United Nations Guidance Note for Effective Use and Development of National Capacity in Post-Conflict Contexts

29 July 2013

Executive Summary

As countries emerge from conflict they often face a critical shortage of civilian capacity. "The journey from war to sustainable peace is not possible in the absence of stronger civilian capacity. Without this capacity, … resilient institutions will not take root and the risk of renewed violence will remain."[1] Effective national policies, institutions and governing systems are critical to successful recovery from conflict or crisis, and must be a priority from the onset of United Nations involvement.

This Guidance Note provides principles, advice and resources for the United Nations as it supports the use and development of national capacity in countries emerging from conflict. The Note is intended to inform assessment, analysis and planning exercises with national as well as other partners and to guide capacity development programming, covering the entire spectrum of UN support including peacekeeping, humanitarian and development activities.

The Note lays out ten principles, advice and resources, which seek to ensure that the United Nations' system-wide support to capacity development is based on national ownership and priorities, while acknowledging its mandates and norms:

1. Make national ownership the starting point for capacity development.

Genuine national ownership of the capacity development process by a broad range of committed national actors is a necessary condition for its success; without a nationally owned transformation of institutions there can be no sustained recovery from conflict. National demand and ownership are the starting point and driver of capacity development; supply-led responses are to be avoided.

2. Analyse and manage the political aspects of capacity development.

Capacity development creates "winners" and "losers" and affects power relations for better or worse. Identifying, analysing and navigating these power relations and incentive structures – both formal and informal – is a complex challenge that must be undertaken carefully to arrive at politically appropriate and technically sound capacity development.

3. Adapt capacity development support to fit the national context.

Adapting to the national context means understanding what constructive capacities for peacebuilding exist, customizing support to build on them, and being sufficiently pragmatic and flexible to quickly adjust support to changing conditions. While adapting support to the context is important, adherence to international norms and standards must be promoted.

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[1] A/65/747-S/2011/85.

4. Prioritise the feasible within the context of national priorities, including critical capacity gap areas.[2]

Identifying priorities in the face of overwhelming needs and competing objectives can become a challenge in the context of peacebuilding and statebuilding. International partners should prioritise their support to capacity development within context of national peacebuilding priorities and the critical gap areas, where broad national ownership of reform and commitment to change exist.

5. Take a strategic approach to capacity development, balancing support for quick wins and long-term results.

A strategic, well-coordinated and results-focused approach enhances the effectiveness of capacity development support. This should consist of a combination of both short-term and longer-term initiatives. Demonstration of quick results is essential to peace processes as it can strengthen citizens' confidence and trust in national institutions; in exploring how to demonstrate progress early on, international partners may consider capacity supplementation and technical support. At the same time, focus on longer-term capacity development initiatives from the beginning is necessary to lay the groundwork for sustainability of early progress.

6. Draw on countries with experience of transition, especially from the global South.

Countries that have experienced a transition to sustainable peace have acquired valuable experience and skills to contribute to national capacity development. Building partnerships between and among countries through South-South and/or triangular arrangements provides opportunities for valuable exchanges of experience. In tapping into the pool of advisors outside the country, international partners should encourage consideration of resources from the diaspora or global South, for example through the United Nations CAPMATCH system.

7. Minimise the risk of undermining national capacity through the use of national and international capacity.

Support to national capacity development creates a high demand for national personnel, which may distort the national labour market and workplace relations, as well as for international advisors, which may "crowd out" national capacities. The use of both national and international human resources should be managed to reduce negative impact on national capacity.

8. Build back better: develop new capacities that don't just replicate the past.

Strengthened capacities of a broad range of stakeholders – state and non-state, formal and informal, women and men, at national and sub-national levels – are vital for peacebuilding and are often needed to overcome the conditions that caused conflict in the first place. Capacity development responses should not only support the strengthening of national institutions but also develop capacities that lessen the probability of further conflict and increase the legitimacy of the state.

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[2]The five critical capacity gap areas are identified in the Reports of the Secretary-General on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict (A/66/311-S/2011/527 and A/67/312–S/2012/645): i) basic safety and security, ii) justice; iii) inclusive political processes; iv) core government functionality; and v) economic revitalization.

