

MAXIMIZING THE BENEFITS FROM WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION

Course Transfer – A tripod capacity building approach

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This paper presents Capacity Building (CB), Technical Assistance (TA) and Partnership Building (PB) as key elements to successful knowledge transfer, in this case course transfer. Water Supply and Sanitation for Low Income Communities course was transferred from WEDC in UK to UMI in Uganda. On the basis of the case, a Tripod Model is advanced as key to successful implementation of course transfer. The paper recommends CB at the local level instrumental to sustainability of course transferred especially when external support ceases.

Introduction

Course transfer can be regarded as a form of transfer that involves sharing of ideas, knowledge or experience from one individual to another by means of mentoring, training, documenting and other collaboration. Argote and Ingram (2000)[1], define knowledge transfer as how ideas, and experience acquired in one situation applies (or fails to apply) to another. To achieve effective course transfer, three important elements ought to be considered, namely: Capacity Building, Technical Assistance, and Partnership Building.

This paper presents course transfer as a tripod capacity building approach. and is divided into the following sections:

- Concepts of knowledge transfer;
- Case of Course Transfer from WEDC to UMI; and
- Lessons learnt as well as recommendations.

The concepts of knowledge transfer

Capacity Building

Capacity Building (CB) is constituted by efforts expended in developing human skills or societal infrastructures within a community or organization. In the case of course transfer, Capacity Building should be composed of development of institutional, financial, political and other resources, such as technology at different levels of an organization in the community.

Mitchel and Sackney (2000)[2], liken course transfer to a fragile ecosystem that is susceptible to damage by some conditions. Care should be taken to minimize risks of failure in the flow of knowledge benefits. This therefore characterizes course transfer to: -reinforcing (strong personal abilities, interpersonal relationships, as well as organizational structures) and limiting processes. In this regard, a community audit tool entitled “community capacity index”, as detailed in table one is important in establishing the level of capacity built in the community with a view of maximizing the reinforcing processes and minimizing the limiting ones affecting course

transfer. The index can also serve as an important tool for monitoring and evaluation of the capacity built in course transfer, or for improving future related projects.

Technical assistance

Technical Assistance (see Table 1) should be considered important in facilitating quick exposure, understanding, and adoption of high value knowledge and experience for effective results on the ground. Technical Assistance will also aid standardization of knowledge and performance for easy supervision, monitoring and evaluation, as well as comparison of results on Global scale. However, the level of Technical Assistance from the source at the top to the recipient at the local level should decline with increasing time. This will enable easy gauging of capacity development of the recipient organization for self-sustainability.

Partnership building

Execution of Course transfer requires twining relationships between developed institutions (eg. in the North) and developing institutions (eg. in the South).

This can facilitate fast adoption of knowledge available else where to solve the prevailing problems at hand. However, special consideration should be given to participatory approaches in problem identification, analysis, prioritisation and solving. This is hoped to ensure appropriate policy development and adoption of knowledge relevant to specific target recipient.

Tripod capacity building approach-

The case of WATSAN course at UMI

Practical experience in the execution of the course entitled “Water Supply and Sanitation for Low Income Communities” at Uganda Management Institute depicts course transfer as a tripod capacity building approach. Water Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC) of Loughborough University in UK transferred the course in

Table 1. Community Capacity Index

Domain 1	Domain 2	Domain 3	Domain 4
Network partnerships	Knowledge transfer	Problem solving	Infrastructure
Levels of capacity	Levels of capacity	Levels of capacity	Sub domains of sustainability
1. There is capacity to identify the organizations and groups with resources to implement and sustain a programme	1. There is capacity to develop a programme that meets local needs	1. There is capacity within the network to work together to solve problems.	1. There is capacity to develop program related policy
2. There is a capacity to deliver the programme	2. There is the capacity to transfer knowledge in order to achieve the desired outcomes/ implement a programme within a net work	2. There is the capacity to identify and overcome problems encountered in achieving the desired outcomes	2. There is capacity to develop financial capital 3. There is capacity to develop human/intellectual capital
3. There is a sustainable network established to maintain and re-source the programme	3. There is the capacity to integrate a programme into the mainstream practices of the network partners	3. There is the capacity to sustain flexible problem solving	4. There is capacity to develop social capital

Bush et. al, (2005)[3]

1998/1999 to Uganda Management Institute (UMI). The approach covers the aspects of:

- External knowledge, market expertise and supply of funds;
- Implementing agencies; and
- Local expertise and other capital resources.

