



**Association for the Development of Education in Africa**

**Biennale on Education in Africa  
(Libreville, Gabon, March 27-31, 2006)**

**Effective Literacy Programs**

**Parallel Session A-3**

**Stimulating Environment for  
Engaging in Literacy**

---

**Creating a Literate Environment:  
Hidden Dimensions and Implications for Policy**

---

*by Peter B. Easton*

**Working Document  
DRAFT**

**PLEASE DO NOT DISSEMINATE**

**DOC A-3.1**

This document was prepared by ADEA for its Biennial Meeting (Libreville, Gabon, March 27-31, 2006). The views and opinions expressed in this volume are those of the authors and should not be attributed to ADEA, to its members or affiliated organizations or to any individual acting on behalf of ADEA.

The document is a working document still in the stages of production. It has been prepared to serve as a basis for discussions at the ADEA Biennial Meeting and should not be disseminated for other purposes at this stage.

© Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) – 2006

**Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)**

International Institute for Educational Planning

7-9 rue Eugène Delacroix

75116 Paris, France

Tel.: +33(0)1 45 03 77 57

Fax: +33(0)1 45 03 39 65

adea@iiep.unesco.org

web site: [www.ADEAnet.org](http://www.ADEAnet.org)

## Contents

<b>1. ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1. The components of a literate environment.....	8
2.2. The origins and requirements of literacy .....	9
2.3. The relevance of local capacity building .....	10
<b>3. THREE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES .....</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1. The alternation between learning and application .....	11
3.1.1. A concrete example.....	11
3.2. The role of broader literacy in accountability.....	13
3.3. The importance of “multiple capitalization”.....	14
<b>4. TWO HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5. WORLD BANK LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING STUDY .....</b>	<b>19</b>
5.1. Theoretical background .....	19
5.1.1. Localizing capacity: The decentralization agenda.....	20
5.1.2. Local Government Capacity Development.....	20
5.1.3. Admitting New Players: Civil Society and NGOs.....	21
5.1.4. The Requirements of Poverty Reduction.....	22
5.1.5. Capacity Development Aspects of Poverty Reduction.....	22
5.1.6. Microfinance and Social Capital.....	22
5.1.7. Empowerment, Participatory Planning and Local Knowledge.....	23
5.1.8. Impact on Capacity Building Strategies .....	25
5.2. Case Examples Across Sectors .....	26
5.2.1. Rural Development .....	26
5.2.2. Water and Irrigation Management.....	27
5.2.3. Public Health.....	28
5.2.4. Humanitarian Aid.....	28
5.2.5. Public Administration .....	28
5.2.6. Civil Society and NGOs as Capacity Builders .....	29
5.2.7. Education .....	29
5.3. Consultation with development partners .....	30
5.3.1. Community-Driven Development .....	30
5.3.2. CLUSA .....	30
5.3.3. Africare .....	31
5.4. What the Results Tell Us: roles for Adult and Nonformal Education.....	31
5.4.1. Technical specificity .....	32
5.4.2. Lack of experience.....	32
5.4.3. Getting too complex.....	33
5.4.4. Elitism.....	33
5.4.5. Buying into the bailout.....	34
<b>6. PADLOS-EDUCATON STUDY: BOTTOM-UP LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING .....</b>	<b>35</b>
6.1. Introduction.....	35
6.2. Methodology .....	35
6.2.1. Description: Degree of effective take-over.....	36
6.2.2. Analysis: conditions and consequences of take-over.....	38
6.3. Strategies for mobilizing and developing local capacity .....	40
6.3.1. Description: Where they learned their skills.....	41
6.3.2. Analysis: Reinforcement & mobilization of local capacities .....	42
6.4. Practical implications.....	44

6.4.1.	For local development.....	44
6.4.2.	For training strategies and programs.....	45
6.4.3.	For External support agencies.....	47
<b>7.</b>	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>49</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Levels of technical capacity required in a democratic organization.....	16
Figure 2: Graphic representation of fivefold local capitalization .....	19

## List of Tables

Table 1 Schematic presentation of learning-practice alternation.....	14
Table 2 Double axis of associational development.....	16
Table 3 Characteristics of the PADLOS-Education Study sample.....	39

## Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>ADEA</b>	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
<b>AL</b>	Adult Literacy
<b>ANFE</b>	Adult and Nonformal Education
<b>CBA</b>	Cost-Benefit Analysis
<b>CBO</b>	Community Based Organisation
<b>CDD</b>	Community-Driven Development (World Bank)
<b>CILSS</b>	Comité inter-état de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel
<b>CLUSA</b>	Cooperative League of the United States of America
<b>CSO</b>	Community Service Organization
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development (UK)
<b>EFA</b>	Education for All
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization (UN)
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GMR</b>	Global Monitoring Report
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization (UN)
<b>LCB</b>	Local capacity building
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals (UN)
<b>NFE</b>	Non Formal Education
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organisation
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>PADLOS</b>	Projet d'appui au développement local au Sahel [Support Project for Sahelian Local Development] (CILSS/Club du Sahel-OECD)
<b>PRGA</b>	Participatory Research and Gender Analysis (CIGAR/Colombia)
<b>UIE</b>	UNESCO Institute for Education
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development

## 1. ABSTRACT

1. A “literate environment” is one that offers new literates multiple opportunities for using their recently acquired knowledge, for enhancing it through continuing education and for developing solid habits of lifelong learning. Experience with literacy campaigns, programs and projects over the last few decades have conclusively demonstrated that the quality of the literate environment is a major determinant of knowledge and skill retention among literacy or nonformal education students as well as of the ultimate impact of the training that they received.

2. This paper is devoted to analyzing and illustrating the different dimensions of a literate environment and the means that can be used to upgrade these characteristics in the often under-resourced environments where the students of African literacy and nonformal education typically live. Care is taken to demonstrate the mechanics and the complementarity of the four major varieties of “post-literacy” activity and programming: provision of reading materials for new literates, organization of beneficial and accessible varieties of continuing education (or connection with those already available in the existing educational system), local assumption of new responsibilities for production, investment and service delivery in the surrounding economy; and assistance to new literates in securing credit and creating new business ventures of their own.

3. Examples drawn from literature on experience with these different types of “post-literacy” programming help to flesh out a picture of best practice and serve as a basis on recommendations for future policy in this area.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

4. This document is devoted to examining and elaborating, in the light of recent field experience, just what we mean by the notion of a “literate environment” and how such a thing can be established or materially strengthened, particularly in the resource-poor settings where much of literacy programming necessarily takes place. Though there has been widespread concern with problems of “post literacy” and with the constitution of literate environments for some years now, it seems safe to say that our analysis of the problem and therefore our understanding of the means by which it might best be addressed have remained quite rudimentary. Parallel Session A-3 of the ADEA Biennial at Libreville on “Stimulating Environments [for literacy]” contains a number of papers in addition to this one that should help us to better elaborate what we mean by these terms and which methods have proven capable of producing desired results. For reasons that will be evident below, I have chosen to concentrate on a side of the question – called in the title of this paper its “hidden dimension” – that is perhaps least explored and yet most relevant to the question of the impact of literacy programs on poverty reduction and the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals.

5. Part of the topic, and the part that might serve as a framework for Parallel Session A-3 in its entirety, was discussed in the latter pages of the plenary discussion document entitled “Investing in Literacy: What, Why and Where.” I therefore begin this paper by reprising selected portions of that text (Section 2 below), which may merit rereading even for those who have already studied the plenary document in question. (Those who remember it full well or would rather admit the points made in the previous document may wish to “fast forward” to the end of this first section and pick up just a paragraph before the beginning of section 2.) In the text immediately below, I deal first with the anatomy of a literate environment, then with the most important differences and the close complementarity between its educational dimensions (reading material and continuing education possibilities) and its socio-economic ones (opportunities for gainful use of new skills and the environmental conditions necessary to ensure them).

### 2.1. THE COMPONENTS OF A LITERATE ENVIRONMENT

6. What constitutes a “literate environment”? There are arguably four principal and interrelated types of opportunity for application and use of new literate skills:

- A. *Access to reading material of direct interest to the neo-literate:* books, brochures, newspapers, magazines, messages, letters, and other practical documents – which supposes publishing facilities and use of the language in question in relevant media of communication;
- B. *The availability of continuing education* in one or both of two forms:
  - sequences of formal schooling to which the learner may accede by establishment of equivalence between the skills already acquired and a given level of that system -- and by virtue of open or age-neutral enrollment policies; or
  - varieties of organized nonformal training (such as organized trade apprenticeship) that confer other skills or elements of knowledge of interest to the learner;
- C. *Opportunities to assume sustainable new functions in existing organizations or institutional structures* (like local governments, agricultural cooperatives or extension systems) that require and exercise literate skills; and
- D. *Opportunities to start and help manage sustainable new business or nonprofit endeavors* that likewise require and exercise literate skills.

7. It is the combination of all four, in forms and to degrees dictated by circumstances, human imagination and available resources, that constitutes a truly “literate environment” and creates



the strongest and most durable demand for literacy training” – “effective demand,” in the terminology of economics.<sup>1</sup>

8. The first two of these dimensions are amply addressed in other studies prepared for the concurrent session on supportive environments for literacy and in the general literature on “post-literacy.” The second two, however, as noted in the study on Investing in Literacy, are much less frequently taken into consideration, though they are at least as important

## 2.2. THE ORIGINS AND REQUIREMENTS OF LITERACY

9. Literacy, it is worth remembering, was first invented some 4000 years ago on the irrigation schemes and in the farming communities of the Fertile Crescent when managing transactions for large scale water allocation and surplus food exchange became too complex to handle by oral means alone (Tuman 1987). Though it soon acquired important political, religious and cultural functions, the initial motivations and uses for literacy have remained closely linked to the exercise of resource management responsibility, as witness its frequent paring with local credit and marketing initiatives in current development work.

10. There is an important lesson here for “post-literacy” planning and for the creation of a literate environment: What most reliably creates the need, the “effective demand” and the local resources for written communication – by creating at the same time the employments that require it – is assumption of new powers and resource management responsibilities, whether in commerce, local government, public service delivery, political development, organized religious ministry or a mix of these. And what is most likely to multiply the volume of written material that passes under the nose of new literates or must be prepared by them is communication among these nodes of new activity and the exchange with the outside world that it requires. But if one has few resources and no complex social responsibilities, then the prime stimulus both for literacy and for the spread of written communication is lacking. Most low-literacy environments in Africa are in precisely that low-power and low-resource situation.

11. The problem most frequently encountered in developing post-literacy and enhancing both major dimensions of the literate environment is that the issues of commerce, power, governance and social organization that determine much of the nature and density of post-literacy opportunity are not in the habitual domain of educators, who tend therefore to be a bit tone deaf when it comes to categories (c) and (d) above. They are, however, very much in the realm of local development itself. In fact, most of the important opportunities for post-literacy lie in other sectors of development like agriculture, natural resource management, health, governance, credit and banking, public works and – yes – even the local management of formal education, though they tend to lie there fallow until a confluence of political will, new seed resources and the availability of appropriate training brings them to fruition. Literacy programs have sometimes tried to simulate socio-economic applications for former students, by starting, for example, small-scale credit schemes or agricultural cooperatives within the framework of the educational agency. Though worthwhile in themselves as experimental sites for new curricula, these efforts seldom attain the level of sophistication or the scope of real development projects, which are naturally more than literacy personnel, even those underwritten by generous outside aid, can sustain.

---

<sup>1</sup> “Effective demand” means simply demand that can and will be satisfied, because it is backed by the resources necessary to pay for the product or service in question. It is therefore often distinguished from our general wants and desires: things that we might like to have or that others think we ought to have, but that no one is willing or able to underwrite. If there is *effective* demand for literacy, that signifies that those wishing to become literate are ready to devote the time and effort required and that they – or their benefactors – are able to provide the other funds and resources entailed. It is most likely to materialize in situations where the acquisition of literacy yields benefits to new literates (and/or to the institutions to which they belong) to make it worthwhile sacrificing the resources required, including enough in the way of eventual economic benefit to defray the costs of instruction. Thus as “worthwhile” employments for literate skills emerge – i.e. uses in activities that yield returns to participants – or as entitlements of local people increase to the point where they can underwrite non-economic activities they judge particularly valuable, the “effective demand” for literacy instruction increases. The criterion is not necessarily scarcely a socially just one: it is no more just than the current distribution of income or configuration of political alliances in society and may only give satisfactory results to the extent that those other important parameters are also modified. But it does reveal like litmus paper what will and won’t provide a sustainable basis for adult education.

## 2.3. THE RELEVANCE OF LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING

12. This situation might seem bleak indeed, if it weren't for the fact that – conversely -- most of the other development sectors in question are presently in very sore need of reliable means to create local capacity for management within their own spheres. Due both to restricted budgets and the impetus to promote local assumption of development initiatives, decentralization and transfer of responsibility into qualified local hands are increasingly on the agenda of technical ministries. The UN Millennium Project places “training large quantities of village workers in health, farming and infrastructure” sixth among seventeen priority investments; the World Bank speaks of “rural development from below”; USAID emphasizes “empowering local populations for community-based forest management”; and NEPAD stresses “broad and deep participation [in development governance] by all strata and sectors of society.”

13. In short, “local capacity building” is becoming a practical necessity in other sectors of development. The more democratically-oriented the strategies in those different sectors – that is, the more local participation in decision-making as well as technical execution is structurally provided for – the broader the training needs entailed. Though a local organization governed top-down can make do with a few of its own bureaucrats and technicians, one more democratically governed requires not only people to fill managerial and technical positions, but others able to replace them in case of incapacitation or malfeasance, plus a membership sufficiently aware and knowledgeable concerning the organization's operations to monitor its performance and hold its leadership accountable.

14. The key notion to understanding and developing a literate environment – or at least the socio-economic side of it (factors c and d in the scheme above) -- lies in local capacity building. There is in fact an immense literature and a vast experience – not all of it successful in the domain of “capacity building for development,” most of which is devoted to imparting skills, knowledge and the benefits of experience at higher levels of society: national ministries, universities, regional institutes and governments, major new businesses and industries. These topics are very important, but discussion and intervention tend not to reach down to the local level. In addition a certain amount of attention has always been paid to developing capacity more locally, particularly in the framework of specific development projects or decentralization initiatives in governance, health, agriculture, natural resource management and so forth; and that topic has likewise attracted increasing attention in recent years.

15. It is significant to note, however, as argued in the initial discussion paper, that these efforts have largely taken place in other local development agencies responsible for sectors like those just named and there has been regrettably little transfer or coordination between this demand and the potential supply facility constituted by literacy programming. There is talk about decentralization and capacity building within literacy services and agencies themselves, but it has to do with decentralization or outsourcing of literacy provision responsibilities and the transfer of certain duties from central to more regional or local hands within the “silo” of literacy program administration, not with the kind of intersectoral collaboration that I have just suggested.

