



Building the know-how (Capacity building)

Background and context

Many development projects are less effective than they could be because they do not make adequate provision in time and resources for capacity building: “growing people”, managing them, and developing their skills fully for planning, implementing and assessing the work. Such projects may have difficulty in producing regular and transparent narrative and financial reports, which generate essential management information. There may be staff with good will and motivation, but insufficient technical project management skills. These issues are frequently overlooked or shortcut in the haste to “get on with the project” and the idea that “learning by doing” is enough. But they are neglected at the peril of the project, as people and money management problems have the tendency to take over.

The TICW project has managed to avoid most of the above in its five countries of operation. Not only was the ground work carefully conducted (two years of project preparation by the sub-regional office), but the country projects were set up with capacity building at national, provincial and community levels as one of the major components (together with awareness raising on the trafficking issue and direct assistance in mainly community based income generating projects). A focus on capacity building was especially important as the issue of child and women trafficking is a sensitive one, which needs confident and competent handling by all those involved.

At the start of the project in each country, sound structures for governance were established. Well-qualified and experienced National Project Coordinators (NPCs) were appointed competitively as the chief executives and overall managers of the country projects. National Steering Committees on child labour and trafficking were set up in Lao PDR and Viet Nam where these did not exist prior to the project¹, and Provincial Steering Committees were set up in all provinces selected for direct assistance in all five countries. These committees consist of well-placed representatives of key government departments, Workers & Employers organizations, and NGOs. Their role is to discuss policy issues, screen and endorse project proposals, and monitor implementation. NPCs set up their national offices, hired appropriate staff, and trained key stakeholders in the use of relevant management tools. They then developed activity plans and initiatives in consultation with the steering committees, and identified partners for implementation – both government and non-government agencies.

¹ The project capitalized on existing National Steering Committees on child labour and trafficking in Cambodia and Thailand.

Definition and main capacity building tools

Capacity building is mainly about people development and has involved the following:

- Development of *materials for training*, including the inputs of stakeholders to ensure relevance and focus
- Strengthening of the *staff of partner agencies* through skills development, backstopping and training
- Strengthening *policy frameworks* (national legislation), implementation mechanisms and policies (including national plans)
- Strengthening of *structures* for policy implementation – including co-ordination mechanisms, and division of roles and responsibilities

In the TICW project, the intention of all capacity building is people better skilled and equipped to make a contribution towards relevant and effective activities in favour of vulnerable people at risk of trafficking.

As capacity building has been one of the three main pillars of the TICW project, it has had many and varied forms, some common to all five country projects, others tailored to specific needs. There has been an important schedule of project management training which started at the regional level through training the NPCs and the staff of selected implementation partners, as well as some members of the steering committees. This has included a wide range of areas, from the use of the comprehensive Project Management Guidelines Manual (known as MAMA), Objective Oriented Project Planning (OOPP), and Technical Intervention Area papers (TIAs), to a more recent set of tools for participatory monitoring. Within country projects, capacity building, including technical training, has been provided based on practical needs. Tools for the various training sessions were developed with inputs from stakeholders at various levels and as far as possible built on existing materials.

The MAMA is a heavy reference tome – a loose-leaf file of some 200 pages. It contains guidelines on how to do everything regarding the management and development of the TICW project, from organising stakeholder meetings to conducting rapid assessments on the worst forms of child labour, identifying suitable implementation partners, and conducting participatory planning exercises. It includes user-friendly examples or models of each report or format or contract. It also describes practical regulations and procedures, as well as the financial rules. It contains important reference information about ILO conventions and the current situation of trafficking, as well as general advice on cross-cutting issues such as gender and inter-agency collaboration. In a word, it is the best friend of the NPC and her/his staff. The MAMA is a living reference document that is updated occasionally based on the realities on the ground and identified experiences and lessons learned.



A number of detailed Technical Intervention Area papers (TIAs) have been (and are being) developed to assist project managers and partners in developing various technical aspects of their country projects in order to combat trafficking in children and women. These concern both project process and non-process intervention areas. Process areas are about approaches and include networking and coordination, child-centred action research, participatory planning/project design (OOPP), participatory monitoring & learning, and participatory facilitation techniques. Non-process areas are more technical and factual, and include legal labour migration and labour markets, rural skills training, micro-finance interventions, non-formal education, psycho-social counseling and trauma treatment, and gender equality promotion.

Under each of the technical intervention areas, sets of tools and technical guidelines have been developed on 'what (not) to do', which include 'case studies', 'lessons learnt' and 'good practices', and they provide literature references for practical 'how to do' materials. Each TIA has come out in a separate publication (or is under development). Some have been widely used, including by those outside of the TICW project.

Implementation

The way capacity building has been implemented has varied from country to country, but all have provided training using the materials mentioned above, among others.

