

Human and Institutional Capacity Development: an approach in perspective of sustainability

Summary:

This paper attempts to present the articulation that may exist between the approach of the 'Sustainability Program of the Church' of LWF member churches in Latin America and the Caribbean and the approach of "Human and Institutional Capacity Development", since both are part of the strategy of the Department for Mission and Development (DMD) of the LWF.

It particularly explores the relationship between the dimension of "Gift and Resources Development-GRD" of the Sustainability Program and the global program on "Human and Institutional Capacity Development" that the Office of the Communion has been developing through the DMD since 2010.

From the early experiences of the Sustainability Program, and especially since the Systematization in 2007-2011 that recommends the realization of an effective articulation between the regional programs (4.2.1.a, page 21), the search for an articulation has been ongoing and it has been proposed to put the efforts of the churches of Latin America and the Caribbean in strengthening their sustainability in dialogue with other similar researches and experiences of the Lutheran communion. Thus the Sustainability Program is no longer an isolated experience or pilot program but becomes part of a larger effort in the world, increasing its strength and sustainability and at the same time strengthening its learning abilities and challenges.

From the start the Sustainability Program has identified three dimensions on which the sustainability of the churches in the Latin American and the Caribbean region are based:

-Participatory Strategic Planning is the proactive and planned mobilization of a church that tries to identify the way it is called by God to contribute to its mission in the context. It is the guiding instrument for the actions of a church realized in the short and medium term by the participation of all members.

-Thinking and building the church, is the identification of patterns and practices of being church and being congregation or community of faith. That is the way in which people, guided by the Holy Spirit, get organized to express their faith.

- Gift and Resources Development, is the identification, deployment and increase of capacities, gifts and resources with which God nourishes his church; these are the skills, charismas and goods which we can really or potentially rely on, as well as the healthy, responsible and efficient management of such resources.

The Sustainability Program also considers two strong cross-cutting themes: the gender and intergenerational approach. To include a gender analysis in the sustainability of the churches *is a*

matter related to faith, justice, power, politics and courage¹. For the intergenerational approach the advice is simple: give space and voice to youth in all aspects of church life, including decision-making².

In 2010 (Plenary Meeting of Ayagualo, El Salvador) the Sustainability Program presented the first paper on the strategy for Gift and Resources Development (GRD) that proposed three program areas:

a) the mobilization of resources, which expresses a vision in which the resources are not just financial but also political, material, technical and human, i.e. all kinds of goods and resources given by God to communities of faith and churches through the Holy Spirit.

b) the integrated management, involving economic, financial and legal management, in which it is not only necessary to mobilize and develop but also to care for, watch and manage the common property and do so in a transparent and fruitful way, giving public account of that common property

c) the development of gifts, means that the sustainability of the church is linked to its members (sisters and brothers in the faith) and to their gifts, talents, time, charisma and skills that are utilized in the service of God's mission³. It leads to the development of skills in people and the organization and it creates opportunities for participation (universal priesthood⁴)

And three cross-cutting supports:

-Cognitive development, or development of knowledge; in a society as complex as the current one, it is necessary to learn, know, study, produce and develop concepts, methods and techniques that enhance the development of gifts and resources

-Theological reflection, positions the strategy and guides the processes; e.g. in accordance with the theology that we recognize, there may be different approaches and criteria to the way we develop gifts and resources and in which we consider the universal priesthood. Theological reflection is one way of seeing the presence of God in our events, plans and actions.

