

# Assessing Change in Capacity Development: Points for Consideration

## Belgium

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**INTRAC**  
International NGO Training and Research Centre

# Session Shape

Part One: Overview on Capacity Building

Part Two: M&E of Capacity Building:

- Illustrating key points through a real experience of evaluating CB
- Group exercise
- Bringing it all together – summary points for consideration; issues & dilemmas; good practice
- Q&A – open ended

# Some Definitions

- ‘Ability to’ and ‘power to’ do something (functional) and be something/someone (intrinsic)
- It is fluid ....grows and diminishes
- It is located at different levels (scales of human action – individual through to institutional)
- Expressed in different forms (human capabilities, relational, resource)
- Influenced by context
- It is applied....‘Capacity for what?’

# Levels of Capacity

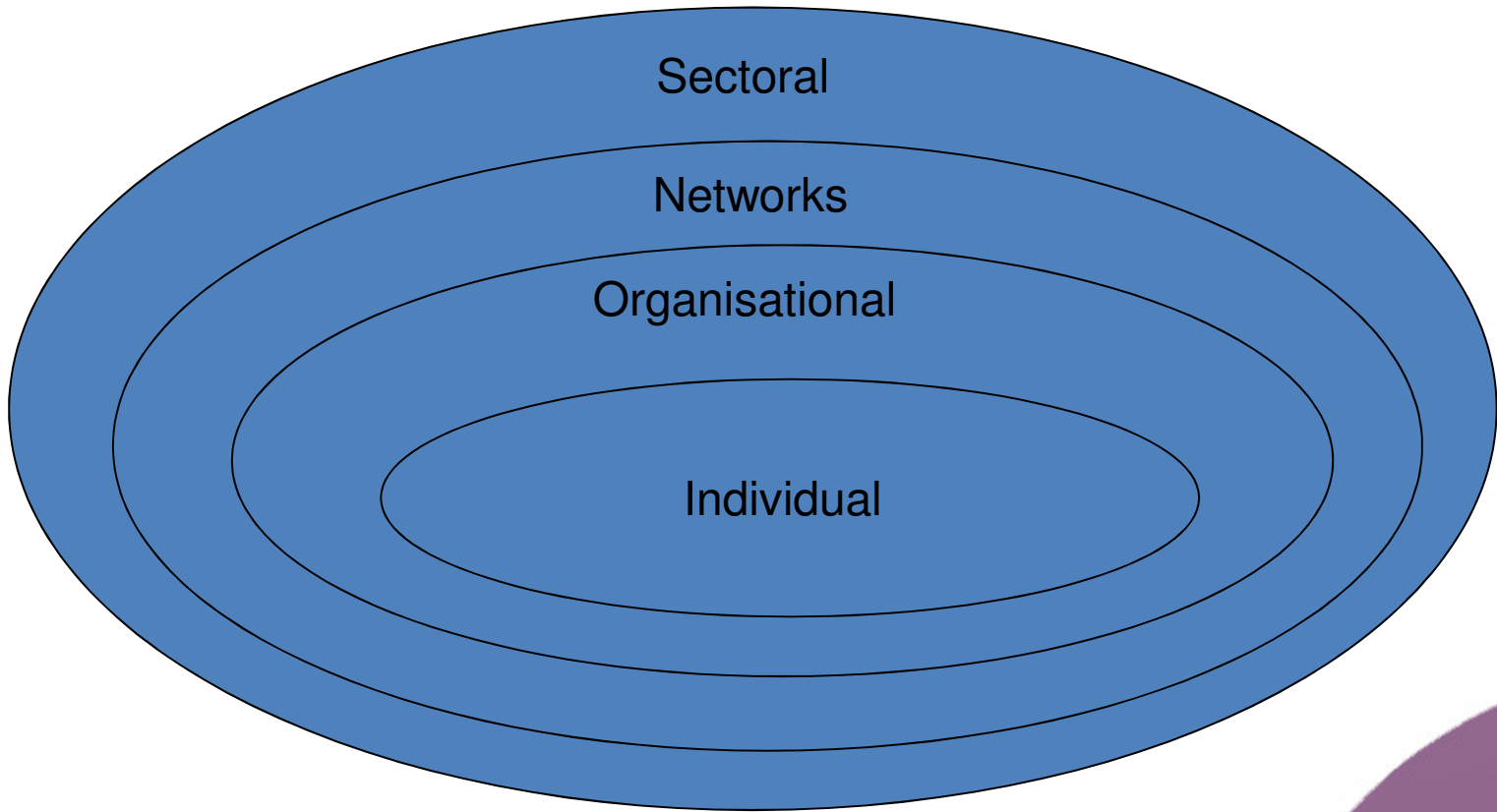
Cross sectoral

Sectoral

Networks

Organisational

Individual



# Terminology

## CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

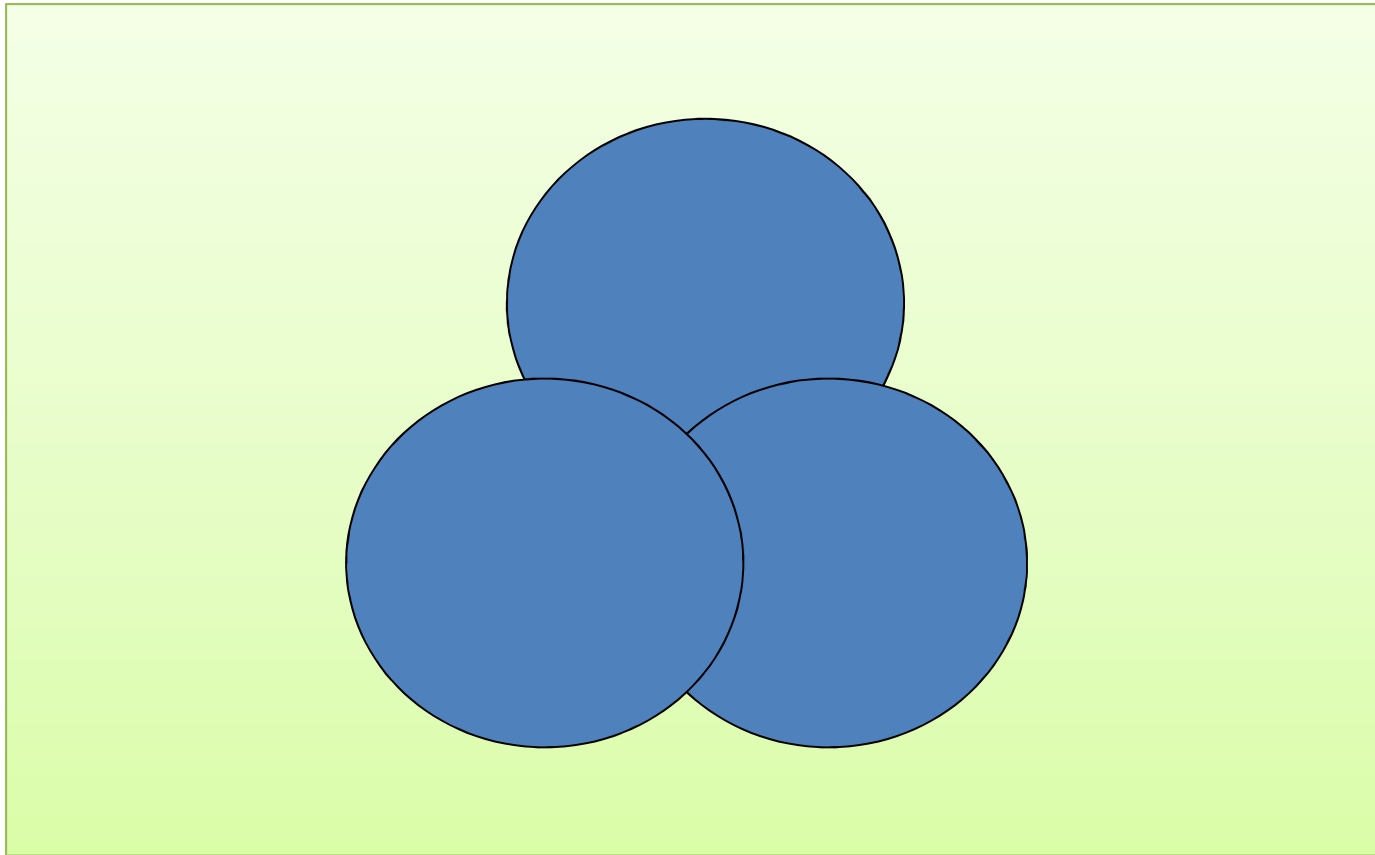
- Increased ability/power to 'do' and to 'be'.
- Conveys notion of change process – no 'agency' (whether internal or external)

## CAPACITY BUILDING

- Purposeful, conscious effort to bring about capacity development

Capacity Building is a structured process that is framed around the answer to the question '**capacity for what?**' It has a clear purpose and set of specific objectives.