16. This is a domain, therefore, in which education personnel remain relatively “illiterate,” and in which connection the staff of other development sectors – though more and more aware of the critical importance of creating local leadership and resource management capacity to the success and sustainability of their own ventures -- seldom think of literacy programming or know how to bridge the gulf between the sectors.

17. My ambition in this paper is to venture a few steps beyond the arguments already laid out above (and presented in greater detail in the document “Investing in Literacy” itself) in order to begin generating – and to invite others to help generate from their own store of experience – the understandings required for building this bridge. I begin by discussing three key principles in the linkage between literacy and local capacity building, then present excerpts from two existing but little-publicized documents that provide some valuable empirical and conceptual insights into the linkage; and finally conclude with a few synoptic remarks and suggestions for further action and study.

### 3. THREE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

18. Three principles based on earlier work seem fundamental to developing our understanding of the linkage between literacy and local capacity building (LCB): a *pedagogical* one concerning the alternation to create between learning and application; a *political* one concerning means for building democratic institutions at the local level and the role of literacy in them; and a *financial* or resource-relevant principle about the interrelated kinds of accumulation that local institutions must undertake. Each is reviewed in greater detail in one of the three sub-sections below.

#### 3.1. THE ALTERNATION BETWEEN LEARNING AND APPLICATION

19. The first principle is a pedagogical one and has to do with the optimal alternation between learning and application. The idea is little more than common sense, and yet it is both very important and insufficiently applied to literacy programming. It concerns the imperative – from a purely pedagogical viewpoint as well as a strategic development one -- of *building a healthy alternation between learning and real application into any program*. By “real application,” I mean not just the necessary practice sessions that allow students to exercise the skills or knowledge they are acquiring and enable them to make connections between the lessons studied and things they already know. Development of the practical dimensions of curricula is certainly important and related methods should be an automatic part of the “toolkit” of any adult educator or instructional designer. But in the context of local capacity building for real development responsibilities the principle must be carried further and lead to a lesson plan that architecturally relates each level of learning to the assumption of a new level of responsibility in some solvent and sustainable enterprise or function. As the recent World Bank publication on literacy and livelihoods (Oxenham 2002) notes, experience to date demonstrates that such integration is more easily accomplished when literacy programming is fitted into the development activity in question than when the reverse is attempted.

20. In any case, this principle puts a premium on staff of the two partner sectors or agencies practicing and perfecting together a new competence: the ability to analyze any development activity or function, to prioritize or rearrange in hierarchy the component tasks or skills involved and to express them as a lesson plan. First people learn this and they are able to do that; then they acquire this additional understanding or skill and they are able to assume such and such expanded or more technical functions. And so forth. The alternation between learning and actual assumption of new responsibilities is premised on the notion that, as mysterious or difficult as the competences required to exercise particular development functions may appear – especially when seen “from afar” -- they are in fact composed of an interrelated set of tasks and understandings; and if one breaks these down and rearranges them in the right sequence, it is entirely possible to come up with a strategy and lesson plan that will enable a group or community to master the various levels of proficiency required.<sup>2</sup>

##### 3.1.1. A CONCRETE EXAMPLE

21. Administration and management of local agricultural markets in Africa provides an example and one in which I have personally been involved on several occasions. Table 1 illustrates – in highly simplified form – the sort of analysis and lesson plan that were required. After careful consideration of the various steps and tasks involved in crop market administration, it became evident that a number of the tasks involved (just like those that first motivated invention and use of written script in the ancient Near East) required only the ability to read and write numbers and so record transactions. People who acquired this skill could therefore already serve as recorders of market transactions, weighers of the product, payers of remittances and/or “controllers” of these operations. Right away

---

<sup>2</sup> In fact, the competencies required may appear difficult or indissociably complex in part because those who presently exercise them have an interest in presenting them that way and maintaining the privileges associated with their own exercise of them.

Design requirements for successful implementation						
Level	JOB ANALYSIS		LESSON PLAN		POLICY ADJUSTMENTS	
	Technical or social function	Actual duties required	Particular KSA needed	Training entailed	Staffing adjustment	Policy changes
I	Weigher, Recorder	Read scales, record sales	Numeracy: reading, writing numbers to 1000	Level 1 numeracy (3 weeks)	Train agency staff for monitoring	Develop salary scales
II	Inventory clerk	Keep stock accounting	+ Addition, subtraction	Level 2 numeracy (6 weeks)	Same	Same
III	Assistant secretary	Keep membership lists and records	Basic literacy: read, write words	Level 1 literacy (4 weeks)	Etc.	Complete legalization of association
IV	Assistant accountant	Help keep financial accounting	Complex addition-subtraction + simple multipl., div.	Level 3 numeracy (12 weeks)	Etc.	Develop fund transfer mechanism
V	Executive staff	Level 3 reading-writing	Establish, read minutes and correspond.	Level 2-3 literacy (8-12 weeks)	Etc.	Same

Table 1: Schematic presentation of alternation between learning and application

this gave them a real sense of accomplishment and at the same time helped resolve one of the enduring problems of local crop markets – corruption by weighers and scribes who had no link to the local community and couldn’t be controlled by them.

22. The next level up (in this scheme, which was by no means the only conceivable one) entailed people learning to handle addition and subtraction with retention or carryover of results. Equipped with this skill, learners could begin to initiate themselves to – and to understand – simple materials accounting, like the sort of forms that must be kept on intake and disbursement of products from a storeroom or warehouse. Those who went beyond to learn the manipulation of larger numbers, the meaning of decimals, the execution of operations in series and the basics, at least, of multiplication and division could begin handling cash accounting as well as materials inventory.

23. There was a similar hierarchy in the mastery of reading and writing, though it entered into play a bit further down the sequence of steps in assumption of market management responsibilities. It stretched then from the ability to draw up and decipher lists of coop members or material goods

onward to the capacity to prepare and receive simple written communications and further forward to preparation and analysis of reports and complex correspondence. At each level, new responsibilities could be assumed. The mechanism is quite simplistically portrayed in Table 1 above.

24. Overall these steps constitute an example of the simple alternation between learning and application that can be built into local assumption of development responsibility in a particular sector of development and into the realization of increasing degrees of autonomy – or, more accurately and better yet, into accomplishment of higher degrees of *complementarity* between what local actors can do and the support required from outside institutions; and so potentially improved performance all around. This same basic process is applicable and has been applied *mutatis mutandis* – that is, with appropriate modifications for each domain and context – to local assumption of responsibility in a whole range of development sectors, from natural resource management to public health administration and from agricultural extension to local governance and the extension of primary schooling itself. In each case, those responsible have had to start by analyzing the different component tasks involved in execution of the functions in question and then organize them into some sort of hierarchy of difficulty, reformulate them as a lesson plan, add the required instructional support methodology and personnel, implement the strategy and simultaneously ensure the parallel changes in policy required to make local assumption of responsibility possible.

25. Table 1 recapitulates this process and its various components in simplified graphic form. The vertical dimension represents the progressive level of difficulty of the technical functions to be assumed, whereas the horizontal dimension represents the steps in strategy design required, from analysis of the functions in question on to confection of the lesson plan and provision for the parallel policy adjustments that will be needed. The content of the cells is a bit fanciful and meant purely as an illustration but it should make clear the assertion above that a similar strategy could be applied to many different kinds of development functions.

### **3.2. THE ROLE OF BROADER LITERACY IN ACCOUNTABILITY**

26. The second principle is, in effect, a democratic one and concerns the role of broadening literacy in stakeholder control and organizational accountability. The scenario above contains at least one potential danger frequently experienced in the field: it can become too exclusively “technicist” and lend itself therefore to takeover by elites or minorities who use the nascent enterprise to their own exclusive or preponderant benefit. To a considerable degree, democratic procedures -- many of them already inherent in African culture -- provide the antidote, but an antidote that only begins to work as broader numbers of people gain literate competence.

27. For a local enterprise or community venture to be democratically governed, it is not enough that the requisite number of people gain the competence necessary to assume its various functions. If they are the only ones to possess such competence, a situation has been created that lends itself, like a Skinnerian box, to abuse of power, malpractice and the risk of embezzlement. At least two other things are necessary:

a set of people -- rather like “understudies” in the theatre or critical “bench players” in a sport – having nearly the same levels of competence who are able to take over functions in case of incapacitation of the existing staff or problems of conduct that might lead to their removal – plus the members of the “board of directors” or governing council of the organization, who must arguably be at a similar level in order to exercise their functions; and

a body of stakeholders or members who (or a representative group of whom) are sufficiently knowledgeable and skilled to “audit” the work of staff and verify that it is on the up-and-up.

28. These three tiers are schematically portrayed in Figure 1 below. Note that these tiers are here organized by type of technical skill entailed to carry out the different functions, not by their relative power in the organization, from which point of view the governing board would presumably

be on top. The level needed to exercise this “stakeholder” control is not the same as that needed to exercise the function on a daily basis. In Hausa, the expression for saying one knows enough of the

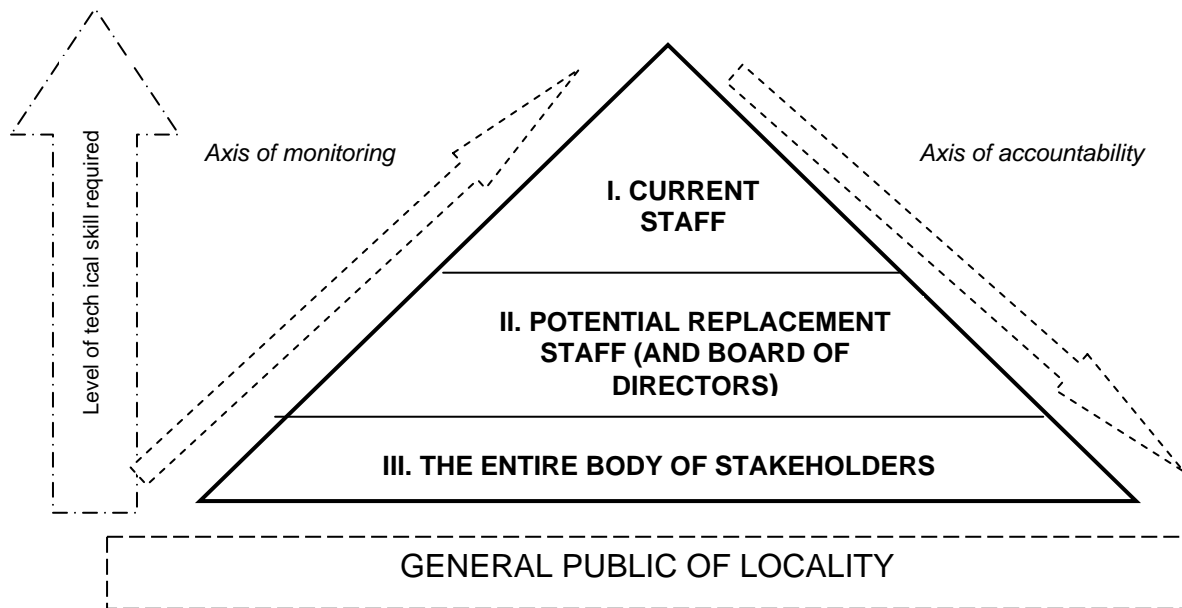


Figure 1: Levels of technical capacity required in a democratic organization

fundamentals of language to keep from getting tricked or bilked is, quite expressively, “At least they can’t sell me without my knowing it!”<sup>3</sup> So also this basic “civic” level of competence in nascent local enterprises and services is nonetheless an essential ingredient in the mix – and a motivation for broader acquisition of literate skills within the community.

29. In Table 2, then, this dynamic of progressive broadening of participation and requisite knowledge is added to the scheme already presented in Table 1, which pictured the pedagogical and organizational consequences of progressive technical assumption of new functions at the local level. To the grid of learning and application presented in Table 1, essentially vertical, is added a horizontal dimension that specifies the different groups of organizational or community members who might attain levels of competence allowing them either to replace given local staff in their functions or, more generally, to perform monitoring and accountability verification functions. The detail is obviously sketchy and the utility of the scheme lies more in the general strategy depicted: a progressive broadening of the base of competence in the community or organization in order to ensure its democratic operation. But the scheme also graphically represents how the narrow technical mastery challenges of local assumption of responsibility can – and must – be translated into broader democratic ones that provide an impetus for increasingly widespread literacy and technical training. Add to this the possibility of multiple such organizations taking form in any geographic area and the possibilities for widespread learning become even more evident.

### 3.3. THE IMPORTANCE OF “MULTIPLE CAPITALIZATION”

30. The final principle is, at least partly, a financial one and concerns the importance of a variety of kinds of resource accumulation. The strategy sketched above for agricultural markets obviously combines two interwoven types of investment or capitalization: financial and intellectual. It is in fact the rising level (and the increasing spread) of new knowledge and skill in the community or organization that makes it possible for the group to assume new functions, which should in turn procure increased returns of various types to it. Part of these will serve to maintain the personnel that

<sup>3</sup> *Ba su iya saida ni, ban sani ba!*

**Axis of progressive democratization**

**Axis of increasing technical competence**

Level of responsibility assumed	Actual technical functions	Requisite knowledge and skill	Training needed	Social groups or categories of persons			
				A	B	C	D
I							
II							
III							
IV							
V							

*Table 2: Double axis of associational development*

has exercised the functions and to cover the operating expenses of the operation, but part should as well be invested in increasing the underlying capital of which the community or organization disposes. In this manner, accumulation of “human capital” – if one wishes to use that term – and accumulation of financial capital progress in rough tandem

31. But in fact the process of “capitalization” that these activities can and must trigger has more dimensions than just funds and skills, and representing things in that manner risks oversimplifying the process and missing some of what is necessarily transpiring. *Three other critical and related types of accumulation* could be named, though the list is obviously arbitrary and might be differently detailed by parties with different perspectives:

*Physical capitalization*, which signifies development and conservation of both the built and natural environment: buildings and facilities, of course; but also the quality of the natural environment and the related natural resource base.

*Social and institutional capitalization*, or the formation of networks of affiliation, reciprocal obligations and communication – and the institutionalization of certain among these into legally guaranteed form. For years now, both academics and development practitioners have put increasing emphasis on the importance of “social capital” in the development process. These networks and relationships make it possible both (a) to mobilize energy and support when those are needed to develop new functions or to strengthen an organization’s financial and political position and (b) to insure the group against various kinds of mishaps or catastrophes by holding in reserve a set of allegiances

that can serve to bail it out when necessary or restore its operations when those are compromised.

*Deep cultural capitalization:* Less recognized but no less important is another type of accumulation – the development of cultural meanings around the new activity, its modification to reflect them and its appropriation as a part of local culture.

