is crucial for independent revenue authorities to have any legitimacy (Fjeldstad and Moore 2013). Key international stakeholders including DfID and the IMF have been more than satisfied with the progress that has been made, not only in terms of the contribution the RRA has made to domestic revenue mobilisation, but also in terms of helping to create a culture of integrity, efficiency and transparency. Whilst not cleared completely, levels of corruption are lower than they were in 1998 and better than in neighbouring countries.

Over time there has been a progressive shift from reliance on long-term resident advisors to the use of minimal, long-term advisors combined with targeted short-term experts to tackle specific tasks. This shift reflects growing confidence in the ability of

management to direct the affairs of the organisation and to drive the change process. TA was considered especially important in the early years in order to support the introduction of new systems and procedures, as well as to develop management skills and a sound understanding of tax administration. Significant progress was made in strengthening core management and technical capabilities and it is noted that, over time, the RRA management became better at using the technical advice and reaching its own decisions on how best to advance the reform process.

Factors explaining the positive results

The study identifies a number of success factors that contributed to the remarkable achievement of RRA:

Commitment and a locally-driven, partly ad hoc-based process. This has been a locally-driven transformation process, underwritten by strong ownership, and driven by a decisive leadership. These have been present both at a political level and at the organisational level, and thus not engineered by any external party. The study finds that this to a large extent has made up for deficiencies in capacity. The end of the genocide crisis led to a burst of idealism and selfless behaviour underpinned by the return of educated Rwandans who were exiled and genuinely wanted to return and help to build up the country.

A clear mandate and expectations to perform. The RRA was granted a clear mandate and strategic role to play within government's wider development strategy. From the outset it enjoyed a high degree of support from official circles, and equally high expectations to perform. It was expected to play a key role in meeting the aspirations of the Rwandan government and its international partners to the reduce dependency on aid and underpin a country-driven transformation process. Hence, RRA enjoyed a high degree of legitimacy and backing from official circles.

An organisational status that gave autonomy and protection. The RRA's agency status offered a degree of management autonomy that enabled it to take decisions and manage resources without interference. This allowed the organisation to offer conditions of service and establish a human resource management system that attracted and retained capable and committed personnel e.g. highly skilled and motivated returning exiles. The RRA's agency status also allowed for a break with the past, and cultivation of a new corporate culture based on values of integrity, accountability

and performance. As long as it performed, it was assured political support, adequate funding and autonomy.

Balancing 'hard' and 'soft' elements of capacity. A mix of capacities was developed to enable the RRA performance. At one level, the functional–rational aspects of capacity (the study calls them 'hard' capacities) that contribute to internal efficiency and effectiveness were developed: getting structures, systems, procedures and technology right and developing appropriate staff competencies. At another level, the political aspects ('soft' capacities) that seem to hold the key to translating capacity into organisational performance were worked with. These included attributes such as visionary leadership and a committed management that have nurtured a distinct corporate identity and value system, including a thirst for learning and critical self-awareness.

Adaptive TAs were perceived to make significant contributions to develop management and technical capacities within the organisation. The TA input has been highly appreciated, although, as in any process, there have been instances where needs were inappropriately diagnosed or where experts have proven unsuited for the job. There has been comparatively little guidance provided to advisors on 'how' they are expected to develop capacity. This seems to have been taken for granted and thus subject to individual interpretation. The advisors emphasised the need to combine substantive knowledge with an ability to communicate and work as team members with counterpart staff. Whilst acknowledging that some guidance on how to facilitate change and develop capacities could be helpful, the advisors cautioned against prescriptive approaches, emphasising the importance of adapting working methods to the situation on the ground. They also stressed the importance of teamwork, getting involved in day-to-day work routines and remembering that they do not have a premium on all knowledge. This also reaffirms the previously-made point that it seems work tasks that are defined ad hoc according to need and motivation as determined by those who are already there, is critical for success.

Looking in but also out – working consciously with relations to the external environment. Managing the external environment has been important to gain support from the public at large and to enhance organisational legitimacy – notwithstanding the authority and legitimacy derived from the law and political backing. Gaining legitimacy from its partners and citizens has been a key part of the RRA's success.

Examples of RRA's work with the external environment

RRA has worked on multiple levels to improve and strengthen its capacity to handle relations with the external environment.

Different public campaigns, tax orientation to the business environment, tailoring of services to different customer groups and, in the process of increasing transparency and accountability, to end users, have all helped boost staff confidence and self-esteem, and have also enabled them to better adapt their services (and capabilities) to the needs of customers.

The establishment of cooperative relationships with various external stakeholders has given access to needed resources (technology, information, support, etc.) and has been important in terms of extending the organisation's outreach and effectiveness. To perform effectively the RRA needed the capacity to influence other organisations in the network, and it has accordingly even invested in the development of its partners' capacities – helping to organise the nascent tax consultancy profession on the one hand, and developing the revenue collection capability of local government on the other.

RRA has contributed to the development of revenue collection capacity beyond the confines of the organisation. Part of the key to the RRA's comparative success has been its ability to build relationships in the form of a broader revenue collection system comprising its various stakeholders: other government departments, various kinds of taxpayers, organisational partners etc.

The organisation has also become aware of the pace of change taking place in the external environment, the emergence of new demands (regional standards for example) and the importance of being able to adapt and respond.

A pragmatic, flexible and incremental change process. There has been a constant adaptation to emerging needs and priorities and progression over relatively short time frames. Thus this has not been a large-scale, comprehensive or predetermined reform process. However, working incrementally has not meant 'being un-strategic'. The study notes that the process has also been driven by a thirst for learning and recognition of the need to continuously compare capacity and performance. This iterative process approach has enabled managers to learn from experience and to advance the capacity development process accordingly. It has also helped ensure internal ownership and appreciation of the change process, and has avoided the risk of proposals being introduced from the outside that are not relevant to local

conditions. The RRA has appreciated the flexible and pragmatic approach adopted by its external partner. DfID is praised for having remained responsive to emerging needs and for providing (with a few exceptions) appropriate technical support and financial resources, while at the same time leaving decision making firmly in the hands of RRA's senior management and board.[16]

A mature committed partnership between the RRA and DfID enabled trust and flexibility. DfID was RRA's most important partner, and Land (2004) notes that, over time, the partners have developed a relationship based on frank exchange, team spirit and shared accountability for results. This has allowed external technical and financial assistance to accompany the local change process, adapting to the local tempo of change and emerging priorities. Clearly, the long-term external assistance has been a process facilitator. DfID strongly committed to the development of revenue generation capacity in Rwanda and as principal partner of a weak RRA this could easily have led to an externally-driven process which disempowered local stakeholders. The study (Land 2004) holds that this has not been the case. Ownership and vision have rested with the Rwandan partner. DfID assumed the role of process facilitator, providing strategic and technical advice, as well as the necessary financial resources.

Teamwork and effective monitoring mechanisms have aided RRA's success. The spirit of partnership and shared responsibility for outcomes has been reinforced by a teamwork approach at all levels. TAs and local partners were encouraged to be team members and meet regularly to discuss operational, strategic and policy issues which, alongside efficient monitoring of the process, is concluded to have been vital for ensuring change.