In *Yunnan province* of China, capacity building interventions have focused on the above-mentioned complementary areas of organisation strengthening and people development:

- Strengthening structures through holding Provincial Stakeholder Ownership Exercises (PSOEs), establishing Project Steering Committees composed of key stakeholders at Provincial, Prefecture, County and Township levels, and establishing a Provincial Project Office in Kunming able to provide direct backstopping to the project.
- Strengthening policies through pushing for the development of integrated and holistic plans to combat trafficking at Provincial, Prefecture, County and Township levels, focusing on prevention as a cost-effective approach to combating trafficking in children and women, and improving access to existing services. [The Chinese Government ratified in 2002 ILO Convention 182 Against the Worst Forms of Child Labour].
- Strengthening staff through holding meetings with key stakeholders at Provincial, Prefecture and County levels to introduce the basic project objective, outputs, approaches and ways of working; training in participatory Objective Oriented Project Planning (OOPP) to Project Steering Committee members; developing project management tools specifically for the project; adapting to local specific contexts the set of TIAs based on identified needs; developing, testing and sharing participatory monitoring tools with implementing agencies, training agencies, key stakeholders, villagers, teachers and with the target groups.

In *Thailand*, (e.g. in Phayao province) capacity building training has been provided for members of the provincial steering committee, implementing NGOs, district field teams and village committees on people centered development, stakeholder analysis, participatory project planning and project management. Village Operating Committees (VOCs) and district teams have also learned practical skills in participatory facilitation and how to run group discussions.

In Chiang Rai province, a “cross visit” was organized for 25 VOCs from four target communities and one nearby community to visit successful villages involved in growing non-chemical (organic) agricultural products, savings groups, village banks, cooperatives and community forestry. Data was collected in a number of ways - in-depth interview, focus group and community SWOT analysis, and included the following topics: occupations that should be promoted, village history and culture, increasing income through tourism, community potential, and labor issues.

In Chiang Mai province, capacity building activities have included setting up Trafficking Committees at province, selected district and sub-district levels, as well as strengthening VOCs to plan holistically against trafficking in children and women, based on sound analysis of available information.

In *Lao PDR*, capacity building among principal actors has been extensive. A TICW monitoring mechanism was established and functions from central to village level². It is composed of 210 government staff from key ministries and 110 villagers. 40 government staff have been trained in TIA 2 and TIA 3, eight people are now MAMA trainers, three are trainers in OOPP, 113 are trainers in participatory monitoring, and 25 are trainers in awareness raising. Similar numbers of people were trained in other countries covered by the project. The TICW network in Lao PDR has expanded to all districts of target provinces.

A national Roundtable meeting was conducted on skills training and micro-finance for key stakeholders and others, and discussion on getting away from the somewhat paternalistic welfare approach to vocational training.

In *Cambodia*, at the community level, the capacity building of Village Development Committees (VDCs) has been focused as an essential approach to ensuring local management of micro-finance based community activities. The VDCs have received practical advice and training on community organising, managing rice banks, village banks and other kinds of small enterprise at village level, which they have been able to put to immediate use.

Provincial level capacity building in Sihanouk Ville and Prey Veng included strengthening of data collection mechanisms in all districts and villages, and integrated planning based on improved information.

² NSC, CLO, 3 PSCs, 3 PSC Secretariats, 8 DSCs, 8 PSC Secretariats, 22 VPCs



Work at national level included strengthening of the co-ordination and monitoring role of the CNCC and in particular its sub-committee to monitor the implementation of the national 5-year plan to combat commercial sexual exploitation of children, and strengthening of information sharing from national to Provincial level and vice versa through existing provincial committees on child rights protection.

In *Viet Nam*, capacity building has been found to be the most important building block for the project so far, since the capacity level of those involved is rather low.

At the *sub-regional office* level, capacity building also takes place through backstopping missions in the target countries and by serving effectively as a 'help-desk' to country teams. NPCs and key country stakeholders (the project front line) are furthermore called together either for specific training on the use of project tools (e.g. for participatory monitoring), for sharing evaluation results, for designing formats for good practice documentation, and for planning the next five year phase of the project. On these occasions, lessons learned and insights are shared across the five countries concerned, and the project team is strengthened through working together for a few days.

With a view to sharing information and practical experience, as well as building networks, national Roundtable meetings were held during 2002 in each country to discuss the issues concerning rural skills training and micro-finance, as put forward in the two concerned TIAs. This contributed to capacity building in the important area of managing direct assistance to communities, and the promotion of rural skills training rather than centre-based vocational training, which had been the traditional approach. Subsequently, in Lao PDR a proposal for a decree for the creation of a National Advisory Committee on Vocational Training was put forward to the authorities.

A Sub-regional Advisory Committee has met on several occasions to discuss key topics related to trafficking, hence providing direction to the sub-regional project team, who in turn shared these with other project staff.

Achievements

- **Innovative/creative**

The inclusion in capacity building activities of stakeholders who are not directly working in the project has been a new approach, which has brought stronger support and commitment to the project. The adaptation of the approach to different geographical levels has also been a constant not often seen. The focus on participation as a theme for capacity building in many areas has also been new for many participants, especially those from China and Viet Nam, who are used to a top-down approach.

