



META MOR PHOSES

1985

To facilitate the posting abroad of professionals in the context of development cooperation, the PSO Association is founded on 26 November 1985.



*Let's take
the PSO
inspiration
forward.*

Preface

PSO 1985 – 2012



Let's have a look at us, at 'PSO'. Since 1985 we facilitated technical assistance. We did this successfully, for many years! Over time, insights from these postings proved to us that local capacity strengthening was a serious need in developing countries. We became convinced that a strong civil society is a prerequisite for sustainable development. As a consequence, in 2000, we completely changed our vision and strategies; our first metamorphosis.

We adopted the view that civil society development is an endogenous and autonomous process. Also, that Northern and Southern civil society actors must be considered as equals. And we must infuse our relations with this practice. Furthermore, that aid must contribute to an enabling environment for civil society development. Vital in the PSO view is that learning and continually improving the quality of our work is essential for effective support strategies.

With these convictions in mind, we stimulated Dutch NGO's to focus on improving the kind of relationship they have with their Southern counterparts. Funding of member's projects with this specific focus led to stronger organisations in the South, innovative ways of collaboration, and growth in awareness of more reciprocal relationships. From 2007, PSO focused even more on a role as a knowledge broker providing a unique platform for learning and exchange between peers, our Dutch members and their partners. A second metamorphosis.

In linking many different organisations we increased our collective ability to learn and experiment, to bring theories and tools into practice and to share lessons learned on capacity development. In doing so, we contributed to the central place that capacity development enjoys today in Dutch development policies. We made capacity development known as a verb, for professionals. And yes, we are proud of that!

Since our first metamorphosis, many of the PSO organisations changed their role from being a main actor in solving direct poverty and emergencies towards facilitating local initiatives and their direct learning needs.

Now, after 27 years of existence and several metamorphoses, over 30.000 contracts, 6.500 postings, thousands of capacity development projects funded, hundreds of learning trajectories, PSO as you know it is coming to a close. A next metamorphosis for development is up to... all of you! So, cherish our legacy. Use our works. And, improve them while you learn.

Let's us all take the PSO inspiration forward!

Margo Kooijman, PSO director

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On behalf of the chairman

Now you are holding the commemorative booklet, you are probably wondering what happened. Why has PSO ceased to exist? As its chairman, I look back on the past few years with a mixture of pride and regret. We were privileged to be able to carry out a great deal of important work in the field of capacity and societal development in developing countries. Capacity development is quite rightly now a prominent part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' policy and is listed as being of great importance to sustainable development. We view putting the importance of capacity development on the agenda as one of our finest achievements.

Nevertheless, PSO's general meeting of members has, at the suggestion of the board, decided to dissolve the association as of 1 January 2013. This was a hard decision to make. In 2010, it became clear that the funding policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – PSO's largest financier by far – was set to change dramatically. Although a two-year prolongation of PSO's subsidy framework was promised in 2010, it was apparent that this would not be continued in its current form after 2012.

'Capacity development is quite rightly now a prominent part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' policy and is listed as being of great importance to sustainable development'

As PSO's board we ordered an external study to be conducted during the first quarter of 2011 which had as its unavoidable, principal question: what needs to be done to allow PSO to operate on a competitive market? The result was that any scenario involved an immensely challenging change process for the organisation. After ample study, we therefore concluded that PSO would have to be entirely changed as far as organisational form and objectives were concerned. In our opinion this plan was infeasible. This is why we proposed dissolving the organisation to its members. Over the course of 2011 we consulted PSO's members concerning this policy proposal. The decision that we, as an association, have been forced to make is both painful and regrettable.

'I am deeply pleased that PSO's demise has led to the birth of new initiatives'

At the same time as announcing the decision to dissolve the association, the board immediately asked members and staff to submit initiatives aimed at safeguarding the valuable elements of PSO's work. Initiatives have been developed and are presented at the back of this booklet. I am deeply pleased that PSO's demise has led to the birth of new initiatives and I would like to wish the initiators, but also PSO's staff and members a fruitful future.

Ludy Geut, PSO Chairman



International Advisory Board members: Alan Fowler, P.N. Vasanti, Dominique Hounkonnou, Alfonso Gumucio Dagon

A vision of the past and future

The International Advisory Board (IAB) was a late invention in the life of PSO, it came to work only during the last five years of the organisation. The intention was to introduce fresh blood into a body that needed to break out of a cocoon made of too many habits that had accumulated over two decades. The creation of the IAB coincided with the drive to 'remake' PSO, by shaking its roots and making profound changes to evolve into a renown point of reference as an international learning and sharing institution.

PSO's trade is capacity development. But this is a "buzz" expression, too many things fit inside to be sure of what is involved. While the former label "capacity building"

became politically incorrect, in so many contexts what was being practiced did not really evolve into a "different animal", as our colleague Alan Fowler would say. The transition between "building" and "developing" needed much more conceptual muscle to grab the ideological difference between vertical approaches that assumed the patronising position of doing good from "above" and the power to imagine that capacity can be developed through a collective collaborative effort, which includes the perspective of complexity as a main ingredient in the process.

Complexity points to the multiplicity and the richness of the social tissue - including

'Times however have changed and we need to come to new ways of working on capacity building'

cultural diversity and communication as vital elements in what capacity and its change for the betterment of society are all about. The sustainable development that capacity should produce is only possible if the capital of history, tradition, and knowledges (yes, the plural) are put to work for the benefit of a community of learning and learners.

If any contribution can be mentioned from the IAB it was to bring into PSO the perspectives from a world in development, bridging the gaps between North and South, and inviting PSO to gain a relational presence in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The fact that the IAB included members from those regions in dialogue with European colleagues is not a minor detail.

'What PSO leaves for the near future? An approach to capacity development that is complex but humble, civic-driven, inclusive and inter-cultural'

The arrival of the IAB in the life of PSO had a lot to do with the capacity to imagine collectively a new role for the organisation,

and to dare to dream changes that would shake the institutional pillars. To leave the zone of comfort of business-as-usual, was a courageous decision, and PSO did take the risks involved. It was an adventurous bet, but it was also a deep-felt necessity: the changing world needs new types of relations in society. PSO dared to change.

In very few years the new PSO emerged, still loosening from the ballast of its own tradition, but flashing a whole new perspective towards its partners and members. Never before had the word "learning" gained such an important meaning inside PSO, which will be remembered for the seeds planted and the road opened for the learning trajectories, a process of collective learning and sharing.

This is what PSO leaves for the near future: an approach to capacity development that is complex but humble, civic-driven, inclusive and inter-cultural. A way of looking at development that takes into account different perspectives and constantly feed back into the learning process. Learning to learn. Learning to share. Learning to dream a better world.

On behalf of the International Advisory Board,
Alfonso Gumucio-Dagon



PSO: a strong channel for capacity building

'Times however have changed and we need to come to new ways of working on capacity building'

PSO has actually had a long history. Previously there were two separate channels for the sending out of development workers from the Netherlands named JVC and OPIT. The first one, JVC (which stands for Jongeren Vrijwilligers Corps) dates back to 1963. The second one, OPIT (short for Overleg Particulier Initiatief Tropenartsen, mainly meant for the sending out of tropical doctors), was set up some 14 years later. Both organisations had an umbrella function for a number of non-governmental development agencies in the Netherlands covering a broad spectrum of the Dutch society.

'I am pleased to ascertain that PSO has actually played that role indeed'

In 1977 OPIT received co-financement funds from the Dutch government, whereas JVC got the same in 1979. The desirability of merging the two bodies into one integrated programme grew and this was finally realised in 1985. On the 26th of November that year it came in Zeist to the set up of a

new organisation, named PSO: Personele Samenwerking met Ontwikkelinglanden. In the process of getting to this merge I have been intensively involved as the then Director of Dienst over Grenzen (DOG), one of the member organisations of JVC and OPIT. I considered it a challenge to help to come to one integrated non-governmental organisation who could play a strong role in the field of capacity building in developing countries.