32. All five of these forms of “accumulation” can be seen as closely interwoven and interdependent aspects of the same reality. In fact, organizational “audits” might well be carried out on the entire set, because neglect of one or another in the assessment may make it seem to appear that resources have disappeared with no counterbalancing credit or asset appreciation, whereas they may, in fact, have served in important ways to augment the physical, social or cultural “capital” of the organization. The five dimensions are graphically – and rather fancifully -- represented in Figure 2. Whatever its literal value, a scheme (and a reasoning) like this illustrate how closely learning activities must be woven into the developing competence and capital endowment of local organizations.



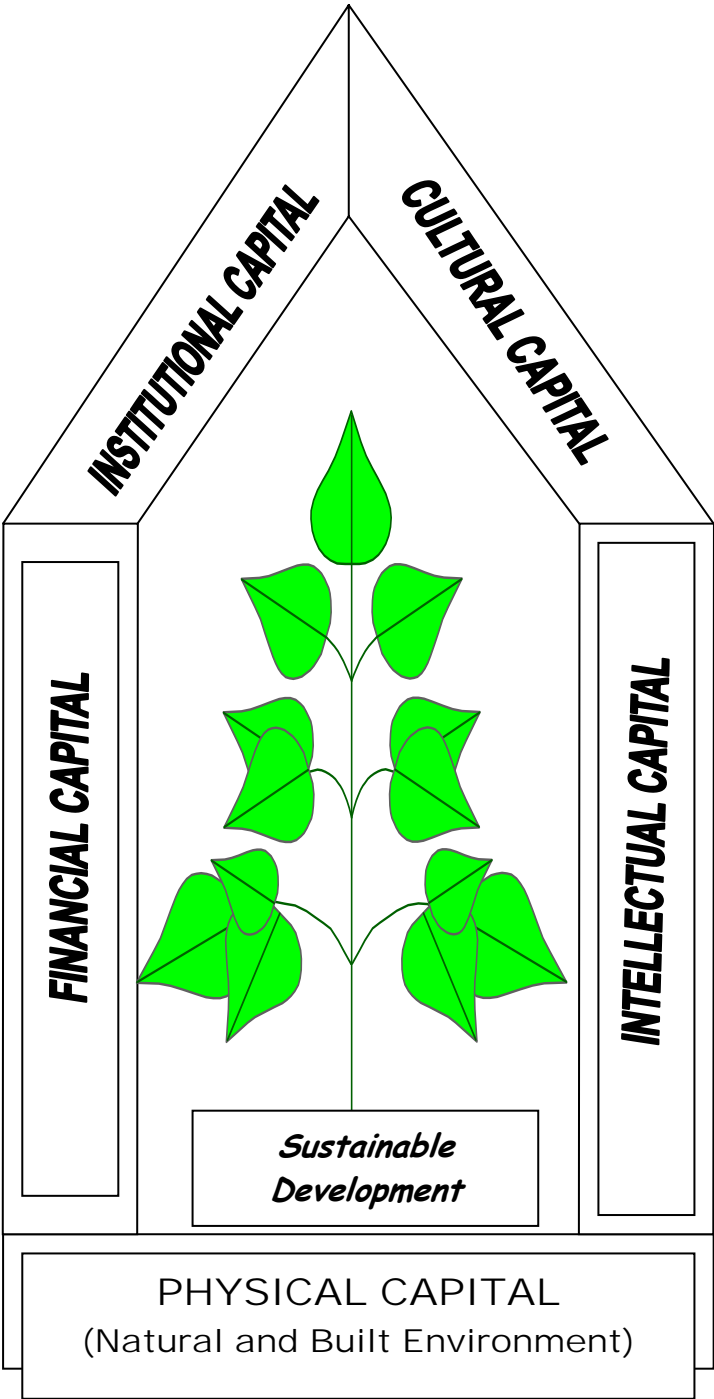


Figure 2: Graphical representation of "fivefold capitalization"

## 4. TWO HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

33. We turn now to two documents that present the fruit of some previous experience with these exact same topics and may therefore add to the understandings and new perceptual tools that we are trying to develop.

34. The first is an excerpt from the fourth part of a preparatory study carried out for the World Bank as the lead-in to what was anticipated to be a re-evaluation of Bank policy in adult education and of the potentials for its better articulation with local capacity building needs. The document presents the fruit of literature review and consultation with partner agencies regarding the conditions and consequence of local capacity building across development sectors, conducted in 2002 and 2003. Unfortunately, the Bank did not choose at that time to follow up on the initiative.

35. The second is a substantial excerpt of the Executive Summary of the PADLOS-Education Study, carried out between 1995 and 1997 under the aegis of the Club du Sahel (OECD) and the CILSS. It was devoted to determining how the leadership (and followership) of particularly successful local (and predominantly rural) organizations and enterprises in five West African countries had acquired the skills and knowledge they needed in order to assume new development functions. It was billed as research on decentralization from the other end up – not so much the factors governing the results of central government or ministerial efforts to delegate or devolve a part of their own responsibilities, but rather those determining the success of bottom-up initiatives. By the same token, the study offered a rare opportunity for those interested in literacy programming to see how local communities and enterprising individuals managed to acquire key elements of literacy and technical knowledge in the absence of targeted projects with these objectives.

36. Though older, the second study is based on actual fieldwork throughout Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal carried on by teams of African researchers and outside consultants at a time when the ideas of decentralization and local assumption of development responsibility were relatively new. The two studies are presented in the order of theory to practice rather than chronologically. Neither, however, was finally endorsed by the sponsoring agencies, which at the time hesitated to adopt the orientations proposed.

## 5. WORLD BANK LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING STUDY

### 5.1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

37. The terms ‘capacity’, ‘capacity building’, ‘capacity development’, ‘capacity enhancement’, etc. came into sharply increased vogue in the early 1990s among international development agencies (Schacter 2000). Much of the critique was addressed to purported failure to create at the national level of developing countries the kind of capacity that could replace foreign technical assistance, but the debate has some real relevance for the local capacity building challenge as well and will be reviewed briefly here as one starting point for the literature review.

38. The upsurge in interest, commentators suggest, was a response to the acknowledged shortcomings of development assistance (Bolger 2000; Schacter 2000). Although development assistance has resulted in successes as well as failures, the overall assessment seemed to point toward failure. According to Browne, most of the successes in technical cooperation (TC) were at the micro level while the most important failures were at the macro level:

TC has yielded very mixed results. There have been numerous micro-successes. Millions throughout the developing world have benefited from better infrastructure, health care, education, housing and improved means of productive livelihoods in agriculture and industry, as a result of projects underwritten by aid....

But the macro failure of aid has been the inability to render itself redundant. Half a century has witnessed over one million TC projects.... The most aided countries have generally remained so (Browne 2002).

Again, according to Browne:

[Though] TC has over many years successfully purveyed training and expertise across the full range of lacking skills, there has been limited impact on the ability of countries to sustainably manage their own development processes, and thus enable them to become more independent of aid (Browne 2002: 1).

39. In a sense, the concern with capacity was nothing new. From the 1960s on, technical assistance had been justified as a temporary expedient, pending replacement by competent technicians from the country in question – and overseas scholarships and training programs for young people from developing areas were presented and funded as a means for endowing their countries of origin with the technical expertise required to take over the reins of their own economies, educational and health systems and so forth (e.g. Anderson 1965, 1967).

40. But the 1990s saw a series of 30-year reviews of the success of this venture and most of them concluded that technical assistance had failed to lead to, or be replaced by, sustainable capacity for development in the majority of the developing countries (e.g. Berg et al., 1993; OECD 1996). The following years were thus marked by attempts to find out the causes of this failure and the search for alternative ways of doing development assistance. Among the international development agencies, UNDP, in particular, has been at the forefront of these efforts. UNDP published in 1993 one of the first comprehensive analyses of the function and dysfunction of technical cooperation (Berg and UNDP 1993). Though focused on Africa, this study had general implications for development assistance. In May 2001, UNDP launched an initiative known as ‘Rethinking Technical Cooperation for Capacity Development,’ which was a multidimensional review of the role of technical cooperation in capacity development.

41. Three books have been published as part of this initiative ((Fukuda-Parr, Lopes et al. 2002); Browne 2002; and (UNDP 2003) ) and a journal entitled *Development Policy Journal* was launched, with three issues published so far (DPJ vols.1,2,3: see (UNDP 2000; UNDP 2002; UNDP 2003). According to Lavergne (Lavergne 2003), another catalyst in increasing understanding of the importance of capacity development in development cooperation has been OECD’s publication (OECD/DAC 1996). Its influence has been felt especially at the Canadian International Development

Agency (CIDA). Some of the results to date of this inquiry are summarized more extensively in Annex A (Historical Development and Assessment of Technical Assistance).

42. As noted, these debates about capacity remain largely anchored at the national level. The focus on *local* capacity has resulted from the confluence of four other trends: decentralization, the growth of civil society and NGOs, the requirements of poverty reduction, and increased emphasis on participatory planning and local knowledge.

### **5.1.1. LOCALIZING CAPACITY: THE DECENTRALIZATION AGENDA**

43. The current decentralization movement started in the 1980s and exploded in the 1990s so that today, over 80% of developing and transition countries claim to be transferring political or administrative powers to local units of government (Ayres; Ribot 2002). Support for decentralization came from at least three different sources: neo-liberal promoters of government downsizing; critics of the ‘overcentralized’ state; and those seeking to strengthen local government following recognition that effective local government is critical to local development (Ribot 2002). Decentralization takes, in fact, many different forms, some of them already reviewed in the introduction to the section of this report on ANFE Management. According to Turner, before the current movement was launched, decentralization consisted of only two choices, both territorially based: devolution (political decentralization) or deconcentration (administrative decentralization). Then privatization was added to the framework and decentralization began to assume a multiplicity of forms, with the World Bank, for instance, recognizing at least four types: political, administrative, fiscal and market. The dominant form being promoted around the world today is devolution (Turner 2002; Smoke 2003), which signifies actual transfer of at least some significant degree of decision authority over resources and policies to local collectivities or to other representative stakeholder bodies. Proponents of decentralization claim that it procures, as advantages, improved efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and good governance (Ayres; Smoke 2003).

### **5.1.2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT**

44. Decentralization reforms may prove to be a necessary condition of good local governance, but they are not a sufficient condition. Without sufficient attention to local capacity constraints, decentralization will fail (Furtado 2001; Romeo 2002). According to Furtado, “Increased attention should be given to local government capacity development in order to convert the promises of decentralization reforms into the reality of good governance”. Furtado finds it useful to distinguish between ‘internal’ and ‘interactive’ capacities of local governments:

Internal capacity is the capacity of local authorities to carry out efficiently their core functions of public sector resources mobilization and expenditure management. Interactive capacity is the capacity of the local authorities to align themselves with a ‘new model’ of the local public sector consistent with the changing role of the state...The internal capacity for administrative performance is essential to promote participation and partnership, as the capacity for interaction with multiple actors is essential to improve the performance of the local public sector (Furtado 2001).

45. Furtado’s discussion of local government capacity relies on the UNDP framework which distinguishes three levels: individual, institutional, and systemic (UNDP 1998). The World Bank document on capacity building in Sub-Saharan Africa puts the focus on strengthening the capacity of institutions to enable them to set goals, evaluate courses of action and exercise leadership (World Bank). This document lists the following lessons:

Institutional development and capacity building should only be provided in the context of a longer range, viable strategic plan;

Capacity building is a process:

The process is as important as the product;

The implementation success of the Municipal Development Program (MDP) can be attributed to several factors: the program is demand-driven; local governments in applying to the MDP have recognized that they have a problem; thus, there is commitment to initiate action to address the problem (World Bank).

46. Decentralization, according to the paradigm referred to earlier, is expected to contribute to good governance. The UNDP's 1997 document on capacity assessment makes the following points:

Governance embraces all of the methods...that societies use to distribute power and manage resources and problems. [Good governance occurs when] public resources and problems are managed effectively, efficiently and in response to critical needs of society. Effective democratic forms of governance rely on public participation, accountability and transparency.(UNDP 1997).

47. Governance thus involves not only the state, but also the private sector and civil society, which operate independently but according to rules established by the state. Decentralization may therefore refer to initiatives to modify the governance or these other institutions as much as to change the style of public administration – and the two should be mutually reinforcing. The purpose of governance policies and activities is to promote sustainable human development in which poverty alleviation plays a prominent role (UNDP 1997).

### **5.1.3. ADMITTING NEW PLAYERS: CIVIL SOCIETY AND NGOS**

48. Diamond and others define civil society as “the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, largely self-supporting, autonomous from the state, and bound by a set of shared rules. It consists of a vast array of organizations, both formal and informal”(Quoted in (Krishna 2000). Civil society is constituted by people joining forces to achieve common goals. Its boundaries are not well delimited and change over time. As a ‘third sector’ of society, civil society operates independently of both the public and private sectors (Krishna 2000; Siri 2002). Two courses of action are available to civil society: (a) autonomous development, on its own, through independent civic action: and (b) participatory development, by working in partnership with government and the private sector. CSOs’ involvement in social investment funds and community-driven development, for example, partakes of both lines of action (Siri 2002). In either case, CSOs perform three sets of functions:

Articulating citizens’ interests and demands:

Defending citizens’ rights:

Providing goods and services directly or indirectly (Krishna 2000).

Civil society organizations thus play a central role in building up the local “tissue” of democracy.

49. The role of civil society in poverty reduction can be quite significant as well, particularly if strategies call for local ownership:

To alleviate poverty...civil society organizations must work closely with governments and the private sector to prepare the poor to participate effectively in the society and the economy. This requires providing social services and increasing the access of the poor to basic education and health services: giving the rural poor a more equitable distribution of land and agricultural resources; opening access to credit for the poor by changing criteria of creditworthiness and decentralising credit institutions: and expanding productive employment opportunities and sustainable livelihoods for those who are unemployed or underemployed...Institutions of civil society can also provide some aspects of the social safety net to protect those who are excluded temporarily or permanently from the market. Some organizations also help to increase people’s capacity to use resources in a sustainable and environmentally beneficial way (UNDP 1997).

50. To this litany might, moreover, be added the argument that civil society organizations that pursue policies of decentralization and stakeholder empowerment in their own governance will be best equipped to accomplish such objectives.

#### **5.1.4. THE REQUIREMENTS OF POVERTY REDUCTION**

51. Laderchi and colleagues observe that while there is universal agreement on the need for poverty reduction, there is little agreement on the definition of poverty. They identify at least four different approaches to the definition and measurement of poverty which they call monetary, capability, social exclusion, and participatory (Laderchi, Saith et al. 2003). The different methods, of course, have different implications for policy and for targeting. Who is poor and why they are poor are key questions (Matin and Hulme 2003). According to Sachs, the Millennium Development Goals and campaigns are attempting to reduce if not eradicate what he calls ‘absolute poverty’ which he defines as ‘poverty that kills’. In his view, “Households in absolute poverty lack the basic access to nutrition, health services, safe water and sanitation, power and transport, needed to assure a high probability of survival and reasonable health and physical productivity” (Sachs 2002). Sachs identifies two broad reasons for the persistence of poverty around the world: (1) failure of certain regions to achieve economic growth; (2) social exclusion or discrimination practiced against certain segments of a population on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, caste, or region. There are four main pathways out of poverty that are usually proposed: the basic needs strategy, the human rights strategy, the economic reform strategy, and the ecological strategy (Sachs 2002).