9. Make more use of national systems and capacities.

In post-conflict contexts, international partners often bypass or overlook national systems and capacities that do not meet their required performance standards, thereby weakening them further. International partners need to better identify perceived risks of using national systems and capacities and manage the associated trade-offs. Capacity development support by international partners informed by risk analysis and management can enable national institutions to assume ownership of their functional responsibilities and the peacebuilding agenda.

10. Lead and collaborate more effectively as the United Nations in support of national capacity development.

Fragmented, disjointed support to capacity development is not only inefficient, but risks undermining national capacities instead of strengthening them. The UN is in a strong position and has a special obligation when using and supporting the development of national capacities to work in a joined-up manner, building on national ownership and in line with national peacebuilding priorities. This requires proactive collaboration, well beyond coordination, within the UN system and with other partners, building on the personal engagement and leadership of the most senior UN officials, both in agency headquarters and in countries.

Prepared by the United Nations Inter-Agency Team on National Capacity Development
29 July 2013

Introduction

As recognized in the Report of the Secretary-General on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict, "United Nations planning can support national capacity-building by following nationally determined priorities and fostering inclusive national dialogue that involves both Government and civil society."[3]

This Guidance Note provides principles, advice and resources for the United Nations as it supports the use and development of national capacity in countries emerging from conflict. The Note is intended to inform assessment, analysis and planning exercises with national as well as other partners and to guide capacity development programming, covering the entire spectrum of UN support, including peacekeeping, humanitarian and development activities.

Capacity development in the context of transition is a journey through complexity, uncertainty, and risk. Navigating these challenges successfully means supporting capacity development that builds on and fosters national ownership. It means following paths often left unexplored, such as tapping into national knowledge and expertise, particularly that of women, youth and marginalized groups and supporting their engagement in various processes that have a direct impact on their lives. It also means cooperating with partners close to home in South-South exchanges, and remaining flexible in design and implementation. The Note responds to this reality by offering an overarching framework within which to support national capacity development, as well as advice and resources for making the trade-offs often required in providing that support.

The Note was commissioned by the Secretary-General in 2011, and subsequently developed by an inter-agency working group on capacity development, led by the United Nations Development Programme and representing 16 United Nations entities. It builds on insights and experiences across these entities as well as the work of external partners, such as the "New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States"[4] developed by the Group of Seven Plus through the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding.

The guidance is meant to be applied within the context of national peacebuilding priorities. The critical capacity gaps identified by the Secretary-General provide an additional lens through which to prioritise UN support to capacity development; these critical capacities gaps areas are: i) basic safety and security, ii) justice; iii) inclusive political processes; iv) core government functionality; and v) economic revitalization. These areas are largely similar to the five peacebuilding and statebuilding goals identified in the "New Deal": i) legitimate politics, ii) security, iii) justice, iv) economic foundations, and v) revenues and services.

The Note aims to support United Nations personnel as well as national actors and the wider international community. The Note begins by presenting 10 system-wide principles. It then gives advice and links to additional resources on how to identify and manage frequently encountered challenges and trade-offs inherent in each principle. The material is designed to strengthen national ownership and guide the United Nations system in providing national capacity development support. It is not designed to provide prescriptive answers, but rather to lay out the parameters that can help policy-makers and practitioners make well informed decisions for supporting effective use and development of national capacity for peacebuilding.

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[3]A/66/311-S/2011/527.
[4]http://www.g7plus.org/new-deal-document.

Part I. Principles

Part I of the Guidance Note presents 10 principles for effective use and development of national capacity in post-conflict contexts. Each of the 10 sections begins with a statement of principle, followed by an overview of challenges and operational results, and then a brief discussion of the principle. "Challenges" are meant to capture frequently encountered situations and/or dilemmas in supporting capacity development in post-conflict contexts, while "Operational Results" are the desired outcomes if the issues and tensions are successfully managed. It should be noted that the statements of principle are not intended to be prescriptive in nature, but rather to guide policy-makers and practitioners in the decision-making process.

