

The DAG Forum

A quarterly newsletter where DAG members express their views and share information

Word from the Co-Chairs

We are very pleased to launch the first DAG newsletter. The DAG Forum is published by the DAG Secretariat, UNDP, to encourage information sharing and dialogue among DAG members and partners.

The DAG was established in 2001 and is comprised of 25 multilateral and bilateral partners that provide development assistance to Ethiopia. The main objective of its work is to foster policy dialogue, coordinate and harmonize donor support. The work of the DAG is supported by its eleven technical working groups and pooled funds. The key elements of support through the pooled funds are: strengthening of the harmonized support to the PASDEP (PRSP) process; promoting the OECD DAC harmonization agenda; strengthening of PASDEP monitoring and evaluation system and; strategic coordinated support to focus areas of the PASDEP including gender mainstreaming and education. We hope this will be an opportunity to share ideas around these themes and invite you all to contribute your views and news.

As we enter the new Ethiopian Year, DAG looks forward to a time of enhanced cooperation and engagement with the government, and better harmonization among development partners.

We wish all DAG members and partners a Happy New Year!

Meeting the Agenda for Action

By Victoria Chisala

The target date of 2010, set for reviewing progress on the Paris Declaration indicators is only months away. According to the OECD's overall assessment, 'progress is being made, but not fast enough.'

The Paris Declaration (PD) set out twelve monitorable indicators of progress, built around the 5 key areas of ownership, alignment, harmonization, results and mutual accountability.

Among donors, a major achievement in the period between the PD (March 2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), issued at the end of

the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Ghana in September 2008, was the delegation of greater authority and capacity to field offices to create an enabling environment for implementing PD principles. The major purpose of the AAA was not to replace the PD but to accelerate and deepen its implementation.



The AAA focuses on three key recommendations:

- Strengthening country ownership
- Building more effective and inclusive partnerships
- Delivering development results and accounting for them

In the area of establishing results and mutual accountability, some twelve countries instituted a mechanism for mutual review of progress on aid effectiveness commitments. However, emphasis on aspects of the PD may differ between donors and partner countries, with some donors emphasizing results and harmonization while partner countries tend to be concerned with strengthening alignment and ownership.

Adapting the Paris principles to the context becomes even more important when dealing with fragile states and conflict situations.

The AAA is a political, ministerial statement with a small set of concrete actions to address constraints to achieving commitments of the PD.

(Cont. on page 4)

Announcement : The Ethiopian Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) has recently published the Financial Transparency and Accountability tools. According to the MoFED the tools are expected to 'foster citizens' engagement and "voice" in the public budget process'. Developed as part of the Protection of Basic Services (PBS) Program, the tools are available on the

New DAG Co-Chairs

- As of September 2009

Mr. Fidele Sarassoro (UNDP) took over the DAG Co-Chair position from Mr. Ken Ohashi (World Bank).



On the bilateral side Mr. Howard Taylor (DFID) has replaced Mr. Hans Docter (Netherlands).



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Disclaimer: Please note that articles featured in this newsletter reflect the views of the contributor and do not necessarily represent the views or policies of either the Development Assistance Group (DAG) or UNDP.

Working Group Update

DAG UPDATE

Gender

The Ethiopian Ministry of Women's Affairs organised a three day annual meeting in Gambella Region under the theme "One Plan, One Budget, One Report", which promotes the development of a harmonised approach to gender across sectors, and a strategic plan developed through consultation with development partners.

The meeting discussed the Core Plan developed by the Ministry. (document can be downloaded from www.dagethiopia.org). Participants were drawn from Regional Women's Affairs Bureaus, role models selected from each region as well as members of the donor community.

The meeting, held from 25-27 June 2009, was facilitated by the DAG Secretariat and organised using the Gender Pooled Fund.



Performers welcoming participants to Gambella

Monitoring & Evaluation

The Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Working Group (M& E TWG) has overhauled its terms of reference and action plan for 2009/10 following an internal review conducted earlier this year.

The review aimed to identify ways of improving support to the Government of Ethiopia under PASDEP II.