# 3 circles model



# 5 capabilities model

Capability to  
adapt and  
self-renew

Capability to  
act and  
commit

Capability to  
deliver on  
development  
objectives

Capability to  
relate to  
external  
stakeholders

Capability to  
achieve  
coherence

# Capacity Indicators

Each broad capacity area can be broken down into specific capacities, for example:

**e.g. Capacity to build effective relations:**

- Capacity to analyse and choose allies strategically
- Capacity to negotiate relationships
- Capacity to communicate within relationships



# Capacity Indicators

These can then be described in detail.

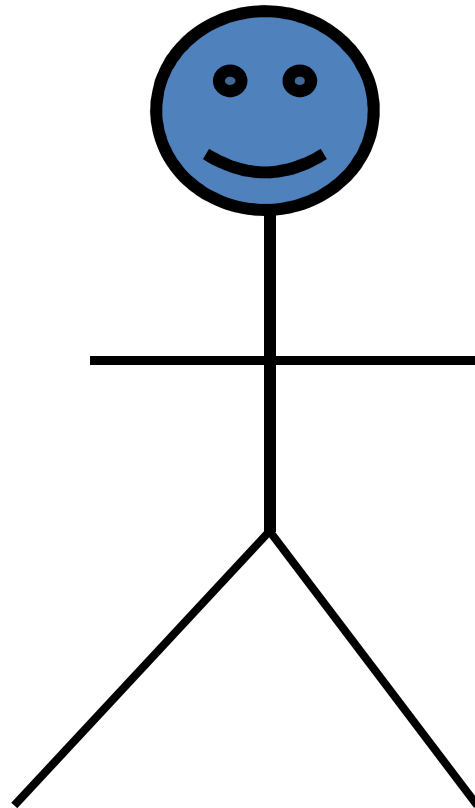
- This description, or indicator, can vary according to level of development of the capacity.
- The description may also vary according to the type of entity being assessed.

# Capacity Indicator - Example

## Capacity to analyse & choose allies strategically:

*Formal analysis of stakeholders is incorporated in decision making. The organisation uses a consistent and systematic approach to identify and initiate potential relationships. It regularly reviews and renegotiates existing relationships (including planned exit strategies where appropriate). Established relationships are prioritised.*

# A Framework for Capacity Building



# PART TWO

## M&E OF CAPACITY BUILDING

# 1. Sharing a real experience

- Overview on the programme
- What was being evaluated?
- What approach to take?
- Which tools to use?

## Overview on the programme

- Global programme
- Focused on capacity building through 'people to people support'
- Linkage with Governance programmes
- ToR: *'to establish relevance, effectiveness and efficiency in relation to capacity building of partner organisations in the South'*