1. Make national ownership the starting point for capacity development.

Challenges	Operational Results
1. Ownership is a dynamic, multi-partite process, often with competing claims of legitimacy and primacy.	- National demand and ownership are the foundation for and driver of capacity development.
2. Commitment to and readiness for change may not be commensurate with the level of ambition for change.	- Capacity development support is flexibly adjusted to the readiness for change, while seeking to increase it and bypass blockages.
3. Mandates and situation require support even if demand and ownership are weak, or demand for support is inconsistent with UN mandate or principles.	- UN leads from strength, based on an understanding of the context and evident needs of the population, effectively brokering between interests, strengthening ownership, and adapting support to a changing context.

Genuine national ownership of the capacity development process is a necessary condition for its success. To achieve the desired impact – sustainable and resilient capacities necessary for peace – capacity development must be a home-grown process that is not imposed from the outside.

Effective national ownership of comprehensive and enduring capacity development has to encompass a cross-section of stakeholders and in most cases cannot be limited to a few government interlocutors. Ensuring sufficient and enduring national ownership requires that international partners identify and support a broad range of national actors – state and non-state, formal and informal, institutions and individuals, men and women, youth and minority groups – who have commitment and incentives to pursue capacity development and reform as part and parcel of peacebuilding.

As national ownership of reform and the peacebuilding process can be particularly dynamic, the context must be regularly monitored and capacity development support adapted as necessary. This entails identifying and monitoring meaningful and tangible determinants or indicators of national ownership at both political and technical levels.

National ownership and capacity development run in a virtuous circle, with real national ownership a prerequisite to successful capacity development and at the same time strengthened national ownership a result of the capacity development process.

2. Analyse and manage the political aspects of capacity development.

Challenges	Operational Results
1. Identifying both formal and informal power and incentive structures. 2. Identifying existing, and sometimes overlooked, capacities. 3. Navigating and influencing power relations. 4. Identifying whose and which capacities to develop without furthering (political, social, geographic, ethnic, religious, etc.) divisions.	- Capacity development support is informed by institutional and context analysis, builds on existing capacities, and is simultaneously politically and technically appropriate in terms of the resulting effects on distribution of power and performance.

Capacity development of national actors aims at strengthening both the political settlement and technical capacities for peacebuilding. Capacity development, with the accompanying influx of resources and increase in performance, stature and confidence, creates "winners" and "losers" and affects power relations for better or worse. In addition, the inclusion of women, youth and minority groups may be accompanied by political risks of its own that must be addressed as well.

To manage this political reality and minimise the potential for doing harm in a volatile environment, support to capacity development should be based on continuous scanning and analysis of priorities, positioning, power and incentives of stakeholders, institutions, networks and systems – state and non-state, formal and informal, national and sub-national. A deep and specific understanding of political, social and institutional dynamics and existing capacities can help identify where peacebuilding is already taking place and where capacities for it can be bolstered.

These insights will help international partners work with national actors to identify whose and which capacities can realistically be strengthened, and to design capacity development support with less potential for doing harm.

3. Adapt capacity development support to fit the national context.

Challenges	Operational Results
1. Linking and adapting to existing national reform and capacity development efforts, rather than importing "best practice" international solutions. 2. Going beyond linear approaches and imported solutions which may appear both easy and attractive.	- Capacity development support is responsive to the national context and evident needs of the population, with adequate up-front investment in ensuring "best fit." - Capacity development support prioritises progress towards adherence to international norms and standards.

3. Promoting adherence to international norms and standards under the adverse conditions of post-conflict.	- Capacity development programmes are flexibly managed, allowing for rapid feedback and adjustment to changes in context and needs. - Capacity development support addresses the enabling environment, organisational and individual levels.

Even in the most difficult post-conflict contexts, capacity as well as other catalysts of peacebuilding exists, and support should adapt to this reality. Adapting to the national context means understanding what constructive capacities for peacebuilding exist, customizing support to build on them, and being sufficiently pragmatic and flexible to quickly adjust support to changing conditions rather than simply rely on (sometimes overly elaborate) solutions from the international community. At a political level, it means promoting the adherence to international norms and standards, such as human rights, starting from the realities on the ground. At a technical level, it can mean monitoring results on a more frequent basis, allowing for adjustment as the context changes, and managing the balance of support among the various levels of capacity: enabling environment, organisation and individual.