I am pleased to ascertain that PSO has actually played that role indeed. The instruments for capacity strengthening have gradually been extended, and have really contributed to the growth and quality improvement of local, trained manpower in the countries concerned. As times have changed we need to come to new ways of working on capacity building. And that will be the new challenge. From 1963 (start of JVC) till 2013 (the intended ending of PSO) is 50 years. Years in which quite much has been achieved and one could be thankful for.

Job van Melle, co-founder of PSO

Being partners is about good relationship and trust

Mensen met een missie

Being a faith based organisation, Mensen met een Missie (founded in 1931) continuously posts lay missionaries abroad to work with our local partner organisations. Therefore, ever since PSO started in 1985, we have been an active and closely involved member of the association. Always being open to innovation and finding a platform for sharing gained knowledge and experience made PSO a strong partner to its members.

We shared PSO's vision on the postings abroad of professionals; its emphasis on long term postings in order to be able to contribute to the local organisations and their activities will continue to inspire us. This approach expresses international solidarity and helps building bridges between organisations in Western Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America.

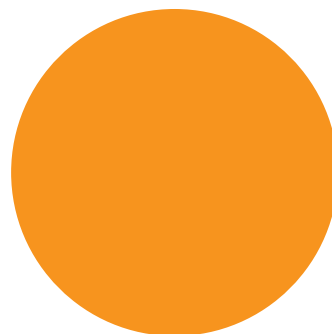
Besides that, PSO has given Mensen met een Missie sustainable food for thought. It helped us to move from individual training of counterparts to ever more systematised capacity building by our partner organisations especially on the different levels of human resource development, organisational and institutional development. Over the last years we have been putting an increasing emphasis on the development and strengthening of local, regional, national and international networks. We established linking and learning activities within Mensen met een Missie programmes and focused on themes like gender, interreligious dialogue and human rights. PSO guided that process.

With a keyword being 'tailor-made', PSO intensified the significance of learning within our organisation.

It's the good relationship and the trust between the two organisations, that guarantees the ongoing influence of PSO. Thank you for all the years of fruitful cooperation!

Mensen met een Missie, The Hague
www.mensenmeteenmissie.nl

Young Maya Mam in Guatemala meet at a linking and learning network event



Our journey Tear

Since its beginning in 1986 we have been a member of PSO. This membership has been dynamic and moved from different stages. In the beginning the focus was on the secondment of experts to local partner organisations. PSO screened the requests through an external committee, and if positive on the request, PSO arranged for many supplementary facilities. We were involved in the committee of PSO on the conditions for secondment of the experts, which brought both HRM expertise as well as expertise on conditions at partner level together.

When the focus of PSO moved to wider capacity strengthening of partner organisations, the relationship between PSO and Tear also changed. We have benefitted from discussions with PSO on the specific contribution we are providing to partner organisations, choices for sectors and themes. Also PSO has invested in processes of learning within our organisation, where

we looked together at systems within Tear that promote learning.

Through PSO support we have been able to develop our capacity in many different ways. We have been attending learning events, staff has participated in learning programmes, and we have been part of a learning trajectory on Disability Mainstreaming with support of PSO. Also some new methods have been tested with support of PSO. There has been a Tear programme on Environmental Assessment in relation to development activities, how to measure effects of climate change and on increasing the role of churches as local actors for development. Other activities that we did with PSO related to supporting learning within partner organisations through Self Organised Learning, widening the role of Faith Based Organisations in reducing stigma and harm.

For us it is important to develop partnerships to address poverty, and to stimulate the involvement of people and local groups like churches, both in the Netherlands as well as in the South. The partnership with PSO has been much appreciated as the relationship was based on appreciation of different approaches in the field of development. Tear has the organisational support of partners high on the agenda and will continue to include this in its programme to make work effective.

Tear, Zeist
www.tear.nl

The Basics of Capacity Development Support

PSO's view on valuable learning methods to support capacity development processes of civil society organisations worldwide

This article summarises the valuable insights into practical support to the capacity development processes of Northern and Southern development organisations, gained by PSO in the period 2003-2012. It gives some of the methodological answers to the ever-emerging questions in the dynamic development context, and presents the state-of-the-art in this last year of PSO's existence.

PSO's vision on social change

A strong civil society is a prerequisite for sustainable development within a country. It constitutes the arena where the forces of government, market, and organised citizens meet, clash, and shape a society's future'. PSO's contribution to the development of civil society has focused on the development of the capacities of organised citizens to play their roles, stand up for their rights, and take their responsibilities in this arena. For PSO capacity development means a continuous learning process whereby individuals, groups, organisations, networks, and institutes increase their ability to:

- perform core functions;
- solve problems;
- define and achieve objectives; and
- understand and deal with their development needs.

Approaches to capacity development support

Based on its vision, PSO used two models to promote a comprehensive approach to capacity development.

'PSO worked with a more systemic and interactive approach to capacity development, through the introduction of the 'Five Capabilities Model', as a tool for monitoring and dialogue'

The first model stimulates organisations to focus on three inter-related dimensions that together shape a desired capacity. They are:

- human resources development;
- organisational development; and
- institutional development.

PSO encouraged Dutch non-governmental organisations to analyse the context of their work, their policies and strategies in the field of capacity development support, from these three perspectives, and to develop demand-driven activities. This approach is primarily based on Northern perceptions of Southern organisations.²

Inspired by a publication of the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), as of 2008, PSO also worked with a second, more systemic and interactive approach to capacity development, through the introduction of the 'Five Capabilities Model'³ as a tool for monitoring and dialogue. PSO used the latter model for both the analysis of Southern and Northern development organisations.



¹ Global changes and civil society - background paper for 'Civil society at a new frontier'-INTRAC conference, December 2011. Brian Pratt, November 2011 on <http://www.intrac.org/data/files/resources/75/>

² Aanvraag en beoordelingsmethodiek, PSO (2004)

³ Capacity Change and Performance: Insights and implications for development cooperation. (Policy Management Brief No. 21). Maastricht: ECDPM (2008)

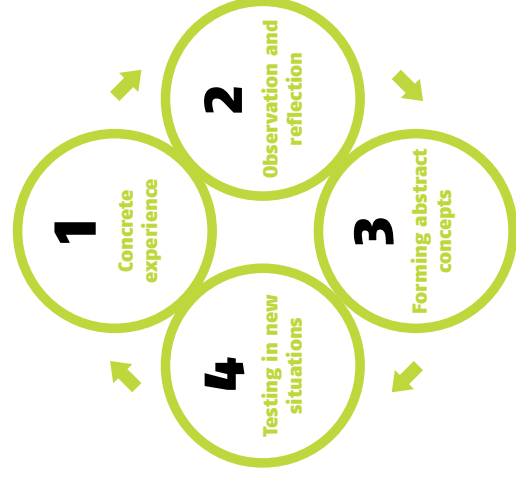
Five Capabilities Model

The Five Capabilities Model supports organisations and their partners to assess the capacities of the organisations and their relationships, and assists them in evaluating the changes. The assessments focus on the following capabilities:

1. **The capability to commit** and engage is the collective wish, the self-confidence of an organisation, and the engine required to mobilise or organise the four other capabilities.
2. **The capability to carry out** technical service delivery and logistical tasks relevant to reach the development results an organisation wants to achieve. This capability is referred to by Northern organisations when they talk about capacity building.
3. **The capability to relate** and to attract resources and support are essential for any organisation that wants to be autonomous and that wants to influence its environment.
4. **The capability to adapt** and self-renew allows an organisation to develop itself in an ever-changing context.
5. **The capability to balance** diversity and coherence refers to the resilience of an organisation to be stable without being rigid and to be innovative without disintegrating.

'Capacity development implies a continuous learning process'

Figure 1:
The Action Learning Cycle



Capacity development is learning

Capacity development implies a continuous learning process. Civil society organisations will benefit from a more conscious use of the Action Learning Cycle of David Kolb⁴. Action Learning is a cyclic process in which individuals and organisations strengthen their learning capacities by repeatedly going through four stages: planning, action, reflection, and learning.

