

# Promoting Capacity Building



Carole Rosenlund

## Introduction

Capacity building has been defined as the "activities which strengthen the knowledge, abilities, skills and behavior of individuals and improve institutional structures and processes such that the organization can efficiently meet its mission and goals in a sustainable way" (Wikipedia 2010, 'Capacity building').

The World Bank Africa defines capacity building as "the proven ability of key actors in a society to achieve socio-economic goals on their own. This is demonstrated through the functional presence of a combination of most of the following factors: viable institutions and respective organizations; commitment and vision of leadership; financial and material resources; skilled human resources" (World Bank 2007).

Capacity building therefore implies a long term investment in people and their organizations, and a commitment to the various processes through which they can better shape the forces that shape their lives and enable the improvement of sector competencies.

For organizations, capacity building may relate to almost any aspect of its work: improved governance, leadership, mission and strategy, administration (including human resources, financial management, and legal matters), program development and implementation, income generation, diversity, partnerships and collaboration, evaluation, advocacy and policy change, marketing, positioning, planning, etc.

For individuals, capacity building may relate to leadership development, advocacy skills, training, technical skills, organizing skills, and other areas of personal and professional development.

Capacity building is undoubtedly vital for strengthening and developing required skills and abilities. All existing staff and stakeholders must therefore be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skill to understand social, economic, legal, technical and environmental issues of their working environment. They can and should be re-trained to enhance their technical and managerial skills from which they can draw upon to sustain them through a power sector that is rapidly undergoing transformations in all aspects.

## International Centre for Hydropower

The International Centre for Hydropower, Norway (ICH) is as a capacity building center, a key partner in providing the transfer of knowledge through training programs, workshops and seminars and developing competencies for the energy sector globally. With

Norad (the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) as a major partner, ICH has been in operation since 1995 and ensures that its study programs are of the highest standard.

ICH's focus is on gathering, developing and making available knowledge on environmental and social, technological, economic and regulatory aspects of energy supply/hydropower. Knowledge transfer is necessary and courses and workshops are an effective way to transmit such knowledge.

### ICH Courses

In the effort to promote the skills of industry personnel the ICH has developed a portfolio of courses spanning more or less the whole range of issues in the planning, design and operation phases in the hydropower sector. The training program also contains distant learning courses and combined distant learning and physical gathering courses. An example of the latter is the "Condition monitoring and Maintenance Planning of Turbines" series.

These courses are offered on an annual or biannual basis, in Norway or in cooperation with a partner organization in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. ICH cooperates with its member organizations in developing countries; as an example, ICH has established cooperation with Hydro Lab in Nepal and Kafue Gorge Regional Training Centre (KGRTC) in Zambia. These centers have good infrastructure and are conveniently located in important regions with large needs for capacity building. ICH has held several workshops and training courses in cooperation with Hydro Lab and KGRTC, conducting most recently in November 2010 a Sedimentation Workshop in Nepal and Condition Monitoring and Maintenance Planning Workshop for the Francis turbines in Zambia, Africa. ICH plans to organize annual courses in Guatemala and Zambia and sedimentation workshops in Nepal in 2013 and 2015.

Through attending capacity programs with ICH, a notable increase in the skills of energy professionals from the developing countries have been observed and documented – putting them on par with well advanced international colleagues in the west.

This demonstrates that well equipped and skilled personnel are also cost and time effective to employers in that they do not have to rely on the expertise of expensive specialist from the west for services. The courses, seminars, workshops and conferences contribute greatly to the positive development of the economies of participants' countries where their own energy resources can be exploited in a sustainable manner.

It is critical to emphasize that capacity building requirements and assessments cannot be initiated or reinforced by parties outside the organization – the process should be initiated, planned for and monitored internally for a clear evaluation of the possible benefits based on the organizational needs. Successful capacity building requires sound decision making, responsible management and delivery of services and the efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation of results.

### **Capacity building**

Capacity building requires a significant and sustainable commitment; hence the development strategies and investments that should be implemented to promote and reinforce skills and knowledge cannot be viewed as one-off intervention. Continuity and sustainability are fundamental for the success of the processes and financial and human resources should be well provided for during the planning phase!

A real commitment to capacity building needs to be evident from the top down. If the top management and decision makers believe that implementing relevant and sustainable capacity building for the organizations stakeholders is vital, then the effect will trickle down to the rest of the corporation. The employee should also be part of the process of identifying their training requirements.

In order to develop an employee's potential to the utmost, they must obtain need based training at regular intervals.