4. Prioritise the feasible within the context of national priorities, including critical capacity gap areas.

Challenges	Operational Results
1. Identifying priorities when there are virtually endless needed capacities, far beyond the doable. 2. Limited capacity and incentives to sequence the doable. 3. Managing competing priorities created by differing objectives among various national stakeholders and among peacekeeping, humanitarian and development actors.	- Capacity development responses support the doable in a tightly focused peacebuilding agenda resulting from a careful analysis of trade-offs among various objectives (national/ international; peacekeeping/humanitarian/ development). - A balance is managed between the strengthening of capacities in select priority areas and the delivery of critical services.

While peacebuilding and statebuilding are the overall goals in post-conflict contexts, ensuring focus on feasible, specific capacity development priorities in the face of overwhelming needs can be a challenge. The prioritisation process can be further complicated by potentially differing objectives of the peacekeeping, humanitarian and development agendas and actors, as well as by other interests influencing the political processes and dialogues.

National peacebuilding priorities are the starting point for prioritisation of capacity development support. In the context of these, the five critical capacity gap areas identified in the Report of the Secretary-General on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict[5] serve as an additional lens through which to prioritise capacity development support. These gap areas are: i) basic safety and security, ii)

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[5]A/66/311-S/2011/527 and A/67/312–S/2012/645.

justice; iii) inclusive political processes; iv) core government functionality; and v) economic revitalization. Capacities for ensuring access to minimal basic services in areas such as health, education, food security and nutrition, and water, and promoting environmental sustainability can also be considered in the prioritisation process, as determined by the evident needs of the population and as part of fostering legitimacy of the political settlement. Regardless of priorities, capacity development support must be balanced with other ongoing activities that ensure services are delivered to meet people's immediate needs.

These priorities are broad though, and capacity development support spread thinly across all of them is unlikely to be effective. Experience strongly indicates that "less is more," and that national and international partners should prioritise support within these critical areas on basic or core capacities that further peacebuilding objectives and where broad national ownership of reform and commitment to change exist.

5. Take a strategic approach to capacity development, balancing support for quick wins and long-term results.

Challenges	Operational Results
1. Balancing quick wins and long-term results, and ensuring sustainability of results.	- Capacity development responses are results-focused.
2. Assessing advantages of integrating capacity development in other strategies versus developing stand-alone capacity development strategies.	- Capacity development activities result in measurably improved sustainable performance in the respective programmatic area.
3. Balancing capacity supplementation, direct implementation and capacity development.	- The UN designs and supports responsible and effective transitions from capacity supplementation and direct implementation to capacity development of national institutions.
4. Designing holistic support when stand-alone activities, such as training and technical assistance, are often easy to agree upon, implement and measure but unlikely to be effective.	

Short-term, stand-alone and ad hoc capacity development interventions are unlikely to have an impact on longer-term peacebuilding. When successful, capacity development support (whether designed and implemented by peacekeeping, humanitarian and/or development actors) is an integral part of a strategic reform, programme or initiative, and it is managed as an integral part of the overall peacebuilding process. It results in increasingly efficient and effective national systems that are able to meet peacebuilding goals, including the provision of: i) basic safety and security, ii) justice; iii) inclusive political processes; iv) core government functionality; and v) economic revitalization.

National as well as international actors are under pressure, however, to show quick results, whether the provision of humanitarian assistance (including early recovery), restoration of security, or revitalisation of basic economic and social infrastructure. These results are essential to peace processes as they can strengthen citizens' confidence and trust in national institutions.

As a first option, international partners should explore how they can support national institutions to produce quick wins; oftentimes this will be through capacity supplementation, for which national and regional resources should be used where possible.[6] As a second option, often when new or recurrent peacekeeping and/or humanitarian needs arise, international partners may still be called upon to respond with direct implementation.[7] Direct implementation, when necessary, should be undertaken in partnership with national actors, integrated in national institutions to the extent possible and when appropriate, and closely aligned to national peacebuilding priorities.