The M&E TWG seeks to strengthen its partnership with the Government of Ethiopia by reinforcing its role as a service provider to the Welfare Monitoring Unit (WMU) and Central Statistical Authority in monitoring the implementation of PASDEP II.

To enhance the support given to the Government of Ethiopia, the M&E TWG has also opened dialogue with the Government on the possibility of transforming the TWG into a Sector Working Group chaired by the Government of Ethiopia. While this will not be achieved in 2009, the M&E TWG and the Government of Ethiopia have agreed to hold regular co-chaired meetings so as to improve cooperation and prepare

for PASDEP II.

The M&E TWG also intends to identify resources and technical means to support the WMU in its institutional strengthening plans during PASDEP II. This is expected to enable the WMU to improve the quality of PASDEP II reports and to take ownership of and proactively manage development partner financed M&E.

The primary goal of monitoring an evaluation is to deliver more effectively by improving Government and donor management and implementation techniques. In this regard, the M&E TWG will work with development partners to ensure that planned monitoring and evaluation is in response to the Government of Ethiopia's needs as well as that of the development partners'. This will mean encouraging Ethiopia's development partners to ensure that M&E is implemented with inputs from the government and that the results feed into government reporting and management processes.

Monitoring and Evaluation Pooled Fund

Eight staff drawn from the Central Statistics Agency (CSA) and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED) are attending a customised 11 day training on Poverty Mapping and Small Area Estimation. The training, which started 20 September 2009, is taking place at the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand. A further eight travelled to Tanzania on 21 September 2009 to learn lessons from the work of the National Bureau of Statistics.

Education

Education quality has not kept pace with expansion

Education reform has been underway in Ethiopia for more than a decade and has resulted in notable progress. Recent initiatives show that access to education doubled in the last five years, with over 15 million children now in primary school. Perhaps not surprisingly, whilst enrolment spiked, education quality has not yet kept pace due to overcrowded, poorly-equipped classrooms, outdated curriculum and insufficient textbooks, and under-qualified teachers. Quality related expenditures are very constrained at decentralised levels with only approximately \$1.00/child spent on non-salary items in primary schools. The problem was recog-

nised by the government of Ethiopia in 2007 and it subsequently developed what is now known as the General Education Quality Improvement Programme (or GEQIP). The programme was launched in March 2009 by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.

Donor commitment to harmonised and aligned support

Donors came together in late 2007 to support this important government initiative. They worked closely with the government over the next twelve months in order to appraise and further refine the design of the programme. An innovative partnership emerged which rested on key principles of: **one** funding channel using government systems, **one** monitoring and evaluation framework, and **one** reporting system.

This mechanism has to date attracted five donors, including the Fast Track Initiative, and mobilised in excess of \$300 million for the improvement of quality education over four years (2008-2012). It has also engaged a number of non-pooled funding partners who, while they are unable to pool their financing, have committed to aligning their programmes with GEQIP.



Over the next four years, this additional financing will contribute to:

- The purchase of over 120 million new textbooks;
- The training of 50,000 primary and secondary teachers;
- The provision of per capita school grants to over 20,000 schools and Alternative Basic Education Centres; and
- Capacity building at all levels in education planning and management

EDUCATION TWG SUPPORTS ETHIOPIA'S COMMITMENT TO QUALITY EDUCATION.

Governance

3 KEY PRINCIPLES for EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE DIALOGUE

Dialogue on democratization and good governance is different from those taking place in other development sectors (such as Health, Education and Infrastructure) and is politically sensitive in many developing contexts, and subject to interpretation or in many instances, misinterpretation – particularly on motives and incentives for change.

Sovereign states and their governments have a legitimate right to determine their own policies and systems to address their respective social, political and economic dynamics. Imposing foreign ideologies and practices on any sovereign state seldom gains much traction in terms of credibility and sustainability.

Consensual progress is best achieved by adhering to the following three key principles for dialogue.

Principle 1 National Ownership

Effective dialogue on democratization and good governance is nationally driven and owned. This requires leadership by national expertise, linked to national development

policies and plans - that reflect national perspectives and priorities for resolving national concerns. This is not a prerequisite, but rather an imperative!