PSO's learning principles

Applying Kolb's Action Learning theory has helped PSO to identify a number of crucial learning principles:

1. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. This is what we mean: in PSO learning trajectories, we put knowledge into practice, and we put practice into knowledge. By doing so, we jointly learn, and we learn from each other.
2. We discovered that when people together explore the significance of an activity or event, it empowers all of them and makes the lessons more sustainable.
3. True learning can be seen: behavioural change of individuals, organisations, and networks.
4. Learning is a tailor-made process: it must fit the reality of the learner and the context of the organisation.
5. Learning requires a safe (institutional) environment, in which one dares to experiment.

Our strategy: learning instruments

To ensure integration of our learning principles in the working processes of organisations, we developed three learning

instruments. They support the learning processes at three levels, from more context-specific to more generic.

Three levels of learning

- | | Learning instruments |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Organisational learning | > Learning-working path |
| • Inter-organisational learning | > Collective learning trajectory |
| • In-depth learning | > Thematic learning programme |

Our vision is that linking the three instruments is beneficial.

When different organisations face similar questions, collective learning trajectories can be developed. Also, the results of collective learning trajectories and thematic learning programmes can feed learning-working paths of individual organisations.

Learning-working path – Individual organisations and coalitions learn

The aim of learning-working paths is to further professionalise organisations and coalitions in order to improve their interventions in the South and the relations with their partners. To meet organisations' specific needs, tailor-made learning-working paths are initiated. First, the daily practice of the organisations and their partners are analysed, followed by the formulation of an organisational development question. Learning-working paths provide organisations with

clearer visions on capacity development, increased learning capabilities, and intensified partnerships.

Read some interesting stories on learning-working paths in our publication Work together, learn together.

Collective learning trajectory – Organisations and/or coalitions learn from each other and with each other

Collective learning trajectories focus on professionalising organisations in the field of capacity development by learning jointly with other organisations. They bring together staff of organisations, so that they can jointly learn and also be change agents in their organisations, which might be supportive to their learning-working paths. A collective learning trajectory consists of a number of gatherings, in between which the participants test or implement in practice what they learned.

Read the fruits of a successful collective learning trajectory in 'The Baseline Approach'.

Thematic learning programma – A number of organisations and/or coalitions jointly focus on increasing their thematic knowledge

Thematic learning programmes aim to enlarge thematic knowledge in the field of capacity development. They provide organisations with opportunities to implement studies and action research in collaboration with their partners on a specific topic, supported by relevant academic institutions. Read some remarkable stories about the thematic learning programme in [title publication: nader te bepalen].

'Kolb and Schön (1983) Experiential Learning. The reflective practitioner, art. Van Welden

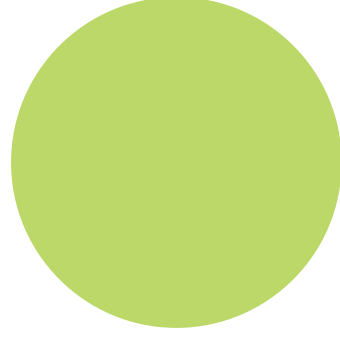


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'Dutch civil society organisations can continue to play a crucial role in processes of strengthening civil society only if they professionalise even more. A learning attitude is required, a drive to continuously learn and improve as individuals and as organisations'



Successes and challenges

What works and what does not work?

The numerous learning programmes that PSO initiated with civil society organisations gave insight in what works and what does not. Some key lessons learnt are:

- Making capacity development policies and strategies explicit helps organisations to know where they stand, and to internally discuss the way forward. It broadens internal knowledge and support.
- Collecting baseline information on capacity development, both in Northern and Southern organisations, is necessary to monitor progress and to strengthen the learning processes.
- Dedicating time and resources to learning pays off.
- Involving outsiders in learning is worthwhile. Third parties bring new views, experiences, and instruments that expand organisations' reflection on their capacity development practices and learning objectives.
- Translating individual learning into organisational learning is essential. Individual learning is only useful when it leads to new instruments, procedures, and work processes within the organisation.
- The frantically sought-after Southern ownership of policies and programmes can become a reality if Northern and Southern organisations respect each others' learning processes, and are transparent about them.
- As a consequence, negotiate with your partners about connecting learning cycles in a way that is meaningful to both.

More valuable lessons learnt are given in other PSO publications, which are hosted by Partos. For an overview of PSO publications please see:

<https://www.partos.nl/category/informatiebron/pso>

Future capacity development

Post PSO challenges

The increased connectivity of citizens through internet and social media, the further inter-dependence of economic markets, the rise of Brazil, Russia, India, and China (the BRIC countries), and the emergence of more global problems (related to climate, energy, etc.) have strengthened the call for a global civil society, in which Northern, Western, Southern, and Eastern citizen organisations together operate on the basis of reciprocal and meaningful relationships. Building these types of relationships is a major challenge for many Northern non-governmental organisations. In our opinion, Dutch civil society organisations can continue to play a crucial role in processes of strengthening civil society only if they professionalise even more. Since the process of social change is not linear and by nature complex, a learning attitude is required, a drive to continuously learn and improve as individuals and as organisations.

Marcella Tam, Rob van Poelje, Margo Koijman

The Baseline Approach

How to systematically improve your organisation's capabilities and be able to better support Southern organisations in capacity development processes

Do you work for a development organisation which supports Southern organisations in capacity development processes, or intends to do so? Then the Baseline Approach is a highly valuable instrument for you and your organisation. It is a smart methodology to discover the state of affairs of your organisation regarding capacity development, its strong and weak areas, and also a tool to decide on necessary improvements and check progress. To guarantee sustainability, the approach aims to strengthen the capacities of the organisation rather than the skills and competences of individual staff members. Moreover, examining capacity development, individually or jointly with other organisations, provides organisations with a common vocabulary.

A thorough exploration of your organisation's capability needs, the involvement of appropriate staff and the manner of engaging them, and grasping the momentum are crucial for an optimal use of the methodology. The main elements of the Baseline Approach are the Basic Questions, the Score Form, the Capacity Radar, and a number of meetings. Although development organisations can independently work with the approach, it is recommendable to engage an experienced facilitator to guide the process.

The Baseline Approach builds on the Five Capabilities Model of the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) as well as on PSO's years of experience in supporting organisations in capacity development processes. PSO

developed and guided numerous learning trajectories, thus gaining in-depth knowledge on adequate capacity development methods.

The five capabilities are:

- Capability to commit and act.
- Capability to deliver on capacity development objectives.
- Capability to relate.
- Capability to adapt and self-renew.
- Capability to balance diversity and to achieve coherence.

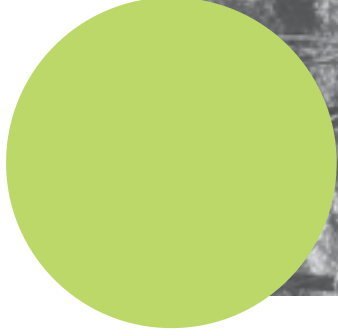
A practical methodology

The Baseline Approach is a methodology to systematically assess the capacity of organisations to develop, implement, and support capacity development processes of their partners in the South. The approach helps to answer two questions: Where are we? And what is our destination? To find the answers, a number of steps can be taken carefully and consciously, preferably supported by a knowledgeable facilitator.

These steps are:

1. Prepare.
2. Explore your organisation's capabilities.
3. Analyse your baseline.
4. Improve your organisation's capabilities.
5. Again explore your organisation's capabilities.

After thoroughly understanding the five capabilities and, therefore, gaining insight in the starting position, your organisation will know its capacity development baseline, at step three, and can determine areas for improvement. The Capacity Radar gives your organisation a good insight in doing so, while you continue the process with steps four and five.



Interested?

So, does your organisation want to systematically work on capacity development and support Southern organisations in the same process? Then scan the QR-code and download the complete online publication. The Baseline Approach will definitely be a valuable instrument for you!

