

Capacity building for SDGs

ICON INSTITUTE Consulting Gruppe

**Learning organisations: Developing capacities at
organisational level**

**Lessons from implementing and evaluating international cooperation
and development aid interventions**

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Preliminary remarks

There are challenges to transferring capacities from the individual to the organisational level

- Legal framework not conducive to effective delivery of the mandate
- Low initial capacities
- Attrition of capacities through turnover and „brain drain“
- Duration of projects and programmes (internalisation takes time)
- Lack of learning culture at management level
- Focus of projects and programmes (eg: youth)

Why evaluate the capacity development at organisational level?

- **Effectiveness/impact**
 - Effective internalisation of capacities provide:
 - Better outputs
 - Better use of resource
 - Less dependency on the capacities of individuals
 - Longer term change of practice and culture in the organisation
- **Sustainability**
 - Transfer of capacities at individual into the organisation allows to:
 - Design better processes
 - Sustainable working methods
 - More focus on internal quality management

Key factors of the development of capacities for organisations

- **Enabling environment**
 - The legal and political context must allow organisations to achieve their mandates
 - The organisation must be ready to learn
 - The human resource management must seek to promote capacity development at individual level
- **Targets - objectives**
 - Ensure the practice is aligned with the mandate
 - Internalise and take ownership of the capacities
 - Transfer learning to processes
 - Improve outputs and outcomes quality

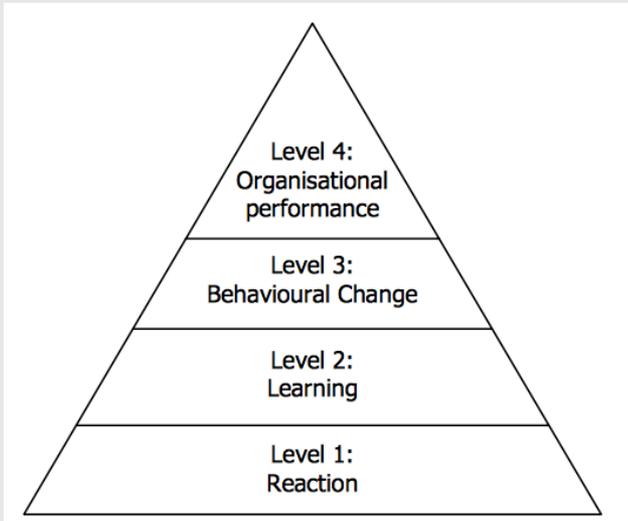
How can it be measured, documented and improved

An important starting point is to set up a benchmark and look for gap analysis

The following are some methods that can help to evaluate the capacity development in organisations:

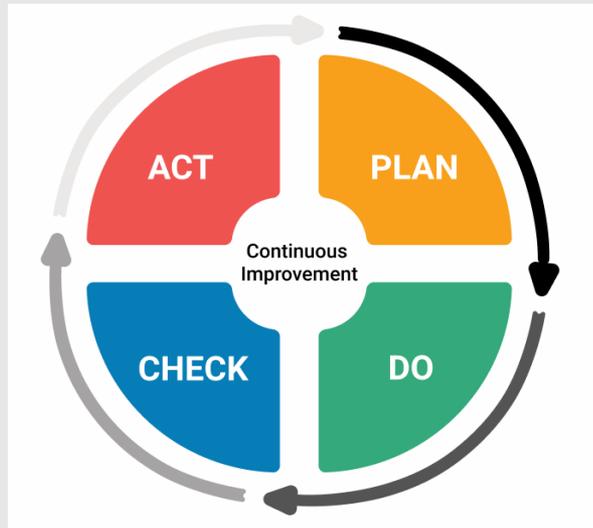
- Kirkpatrick model
- Deming cycle – PDCA
- Process evaluation

Kirkpatrick model



- Level 1 and 2 are more targeted at the measurement of capacity development at individual level
 - Level 3 and 4 are adequate to measure to the transfer of capacity from individuals to organisations
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- **Level 3: Behavioural change**
 - The degree to which participants apply what they learned during training when they are back on the job
 - **Level 4: Organisational performance**
 - The degree to which targeted outcomes occur as a result of the training and the support and accountability package

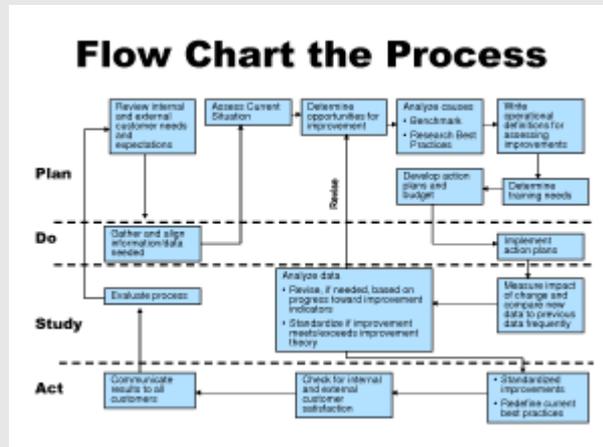
The Deming cycle – PDCA



The deming cycle can be used to assess the maturity of an organisation to undertake the basic functions and identify the capacity gaps to:

- **Plan** its work appropriately – relevance of the outputs and outcomes to the mandate, purpose or function
- **Do** its work to deliver its mandate, purpose or function – effectiveness and efficiency
- **Check** its objectives have been met, how and why or why not
- **Act** upon the shortcomings and improve processes (including planning, delivery and monitoring)

Process evaluation



- **Process evaluation** is the understanding of how things work in a sequence and how **integrated** and **interdependent** the inputs and outputs are
- We can use the **same criteria** as for the intervention evaluation (Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency) but at a more **granular** level
- We can identify if the organisation works in **silos** or more **transversally**
- Evaluating processes allows to **differentiate** between **theory** related factors and **implementation** related factors
- Understanding the processes gives more leeway for **replicability** or **up-scaling** and isolates organisational outputs from the environment factors
- **Identify the gaps** and **monitor** the implementation of the processes

Some « good practices » to look for

- Existence of **feedback loops** between organisational and individual capacity development
- A **knowledge management** function in the organisation or in the design of the project is a good indicator of a culture of learning from practice
- **Action learning** is an effective way to deliver capacity at individual level while ensuring that the capacities are transferred into the organisation and its working processes
- Existing **workflows** are a sign that the organisation has the capacity to reflect on its operations
- **Internal monitoring** functions are a sign that the organisation is willing and/or able to take stock of its operational capacities

Concluding remarks

- External evaluation can help organisations to develop and **internalise** and **take ownership** of their processes and capacities
- Evaluators should actively **advocate** for the internalisation of individual capacities to development partners and beneficiaries
- Developing **internal M&E functions** and capacities are a key success factor for **sustainability** of capacity development
- **Transferring capacities from individuals to organisations takes time** and it should be acknowledged in the design and evaluation of projects and programmes
- **Efficiency** at the organisational level is a longer term target - Capacity development has a dimension of **public service**
- **Participatory methods are important for an organisation to learn from an external evaluation**