A truly country-driven process contributes significantly to overall quality and credibility of the dialogue process, by ensuring that it is demand-driven, relevant to the country's context, and sustainable - based on the consensus achieved (which is not coerced or imposed by any party).

Principle 2 Shared Agenda

Good governance is generally understood as the fundamental interactions between the state and society – i.e. the rules, processes and behaviours by which interests are articulated, resources are planned, allocated and managed, and power is exercised in society. Nonetheless, there is no globally agreed definition of democratization and good governance. The concepts and their processes are not mutually inclusive, as they are interpreted to mean different things to different stakeholders.

Therefore, a key prerequisite for an effective dialogue on democratization and good governance entails that all participants have an understanding of the other's socio-cultural, political and economic ide-

ologies, systems and practices, as well as agreement on a structured process for resolving differences and building consensus.

It is equally important that a shared agenda for dialogue includes challenges and progress in implementing regional and international commitments to good governance by governments and their development partners. To achieve this, donors should work proactively towards building consensus with partner governments, to agree on common ground on policy and programmatic issues, while respecting the first principle of national ownership.

Principle 3 Partnership

Another prerequisite for an effective dialogue on democratization and governance is based on confidence and trust between governments and their international partners.

This entails a "cooperative relationship" - to discuss, agree on and share responsibility for achieving specific development goals. country is set in stone and continues to evolve with changing circumstances) – with various entry points/opportunities along the way.

**“In true dialogue, both sides are willing to change.”
- Thich Naht Hanh
(Vietnamese monk)**

Health, Population and Nutrition

Eight million lives are lost in Africa every year mainly due to five major causes: Malaria, Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, Child Mortality and Maternal Deaths, and yet the continent has the biggest funding gaps for the Health MDGs (an estimated USD44.9bn).

The Ethiopian International Health Partnership (IHP) Compact, signed on 26 August 2008 between the Government of Ethiopia and development partners, is a global commitment towards improved aid effectiveness in the health sector in order to expedite efforts to achieve the MDGs. Ethiopia is the first country to take on the IHP agreement, launched on 5 September 2007 in the United Kingdom by international organizations, governments, and bilateral donors.

The Ethiopian IHP has a provision for joint financial arrangement that enables partners to send their funding support through the Government's preferred channel or mechanisms. This allows for greater predictability in the flow of resources as well as flexibility in their allocation. On 15 April 2009, the Government of Ethiopia and development partners signed a Joint Financing Arrangement to support the MDG Fund - an innovative pooled funding mechanism established within the frame-

work of Ethiopia's IHP Compact. The Fund is designed to facilitate the mobilization and steady channeling of additional resources for financing high impact interventions in order to accelerate progress towards the MDG-based targets.

Health system strengthening remains one of the priority agendas and the strategic direction for both the Federal Ministry of Health (MoH) and development partners.

Program (HSDPIII) of the country.

Ethiopia launched the HSDP in 1989 as a 20 year rolling programme outlining long term goals and strategy for the health sector that is based on the country's 1993 National Health Policy, which emphasizes decentralization and equitable distribution of health services.

Development partners have also played a major role in supporting the Woreda-

based planning exercise by deploying more than 50 technical experts who were fully engaged and provided hands-on support to the Woreda experts of the Federal Ministry of Health.

However, the biggest challenges remain the limited Human resources both from the side of the partners and MOH and need to scale up interventions to improve maternal and



The donor community with H.E. State Minister Mekonnen Manyazewal (left to right) and H.E. Minister of Health Dr. Tedros A. Gebreyesus

In this regard development partners have pursued an active and consistent engagement in the overall sector policy process and strategies, including annual review of the current Health Sector Development

new born health.

Point of View

Tackling Aid Effectiveness

By Alexander O'Riordan

Aid Effectiveness is impossible without ensuring relevance and planning for *sustainability*. Better government ownership is a necessary condition for ensuring relevance within the Government of Ethiopia's own strategies so that when development initiatives succeed they have a chance at becoming sustainable because ownership is an incentive to continue or replicate successful projects.

