

POLITICS OF CAPACITY BUILDING

CONSULTATION ON CAPACITY BUILDING - SOUTH & EAST ASIA



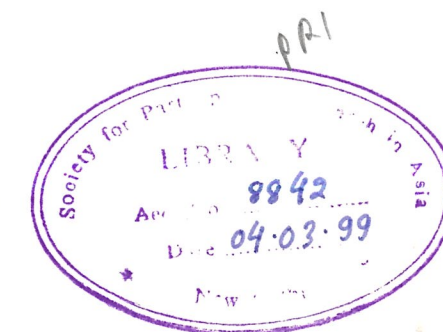
INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON
CAPACITY BUILDING

CS3:31, 2
IFC
8842

POLITICS OF CAPACITY BUILDING



SOUTH & EAST ASIA
CONSULTATION



Prepared by

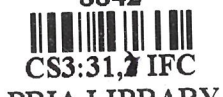
Society for Participatory Research in Asia

42, Tughlakabad Institutional Area
New Delhi - 110 062, India
Tel: 6981908/9559 • Fax: 91-11-6980183
E-mail: pria@sdalt.ernet.in

International Institute of Rural Reconstruction

Y.C. James Yen Center
Silang 4118 Cavite, Philippines
Tel: (63-46) 414-2417 to 19 and 414-2423
Fax: (63-46) 414-2420 and 414-2423
E-mail: iirr@cav.pworld.net.ph

PRIA
8842



CS3:31,7 IFC
PRIA LIBRARY

International Forum on Capacity Building SOUTH AND EAST ASIA CONSULTATION

THE POLITICS OF CAPACITY BUILDING

CONTEXT

Recent years have witnessed an increasing recognition of the importance of a strong civil society and widespread citizens' participation as being the key to sustainable development and democratic societies. They have been seen as important contributors to the process of social change. While the work on capacity building of Southern NGOs (SNGOs) has been in practice for several decades, little conceptualisation of this practice has occurred. Even less is known about strategies for strengthening the diversity of actors within civil society.

Traditionally, capacity building interventions have focused on strengthening state and public sector institutions. However, due to the growing importance of civil society organisations, there is a need now to find ways to strengthen the capacity of these organisations.

Historically, capacity building interventions have largely focused at the organisational level, emphasising improvements in performance, processes and structures. There is also a need to look at strengthening capacities of organisations in the context of the specific regional changes within Asia Pacific, and focus on long term capacities of SNGOs to interact with, and influence the ever changing external environment.

This perspective of capacity building interventions raises some issues of serious concern. One of the key issues is related to the fact that the capacity building needs of Southern NGOs are mostly defined by the Northern agencies providing resources for these interventions. The context specific needs are not taken into perspective and usually an universal prescription is followed. This results in building capacities of organisations in certain areas only and does not strengthen them to act and function independently.

A holistic understanding of the very concept of capacity building and the contextual needs of civil society organisations is required to strengthen the sector. The fundamental base on which capacities can be built requires a continuous process of learning, reflection, systematisation, analysis and articulation.

In the course of capacity building today, all of us are witnessing historical processes. This is largely due to the changes that are taking place globally. In the past, capacity building interventions were not considered important. The existence of NGOs was seen as transitory and as agents of service delivery. The capacity building inputs were project oriented, geared towards implementation of projects. There was little or no emphasis on long term capacity building of the NGOs. Long term sustainability of the sector is a recent realisation on the part of NNGOs.

Support functions were also given a low priority. In fact, the international fraternity did not even take into account the concept of support organisations. Support organisations historically have shared the same roots and motivations that inspire other types of NGOs. They have evolved into institutions whose multiple functions are aimed mainly at assisting and supporting the initiatives of grassroots organisations and their constituencies through training, research, documentation, advocacy, networking. Support organisation linkages and initiatives have focused on building the professional capacity of individual organisations and on creating inter organisational collaborations for more effective action. In the recent past, many international agencies have turned to NGOs and civil society organisations as important development actors. Interest on the part of bilateral and multilateral agencies has focused on the importance of capacity building of support organisations that can serve as bridges between the concerns and resources of Northern development agencies and Southern organisations that provide support to grassroot NGOs.

Many large-scale international development agencies became interested in supporting the capacity building of SNGOs in 1990s. The whole concept of sustainability of NGOs and their

programmes and institutional development gained importance and these words were used widely. In the history of capacity building of SNGOs, the role of Northern NGOs (NNGOs) and Foundations has been prominent as they have been key supporters of this process in the past.

The SNGOs have started to look at their own needs for capacity building in the light of their experiences in different countries. They realised that the previous view of their capacity building needs had been limited. The focus of these interventions had been primarily based on the requirements for funding, monitoring, financial reporting and documentation. It appeared that capacity building was more short term oriented than looking at it as a long term input that would strengthen the SNGOs.

There is a growing concern raised that most of the capacity building interventions are done by consultants from the North who may not necessarily understand the context in which SNGOs function. While the NNGOs have contributed in improving the organisational and management capacities of SNGOs, especially financial management and developing gender sensitive policies, there is a need to reach a common understanding about primary development goals and values. This becomes essential bearing in mind the differences in the context, culture and values in SNGOs and NNGOs. Historically, the concerns of resource providers and northern donors have determined the priorities of Southern NGOs. This has been manifested in two ways. Firstly, programme/project management capacity and financial systems capacity has been the main component that has received attention. Secondly, the focus has been on the training of individuals. It was assumed that once the individuals are sufficiently trained, they can translate it in programme management and financial management. In the past, most donors and resource providers have encouraged such

short term orientation to capacity building. Often the northern donors emphasise their own agendas in programme funding, thereby forcing the SNGOs to cater to two separate levels of requirements - the donor and the community. This reiterates the feeling that the donors' perceptions of the ground reality is based on their own country experiences and does not necessarily match with those of the southern communities.