Tailoring capacities to growing needs and capacity – a sign of capacity
Output has been a main concern defining the need for capacity development within the RRA. Along the way RRA has broadened its understanding of output from an initial focus on revenue collection to include concerns for efficiency and customer satisfaction. It has also developed a better appreciation of what capacity is and how

16 DfID recognised the advantages of adopting a flexible and relatively short-term approach to project design. It reflected the belief that it would be inappropriate to design a comprehensive and longer-term programme in a situation of rapid change and relative uncertainty.

it can be developed, and is now better able to determine its capacity development needs.[17] Land (2004) argues that it is clear that certain capacities have emerged as being of critical importance – examples include audit as a key service delivery function and human resource management as a key support function.

The RRA has also developed a 'learning' capability and a critical self-awareness that have played an instrumental part in its rapid development. This learning capability has enabled the RRA to think strategically about the relationship between capacity and performance, and to identify opportunities for continuous improvement across the organisation while at the same time carrying out its core mandate. This capability has also translated into an emerging ability to manage internal change as well as the external environment.

Challenges:

The need for funding is obvious and the prospect of DfID ending its support has implications for morale, and the readiness of the organisation to stand on its own feet and to continue the change process unassisted.

After several initial years of dynamic transformation and tangible improvements, the organisation entered a period of less dynamic change.

The RRA did not continue to be the employer of choice, and found it increasingly difficult to remain competitive in the labour market. Once the standard bearer for conditions of service, a growing number of private and quasi-public institutions as well as international agencies started to offer more competitive remuneration packages. It therefore became more difficult to attract and retain good personnel.

The RRA will have to face up to the *challenge of succession*. Capable and experienced managers who have been driving the process are recruited and seek other challenges, and there is a lack of capable staff to take over.

17 For instance, the operational departments have tailored their capacities to address the specific features of the external environment. The Large Taxpayers Department needs to be knowledge-based so that it can keep up with its more sophisticated clientele. The Internal Revenue Department by contrast needs to perform more of an outreach role as it deals with a less well-educated and sometimes less cooperative client base, while the Customs and Excise Department needs to exhibit a high level of responsiveness and vigilance in the face of pressures to process declarations as swiftly as possible. The Revenue Protection Department requires a capability for intelligence gathering and for maintaining the highest standards of integrity.

Concluding remarks:

The lesson from this case is that the RRA's success must in large part be attributed to the level of political commitment and support it has enjoyed. It has benefitted from a unique and long-term relationship with DfID and enjoyed full support from the government. This commitment provided the legitimacy and space for the organisation to invest in the development of its capacity and to translate those capacities into performance.

Functional–rational aspects balanced with attention to changing internal politics
There has been a continuous balance between changing functional–rational aspects of the RRA and making initiatives that altered the political aspects, for example by generating a sense of shared mission and commitment that generated ownership and lessened corruption and vested interests. Introduction of new procedures and achievements, and the emphasis on creating a favourable public image were used as a way to generate internal support and motivation for new ways of working.

It was a conscious *strategy to work with the external environment* when developing capacities. Another main lesson is the way capacity development has been consciously directed at RRA's relation with the external environment. It has focussed on developing capacities to handle its public relations and relations with various external agencies and partners, which has greatly enhanced its credibility and support, and thus further enhanced capacity development.

Context has been an integrated part of the balancing of technical–rational and political aspects, in the incremental development of new strategies based on needs and capacities, and in RRA's conscious work with its relations to various external stakeholders. The programme has developed ad hoc according to perceived need by the RRA and as a response to as a response to committed and engaged staff and rapidly evolving and changing needs, i.e. according to the context and situation.

4. One donor and one person: developing capacity of the police in Sierra Leone

Security and justice are highlighted as two of the five Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals in the New Deal. This indicates the immense importance attributed to ensuring the rule and execution of law to establish a credible and functioning state in fragile and war-affected countries. The Security Sector Reform programme in Sierra Leone was the first of its kind, developed by DfID and exclusively supported by the UK. It was called the 'Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project' but in practice it was run by the UK. The police received specific attention within this programme. Sierra Leone was one the first and only countries to receive comprehensive security sector reform support and, perhaps due to the UK's military intervention in support of the Government of Sierra Leone, it successfully contributed to stabilising the country. There is general agreement that changes happening from 2002 and during the first five years were impressive (Albrect and Jackson 2009). This case builds specifically on two independent studies. One on Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone 1997–2007 (Albrecht and Jackson 2009) and one on reforming of the police in the same period (Albrecht 2010).[18] These studies include qualitative documentation based on observations and interviews during the reform process, and thus provide unique insights from a special case of capacity development.

Context

Sierra Leone had gone through a decade of civil war starting in 1991. It was by then one of the poorest countries in the world despite the rich abundance of natural resources. In 2000 the British army intervened to support the failing government and fought until the rebels were defeated. After the ceasefire in 2002, the British Department for International Development (DfID) supported an overhauling of the entire security and justice sector of which the police was an important part. Some reform attempts had taken place in the decade preceding it, and from 1999 DfID funded a high-ranking British advisor close to the president. The entire police had to be rebuilt and there was a need for basic policing. The UK side argued that the police needed a fundamental restructuring: a new organisational structure, alteration of attitudes and behaviour of all officers and a total shift in the management culture and practice of the police (Albrecht and Jackson 2009). There was strong political support to transform the

18 Friedman (2011) has also been consulted.

police at the end of the 1990s. From the perspective of the government, reforming the police helped re-establish state legitimacy which was perceived as more important than re-establishment of local security (Albrecht 2010). Moreover, the president was concerned to expand the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and thereby downplay the role of the armed forces, which he believed had played too much of a role in politics and colluded with rebel forces. Clearly, there was support among powerful segments for radical reform of the police.

Objective

As part of the overall aim to work with the Government of Sierra Leone to design and implement a sustainable policy, institutional and legal framework for national security of defence, the objective was to support a reconstruction of the police to ensure the provision of security (Albrecht and Jackson 2009).

Activities

The reform took place in three overlapping phases, each with a primary focus:

1 Enabling Sierra Leone Police to police within a post-conflict context and during the 2002 elections. This included procurement of equipment (including uniforms, vehicles and radios).
2 Skills development within the Sierra Leone Police and promotion of community involvement and accountability.
3 Institutionalising change at various levels and handover of leadership to the Sierra Leone Police.

From 1999–2003 DFID funded the UK citizen Keith Biddle as Inspector–General of Police; only thereafter was the SLP led by a Sierra Leone national. Keith Biddle was a primary activity, if you like, in the UK support. He appointed a board of officers to work closely with him, the Executive Management Board. They appointed regional commanders to assist the reform work in the regions. The UK also funded a range of other British personnel to aid the police, but Biddle played a major role in close alliance with the President. It is quite extraordinary that he, as a foreigner, executed the arrest of several political leaders.

Teamwork was a basis for work. This was highly appreciated and was not undermined, although Biddle had immense influence at the same time. Through this teamwork, with Biddle in the driving seat, various activities were implemented:

- Simplifying and flattening of rank system (fewer ranks)
- Clearly defining the roles of the army and the police in the internal security of the country.
- Initiatives to curb corruption and strengthen accountability, for example by encouraging the public to report cases of corruption and fraud.
- Development of recruitment procedures and requirements.
- Back to basics – initiative focussing on the very basic skills of making entries in notebooks, interviewing, identifying investigative points, recording statements with rules of evidence and obtaining accurate descriptions of places, people and properties.
- Decentralisation of decision making.
- Introduction of 'Local Needs Policing' – rebuilding trust through engaging with the public and thus ensuring state legitimacy.

After 2005 there was a realisation that the police sector could not be reformed without the rest of the security sector following, and thus a more all-encompassing security sector reform was launched, incorporating justice and law-making as well as the armed forces.

Output – capacity and performance

Within a decade the Sierra Leone police was turned into a functioning executive power of the state.