In 2009 Ethiopia's development partners have a rare opportunity to engage the Ethiopian government on its development strategy and to strengthen the government's capacity to take ownership of development initiatives. Ethiopia's second 5 year Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP II) opens the floor for donors to engage the government in a cohesive manner so as to document and bring forward lessons learned under PASDEP 1 and propose changes to improve the effectiveness of the partnership under PASDEP II (2011-2015).

DAG Ethiopia's 11 Technical and Sector Working Groups are scheduled to meet on September 30th 2009 to identify their key government counterparts and suggest how to mobilise and provide them with the appropriate resources to be the primary drivers of development policy and intervention in their respective sectors. This necessitates recognising that at the sector level, Government counterparts may need to improve their technical and human resources to manage what is an unusually large community of development partners.

The technical and sector working groups will contribute to improved Division of Labour by working towards diminishing the number of lead donors in each sector and investigating how to diminish the number of project steering committees (e.g. by merging them or holding multiple steering committee meetings in the same location on the same date). Merging project governance structures makes them easier to access and manage by government officials as well as promote improved effectiveness

of technical assistance and project management, harmonization and coordination.

Beyond coordination, the quality of development assistance can be improved by ensuring that monitoring and evaluation exercises play an effective role in improving management and policy making.

At the political level, development partners and the Government of Ethiopia are in a partnership relationship. However, development partners are also aware that at the technical level they are service providers to the Government of Ethiopia.

The role is, first and foremost, to *assist* the Government of Ethiopia to manage *its* development resources as effectively as possible.

The primary client is the Government of Ethiopia and under PASDEP II, there is a meaningful opportunity to use the *Aid Effectiveness* agenda to improve the quality of the partnership so as to enable the Government of Ethiopia to better deliver poverty alleviation and development assistance to the people of Ethiopia.

(Alexander O'Riordan is an Aid Effectiveness Expert for the European Commission.)

Cont. from page 1 Agenda....

The 2008 Survey on Monitoring the PD provides clear evidence that countries have made progress in areas covered in the survey. The results of the 2008 survey show significant advances in some countries and some areas,

confirming that real change is possible when resolute joint efforts are made [nonetheless], more determined and consistent efforts in turning the principles into action are needed' (OECD, p16).

While 36% of partner countries showed improvements in the quality of country systems for managing public funds (Indicator 2a), donors on the other hand have shown reluctance in using these systems. In order to assure progress in this area, donors may have to accept and manage risks associated with using partner country systems (ADB, 2008).

Independent evaluations of the PD suggest that context is key and political changes and pressures affect implementation (ADB, 2008).

AAA recommendations include:

- Developing countries to take stronger leadership of their development policies with development partners providing capacity development assistance for this purpose;
- Greater predictability in the provision of aid flows including full and timely information on annual commitments and 3-5 year donor commitments where possible;
- Switching from using donor conditionality to those based the country's own development objectives;
- more cost effective results management systems to be developed (national statistical systems, budgeting, planning, monitoring and evaluation); and
- Increasing aid's value for money by untying aid.

Progress made

- The number of countries with sound operational strategies increased from 13% to 20%.
- The proportion of untied aid increased from 75% in 2005 to 88% in 2006.
- The proportion of coordinated technical cooperation increased from 48% in 2005 to 60% in 2007, exceeding the 2010 target of 50%.
- Budget realism, referring to accountability and predictability of development resources, increased slightly from 42% to 48% in 2007.

The Fourth High level forum is scheduled for 2011 to be held in the Republic of Korea

(Victoria Chisala is Coordinator of the DAG Secretariat in UNDP)

References:

- ADB, Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration, Operations and Evaluations Department, July 2008.
- OECD, 2008 Survey on the Monitoring of the Paris Declaration: Making Aid More Effective by 2010.

Announcement: An Experience Exchange and Knowledge Sharing Conference on PILOTING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN ETHIOPIA will be held on 02 October 2009 at the UN Conference Center in Addis Ababa.

The Ethiopian Social Accountability project, Component 4 of the Protection of Basic Services (PBS), came to an end on 30 June 2009. For more information on the project visit For more information, please visit www.ethiosap.org.