The challenges facing the Southern NGOs have grown in scope and complexity in recent years. There is a growing need for ensuring the central role of Southern NGOs in defining and managing their own agenda for their capacity building efforts. This assumption requires new roles and responsibilities on the part of governments, northern donors and international agencies.

As a result of the debate around the issues of capacity building, the NGO Working Group on the World Bank, together with a number of partners both from the donor community as well as from the NGOs, in the North and the South, initiated the idea of an International Working Group on Capacity Building (IWGCB) in October 1996. The concept behind this Working Group was an effort to develop a southern definition of capacity building, based first on an analysis of various interventions that have taken place so far, and then evolving a new agenda for capacity building for Southern NGOs. In May, 1997, a meeting was held in Washington DC to share perspectives and evolve structures and steps towards formalising the Working Group. A year long process of consultations and surveys was proposed to elicit needs and concerns of SNGOs as well as the NNGOs and donors' perspectives on capacity building of SNGOs. An international conference was proposed to be held in May 1998 which would provide a platform for sharing these perspectives on issues and priorities on capacity building and review innovative capacity building programmes.

CONSULTATIONS IN SOUTH AND EAST ASIA

The Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), India and the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction (IIRR), Philippines were designated by the International Working Group on Capacity Building to be the Co-ordinators for South Asia and East Asia consultations respectively to identify and define capacity building needs of Southern NGOs.

These regional consultations aimed at :

- ◆ formulating a comprehensive list of priorities identified by the group
- ◆ joint assessment of how well the current capacity building programme fit those priorities
- ◆ identifying programmes that are presently effective with exemplars of the same to be shared
- ◆ analysing concerns related to Benefits and Issues in North South collaboration

Different approaches were followed by South and East Asia leading to the consultation meetings. Nodal organisations were identified in South Asia for conducting national level meetings. The general framework for presentation was provided to the participants prior to the national consultations. Each of them were asked to conduct either formal or informal consultations involving a range of NGOs- small, medium size, and large, both implementing grassroots organisations and support organisations. The aim was to cover the widest possible range of different types of NGOs. During the course of the consultation, the NGOs were encouraged to add to the existing list of capacity building needs provided by the IWGCB. In South Asia, each one of the identified organisations presented their findings at the regional consultation held at PRIA, New Delhi on November 27 - 28, 1997. In East Asia, a number of organisations came together in a workshop held at IIRR, Philippines during January 15 - 16, 1998 and discussed the issues on the basis of their experiences. The framework was shared at this meeting and the discussions evolved from there.

The aim of the consultations was to build a better understanding of the capacity building

needs of the Southern NGOs, and their experience in joint activities with the Northern NGOs. On the whole, about 155 NGOs were involved in these consultations. The findings were shared at the International Conference on Future Capacity Building of SNGOs held at Brussels in May, 1998.

The nodal organisations identified in the South Asian countries were

Bangladesh	PRIP TRUST
Nepal	Action Aid, Nepal
Pakistan	South Asia Partnership (SAP), Pakistan
Sri Lanka	South Asia Partnership (SAP), Sri Lanka
India	Sahayi, Kerala Samarthan, Madhya Pradesh Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra, Uttar Pradesh Centre for Youth and Social Development, Orissa

The organisations in East Asia were :

Indonesia	Bina Swadaya INDHRA
Cambodia	SKIP
Vietnam	Action Aid, Vietnam
Thailand	RRAFA
Philippines	Philippines Business for Social Progress Asian Social Institute ANGOC PRRM PhilGer Funds

MEANING OF CAPACITY BUILDING

In both South Asia and East Asia, there was debate on the meaning of capacity building. What is capacity building? How does one define a complex phenomenon like this? Capacity building cannot be understood without understanding the meaning of capacity itself. There is an absence of an agreed definition of capacity in a civil society organisation. Some equate it with physical assets, some others would equate it with delivery of

services and programmes. These were some of the questions which were raised at the consultations. Through the discussions, it was clear that capacity is a multi dimensional and complex attribute. In a simple sense, it covers the totality of an organised effort of an NGO to fulfil its mission. It has certain distinct yet inter related components.