There is a sense of pride and achievement among large parts of the senior management and police in general. They feel part of a team that has made a fundamental change in terms of introducing a new way of running a police institution – internally via open and transparent and less ranked recruitment, and externally by close cooperation with the public. There is general agreement that all the changes happening within the SLP from 2002 onwards, especially in the first half decade, were no less than impressive (Albrecht 2010).

Changing a culture – the UK support helped "turn a rank-conscious, regime preserving and centralised force into a much less aggressive and more forward thinking organisation" (Albrecht 2010:80).

A survey of 250 respondents (Albrecht and Jackson 2009) indicated that the police are more visible and more credible in the eyes of the public after the war. People also felt that security had improved and they felt that the communication between security personnel and the public had improved. There is a stronger cooperation between communities and the SLP, as evidenced by communities handing over criminals to the police. Clearly this has enhanced police and state legitimacy. Nevertheless, many people still perceive the SLP to be the most corrupt state institution (Albrecht 2010)

Factors explaining the positive results

Sierra Leone is a special case because mainly one donor supported the entire security sector: the UK. This created a unique and close relation in which certain things were possible that would not be acceptable in a multi-donor coordinated setting. The reasons behind the results are to be found here:

One country–one person

UK had a longstanding relation with Sierra Leone, as the only donor and a former military ally of the president. The UK enjoyed great trust, and had great influence as it did not have to coordinate with other donors. Moreover Biddle, with executive power alongside external advisors, had "unprecedented powers to replace senior officers with officers who were reform-friendly" (Albrecht 2010: 29). As Albrecht (2010:30) argues "the SLP was effectively run by the UK". This was, of course, a unique and very context specific situation. Beside the power enjoyed by being only donor, the case reveals the importance of single persons and personalities. Keith Biddle had previous experience from Sierra Leone and had seen what needed to change. More importantly, his relation with the President of Sierra Leone was close and personal. Biddle had direct access to the President (that was his condition to take up the post in order to be able to make fundamental changes)(Albrecht 2010:25). The relationship between Biddle and the President was one of mutual respect and admiration and, one could argue, a sense of cultural affinity. Biddle managed to balance his enormous influence with intimate knowledge of the local reality and a strong prioritising of teamwork. Lastly, the fact that the IGP was an expatriate meant that the hitherto prevailing political methods functioning within the Sierra Leonean leadership were useless, and

that Biddle could make other demands than a national Sierra Leonean, not least on donor resources. As the study states, "it is difficult to underestimate the role Biddle played in terms of transforming the internal organisation of the SLP. Coming from the outside, with direct access to the donor community, he was able to make difficult decisions, act on them and attract funding to see them through"(Albrecht 2010:49).

Exclusive priority
The SLP was highly prioritised with £25 million and the appointment of Biddle as IGP. The UK wanted to ensure that the SLP did not revert to where it was prior to the conflict. Until 2005 the SLP received exclusive support, which meant that it made a great leap forward compared to other institutions in the security sector. The UK and the Sierra Leone government agreed that the police force was absolutely central to create stability in a highly challenging environment (Albrecht 2010)

Team spirit and independent decision making
In stark contrast to police operations before the civil war, teamwork became a benchmark of the SLP. The British IGP did have a strong role as a leader, but when he was preceded by a national Sierra Leonean strong capacities had already developed around him, and all key players remained in place. The Executive Management Board now makes collective decisions at the highest level. Commanders down to the level of the Local Command Unit have considerable room for independent decision making.

The success was owned by Sierra Leone
There has been a strong sense of pride and achievement in the senior management, even though Biddle was in charge. The confidence in and ownership of the reform process has remained years after Biddle's exit (Albrecht 2010:28). A clear sign of changed management culture was when Biddle's successor was to be elected. Nine candidates were assessed and it is said that no political or tribal preferences infused the selection. Moreover, all the senior managers trained during the UK-supported reform process remained in place after the change of government in 2009 (Albrecht 2010:29).

Difficult decisions were made in the beginning
Difficult decisions have been made throughout the life of police and broader justice sector reform in Sierra Leone. The ranking system has been flattened and the scope of reform efforts has been broadened. At the same time, support for the development of appropriate oversight mechanisms and Cabinet-level representation of the police has been weak. From this it follows that the longer advisors wait to make difficult

decisions, the more difficult it becomes to make them. The study argues that this is particularly pertinent in Sierra Leone where many external advisors occupied executive positions. Because they were not part of already-established power networks, they were in a better, if not easy, position to make politically sensitive decisions that their national counterparts were unlikely to.

The social contract was prioritised
The very visible change in appearance of the SLP combined with the Local Needs Policing has helped re-establish, or perhaps it is more correct to say establish, a social contract between the state and the public. There are still numerous strongmen and others involved in local security provision but the police is now seen as a possible and legitimate institution to turn to when crime occurs.

Symbolic change and visibility
Despite the issue of long-term sustainability, in the short term the SLP vehicles and communications project did play an important role in increasing police visibility. Improved force mobility meant that officers could respond more effectively to crimes and garner public respect through the quality and use of their equipment.

Challenges

The success story of course also has some challenging sides. Most of all, there is a lack of sustainability because the new interventions are too expensive for Sierra Leone to run without funding.

While it was a conscious strategy to concentrate on the management level and make fundamental changes, this had a price. The lower level within the police was for a long time left without any capacity development initiatives, which led to frustration.

Similarly, the specific initial focus on the police meant that other parts of the security sector lagged behind. There was a window of opportunity within the police, and the results achieved reflect that. However, the study contends that such reforming of the police needs to be integrated with wider security sector reform (which is now the way security reform is approached in fragile situations). The transition from police to justice sector reform was a relatively painful process in Sierra Leone. The dramatic expansion of reform efforts was not clearly communicated to SLP leadership and was resisted by advisors to the police, some of who had been in post since the late 1990s. Changes were not communicated to relevant national and international stakeholders.

Instead, different messages were delivered to different actors during the critical phase of programme transition.

The standing of the police in the eyes of the public has improved considerably, but corruption is still widespread within the police and this is reflected in the public perception. For the newly acquired increase in state legitimacy not to vanish, the study argues that it is important that the reform process continues (Albrecht 2010).

Concluding remarks

The successful UK-supported police reform in Sierra Leone illuminates how positive results may not be a result of an exportable best practice but occur due to a combination of highly context, donor, institution and person specific circumstances. It is unique to this case that strong external influence and leadership was combined with great national ownership and institutional commitment. This arose as a result of the strong relationship between a single donor country (the UK) that was also a military ally, and the Sierra Leonean leadership, and because the capacity and personality of one single central person fitted so immensely well with what was needed to reform the failing Sierra Leone Police. Supportive of this was the role that the police had historically played, and played again as a result of the reform, of preserving the ruling government, which cannot be underestimated. This case is important in alerting us to focus on what is best fitted to the specific context, situation and interplay of technical–rational as well as political challenges of a given institution. This may not be possible elsewhere. Yet, we cannot assume that processes always need to be bottom-up and locally initiated and driven to ensure sustainable change, ownership and commitment.

Balancing short term impact and long term change

During the early reform period the urgent need for police force mobility took priority over strategic planning, national ownership and sustainability. This meant that many reform initiatives could not be continued without external funding. The study (Albrecht 2010) notes that what is needed is not always sustainable, and that such a realistic approach must be accepted from the very beginning of police reform and related programming. There is a need to find the balance between short-term needs that concern stabilisation and have the police perform basic duties in a legitimate way, and longer-term thinking that concerns fundamental transformation at all levels.