Work together, learn together

Nine inspiring stories of Dutch non-governmental organisations that followed learning-working paths jointly with their Southern partners



Does your organisation feel the need to work on capacity building jointly with its Southern partners? Then, our publication 'Work together, learn together' will support you in gathering practical knowledge on the issue as well as choosing the right trajectory and tools, as it offers nine cases of Dutch non-governmental organisations that embarked on PSO supported learning-working paths. The stories are to inspire you to enhance your know-how about capacity development, in order to improve the quality of interventions in developing countries as well as the relations with your partners. What methods and approaches can you use to strengthen yourself at the organisational level? What are achievable results? What obstacles can you expect on your path? And what advice can other organisations offer you in a learning process?

Learning-working paths

In 2007, PSO presented its Dutch member organisations with learning-working paths, which are trajectories to further increase the knowledge on capacity development, to enable participants to use this knowledge in practice, and to improve the learning ability related to this. The trajectories usually take about two to three years. Fifty-nine non-governmental organisations agreed to engage in a learning-working path jointly with their Southern partners. Each organisation formulated capacity development targets, designed an action plan, and systematically worked on the realisation of its goals. Elements of the trajectory included workshops with its partners, meetings to exchange knowledge and ideas,

field visits, and action research. PSO's learning for change consultants supported the organisations through facilitating conferences, offering critical feedback, and regularly reflecting on the progress of the path. PSO also provided financial means.

Three themes

In the publication 'Work together, learn together', the cases are categorised into three themes, so that you can easily choose relevant stories to further explore and take as an example. These are the themes and organisations:

Supporting capacity development in the context of an international non-governmental organisation

Netherlands Red Cross
Tear
Voluntary Service Overseas

Professionalising capacity development within a thematic organisation

International Institute for Communication and Development
Netherlands Leprosy Relief
Rutgers WPF

Changed relationships with partners

Action Aid in The Netherlands
Gereformeerde Zendingbond
Woord en Daad

'Fifty-nine non-governmental organisations agreed to engage in a learning-working path jointly with their Southern partners'

The final chapter is a reflection of organisational expert Brechtje Kessener on the requirements and advantages of professionalisation trajectories as presented in the publication.

To give you a little taste of what's in the publication, we'll give you a brief look into three cases. You can download the entire publication by scanning the QR code. Have a great read!



Tear: Supporting capacity development in the context of an international non governmental organisation

A number of Dutch organisations are members of international organisations, networks, or movements. Their roles, degrees of independence, opportunities to develop individual policy lines, and their influence within the international constellations vary. This influences the opportunities for supporting capacity development and the relationships with their Southern partners. Do they work on this alone, or do they involve the international headquarters? Does the international constellation hinder capacity development processes, or does it offer opportunities to share insights and make significant



'The learning-working path encouraged Tear and their partners to continually pay attention to learning, exchange of experiences and quality improvement'

Learning and change at three levels

The learning path of Tear, Tearfund UK, and their partners to eddectively strengthen capacity development processes

Adequate support of its partners' capacity development processes, strong partnerships based on equality, and more coherence within the organisation. These were the aims of Tear at the start of the PSO supported learning-working path. As Tear and Tearfund UK often collaborate with the same Southern partners, it was crucial that they truly agreed on the learning trajectory and its targets.

'Our endeavours to reduce poverty in collaboration with Christian organisations and churches in the South used to be rather scattered, with many different themes and numerous partners in several countries. We felt the need to take a critical look at our organisation and make some radical choices',

Casper Waalewijn, Programme Officer at Tear, explains. 'We decided to reduce the number of partners from 80 to 40, and the number of countries in which we work from 27 to 17. Moreover, we agreed to concentrate on three main themes: HIV, disaster management, and mainstreaming environmental sustainability. This was the start of our learning path.'

Share lessons learned

'The learning-working path encouraged Tear, Tearfund UK, and their partners to continually pay attention to learning, exchange of experiences and ideas, and quality improvement', according to Casper. 'For instance, we organised workshops with our partners in Malawi, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, to share lessons learned in the HIV-programme involving the communities. A major lesson was that churches and church leaders have great potential to be agents of change in their communities, and that people with HIV can be effective as champions to make the response of churches more effective. Learning trajectories can change attitudes, but also provide organisations with practical knowledge on learning methods, such as Self Organised Learning. However, for members of international organisations that work with the same partners, it is vital to agree on the different elements of their learning trajectory and also on unexpected adjustments. For instance, Tear and Tearfund UK jointly decided to adopt 'storytelling' as a learning method, which proved to be a good choice. Thus, open-mindedness and flexibility of international organisations will truly benefit the learning process of all involved.'

Rutgers WPF: Professionalising capacity development within a thematic organisation

Organisations that focus on one major theme usually possess broad expertise as well as strong dedication to their themes. Their relationships and partnerships also emerge from their specific issues. Consequently, the more general development of their partners often receives less attention. What happens when thematic organisations decide to also support broader capacity development processes of their partners? Do they wander too far from their subjects? Or do they more easily realise their targets?

Focus on movement building

Rutgers WPF's exploration to better balance thematic support and capacity strengthening of its partners

Rutgers WPF was eager to learn about capacity building at the organisational level, as staff was accustomed to chiefly provide technical sexual and reproductive health and rights support. During the PSO supported learning-working path, the organisation and its partners decided to focus on movement building.

'Even if your theme, targets, and activities are well thought out and you have years of experience, things can still go wrong when you lack essential capabilities at the organisational level, such as financial and human resource management capacities', Linette Belo, Country Programme Manager at Rutgers WPF, states. 'We were quite aware of this, but we did not have a

clear picture how to provide organisational capacity building support. And how could we balance the thematic support and capacity development support that we gave to our partners? We definitely needed the expertise of PSO.' Jointly with its field offices in Indonesia, Pakistan and Vietnam and a number of partner organisations in the same countries, Rutgers WPF engaged in a PSO supported learning-working path in the period 2009-2012.

Your theme is your strength

'Although it may sound paradoxical, thematic organisations should keep in mind that they need to strengthen general organisational capabilities, whereas, at the same time, they should not wander too far from their specific themes', Linette advises. 'Your theme is your strength. Rutgers WPF discovered that its organisational capacity assessment tool was too general and, therefore, it did not really work within the thematic organisation. Another eye-opener was that, to be able to learn, as a coordinating Northern organisation, you sometimes have to be bold enough to let go, to learn from Southern partners and become equal partners. Out of fear to lose thematic quality, we initially clung to old habits too much and lacked the flexibility to learn and change our practice. Another discovery was that, in a learning process together with partners, some generally formulated learning questions might eventually result in one collective question which perfectly fits the theme of your organisation.'

'Your theme is your strength'



'When you decide to be equal partners within an alliance, each organisation should be willing to give and get criticism, and have an unbiased and open attitude'

Woord en Daad: Changed relationships with partners

Capacity development processes have an impact on the relationships of organisations with their Southern partners, as the aim is to improve the interventions in the South and the relationships with the partners. How can organisations most adequately embark on such trajectories jointly with their partners? What outcomes can they expect? What obstacles will they meet? And what do the organisations require?

The building of strong alliances

Woord en Daad's quest for the enhancement of capacities and the building of new partnerships

The sharing of ideas and capabilities with other civil society organisations supports the process of designing individual capacity development plans. Woord en Daad and its partner organisations decided to jointly work on this during a PSO supported learning-working path. This also involved a new way of collaborating of Woord en Daad with its partners as well as between partners.

PSO and Woord en Daad agreed on a learning-working path, aiming at the design of capacity development plans for each partner and the building of regional alliances. These turned

out to be intertwined endeavours', Cees Oosterhuis, Regional Coordinator West Africa and Greater Horn of Africa at Woord en Daad, states. 'In addition, Woord en Daad felt a need to work on the differentiation between its partner and funding role, as our intention was to establish new partnerships based on equality.' PSO's learning-working path supported the process in the period 2008-2012.