Technical assistance and training are frequently used instruments for the achievement of immediate capacity development results, such as enhanced systems and business processes and increased skills. The transformation of such immediate results to sustained performance has historically been the Achilles' heel of these approaches. To achieve impact on performance, the following measures should be considered: provision of specialist capacity development assistance; systematic use of on-the-job-learning; phased approaches shifting emphasis from "doing" to mentoring; enabling knowledge acquisition through peer-learning arrangements; co-location and embedding of technical assistance; executed as part of an explicit exit strategy defined at entry.

6. Draw on countries with experience of transition, especially from the global South.

Challenges	Operational Results
1. Finding and using sources of capacity development support from within the region, or more generally from the global South. 2. Funding national capacity development initiatives.	- There is more systematic use of South-South and triangular cooperation involving countries from the global South in supporting capacity development in the aftermath of conflict. - Meeting advisory needs is possible through CAPMATCH.

Capacity development support may be strengthened by tapping into those countries that have experienced a transition to sustainable peace. In many cases, these countries possess a unique understanding of the challenges specific to post-conflict environments. In addition, expertise from the region might share historical, cultural and linguistic affinities. These experiences and skills could be valuable contributions to the design and implementation of a country's national capacity development initiatives, and should be considered first when using international capacity.

In addition, building partnerships between and among countries through South-South and/or triangular cooperation creates opportunities for funding this valuable exchange of experience and expertise.

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[6] Capacity supplementation is the use of human resources from outside a national entity or system that augment the institution or system's existing human resources.

[7] Direct implementation occurs when parties other than the specified national actor have responsibility for implementation of assistance along with the assumption of full responsibility and accountability for the effective use of resources and the delivery of outputs, as set forth in an agreement between parties.

7. Minimise the risk of undermining national capacity through the use of national and international capacity.

Challenges	Operational Results
1. Demand exceeds supply in the national labour market. 2. Wage supplement systems create distortions, tensions and fiscal risks. 3. Use of national resources undermines public sector competitiveness. 4. Suitable national personnel are not available, while use of international resources, including diaspora, can create tensions.	- Measures are used to mitigate potential negative effects on national institutions of their staff leaving to work with the international community. - International resources provide both technical expertise and support to strengthening national organizations, institutions and systems.

Capacity development support and supplementation will most often consist of a mix of national, regional and global resources. Because the use of these types of resources may erode national capacity, international partners should take steps to avoid or mitigate such effects.

High demand for, and corresponding higher salaries paid to, nationals employed by international partners may distort the national labour market and workplace relations by causing an exodus of staff from the public sector, inability to attract new talent, and frictions as well as disincentives to performance in the workplace. Extensive contracting of national personnel or provision of special incentives to selected groups should, when possible, be accompanied by measures for mitigating labour market distortions and ensuring the competiveness of the public and private sector in the medium and long term.

Reliance on international advisers, whether from the region, from the diaspora or beyond, also has pitfalls due to remuneration differentials and the risk of "crowding out" of national capacities. When international capacity is used, the negative effects on national capacity should be managed and mitigated.

8. Build back better: develop new capacities that don't just replicate the past.

Challenges	Operational Results
1. Designing capacity development support to address needs of a diversity of actors (beyond only government and state actors). 2. Balancing the focus on 'old' versus new capacities. 3. Working at national level at expense of sub-national level.	- Capacity development responses not only support the renovation of basic functions but also develop capacities that lessen the probability of further conflict and strengthen the legitimacy of the state and the political settlement.

While the state has overall responsibility for ensuring stability, security and access to essential infrastructure and services, it discharges these responsibilities in collaboration with a variety of actors, whose capacities are also vital for peacebuilding. Strengthened capacities of a broad range of stakeholders – state and non-state, formal and informal, women and men, at national and sub-national levels – are often needed to overcome the conditions that caused conflict in the first place.

In addition to certain basic functional and technical capacities, capacities that strengthen the complex web of state-society relationships and the legitimacy of state institutions will be needed. Critical among these capacities are more inclusive, gender-balanced, participatory and transparent processes that support the active involvement of such broad stakeholder groups in identifying, shaping and delivering solutions for the challenges of peacebuilding.