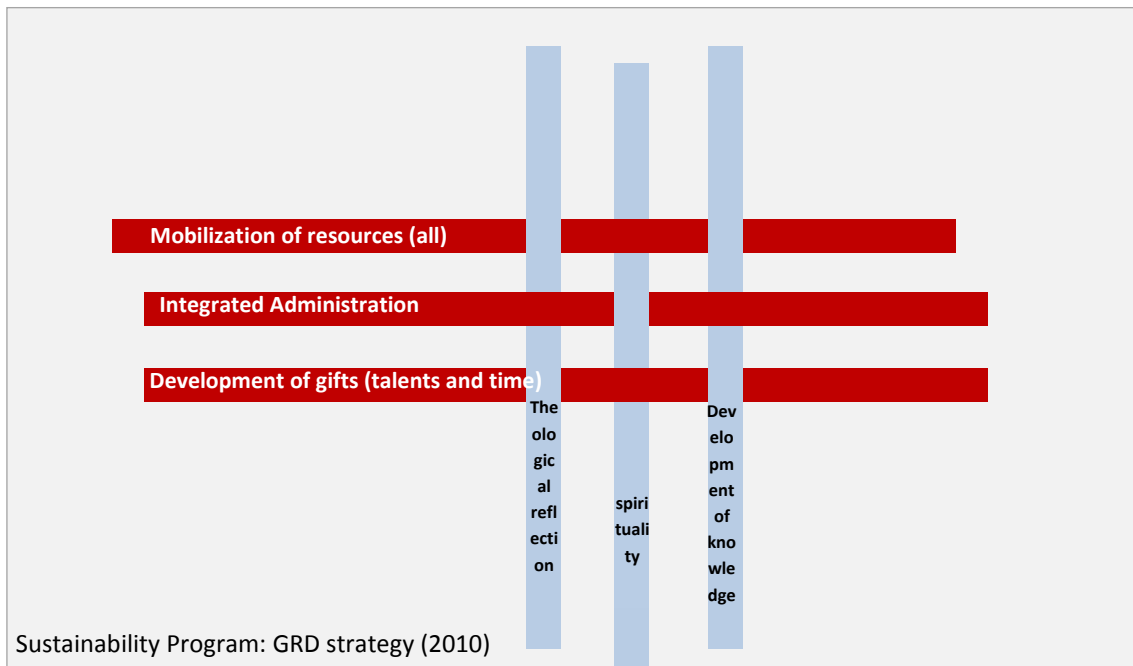
-Spirituality, allows us to discover, experience and express God's grace, that is, what God does and gives. Prayer, silence, symbols, deep encounter with other people and with Creation, as well as our actions and plans are expressions of spirituality that help us see what God has already given and how that already is around us.

¹ Marcia Blasi. Gender and Sustainability, 2011

² A church of Ideas. Workbook on the participation of the youth. LWF 2010

³ Strategy for the Development of Gifts and Resources. Sustainability Program-LWF-LAC. See document: <http://sustentabilidad.files.wordpress.com/2010/08/estrategia-desarrollo-de-dones-y-recursos.pdf>

⁴ Bautismo, Sacerdocio Universal y Ministerio Ordenado, Martin Junge, 2008



Gifts are abilities, charismas, talents, time and goods that God has given us so that we may utilize them in the service of His mission. We are all bearers of gifts, we all have received gifts. Development of gifts is a responsibility of all Christians. Our gifts are tools that allow us to respond to God's call to us. The call to help with His mission is accomplished by individuals, but also by communities of faith and churches; the latter also have a responsibility to develop God's gifts.

As churches and as a communion we are called to deepen our commitment to make people with the ability to utilize their full potential available for service in God's mission and to create organizations (churches) that are fertile ground for the deployment of their gifts.

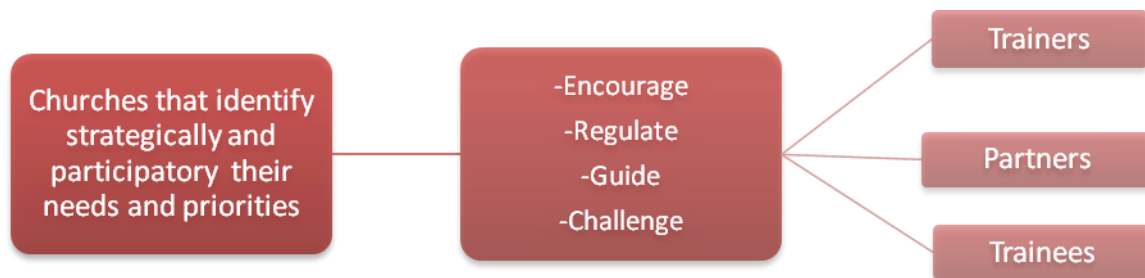
Gifts and Resources Development in perspective of Sustainability means to develop in people and organizations (churches), skills that are necessary in the context in which we operate, and also to ensure that those capabilities will deliver the fruits they potentially bear.