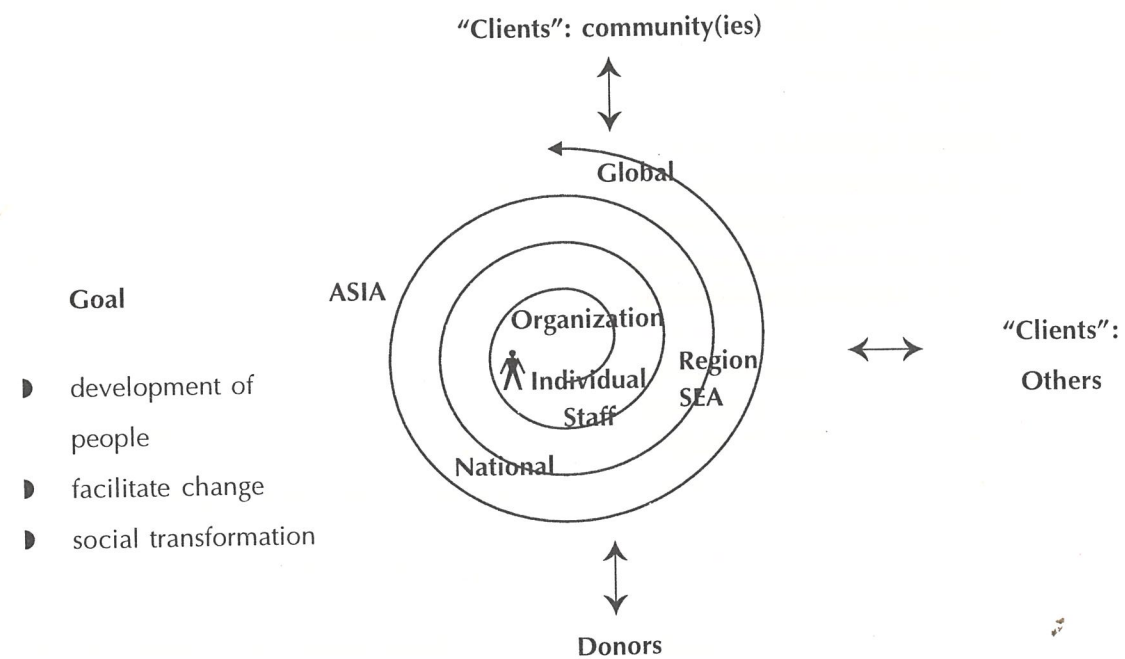
Capacity building means development of both individual workers and the organisation. It is essential to focus not only on the individuals in an organisation, but also on the organisation itself. Training of individuals has been a dominant method in capacity building. It has been assumed that the individuals, when appropriately and technically trained, will have the necessary capacity to translate it in programme management and financial management. However, often, individuals leave and move on, taking capacities with them. It is essential to address the issue of institutionalising capacity in an organisation. Thus, it is essential to look at organisational capacity building which is a long term and gradual process.

As a development actor, building relationships with other actors, locally, nationally, regionally as well as globally, becomes important for effective functioning and sustainable impact. Alliances, partnerships, networks provide the necessary platform for sharing information, experiences and ideas. Many SNGOs are being called upon to

play regional and global roles in the present context. Building regional networks and global alliances is necessary to play these roles. SNGOs have also started working actively with the government to improve their linkages locally as well as to influence their policies and programmes. Therefore, advocacy capacity is a key to multiplying the impact of a development actor.

Capacity building should have both content and process. It is a systematic and continuous process that is undertaken by an organisation in pursuit of its purposes within the context in which it operates. It is determined, managed and controlled by the organisation itself. Content should be specific and inter related. It is not always possible to demonstrate a one to one relationship between an element of institutional capacity and a component of the result on ground. Planned, systematically designed interventions are needed to be applied continuously to ensure that capacity building keeps on happening. The process should be participatory, experiential, contextual.

Diagram below describes the process of capacity building in terms of both content and process. If the goal is to bring about social transformation and facilitate a process of change through development of people, the communities and the others involved in the process become important.



Capacity building involves both the individual as well as the organisation.

INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY BUILDING

- ☞ Capacity building is a *facilitative process* which builds new or additional capacities over and above the existing ones within an organisation. A capacity building initiative should have inherent human potential as its focus. Everyone has a desire to improve as human being and has the potential to do so. Therefore, the focus of capacity building should be a combination of skill upgradation and enhancement of potentials. Growth of individuals is key to any meaning of capacity. It is essential to recruit new and appropriate human resources, to have sustained orientation and motivation of the staff, a continuous performance appraisal and improvement, regular assessment of developmental needs and provisions for the same.
- ☞ A comprehensive capacity building perspective requires a *holistic set of principles* to be applied to approaches to capacity building. Capacity building of development actors has not been sufficiently understood. The inputs in the past have been very limited and narrow in meaning of capacity and, therefore, very limited in approaches to capacity building. However, one needs to look at capacity building in a holistic sense, as a long term and gradual process. Capacity formation and enhancement is a cumulative process where aggregation of new elements of capacity occurs on the foundation of previous ones.

ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

- ☞ An important capacity to be developed relates to a south based, south originated and south articulated capacity for *critical reflection, learning, documentation and dissemination*. Often only management skills are imparted, taking away the focus from critical analysis and reflection which is a crucial part of capacity building. Capacity for self reflection, systematisation of its own experiences and drawing lessons from the same are important in this context. Other elements to be kept in mind include capacity to monitor their activities and review their purpose in the light of

the changes taking place in the wider society, capacity to document, synthesise and articulate their own learning in the course of the on going activities.

- ☞ There should be an outward focus to include capacities related to being effective and relevant to communities. It is important to recognise the *context specific* meaning of capacity. Each organisation functions in a local context and its ability to function effectively in that context provides clues about its capacity building requirements and challenges.
- ☞ Capacity building is a *continuous learning process*. It should be in relation to the purpose, mission, and rationale of the organisation and its continuity. This implies that the meaning of capacity may change as purposes undergo re-statement and re-articulation. At different stages in the life of an organisation, different types of capacity may become important. This is an evolutionary, continuous process which should not depend entirely on external environment. The on going nature of capacity building encourages the acknowledgement of its dynamic nature as opposed to mere events and structures.
- ☞ Capacity building is a *synergistic total of strengths of individuals, systems and resources* in any organisation. The relevance of the organisation to its changing context is the measure of its effectiveness. Capacity for that organisation, therefore, implies relating to the changing context in an effective and proactive manner to be able to continuously respond to emerging trends and changes. It is important for an organisation to review its functions periodically in a systematic and sustained manner. This is particularly important in today's context.