External knowledge (expertise) and funds

During the execution of the course, external assistance was in form of technical personnel from Water Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC) of Loughborough University in United Kingdom (UK). WEDC developed the initial curriculum and on a declining basis, the WEDC personnel have been teaching on the course. Initially, WEDC participated on the teaching up to 70% of the total contact hours in 2003; this has declined to 40% in 2005. Donors have provided complementary funds to Government of Uganda through the Directorate of Water Development (DWD). DWD contracted UMI, who in turn sub-contracted WEDC to undertake Institutional Capacity Building of UMI and participate in teaching. UMI has received a number of items to support its capacity (see Table 2).

WEDC has also undertaken institutional capacity development, which has included training UMI staff and equipping the UMI library through securing appropriate training materials and arranging short courses and study tours one in the UK and another in South Africa.

The curriculum of the course initially developed by WEDC continues to be reviewed in order to keep the course content responsive to challenges of Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) sector in Uganda. The review is done by Advisory Council and feed back from participants.

Implementing arrangements

The implementing arrangements constitute the three elements of a Tripod – on one side WEDC and Donors providing complementary technology and funds, on the other Government of Uganda through its line Ministries providing policy direction and funds; and UMI the Training Institution developing the necessary capacity to provide appropriate training on a sustainable basis. In order to make the tripod function effectively, an Advisory Panel composed of representatives from DWD, the ministries of Health, Local Government, that of Gender Labour and Social Development and the UMI. The Panel reviews the Curriculum on a regular basis to keep the course appropriate, and has help develop selection criteria for course candidates. Candidates are selected on the basis of geographical regions, gender and sectors (public, private and NGO). The Advisory Panel has worked well to ensure appropriateness of the course content to local conditions as well as, fostering quality assurance and successful running of the course.

Local resources in form of expertise and other capital

Uganda Management Institute (UMI) provides the venue for the course and local expertise in form of teaching. As a member of the Advisory Panel, UMI participates in all decisions affecting the course. UMI advertises the course and its corporate image provides the assurance that it is a worthy course.

Results and challenges of Capacity Building Tripod Approach
The Partnership among the various participants in the tripod approach, have helped in smooth running of the course and

Table 2. Capacity building items

Item	No.
Books	98
Computers	2
LCD Projector	1
Printer	1
Photocopier	1
Water testing equipment	1

its successful outcome so far. However, the execution of the course transfer has also faced challenges. For example, where there are many people in the country who have knowledge in various aspects of water and sanitation, there were found to be inexperienced trainers. This necessitated a training of trainers' course to be conducted for facilitators on the course. Late disbursement of funds affected the schedules of implementation of the project. Some applicants could not meet the stringent selection criteria. While some lacked authentic academic papers, others could not be released by their employers for both modules of the course.

Learning lessons, conclusions and recommendations

In light of the experience gained during the implementation of the Water Supply and Sanitation course for low-income communities, the following are learning lessons, conclusions and recommendations.

Learning lessons

Successful course transfer is a tripod approach that necessitates participation of a wide range of stakeholders. These include; external professional firms like WEDC, that provide expertise, knowledge and funds; the implementing agencies in the recipient geographical destinations (countries) who provide conducive environment for implementation of knowledge transfer; and local resources in form of expertise and other capital resources.

The external support should decline in proportion to extent of capacity built so that by the time the external support is built the transfer is complete and sustainable. Capacity building at the local level is therefore important to ensure self-sustainability for continued operation of the course especially after external support ceases.

The host Institution, in this case UMI, should be able harness locally available resources in terms of policy support, expertise and corporate image and to allow growth of strong personal abilities, interpersonal relationships and organizational structures at local levels that are necessary to support sustainability.

Conclusions

In conclusion, whereas a tripod is necessary to prop transfer of a course from one institution to other, once propped, one stand can be withdrawn to leave two firmly standing. By the end of the five-year project period, Uganda Government

and its line ministries and UMI can sustain the course when WEDC and donors have withdrawn.

Recommendations

The Tripod model should be encouraged during which capacity building at the local level in terms of personal abilities, interpersonal relations, and institutional structures to etc emphasised to enable self-sustainability.

At the time of pull out of foreign support, twining relationships should continue between UMI and Loughborough University to sustain or enhance desired standard set.

References

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