The Lutheran Communion and particularly the churches in Latin America and the Caribbean make great efforts in training and education of their human resources: lay members, ordained members, executive boards, paid leaders and staff often receive workshops, lectures and materials aimed at developing their capabilities. However, these activities do not always coincide with the plans and strategies of the churches.

In these times it is necessary that churches become stronger and clearer in expressing their strategies and priorities, and that training activities are based on the plans, strategies and priorities of the churches.

The dynamics of capacity development show at least four actors: a) churches of the communion that need training, b) trainees c) allies, partner organizations and donors who support with donations (investments) and d) implementers of the training.

Churches that identify and participatory plan their strategies and priorities can direct and regulate the actions of their allies and companions, those who they support as well as those implementing the capacity development and those who are trained.



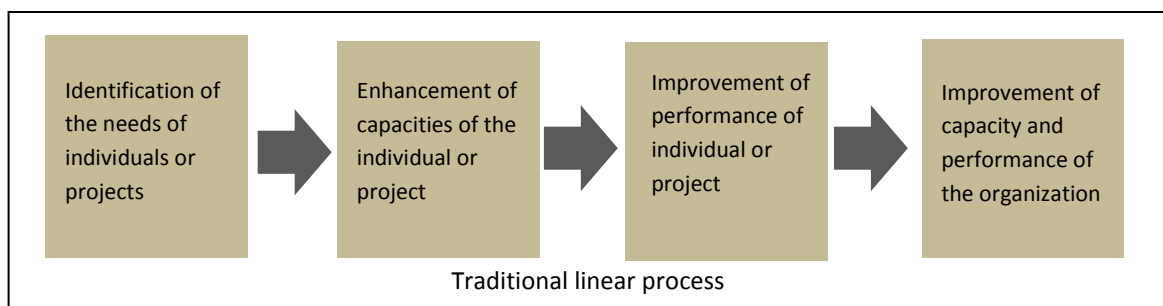
The depletion of the traditional approach⁵

In the past the most frequently used process of capacity development of an organization began with an estimate, or sometimes even with an assumption of the needs of its members, or staff or project, each of them separately.

Once these needs were identified, individuals were trained and abilities increased in the project or church. These capacity building activities at the individual or project level were supposed to contribute to the improvement of capacity and performance of the organization; but usually the process did not work as such.

It turns out that the support given to the individual or the project did not respond with certainty to the priority needs of the organization (church); the approach of people or the program did not include the broad perspective and strategy of the whole church; or the trained people did not find a conducive environment to utilize their knowledge, skills and attitudes.

In other cases, trainees who returned, sometimes could not even stay in the church, they found no "space" and sometimes they were offered opportunities in the labor market. The approach that only focuses on training of people and projects or organizational units may even jeopardize the capacity of the organization as a whole.



Articulation with the Capacity Building Process in the Lutheran Communion

Since 2010 the DMD / LWF has been developing the strategy of the Lutheran communion in the area of Capacity Development that is gradually beginning to articulate with the DDR strategy of the Sustainability Program in Latin America and the Caribbean.

⁵ Evaluating Capacity Development. Experiences from Research and Development Organizations around the World, Douglas. Horton *et al.* International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada; ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), the Netherlands.

At the same time the Communion Office (LWF) has identified the need to strengthen the link between the programs that support capacity building in the churches, ensuring more effective support to policies for the development of human resources, leadership, skills for service in diakonia and growth, etc.

The Global Consultation on the Impact and Strategy of Education and Training conducted by the LWF churches (5 to 8 October 2010 in Montreux, Switzerland) also reemphasized the need for synergy and collaboration between all actors in the communion that take part in capacity building.