PRIORITIES FOR CAPACITY BUILDING

Part of the framework provided by IWGCB addressed questions related to priorities of capacity building identified by SNGOs. The responses elicited in the national consultations were shared at the regional meetings in New Delhi, India and

Cavite, Philippines. The following points emerged during the consultations.

It is important to look at the sector's future needs and see how best one can use different methodologies to enhance existing capacities. Current trends of capacity building are more towards corrective and incremental inputs based on past and present experiences. There is a need for it to be more futuristic in its approach. There is a search for NGO sector specific capacity building, highlighting its uniqueness of programmes and organisations that are value based and mission driven. There is also a need to develop, establish and articulate values and principles. Clarifying NGO roles and identity becomes relevant in this light.

Some of the over arching **priorities** as expressed through the in-country consultations are:

☛ **Leadership development** : Leadership development programmes for both existing and "second generation" leaders was expressed to be one of the highest priority. This would include -

- i) to develop a less leader centric NGO functioning
- ii) to democratise organisations
- iii) to develop second generation leaders
- iv) to balance leadership and management

☛ **Policy research, analysis and advocacy** : SNGOs are interacting with various actors in the development sector. They work actively with the government departments, donors, academe and other agencies to influence their policies and programmes. Thus, an important capacity that needs to be addressed relates to research, analysis and advocacy in order to multiply the impact of the organisation. Development policies, action and the possibilities of social change should be kept in mind when talking about capacity building. They also need to build capacity for independent research and analysis of local trends and social reality from pro-citizens' perspectives. Thus the need for capacity in policy research, analysis and advocacy becomes relevant.

☛ **Strategic Planning and Management** : The SNGOs need to think in terms of long term strategic planning to articulate their vision and sharpen their impact. This includes effective governance mechanisms, visionary leadership, ability to restructure their positions and roles in response to emerging trends and changes. It is essential for an organisation to be able to identify and address strategic issues. Capacity to review and redesign NGO strategy is the focus here.

☛ **Project/Programme design and implementation** : This includes need for learning how to plan, assess the needs of the target group, programme management, monitoring and evaluation. Organisations need to learn more about participatory planning, implementation and monitoring as a part of their project/programme management capacity.

☛ **Organisational development and renewal** : An important component of capacity building of an organisation is the ability to review its functions periodically. Often little institutional learning takes place over time. This process has to occur at all times for all levels of people involved in development work. Organisational learning, organisational review, change and development, internal and external restructuring, reformulation of mission and strategy, reorientation of leadership are some of the important components of this capacity. This should also include structural development, personnel development and assistance in technical development. There is a need to make capacity building more systematic and institutionalised and prevent it from being only tied to project related capacities.

☛ **Resource mobilisation** : Widespread concern with the sustainability of development services and shrinking international aid resources makes this area central to the future of NGOs in the region. It was felt that there is a need for cross sectoral collaboration with the government as well as other NGOs and funders, developing gender sensitive policies, and staff development through training of trainers. Learning how to mobilise local resources becomes

relevant in this context. Dependence on external resources has greatly undermined the southern NGOs capacity to build indigenous, autonomous and local resource base. The capacity to mobilise local resources is essential towards financial sustainability and autonomous functioning. A related issue here is the strengthening of people's access to and control of resources.

☛ **Information access, storage and dissemination** : Accessing, recording and utilising appropriate information for decision making in programmes and other aspects of the functioning of an organisation is an important component of capacity. In the face of the new information order and communication techniques, southern NGOs need to build capacity to access, store, use and disseminate current information at a rapid pace.

During the in-country consultations, additions were made to the existing list provided to the NGOs by the IWGCB. These changes were the result of current concerns in the field of development work. In many instances, the concept of capacity building was new. There were NGOs who felt that the term capacity building needs to be explained along with the processes that they entail. The current financial crisis in East Asia is a significant defining factor in the nature and content of capacity building work. The crises compels the NGOs and civil society actors to address more strategic consequences and their structural roots.

These **additions** can be divided into two categories - thematic and generic.

THEMATIC

☛ **Understanding and knowledge on environmental issues** : Given the changing global environmental condition, there is a need to understand the issues concerning it. This would include management of natural resources, watershed management.

☛ **Understanding on human rights issues** : Asia is going through a political transformation. Human rights violations is an issue in almost all the South Asian countries and some of the East Asian countries too. Looking at the current

political scenario, it was felt that one must understand human rights issues not only within a country context but in a wider perspective also.

☛ **Knowledge and understanding of ethnic, minority and religious issues** : It is important to understand our traditional ways of defining issues and concerns and our cultural heritage. There is a need to appreciate our rich cultural heritage and see how it can be used to develop capacities, improve the existing ones and create new ones in the light of the changing context. There is a need to develop an understanding on traditional ways of building capacities of organisations and leaders.

GENERIC

☛ **Conflict resolution** : As an organisation grows, it needs to undertake more complex activities and new institutional arrangements need to be developed to make effective decisions, hold the organisation's sub units accountable, and resolve differences among organisational departments and divisions. The complexity of development activities and the variety of external constituents that the organisation deals with sets the stage for internal conflicts. This creates the need for more organised and efficient ways to divide responsibilities, coordinate activities and resolve disputes. The capacity building interventions would include strengthening governance mechanisms and processes, systems and procedures for decision making, formal structures, roles and accountability.

