

Best Practices and Challenges in Building M&E Capacity of Community-Based Organizations

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Presenters

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Panel Session: Best Practices and Challenges in Building M&E Capacity of Community-Based Organizations

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Kyaw Hlaing, President and Executive Director, Myanmar Survey Research

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Dennis Bours:

I'll pick it up. Most of it refers to the – to the three presentations that we had this morning where capacity development was – elements of it were trainings and workshops. Another element was empowerment of individuals; communities, organizations, or government entities.

Another element was the continuous coaching and support, and the fourth and last element was an organic process of growth and development. I put that in my own words, the last one, and I would say if you don't have three out of four, don't call it capacity development because it isn't.

If you are only doing trainings or workshops it is not capacity development and if you are coaching people that's very good, that's a nice exercise but, in itself, that's all capacity development. So that's a – that's a first point that I want to make. You need to have at least three out of these four, for me, to be able to call it really, functional, capacity development.

Secondly, I would like to make the difference between capacity development and M&E, and the M&E of capacity development in M&E because those two things are really different beasts and in our community of practice we have a lot of discussion about it; so much that we actually gave different resource tags to resources that we have

on capacity development in M&E and the M&E of capacity development in M&E.

No, it's really different and it's a long discussion, and I'll start with three pointers that I took from this morning on capacity development in M&E. There needs to be an organizational internal context that is open to absorb the capacity development. If it's not there, you need to develop it and, if you don't develop it, or if there's not the will to absorb any capacity, then you really have to wonder if it's the right partner you're working with or if you're doing something completely wrong there.

So you do need to have the organizational context of the – of your local partner, or the government body, or of the one of whom you're trying to build the capacity to absorb that capacity development.

A second point is that it's not a one-off thing. So giving one or two trainings is not capacity development. It should be focusing on longer-term development, building an M&E infrastructure, and basically a process of socialization towards also the expectations and needs towards that capacity development of both the organization and other stakeholders.

And third, donor reporting in itself is not enough reason for capacity development in M&E. There also needs to be a value added for the organization beyond donor reporting with respect to utilization and there needs to be the development of an infrastructure to actually absorb those findings and utilize those findings, which gets me – I hope I'm still within the time,

which gets me to the M&E of capacity development in M&E.

The first point is that the number of people attending a training is not an indicator for capacity development and I often see that one and I think it's even a global indicator for someone in the room. It is not an indicator for capacity development on its own.

The – as such, participatory self-assessment methods, workshops, interviews, mixed method approach, is what we should be looking for if we are doing M&E of capacity development. It's not something that you can tally. It's something that you might be able partly to tally, but you also will have a very big qualitative element in it.

And third, the M&E process of M&E capacity development should be seen as capacity development in itself. No, that's true. So the CBO, the local organization should actually learn from that M&E exercise. It should be a participatory approach, it should be capacity development in itself doing that M&E.

Kyaw Hlaing:

Hello, my name is Kyaw Hlaing I am President of Myanmar Survey Research. I'm here to build the M&E of our community-based organizations. So actually, in Myanmar, community-based organization, these CBO's are very, very – the early stage of the government. This CBO in Myanmar started just about five years ago, after _____ so there was not much capacity and now there are about 93 CBO's in Myanmar within these five years – they are engaging in a social welfare, the health sector and education sector, and some religious sector, and environmental issues and so on but there – this is a very

beginning stage. So they do have a lack of capacity and they do not have a proper M&E system yet.

But how they are developing – they are making the capacity in Myanmar these – the CBO and NGO, they meet – twice a month, together, twice a month and share their experiences. And they learn from each other. So in that way they are building their capacity.

At the same time they are developing a network among the CBO's. These meetings are organized by a group of local NGO, local meeting management committee. And so there is not much M&E, but in developing their capacities through this meeting, and from that they are meeting, it is a coordination meeting with the NGO, who -- a local NGO and also government agency, so this is the current situation of capacity of NGO's in Myanmar.