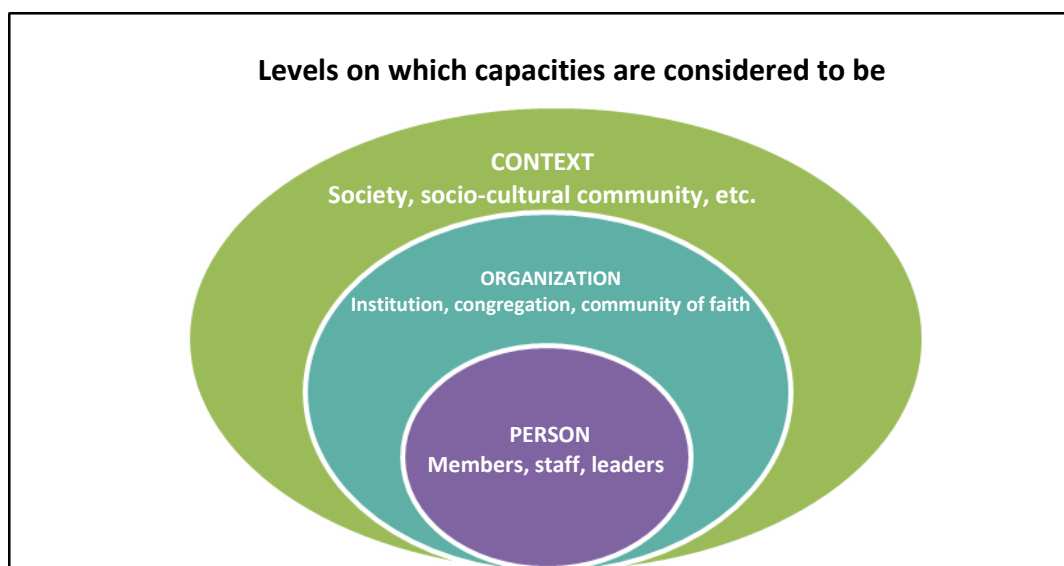
In social organizations mention is often made of capacity building and human resource development. The (visible) church is also considered a social organization so that it is possible to connect us with the approach that comes from social science.

The concept of Human and Institutional Capacity Development considers people (who carry their gifts) to be embedded in their context and mediated by their relationships, that is as part of a system. From this perspective, the capacities are considered to be in the person but also in the organization and its broader social context.

It is not only considered how skilled a person is, but also how capable the organization is to utilize the person's full potential.

Human and Institutional Capacity Development provides an integrative and systemic approach of the individual and the organization (church) in which a person is serving, considering also the organization (church) in its environment and its socio-historical context. In other words, the capacities must be aimed at:

- the person (members, leaders, managers, staff of the church)
- the community or organization (church, faith community, wide community)
- the network of organizations (national church)
- policies and legal framework of the country
- customs and habits that shape the economic, cultural and socio-political environment of the society.



Capacity and capacity development

There are various definitions of capacity and "capacity building"; normally we recognize the use of the following:

Capacity involves skills, relationships, organizational and technical values that enable countries, organizations, groups and individuals at all levels of society to fulfill functions and achieve their development goals over time. Skills are not only capabilities and knowledge but also relationships, attitudes and values ⁶(Morgan, 1998)

You can also define capacity as the "emergent combination of attributes, assets, skills and relationships that enables a human system to perform, survive and self-renew itself"⁷

In the following table you can see a summary of the capacities at different levels

Levels of Capacity	Definition of Capacity	Elements on which the capacity is based
Environmental	The environment and conditions necessary for demonstrating capacity at the individual and organizational levels. It includes systems and frameworks necessary for the formation/implementation of policies and strategies beyond an individual organization. It includes administrative, legal, technological, political, economic, social and cultural environments.	Formal institutions (laws, policies, decrees, ordinances, membership rules, etc)
		Non formal institutions (customs, cultures, norms, etc)
		Social capital, social infrastructure, etc.
		Capacities of individuals and organizations under the environment
Organizational/ institutional	Anything that will influence an organization's performance.	Human resources (Capacities of individuals and organizations)
		Physical resources (facilities, equipment, materials, etc) and capital
		Intellectual resources (organizational strategy, strategic planning, business know-how, program management, process management, networks relationships, etc.)
		Organizational structure and management methods which affect the utilization of the resources (human, physical and intellectual assets) such as organizational culture, incentive and reward systems, etc.
		Leadership styles and responsibilities
Individual	The will and ability to set objectives and achieve them, using one's own knowledge and skills.	Knowledge, skills, value, attitude, relationships, health, awareness.