☛ **Entrepreneurship development** : Improving livelihoods among the poor requires focusing on savings and credit, micro enterprise and entrepreneurial development. It goes beyond that to include economic empowerment which is more than mere economic independence. Many NGOs have historically worked in areas of social development. The concept of income generation is a relatively a new arena of work for NGOs in some of the Asian countries. Therefore, capacities for promoting economic development leading to empowerment among the poor becomes an urgent requirement.

- ☞ **Development of communication skills :** This would include computer training, personality development and confidence building of the individuals. It would also include learning about new information and communication technologies. A need for a common language was felt by the NGOs. English, today, has become one of the most commonly used languages. A need was expressed to be fluent in English to facilitate better communication with others in the development sector as well as to be able to relate to other NGOs in the region.
- ☞ **Building people's organisations :** The need to build capacities for forming self help groups and people's organisations by using participatory methodology was added to the list. The need to sensitise staff on the needs for such capacity was felt as important.

APPROACHES TO CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building is a continuous, on going process which does not end when a project or programme ends. Each organisation has a continuously growing need for capacity building in the context of its work. Capacity building inputs need to be related to the larger environment as the impact of the organisation's capacities reaches beyond the organisation to the constituency it works with.

Capacity building inputs should not be targeted at a chosen few in an organisation. Often, these inputs are geared for the top level leaders within an organisation. The implication of this is that when they leave, the leadership goes with them and the organisation may flounder. It is essential to build capacities of all levels of professionals in an organisation to ensure continuity and smoothness in the running of an organisation.

Historically, capacity building inputs have been tied to project goals. They are training dominated and related to service delivery. In this context, institutionalisation of capacity building needs to be looked at. Capacity building, in this sense, needs to have a multi - track approach. It should not focus only on a particular organisation, but on the capacities needed by the range of

people working in the same environment and addressing a common concern.

Capacity building, in the Southern context, is largely dependent on international funding. This influences the type of intervention provided. As an NGO grows, either it realises the need for capacity building inputs by itself or the funding agency decides what inputs the concerned organisation needs. Often, the interventions are planned by the donors and geared to meet their own requirements rather than that of the organisation. Thus, most of the inputs are related to programme planning, management and related to a particular theme or area of work of the organisation. Few, if any, inputs are provided for long term capacities of the organisation.

The process of capacity building can be considered by looking at the following :

- ☞ **An Asian perspective :** After decades of top down, north led policies and projects, the Asian development community has realised the importance to articulate its needs so that it is heard by the donors. It is essential to build capacities related to a *south based, south articulated and south originated capacity* for critical reflection, learning, documentation and dissemination. There is a need to develop one's own systems, define capacity building needs by assessing the present and future.

The SNGOs know and understand their constituency and their needs better than any one else. South and East Asia are going through process of economic, social and political changes. In this light, it is essential to initiate a dialogue with the community with whom they work on its need for specific programmes. Capacity building initiatives should be looked at in this context and related to the work they are involved in.

- ☞ **Identity :** Capacity building has to be in relation to a search for relevance, identity, clarity of roles and perspective building. We need to look at NGO identity and the work it is doing. NGOs are not contractors or apolitical agents of civil society but they are agents of social change.

- ☞ **Existing capacities :** It must be accepted that no capacity building inputs begin from scratch. Each organisation has some inherent strengths and weaknesses. Capacity building through external intervention is a facilitative process which builds new or additional capacities on top of the existing ones. Therefore, it is essential to analyse and assess these to decide the capacity building inputs required. A SWOT analysis could be one of the methods used to assess the organisation's existing capacities and to build on these for future interventions.
- ☞ **Providers of capacity building :** While appreciating the trend of southern organisations questioning the delivery of capacity building, one also needs to think of how to address these questions and identify what kind of institutional support the grassroots organisation will need when they ask for specific capacity building inputs. The capacities of providers of capacity building needs to be continuously updated. They need to grow with the changing social environment.

There is a *market approach* towards capacity building. There are 'suppliers' of capacity building and there are those who 'demand' it. There are consultants who provide these inputs either as short term or as long term consultants for capacity building. The former, since it is for a specific programme has smaller stakes. They are not necessarily involved in the long term growth/ development of the organisation. The latter provides supportive capacity over a period of time to suit the growing requirements of the organisation they are involved with. There is the question of *who gives authority* to some for capacity building of the others. The constantly changing needs for capacity building of any organisation necessitates a growth in the capacities of the 'capacity builder'. The capacity builder needs to *adapt to the evolution* of their complex tasks, and they cannot adapt appropriately without commitment to continuous learning. The very assumption that capacity building is an on going process implies that the *capacity builder also has to grow* with the organisation and the needs of the community.

The question, therefore, that needs to be addressed is related to who will enhance the capacities of the capacity builder. This becomes even more relevant in the context of the changing environment and the challenges faced by the NGOs in their respective constituencies.