### **Gender bias**

Whilst there is an effort to promote the inclusion and participation of women, there is a clear imbalance of gender equality in the energy sector, which is evidently a very male-dominated professional area. The proportion of women is still relatively small in most energy institutions and women in this industry encounter many obstacles with limited access to capacity building opportunities. ICH has learned that some women face problems in getting permission for course participation from their bosses, or a male colleague is favored over

them, or they can not be away from work or home for a long period. As with male colleagues capacity building opportunities should also include women in the sector. ICH is aware of the existing gender imbalance within the sector and working to bridge the gap and narrow this margin by encouraging women to apply and participate on the same merits as men for the programs on offer and also using women as resource persons in its activities. It is equally encouraging to see that women in developing countries are increasingly getting higher education, and gender equality is on the agenda of most countries. This boost of women's role in the energy sector in the past few years is a significant support mechanism for the recruitment of women to the industry.

Capacity building is about building an organizations capacity as well as that of its employees-indiscriminately, and investment in capacity building must be modeled to account for its impact on the individual, organizational and societal levels.

### **Training Needs**

It is crucial to set up a training requirements road-map which when achieved integrates the organization objectives. To track performance and achievement of company goals, these training records must be monitored for the results to be significant. Getting feedback on trained personnel and their performance levels is therefore paramount.

In generating a strategy for an organization's capacity building objectives, the departmental managers should also be actively involved on behalf of the organization as well as its employees. Managers should be capable of identifying their departmental training needs, assess whether these needs will bring about concrete development, and be fair in selecting without bias the eligible candidates to enroll onto a program whilst complying to the organization's policy. The mechanisms for decision making processes must likewise be speedy, allowing employees to take advantage of existing opportunities and avoid holdups in the system.

Training on both technical and supervisory levels are key for the efficient and effective management of the industry's resources.

Organizations that encourage capacity building on all levels display a real commitment to their stakeholders – and for the employees it is a clear signal that they are valued by the investment in their training needs. Choosing the right person for a training program also reinforces a culture of openness to new ideas, where people are rewarded for developing themselves. A company that invests in its employees is able to retain them within the organization.

Those employees that participate in capacity building

subsequently become equipped with the understanding, skills and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively. This is of benefit to the organization in achieving its development objectives over time. As long as people acquire the right skills, they are equipped to apply their knowledge and are furthermore empowered to think independently and to work for positive changes.

A 2001 WHO report provides this excellent summary of capacity building:

- Capacity building is a continual process of improvement within an individual, organization or institution, not an one-time event.
- It is essentially an internal process which may be enhanced or accelerated by outside assistance.
- Capacity building emphasizes the need to build on what exists, to utilize and strengthen existing capacities, than randomly starting from scratch. However in some situations, radical and extensive exchanges may be needed.
- Human-centered development strategies emphasize that besides being a means to an end, capacity building has an intrinsic value on its own in fostering job satisfaction and self-esteem.
- An essential aspect of capacity building should be to build capacity to cope with change and to inculcate more an integrated and holistic approach rather than traditional, narrowly sectoral ways of thinking in addressing problems at hand.
- Capacity building takes a long time and requires a long term commitment from all involved. Success of capacity building efforts should not be measured in terms of outputs with little attention to sustainability.

### **Attitude and resources**

To be competitive in this business, attitudes need to change and investing in personnel training is vital in facilitating increased energy production and achieving organizational objectives. Resources required for a productive and sustainable capacity building effort and implementation should therefore be understood and viewed as an investment and not an expense. More importantly, these resources should be integrated as part of the yearly operational budget of an organization.

Training develops an employee's potential to the maximum and enables them to contribute their best to the company. Acquiring new skills and knowledge boosts employee confidence, cultivates professional pride and loyalty and empowers employees to be proficient in their work environment. Investment in personnel training must not be viewed as an expense but rather as a development activity that will effect in productivity in a positive way.

The span of courses that ICH offers are usually gatherings of professionals from various organizations interacting on an international scale who bring with them a wealth of varied experiences and ideas which can be very helpful to other course participants and vice versa. Management training shows new managers that the company cares about their success, which helps to build company pride and loyalty. When managers learn new skills and knowledge, they gain confidence and comfort in their ability to succeed and are more likely to tackle problems than avoid them. Well-trained managers are better equipped to play a leadership role in successfully navigating an organization through the challenges of constant change.

Training should be well balanced for all stakeholders in the organization – this includes both management and junior employees. Provision of training opportunities is a significant incentive in retention of skilled and capable personnel and Organizations with better trained staff tend to be more cost effective, perform better and encounter fewer problems in all aspects. Wherever capacity building is limited, development is almost certainly constrained.

Successful capacity building fosters a positive attitude among the employers and employees, promotes better accountability and responsibility in employees, creates an environment for initiative by linking performance with recognition and reward, eliminates the “ Blame everything on management” syndrome and better still empowers employees to cope effectively with the changing scenario. and tackles the issue of ageing of skilled employees with no fresh recruitment.