⁶ LWF- DMD Document: Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD)-Planning Framework. Africa - Outcome of the Strategic Leadership Seminar, Nairobi, Kenya, 8-12 de agosto 2011

⁷ Capacity Development in Practice, Jan Ubels, Naa-Aku Acquaye-Baddoo, Alan Fowler, Earthscan, London, 2011

Approaches to Human and Institutional Capacity Development

While the formation of concepts and approaches on how to carry out processes of Human and Institutional Capacity Development is still in process, there is consensus on the following points:

- 1) The importance of ownership of processes by the LWF member churches;
- 2) Pay due attention to capacity development at all three levels, in particular to the institutional (church) and environmental level.
- 3) Recognizing that capacity development is a long-term process.

Based on these perspectives and principles, it will be possible that churches initiate a process to determine and improve their approach and management (may also be called administration) in developing human and institutional capacities of their members, staff and work teams, leaders and governing bodies, while taking into account their own strategic needs and those of the wider communion and promoting mutual learning among its members.⁸

Program Areas prioritized by the "Human and Institutional Capacity Development " program

The Global Consultation on the Impact and Strategy of Education and Training of the LWF churches (5-8 October 2010 in Montreux, Switzerland) and its subsequent monitoring process, identified three central areas for the Identification and Evaluation of Capacity Development Needs:⁹

- Leadership Development
- Theological Education
- Capacities to serve in Diakonia and Development

At the same time, it made clear the necessity for an in depth discussion and analysis of the need for

- Local policies on Human and Institutional Capacity Development and Human Resource Management.¹⁰

Questions to help the churches to move forward:

1. Ownership of the process

How can we ensure that churches are owners of their processes of human and institutional capacity development? What tools do we need to determine this strength?

2. Focus on the broader picture, see the whole not just the parts

How can we ensure that initiatives of human and institutional capacity development focus on the person, the church (organization) and the environment? How do we avoid looking only at the individual and/or traditional level that has customarily influenced the approach on capacity development?

⁸ Final message of the Global Consultation on Impacts and Strategies in Education and Training -LWF, Octobre 2010.

⁹ See attached document 1: Guidelines for Identification and Assessment of Capacity Building

¹⁰ See attached document 2: Guidance for Developing Local Policies for Human Capacity Development and Institutional and Human Resource Management.

3. An environment and conditions in the church that utilizes capacity development

How can we create spaces for people to show their skills and knowledge in order to let them support processes of change that the organization carries out?

4. Processes, not events

How can we make sure that the activities and skills-development programs (education, formation, and training) are aimed at the needs and strategic priorities of the churches? How do we implement the perspective of human and institutional capacity development as a long-term process?

5. Moving from just training to policies of human and institutional capacity development

How can we achieve that the innumerable activities of training such as workshops, meetings, seminars and events become policies of human and institutional capacity development, which have their own systems for planning, monitoring, evaluation (including objectives, indicators, systematizations, etc.)?

6. The sustainability of the initiatives of human and institutional capacity development

How can we design from the start our capacity building initiatives in such a way that the perspective of integrated sustainability is included?

Capacity Building as a Political Process

What makes an organization take steps to develop capacities? Organizations change and develop capacities in response to the challenges of their context.

Naturally there will be different perceptions of what is considered as challenges of the context and the responses that are needed, i.e. which skills to develop and how soon to realize them. So there could be different views among decision makers to set the course of actions. If the top management does not understand the importance of capacity building there will be no political will to change the organization, and it is unlikely that the functional or technical views will have the necessary strength. At the same time there can be very strong reasons not to change (e.g., strong interest in maintaining the status quo); in that case it is likely that the change does not happen, unless the internal correlation of forces obliges decisions (Boesen, 2010)¹¹.