Attention was paid to symbolism and language
New cars and uniforms to visibly display the existence of an organisation is an important step towards re-establishing legitimacy of any state institution (see also Petersen 2013). Similarly, the Local Needs Policing as a very symbolically important way of putting customers first. The Sierra Leone case also reveals how language also needs to be carefully considered: the 'back to basics' programme that focussed on recapitulating fundamental police skills was perceived as condescending.

Functional–rational aspects were changed through changing political aspects
This case of police sector reform in Sierra Leone clearly shows that changing the political aspects of an organisation can be pivotal to sparking institutional change in the functional–rational aspects. The personalities, political behaviour and cultural attitudes and beliefs of internal actors within the police had a strong impact on how external advice was received, absorbed and acted upon. The fact that senior officers and management never doubted who benefitted from and owned the reform ensured their full support, even during the initial years where Biddle had immense executive power. They could see the benefit for the functional–rational aspects of the police of having an external person to make changes to highly delicate internal politics and vested interests.

Establishing relations with the external environment was directly aimed at. Biddle consciously had the police working closely with the local population as a way to establish trust and legitimacy. Through the Local Needs Policing, there was an invitation and a signal to the public that the police was there for them, and according to their needs. This was an important step towards restoring the public image of the police and contributed to establishing the social contract, which was also a means of preserving the government.

Context has been essential at many levels. This is a unique case because the main results have been achieved by doing the exact opposite of what is currently advocated by the New Deal and many international concerns with engaging in fragile situations were shrugged off. Context does not only mean the specific context of fragility, it also implies looking at good donor–government relations, institutions within a sector that may show commitment to change and then personalities who understand and fit the task.

5. Using diaspora and senior national professionals for capacity development in Liberia

During the last decade, with the increasing concern that external expertise was not the right way to approach capacity development, several countries have used experts and professionals from the diaspora as well as nationally-based senior national professionals. It is assumed that such people are eager and committed to help rebuilding their country of origin. Furthermore, it is assumed that by using experts of same nationality, there will be less resentment from civil servants. In Liberia, senior national professionals and professionals from the Liberian diaspora have constituted a central element in the country's reconstruction and capacity development strategy. The Liberian government and UNDP have jointly supported two programmes that have been successful in enhancing capacity across a number of state institutions. One is the Liberia emergency capacity building support project (LECBS) of which the Senior Executive Service (SES) is a part that draws on well trained, technically qualified and professionally motivated people as change agents throughout the civil service to drive reform. The other is the Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) that employs qualified expatriate Liberians to initiate capacity development for shorter periods. Both programmes have run from 2006 and an independent mid-term evaluation from 2008 covers the initial period. The case presented here builds on the mid-term evaluation and on various materials provided by the UNDP and the Liberian government (annual progress reports and personal success stories, GOL/UNDP GOL/UNDP/USIAD 2008; GOL 2010, UNDP 2011a, 2012c, Grejn 2007).[19] The programmes have been chosen because, as the independent midterm evaluation states, 'The study recognises the contributions from other capacity development initiatives in the country but argues that the political commitment at the highest level of government, together with the fiscal discipline and technical expertise brought about by the LECBS/TOKTEN professionals, have been critical in achieving these results" (GOL/UNDP/USAID 2008:8).

Context

The programmes took place in a post-conflict environment with vast capacity gaps. During the 14 years of violent conflict many of the country's resourceful citizens and professionals had been killed or fled. There was a complete breakdown of rule of law

19 The Liberian Civil Service Agency homepage has also been consulted http://www.csa.gov.lr/index.php.

after the transition to democracy in 2005. The country was completely devastated with literally no functioning government institutions and Liberia had the worst debt in the world. Clearly, the task of reconstruction was daunting. The newly elected president H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was very concerned to find a solution to the scarce availability of human capacity to undertake the immense task of reconstruction and development. A census report of civil servants in 2005 revealed that of 19,635 persons in 33 government agencies and institutions only 12.5% had a first degree and 1.9% postgraduate degrees. The programmes were thus initiated to fill the gaps in capacity, to ensure stabilisation, recover the economy and get institutions to function and slowly build public confidence.

Objectives

The main objective has been to rebuild the country by drawing on Liberian expertise. Liberia has relied strongly on Liberians for capacity development. One main reason is the assumed commitment and motivation of working for 'your home country', also as an expatriate. It also emphasises the relevance of cultural affinity, the lack of which is an oft-cited criticism concerning Western experts.

Activities

Three integrated programmes make up the UNDP-supported capacity development work in post-war Liberia, partly funded by USAID.

Liberia emergency capacity building support project (LECBS)

This project was requested by the president of Liberia to attract experienced professionals from the diaspora to take up leadership positions and to promote reform initiatives by aiding the government of Liberia. The LECBS has several components that are closely interlinked, of which the SES is best documented. All personnel recruited under this programme are appointed directly by the president.

Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP)

Through GEMAP, international advisors are posted in financial offices in key institutions to help guarantee competent and judicious management of the country's resources in an open, transparent and accountable way so that it is responsive to public needs. The advisors should train and build capacity of their local counterparts.

Civil service right-sizing reform programme
A programme that should help to get rid of all ghost employees and reduce the excessive size of government institutions.

Senior Executive Service (SES)
One hundred experienced professional Liberians from the public and private sectors, as well as NGOs in Liberia and abroad, have been recruited to various national and sub-national positions. The aim is to supplement the other programmes with a programme that provides a surge in capacity, leadership and experience that is intended to aid the government's longer-term structural reforms. SES is closely linked to the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and several of the important outcomes therefore relate to this.

Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN)
TOKTEN is a global UNDP approach designed to reverse the severe brain drain occurring in developing countries, especially those affected by violent conflict. Through TOKTEN, expatriate nationals are deployed for very specific tasks in their home countries on a short-term basis. In Liberia, however, they are assigned on a longer-term basis because there is a lack of personnel to fill the gaps they leave. TOKTEN in Liberia has three objectives: to bring home Liberian nationals to aid the nation building process; to assist in revitalising the agencies and institutions in which they work; and to build capacity. The selected tasks are based on specific needs that aid the overall goal of nation building.

Output – capacity and performance

The mid-term evaluation recounts the following changes in the outcome of national institutions as a result of deployment of expatriate and local professionals (making no clear distinctions between the LECBS and TOKTEN). According to the SES stories (see Box 3) there are many more achievements. These will be documented in the final evaluation which comes out ultimo 2013.

Increased public revenues
From 2005/6 to 2007/8 revenues have increased by over 149%. Vendors and civil servants are paid on time and a large debt cancellation has put the country on a good standing with creditors.

Improved access to and delivery of services
Bureaucratic bottlenecks have been reduced and the timeframe for completing a process has been shortened. Several forms of corruption (e.g. rent-seeking) have been almost eliminated. Funds are distributed on a timely basis.

Increased private sector investment opportunities.
Liberia is beginning to become an attractive investment location going by the increase in USD invested.

Improved health sector conditions
There has been a great increase (97%) in admissions of patients to Liberia's largest hospital from 2006 to 2007, there is now 81% coverage in immunisation, and 122 doctors (51 Liberians) now serve throughout the country.

Improved quality in higher education system
Many sub-standard higher educational institutions have been closed down, and courses, curricula and procedures in the existing ones have been improved.

Human skills and capacities
Measured by output and outcome, impressive changes in institutions' administrative capacities have occurred as result of the posting of different professionals. Yet very little transfer of knowledge and building of capacity among the civil servants was found by the evaluation team. This is clearly a dilemma.