#### **5.1.5. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ASPECTS OF POVERTY REDUCTION**

52. According to Sachs, a sound comprehensive strategy for global poverty alleviation requires three main components:

Diagnosis

Implementation

Research and development

And it must reckon with four types of ‘pathologies’ that block economic development:

Biophysical constraints

Poor governance and weak economic institutions

Human rights constraints

Unsolved technological challenges (Sachs 2002).

53. Matin and colleagues have identified the following points as lessons learned in the struggle against poverty:

The poor are not a homogeneous group;

“Effective poverty reduction requires both a promotional component (that increases the incomes, productivity or employment prospects of poor people) and a protectional component (that reduces the vulnerability of the poor)”, i.e. it’s not a question of either or;

The agency of poor people is crucial, and “programs that seek to decree exactly what poor people are to do are likely to fail” (Matin and Hulme 2003):647.

54. Their analysis of BRAC’s [Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee] Income Generation for Vulnerable Group Development (IGVGD) Program which seeks to reach the country’s poorest people shows that it has successfully combined livelihood protection (food aid) with livelihood promotion (skills training and microfinance) to achieve impressive results.

#### **5.1.6. MICROFINANCE AND SOCIAL CAPITAL**

55. Microfinance institutions (MFIs) are financial institutions characterized by their commitment to assisting poor households and small enterprises in gaining access to credit and other financial services. Their clientele faces severe barriers, including high operational costs and high

risks, in accessing financial resources from conventional financial institutions. MFIs have to be innovative to overcome the barriers facing their clientele. The group-lending model is one of their most successful techniques. It relies on the peer guarantee mechanism, which is based on shared liability and social pressure, to serve as a substitute for the collateral that the group members lack. MFIs, thus, build social capital. Most MFIs seem to be connected to NGOs (Carroll and Asian Development Bank. Office of Environment and Social Development. 2000; Hardy and Prokopenko 2002).

### 5.1.7. EMPOWERMENT, PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AND LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

56. These three related topics, which have become a virtual litany of local development in recent years, arguably constitute a good part of the “technique” of reinforcing civil society and admitting new players to decision-making roles in development. We review key notions and applications briefly below.

57. **Empowerment**, explored in some detail in two recent World Bank publications (Narayan 2002; World Bank 2002), is a term that has begun to mean all things to all people. The World Bank document just referred to introduces the topic with the following comments:

The term empowerment has different meanings in different socio-cultural and political contexts, and does not translate easily into all languages.... Empowerment is of intrinsic value; it also has instrumental value. Empowerment is relevant at the individual and collective level, and can be economic, social, or political. The term can be used to characterize relations within households or between poor people and other actors at the global level.... A review of definitions of empowerment reveals both diversity and commonality. Most definitions focus on issues of gaining power and control over decisions and resources that determine the quality of one’s life. Most also take into account structural inequalities that affect entire social groups rather than focus only on individual characteristics (World Bank 2002):10.

58. The same document’s approach to empowerment starts with the assumption that the common elements that underlie poor people’s exclusion are voicelessness and powerlessness which render the poor “unable to influence or negotiate better terms for themselves with traders, financiers, governments, and civil society” (World Bank 2002):10. From this it derives the following definition of empowerment:

Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives (World Bank 2002):vi.

59. Successful empowerment strategies—whether initiated by the state, the private sector, civil society, or by the poor themselves have four elements in common (World Bank 2002):14-18):

- access to information
- inclusion/participation
- accountability
- local organizational capacity

According to this document, empowerment enhances development effectiveness through its impacts on good governance, pro-poor growth, and project-level outcomes (World Bank 2002):1-7).

60. **Participation**, likewise, is a “ ‘portmanteau concept’ which different actors define according to their values, interests, and analytical frameworks” (Finger-Stich and Finger 2003):xi). And consequently, “The lack of a common understanding or definition of the term ‘participation’ meant that a whole variety of practices could be carried out and legitimated under its label” (Cornwall and Gaventa 2001):3). Despite its recent rise to prominence, the concept of participation is not a new one.

61. The following summary follows the outline of the INTRAC/UNDP (1997) document. According to this document, in the 1950s and 1960s participation went under the name of ‘community development’:

The style was quite generalized and the community development worker was often a government official working as the interface between the outside forces of modernization and the natural conservatism and suspicion of rural communities. Control was usually exercised externally and communities were seen as contributing to and supporting the national development agenda and not necessarily as being instrumental in determining its content or direction (INTRAC/UNDP 1997).

62. A shift occurred during the 1970s and 1980s. ‘Participatory development’—influenced by Paulo Freire’s and others’ explanations of the causes of poverty, which emphasized their exclusion and marginalization from broader societal involvement—came into prominence.

63. The 1990s was the decade in which interest in participation skyrocketed and participation moved from the margins to the mainstream of development practice where it is currently positioned. Two main approaches to the promotion of participation have been identified in current practice by several authors (INTRAC/UNDP 1997; Cornwall and Gaventa 2001; Siri 2002; Cornwall nda). The INTRAC/UNDP document identifies them, alternatively, as (1) participation as a means/participation in development, and (2) participation as an end/participatory development. Cornwall calls them ‘beneficiary participation’ and ‘citizen participation’.

64. INTRAC/UNDP identifies the following as key principles of participatory development:

The primacy of the people

People’s knowledge and skills must be seen as a positive contribution to the project

The empowerment of women

Autonomy as opposed to control

Local actions as opposed to local responses

Flexibility in project development

65. A number of participatory methods seeking to translate these principles into actual development practice have been developed. They include (INTRAC/UNDP 1997):

Stakeholder Analysis

- Gender Analysis

Local Level Information Gathering and Planning

- Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)
- Participatory Action Research

Project/Program Planning Tools

- ZOPP and Project Cycle Management (PCM)

Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

- Roundtables
- National Selection Committees

Large Group Interventions

- Open Space
- Future Research
- Process Consultation



- Technology of Participation (TOP)

66. Finally, the outcome and effect of people's participation in the project needs to be monitored and evaluated through Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation.

67. **Local Knowledge.** Recognition of the relevance and applicability of existing local knowledge in many arenas of development and governance is indeed one of the principles of participatory development:

People's knowledge and skills must be seen as a positive contribution to the project: a project which does not seek to make use of local knowledge and skills may not only be less effective but will also be squandering a useful resource. A participatory project should seek every possibility to base its activities upon local resources, both to avoid situations of dependence on external ones and also to help develop local capabilities, which will be important if the development is to be sustained. Participation has to do with developing people's capacities and this can best be achieved by building on and strengthening their existing knowledge, expertise and skills (INTRAC/UNDP 1997).

### 5.1.8. IMPACT ON CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGIES

68. The confluence of these trends has given increased prominence to the *local* dimension of capacity building and, at the same time, has begun to bring into relief the learning requirements of that task. In fact, capacity building must be increasingly understood as a multi-level endeavor. Developing local capacity without corresponding ability of personnel at regional and national levels to oversee, protect and respect the local sphere of activity is an iffy proposition, just as is reinforcement of national-level skills and competencies with no increased capacity for initiative and accountability at the base.

69. As one consequence of the debate, in any case, the definitions of capacity and capacity development have changed and matured. There is no lack of definitions for these terms, and a number of them are examined in Annex B. One of the most widely applied definitions of capacity is the UNDP definition of 1998 cited above by Anneli Milèn of the World Health Organization who has adapted it to yield the following usable definition:

Capacity of a professional, a team, an organization or a system is an ability to perform the defined functions effectively, efficiently and sustainably and so that the functions contribute to the mission, policies and strategic objectives of the team, organization and the system. (Milèn 2001).

70. Following from the above definition of capacity, capacity development is defined by both UNDP and the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) as follows:

Capacity development is the process by which individuals, groups, organizations, institutions and societies increase their abilities to:

Perform core functions, solve problems, define and achieve objectives

Understand and deal with their development needs in a broad context and in a sustainable manner. (Quoted in Milèn 2001: 5).

71. Whatever the definition adopted, three issues stand out across the debate:

- I. *Capacity is organizational systemic as much as individual.* This means that we must think in terms of building lasting institutional and organizational capacities as well as in the more traditional ones of increasing individual mastery of certain skills and areas of knowledge. It also means that for new learning to be fully applicable at a local level for anything like the full range of actors one hopes to assist, there must be capacity at regional and national levels to create conducive conditions, provide needed support, assess outcomes and design critical tools.

- II. *The notion of “building” capacity must be tempered with a recognition that important dimensions of competence already exist.* The movement to highlight local or “indigenous” knowledge has brought attention to a more general phenomenon: namely that no community or region is entirely bereft of human and even scientific resources and the inhabitants of each area generally know much about its potentials that outside agencies and experts do not. Developing capacity is therefore as much a case of *reinforcing and mobilizing what is already there* – of building on an existing “infrastructure” of knowledge and skill -- as it is of creating something *ex nihilo*. In fact, researchers for the PADLOS-Education study (Easton et al, 1997) discovered that capacity needs of new local enterprises in rural areas were typically met in good part by ex-migrants from the community prompted to move back from urban areas by these new opportunities, and literacy or training courses established to provide staff training functioned as much to “recycle” and “reorient” people with various existing sources of capacity, initiating them to the systems to be used, as they did to train utterly new recruits.
- III. *Developing it requires an alternation of learning and application.* The strongest reinforcer of capacity and the most effective “pedagogical” approach under these circumstances is structure training as a careful alternation and dovetailing of instruction and application, using problems and materials from the various community enterprises to be run.

## 5.2. CASE EXAMPLES ACROSS SECTORS

72. Not surprisingly, in recent years local capacity building needs have arisen – or been increasingly recognized – across multiple sectors of development and governance. The following resources and summaries offer only a sampling of the situation in rural development, water and irrigation management, health, humanitarian aid, public administration and education.

### 5.2.1. RURAL DEVELOPMENT

73. Capacity building for rural development is presented through a case study from Zimbabwe in (Cusworth 1997). The approach to rural development has steadily been shifting away from projects based on predetermined ‘blueprints’ requiring predetermined quantities of resources and accounting for them systematically, and towards a more process-based approach to project planning and implementation which precludes predetermination of levels of resource allocation within specific time periods and against specific project outputs. The paper presents the process approach to promoting rural development as it has been tried on a pilot basis in Zimbabwe between 1989 and 1994.

74. **Agricultural marketing and credit cooperatives** have long been an arena where local assumption of management responsibility was encouraged and serious effort devoted to developing new competencies to meet this challenge. The Cooperative League of the United States of America continues to support a host of such projects across Africa through the intermediary of national organizations. Major accomplishments in this domain transformed the face of southern Mali (Easton 2000).

75. Farmer participation in **agricultural research** has assumed new impetus with the support of CIGAR, PRGA and the IDRC (GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit) 2001). This is an arena that has offered multiple means for identifying, articulating and respecting local knowledge (IK Notes).

76. **Natural resource management** has in recent years become one of the prime foci for local capacity development, given proponents’ awareness that projects and so ecological improvements are not sustainable unless responsibility is assumed by beneficiaries and they acquire the skills necessary to manage enterprises that are both economically and ecologically feasible. USAID is presently devoting a good deal of effort to participatory and community-governed forestry management in several African countries.

77. **Community-Driven Development** is a new emphasis within – and outside – the rural development sector per se that has its roots in the long tradition of “community development but has given major emphasis to the importance of relocating resources and decision authorities in local institutions to ensure sustainability and improved coordination of the many actors and organizations that come into play. It has received major support at the Bank in recent years and is discussed further on in this report. CDD proponents are particularly insistent and articulate in pointing out the conditions under which true capacity building can transpire (World Bank, nda, p. 5):

Agencies should not attempt to create skills in a vacuum, or as a pre-condition for empowering local governments. Local capacity cannot be created unless local governments are given resources that enable local people to experiment. If resources are provided first, capacity creation is likely to follow. The gaps in skills can be plugged as they appear...

Considerable institutional capacity already exists in local governments or communities. This capacity has been cloaked by a lack of local empowerment to use it. Any definition of capacity that focuses only on technical capacity will miss the huge potential that exists. Existing capacity is best defined as the ability to solve problems. People who have survived by trying to solve problems in difficult economic and political conditions have considerable capacity to put their experience and skills to work, once they are empowered.

78. They refer to this kind of capacity building as the critical “software of development” (p. 9) and remark that “untied matching grants to communities will help develop their inherent capacity for problem-solving through learning by doing. As they take on more responsibilities, *they will find that they need to upgrade their skills*” (p. 13, emphasis added) – a clear indication of the critical adult education connection.

## 5.2.2. WATER AND IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT

79. Capacity building experience in the water sector is presented in (Franks 1999). The water sector, which encompasses the supply of water for drinking and food production through irrigation, as well as the protection of life and infrastructure from flooding, has traditionally been dominated by engineering concerns:

The emphasis has been on the construction of physical facilities ...and in the past there has been little attention given to those concerned with operating and using the facilities. Irrigation systems, for example, were often constructed and handed over without even an operations’ manual being prepared, much less any training for the operatives who then assumed responsibility for it. The failure of such projects to deliver the level of benefits expected of them has prompted much greater attention to the people who manage and operate the systems. It is now realized that it is necessary to increase human capacity at the same time as projects are implemented.... Indeed, there are many programmes in the water sector, which are now primarily focused on developing human resources rather than physical infrastructure. (Franks 1999: 51-52, emphasis added)

80. With the accent now on capacity-building, development professionals working in the water sector held two conferences in 1991 and 1996 to develop their understanding of the concept. They came to the conclusion that capacity building is comprised of three elements: creation of an enabling environment, human resource (or individual capability) development, and institutional development. These are the same as UNDP’s ‘levels’ presented earlier. Enhancing the capability of individuals depends on effective education and training, lifelong learning and continuing professional development, using a delivery system that includes networking and twinning arrangements. The creation of an enabling policy and legislative framework is essential because no matter how competent and committed the individuals are, they need incentives and a supportive environment to carry initiatives through to completion. Finally, because these are times of rapid changes the world over, flexible, responsive, “learning organizations” are evidently those in greatest demand.

81. Interestingly, as Tumans (1989) points out, the challenges of managing water distribution and the resources it entailed and generated were arguably the stimulus for the creation of the first systems of writing in the Fertile Crescent 5000 years ago. Caldwell and others report results of a farmer participatory approach to identification and planning of water management priorities in Thailand (Caldwell, Sukchan et al.).