## What was being evaluated?

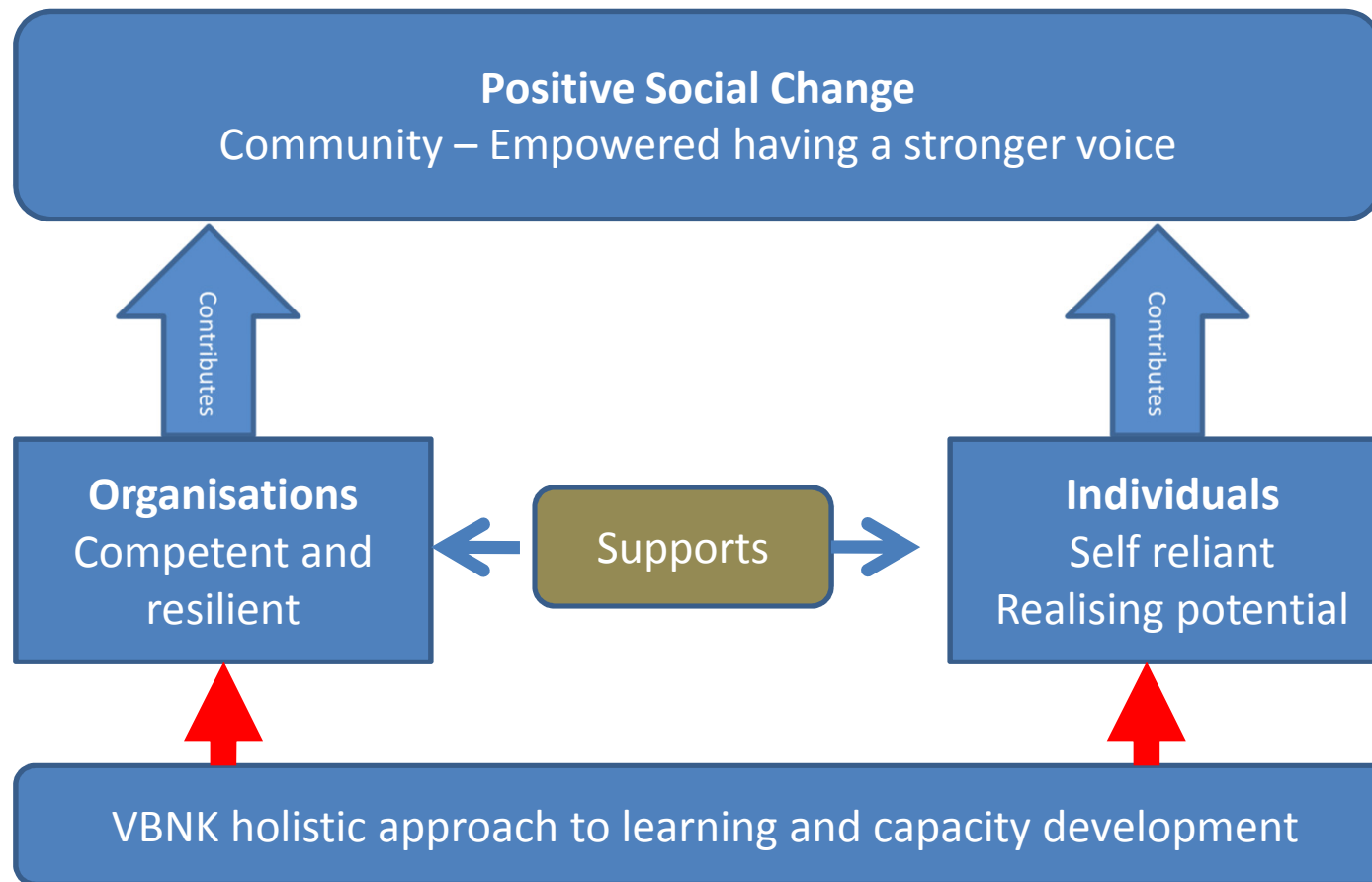
- Theory of Change? (relevance question)
- Changes in people's lives? (impact)
- Capacity for What? answers (impact in terms of contribution to Governance related objectives)
- Partner capacities (outcomes at organisational level)
- Individuals' competencies (outcomes)
- The capacity building processes
- Cost efficiencies?

# Theory of Change

- Why capacity building is being done
- What is involved
- How change is expected to occur & actors for change ('change agents')
- How individual/organisational change contributes to wider change
- What those wider changes might be
- Whose perspectives we are interested in
- Can be organisation-wide; programme level or project based



# VBNK's Theory of Change



# M&E levels

## **IMPACT**

Wider impact on civil  
society  
Changed lives of client's  
beneficiaries  
Long-term changes in client  
organisation

## **OUTCOMES**

Changes in capacity of client  
organisation

## **ACTIVITIES / OUTPUTS**

Capacity building  
process

# What approach to take?

The three levels - where to start from?

In the case:

- Focus was primarily on the middle-down and the bottom-up
- Taking both simultaneously and then bringing together the data in the analysis phase
- Being open to what might emerge about the top-down

# What tools to use?

In the case:

- Survey – reaching out to all partners (got a 67% response rate) and to the individuals who were ‘placed’ (62% and 55% response)
- SSIs – across diverse stakeholders
- Country case – one ‘in depth’ including visits to partners, communities

# M&E Tools & Methodologies

1. Organisational Assessment tools
2. Direct Measurement
3. Stories of change
4. Standard 'tools of the trade'
5. Newer tools and methodologies
6. Client satisfaction
7. Different M&E disciplines
8. Certification and Accreditation?