Give and get criticism

Cees: 'Supported by PSO's learning-working path, we are realising our long-cherished ambition to strengthen the collaboration with and between our partners. Jointly, our partners have built strong regional alliances which facilitate sharing and strengthening of capacities. However, effective alliance building can only be realised when organisations critically weigh and decide about the acceptance of new members. And for Northern organisations it is crucial to pay serious attention to the differentiation of their roles of alliance partner and funder. When you decide to be equal partners within an alliance, each organisation should be willing to give and get criticism, and have an unbiased and open attitude. In our case, the shared Christian values of all involved, the sincere intention to be equals, and the eagerness to increase the effectiveness of our work, definitely contributed to the success of the learning path.'

Evaluation of PSO works Facilitating Organisational Learning

Insights from Practice

In the course of 2012 PSO asked us, a team of evaluators, to have a look at the learning trajectories that PSO supported over the past couple of years. We had the much appreciated opportunity to engage with development professionals and their leaders in the Netherlands and overseas. During numerous encounters we engaged with stakeholders in order to understand and appreciate the various activities they undertook to improve their practice in capacity development and to strengthen the networks and alliances in which they operate.

We did so, not so much to hold them to account, but with a forward looking eye: “to collect and review the experiences and lessons of the learning trajectories to further the process of exploration and reflection on a sustainable integration of learning practices and improved learning capacity within the organisations concerned” as it was eloquently stated in our Terms of Reference.

A massive process, since many organisations and hundreds of professionals both in the North as well as in the South are involved in the three types of learning trajectories that PSO developed and supported. The more than 50 evaluations we undertook were shaped in such way as to become part of the learning trajectories themselves. Stakeholders and participants were able to reflect on their learning process and jointly formulated lessons learned.

The findings, both on results as well as on the learning insights during the process, have been handed back to the organisations concerned – it is now up to them to continue on their learning path.

The package of individual evaluations presented an enormous richness on what works and what does not in facilitating organisational learning. We analysed the material and discussed it with each other and with PSO staff and management. Our findings and insights are laid down in the publication ‘Facilitating Organisational Learning; Insights from Practice’.

In the publication we present a very brief historical overview of the evolution of thoughts on technical assistance and capacity building and the recent translation of these



‘The failure to learn from failure is most probably the most important shortcoming of the development sector’ (OECD, 1993)

thoughts in policy. We also present a general overview of results achieved during the implementation of the learning trajectories supported by PSO. On results achieved the picture is clear: most trajectories have in one way or another contributed to increased competencies – people have learned interesting and relevant stuff and have appreciated that. Most of the instruments have contributed to the development, introduction and operationalisation of (elements of) capacity building strategies, policies, methods and/or tools. It is however fair to say that there is still a lot of work ahead in truly translating these in improved capacity development practice and revised organisational set-ups. And slightly less than half of the learning trajectories has indeed contributed to positively changed relations between PSO member organisations and their Southern partners.

As will be argued in the publication, the PSO learning instruments have proven a valuable tool for both the participating Dutch Development NGO, their Southern partners as well as the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in furthering the discourse on and experience with capacity development. Whether the experiences gained and lessons learned truly reflect the radical changes called upon by the ‘Berg-report’ now some twenty years ago seems a highly relevant issue for serious reflection and introspection and some fundamental triple loop and real double learning. These are now to be undertaken by the development sector itself, without PSO support.

The heart of the publication consists of a series of insights on how to facilitate organisational learning based on the evidence found in the PSO learning trajectories. And finally we share a number of strategic thoughts on how the Dutch development sector could further collective learning with an aim to improving the relevance and effectiveness of its endeavours in contributing to a more sustainable and equitable world. As stated, the publication provides some highly interesting insights on how to best facilitate relevant learning within Dutch Development NGO and their partner organisations with an aim to improving their capacity development practice. As such they present a true PSO legacy – the lessons learned from learning itself.

This legacy indicates that learning is more effective when the underlying Theory of Learning includes the desired organisational development; the major learners as being potential agents of change; the assumptions on what kind of learning is most appropriate given the organisational development challenge; pathways of organisational development and progress markers to measure the organisational development process.

Furthermore, the evidence shows that the chances of successful effective learning increases when learning takes place in view of realising or furthering an urgently felt (strategic) capacity development or change. The learning motive needs to be coupled with this actual challenge. In other words: it is important to balance what needs to be learned, who needs to learn and how that can be best done. Moreover, the more inclusive the learning path becomes the better.

Regarding the implementation of learning paths, we found that learning becomes more effective when it is backed with an (self)analysis of competencies, capabilities and capacity of all actors involved. Most learning takes place on the job and through multiple interactions so one needs to take into account different learning preferences which can result in a mix of approaches and learning processes. And we point at the importance of acknowledging the indivisible character of learning and the fact that inter-organisational learning is not self-evident and needs to take into account issues as power and ownership.

Finally, with regard to facilitating learning, not only committed leadership is crucial; we also emphasise that facilitating learning is a ‘profession’ and requires specific skills, knowledge and attitudes both process and content focused and also aimed at supporting learning on both organisational and strategic level.

On behalf of the evaluation team:

Geert Phlix
Fons van der Velden
Marriëke de Wal
Kees Zevenbergen



If you are **interested** in reading more in depth about our findings, the conclusions and our recommendations, please download the complete evaluation report by scanning the QR-code on this page.

'The publication provides some highly interesting insights on how to best facilitate relevant learning within Dutch NGOs and their partners with the aim to improving their capacity development practice'



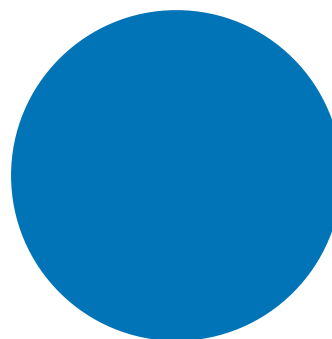


PSO's Thematic Learning Programmes

As of 2009, PSO invested in a new learning instrument: thematic learning programmes. It is an instrument that we specifically designed to connect three vital players in the 'development triangle': the practitioner, the policy maker and the academic.

A thematic learning programme links theoretical concepts and tools to practice and does so in very specific ways. And, this cannot be stressed enough, it is a collective effort. This means that the peer learning process is as important as its results, and that organisational stories must be meaningful to the collective picture. Presenting diverse points of view and experiences with a minimum of synthesis is challenging – but also paves the way for a level of learning more profound than is achieved by more conventional means. It offers the opportunity to look beyond the 'comfort zone' of the development sector.

On the PSO Conference on 23 November 2012, a selection of thematic programmes were presented. On the following pages you can read the abstracts and find the QR-codes to some relevant documentations.



The Barefoot Guide to Learning Practices in Organisations and Social Change

Organisational Learning gets a lot of attention nowadays. But what does organisational learning entail in the daily practices of development practitioners? What do you encounter when you start? Which experiences may you have? How can civil society organisations improve their own learning practices? These questions were part of the TLP Learning Practices in Organisations and Social Change in which PSO closely collaborated with CDRA and VSO.

Capacity

Looking at the practice of learning in organisations requires working with practitioners. Their expertise and experience constituted the basis and were supplemented by an extensive literature review. The Barefoot Guide to Learning Practices in Organisations and Social Change is the joint effort of a group of development practitioners from around the globe. It was designed and written during three intensive, participatory writing workshops known as 'writeshops'. The central approach to learning in the guide is Action Learning, a model for experiential learning. Using the Action Learning cycle is both an attitude and a method. It is

a practical approach to learning and it demands that participants reflect and learn as a continual process.

Process

The programme lasted two and a half years. During the first phase (November 2009 – May 2011), a full range of materials was produced and made available on the barefoot guide website. Action research was conducted during the second phase (November 2010 – May 2012). The focus being on experiencing what happens when organisations commit to a learning programme. The research cycle was implemented at organisational, regional and global levels. Twenty four organisations took part in a year-long process of action and reflection in six regional hubs in South East Asia, South Asia, Southern Africa, Western & Central Africa, East Africa and Europe.

Findings

Civil society organisations can improve their own learning practices by:

- having mandated and dedicated staff play the role of learning facilitator;
- having leaders who never stop asking questions about organisational practices and strategy, and who encourage a learning culture;
- supporting communities of practice in which participants learn collectively from one another in a safe environment;
- embarking on an intentional, systematic and strategic process of action research.