To attend the full day conference organised by GTZ International Services, email the Management Agency and provide the name of the participant and the organization to cdc.pbs@gmail.com; Fax: 011-6187038. Tel.: 011-6187034 .

Word from the Agencies

Canada's commitment to aid effectiveness in Ethiopia: Division of Labour

By Felicia Chang

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is confident that with strong commitments and effective partnerships, progress towards increasing the impact of aid in Ethiopia is happening and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is possible.

The ongoing division of labour (DoL) exercise is a valuable initiative launched by the DAG in 2008. One of the issues addressed in the Paris Declaration was the impairment of aid effectiveness due to the excessive fragmentation of aid at global, country or sector levels. This fragmentation results in a lack of coordination among donors and has several adverse effects including the duplication of aid efforts and an overload on the management systems of the partner country. In response to this, donors and partner countries committed to a pragmatic approach to division of labour to increase complementarity, improve alignment and reduce transaction costs.

The DAG DoL exercise started in the form of a questionnaire to assess the current sectoral involvement of donors in Ethiopia. The mechanisms to advance the division of labour in Ethiopia include identifying the priority sectors in which

donors have a comparative advantage and harmonizing programmes within sectors to avoid duplication of efforts, promote improved coordination and efficiency of delivery.

Through its active participation on initiatives such as the division of labour exercise, CIDA will ascertain its role as a lead, active or silent donor in specific sectors, therefore, contributing to the reduction of the fragmentation of aid and the increase in complementary division of labour.

CIDA is an active player in promoting harmonization efforts in Ethiopia to create and sustain mutually beneficial partnerships in development assistance. As a core member of the DAG's Harmonization Taskforce, CIDA is committed to partnering with the Government of Ethiopia and donors to advance the division of labour.

CIDA's development assistance is also focused in a limited number of sectors, mainly food security/ agricultural growth and governance. CIDA also contributes to the Protection of Basic Services Program.

As co-chair for the RED&FS TWG, CIDA aims to facilitate collaboration and improve coordination within and among the group's three pillars: Food Security Programs, Sustainable Land Management and Agricultural Growth Program.

CIDA has made considerable efforts to take a comprehensive, more collaborative approach to development in Ethiopia particularly in the delivery of Programme Based Approaches (PBA).

Approximately 80% of CIDA's bilateral funding is provided through PBAs, exceeding the 66% target for 2010 set in the Paris Declaration.

The way forward

Achieving effective division of labour is challenging insofar as it requires commitment, partnership and strong capacity from the government (federal and local levels) to effectively implement programs.

According to CIDA Ethiopia Country Director Mr. Edmond Wega, "Development assistance to Ethiopia is not perfect, but the donor community is actively working with the Government of Ethiopia to strengthen the overall impact of aid while enhancing local ownership and sustainability of the development process.

Exercises such as the division of labour are fundamental to achieve these goals and the Government of Canada fully supports this initiative".

(Felicia Chang is a Program Officer for CIDA's Ethiopia Canada Cooperation Office. CIDA participates in five TWGs and co-chairs the RED&FS Sector Working Group)

Working Group Update

Cont. from page 3 Governance

In the development context this is achieved over the long-term, through technical cooperation at various levels, domestic and international. Such engagements are not a one way street, nor a top down process – but rather, part of a policy cycle (which in no country is set in stone and continues to evolve with changing circumstances) – with various entry points/opportunities along the way. To seize these opportunities, both parties must be ready and willing to make policy changes to accommodate the views of the other – i.e. compromise and consensus.

This does not happen over night, but is achieved – not directly through high-level

political engagements with Ministers (i.e. usually the first symptom of constraints in relations and communication) – but often through both formal and informal discussions with State Ministers, their Department Heads and other counterparts. Of course, difficult partnerships are an unavoidable part of the development landscape, but these should not be avoided or neglected. Effective partnerships are those that are built on mutual trust and confidence.

In pragmatic terms, this is based on identifying and agreeing on "who" has

the comparative advantage to participate in the dialogue, "what" the dialogue should be about (i.e. Principle 2), and "when" it should take place (i.e. timing).