### 5.2.3. PUBLIC HEALTH

82. Experience in the health sector is reviewed in ((LaFond, Brown et al. 2002)). The health sector has also come to the realization that improved health outcomes depend on adequate local capacity to use resources effectively. And capacity building has come to be increasingly relied upon. Especially notable in this paper is the attempt to develop a framework for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of capacity building interventions.

83. Local capacity building has become a particularly strong motif in the campaign against HIV/AIDS in Africa and elsewhere (Africa-America Institute 2001). Kyaw (Kyaw 1999) profiles the approach and its results, for example, for villages along the Myanmar-Thailand border. Naur (Naur 2001) describes the effect of recruiting traditional healers to assist in AIDS diagnosis and treatment in Ghana and Zambia. Village paramedic training and service has formed a critical backbone of China's vast rural welfare system for years (Selden 1997).

### 5.2.4. HUMANITARIAN AID

84. Lessons from the sector of humanitarian assistance, where local capacity building has become an imperative, are outlined in the recent work edited by Smillie and published by Kumarian Press (2001), *Patronage or partnership: Local capacity building in humanitarian crises*. The War-Torn Societies Project has developed an entire methodology of participatory action research with post-conflict populations to assist them in taking control of their own circumstances, used notably in Mozambique, Rwanda and Somalia (Johannsen 2003). Local capacity development is in fact an article of commitment and regular practice now for Catholic Relief Services, which runs workshops on the topic wherever it lends assistance. (CRS 1999)

85. Another example comes from the Food Aid Management consortium (FAM), a group of NGOs involved in administering food aid in developing countries. They have developed a variety of capacity development approaches at the local level and gone beyond these initial efforts to work out systems of indicators to assess the resulting capacity of local institutions (Brown, Lafond and Macintyre, 2001).

86. Our brief review of reports and literature from humanitarian aid organizations leaves us with the impression that it is one of the sectors most attuned to the critical importance of local capacity building, probably because veterans of the field know all too well that without that kind of follow-on capacity the beneficiaries of aid are likely to find themselves once again in as dire straits as they were.

### 5.2.5. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

87. The public sector experience is discussed at length by (Hilderbrand and Grindle 1994) and a case of twinning is presented in (Olowu 2002).

88. The paper by Hilderbrand and Grindle emphasizes the importance of public sector or government capacity for the overall development of a given country. It develops "an analytic framework for assessing capacity and discusses how this framework can be used as both a diagnostic and a strategic tool for planning interventions to strengthen existing capacity". The framework is then applied in six country case studies involving Bolivia, Central African Republic, Ghana, Morocco, Sri Lanka and Tanzania.

89. The paper by Olowu takes a critical look at the potential of a twinning project involving the government of Namibia and a Dutch development institution in terms of its dual aim in capacity

building which was to produce high quality government managers and to increase the capacity for policy management training at Namibia's national university.

## 5.2.6. CIVIL SOCIETY AND NGOS AS CAPACITY BUILDERS

90. Capacity building for civil society development is the topic in (Siri 2002). According to this paper, civil society can make a significant contribution to development both autonomously, as the third sector of society, and by working in partnership with government. This underscores the importance of an 'enabling' environment for overall national development.

91. The subject of NGOs as capacity builders is elaborated on in (Carroll and Asian Development Bank. Office of Environment and Social Development. 2000). Three cases in which NGOs have successfully acted as capacity builders are presented. They are: the ADB Forestry Program in the Philippines, the People's Rural Education Movement (PREM) in Orissa, India, and PRADAN, a national NGO in India using an 'enabling strategy' in support of smaller organizations. According to Carroll, NGOs offer a great potential through which donors can implement local capacity building. However, most service delivery NGOs have neither the interest nor the skills to become capacity builders. He therefore felt the need to develop indicators for identifying NGOs that are likely to have local capacity-building abilities (Carroll/ADB 2001:106).

## 5.2.7. EDUCATION

92. Last but not least in this very selective overview of domains where issues of local capacity building have become critical is the education sector itself. The topic is, in fact, a two-edged sword there because education is concerned "on both the supply and the demand sides of the equation": i.e., both as a provider of the kind of skills and knowledge required for assumption of new responsibilities by local actors and as a system which itself is being increasingly decentralized and therefore needs ways to train its own stakeholders – notably teachers and parents – to play new and enhanced roles.

93. Educational decentralization is the order of business to greater or lesser degrees across the developing world and NGOs are often called upon to assist local communities in managing their own schools. World Education has run for several years a project in Guinea devoted to training NGOs in the skills they need to play this support role and undertake local capacity development at the community school level (World Education 2003). In its *World Development Report 2000/2001* (Chapter 5: "Expanding Poor People's Assets and Tackling Inequalities"), the World Bank itself stressed the potential and local capacity building requirements of community management of education:

Other evidence suggests that community management of education can increase efficiency... [I]t may, however, be hard to achieve. Finding qualified people can be difficult and results are uneven... Overall, experience suggests that a strong regulatory framework is needed and that training parents is vital to make local monitoring of schools effective. (p. 89)

94. The Community-Owned Primary Education project in Nepal (COPE) Project has set up over 100 community-managed primary schools in that country under UNDP funding over the last three years. And in Thailand, the Thai Education Foundation, founded in the 1970s through collaboration between the Ministry of Education and World Education, has made a specialty of helping local schools with reform, site-based managed and necessary capacity building (TEF 2003).

95. Nonformal and adult education programs are also increasingly managed at the local level. The historic tendency of NFE and literacy programs to train people, who then become the teachers and organizers of further courses, was mentioned above. As documented elsewhere in this report, in both Burkina Faso and Senegal where out-sourcing strategies have been adopted for the delivery of NFE services, a growing number of the NGOs and contractors engaged in the effort are associations formed by local literacy graduates themselves. The Cooperative League of the United States (CLUSA), which specializes in support for local agricultural marketing and production cooperatives

and other varieties of rural development enterprises, has adopted a pattern of helping its staff in the countries where it works, to create their own local training firms upon the conclusion of its projects, and many of these continue to provide instructional design and training management services for other projects and economic development activities on an ongoing basis.

### **5.3. CONSULTATION WITH DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS**

96. Contacts were made both inside the World Bank and with a few outside programs to discuss local capacity building issues – and the state of initiatives designed to address them. Three are briefly highlighted here: the Community-Driven Development program within the Bank, whose policy was characterized in preceding paragraphs; the Cooperative League of the United States of America, which has a long history of supporting development of locally managed cooperatives and enterprises in Africa; and Africare, an American NGO that has become increasingly involved in food aid supervision.

#### **5.3.1. COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT**

97. Within the Bank, the most productive and interesting encounters were with staff of the Community-Driven Development (<http://www.worldbank.org/participation/CDD.htm>) program, which is devoted to promoting programs that “treat poor people and their institutions as assets and partners in the development process.” As the keynote text on the website continues,

Experience has shown that, given clear rules of the game, access to information and appropriate support, poor men and women can effectively organize to provide goods and services that meet their immediate priorities. Not only do poor communities have greater capacity than generally recognized, they also have the most to gain from making good use of resources targeted at poverty reduction.

98. The language and the programmatic efforts of CDD – which is a cross-cutting special emphasis with correspondents in several regions of the Bank and programs involving several sectors – are very consistent with the positions taken in our concept paper and seem entirely congenial. Our contacts with their staff were likewise extremely positive and we see opportunities for much fruitful collaboration.

99. The one interesting divergent – and perhaps highly significant -- note in these initial exchanges was that most CDD material we consulted, while very strong on principles we share, made remarkably little mention of the capacity reinforcement requirements of genuine local empowerment and community-driven development. Asked about this fact, staff responded that in fact program policy stipulates that 20% of resources be set aside for capacity development and much is done in this regard. But the required services are generally furnished by local consultants and trainers directly hired by the programs or services concerned. There seems in fact to be considerable hesitation to involve resource people from ANFE programs or Ministries of Education, because it is feared that they will attempt to take over and provide little of worth, given their lack of experience with the kind of concrete (and non-educational) local development problems that are of primary concern.<sup>4</sup>

#### **5.3.2. CLUSA**

100. The most fruitful contacts made outside the Bank during the abbreviated first phase of the project involved two organizations – Africare, which is deeply engaged in local capacity building for food security reasons; and the Cooperative League of the USA (CLUSA), which has for years supported and staffed programs to develop local cooperatives and enable them to survive on their own.

---

<sup>4</sup> A parallel phenomenon seems evident in respect to the decentralization literature of the Bank. Though both the analysis and the practice of decentralization are increasingly well developed, the principal online resource from the Bank – the “Online Sourcebook on Decentralization and Local Development” at [http://www.ciesin.org/decentralization/Entryway/english\\_contents.html](http://www.ciesin.org/decentralization/Entryway/english_contents.html) makes no prominent mention of the capacity building and training requirements of decentralization.

101. CLUSA has branched out from its original work with farm cooperatives to develop an allied vocation for supporting community-based natural resource management and health systems as well as improved governance of local associations. Training and capacity building are central tenets of its approach, and, as mentioned above, CLUSA has been particularly successful in addition in helping its own in-country staff to create training and instructional design firms to serve the related needs of development projects on an ongoing basis.

### 5.3.3. AFRICARE

102. Africare currently supports a variety of agricultural and health development projects in 25 African countries and has been an active member of the Food Aid Management consortium of NGOs responsible for delivering USAID food assistance and using it as an occasion to strengthen local agricultural productive capacity. In this regard, Africare has been heavily involved in developing local capacity for agricultural marketing and improvement and in exchanging best practice in this regard within the FAM Local Capacity Building Working Group. The cutting edge in their own practice presently lies in finding ways to assess – and promote self-assessment of – the institutional capacities of local organizations so that stakeholders can identify priority training-needs and devise ways to meet them.

103. Discussions with representatives of these two organizations provided good examples of what nongovernmental organizations are doing and can do to pilot local capacity development methods and suggest optimal directions for related policy.

## 5.4. WHAT THE RESULTS TELL US: ROLES FOR ADULT AND NONFORMAL EDUCATION

104. Our brief review of the literature and our initial contacts with units actively involved in local development support, at least confirm that decentralization and local assumption of development responsibilities are central concerns nearly everywhere one turns – and that these movements do indeed create a variety of needs for mobilizing, strengthening and/or building local capacity. They constitute therefore a real source of “effective demand” for adult education and training at the local level, both in the sense of creating fields of immediate application for new knowledge, and in that of linking learning to economic and social activities with a resource base that can help, at least, to meet the recurring costs of continuing education.

105. But a number of pertinent questions may still be – and have been – asked about the relevance of this demand to Adult and Nonformal Education programs and the role that ANFE agencies can and should play in meeting local capacity building needs. Some of the principal objections to a closer affiliation that we have heard include the following:

*Technical specificity.* Local capacity development needs are generally focused on particular technical skills of concern in a given sector at a given point in time and do not necessarily give much opportunity for the broader pursuit of literacy, continuing education and life skills development that is the principal focus of ANFE programs.

*Lack of experience.* ANFE personnel are usually little versed in the technical needs of development and governance programs that form the kernel of the local capacity building agenda.

*Getting too complex.* Attention to the very diverse kinds of training required for technical capacity reasons across multiple sectors of development would entail dispersing the scarce resources of ANFE agencies both physically and psychically.

*Elitism.* Local capacity needs are most often focused on a few officers or staff of associations and do not provide much motivation or training substance for broader population groups. This kind of training can therefore be inherently elitist and largely incompatible with Education For All objectives.

*Buying into the bailout.* And one broader, even “political economic,” concern: decentralization is sometimes a case of shifting costs to local groups without giving them either the resources or the authorizations to validly exercise new functions. It can amount to little more than a bailout by central government. Local capacity building may be largely a charade under these circumstances, a support for policies of further impoverishment.

106. To our minds, these criticisms are not entirely valid, let alone fatal to the cause of better connection between ANFE offerings and local capacity building needs – but each has important elements of truth. Addressing them briefly here will provide one way of beginning to reflect on the kind of initiatives that might support better valid linkage of supply and demand.

#### **5.4.1. TECHNICAL SPECIFICITY**

107. The first remark goes to the heart of a real and important question. It is true that local capacity building needs in different sectors like agriculture, health or municipal governance typically are born from very specific gaps in technical know-how and that the training efforts conceived by the immediately responsible agencies often remain quite focused and minimal. This is not always the case: organizations like CLUSA have for years sponsored broader-gauged training for participants in their programs and we have lived through periods when rural development operations routinely funded and organized literacy programs. But the natural tendency and majority practice in technical development agencies has heretofore been to circumscribe training to their most immediate functional needs.

108. Two important facts are currently modifying this picture, however – both prompted to some extent by the requirements of decentralization. First, to the extent that local actors and their associations are expected henceforth to assume direct responsibility for operating and sustaining a broad range of development and service delivery programs, they must acquire managerial and policy competence as well as the more strictly technical skills involved in field-level operations. Managerial and policy responsibility may create broader needs for training, for information retrieval and for communication than does a subaltern technical role. In fact, we are now talking about building local organizational and institutional capacity as much as individual capacity. In addition, the more a group or an individual is expected to progress in competence and operational capacity – e.g. several successive levels rather than one slight notch upward – the more important general training becomes, because it provides the surest basis for learning substantially new skills.

109. Second, the confluence of decentralization and capacity building initiatives in several different and often overlapping sectors of development tends to underscore the common denominator elements in training, which are typically the broader and more general dimensions of knowledge and skill. Most communities where these issues arise are, at least to some degree, dealing with parallel challenges and opportunities in agriculture, in health, in natural resource management, in education and in local governance – to name a few illustratively. At some point, it makes manifestly more sense, from a cost-effectiveness point of view, to reconfigure the capacity building function as a community-located and community-governed facility meeting multiple training needs, than as a series of separate and partial programs controlled by different technical agencies or outside support groups. The point here is analogous to the one made by Community-Driven Development advocates: in the mid-term future, at least, we should think of the collectivity as the client and coordinator of development services. And this configuration lends itself to better complementarity between broad-based adult education and specific training packages.

#### **5.4.2. LACK OF EXPERIENCE**

110. It is unfortunately true that most staff in public ANFE agencies and Ministries of Education have little familiarity with the mechanisms and needs of economic and social development at the local level and so are scarcely qualified to diagnose or analyze these needs. This may be less true of NGO staff, who, typically, are involved in a greater breadth of programs in their attempts to meet local needs. (And we should remember that it is even less true of the communities that we are



attempting to serve, since all development programs are at least unofficially integrated into the same set of realities at the ground level.)

111. But two facts help once again to overcome this obstacle. The first is that the role of instructional designer and facilitator does not necessarily presuppose long experience or deep familiarity with the domain of instruction – but only a willingness to collaborate, a commitment to some shared underlying principles, and a voracious capacity for learning. In the instructional design tradition in industrialized nations, training programs are, most often, put together by a team composed of instructional designers and “subject matter experts” (SMEs) – the latter being responsible for communicating to their teammates the essential technical knowledge and performance requirements of the domain in question, and the former for shaping this iteratively and interactively into a viable curriculum and instructional strategy. Undertaking such collaboration will require of ANFE staff that they get better and more supple at instructional design, and that they learn to be “quick studies” in the various technical domains where their assistance is sought, but not that they have extensive advance experience or knowledge in that realm.