This is a very beginning stage, but its growing capacity and quality. So there's not a M&E ability in the CBOs but we do have the M&E ability in the NGO and UN Agency since 2000 and – 1995 until now we studied for 18 years. We have conducted many, many evaluations on that and formed an NGO with the UN Agency but one thing is that these evaluations for the internal purpose of – internal purpose of our client, of Myanmar's implementers.

They use this monitoring to learn how to do it for them – better program, main purpose. Rather the purpose is for the accountability purpose to the donor. For these two purposes, we – we use these evaluations. But now there is a change and these evaluations and the findings of

the data, they can even disseminate that data to the government, to change their policy, to have advocacy for their policy.

As before of course there was no chance to – but Myanmar is changing a lot. A community-based organization in capacity development even, and so these findings, I encourage an NGO and UN Agency to use this finding to – for the advocacy of a change in the government.

There are three ways they get these findings to the government. One way is through local citizens. That’s one way. Another way is directly to approach to the government. A local, an NGO, they have a local counterpart in the government to the local counterpart, so they can – they just make that connection.

Another way is we have the committee in Myanmar’s parliament. They are also _____ the information at this region, they _____. And regarding the data quality, so too I have I –

Moderator:

Sorry, we have to wrap it up.

Kyaw Hlaing:

Yes, too, regarding the data quality here you are – of course data quality is very, very important and as such to ensure the data quality, there are three stages to – to make sure we have quality. One is the training stage and the training stage, we have them – to train the data collector to understand, you know the purpose of the survey and the idea for each and every question. This is every – so they have to do – to train everyone and to – a rough guess and final guess. This process, this is one stage.

And the second stage is the field – the field stage. The field stage, data collector and also supervisor collect – data collector and supervisor collect data and. And another thing, an independent _____, at least 15 to 25% independent _____ to check the data but to make sure all the data is correct.

But there's the data entry stage. And the data entry stage also is very, very important. So we normally use the double data entry. If someone makes a mistake, then it can be easily identified from the data. So this is what I wanted to say.

Moderator:

Thank you very much.

John Callanta:

Hi, John Callanta, M&E Specialist, USAID Philippines. Coming in last and in line with principal we use in managing our conversation. I think all I have to say is I agree – just kidding, just a little bit. Well paramount importance of contextualization, it's pretty clear from the morning's discussions and our lead-in discussions to the table that's – that's – that was evident in the three presentations that we had.

CBO's are not just collectors of M&E information. They can be co-developers of M&E systems and they can also be co-analysts. They bring in a wealth of knowledge and experience that is absent from all of us that are primarily external.

The third one is – I took special note of the steps in participatory data quality assessments, not audits, in _____'s presentation, mainly because that's the next task I'm gonna do when I get home. It's been a lot of –and you guys have looked at – and cross activities and it's done once every three years but it is – it is a

significant task but it's something that should not be taken lightly as evidenced by the intentional audits that are done and the findings that these generate.

A lot of the grantees, I'm thinking of the Philippine portfolio, and we do have a lot of grantees with funding that is less than a million, you know, but we're – the expectations for them are – are not too different from those contractors who have \$20 million, \$30 million projects, you know.

We do have to understand their – their inherent capacities and also their challenges and, you know, the more capacitated that people should be adjusting to the less capacitated, if I'm allowed to say that. So it's like we should be exerting the effort to reach out and make their M&E systems work for them and for us as well.

The last point I wish to make – and I guess this would be coming up in something that's easier to remember. If we want to pursue the mind we need to give more time and dime. Mind meaning coaching, demonstration, if we really want that to happen in our capacity development efforts in M&E there certainly is some resource-intensiveness to it.

We need to devote more money, more people. There – let me just read this – Intentional contextualization, intensive workshops, in turn with MTA, all those need to happen so that the mind can be pursued with more time and dime. So that's it.

[End of Audio]