- ☞ **Size :** There are dynamics of change that need to be looked at with the growth of an organisation. Thus the needs for capacity building is different for small, medium, and larger NGOs. For instance, a small organisation may need inputs in personality development, leadership development and organisational management at a smaller scale. The medium size organisation may need greater inputs in programme planning and resource mobilisation. The larger organisation may need a totally different set of capacity building inputs, like strategic planning, organisational development, networking with other NGOs and advocacy. However, this does not imply that each of these organisational divisions, i.e., small, medium and large, are water tight compartments. Each needs capacity building inputs in programme planning, resource mobilisation, strategic planning, etc. Any capacity building interventions must keep in mind not only the size, but also its age and the growing constituency it works with. In South Asia and East Asia, it was felt that the newer NGOs can share and learn from their older counter parts in the region. There is little input provided for capacity building of networks. A wide range of experiences and practices exist among NGOs in the region. Therefore, intra regional and inter regional learning on capacity building should be facilitated.
- ☞ **Category :** There are variations in the needs of NGOs depending on the type of work they are involved in.. Sometimes, NGOs are created and managed by people who have little exposure to the development techniques applied in the development field today. They learn about leading and organising through 'doing'. As an NGO grows and starts interacting with those beyond its immediate constituency, like the government, civil society actors,

fundings, etc., the capacity building inputs change. One way of doing this is to combine learning through personal action with learning from others in the community. The needs of each organisation is different depending on the kind of work it is involved in. For example, the needs of a research provider will be different from a support organisation or an activist group. The needs of NGOs in transitional economies and liberal economies are differ-

ent. Though civil society organisations have been in existence in these countries since a long time, the concept of NGOs, as we understand it today, is relatively new in transitional economies. Hence, their needs are different from those in the liberal economies which have been in existence since a long time. There will be different capacity building approaches for different socio - political - economic systems.

RECEIVERS OF CAPACITY BUILDING

<p style="text-align: center;">OTHERS</p> <p>May be donors, government organisations, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New modalities of working (networking) through assistance from other NGOs, exchange/exposure ● Globalisation policy (research, advocacy, analytical skills) through training, collaborative research, exchange <p style="text-align: center;">4</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CLIENTS CAN BE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Individual or Organisation ◆ Other NGOs, community, government organisation ● Programme/project management through strategic planning, training ● Institutional/organisational management through networking, training ● Technical, thematic/sectoral through training, exposure/exchange ● Working with government and other sectors through dialogue, exposure/exchange <p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	E X T E R N A L
<p style="text-align: center;">INDIVIDUAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Competence ◆ Commitment ● Enhancement of values, attitudes, commitment through support by institutional systems ● Methods of working with empowered communities through exposure/exchange, dialogue ● Specific skills through training, exposure/exchange <p style="text-align: center;">1</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ORGANISATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Institutional systems and procedures ◆ Programme or thematic ● Financial management through strategic planning, participatory budgeting, revenue generation strategies ● New modalities of working (with government, empowered communities, networks) through exposure, dialogue ● Enhancement of organisational values, attitudes and culture ● Project management through use of external specialists ● Policy research, analysis and advocacy through training, collaborative activities, exchanges ● Institutional capacities through establishing systems and processes, developing legitimacy, partnership <p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	I N T E R N A L

II. NORTH SOUTH COLLABORATION :

An exercise was undertaken to assess the priorities and gaps between the relationship of SNGOs and NNGOs. It was also geared towards finding out points of congruence and incongruence in capacity building efforts of SNGOs. As explained earlier, most of the capacity building for SNGOs has been delivered by Northern NGOs (NNGOs), often on behalf of donors agencies. Funds are available to NNGOs from donors and other resource providers for development programmes in the South. The NNGOs and SNGOs should start a dialogue for effective sustainable development. There is a need to assess the relationship between the NNGOs and SNGOs, look at the benefits and issues of concern. If the needs of the Southern NGOs are not only to be voiced, but also to be heard by those concerned, it is imperative to identify and voice these needs.

There is also a need to find ways of relating to NNGOs besides thinking of them only in the context of funders as there are many NGOs in the North who face similar problems as those in the South. There are resource poor organisations in the North too and are in the same predicament as many organisations in the South. This is the right time to share experiences with each other and learn how each copes.

One of the areas where SNGOs and NNGOs could come together is in the area of capacity building. Often, there are instances where NNGOs focus only on the larger SNGOs and the smaller ones get neglected. There is a need to dialogue with the NNGOs and change this attitude. Secondly, the funds go to only a few organisations. This might be because of the assumption that the small and the mid level NGOs cannot understand/follow the guidelines laid out by the NNGOs and thus loose out on funds or any other initiatives taken at large. It is time to initiate a dialogue with the NNGOs and encourage funding for the smaller NGOs.

IWGCB provided a questionnaire to assess the issues and benefits of North South collaboration. The in country consultations assessed the effective

relationships between SNGOs and NNGOs and donors and the impact it has made on their work. This consultation was undertaken to build a better understanding of the capacity building needs of SNGOs and their experiences in joint collaboration with NNGOs.

BENEFITS OF SNGO-NNGO COLLABORATION:

Information technology advances have increased information flow of South - South and South - North exchange. Over the years, there have been certain visible benefits of North South collaboration. Some of the emerging benefits and issues related to North South collaboration are :

- Enabling mutual learning from experience (such as access to wider experiences)
- Increasing programme quality (improving technical capacity or range of service)
- Increasing programme scale/impact
- Enhancing organisational and management capacities (improved personnel and accounts systems)
- Promoting more effective advocacy (improved legitimacy with policy makers)
- Increase in awareness of Northern players on realities of the South and assess what they can contribute

ISSUES IN NORTH SOUTH COLLABORATION

- Reaching agreement about basic development values and goals
- Reaching agreement on the basic causes of development problems
- Incompatibilities in programmes and operational priorities
- Establishing mutual trust and respect
- Reaching agreement about programme monitoring and evaluation
- Preserving NGO mission and independence

EXEMPLARS OF EFFECTIVE SOUTH NORTH RELATIONSHIPS

The SNGOs shared positive experiences of North South relationships which have had a positive impact on their functioning.