### **Conclusion**

It has been, is and will continue to be important for the International Centre for Hydropower (ICH) to actively promote capacity building for the energy sector. Increased cooperation with partner institutions as well as the human resource departments of these energy organizations is a reinforcing element in ICH's endeavor to promote capacity building and encourage the increase and participation of women on the course and other events for the industry.

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*Carole Rosenlund has a degree in Business Management from Birmingham, UK, and is currently taking her Masters in Project Management at Norgest Teknisk-Naturvitenskapelige Universitet (NTNU) in Trondheim, Norway. She is currently working as Project Manager of the International Centre for Hydropower, Trondheim. Carole is responsible for ICH activities in Africa, e-learning systems, the Turbines maintenance planning course series, and ICH conferences.  
Corresponding address: Carole.Rosenlund@sintef.no*

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Policy Makers and Practitioners, Location:

Norwich, UK. More info: E-mail: [devco.train@uea.ac.uk](mailto:devco.train@uea.ac.uk), Website: <http://www.uea.ac.uk/dev/co/prodev>

**29 May -3 June 2011**, 79th Annual Meeting of ICOLD, Location: Lucerne, Switzerland, Website: <http://www.swissdams.ch>; Email: [swissdams@stucky.ch](mailto:swissdams@stucky.ch)

**02-05 May 2011**, 3rd International Multidisciplinary Conference on Hydrology and Ecology: Ecosystems, Groundwater and Surface Water - Pressures and Options. Location: Vienna, Austria. E-mail: [hydroeco2011@interconvention.at](mailto:hydroeco2011@interconvention.at), Website: <http://web.natur.cuni.cz/hydroeco2011/>

**16-20 May 2011**, 24th ICID European Regional Conference: "Integrated Water Management for Multiple Land Use in Flat Coastal Areas" Location: Groningen the Netherlands. More info: Email: [bert.toussaint@rws.nl](mailto:bert.toussaint@rws.nl) and [pol.hakstege@rws.nl](mailto:pol.hakstege@rws.nl), Website: <http://www.nethcid.nl>

**23-25 May 2011**, Water Resources Management 2011, Location: Riverside, California, USA. More info: Website: <http://www.wessex.ac.uk/11-conferences/waterresourcesmanagement-2011.html>

**23-28 May 2011**, Dam Safety Inspection, Location: Trondheim, Norway, More Info: [www.ich.no](http://www.ich.no) ; Application deadline: 5 March 2011

**25-27 May 2011**, River Basin Management 2011, Location: Riverside, California, United States. More info: Website: <http://www.wessex.ac.uk/11-conferences/riverbasinmanagement-2011.html>

**15-18 June 2011**, II Optimization of Constructions Methods of CFRDs, Location: Yichang Three Gorges, China. More info: Website: <http://hydrou.com>; Email: [hydrou@hydrou.com](mailto:hydrou@hydrou.com)

**26 June-01 July 2011**, 33rd Hydrology and Water

Resource Symposium 10th Conference on Hydraulics in Water Engineering, Location: Brisbane, Australia. More info: E-mail: [info@iahr2011.org](mailto:info@iahr2011.org), Website: <http://www.iahr2011.org/>

**4 - 8 July 2011**, Singapore International Water Week, Sustainable Water Solutions for a Changing Urban Environment, Location: Suntec Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre, More info: Contact: <http://www.iwmi.cgiar.org/#>

**04-22 July 2011**, Water Transport and Distribution II, Location: UNESCO-IHE Delft, The Netherlands. Contact: [n.trifunovic@unesco-ihe.org](mailto:n.trifunovic@unesco-ihe.org)

**6-8 July 2011** - 35th WEDC International Conferences, Location: Loughborough University, UK. More info: [www.wedcconference.co.uk/](http://www.wedcconference.co.uk/)

**25 September 2011**, Seminar on Operation and Maintenance of CFRDs, Venue: Yichang Three Gorges, China, More info: Website: <http://hydrou.com>; Email: [hydrou@hydrou.com](mailto:hydrou@hydrou.com)

**25-29 September 2011**, XIVth IWRA World Water Congress, Location: Porto de Galinhas/ P.E, Brazil. More info: E-mail: [info@worldwatercongress.com](mailto:info@worldwatercongress.com), Website: <http://www.worldwatercongress.com/en/>

**25-29 Sep 2011**, 6th Dubrovnik Conference on Sustainable Development of Energy, Water and Environment Systems, Venue: Dubrovnik, Croatia. More info: Contact Persons: Prof. Dr. Zvonimir Guzovic Category: Global; <http://www.dubrovnik2011.sdewes.org/>

**27-29 September 2011** 15th International Conference on Flood Management (ICFM5), Tsukuba-Japan; <http://www.ifi-home.info/icfm-icharm/icfm5.html>

**23 -26 October 2011**, XXVIII National Seminar on Large Dams, Location: Brazil. More info: Website: <http://www.cbdb.org.br>