As a result of their environment or internal factors, people and organizations can have strong or weak incentives to change, develop and learn. Like learning, skills development in people or organizations can not be forced, it is always necessary to have a certain degree of consent to make capacity development happen.

Trainers or consultants can teach, encourage, but not more than that. If the processes of change are not owned and led by those whose capacity is being developed, it is unlikely to be successful. In many cases pressure from external actors could be a major help to change and build capacity, but the decisions and processes are internal to each organization. (Boesen, 2010)

¹¹ Capacity, complexity and consulting: Lessons from managing capacity development projects, Ajoy Datta, Louise Shaxson and Arnaldo Pellini, Overseas Development Institute, 2012

Capacity Development with Gender Justice

The concept of justice goes back to the concept of injustice. Logically, persons who are deprived are the ones who seek justice. In the development of human society, a patriarchal structure has prevailed where community, family, church relations have a common pattern: women suffer injustices caused by discrimination, subordination, denial of their rights, and violence of all kinds. These injustices are sometimes visible or hidden. They are committed either in the private/domestic or public sphere and unfortunately they are present in almost all the economic, social, religious, and political areas. Gender justice denotes a concept of justice related to existing personal, social, legal relationships between men and women. It implies full citizenship for women in the personal or private, social, political, and legal settlements.

Gender justice implies empowerment of women, who having taken control of their lives have established their own agenda, acquired skills, achieved confidence, have capacities to solve problems, and have developed self-reliance. While each person can only empower themselves, the processes for empowering individuals or groups should be supported jointly by others.

Capacity Development with Gender Justice must be expressed through social, legal, and institutional just relations at personal/domestic or organizational/public levels in society. At each level agreement regarding behaviors, policies, and strategies are needed plus accountability regarding these agreements in order to advance towards a human development that empower all people to maximize their resources and gifts.

Capacity development for Gender Justice deal power issues which cannot be solved with operational or functional issues (such as quotas, or inclusive language). On the contrary, a vision and political will is necessary to transform structures, organizations, and individuals. There is need for a skill of how to solve emerging problems and their consequences, and the persistence and resilience in the vision of gender justice.

Policies and strategies capable to disarm the institutionalized patriarchal power systems requires fair and good governance on part of the authorities. Power imbalances can prevent women and other human beings to act in solidarity with each other to practice justice.

To be human means to be men and women, different but equal in rights, because that is the way God created us. The image of God is expected to be reflected together between and among men and women.

The relationship between men and women must be inspired by the Trinitarian model where there is mutuality, equality, and partnership. So, when men and women live in mutuality and partnership, God's image is reflected as human beings are created as unique and different at the same time.

Christ's ministry clearly points that it is beyond all differences, whether gender, race, culture, caste or class that everybody can be transformed when we are part of the body of Christ. The cross, on which Jesus chose to die and to save the world, is a "poignant symbol of the *kenosis of patriarchy*, the self emptying of the dominant male power in favor of the new humanity of compassionate service and mutual empowerment" (It will not be so among you. Mark 10:34. A reflection of faith on gender and power, LWF document).

Gender justice between men and women exists when both are able to share equally in the distribution of power and knowledge and have equal opportunities, rights, and obligations. Capacity Development with a Gender Justice approach points out to this objective.

Capacity Development of Youth

Lutheran theology teaches that we become members of Christ's body through baptism. In baptism, we do not choose Christ; rather, Christ chooses us. Hence in the Lutheran churches often baptize children at young age even before they can speak or walk, affirming that are important part of the body of Christ.

We acknowledge that children are also full members of the body of Christ. Therefore, they are part of the church. God calls each person to offer their gifts and skills for the benefit and good living of the whole body of Christ. Sometimes, God calls us to something that seems unlikely. For instance, God called Jeremiah to be a prophet to the nations (Jeremiah 1:6-7) when he was just a boy. People of all ages are called to serve God (A Church of Ideas. A Workbook for youth participation, LWF document).