- ☞ **Consensus on development priorities :** Over time, there has been a sharing of experiences that has resulted in better clarity of issues of development problems, priorities, etc. With some of the NNGOs, the SNGOs find a similarity of development agenda and vision. This also helps them to relate to each other better.
- ☞ **Networking in North :** Similarity in goals, objectives and strategy has also helped in networking with other development organisations in the North and appreciating the global uniformity of issues.
- ☞ **Partnership in advocacy and lobbying on environmental and women's issues :** Environment and gender have been key issues in Southern context. NNGOs and SNGOs have found common advocacy agenda by coming together on this front and have supported each other in their efforts to deal with these issues effectively.
- ☞ **Development of Business :** NGO collaboration: There has been an increased level of awareness in the business world today. The corporate sector has not only realised but now even talks about social responsibility. There is a realisation that investing in development sector would create an environment conducive to corporate economy. This has encouraged them to not only acknowledge but also to fund certain activities undertaken by the NGOs.
- ☞ **Development of Government :** NGO collaboration : SNGOs are now able to work with government and other players, thereby increasing programmatic relations between them. The relationship works in two ways - NGOs can build capacities of specific government units and the government can provide enabling environment to the NGOs. The SNGOs play an important role in advocating policy reforms with the government.

In summary, in many instances, the inherent capacities of the organisation has improved as a result of these interventions by NNGOs.

FOLLOW UP COMMITMENTS

In a way, these consultations have set off a whole process involving on-going commitments on the part of those NGOs who participated in the in country consultations. With the increasing levels of challenges facing the NGOs, it becomes clear that most are ill-prepared to take on this larger role. Organisational weakness has inhibited many NGOs from performing their role effectively in the past. Unfortunately, the Northern donors' perceptions of what inputs are needed are different from the ground reality. As a result of the consultations, it was decided that an analysis of existing capacities and strengths would be conducted and capacity building needs identified. During this process the NGOs will meet regularly and keep abreast of international events happening in this field. The commitments were strong enough to be taken forward irrespective of the fact whether IWGCB existed in future.

NATIONAL LEVEL

- ☞ Introspection on organisations' efforts towards capacity building based on the collective insights of the consultations
- ☞ Share the outcomes of the consultations with those who participated in the in-country consultations. Motivate other groups to join this initiative, particularly those who are not working closely with NGOs, e.g., trade unions, academe, media, etc. Get their reactions and reconfirmation of the issues/points raised during the consultations and give a feedback to IWGCB.
- ☞ Go through a mapping exercise - find out who is doing what at country level and produce a bibliography in capacity building at country level
- ☞ Documentation and dissemination of the process of capacity building and its impact
- ☞ Mainstreaming capacity building rather than leaving it at the periphery

REGIONAL

- ☞ Understand the capacity building efforts of all NGOs - small, medium, large
- ☞ Mapping exercise at regional level on who is doing what and produce a bibliography of capacity building interventions
- ☞ Organise exposure visits to observe the process of capacity building and learn from each other

CONCLUSION

Both South and East Asia are going through major political, economic and social change. In this context, there is a need to redefine the roles of the NGOs and work towards maintaining their identity.

The current financial crises is a significant factor in the nature and content of capacity building work in all of Asia. The crises compels the enabling of NGOs and civil society organisations effectively cope with its immediate effects and address its more strategic consequences and their structural roots. Capacity building to enhance NGO roles as an agent of change was considered important.

The need to expand engagement among

various stakeholders in capacity building was underscored by the participants during the consultations. Understanding of the needs, imperatives and constraints, of various stakeholder groups (government, NGO, corporate sector and civil society groups) was identified as critical in determining the terms of engagements and collaborations on capacity building among these groups. A process of stock taking therefore, is needed which would highlight centres of excellence or exemplars of innovative practices can be shared with a wider audience.

In both the consultations, the need to give special attention to understanding multi stakeholder capacity building needs, challenges and actual practice in transitional economies (China, Central Asia and Mekong River Delta) and developing economies was expressed.

Asian NGOs have demonstrated their ability to build and enhance their own capacities in the past. Many innovative experiences and institutions in capacity building have emerged in the Asian NGO movement. This history provides a sense of confidence and strength to Asian NGOs to work together towards meeting the challenges of the next millennium.



International Forum on Capacity Building: Consultations on NGO Capacity Building and North-South Cooperation

This consultation is being undertaken to build better understanding of the capacity building needs of Southern NGOs and their experience in joint activities with Northern NGOs. The results of the survey will be used to promote more relevant capacity building programs and more effective North-South cooperation in the future.

The following lists of (1) future capacity building needs and (2) benefits and issues in North-South cooperation are based on discussions with a range of Southern NGO support organization leaders and Northern donor agencies. But no single list can reflect the concerns and priorities of NGOs in all countries and regions. This list is intended to stimulate the development of lists that better reflect the priorities of specific regional and national NGO communities.

To build lists of priorities appropriate to regional or national communities, we suggest the following process:

- Step 1: NGO leaders and representatives review the lists as individuals and add areas of importance that are not indicated on the list by filling in blank spaces. They identify the 3-5 areas they see as most important on each list.
- Step 2: The participants as a group share their additions to the list and identify the most important 3-5 priority areas on each list as seen by the group as a whole. For example, a group might add three or four new areas to a list and then identify top priorities by adding up votes by each individual for the top five priorities.
- Step 3: A. Capacity-building Needs. For the three or four top priority areas:
 - (1) How well do current capacity-building programs from different sources (e.g., national or regional support organizations, Northern PVOs, government programs, universities, etc), meet this need?
 - (2) What are examples of effective capacity building programs, and what makes them effective?
- B. North-South Cooperation Benefits and Issues.
 - (1) What are examples of particularly effective North-South NGO relationships?
 - (2) How have these relationships resolved the most important issues?