Senior Executive Service – personal stories of output

Mr Geegbae left a good job in the US to return to Liberia and take up a post as a director and senior economist at the Ministry of Finance through the SES. In 2006 Liberia's debt was the worst in the world and thus negotiating restructuring of the debt was a first task. He has helped initiate several new rules, standards and procedures but argues that "ultimately behaviour must change if there are to be meaningful and lasting reforms".

Mr Gwesa, Liberia's only microbiologist, came home from studies in Nigeria and was hired through SES to strengthen the environment for economic development through establishing a National Standards Laboratory and procedures and manuals for testing products for export and import.

Mrs Vincent has been a driving force in the efforts to clean up the country's public sector payrolls and ensuring registration of all employees as well as developing job descriptions and a transparent salary system. These achievements are fundamental to combat corruption and get an efficient public administration.

Mr Mason was placed in a county as development officer under the SES after having worked for 15 years for NGOs in Liberia. "I though after many years in NGOs I could help the government take ownership of the development agenda". He does so making connections between leading health NGOs and the health ministry, which has resulted in a renovation of the county hospital, which immediately produced marked improvements for mothers and newborn babies.

Source: Government of Liberia, Civil Service Agency, 2010. SES Success stories – the faces behind civil service reform in Liberia.

Factors explaining the success

There are several reasons why LECBS and TOKTEN were relatively successful in terms of enhancing the capacity of central state institutions. The mid-term evaluation does not give much away, and clearly the 'success stories of the SES' is a document that reveals the sunny side with the explicit aim of attracting more funding. Nonetheless, analysis of the different documents reveals various reasons for the results achieved.

A main reason why the programmes have been successful is the fact that *a strong committed leader* was convinced she could boost capacity by infusing capable professionals over a broad range of state institutions to create quick and fundamental change.

Another reason was that first priority was given to making *reforms and institutional changes that could be felt by the public and seen by donors,* so as to ensure the support of both for the long-term processes of capacity development that inevitably lay ahead.

The mid-term evaluation concludes that 'the transformational changes underway have instilled confidence of the international community in Liberia, and that would not have been possible without the *commitment and quality of work* that has been accomplished in such a short period of time' (2008:62). The recruited experts were well qualified and committed to make change. Those recruited through the SES were directly appointed by the President to target specific areas that needed large-scale change. Normally resentment would be expected when experts are brought in to 'fix' problems, but apparently the fact that these professionals managed to create visible and immediate change and showed a sincere commitment to supporting their country as national Liberians (a commitment that the evaluation notes was often absent amongst permanent staff) somehow balanced the resentment.

Challenges:

As indicated in the point above there are, of course, challenges. Although the programmes conjointly have helped make a leap forward in forming the public service system in Liberia, posting a host of international and national professional Liberians, not just in advisory positions but also in actual positions, is not unproblematic.

Similar to what is often highlighted with foreign advisors, *salary differences are counter-productive to institutional change. Salary differences create jealousy, animosity and dissatisfaction among national civil servants who feel they work on similar terms as LECBS/TOKTEN professionals but without benefitting from the programme. The mid-term evaluation argues that this further leads to a lack of willingness to cooperate with those colleagues who are part of the programme.*

Another major challenge is the fact that all those recruited under the LECBS programme are directly appointed by the president including a pool of cabinet ministers accountable only to her. Although TOKTEN is recruitment-based, the mid-term evaluation states that "a number of interviewees have highlighted the lack of competition and objective standards in the selection of candidates in both projects, implying that political considerations and other forms of relationships, rather than qualifications and experience seem to cloud the recruitment process" (GOL/UNDP/USAID 2008:59).

Another major challenge, related to the former points, is the absence of a conducive work environment for the recruited experts. Salary differences, unclear recruitment and the fact that performance was not properly monitored created resentment and unsupportive attitudes among the national civil servants.

Concluding remarks:

This case is an example of a strongly nationally-led placement of qualified individuals as the primary tool for enhancing state capacity. The strong priority given to human capacities in state institutions seems to have been worthwhile, and it teaches us that:

National gap filling created immediate changes and instilled confidence among donors and the public. Resentment was balanced because the gap filling was done using national professionals. This may be easier in contexts where there are no major ethnic rivalries in the country, which can counter the positive effects of bringing back professionals. However, the mid-term evaluation argues there is a need for objective recruitment procedures, proper monitoring and support for behavioural change to ensure that the posted professionals can make an impact and national servants can see the point, also for themselves.

Functional–rational aspects have strong symbolic value

Clearly, these programmes put strong emphasis on making actual and fast changes in the functional–rational aspects of state administration and succeeded as such. It has been important to reduce the excessive levels of government staffing, make systems that work and take some drastic measures to halt Liberia's downward spiral. Moreover, *political aspects have been an integral, yet unmentioned, part of the strategy,* especially for the SES who are all directly appointed by the president and thus assumed to be loyal to the government. Destructive elements and internal politics that counter the work for change have been cleared out. In fact, there seems to have been an expectation that the political aspects and various power relations that could work against institutional change would be overcome by the mere fact that national Liberians with experiences from Liberia as well as of well-functioning systems could navigate both. Certainly, some changes came about (according to the SES stories) because the recruited experts dared to challenge vested interests and internal politics by drawing on experience from well-functioning systems elsewhere in combination with their cultural familiarity.

The consideration of the external environment

The programme is concerned with posting of national professionals in various state institutions and functions. Therefore, it is a programme which has *the method* as its focus rather than a specific institution, and it is difficult say something about the programmes' consideration of the external environment of the many different institutions. These initiatives had, as their primary aim, to change internal procedures, strategies and plans. It seems from the available documentation that relations to the external environment have not been a major focus for these initiatives.

It is clear that *context awareness, and especially national commitment and patriotism, have been prioritised.* The use of national expertise was a clear strategy for the president, following on from the assumption that those who are close to context understand it better and are more committed and better qualified to make changes in it. For many of the personal cases this indeed seems to have been the case.

6. South–South capacity development through regional support in South Sudan

South–South cooperation was promoted as an answer to Western domination back in the 1970s as part of a concern with self-reliance. Clearly, the notion indicates a difference from predominant North–South relations. Lately, there has been growing international interest in South–South cooperation as a way to provide development aid. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) initiative in South Sudan is a recent capacity development programme based on regional South–South exchange. The IGAD is a special example in several ways. It is part of the construction of a new nation, rather than reconstruction, which means that many civil service functions start from nothing. Secondly, it is special, because it is a large-scale example of regional funding and cooperation. It is well documented by independent researchers through a large research project, 'The International Capacity Research Initiative', comprising a researcher from the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) and several researchers from the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI) (Tarp and Rosen 2011, 2012; da Costa et.al 2013a,b,c,d). It builds on large-scale qualitative fieldwork in 2011 and 2013, and is thus one of the best researched cases presented in this study. This is a newly initiated programme and it is still running.