## 2. Group Exercise

Look at the three different directions of M&E in turn and consider:

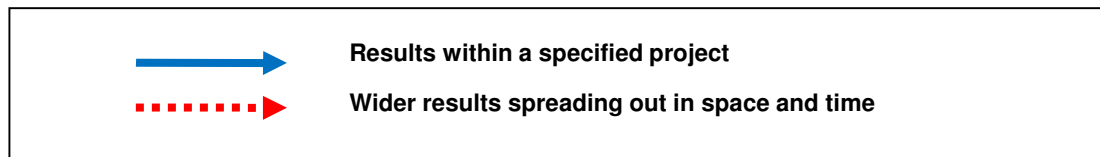
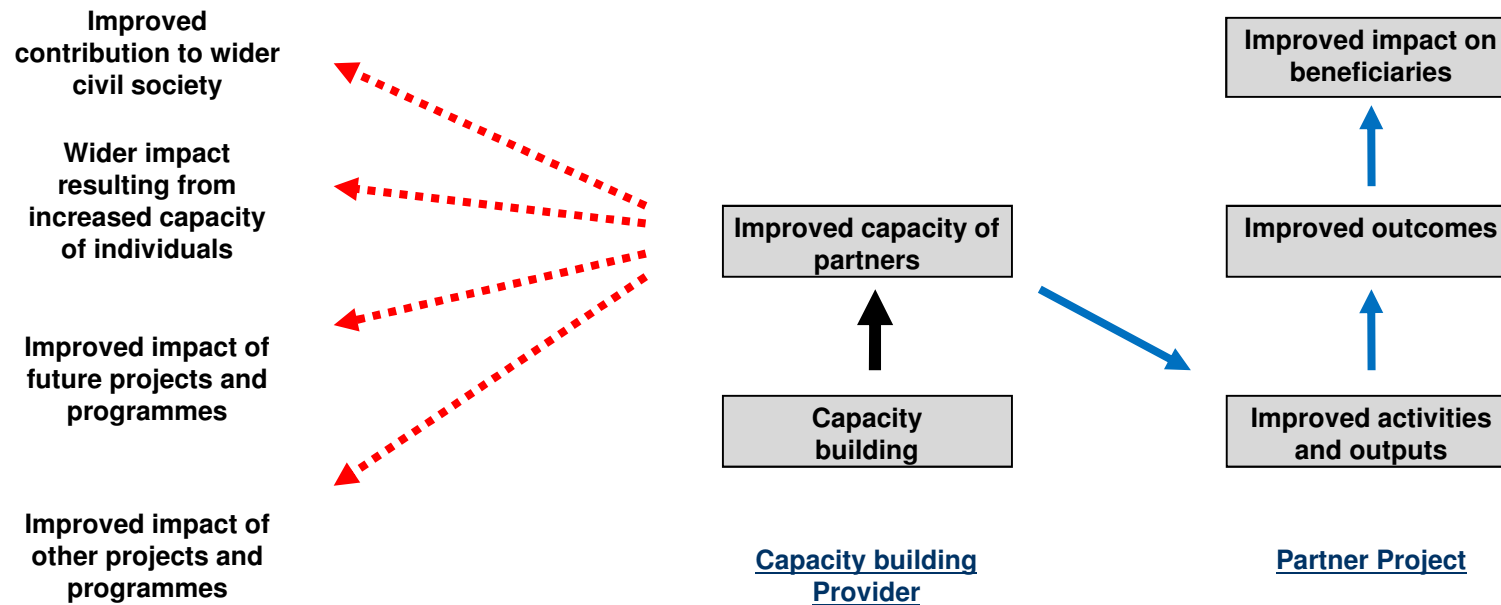
*What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the three different directions?*

- a) Bottom-up
- b) Middle-up-and-down
- c) Top-down

### 3. Issues for consideration

- Theory of Change
- Capacity for what?
- M&E for what?
- Clarity on what you are evaluating (programme; organisational/individual capacities)
- Different directions
- How far to measure (or illustrate or draw plausible links)

# Measurement and illustration





# Challenges & Dilemmas

- Long timescales between capacity building and desired end results
- Capacity development not a linear process
- Attribution or 'plausible association'?
- Results stretched across different organisations
- Appreciative approach?
- Balancing numbers and stories
- Whose views count?

## Good practice points

- M&E (for learning) needs to be separated from funding decisions
- M&E needs to contribute to the capacity building process
- M&E needs to be 'owned' by the organisation(s) receiving capacity support
- M&E costs should not outweigh benefits
- M&E needs to be light at the point of use