- **Effective/impact**

It is still early days to measure the impact of capacity building on the project goal, but those involved have had their ideas broadened and have acquired new or enhanced skills. By all accounts, the skills acquired through training received by project stakeholders in the five countries has been practical, relevant and immediately useable. For example, over time, the national stakeholder ownership meetings are said to have changed from being rather dry information delivery sessions, to active debating chambers where policy issues are argued and resolved with the participation of all.

- **Sustainability**

The building of capacity always implies sustainability in human resource skills as long as the people remain in the project, or else in similar work.

- **Relevance/responsiveness**

All capacity building seems to have been responding to a practical need of the project, whether in the form of management or technical training, stakeholder meetings, awareness raising activity, or experience sharing meetings and visits.

- **Efficiency**

Substantial investments of resources and time have been made in the area of capacity building. It is a costly business, and much of the expense occurs at the beginning of the project's life. Feedback from staff, stakeholders and the mid-term evaluation seem to indicate that this has been a worthwhile investment, and that the tools and approaches adopted will be useable elsewhere in this project, and even outside of it. Most training materials produced – in particular TIA 1, 2 and 3 and TIA A, B, C, and E – have been in high demand and have therefore been distributed widely. Summary notes of all TIA-papers were also produced and translated into Khmer, Lao, Mandarin, Thai, and Vietnamese for sharing and use beyond the immediate project stakeholders.

Lessons learned

The results of the project to date show that time spent building the capacity of partner agencies and beneficiaries in a participatory way is a good investment.

- Time spent on capacity building ensures a good understanding of the project objectives, outputs and activities. It takes time to build capacity. Capacity building is an on-going process.
- It takes time to identify the needs, to develop and discuss learning materials that are suitable and adapted to the context and to identified needs. There is a constant need to assess whether new materials are suitable and to ensure that quality translations are made.



- Have clarity on the target audience of training materials prior to starting the design of the materials. Include in the preparations a plan on dissemination of materials and training.
- Field visits *prior* to the training ensures that the training is relevant for the intended participants and adapted to their needs.
- It saves time and energy not to develop tools from scratch but to base them as far as possible on existing materials, and make them context based – where possible by reviewing the (outstanding) needs of the target audience of the materials.
- Qualified staff of partner agencies, once trained, are sometimes reassigned to new positions. Though a loss to the project, it is not an overall loss as they often continue to contribute to the overall effort in their new capacity. However, there is then the need to train new staff, reinforcing the continuous nature of the process of capacity building, the need for trickling down of acquired knowledge and of establishing support mechanisms.
- The availability of a ‘Help Desk’ function in the national project office and in the sub-regional office (Bangkok) ensures that questions and problems of partner agencies can be responded to in a timely manner. It also facilitates follow-up training when needed.
- Bringing different levels together for training, such as from village, district, and provincial levels maximizes momentum for information sharing and follow-up.
- The establishment of volunteer networks of trainees is a cost-effective means of ensuring mutual support after training has been given. It also ensures continued learning based on the experience of the trainees-turned-practitioners, and contributes to the sustainability of the investments made.
- Capacity building interventions can run the risk of hindering the work plans of government officials in some countries. Governments engaging in multiple donor-led activities can be prevented from working by the number of meetings and capacity building workshops they are expected to attend. The same is the case for committee meetings and their associated capacity building.
- Participants to any capacity building activity must be carefully selected if there is to be impact from their new learning. Sometimes the wrong people are trained. Organizers of training events should not select trainees for their level of English only, but rather their potential role in influencing their organization and its staff after training.
- Working with specific age groups of young people (e.g. 8-11, 12-14, 15-17, 18-25, etc.) with a view to their learning about trafficking and developing ‘life skills’, has been found to be more effective than with mixed groups.

Conditions for replicability

In order to replicate the approach of building the capacity of partner agencies and beneficiaries elsewhere, the following should be taken into account:

- Obtain support from senior management of the potential partner agencies to address the issue of trafficking in the concerned geographical areas.
- Obtain the willingness of key stakeholders to address the issue of trafficking.
- Follow-up training is a must. One-off training is rarely sufficient to ensure internalisation of the information provided.
- Consider bringing change at all levels, structure, policy and staff knowledge, attitudes and experience.

References

Project Management Guidelines Manual (MAMA), 2001.

Building the Capacity of Partners and Beneficiaries, ILO-TICW, GP 2, Kunming, 2002.

Key Facts of Evidence of Project Achievements in Lao PDR, by Inthasone Phetsiriseng.

Technical Intervention Area (TIA) Summary Notes:

- TIA 1: Labour Migration and Trafficking Within the Greater Mekong Subregion
- TIA 2: Non-Formal Education and Rural Skills Training: Tools to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labour including Trafficking;
- TIA3: Micro-Finance Interventions: Tools to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labour including Trafficking;
- TIA5: Course on Psychosocial and Medical Services for Sexually Abused and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth (ESCAP HRD publication in collaboration with ILO-IPEC TICW)
- TIA-A: Project Management Guidelines Manual (MAMA)
- TIA-C: Participatory and action-oriented research (*forthcoming*)
- TIA-E: Participatory monitoring.

For detailed information on the TICW project see: www.ilo.org/asia/child/trafficking

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