Context

South Sudan is a country with a long history of conflict. The last major war was between the central Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army, which lasted more than two decades until the signing of a peace agreement in 2005. Around two million people were either killed or died of famine and disease caused by the war. The civilian death toll is one of the highest of any war since World War II, and four million people in southern Sudan have been displaced during the war. After the peace, a referendum was held in January 2011, which led to South Sudan gaining independence and becoming the world's newest country on 9 July 2011. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development initiative thus takes place in a very special context. It is not only one of the first extensive attempts at deploying South–South capacity development in a post-conflict situation, it is at the same time capacity development of a state that is to be built from scratch. Since the comprehensive peace agreement in 2005 basic institutions and processes have been established. Yet, at the time of independence there was a general agreement among donors and analysts that South Sudan was the largest post-conflict reconstruction challenge of modern times

(Tarp and Rosen 2012). For example, just 5% of civil servants had a graduate degree or higher and around 50 per cent had only primary level education. There was a lack of the most basic legislation and organisational procedures. In terms of the political aspect, military commanders had been put in key decision-making positions and there was a widespread culture of impunity and a lack of accountability. Clearly, the tasks facing the seconded officers in this programme were overwhelming.

Objective

The programme aims to build capacity through coaching and mentoring of civil service officers in various South Sudanese ministries and bodies at the national and state levels.[20] The primary objective is knowledge transfer from the regional Civil Service Support Officer to the South Sudanese 'twin'. It is assumed that South–South coaching and mentoring as a way to capacity development ensures greater cultural affinity alongside stronger commitment and dedication, and thus help to build relations.[21]

Activities

IGAD has seconded 199 civil service support officers to South Sudan from neighbouring Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda during its first phase that runs from 2011 to 2013. The officers are seconded on two-year terms. Their home countries pay salaries, the UNDP provides technical support and the government of South Sudan's Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development is responsible for implementation. Norway funds programme management and various costs related to the officers such as travel and per diems.

Twinning – Qualified and motivated senior-level officers from Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda are seconded and 'twinned' with a South Sudanese colleague. Knowledge transfer should occur from on-the-job training and thus strengthen the ability of the South Sudanese 'twins' to perform their civil service functions. 83% of the seconded officers actually worked with twins or groups of twins, the rest ended up with no twins.

20 As of February 2013 the initiative had seconded 177 Kenyan, Ethiopian and Ugandan officers. The last 22 arrived in March 2013, and thus the total number was 199. The South Sudanese institutions range from the air traffic control tower at Juba Airport and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the laboratories at the Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries and the National Legislative Assembly. The seconded officers are primarily medical personnel – specialised doctors, nurses, midwives and laboratory technicians. Altogether, they are deployed to 19 ministries, 44% work within health (UNDP 2013 in da Costa et al 2013).

21 Coaching and mentoring for capacity development (including South–South co-operation) have previously been utilised in post-conflict settings such as Kosovo, Liberia, Iraq, Timor-Leste and Afghanistan (da Costa et.al. 2013a)

Coaching – there is no official definition, but according to the study it is seen as the act of transferring knowledge through various types of on-the-job training in a somewhat fluid, informal and ad hoc manner.

Mentoring – here also there is no official definition, but it is seen more as a purely advisory role in which the twin would have to more explicitly subordinate him/herself to the seconded officer and actively seek guidance.

Output – capacity and performance

The study found *a multitude of coaching practices* but few examples of mentoring. Egalitarian practices were preferred. Many seconded officers worked with their 'twins' on a specific task and thus transferred knowledge as 'learning-by-doing'. This could range from building a laboratory, to developing various manuals for inspection or drafting policies and laws.

The programme already shows evidence of impact on core practices such as establishing strategic plans, drafting policies and supporting their development.

In terms of output in service provision, not much has been achieved so far. According to the study, the main reason for this is, 'austerity measures' i.e. severe lack of funding for much-needed staff, no funds for key functions such as inspections or labour inspectors and lack of resources for implementation of the policies drafted by the twinning partners. Nonetheless, the mid-term review found that 82% of seconded officers found that the institutions' service delivery had improved as a result of the programme.

The mid-term review indicates that learning takes place. Of the seconded officers, 80% stated that the skills of twins had improved as a result of the programme. This positive assessment is also shared by the twins themselves: 95% stated in the mid-term review that they agreed or strongly agreed that they are learning a lot from working together with the seconded officers.

Fundamental understanding, basic skills and elementary functioning

Given an initial context of starting from almost nothing, with employees having no previous experience with civil administration, the study concludes that civil servants have acquired an understanding of the purpose of their institution and of their own

job functions. Along similar lines, IGAD has led to the design and implementation of basic standard operating procedures that are fundamental to a functioning civil administration, for example time management, communication, archiving procedures and basic analytical skills. Civil servants have developed and improved their drafting skills, which seems basic but nonetheless is a central capacity for a well-functioning institution. The study found an increase in administrative and regulatory capacities such as capacity to conceive of and develop rules and procedures, and maintain systems. These provide the foundation for future output in an institution.

OPEN assessment

Measured against the UN-defined OPEN framework the IGAD is concluded to have demonstrated high levels of national Ownership, Partnership and cooperation between participating countries at diplomatic levels as well as in practical operations, the professional Expertise of seconded officers has been noteworthy and most have been genuinely committed to their tasks. Finally, Nimbleness has characterised IGAD, thanks to the flexible and risk-embracing donor of Norway and to seconded officers who were prepared to undertake tasks as they emerged, even if they were not part of their terms of reference.

Source: da Costa et al. 2013. Civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict – a case study of OPEN. DIIS Policy Brief, May 2013.

Factors explaining the success

The use of this model of regional support is in itself the reason this can be deemed a success, because it embodies so many positive driving forces:

First of all, there seems to be a *strong ownership* of the programme by the government of South Sudan and many of the twins.

There has been a *balance between self-interest and altruism* for each of the contributing nations as well as for the seconded officers, which has created strong motivation and commitment.

Regional (self)interest is a driving force. The border-sharing countries naturally have a strong interest in developing a resilient and secure neighbouring South Sudan, and a regional economy. The study found that the IGAD embodied a strong sense of mutual dependency and shared destiny.

Professional appropriateness has given the programme strong credibility. The seconding countries selected professional and experienced staff to supplement their South Sudanese twins, and the fact that this professional expertise is required in a somewhat similar bureaucracy where nepotism, corruption and patrimonial affiliations are familiar, makes the professional input highly appropriate. The study notes that the seconded experts have a necessary pragmatic approach to what they can achieve, which is often absent among Western experts.

Cultural affinity enhances chance of success. The seconded officers, South Sudanese twins as well as donors and collaborating governments all put strong emphasis on cultural affinity as an explanation for why this programme works better than traditional secondment of international experts.

A sense of brotherhood is a motivating factor – the seconded officers are motivated by a wish to support their 'African brothers and sisters'.

It is *significantly less expensive* than deploying international advisors and consultants. Moreover, the fact that the seconded officers already work in state administration and thus come directly from a job similar to the one they are helping their twin to establish makes the match highly relevant.

Challenges

Coordination and cooperation – The triangular cooperation between Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda has been profoundly challenging. Each country has had different approaches, different expectations, different procedures and different salaries for their seconded officers.

Lack of funds – Because of the austerity measures taken by the government of South Sudan due to the lack of income from oil production, many functions cannot be performed, even if capacity is prioritised – for example there is no money for labour inspection officers to go out and inspect. There is often a lack of funds to buy the most essential and basic office equipment and follow the newly-learned procedures through. It is naturally difficult to develop capacity and get civil service functions running when there is a lack of funding for even the most basic tasks.

Human resource management is challenging. It has been delicate and challenging to match tasks, skills and to balance expectations and attitudes of seconded and South Sudanese officers. The exercise has been mostly successful but there have also been failures.

Hardship is underestimated. Many seconded officers, although highly motivated and willing to endure hardship, come from living and working conditions very different from the ones they encounter in South Sudan. Many live secure middle class lives and find it difficult, for example, to live in a tent, with few or no resources and amenities available.