112. Second, insofar as the trends outlined above begin tipping the balance of needed training a bit more toward more general and generalizable educational components, this itself will add more weight to the ANFE personnel’s contribution to the collaboration.

### **5.4.3. GETTING TOO COMPLEX**

113. The danger of excessive dispersion, while real, is palliated by the trends and perspectives discussed above. Insofar as ANFE staff and programs serve as the “instructional design and facilitation” member of cross-sectoral teams – exercising therefore an essentially similar function across different domains – the risk of feeling scattered diminishes. And insofar as training activities begin to be concentrated in dedicated facilities, or at least programs, within each community, the locus of intervention may be single rather than plural. Moreover, there is no need to start everywhere at once. Even if local capacity building were adopted as the principal mission by an ANFE agency, it would and should attack the work of developing this vocation one sector at a time, by some locally defined set of criteria.

### **5.4.4. ELITISM**

114. Typically new technical and even managerial functions at the local level concern a limited number of people. There may be three paramedical staff per community, two or three accountants for local enterprises, a few managers – but not 300 of each. At first blush they scarcely seem, therefore, like an effective stimulus for “Education For All.” Furthermore, when positions are limited and endowed with some power or access to resources, they are allocated not only (if at least) by technical criteria but also along existing status lines. Other things being equal (which is not always the case, particularly in the presence of programs sponsored by outside donors having other criteria), these spoils go to men and to members of dominant groups. As a consequence, the effect of truly “functional” training or literacy programs can be quite elitist.

115. But the nature of risks and opportunities in this area may change as well with currents of decentralization and democratization. First, as the PADLOS-Education study demonstrated (Easton 1998), skill and knowledge needs in local associations – and especially in those with some form of democratic process – typically exceed the bare minimum dictated by current execution of technical functions. Most of these associations, or their members, have experienced the fact that confiding responsibility for collective resources in people who are the only ones with the requisite knowledge to understand such affairs is an invitation to abuse and corruption. A healthy organization must tend to the “lateral” as well as the “vertical” dimension of training – that is, ensuring that there are sufficient people, with at least a functional minimum of knowledge in the different technical and administrative areas of concern to their organization, to ensure the accountability of those in power, and to make it possible to replace them should they abuse their functions. The more the membership of the organization wishes to participate in policy decisions concerning its practices, the more substantial this demand for broader training becomes.

116. Second, as the number, the membership, the gender equity and the volume of “business” of such local organizations increases, so also does what one might call the “background” level of educational demand in the community. People in all walks of life begin to see that a certain (and rising) level of literacy, numeracy, communication skills and/or educational attainment is becoming the common currency for social and economic advancement throughout the community, and the motivation and demand for learning spreads well beyond the current incumbents in official positions.

117. How and how quickly these factors come into play depends, of course, on the particular dynamics of development in each locale – but ANFE can play a role of stimulant in that process.

#### **5.4.5. BUYING INTO THE BAILOUT**

118. Decentralization is not always or necessarily an unmixed blessing. Governments or organizations strapped for funds but responsible for service provision to their constituents can opt to “devolve” certain of these functions to lower levels without granting at the same time the resources and powers necessary to exercise them. So in many areas of rural Africa, for example, structural adjustment and budgetary austerity, let alone civil conflict, have resulted in an absolute decrease in the already low level of public services and government agency ministrations available on the ground. Tending to local capacity development in such cases -- unless it were genuine capacity to replace government, locate new resources or thrive on autarky – might be simply a way of socializing people to an untenable situation.

119. A few “truths” help to restore perspective and clarity in this regard. First, decentralization is never a question of total eclipse of central State functions, but rather a new and hopefully more productive distribution of functions among central, regional and local levels. As Etienne Le Roy pointed out in the special issue of *Politique Africaine* on the “need for a State” (1996), central functions cannot be evacuated so summarily and provide in fact the necessary guarantees for the development of local ones.

120. Next, there are no bricks without straw, so functions cannot be transferred from one level to another or assumed *de novo* on the ground if the resources and authorities necessary to exercise them have not simultaneously been conferred or assumed. Those resources may be provided for a time by exceptional sources of external support, but a new stable equilibrium between what higher levels of national society can furnish, and what local authorities can generate or allocate, must be found for the new arrangement to be sustainable.

121. It follows that certain criteria must be applied to any instance of local capacity building, and they have to do with the availability of resource flows required to exercise the new functions, and the establishment of the institutional arrangements, authorizations and regulations that “empower” and protect their performance. Assessment of these conditions must be part of the ABCs of program design in Adult and Nonformal Education.

122. We conclude that, despite the precautions that must be taken, local capacity building does offer a critical terrain for the development of Adult and Nonformal Education, though one that will demand changes in approach and the acquisition of new skills in many cases. Very much resides, however, in the way in which strategies and program designs are developed and on new means for cross-sectoral collaboration.

## 6. PADLOS-EDUCATION STUDY: BOTTOM-UP LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING

123. We turn now to the other historical document excerpted as data and source of substance for this paper on the dimensions of a literacy environment: the PADLOS-Education study. “PADLOS” is an acronym for “Projet d’appui au développement local au Sahel” or “Support Project for Local Development in the Sahel.”

124. The PADLOS-Education Study was commissioned not by an education agency but by the Club du Sahel, a division of OECD uniting donor organizations concerned with Sahelian development, and its West African counterpart organization, the CILSS (Comité inter-état de lutte contre la sécheresse au Sahel or Interstate Committee for Combating Drought in the Sahel). The CILSS and the Club du Sahel were struggling at the time with the issue of making possible greater local management of natural resource management projects, having observed that the infrastructures already put in place tended to deteriorate because the activity had not really been understood or taken over by local communities. As is often the case in organizations, the period of the study coincided with a time of new openings and broader perspectives within the two organizations, but was succeeded by a period of retrenchment and more conservative administration during which no further follow-up was given to these initiatives. They nonetheless provide some valuable insights into the topics that interest us here.

125. The text is largely devoted to conclusions of the field study. These are marked by text boxes and below each is the elaboration.

### 6.1. INTRODUCTION

126. Decentralization movements in West Africa have created major new training needs at the local level -- needs which the existing school system cannot meet on its own on its own. How do the leaders and members of new civil society organizations acquire the skills and knowledge they need to play a growing role in the management of economic development programs or to take over the local provision of social services?

127. Many elements of a lasting solution to this problem already exist “on the ground,” in the form of experiments in self-management and training initiated over the past twenty years by various state services, NGOs and community associations.

128. The main objective of the PADLOS-Education Study was to shed light on the lessons which might be drawn from such initiatives. Its results are presented in four sections:

a brief summary of our *methodology*;

an analysis of the actual *level of assumption of new responsibilities* in the field;

an analysis of the *strategies for training and new skill acquisition* actually used by local actors; and

*practical implications* of these results for efforts to build new local capacity and for reform of the related programs and policies of external actors: governments, NGOs and donors.

### 6.2. METHODOLOGY

129. On what scale and according to what criteria can the degree of real takeover in the field be evaluated? This is one domain in which all that glitters is certainly not gold. Five criteria were tentatively adopted by the research team at the outset:

- a. level of technical skill attained;
- b. degree of lateral spread of knowledge;

- c. degree of financial self-sufficiency;
- d. level of institutionalization of the activity; and
- e. degree of cultural adaptation of the activity.

130. The research was conducted by means of a series of case studies carried out in five West African countries: Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Senegal. Data were collected in more than 100 communities, associations and local businesses, forty of which were chosen for field visits and intensive studies on criteria of exemplary success. The instances of local empowerment and self-governance investigated cover the primary sector (rural production, natural resource management), the secondary sector (processing and marketing of products, small industry) and the tertiary sector (credit, health services, education, administration) of the local economy. The actual sites are detailed in Table 3 hereafter.

### 6.2.1. DESCRIPTION: DEGREE OF EFFECTIVE TAKE-OVER

*In all sectors of local development, there exist -- in increasing number -- remarkable examples of the assumption of new functions and responsibilities by grassroots actors.*

131. The results of the study show that local actors and associations in all five countries have succeeded — sometimes starting from levels of total illiteracy — in acquiring the necessary knowledge to take charge of a wide variety of operations in each of the development sectors considered. The common denominator among successful experiments in local-level assumption of development responsibility seems to lie in the close interweaving of training and the application of knowledge -- and thus in the development of practical opportunities for individuals, collectivities and associations to deploy and gain tangible benefits from their newly acquired skills.

*The majority of successful cases are actually multisectoral and follow an itinerary which begins with the management of a viable income-generating activity.*

132. Successful local groups seem to recognize, of their own accord, the need to associate income-generating projects with activities to improve supply of public goods and services. They attempt, in effect, to “box the compass”, developing strategies that incorporate activities in all three sectors of the local economy. If one element could be identified as “triggering” the need for new training and the upward spiral of self-governance, however, it would be local management of viable economic activities.

133. Yet evidence from the sites demonstrates that the self-governance effort can also begin with cultural or institutional initiatives, on the sole condition that it incorporate or soon generate possibilities of local self-financing and permit its initiators to combine primary, secondary and tertiary sector activities in a comprehensive strategy.

*The movement remains sparsely and unevenly developed, and it is subject to a number of constraints that demand attention.*

134. In spite of the dynamism of this movement for local assumption of development responsibility, such initiatives are still in their infancy and face numerous obstacles. Only half of the sites selected for the intensive phase of the survey proved actually to have made major progress in the direction of overall self-governance at the time of the study. Even in these sites, the “lateral” distribution of knowledge and functions to new strata of local society continues to pose a problem.

135. Moreover, in places where the development of training was not accompanied by new investments requiring technical and managerial capabilities, a paradoxical problem of “over-literacy” or “over-training” frequently arose. The geographical spread of the movement also remains limited, despite centers of intensive activity. And although they are often part of broader networks, local

No.	CN	Ctry	Site	Region	Sector	Gender	Scale	Context	Pop.	Religion
1	1	B	Ghana	S. central	Health	mixed	Network	semi-rural	1,200	mixed
2	2	U	Ménengou	N. central	cred-svgs	Men	Local	rural	2,400	Islam
3	3	R	Nomgana	central	natl res	Mixed	Network	semi-rural	2,200	Christian
4	4	K	Noungess	Boulg	Rur prod	Women	Network	rural	3,600	mixed
5	5		Songtaaba	capital	Art/ind	Women	Local	urban	>100,000	mixed
6	6	FASO	Tin Tua	East	information	Mixed	Regional	rural	[<1,000]	Chr.-anim.
7	7	G	NFLP	North	training	mixed	regional	N/A	N/A	mixed
8	8	H	Forikrom	W. central	natl res	men	local	small city	6,000	Chr.-anim.
9	9	A	Kambguni	Southwest	govt	men	local	rural	2,000	Islam
10	10	N	Mafe-Kum	Southeast	water	mixed	network	rural	800	Christian
11	11	A	Nwodua	North	govt	mixed	local	rural	700	Christian
12	12		AFRCED	E. central	cred-svgs	women	network	mixed	mixed	mixed
13	13	M	Bamako	capital	Art/ind	mixed	network	urban	>100,000	mixed
14	14		Bangoro	Southeast	training	mixed	network	rural	3,400	Islam
15	15	A	Centr Gest	South	trade	men	regional	small city	N/A	Islam
16	16		Dugnink	South	natl res	men	local	rural	650	Islam
17	17	L	Ntongoros	South	Art/ind	men	local	rural	2,900	Islam
18	18		Kafara	South	trade	mixed	local	rural	700	Islam
19	19	I	Kaniko	South	cred-svgs	women	local	semi-rural	2,350	Islam
20	20		Niono Col	central	processing	mixed	local	semi-rural	2,950	Islam
21	21		Seriwala	central	cred-svgs	men	local	semi-rural	3,100	Islam
22	22		Sougoula	South	trade	men	local	rural	650	Islam
23	23		Damana	S. central	processing	women	local	rural	1,550	Islam
24	24	N	Gaya	Southwest	Rur prod	men	local	small city	15,000	mixed
25	25	I	Iyo		education	mixed	local	rural	750	Islam
26	26	G	Kouré	West	Rur prod	men	local	semi-rural	1,400	Islam
27	27	E	Makalondi	West	Rur prod	men	local	rural	2,100	Islam
28	28	R	Sayé Sab	S. central	supply	men	network	rural	3,600	Islam
29	29		Sona	Northwest	Rur prod	mixed	network	semi-rural	3,200	Islam
30	30		Fandene	W. central	cred-svgs	mixed	network	semi-rural	1,500	mixed
31	31		GrandYoff	capital	Art/ind	women	local	peri-urban	>1 million	mixed
32	32	S	GY Bocar	South	Rur prod	mixed	local	rural	1,550	Islam
33	33	E	Kër Simb	W. central	processing	women	local	rural	450	Islam
34	34	N	Kër Madialé	N. central	supply	women	local	rural	900	Islam
35	35	E	Koumptent	central	Rur prod	Mixed	network	semi-rural	N/A	Islam
36	36	G	Ndiayene	Northwest	Rur prod	Men	local	rural	1,600	Islam
37	37	A	Pendaw	Northwest	cred-svgs	Mixed	local	rural	1,350	Islam
38	38	L	Saam Njay	W. central	health	Women	local	rural	450	Islam
39	39		S M Kolda	South	Rur prod	Women	local	small city	8,500	mixed
40	40		URCAD	N. central	trade	Men	network	rural	N/A	Islam

Table 3: Characteristics of sample for PADLOS-Education Study

*associations — with the exception of a few leading cases — have not secured full representation in decision-making at higher levels.*

*External support was instrumental in launching the majority of these experiments, but it only proved effective to the degree that ownership of the initiatives was later claimed and assumed by local institutions.*

136. Of the forty sites visited across the five countries surveyed, twenty were launched by external parties, eleven were principally the work of the local actors themselves, and nine were of “mixed” origin, i.e., generated by the interaction of internal and external initiatives.

137. The dominant influence of external intervention on the development of these initiatives seems to be due as much to a lack of seed capital at the local level as to any lack of motivation for local self-governance.

### 6.2.2. ANALYSIS: CONDITIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF TAKE-OVER

*The emergence of genuinely empowering local initiatives and the further development of this local governance movement hinge on a process of local capitalization along five convergent dimensions—ecological, financial, institutional, intellectual and cultural—which it is risky to dissociate from each other*

138. How does one move beyond the vague feeling that there are remarkable achievements in some places and sparse success in others? How do we evaluate the precise *degree* of assumption of responsibility in the different sites visited? And how can one make an accurate *diagnosis* of the situation – that is, identify the obstacles that such local initiative must overcome, as well as the influences that favor it?