Accordingly, the role of development professionals is to build trust, work and resolve difficult issues "with" government officials, the outcomes of which can then be put to Ministers. In this way, common ground can be gained and issues moved forward.

Strengthening Ethiopia's Nutrition Information and Survey

By Iqbal Kabir

In the Project Implementation Manual (PIM), the National Nutrition Program (NNP) highlights the importance of strengthening the quality and availability of nutrition information to support timely warning for possible crisis and adequate response.

In addition, the Nutrition Surveillance is expected to support the development, management and evaluation of the NNP.

The recommended approach – hereafter referred as “fast track approach” - is on improving the quality and availability of woreda-level nutrition data and on linking them to the agro-economic data accessible from the Early Warning System (EWS).

The rationale for a “fast track approach” is to fill gaps in short-term need for nutrition information by using existing data sources from selected woredas with programs like Community-Based Nutrition (CBN), Therapeutic Feeding Program (TFP) and quarterly-based Child Health Days (CHD) or bi-annual Enhanced Outreach Services (EOS). These data are expected to provide more comprehensive and accurate picture of trends in malnutrition.

The suggested start-up is to focus resources and on-the-job capacity building to fast-track minimal nutrition indicators to regional levels (see table 1.1). This would be done by providing additional training to Regional Health Bureau (RHB) and Emergency Nutrition Coordination Unit (ENCU) to support quality and timeliness of data from CBN, CHD and TFP and to im-

prove interpretation of nutrition data by increasing triangulation with EWS data.

It is assumed that one “data quality” personnel can cover up to 5 woredas. Based on this, additional personnel might be required in RHBs at zonal level. External quality assurance mechanisms will include spot check monitoring and annual validation surveys on a sub-sample of sites by the Ethiopian Health and Nutrition Research Institute (EHNRI).

Assuming each “data quality assurance unit” can cover 5 woredas, the budget is approximately \$20 000/unit per year, including running costs, supportive supervision, and external validation. Training, consultants, and initial procurement costs will cost an additional \$336 500 in the first year. The initial pilot is expected to gradually cover 100 woredas within 2 years.

(Dr. Iqbal Kabir is a member of the Health, Population and Nutrition TWG, and chief of Nutrition & Food Security Section, UNICEF Ethiopia)

Table 1.1 Fast-Track Nutritional Indicators for early warning

Indicators	Frequency
CBN	Monthly
I1. Coverage of weighed children	
I2. Prevalence of severe underweight	
I3. Prevalence of bilateral oedema (not in the current CBN)	
I4. Prevalence of moderate underweight	
I5. Reporting rate	
TFP	Monthly
I6. New admissions	
I7. Reporting rate	
CHD	
I8. Coverage of screened children	
I9. Prevalence of MUAC <11	
I10. Prevalence of MUAC <12	Quarterly
I11. Prevalence of bilateral oedema	
I12. Reporting rate	

Note: Additional context information can be obtained from FEWSNET, LIU, SC-UK, GIEWS (FAO) and VAM (WFP)

UN Update

Refining the UN Development Assistance Framework

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) is currently engaged with the Government of Ethiopia in finalizing the midterm review report for the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the overall framework for the UN's support to Ethiopia.

The current five-year UNDAF is for 2007-2011 and is evaluated annually. The present midterm review looks at aligning UNDAF to current national development needs and priorities, and has come up with a series of key recommendations to guide the UN's engagement in the country in the remaining two years of the current UNDAF cycle. Principal among them are the need for improving UNDAF's focus as well as rationalizing and streamlining its outcomes and outputs for ease of implementation, monitoring and accountability.

On 23 – 24 June 2009, UN Agencies, Representatives, drawn from the coun-

-try team, regional and headquarters offices, as well as senior staff from line ministries and Regional Bureaus, and other relevant government bodies participated in the UNDAF MTR National Meeting jointly organized by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED) and the UN Resident Coordinator's Office.

During the meeting presentations were made on major achievements, key strategic issues and recommendations for the five UNDAF outcome areas of Basic Social Services, Humanitarian Response, Recovery and Food Security, Good Governance, Enhanced Economic Growth and HIV/AIDS. The meeting also examined major findings emanating from consultations at both regional and federal levels.