Seconded officers miss acknowledgment and appreciation. Some seconded officers feel they provide relevant and professional expertise, yet they are offered much lower payment than other international experts. Similarly, they miss the attention and care that are given to other expatriates, features such as regular invitations to social events offered by their embassies. Their experience of the hardship of living in South Sudan only adds to the feeling of not being acknowledged.

Concluding remarks:

Regional South–South mentoring and coaching is an attempt to find new ways to counter previous challenges of posting context-unaware, expensive, international experts to develop capacity. Shortly stated, the case reveals that it is cheaper and seconded officers are equally professional and have experience from state institutions facing some of the same kinds of challenges. The experiences of secondment of staff from Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda to South Sudan shows there are strong advantages for both twins in a capacity development relation (sending and recipient) in terms of cultural affinity. This and the sense of 'brotherhood' ensured motivation and commitment on both sides. This does not mean there are no challenges, of course. We should not assume that countries within the same region are similar. It is also challenging for a Kenyan middle class senior civil servant to be seconded to live in a tent in conflict-affected South Sudan. However, the study team is very positive and concludes that the IGAD may be a new model for rapid capacity development of central state institutions in fragile situations.[22]

22 The IGAD initiative and a planned African Union initiative in South Sudan reveal that 'the model has reached a level of ambition and maturity where it is perhaps possible to speak about South–South based coaching and mentoring as a key instrument for capacity development in the state-building toolbox' (da Costa et al. 2013c).

Three things are especially worth noticing with this case. First, it is a rare example of really well researched and documented capacity development in a fragile context. Second, it is an example of large-scale support to key state functions which has yielded positive results within a short span of time. Third, the regional capacity development programme mitigates resentment towards external experts and both the government of South Sudan and many of the twins, i.e. the national staff being mentored by the experts, have a strong sense of ownership.

Functional–rational and political aspects are mixed in the twinning approach
Regionally based South–South capacity development is an attempt to address not only functional–rational challenges but also the need for building relations and trust to be able to meet local needs and develop local capacities. Clearly, the work of creating a new state entails a strong focus on establishing various functional–rational aspects of state institutions. At the same time, it is crucial the South Sudanese staff feel that they are key players in establishing the various systems and procedures, and thus are those developing the new state. It seems that the use of regional experts to a certain degree mitigates the resentment that capacity support often generates when external experts are brought into capacity-poor environments. Moreover, they proudly support their 'brothers and sisters' in developing this new and free African state. The regional experts deliver what is expected in terms of initiating functional–rational changes, and due to their position (as external, yet internal to the region) they are familiar, but not intertwined in, the internal politics and vested interests and are thus well positioned to analyse as well as seek to alter these.

The external relations are part and parcel of the programme. At an overall level, each institution's relation with the external environment is to some extent present in the form of the regional officer. Again, as with the case of using diaspora and senior professionals in Liberia, the seconded officers in this initiative are posted in a host of different institutions. The primary focus of the study is on the twinning method, and thus the extent to which capacity development in each institution has been linked with the external environment is not accounted for.

Regional and national – consideration of different contexts
The case clearly reveals the importance of context in terms of ensuring that advisors and mentors are familiar with and sensitive to the context, but also with regard to how impact or improvements are measured. In a new country where the entire civil administration is to be built from scratch, it is noteworthy that employees feel they have acquired a sense of the purpose of their job and the institution in which they work.

7. Conclusion

This report has analysed different cases of capacity development in fragile situations in an attempt to discern what kind of methods and approaches have revealed positive results according to their context of fragility, and thus provide some lessons learned. The report has taken an output-oriented approach to capacity development, perceiving state institutions as open systems, discerning the functional–rational aspects of capacity development as well as the political and power related aspects, in an attempt to explain reasons behind the results achieved in the cases analysed.

There is no one right way to support or carry out capacity development in fragile situations. The literature abounds with general recommendations regarding optimising support. These are concerned to find 'best practices'. This report adds to such general insights but concentrates on documented cases and the major lessons arising from the analysis of these. Following the analytical approach, the cases are all examples of capacity development in state institutions that have produced positive output at various levels.

Overall, the findings of this report show that there are rarely uniform best practices. Rather, there are interventions which *fit well* to the given situation and context (donor, sector, conflict etc.) This does not imply conforming to the context. In some cases, the initiative which seems to fit the need, context and situation, may be one that finds a window of opportunity to confront the specific technical–rational and not least political aspects of the context.

Capacity development: start from needs, opportunities and motivation

There are many good reasons to continue the strong focus on capacity development of state institutions when supporting fragile states. The most convincing of these is the fact that many of these countries themselves emphasise that it is a top priority. When supporting such states the following points should be considered:

Cases of successful capacity development have started from *strong motivation and commitment by either the political leadership or key persons in the state institution*. As such, it is a demand-driven process. The cases clearly show that strong leadership and commitment are crucial factors for capacity development. In Afghanistan it was

the Minister of Education and, after the advisor-driven formulation of the NESP-I, also senior management staff who were motivated to take over the process themselves. In Sierra Leone and Liberia there was direct support and a mandate from the President. Finally, when donors align with and stand behind the recipient country's own policies and plans, motivation among the leadership may evolve, as has been the case in Afghanistan where, for example, Danida's flexible support has been highly appreciated. At another level, motivation can be created when committed people are posted in key positions. The diaspora and national professionals brought into Liberian institutions have shown great commitment to their work, and acted in close alliance with the President.

Quickly initiated changes that break with past ways of doing things and have symbolic impact have created remarkable results. These then need to be supported in the long term to avoid drawbacks. This conclusion deviates from the present agenda of capacity development where pre-assessment and slow, locally initiated, changes are emphasised. We do not argue against incremental processes, but the cases show that change with great real and symbolic value (for example a massive clean-up of staff), sometimes externally initiated (but with strong local backing), has pushed institutions into a momentum where incremental changes then started to occur. This was the case with the RRA in Rwanda, the police in Sierra Leone and with capacity development initiatives in state institutions of Liberia.

Good things evolve but not necessarily as results of a grand plan. The cases of the Rwanda Revenue Authority and Sierra Leone police reform show that the most remarkable changes have occurred without following a grand plan. All the cases show that capacity is developed through numerous incremental, small and meticulous actions and rarely as a large, designed process. Much is about momentum and finding pockets of motivated people within organisations.

Sometimes *capacity development of an entire sector may be initiated by a focus on one of its branches* where motivation and backup is strong. The case of security sector reform in Sierra Leone may be used to show exactly this. Although there was a criticism that the police had been prioritised, leaving justice institutions behind, it can also be argued that it is exactly therefore large changes could be made in a short period of time which gave motivation to reform other parts such as the law and court system. In other words, capacity development initiatives need not start with an overall sector reform.

Capacity develops on an ad hoc basis. Sudden and context specific windows of opportunity arise and, when supported, have produced great results. Clearly, there needs to be a balance between having certain plans and long-term objectives and then flexibility to allow for changes in these when sudden opportunities arise. Where this has been successful, there has been a trustful partnership between the donor and recipient government/ organisation (e.g. DfID in Rwanda, UK in Sierra Leone, UNDP in Liberia)

Capacity development of central state institutions should be connected to the external environment. State institutions are open systems and as such they can be influenced by and also influence the public. This is rarely considered in capacity development initiatives. The Rwanda revenue authority is an example of an institution that acknowledged this relation, and attempted to 'brand' itself for the public and thereby enhance its capacity by being perceived as a leading employer, and thus attracting qualified staff. Similarly, the strong focus on creating public support through the 'Local Needs Policing' as part of the reform of the Sierra Leonean police, increased public trust in the police and thus boosted motivation to perform among some staff.