Capacity Development with Youth requires multifocal approaches: a) the development of individual/personal and group skills that takes place when learning and organizational processes are supported; b) development of organizational capacity of churches for youth participation which includes participation in decision-making processes including gender justice; c) participation of young people supported by the church (organization) is stressed in the public agenda in civil society.

Capacity Building is a Common-union process

Capacity is the total of interactions within a system between different actors whose behavior can sometimes be unpredictable. The capacity lies in the relationships and interactions between actors, both inside and outside an organization and at different levels. The capacity develops as relationships and interactions between these players progress; this may happen when for example a team of diakonia returns from a training activity and presents the experience to colleagues and leaders; on the contrary, when people of a team travel, learn and have experiences and do not or cannot share, the capacity is encapsulated and does not develop. Approaches that are aimed at individual and isolated entities (a person or an office or project) will have little impact. Capacity development should not only focus on the capabilities needed to achieve the technical results, it should also build relationships, more effective interactions and healthy dynamics (Woodhill, 2010)¹².

Bringing together and connecting multiple stakeholders through participatory processes, will help improve their shared vision, purpose and direction, increase clarity about their roles and improve their ability to make decisions. When participants in a participatory process listen to each other, they build trust, openness, connectivity and understanding, which helps to overcome differences in search for the benefit of all people and of the organization.

In organizations with adequate participation the articulation of resources, connections, technical skills, responsibilities, interests, perspectives, knowledge, different forms of power and ways to encourage change, lead to new types of capacities. But if it is not possible to create participatory processes, such as can happen in an organization or system where the hierarchy is strong and the

¹² Woodhill, J. (2010) 'Capacity Lives between Multiple Stakeholders'. In J. Ubels, N.-A. Acquaye-Baddoo, and A. Fowler, Capacity Development in Practice. London, Washington, DC: Earthscan

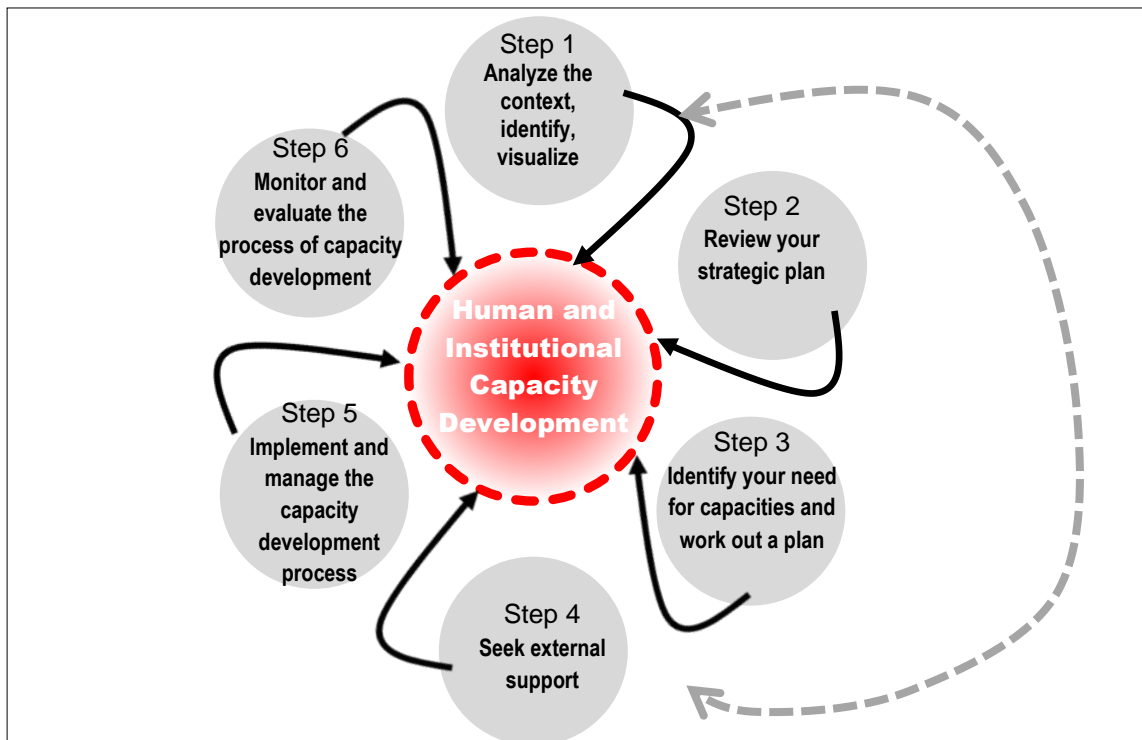
organizational elements are atomized, other ways to encourage collaboration and participation can be considered, for example: less formal networks, consultative forums or other methods that require less interaction and commitment (Woodhill, 2010)