Upon the finalization of the UNDAF MTR report, expecting in the coming weeks,

the UNCT and government will embark on a refinement exercise for the UNDAF document. Specific areas for flagship joint programmes will be identified in the new refined UNDAF. These will be significant in scope, showing the impact of UN interventions, and of course are in line with national focus as identified in PASDEP.

Some of the areas that have elicited interest so far include maternity and infant mortality reduction, gender, and strengthening the capacity of emerging states.

For more information contact: Joseph Oji, UN Coordination Specialist (joseph.oji@undp.org) Metselal Abraha, UNCT Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist (metselal.abraha@undp.org)

Capacity Building – An Existential Challenge of Development

By Aberra Makonnen

On one of my recent field trips monitoring USAID programs, I asked a newly appointed school director what he thought of our contribution towards improving the quality of learning in the school. He told me he didn't know much about what has been going on in the school. It was clear that either he didn't get a proper briefing by the out-going director and/or the history was not properly documented.

Another time, while visiting a teacher training college, the Dean proudly showed us the computerized library automation we had helped introduce. I happened to casually look around and see piles of training modules that we had developed for use by the institute's teachers. I was told by the librarian that they have been sitting there unused for years.

These could be isolated instances. However, they tell us that we need to work more in the areas of documentation, transfer of knowledge and generally effective leadership, which are all parts of institutional building, and essentially capacity building.

Knowledge and skills are transferred through peers, from technical assistance attached to the institution, from senior colleagues that have had the opportunity of living and working longer, and most of all from the leadership of the institution. However, these don't happen by accident. There is need for better planning, which brings us to good leadership and the ability to organize available resources for the intended purposes.

Capacity building is a very broad term. It applies to an individual within an organization; the organization itself; the public administration the organization belongs to; and the social, economic and political context in which the individual works. Therefore, improving the capacity of an organization entails a) enhancing the profes-

sional capacity of an individual to perform and creating an incentive system while avoiding inhibitors; b) creating an organizational structure that clearly and simply reflects its mandate; c) developing an efficient internal communication flow through clear lines of accountability and supportive supervision; and d) availability of the necessary information, human, material and financial resources.



Imagine the extent of the knowledge transfer if all participants of the thousands of workshops we conduct every year were able to pass on the knowledge to their colleagues in a planned manner. The return on our intervention would be enormous.

It is necessary to make our training workshops results-based. Let us not conduct workshops that are not concretely linked to institution building. The persons trained must transfer the knowledge and skills gained to the broader institutional base. Let me illustrate this with an example. In one teacher education institution we trained two teachers in computer trouble-shooting. These two teachers transferred their new skills to the broader staff. Due to this, the institution is now self-reliant in maintaining its computer laboratory.

Imagine the extent of the knowledge transfer if all participants of the thousands of workshops we conduct every year were able to pass on the knowledge to their colleagues in a

planned manner. The return on our intervention would be enormous.

Another major challenge in Ethiopia is the high turnover of civil servants, who are continually being reassigned. The challenges of inadequate documentation, lack of transfer of knowledge and information, breaks in continuity of leadership and institutional building, added to the high turnover of the civil service, create additional burdens on our work in capacity building and must be addressed.

The bulk of the capacity building efforts are on human resource development. That is why, without the effective transfer of new skills and knowledge from individuals to institutions, our efforts may be ultimately hijacked by the high turnover.

Though it still contributes to the national capacity, seen broadly at present we can say that overall the training of an individual has become a self-serving exercise rather than

contributing to building effective institutions. It is time to look into the effectiveness of all the training workshops going on around the country in relation to the enormous investment we are making, whether sponsored or government financed.

(Aberra Makonnen is a member of the Education TWG and is Chief of the Basic Education Services Office of USAID Ethiopia.)

Gender Pooled Fund: 30 women from the 'emerging regions' of Beneshangul, Gambella, Afar and Somalia as well as pastoralists from Oromiya and SNNPR have been enrolled in 4-5 year summer course at Alemmaya University to study for their degree in gender and development studies. The female students include four pregnant women, with one ready to deliver any moment!