Context assessment is important, but may best be based on people who have inside knowledge, people who are already there. Fragile countries and those affected by conflict are often characterised by mistrust, corruption and various malpractices in the state administration. Therefore, analysis of needs, of existing systems and capacities, of informal power relations and hierarchies are pivotal for capacity development to succeed. Such analysis is not always best done by external teams coming in and making large-scale assessments, but by people – external or internal – who have intimate knowledge of what happens on the ground. The British Inspector General of Police for example, had been in Sierra Leone for several years before he was asked to lead the reform process. In Rwanda, a full-time project manager served as the link between DfID and the RRA management and helped ensure that decisions on what to support were guided by assessments of need and commitment as perceived by RRA management.

Capacity is developed by people and with people – what works when posting experts?

All the analysed cases use advisors or experts to initiate, facilitate and in some cases, run the capacity development process. In Afghanistan, the MoE received a large number of international and national advisors; in Rwanda, technical expertise played a main

role; in Sierra Leone, an external expert lead the process; in South Sudan, regional twins have been posted to work alongside South Sudanese staff; and in Liberia posting and appointing of diaspora professionals and national experts from various walks of life was the backbone of post-war capacity development. Hence, special attention is given to what has worked when using expert personnel.

Gap filling may strengthen the system considerably and be the foundation for capacity development and institutional change, especially if it makes alterations to internal politics. Deployment of TAs, although often criticised as unsustainable in terms of capacity development, has actually in some cases built capacity. TAs do not develop staff capacity unless there are direct measures and guidance to do so, but TAs have been central in changing some systems, both formal functional–rational as well as political hierarchies and practices. In Liberia, it has been a conscious strategy to recruit and appoint national professionals in key positions (with TA privileges) in various state institutions, and this gap filling has yielded important results in terms of output of the institutions as well as of the sections within the institutions where these experts have been posted. Being internal, but with years of external experience, several of the senior professionals have been able to question vested interests and internal politics. In Sierra Leone, the highly UK-driven process changed fundamental procedures and policies, for example by introducing 'Local Needs Policing', which was unlikely to have been initiated without the influence of someone intertwined in the local cultural and political systems. It is a balance, however, because external experts can also create local resentment to changes and jealousy, and build up systems that collapse when they leave.

Salaries are important for staff motivation for capacity development. Not only is there a need to pay attention to salary differences between TAs and local staff to avoid demotivation etc., the Rwanda case also shows that prioritising a competitive salary may change the public image and standing of an institution and thus attract capable staff able to push further changes along. It is worth considering whether it may in some instances be worthwhile prioritising higher salaries and fewer personnel to increase the overall capacity of an institution.

Cultural affinity and professional expertise both play a role when deployment of TAs results in capacity development of systems and staff in central state institutions. Some sort of cultural affinity, as is the case with diaspora nationals, national experts and regional advisors, enables a better understanding of the challenges and potentials on

the part of the advisor, and creates greater trust and acceptance among civil servants. Nonetheless, cultural affinity has also created challenges. Because advisors (whether diaspora or from a neighbouring country) and civil servants feel culturally similar, differences in payment for example have sometimes appeared more provocative. Clearly, cultural affinity cannot stand alone; advisors and experts are expected to bring in professional expertise and some fresh, external eyes as well. They have to be able to challenge the status quo.

It seems that *regional South–South cooperation may be the way forward*. In short, it is cheaper, and equally professional to post expertise from neighbouring countries where state institutions may also have governance challenges and corruption problems and similar internal politics, but who nonetheless have an outsiders' position. It is often combined with a 'sense of brotherhood' and thus motivation and commitment on both sides. The Sierra Leonean case counters this, but close personal affiliation to the president and a sensitive process had the same effect of generating affinity and commitment. It is argued that when advisors are used to corruption in their own countries, then some may be more pragmatic about it in order to make things work when posted in a fragile setting. This may enhance capacity development, as has been the case in Liberia and South Sudan.

Capacity development can help strengthening the social contract. From the cases analysed here there are a few factors that emerge to be of importance to (re)establish or strengthen the social contract between a state and the citizen: One is paying attention to changing the public image of institutions through campaigns and active institutional engagement with the public, as has been the case in with the Revenue Authority in Rwanda and the police in Sierra Leone. Another is making visible and symbolically significant changes such as building schools and enrolling girls as has been the case in Afghanistan, or by installing a host of nationally accepted personnel to indicate a sincere effort at creating change across the range of state institutions as in South Sudan and Liberia.

Balancing the change of tangible systems and internal power relations and hierarchies

The report has analysed the cases in terms of how capacity development attempts have sought to alter functional–rational aspects, as well as the political aspects of state institutions and the following conclusions emerge:

The cases have *all attempted to challenge the internal politics and power hierarchies but focussed mainly on systems and procedures to do so.* What seems to have been of great importance in several cases (Afghanistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Liberia) has been to make large-scale clean-ups of staffing and ranking systems, and to rid organisations of shadow employees and to challenge outright vested interests etc. through systemic change.

Donor-aided capacity development in fragile situations has (and should have judging from the cases) a strong focus on the technical–rational aspects of an organisation. Establishing management structures etc. has, in many instances, been the base upon which staff capacity development has begun. In recent years there has been a strong focus on the political aspects, the need to pay strong attention to altering the informal systems and hierarchies existing within organisations, especially in fragile situations. This report contends that sometimes externally-supported change of fundamental procedures, if backed by committed leadership, can spur change and capacity development in internal politics.

None of the cases presented here started the capacity development work based on large-scale context assessments. However, if those involved in decision making regarding capacity development were often insiders to the context (even an outsider like the UK citizen Keith Biddle, had worked in Sierra Leone several years prior to being appointed Inspector General of Police) then, clearly, capacity development models cannot be exported independent of context. But it seems that *context assessments to a larger degree need to be based on people who are actually there*. And rather than merely assessing needs and deficiencies (although important of course), they should look for motivation, committed people and immediate opportunities for supporting institutional change through capacity development. Again, this underpins the initial point of finding the good fit in a given situation, a fit that also enables a handling of contextual malfunctions.

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8. Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, some overall recommendations emerge that donors need to consider when supporting capacity development in fragile situations:

- *Find a good and strong fit for the given context and situation*. This is the overall recommendation encompassing the following.

- *Build on good relations*
  When possible – build on existing partnerships as trust and long-term cooperation have proven to be vital factors for changing the way systems and people work.

- *Base support on commitment and leadership*
  Look for strongly committed institutions and persons to identify appropriate pockets where quick capacity development can be initiated.

- *Support ad hoc evolution and do so on a long-term basis*
  Allow time and phase-wise definition of needs and targets to overhaul an entire organisation. Start with motivated pockets and continue on an ad hoc basis as defined by those on the ground.

- *Pay specific attention to the external environment*
  Pay attention to the external linkages and the environment of an organisation and support changes in the public perception of an institution, as this may fuel internal change.

- *Ensure initial bold symbolic changes*
  Focus on initiating some changes that markedly break with previous ways of doing things as these can lay the basis for institutional change and capacity development.

- *Prioritise regional South–South capacity development*
  Judging from the example of IGAD in Southern Sudan, it is clearly recommendable to put more resources into facilitating regional South–South exchange of professionals for capacity development purposes.

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