The results will be used to develop reports on capacity-building and North-south partnership initiatives. We hope to get the following from each national and regional discussion:

- (1) A list of the top priorities identified,
- (2) Examples of effective programs and relationships, and
- (3) ideas about what promotes effective capacity-building and relationships.

International Forum on Capacity Building:
**Consultations on Future Southern NGO
 Capacity Building Needs**

(CHECK IF HIGH PRIORITY FOR FUTURE)

- A Leadership development (such as strategic thinking, succession planning)
- B Policy research, analysis and advocacy (such as campaign planning, coalition building)
- C Organisation development and renewal (such as team building, organization design)
- D Planning and strategic management (such as analysis, environment scan).
- E Project/program design and implementation (such as assessing needs, planning).
- F Information access, storage and dissemination (such as using internet, information systems design).
- G Gender sensitivity (such as awareness training, organization assessments).
- H Staff development (such as training, human resource planning).
- I Financial systems (such as accounting systems, budgeting systems).
- J Monitoring and evaluation (such as organization evaluation, learning systems).
- K Fund raising (such as proposal writing, business development).
- L Local resource mobilization (such as constituency building, grassroots organizing).
- M Networking with other NGOs (such as association building, partnership creation).
- N Networking with other civil society organizations (such as coalitions with movements).
- O Networking with Northern NGOs (such as relationship building, negotiation skills).
- P Cross-sectoral collaboration with government (such as training to understand public agencies, creating alliances to implement policies).
- Q Cross-sectoral collaboration with business (such as training to understand business priorities creating alliances for mutual gains).
- R Improving governance and social accountability (such as Board development).
- S Research, documentation, and perspective-building (such as training in research).
- T Improving relations with donor agencies (such as negotiation with donor alliances).
- U Clarifying NGO roles and identities in society (such as NGO identity workshops).
- V Strengthening public support for NGOs and civil society (such as public awareness campaign).
- W Other
- X Other
- Y Other
- Z Other

International Forum on Capacity Building:
**Consultations on Benefits and Issues in
 North-South NGO Collaboration**

Please check the Benefits and Issues that have been most important to your NGO in relations with Northern partner NGOs.

BENEFITS

- A Increasing program scale or impact (such as expanding number of people served)
- B Increasing legitimacy with other stakeholders (such as government agencies)
- C Increasing program quality (such as improving technical capacity or range of services)
- D Enhancing organization and management capacities (such as improved personnel or accounting systems)
- E Enabling more mutual learning from experience (such as access to wider experience).
- F Promoting more effective advocacy (such as improved legitimacy with policy-makers)
- G Other
- H Other

ISSUES AREAS

- A Reaching agreement about basic development values and goals
- B Reaching agreement on causes of development problems
- C Incompatibilities in programs and operational priorities
- D Establishing mutual trust and respect
- E Preserving NGO mission and independence
- F Creating mechanisms to resolve conflicts
- G Reaching agreement about cost-sharing
- H Reaching agreement about staff salaries
- I Reaching agreement about financial and accounting systems
- J Reaching agreement about program design
- K Reaching agreement about program monitoring and evaluation
- L Other
- M Other

COUNTRY WISE PRIORITIES IN CAPACITY BUILDING:

BANGLADESH

- ◆ Planning and strategic management (strategic analysis and environmental scan)
- ◆ Strengthening public support for NGOs and civil society organisations (public awareness campaigns)
- ◆ Leadership development (strategic thinking, succession planning)
- ◆ Financial sustainability (accounting systems, budgeting systems)
- ◆ Local resource mobilisation (constituency building, grass roots organising)

PAKISTAN

- ◆ Democratic development
- ◆ Organisational development and renewal; planning and strategic management (team building, designing, environment scan, strategic analysis, culture of organisation)
- ◆ Local resource mobilisation
- ◆ Networking (role clarifying)
- ◆ Policy research, analysis and advocacy (issue based campaigns)

SRI LANKA

- ◆ Improving relations with donor agencies
- ◆ Leadership development
- ◆ Policy research, analysis and advocacy
- ◆ Gender sensitivity
- ◆ Organisational development and renewal

INDIA

The consultations were carried out in Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa. The state wise expressions of priorities are :

KERALA

- ◆ Leadership development
- ◆ Organisational development and renewal
- ◆ Project/programme description and implementation
- ◆ Staff development

- ◆ Policy research, analysis and advocacy
- ◆ Cross sectoral collaboration with the government

MADHYA PRADESH

- ◆ Improve relations with donor agencies
- ◆ Leadership development
- ◆ Policy research, analysis and advocacy
- ◆ Gender sensitisation
- ◆ Organisational development and renewal

UTTAR PRADESH

- ◆ Institutional development
- ◆ Human resource development
- ◆ Strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation
- ◆ Documentation
- ◆ Networking

ORISSA

- ◆ Organisational development
- ◆ Monitoring and evaluation
- ◆ Establish networks with other supporting organisations/institutions
- ◆ Human resource development
- ◆ Creation of leaders and leadership

II. PRORITY AREAS IN EAST ASIA

PHILIPPINES

- ◆ financial sustainability of NGOs including fund raising
- ◆ new modalities of working (Networking, linkaging, collaboration)
- ◆ continued development of values, attitude and culture (value clarification)
- ◆ financial management
- ◆ method of working with empowered communities (problems between NGOs/POs)
- ◆ working with governments