139. Many factors come into play in the assumption of new development responsibilities at the local level. The research team decided to aggregate those observed most frequently in the course of the surveys into five categories representing five interdependent dimensions of the accumulation, reinvestment and husbanding of resources necessary to ensure the sustainability of local initiative.

- I. Physical capitalization – or enhancement of *ecological capital* and development of a *material infrastructure* to serve as a lasting basis for human activity;
- II. Financial capitalization – or accumulation of collective savings and other forms of monetizable investment;
- III. Institutional capitalization – or constitution of a social framework to define and regulate the division of labor, guarantee agreements and contracts, and create avenues for broad social amendment and ratification of these norms;
- IV. “Intellectual” and technical capitalization – or the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, and their application to tasks that they judge significant, by a growing proportion of the community;
- V. Deep cultural capitalization around the activity in question, ensuring that it is imbued with existing cultural values even while serving to renew or transform them.

140. The interdependence of these dimensions of accumulation and local self-sufficiency was confirmed many times in the course of the survey.

141. The same principles are unfortunately demonstrated in reverse by the failures of numerous projects that have emphasized one or another of these factors without to some extent associating all ingredients, or without at least consolidating links to the related functions in local society.

*The element most often missing from development initiatives is adequate training and/or literacy instruction of participants—closely linked to their progressive assumption of responsibility. Its absence imposes a very low ceiling on financial and technical self-sufficiency.*

142. Without introducing the technology of writing and effective literacy—in whatever language or script it may be, and acquired by any available type of education—training and assumption of new development functions both tend to *remain stuck at the most rudimentary level of technical skill and the most incomplete forms of participation.*

143. Each type of “capitalization” defined above requires its own style and content of training, and the need for the technology of writing arises at different stages in each domain. In the foundational area of accounting and management of collective resources, however, the upper limits on the effectiveness of oral communication appear very low among the nascent enterprises visited during the survey.

144. Though African culture is a domain of orality *par excellence*, endowed with an unequaled tradition of wisdom, palaver and recitation, all of the countries participating in the survey are also parishes of the “religions of the Book”, cultural institutions which place special emphasis on writing – and societies in which education is given high intrinsic value.

*The development of these new institutions of civil society and the local assumption of functions previously reserved for central administration pose very rapidly a democratic challenge that can only be met by progressive broadening of the supply of training.*

145. Local associations and communities that seem to be winning the wager of decentralization find themselves obliged at an early date to adopt training and literacy strategies *along two critical axes:*

first, they must provide increasingly sophisticated professional training for the people who will perform managerial and operational functions within the organization; and

second, literacy instruction and basic technical initiation must be offered to a growing proportion of the organization’s members.

Only an expanded training effort guarantees that the participants will be able to exercise democratic control over association activities and, as needed, replace leaders whose services are not deemed satisfactory.

146. This requirement of their internal organization makes such associations an important initial testing ground for African modes of democracy, and a source for lessons of experience that may subsequently be reproduced on a larger scale or gradually penetrate the social fabric.

*To succeed, local governance initiatives often seem to require and to provoke the development of new relationships among social groups—groups defined by age, gender, religion and ethnicity.*

147. In both urban and rural contexts visited, the associations and collectivities that have best succeeded in undertaking this fivefold capitalization appear to have grafted themselves onto, or been born from, existing social structures. This most frequently happens, however, in circumstances where a fundamental social challenge is widely recognized and provides impetus and blessing for a certain

degree of cultural and social innovation. Such phenomena provide a fine example of the sort of “cultural capitalization” that must be an integral part of self-sufficiency strategies.

148. Among the most significant cultural transformations spurred by genuine local capitalization is the redefinition of the roles of different groups of actors within local society—strata of age, gender, ethnicity, profession, religion etc. The need to mobilize all the skills required by a new development activity often pushes local associations to transcend barriers of age, gender and social status which previously appeared impermeable.

*Women currently represent the most dynamic element in the local governance and self-sufficiency equation, but they continue to lack the means to capitalize on their energies.*

149. The latent human resource with the greatest potential to spark the self-sufficiency of new local institutions—women—has now decidedly entered the picture. When they are able to benefit from the requisite training, women have generally shown themselves to be better managers, more trustworthy debtors, and thus more “bankable” borrowers than men. However, the participation of women in positions of responsibility remains relatively minimal in the majority of the sites visited in the course of the study. This is clearly due to a lack of the training opportunities, investment resources, and institutional frameworks that would permit them to “earn their stripes” in women’s associations with enough resources and a sufficient margin of maneuver to capitalize their efforts and win real powers of negotiation.

150. Ten women’s associations or enterprises and seventeen mixed groups were included among the forty sites of our “intensive” study, though the terms “women’s” and “mixed” only have relative value in most cases. Nevertheless, the restricted—but growing—number of activities organized and managed by women demonstrates their aptitude for these new responsibilities:

*External support is most effective when it concentrates on creating and sustaining an environment favorable to local initiative.*

151. In this domain, it appears to be more a question of removing the obstacles (economic, political, technical) up- and downstream from local capitalization efforts – obstacles to which the actors themselves rarely have access -- than of directly intervening in the field. From the outset, it is essential to lay groundwork for the financial autonomy of the activity, and to respect the dignity of the beneficiary, by providing support only upon request and against payment, even if payment is only partial in the beginning.

### **Conclusion**

If one were to draw a single general conclusion from the local governance experiences—successful, in progress, fictional and/or still-born—which were examined in this part of the study, it would be that there is obvious potential for much greater assumption of responsibility and a higher level of initiative by local communities. This potential is only realized, however, under certain conditions—summarized in the notion of “fivefold capitalization”—which depend as much or more on policy makers and sources of funding as they do on the population itself.

## **6.3. STRATEGIES FOR MOBILIZING AND DEVELOPING LOCAL CAPACITY**

152. The second series of observations in the PADLOS-Education Study concerns the strategies used by local associations, enterprises and communities to acquire or mobilize the skills required by new local governance opportunities. A summary of these observations is followed by an analysis of the dynamics of skill mobilization and capacity construction at the local level, and of the role of the different sources of training presently available “on the ground.”



### 6.3.1. DESCRIPTION: WHERE THEY LEARNED THEIR SKILLS

153. There is a surprising variety of local knowledge and skill, sometimes latent, upon which the communities and associations can call. The most successful organizations have learned to use all such means at their disposal in very eclectic fashion.

154. Associations on the road to self-sufficiency tend to develop and make use of the whole range of competencies available at the local level. There is quite a mix of types of instruction and varieties of knowledge -- both imported and indigenous -- in most of these sites, even those with little in the way of formal schooling. This latent pool of "human resources" includes graduates of nonformal education and literacy programs, school leavers and dropouts, Koranic or Bible school students, returned out-migrants, trade apprentices, extension program participants, initiates of traditional African education, and the self-taught.

155. These varied types of training are not well linked to each other. Episodic relationships and exchange mask a general lack of communication. But the constituent material needed to build new competencies manifestly exists and associations or businesses in sites where real progress has been made in local assumption of development responsibility have found ways to draw on it.

*It is most often literacy and nonformal education programs that serve to bring out this diverse and still latent human resource and to prepare it for its new responsibilities.*

156. Given the diversity of human resources available at the local level, associations seeking self-sufficiency are confronted with a considerable problem of retraining, harmonizing, and integrating the available "labor pool". The solution most frequently adopted has been to use adult literacy or nonformal education programs as a "mainstreaming" or "recycling" mechanism. In a good number of associations, literacy in the national language of the area is now a condition of candidacy for official positions, and numerous Koranic students or school dropouts attend the literacy courses to brush up on their skills and qualify for new responsibilities.

157. At the same time, as these training activities expand, enrollments are getting younger. A number of communities are beginning to transform literacy training into a form of self-schooling for children.

*Mastery of the tool of writing appears to constitute a threshold of institutional development at the local level.*

158. All Sahelian languages of wide or medium usage have by this time been transcribed and are endowed with a growing literature. Their usefulness as a means of communication and self-management in decentralization strategies must increasingly be acknowledged. Moreover, the transition between African and international languages of communication (e.g. French and English) is now much better understood and instructionally developed, opening the way to new modes of transition from one to the other.

159. The multilingualism of Africa is, from this point of view, as much a resource as it is a constraint. The achievement of literacy in these languages poses few technical problems, but their adoption by the media and administration as a means of written communication has proved much more problematic.

160. Supporters of effective decentralization and local self-governance have every reason therefore to help surmount these problems and the political reticence that underlies them. The mastery of some written system appears to constitute, in any case, an essential condition for progress in the self-sufficiency of local associations.

*The most convincing experiments in self-sufficiency and community governance result from synergy among the different elements of local capitalization and close collaboration between trainers and developers*

161. The key element of a successful local self-governance strategy lies in the close and careful coupling of training and productive investment. The fact is demonstrated by the numerous sites where unilateral interventions floundered until these two forms of capitalization were at last joined. Furthermore, it is most often training which serves to weld financial capital to an institutional base broad enough to ensure the perpetuation of the enterprise, and which provides a vehicle for cultural adaptation of the intervention model.

### 6.3.2. ANALYSIS: REINFORCEMENT & MOBILIZATION OF LOCAL CAPACITIES

162. What can we learn about the dynamics of local capacity creation and the prognosis for self-sufficiency efforts from this appraisal of efforts of the performance and results of the various parallel training “systems” in place at the local level?

*The majority of local actors concerned with the local self-governance movement—men and women—succeed in becoming literate and/or gaining the required technical knowledge without great difficulty.*

163. Observations at the forty sites strongly suggest that teaching literacy and becoming literate in one’s own language or a familiar tongue, and acquiring new knowledge on this basis, are not terribly difficult provided the application of the new knowledge is clear, and the pedagogy progressive and participatory.

164. Several factors seem to explain this fact:

The powerful motivation created by real opportunities for local assumption of responsibility;

The phonetic character of the transcription of African languages;

The great success of strategies for using new literates to staff subsequent training;

The relatively low unit cost of the programs;

The possible multi-functionality of literacy instruction;

The existing knowledge of the public and the natural phenomena of “creaming” which enter into the selection of local leaders.

165. The training necessary to support self-governance initiatives is not, of course, limited to literacy instruction—far from it. But if the “tool of writing” constitutes a threshold of effectiveness in the management of local institutions, mastery of this code is equally important as a means of magnifying the scope and the impact of training.

*Keys to the success of training programs at the local level can be summarized by three conditions: (a) careful dovetailing of training and application; (b) real employment or self-employment possibilities in prospect; and (c) a “conscientizing” but easily reproducible instructional approach.*

166. While our surveys were focused on the ins and outs of local self-governance efforts, they also provide some insight into the conditions for success of related training efforts.

*Real employments:* Training initiatives which are not at least partially linked with real outlets and real possibilities for increased capitalization have little chance of success. The challenges of generating and managing new collective resources most often trigger the need for training, constitute its most solid starting point, and furnish its most immediate field of practical application.

*Alternation between learning and application:* A good alternation between learning and application seems to be the second key to success for this type of training. “Application”

can, of course, signify many things besides the management of income-generating activities. The criterion is obviously the use or uses valued by the beneficiary group.

The big challenge, however, lies in adapting the program of instruction to the contours and requirements of the new powers or functions to be exercised, and in modeling those functions themselves into a gentle pyramid of competencies and tasks which the trainee can scale over time as he or she masters the related lessons.

*A conscientizing and reproducible pedagogy:* The element of “conscientization”, or culturally innovative and critical learning, is a key ingredient in the formula. This is the element that – in a number of sites visited – transformed training to varying degrees into a movement that revitalized and awakened the surrounding culture. But it is difficult to reproduce such approaches in a large-scale manner without a good methodology to associate beneficiaries in their conception and development.

*Coupling training and literacy to local “capitalization” efforts also ensures a higher degree of self-financing of the endeavors, and thus greater reproducibility.*

167. Successful efforts at “fivefold capitalization” seem to offer the best basis for the self-financing of training.

168. The most striking example of this phenomenon is probably found in Chad, where under conditions of a prolonged civil war and near-total incapacity of the state, communities forced to assume responsibility for their own affairs created schools and provided 28 times as many classroom places as the government over the ensuing decade.

169. But similar approaches appeared in our sample wherever training was taken over by a collectivity or association because it was considered an essential instrument of the organization’s own growth and self-governance.

*The gap between educational systems on the one hand and development services or programs, on the other, is still wide and deep. It represents one of the greatest obstacles to the promotion of “fivefold capitalization” in the field.*

170. A wide gulf continues to separate the two groups of actors who hold the key to capitalization at the local level.

Development agencies and the divisions of the aid organizations which support them recognize all too rarely their “pedagogical” vocation: that is, the possibility of breaking down their technical messages and managerial functions into “learnable” skills and ceding responsibility and resource entitlements to local actors who master them, phase by phase.

Educators, on the other hand, tend still to have little or no understanding of the stakes of socio-economic development in the zones where they work. They do not know how--or at least rarely try-- to adapt their programs to the “pedagogy” inherent in the assumption of new responsibilities by their learners.

### Conclusion

By way of concluding this section on the performance of existing local training systems, and on the basis of all the data on the experiences examined, the following (not very original) maxim might be formulated:

“It is impossible to train, educate or make literate a community or social group. One can only create the conditions under which that group becomes literate, trains, or educates itself--and then accompany the nascent initiatives by furnishing relevant support and helping address blockages downstream. But that role of facilitator and guarantor is a highly demanding one.”

## 6.4. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

171. What are the implications of the results of the PADLOS-Education study for the intervention or partnership strategies of government services, NGOs and aid agencies in the West African context?

### 6.4.1. FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

*To promote the success of local governance and self-sufficiency initiatives:*

*(a) encourage multiple capitalization;*

*(b) firmly insert training into this context; and*

*(c) conceive all planning, investment and technical diffusion programs as opportunities for learning, assumption of responsibility by beneficiaries, and staged transfer of decision-making responsibilities.*

172. The launching and management of resource-generating activities constitute the driving force of this strategy, but are not necessarily its first element, and never its only one. Capitalization can also begin with cultural renewal, or with confrontation of ecological or demographic challenges. The secret obviously lies in close interweaving of the five kinds of resource required by local actors themselves, and thus a form of outside support sensitive to these needs.

173. Whatever the order of intervention, the image of fivefold capitalization at least serves to recall the necessary strategic “ingredients” and to emphasize the importance of reciprocal *linkages*. It seems fair to say that no external investment or intervention program in local development should henceforth be conceived without incorporating a strategy of capacity building that enables the beneficiaries to take charge of the activity in appropriate and mutually-negotiated phases.

174. Learning how to develop such a joint strategy of development, training and actual assumption of responsibility constitutes the real challenge for agency and aid personnel.