A Method to Articulate and Monitor Capacity Development¹³

There is no single recipe or model for capacity development of an organization; what works well in one place may fail in another. Given the nature of the capacity building processes and the frequent changes that organizations face nowadays, it will not be easy to implement an orderly sequence as presented here. However, our experience suggests that there is some logic in the presented order of PME practices in projects and programs.

- 1. Analyze, visualize, and identify the context:** political, social, technological or economic changes can dramatically alter the approach and processes for capacity development. Economic crises, reduction of external financial aid, changes in the constitution of the churches, experiences of new ministries, transformation of work in the church are some of the changes in our contexts. While you analyze, visualize and identify the context, you look for allies and external partners who can contribute to capacity building in your organization.
- 2. Review your strategic plan:** the needs of capacity development should be identified within the strategy of the organization, which is expressed in its participatory strategic plan (PSP). As the organization recognizes its external environment, it periodically reassesses its vision, mission, objectives, strategies and programs. Work teams that have participated in professional evaluations of capacity development processes, assure that it would have been useful to conduct a participatory strategic planning exercise before starting with the development of particular capacities.

¹³ Evaluating Capacity Development IDRC, Canada, 2003 Douglas Horton y otros. Disponible en http://web.idrc.ca/es/ev-43630-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html



- 3. Identify your need for capacities and work out a plan:** capacity development plans need to be based on the understanding of the environment or context and a well-formulated strategy for the organization. It is not possible to have a capacity building process if it is not planned and coordinated with the context and organizational strategy itself. A capacity development plan will lead us to the implementation of a planning, monitoring and evaluation system (PME) as part of the plan; this will stimulate the decision-making and will contribute to the short or long term plans of the organization.
- 4. Seek external support:** It is very likely that an organization does not have sufficient own resources to build its skills as fast as needed. Some external support will be required, which does not only mean international financial support, but also a variety of resources from national or local bodies such as NGOs, consultants and networks. Regardless of the support that is received, the organizations need to negotiate the terms of support to ensure that capacity development efforts are directed in such a way that they comply with the priorities of the organization, with follow- up, comprehensive accounting reporting, monitoring and evaluation.
- 5. Implement and manage the capacity development process:** Nothing can be as demoralizing and harmful to the performance of an organization as a comprehensive planning exercise that is not followed by a sensible and thorough implementation. Developing human and institutional capacities involves processes of organizational change that need to be managed effectively to last and go on. If there is no effective management in an organization, this aspect should be a requirement in the capacity development strategy.

6. Monitor and evaluate the process and capacity development plan: Monitoring and evaluation ensure that the capacity development process and plan are supervised and re-oriented whenever necessary. Following up, documenting and the sharing of results and achieved progress, encourage people and organizations to feel involved in the change process.

Focal Points:

- The sustainability of the church demand strategy, policies and plans of Human and Institutional Capacities Development (HICD). Strategy and policies should be explicit and documented.
- These HICD strategies and policies should be consistent and inspired by the processes of strategic planning.
- The HICD strategies, policies and plans cover the church (as an organization), the individuals and the context. Hence ordained ministers, non-ordained, lay members, hired professionals (staff).
- The strategies, policies and plans of HICD contain all practices and activities usually called training.
- The strategies, policies and plans in HICD are particular to each national church but come together in the global and regional perspective of the communion.
- The Latin America and Caribbean region offers networks facilities that should be taken advantage of, in order to make the HICD more efficient.

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