Continuation

The Barefoot Guide Connection has been established as a follow up. A sustainable, creative and humane future for this planet requires dedicated social change leaders and practitioners working in vibrant

communities of practice. The Barefoot Guide Connection is one such community. The community exist both online – as a global network – and locally as face-to-face collectives. You can connect to it at:

www.barefootguide.org

What does the Barefoot Guide Connection have to offer?

- A growing collection of freely downloadable Barefoot Guides in a variety of languages;
- Growing interactive resource libraries of practical exercises, tools and

reading material for anyone to use and contribute to;

- Online and face-to-face conversations and workshops to deepen and explore practices;
- Blogs which enable people to share their experiences, reflections and ideas;
- Online News and newsletters to subscribers concerning social change and Barefoot Guide issues;
- The encouragement of and support for new collectives who wish to develop new Barefoot Guides.



Scan the QR-code for more in-depth information.

Learning about fragile states policies

Aid sector in fragile settings

The context in fragile states such as South Sudan and Congo is chaotic and hectic. Almost daily far-reaching political events effect development aid. The fact that there is hardly reliable information to be had, that there is a lack of insight into conflict dynamics and that there are misunderstandings between local and international aid organisations does not help either. Quite logically, aid practitioners have sometimes reverted to 'to-do mode'. As a consequence, genuine reflection and certainly learning to improve practices does not come about automatically.

Learning in fragile states

The PSO approach of thematic learning programmes (TLP) is well suited to fragile contexts. In this approach, action research and action learning are combined with

a process of organisational and inter-organisational learning. It is important to facilitate the process flexibly in order to respond to the dynamic context and the priorities of the variety of stakeholders involved.

Results

The programme 'Fragile States' for partnering processes between international NGOs and national NGOs contributed to changes in partnering policies and the practises of the participating organisations. The TLP 'South Sudan' improved cooperation and communication between donors, international NGOs and national NGOs in Juba.

Appreciation

- Wani Hafeez coordinator National NGO Forum in Juba: 'Now I have learnt capacities (of action learning) which I can also use in other circumstances'.
- A representative of SNV-South Sudan: 'Participation in the TLP improved our ability to constantly question and learn from our daily practice instead of becoming absorbed in routine work – now we embed learning questions in assignments'.
- Sara Pantuliano (head of ODI/ Humanitarian Policy group): 'I think this is a unique experiment in South Sudan and one that is very important right now'.
- A SPARK representative: '[...] it proved important to establish relations beyond the direct implementation process [...]'.
- A ZOA representative: 'Organising a learning history is a new skill for me, that I can use forever'.



Scan the QR-code for more in-depth information.



Gender Learning in Action Community (GLAC)

Most development organisations strive for equality and justice for women and men in their programmes. However, there is often a gap between policy intentions and the reality in the field. How can we close this gap? Which stakeholders must be included and how can dialogue on this topic with local partner organisations be improved? These were our burning questions for the Action Research. With the aim to co-create – as a learning community – new knowledge and insights to align gender policy and practice and to achieve sustainable results at a grassroots level. Ten organisations participated: CIVICUS, DAI, IICD, Justitia et Pax, MWPN, PSO, Radboud University, TIE, Van Hall Larenstein and WO=MEN.

Capacity

Working on capacity development proves to be a limited strategy on the road to gender equality and gender justice. One of the GLAC research design's assumptions was that existing beliefs and values are the driving forces behind inabilities and behaviours that affirm or worsen inequalities. The participants studied their own strategies and also decided to further research on strategies related to dealing with power relations, the inclusion of men in gender equality strategies and engaging in a dialogue with stakeholders in their programme's environment.

Process

We designed the gender learning process as an 18-month learning trajectory. From the start, we considered a number of elements essential to the learning process:

burning questions and eagerness to resolve these; 11 collective learning events; a safe and confidential support group; coaching sessions; a practical action research methodology; joint reflection on the research proposals, supported by proposal workshops and peer reviews; space for internal and external expertise; developing future road maps for organisational mainstreaming of gender equality in policy and practice.

Lessons learned

Establishing ownership and changing beliefs – which are crucial to changing gender relations – go hand in hand. Therefore changing gender policy and practice is not merely a matter of improving formats and templates. It is a matter of engaging in a dialogue with your colleagues and your partner organisations. In this study, personal and organisational ownership also developed through a process of co-creating gender jargon and knowledge when participants met and discussed issues. Ownership increased when burning issues were studied by the participants themselves who 'own' the problem (instead of outsourcing research). A solution-focused (instead of problem focused) and step-by-step approach matches ambitions and feasibilities, and avoids participant disappointment. All lessons learnt will be incorporated in the future. WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform will take on the challenge to design and implement these in a next gender learning trajectory. If you are interested, please contact WO=MEN via info@wo-men.nl



Scan the QR-code
for more in-depth
information.



Power Dynamics in multi-stakeholder processes: a balancing act

What is power? 'Power over' is the ability to influence, control people or events to achieve certain outcomes. But there is also 'power within', 'power with' and 'power to'. Dealing with power is a delicate process: mediate interests with influence, power with trust and make hidden power visible. We know that multi-stakeholder processes (MSPs) deal with complicated issues in complex contexts: land conflicts, natural resource conflicts or farmers at the bottom of the value chain. We also know that MSPs are not always harmonious and that not everybody is able to have the same level of stakes and representation at the table. Finding new insights was the rationale for our Thematic Learning Programme.

Framework and tools

As the number of conflict-ridden MSPs increases in this increasingly complex world, more development actors will analyse exclusion, inequality and power abuse in negotiations. We argue that less powerful stakeholders can gain from participation in MSPs, provided that transparency is created about the power politics at work. In addition, powerful stakeholders need the mindset or political will to discuss power dynamics. All stakeholders need capacity in terms of resources, tools, supportive facilitators and clear rules. Power dynamics likely manifest themselves in actors' control of resources, resource interdependencies, framing of

the problem, membership in the MSP and strategies used to address the MSP topic. There are several tools available to understand power dynamics.

Process

- Discussion and design of the Thematic Learning Programme by the Dutch conveners
- Inception workshop featuring the conveners, academia and action researchers to agree on a methodological framework
- Development of toolbox by WUR-CDI
- Action research in 12 MSPs (actual or emerging) in 8 countries dealing with value chains, natural resource conflicts or service deliveries.
- E-conference and webinars to exchange, discuss and digest our findings
- Documentation of findings by action researchers

- Learning event to present and discuss the experiences
- E-publication

Insights

1. Tipping the power balance requires key actors to have mutual respect and trust
2. Explore key actors' visible and/or hidden power related to resources, spaces and terms of engagement
3. Use specific tools to clarify power dynamics in MSPs
4. Facilitate stakeholders to create new rules for decision-making
5. Make no mistake: the poor also have power!



Scan the QR-code for more in-depth information.

Effective collaboration in north-south networks

Networks pose different challenges than conventional organisations. One challenge is that networks require voluntary energy and commitment. Is this why we often notice that participation in networks is not as active as was hoped for? Another difference is that relationships in networks are more horizontal, which means that working in networks requires different competences. How can networks be managed in such a way that they meet the expectations of their partners and motivate them to contribute? It was these questions we were interested in answering during the action research. Five development organisations participated in the study¹.

The Capacity to Connect

Network outcomes are hard to predict, but a healthy network with strong relationships is capable of responding to a complex environment. As social beings we all have basic knowledge of what to do to keep connected in networks. This is why the Free Actors in Networks (FAN) approach developed by network advisor Eelke Wielinga focuses on tools for improving connections, rather than on reaching goals.

Keeping a network healthy requires people who are able to recognise destructive patterns and who endeavour to restore connection. We call these free actors. In the

action research we used the FAN tools to help the local researchers to sharpen their intuition and become more effective in building bridges in a network and act as catalysts for change.