The current batch of students already have diplomas in various fields and meet the university's admission criteria.

This initiative was taken By Ethiopian Ministry of Women's Affairs to address the capacity needs of regions in terms of women's access to education. Financing to cover cost of the women's education came from the DAG Gender Pooled Fund.



The need for implementing a Quality Infrastructure Strategy

By Erik Ruh

Mothers worry that the food for their children endangers health; recipient countries of Ethiopian exports send back goods and products which do not meet standards and quality requirements.

All of this is known to happen in Ethiopia and other developing countries and the reasons on the table clearly point to the lack of a fully functioning National Quality Infrastructure.

Once such an infrastructure is established and fully operational we can expect to witness the positive impact on the nation's health, safety, security and environment and beyond that reduce the high compliance costs of a country's exporting firms. In any given market, suppliers and purchasers agree on the quality requirements before a successful trade transaction can be initiated.

Once such an agreement is reached, the purchaser needs to have the assurance that the product or service supplied will in fact meet the stated requirements.

In more technical terms, the chain of evidence facilitating this exchange starts with defined standards, completed by evidence of compliance. However, the evidence of compliance, i.e. conformity assessment, will only be trusted if the technical capability of those services is beyond reproach.

In developed economies, the output and services necessary to

provide all of this have been crystallized in the last century. The institutions providing them can be considered as Quality Infrastructure and are made up of Standards, Metrology, Testing, Inspection, Certification, and Accreditation.

Countries have to view the provision of such services in a holistic way as elements are interrelated and to some extent are all required to provide the purchaser, consumer or authorities with the appropriate confidence that the product, process or service meets expectations.



Laboratory work at the Quality and Standard Authority of Ethiopia

In 2007, during its second year of working closely with the Quality and Standards Authority of Ethiopia (QSAE), the Engineering Capacity Building Program (ecbp) presented a draft Strategy to the Ethiopian authorities for the implementation of a National Quality Infrastructure (The

ECBP handles the technical and financial assistance of the Federal Republic of Germany to achieve the economic targets outlined in PRSP II as well as PAS-DEP).

Following consultations with all relevant stakeholders, the strategy was approved by the Ethiopian Council of Ministers in March 2009.

Ecbp and QSAE have now drafted all needed proclamations to establish the relevant institutions with the help of international experts. They foresee the establishment of new bodies by utilising already existing workforce and experience from the QSAE. In order to meet WTO requirements and support the process of Ethiopia's accession to WTO the proclamations indicate the accountability of all service provision bodies (Standards, Conformity Assessment, Metrology, Accreditation) to the newly established Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) while all regulatory tasks including Legal Metrology are under the duty of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI).

Ecbp invites the donor community for a close collaboration on issues of Quality Infrastructure.

Some steps have been successfully undertaken but an even closer cooperation between the different donors is very much needed to support common efforts in private sector development and particularly on issues of safety, security and health.

(Erik Ruh is a Manager of Quality Infrastructure at Ecbp – GTZ and a member of the Private Sector and Trade TWG)

Update : Ato Hailemichael Kinfu, Head of External Mobilization Department, and Ato Admasu Nebebe, responsible for the Aid Management Platform (AMP) attended a sub-regional workshop on the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) held in Accra, Ghana from 8-9 September 2009. Ato Hailemichael made a presentation on 'Aid Information Systems in Ethiopia'.

The meeting brought together government officials working on aid and coordination to discuss partner country aid information needs, challenges and way forward for the development of common standards and a Code of Conduct for the recording and publication of aid information.

A Global High Level meeting will be held in October in The Hague to consider the recommendations of the Regional consultations. Ethiopia will be represented by the State Minister responsible for development cooperation.

COMING UP: 30 September 2009 (UNAIDS conference room, 10am)
6 October 2009 (UNDP small conference room, 2:30pm)
8 October 2009 (UNDP conference room, 2:30pm)

DAG TWG co-chairs meeting
DAG Executive Committee meeting
DAG Heads of Agency meeting

Please email your contributions to dagcommunications@undp.org.
Articles may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.

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