*Achieve at long last a better semblance of inter-service coordination by transferring control of resource deployment to the local consumers or “clients”.*

175. Better coordination among development actors is an eternal refrain, but an objective achieved only very partially and occasionally. The movement considered here presents real possibilities for better coordination “from the grassroots”, a situation in which the beneficiaries or clients of the activity themselves demand a minimum of harmony among the interventions of external agents.

*Develop the critical “missing link” between top-down decentralization and local self-management -- by making local municipalities the turntable and rendez-vous point between the two movements.*

176. It is critically important to ensure that the two movements now under way – top-down and bottom-up -- are not at loggerheads. Local municipalities seem to constitute the critical junction between the two phenomena.

On one hand, we observe an increasingly powerful “federative” reflex among grassroots communities and associations, which seek to form networks of service provision and savings that reach beyond the local level.

On the other, the newly decentralized authorities of government administration, enterprises and NGOs sorely need to assemble a constituency that connects them with the local population.

Local municipalities furnish a site of confluence for these currents; training and literacy offer a potent means of communication and collaboration among them.

*Systematically promote in development projects and administrative operations the mastery and especially the use of the written code most accessible to local actors.*

177. This generally means African languages transcribed in Roman characters, though other alternatives exist and still others will emerge. In the present situation, it seems essential to

develop training and intervention methods that will help people gradually move to functional bilingualism or trilingualism; and

encourage an intensification of written communication in vehicular African languages, an expansion of small local media, and a greater attention to cultural production grafted onto local governance initiatives, which allow stakeholders to “have their say” in the design of these efforts.

178. The future seems sure to be multilingual, the natural state of a good proportion of humankind and a particular asset of African peoples. We must begin to think in terms of a functional trilingualism (bilingual in major centers, where many of the population will nonetheless wish to master a third code): local language, African lingua franca and international language, each having its own uses as well as shared areas of deployment.

*It isn't enough to “remember gender” in strategizing for local self-governance. Successful strategies do best to start with women and must meet their needs for seed capital and training.*

179. To judge by the numerous women’s or “mixed” associations visited during the study, initiatives on their behalf need to ensure at least three critical elements: the opportunity to come together to evaluate their situation, adequate credit, and access to training-on-demand in literacy, administration and management.

180. In the communities visited in the course of the survey, women are increasingly responsible for maintaining social stability and managing households. There can thus be no strategy to stimulate the local economy that does not involve them.

#### **6.4.2. FOR TRAINING STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS**

*Focus training on the mastery of management, the challenge of productive reinvestment of income, and the development of a process that enables the entire stakeholder population to participate in decision-making in an appropriate manner.*

181. The challenges posed by management of collective resources remain one of the great stimuli of the desire to learn and one of the principal instruments of effective self-governance. Promoting strategies of local investment “left, right and center” is therefore the basic vocation of external sources of support, a vocation which will not be soon exhausted. But *technical* instruction alone is far from a sufficient strategy for pulling it off.

182. The *democratic* challenge of institutional development consists of ensuring that the competency—and the resources—needed to manage the capitalization effort do not remain the exclusive right of an elite. To judge by the results of our surveys and discussions, this transformation poses two imperatives:

*Attending to the horizontal as well as the vertical axis in the acquisition of new skills and the distribution of functions within the organization, taking care to provide a good number of people outside the initial core of leaders with a set of skills and competencies that will at least enable them to monitor group activities and decision-making.*

Allowing the necessary time and energy to develop with the interested parties, on the basis of an updating of underlying values and traditions, *institutional forms and decision-making processes likely to guarantee the representation and encourage the expression of everyone in an appropriate manner.*

183. Finally, the effort required to give meaning to the innovations and to adapt them to the basic values of the surrounding culture or improve them by this crossbreeding is an indispensable function of any attempt at the promotion of local self-governance; and training can constitute one effective means to this end.

*Adopt empowering training methodologies that put a premium on learner responsibility for design, promote the development of increased self-confidence and offer opportunities for forging a reinforced and broadened cultural identity.*

184. There is a harmony to be respected—or created—between the objectives of greater assumption of responsibility and fuller participation assigned to these training programs and the methods used in developing and conducting them. Participation in the design and evaluation of training, and nurturance of responsibility for learning decisions, are critical approaches, though ones sometimes difficult to follow on a widespread and durable basis. The time of patented and standardized instructional methods seems largely past. Experience shows how important it is to plan for the participation of the users themselves in the development of materials and instructional strategy.

*Encourage communities to develop their own systems of training and schooling in African and (as feasible) international languages. Such educational initiatives should be based on, and closely coordinated with, prior successful activities in self-management and local capitalization.*

185. Our observations and analyses bring up some fundamental questions:

Why not try forging a better connection between the self-management initiatives increasingly underway at the local level and the strategy of “education for all” confided in primary schooling?

Why not consider—at least in the growing number of communities affected by the sort of “capitalized” activities discussed here—entrusting to the community itself the responsibility of organizing a program of primary instruction, schooling which would begin in an African language on the basis of prior literacy experience?

Why not consider schooling as an integral part of the local “human resource development system” that all communities and associations striving for self-sufficiency inevitably need and as an enterprise that is as manageable at the local level as those in other sectors that are being increasingly taken over?

186. Such an educational reform “by the grassroots” should of course be accompanied by a certain number of checks and guarantees designed to ensure the quality of work, as well as the usefulness and convertibility of the results. But is not the first step to breach the conceptual isolation surrounding the educational system and rethink it in the same framework as the new development activities in progress?

*The real challenge is working for long-term educational reforms that will lead to a better coupling of schooling with the obstacles and opportunities presented by socioeconomic decentralization.*

187. Such an ambition entails gradually accomplishing two important changes.

The first is achieving a much better *horizontal and vertical integration of the educational system*. -- fluid passage between a broad primary education rooted in African language literacy and a selective secondary and higher system using international languages; and

institution of exchange, equivalencies and transitional mechanisms between the formal and nonformal segments of the system.

The second change involves crafting a host of *new linkages between education and local development*. Among the most important are --

- better connection of training and education to local employments;
- fuller enlistment of economic and social development services, credit and savings networks, and small and medium enterprise in developing—locality by locality—the job market and possibilities for entrepreneurial initiative which will be open to graduates of different training courses; and
- greater recognition of these practical destinations and itineraries in programs of instruction.

### 6.4.3. FOR EXTERNAL SUPPORT AGENCIES

*Budgetary decentralization and supported transfer of financial responsibility should be practiced at all levels, using approaches like “performance contracting” and “management by objectives”.*

188. External actors can only effectively support a more decentralized style of development by decentralizing their own operations. Several tools may assist in achieving this end:

*Management by objectives* to give staff and field offices increased responsibility for development and implementation of strategies;

*Performance contracting* to enlist the energies of a variety of local actors in a fully accountable manner;

*Innovative ‘request-for-proposal’ procedures* to open learning and service opportunities up to new groups while at the same time providing a means to identify those most able to meet each type of need; and

*Highly developed negotiation skills* to create the basis for new alliances between government agencies and civil society and turn the page on more outmoded and autocratic administrative behaviors.

189. Approaches like these open new avenues for decentralization for they promote the emergence of new local intermediaries who can greatly amplify the impact of initiatives.

*Reinforce the capacity of state services to play the new role of facilitator, trainer, regulator and catalyst of local investment which falls to them in a more decentralized system.*

190. This role demands both more competence and more “restraint” than the hierarchical behavior of traditional administration, an observation which confirms a general rule: successful decentralization requires a state which is both technically strong and administratively circumspect.

191. At the same time, measures must be taken to *unfetter and promote* the kind of *closer collaboration between ministries and services* (and therefore among the corresponding divisions of the aid agencies as well) needed to ensure effective support of local initiatives that are always and inevitably “multidisciplinary”.

192. And the coordination of this new style of integrated development should be carried out in large part *from the bottom up* and under the direction of beneficiaries.

*Finally, strengthen the ability of aid agencies and donor organizations to play the new roles which will be theirs in the next generation of relations between West African and Northern countries: roles of facilitation, training, and support of initiatives conceived and managed at different levels of the host society.*

193. Faced with such imperatives, the question of the proper *instruments* of aid and the search for effective *strategies* begin to blend into one. Only by helping African partners to gain mastery of the instrument itself and to develop an increased understanding and finer analysis of the global context surrounding aid will donor agencies be able, in the next phase of development assistance, to ensure truly cost-effective operations.



## 7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Africa-America Institute (2001). A Sampling of African Views on U.S. and Western Policy Responses to HIV/AIDS in Africa, The Africa-America Institute. **2003**.
- Ayres, W. S. Supporting Decentralization: The Role and Experience of the World Bank.
- Berg, E. and UNDP (1993). Rethinking Technical Cooperation: Reforms for Capacity- Building in Africa, UNDP.
- Browne, S., Ed. (2002). Developing Capacity Through Technical Cooperation: Country Experiences, Earthscan Publications
- Caldwell, J. S., S. Sukchan, et al. A Farmer Participatory Approach to Development of a Research Agenda for Water Management Priorities in Nong Saeng Village, Khon Kaen Province, Thailand, Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS).
- Carroll, T. F. and Asian Development Bank. Office of Environment and Social Development. (2000). Social Capital, Local Capacity Building, and Poverty Reduction. Manila, Office of Environment and Social Development Asian Development Bank.
- Cornwall, A. (nda). Making a Difference? Gender and Participatory Development, IDS, University of Sussex. **2003**.
- Cornwall, A. and J. Gaventa (2001). From Users and Choosers to Makers and Shapers: Repositioning Participation in Social Policy. Brighton, Sussex, UK, IDS.
- Cusworth, J. (1997). Institutional Capacity Building for Rural Development: A Case Study from Zimbabwe. Towards Sustainable Development: Perspectives and Practice. F. A. Wilson. Cheltenham, UK, Edward Elgar Publishing Co.: 183-197.
- Easton, P., et al., (1998). Decentralization, Self-Governance and Local Capacity Building in the Sahel: Results of the PADLOS Education Study, Club du Sahel/OECD and CILSS.
- Finger-Stich, A. and M. Finger (2003). State versus Participation: Natural Resources Management in Europe. London/Brighton, IIDE/IDS.
- Franks, T. (1999). "Capacity Building and Institutional Development: Reflections on Water." Public Administration and Development **19**: 51-61.
- Fukuda-Parr, S., C. Lopes, et al., Eds. (2002). Capacity Development: New Solutions to Old Problems, Earthscan
- Furtado, X. (2001). Decentralization and Capacity Development. Understanding the Links and the Implications, CIDA.
- GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit) (2001). Farmer Participation and Use of Local Knowledge in Breeding Barley for Specific Adaptation. Aleppo, Syria, ICARDIA ( The International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas.
- Hardy, D. C. and V. Prokopenko (2002). Microfinance Institutions and Public Policy, IMF.
- Hilderbrand, M. E. and M. S. Grindle (1994). Building Sustainable Capacity: Challenges for the Public Sector. New York, UNDP.
- INTRAC/UNDP (1997). Empowering People: A Guide to Participation. Oxford, UK, INTRAC.
- Johannsen, A. (2003). Participatory Action-Research in Post-Conflict Situations: The Example of the War-torn Societies Project.
- Krishna, A., et al. (2000). Changing Policy and Practice from Below: Community Experiences in Poverty Reduction--An Examination of Nine Case-Studies, UNDP.
- Kyaw, M. M. (1999). Local Capacity Building for Sustainable Community-Based Voluntary Program in Myanmar-Thailand Border , Golden Triangle Area. 5th International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific, Manila.
- Laderchi, C. R., R. Saith, et al. (2003). Does It Matter that We Don't Agree on the Definition of Poverty? A Comparison of Four Approaches, QEH.

- LaFond, A. K., L. Brown, et al. (2002). "Mapping Capacity in the Health Sector: A Conceptual Framework." International Journal of Health Planning and Management **17**: 3-22.
- Lavergne, R. (2003). *Approaches to Capacity Development: From Projects to Programs and Beyond*, CIDA.
- Matin, I. and D. Hulme (2003). "Programs for the Poorest: Learning from the IGVGD Program in Bangladesh." World Development **31**(3): 647-665.
- Milèn, A. (2001). *What Do We Know about Capacity Building? An Overview of Existing Knowledge and Good Practice*. Geneva, WHO.
- Narayan, D., Ed. (2002). Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: A Sourcebook. Washington, D.C., World Bank.
- Naur, M. (2001). "Indigenous Knowledge and HIV/AIDS: Ghana and Zambia." IK Notes **30**(March).
- OECD/DAC (1996). *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Cooperation*, OECD/DAC.
- Olowu, D. (2002). "Capacity Building for Policy Management through Twinning: Lessons from a Dutch-Namibian Case." Public Administration and Development **22**: 275-288.
- Oxenham, J., A. H. Diallo, et al. (2002). *Skills and Literacy Training for Better Livelihoods: A Review of Approaches and Experiences*. Washington, D.C., World Bank.
- Ribot, J. C. (2002). *African Decentralization: Local Actors, Powers and Accountability*, UNRISD (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development) and IDRC (International Development Research Centre--Canada).
- Romeo, L. G. (2002). *The Road from Decentralization to Poverty Reduction and the Role of External Assistance*.
- Sachs, J. D. (2002). *Addressing Absolute Poverty*.
- Schacter, M. (2000). *'Capacity Building': A New Way of Doing Business for Development Assistance Organizations*. Ottawa, Canada, Institute on Governance.
- Selden, M. (1997). "China's Rural Welfare Systems: Crisis and Transformation." Hong Kong Journal of Social Sciences **10**(Autumn).
- Siri, G. (2002). *The World Bank and Civil Society Development: Exploring Two Courses of Action for Capacity Building*. Washington, D.C., World Bank.
- Smoke, P. (2003). "Decentralization in Africa: Goals, Dimensions, Myths and Challenges." Public Administration and Development **23**: 7-16.
- Turner, M. (2002). "Whatever Happened to Deconcentration? Recent Initiatives in Cambodia." Public Administration and Development **22**: 353-364.
- UNDP (1997). *Reconceptualizing Governance*, UNDP.
- UNDP (1998). *Capacity Assessment and Development: In a Systems and Strategic Management Context*. New York, UNDP.
- UNDP (2000). "Special Issue: Capacity for Sustainable Development." Development Policy Journal **1**.
- UNDP (2002). "Special Issue: Technical Cooperation." Development Policy Journal **2**.
- UNDP (2003). "Special Issue: The Millennium Development Goals." Development Policy Journal **3**.
- World Bank *Building Capacity for Decentralization and Local Governance in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Municipal Experience*. Washington, D.C., World Bank.
- World Bank (2002). *Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: A Sourcebook*. Washington, D.C., World Bank.
- Zeba, Souleymane (1998) *Community Wildlife Management in West Africa*. Gstadt, Switzerland: World Conservation Union [www.iied.org/docs/blg/eden\\_dp9.pdf](http://www.iied.org/docs/blg/eden_dp9.pdf)