Process

Activities in the participating networks² started with Time Line Workshops describing the highs and lows of the network's history. The local researchers analysed the data in a workshop under the guidance of external experts, which resulted in initial suggestions for action. During the following period of implementation, the local researchers from the networks shared the results and initiated improvement activities. In June 2011, a second reflection workshop was held to share and analyse the findings.

Results

- The concept of the free actor has motivated the local researchers to claim the space they needed to start initiatives that



Scan the QR-code for more in-depth information.

provided new energy to the network. In doing so, they developed an understanding of the concept from their personal experience.

- Decentralisation is an interesting way of increasing the connector function in the network. It is easier to interact in smaller entities that it is to function separately from the formal process at a central level. Also, it enables partners with similar ambitions to find each other.
- Continuous sharing of experiences between partners motivates and feeds the networking process. The best effect is reached face to face, but as this is often impossible, the network should invest in other means of interaction.

¹ Action Aid Netherlands, SOMO, UNOY Peacebuilders, ETC and Free Press Unlimited

² ASTEKI, PROLINNOVA, UNOY Peacebuilders, OECD Watch and IANRA



Learning about Assessing Organisational Capacity

Six Dutch development NGOs: Woord en Daad, War Trauma Foundation, Light for the World, Medical Committee Netherlands Vietnam, World Granny and Red een Kind [Save a Child], and their Southern partners initiated an action learning path to jointly reflect on their Organisational Assessment (OA) practices.

Capacity

Two main lessons had already been learnt from both experience and the existing literature. Firstly, a higher sense of ownership of the OA process at the organisation under review increases the willingness to use the outcomes for follow up development and improvement. Secondly, OAs can strongly enhance the partnership between the Dutch organisation and their partner organisations if the entire OA process takes place on the basis of trust, in good dialogue and with understanding for each other's working realities. These two lessons were taken as the guiding principles for the learning path and were further reinforced.

Process

The learning process was specifically designed to take place in action as it required continuous reflection and learning. There are three phases: preparation, implementation and follow-up of OAs (May 2011 - November 2012). Valuable answers and experiences have already been gained in relation to the main learning ques-

tion: How can organisational assessment processes and tools be developed and used in such a way that they facilitate on-going and endogenous organisational and institutional development (of both Northern and Southern) organisations and make processes transparent?

Lessons learned

- The 5C framework, which deals with the 5 core capabilities, offers a helpful framework for discussion and reflection, an expanded vision that enhances learning; especially if combined with participative methods such as Appreciative Inquiry.
- Trust, leadership and ownership are aspects that should be openly and jointly considered prior to the OA exercise. Only then will the focus be on benefits for all i.e. it matters less who initiates and owns the OA process.
- Facilitating an OA process requires both process and organisation development expertise.
- Contextualisation is crucial, specifically during the preparation phase, it helps create mutual understanding of the tools, the design and the approach.
- OA is a logical and integral part of an endogenous OD process; as such OA is an intervention, not merely a measurement



Scan the QR-code for more in-depth information.

Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation (PME) of Complex Processes of Social Change

"[...] those development programs [sic] that are most precisely and easily measured are the least transformational, and those programs [sic] that are most transformational are the least measurable."

US-AID president Andrew Natsios (2010)

Between 2010 and 2012, PSO facilitated the Thematic Learning Programme on complexity-oriented Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation approaches with 10 Dutch and Belgian development organisations. Participating organisations, together with their partners, piloted various PME approaches with the aim of dealing more effectively with complex social change processes.

Framework

The overarching analytical framework that emerged during the process focuses on four essential aspects in complex social change processes: i) roles, expectations and relationships between actors, ii) adaptive capacity, iii) accountability and iv) learning. It provides the opportunity to explore the potential of actor-focused PME approaches, as shown on the right. This framework was used to analyse the 10 case studies and present a solid case for the need for diversified and actor-focused PME approaches.

Process

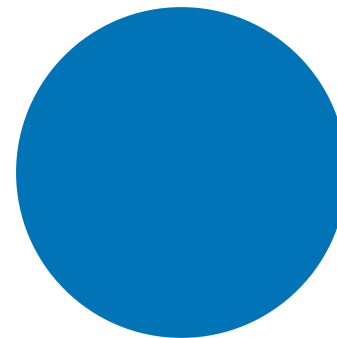
This innovative collaborative action research programme involved a variety of actors, including NGOs, academics, PME experts and policy makers. Each of the participating organisations engaged in pilots with diversified PME approaches and reflected on the implementation and results thereof for their organisation, their partner organisations and their goals. Some of the PME approaches piloted included Outcome Mapping, Most Significant Change, Sense Maker and Client Satisfaction Instruments. At a collective level, we held regular collective learning moments, organised conferences (DPRN 2010, INTRAC 2011, PSO 2012) and engaged continuously with various external (international) stakeholders.

Results and Way Forward

The results of the programme are described in a Cross Case Analysis paper and have been summarised in a policy brief. We found evidence that actor-oriented PME approaches have a positive influence on all four elements of the research framework. "I think our pilot project can inspire rethinking of practice [sic] and what we expect to gain from our PME. One of most valuable lesson [sic] we have learned and which others might pick up, is the PME [sic] can actually be an inspiring and learning oriented activity."



Scan the QR-code for more in-depth information.



How to mainstream sexual diversity in SRHR organisations in Kenya and Indonesia

“Not only is it unethical not to protect these groups; it makes no sense from a health perspective. It hurts all of us.” – Ban Ki Moon

Southern partner organisations of Dance4life, Rutgers WPF and the umbrella organisation the SRHR Alliance in the Netherlands claim to be SRHR organisations. However, they are hesitant to accept the rights of LGBT people, do not include needs of the vulnerable group of young LGBT people in programmes and lack the organisational policies to protect LGBT staff. Key factors for this omission are primarily staff attitudes and the reluctance of management and boards. This action research-based Thematic Learning Programme (TLP) created an alliance between LGBT and non-LGBT organisations to develop effective strategies and tools for mainstreaming sexual diversity within their policies, services and programmes.

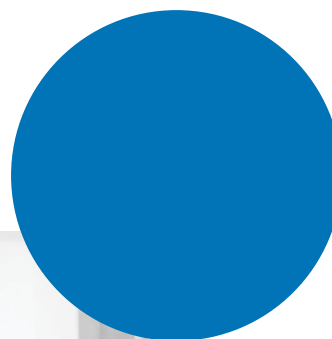
“I came to the TLP without expecting much. Or if I expected anything it was to meet the most immoral, cursed people on earth. I also had a fear of being lured to become gay [sic] by the facilitators ... During the TLP I discovered that my perceptions were just myths and misconceptions, not facts.”

Process

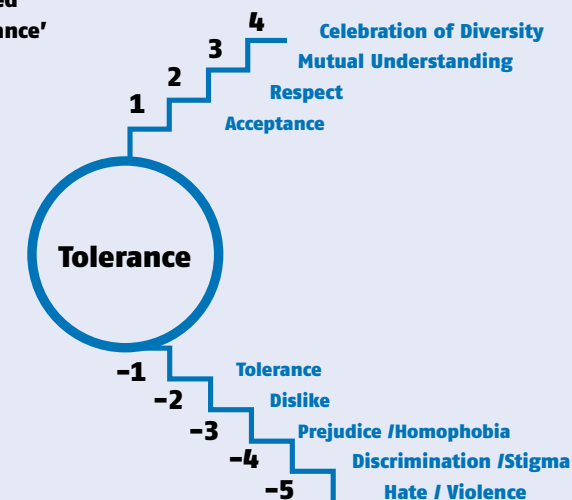
Baseline surveys developed by the management, staff of LGBT and non-LGBT partners, and Dutch and local universities revealed negative staff attitudes and gaps in organisational policy. Strategies, tools and action plans were developed on the basis of these results. Selected, and subsequently trained, change makers were coached by a team of LGBT and non-LGBT facilitators in sensitising their

colleagues. Boards and managements reviewed organisational policies on how to meet the needs of LGBT people. They developed a long-term vision for further mainstreaming into programmes, referral between LGBT and non-LGBT organisations, and advocacy towards policy makers.

“UFBR partner organizations [sic] reported such negative and strong feelings against the LGBT community in the survey. We were all in it. It was about us. And we had to do something about it. It showed us that, left unchecked, Kenya could easily go the way of Uganda, where a gay activist was recently killed.”



Olsson's adapted 'Stairs of Tolerance'



Lessons learned

- Combining academic evidence with personal testimonies is a powerful way of demonstrating the need to mainstream sexual diversity and provides entry points for attitudinal change and organisational development.
- Sensitively facilitating a process that brings people together from different communities and strategically exposes them to different sets of standards and values, has a huge impact on personal beliefs within a short period of time. Personal storytelling proved a particularly important tool to help people understand SD issues.
- Starting with the 'ME' in people helps contextualising the TLP individually and creates organisational, but also, more importantly, personal ownership.
- Challenges vary greatly from one organisation and culture to the next – each one is unique and calls for a unique process.
- It is essential to create ownership and encourage participatory working at all levels right from the start. It is also critical for senior management and board members to be involved.

“The most significant change was what happened within us. The dropping of our personal judgment and creation of personal spaces to allow and accept that sexual diversity is an important issue of [sic] human rights and health – one where we have a positive contribution to make. The role shift from critical and judgmental personal positions to willing change agents is a tremendous achievement.”



Scan the QR-code for more in-depth information.

PSO's 'legacy' within Double loop

Double Loop supports social organisations to become more effective in bringing about change. Our services are process facilitation, design and facilitation of learning processes, and advisory services in the field of capacity development.

Why Double Loop?

Double Loop is a collective of five consultants who worked with PSO. Double Loop learning stands for what we believe in: learning to question one's assumptions in order to find innovative solutions, which goes further than doing the same things better (single loop learning). Dealing with complex and tough social dilemmas requires linking theory to what is actually happening in the field, challenging assumptions, bringing in values and different perspectives on what is going well, or not so well.

Experience

We have gained extensive field experience prior starting to work for PSO. Working with PSO has added in-depth knowledge to our track record about change processes, capacity development and design and facilitation of learning events. It has made us aware of the complexity of change, the challenges of becoming a learning organisation, and the importance of action learning.

Our approach

In line with the work we did with PSO, we facilitate practitioners and social organisations to become more effective and capable in learning systematically from their actions and translate insights and lessons learned directly into their daily practice. As Double Loop Advisors we support organisations in dealing with tough problems, and complex issues and systems. Further we help organisations with integrating learning in the interventions of development organisations and programmes, and we provide methodological advice and facilitation at crucial moments in the lifespan of organisations. We have come to realize that bringing about social change is about finding a sound balance between the head (concepts and theories), heart (values and principles) and feet (methods and tools).



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Our guiding principles for addressing complex problems are :

- Use the intrinsic problem solving power of the people involved
- Make explicit and value the different perspectives to a problem
- Stimulate the sharing of practical wisdom
- Create an environment of trust and mutual learning
- Substantiate potential solutions with evidence
- Dedicate time to reflection
- Support the development of 'know-of' to 'know-how'
- Organise feedback on our approach and results to become more effective ourselves

PSO's 'legacy' within Humanity House

At Humanity House you can experience what it feels like to live in a place gripped by conflict or hit by a disaster. Humanity House is a museum and platform.

Humanity
House

museum+educatie+platform+

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www.humanityhouse.org



Humanity House worked together with PSO as partners in organizing lectures and seminars on humanitarian topics.

A successful recurring public event is Café Humanitaire that takes place four times a year. Café Humanitaire is a platform hosted by Dutch civil society and academics at Humanity House in The Hague. Professionals who work for NGO's, governments, universities and the private sector meet here in an informal setting. At Café Humanitaire we serve an intellectual snack, like a short presentation, lecture or living column.

Humanity House is pleased to continue this legacy by keeping the concept of Café Humanitaire alive every 3 months in the café of the Humanity House.

PSO's 'legacy' within

Partos

Partos is the Dutch Association of NGOs working in International Development. The association represents the interests of 120 Dutch development organizations active in the field of poverty reduction, humanitarian aid, human rights and sustainable development.



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Address	Ellermanstraat 18B
Contact	Anne-Marie Heemskerk
E-mail	amh@partos.nl
Telephone number	020-320 9901
Website	www.partos.nl
Partos Portal	https://www.partos.nl/category/themas/capaciteitsontwikkeling



Partos and PSO developed a cooperation program for the years 2011 and 2012 in order to combine efforts in the facilitation of joint learning on capacity building and international development. Together a number of meetings and events were organised on different topics related to capacity development. PSO staff members played an important role in facilitating the meetings both technically and in content, as such making the PSO knowledge and expertise available to a large audience consisting of both PSO and Partos members.

After 2012 Partos will do its best to safeguard the PSO legacy and continue to facilitate joint learning on capacity development, although on a far less scale. Partos supports an initiative by PSO and Partos members for a light new learning facility (a learning platform) to enable further learning on capacity development in which Partos will play a modest facilitating and coordinating role. A feasibility study, financed by PSO and conducted among Partos and PSO members in preparation to a proposal for the organisation of the new learning initiative, showed that

- capacity development is widely considered to be a leading concept in the work of most organisations;
- a substantial number of members may be interested to participate in a new initiative on learning about capacity development, despite the fact that
- organisations have limited capacity and resources available.

The main objective of the new initiative is to continue further improvement of the pro-poor capacity development support provided by Dutch civil society organisations to the South. Through the Partos Portal it will in addition safeguard and make the knowledge collection of PSO on capacity development available by hosting most of PSO publications on the online theme page. And through its Learning Platform Partos will support online learning and knowledge sharing, including some of the thematic learning as it has taken place in networks of PSO.

As of 23 November 2012 Partos makes available a variety of recent PSO publications and reports via the Partos Portal:

<https://www.partos.nl/category/themas/capaciteitsontwikkeling>

A selection of PSO works



The Basics of Capacity Development Support



The Baseline Approach



Work together, learn together



Facilitating Organisational Learning



Let's innovate, instead of duplicate



CSO's & Business



Civil Society at Crossroads



Youth Zone



Use of the PSO QR codes

In this booklet there is a QR code printed next to every header of the PSO publications. Scanning the QR code with your smartphone will direct you to the particular page/website on the Partos website (see page 49 en 50 for PSO's legacy within Partos) where you can instantly read and download the whole (and free available!) PSO publication. After scanning this specific QR code you'll be directed to the survey page of the Partos website where all PSO publications and reports are listed, old and new.

What is a QR code?

QR codes (abbreviated from Quick Response Code) are two-dimensional barcodes and are used to reveal more information about a product, service, event or person. The codes consist of

black modules (square dots) arranged in a square pattern on a white background. QR codes can contain different types of data including URLs (Universal Resource Locator, or as most people know them: web addresses) and can be scanned by a smartphone or a similar device, if it has a QR reader app installed.

How to apply?

To scan (and read or open) the codes, all you need is a mobile device with a camera and an app (software) to interpret the data in the code. There are many free QR reader apps available on the internet. After downloading the app on your smartphone, you'll open the app, point your device to a QR code, scan it and immediately grab useful information.

PSO is grateful for the intensive cooperation with its member organisations. The following organisations formed the association in recent years:



Colofon

Text

PSO thanks all participants for their contribution to this memorial edition.

PRacties

Todo, Tekst in de Dop

Photography

Ad Hupkes (see pages 8 and 9)

Mensen met een missie (see page 13)

Tear (see page 15)

Both Ends / FANCA (see page 20)

Reinout van den Bergh (see page 17, 27)

PSO

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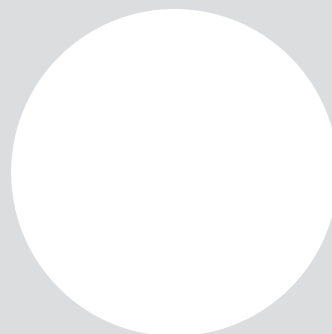
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Cherish our legacy.

Use our works.

*Improve them
while you learn.*