9. Make more use of national systems and capacities.

Challenges	Operational Results
1. Assessing trade-off between risks of using national systems versus risks of missing longer-term capacity and sustainability opportunities. 2. Choosing between using national systems versus purportedly more effective parallel structures.	- UN support to post-conflict countries moves towards using national systems and capacities, accompanied by adequate risk management approaches.

In post-conflict contexts, international partners often bypass or overlook national systems and capacities that do not meet their required performance standards, thereby weakening them further. More use of, and more investment in, national systems and capacities can be made when international partners are better able to identify perceived risks and manage the associated trade-offs. Capacity development support by international partners informed by risk analysis and management can enable national institutions responsible for ensuring stability, security and access to essential infrastructure and services to assume greater ownership of their functional responsibilities and the peacebuilding agenda.

10. Lead and collaborate more effectively as the United Nations in support of national capacity development.

Challenges	Operational Results
1. Capacity development activities are fragmented across various actors. 2. Balancing costs and benefits of partnership and coordination. 3. Leveraging synergy amongst UN entities based on collective and individual mandates and comparative advantages.	- Capacity development activities are coordinated and tie to an overall peacebuilding plan. - The UN demonstrates leadership and coordination in supporting national capacity development, as owned and led by national actors.

Fragmented, disjointed support to capacity development is not only inefficient, but risks undermining national capacities instead of strengthening them. The UN is in a strong position and has a special obligation when using and supporting the development of national capacities to work in a joined-up manner, building on national ownership and in line with national peacebuilding priorities. This requires proactive collaboration, well beyond coordination, within the UN system and with other partners, building on the personal engagement and leadership of the most senior UN officials, both in agency headquarters and in countries. Joined-up support requires joint assessments and management of risk; co-location wherever feasible; systematic knowledge sharing and learning; as well as mechanisms and incentives for joint planning, pooled funding, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Part II. Advice and Resources: Putting Principles into Action

Part II of the Guidance Note provides advice for putting the principles into action. Each of the 10 sections begins with a discussion of the situation, or why the principle is important, what the challenges are in applying it, and how the UN can respond. Each section also contains specific advice for identifying and managing frequently encountered trade-offs inherent in each principle. Each section concludes with a list of resources that can be referenced for further information on specific aspects; below is a list of general resources for supporting capacity development in post-conflict contexts that span all ten principles. It should be noted that the advice does not aim to provide prescriptive answers, but rather to lay out the parameters that can help policy-makers and practitioners make well informed decisions for supporting effective use and development of national capacity for peacebuilding.

Resources for supporting capacity development in post-conflict contexts
- Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict, UN, June 2009 (A/63/881-S/2009/304)
- Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict: Independent Report of the Senior Advisory Group, February 2011 (A/65/747-S/2011/85)
- Report of the Secretary-General on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict, UN, August 2011 (A/66/311-S/2011/527)
- Report of the Secretary-General on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict *(progress report)*, UN, August 2012 (A/67/312–S/2012/645)
- Civcap Review website: http://www.civcapreview.org/
- New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, advocated by the g7+ and developed through the forum of the International Dialogue for Peacebuilding and Statebuilding, November 2011
- The Dili Consensus, February 2013 (outcome document of the International Conference on the Post-2015 Development Agenda)
- Enhancing the UN's Contribution to National Capacity Development, A UNDG Position Statement, 2006
- Capacity Development: a UNDP Primer, UNDP, 2010
- Technical Note – Capacity Development for the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action, UNICEF, 2012

Principle 1: Make national ownership the starting point for capacity development.

The situation

Genuine national ownership of capacity development processes is a necessary condition for their success. National ownership is, however, a dynamic and multi-partite process that may be as fragmented as the national agenda is unsettled in the immediate aftermath of conflict, with multiple "owners" all competing for legitimacy and primacy. In this situation, national ownership and readiness for positive reform may be diffuse, changing over time and regularly contested and challenged. In addition, demand for support may be inconsistent with the UN mandate and/or vision of capacity development for peacebuilding, and stakeholders, such as women, youth and minority groups, may be excluded from the processes. In this fluid context, the UN should identify and work with those

institutions and individuals moving forward in a positive direction while managing possibly divergent national and international agendas and tensions between responding to immediate demand versus supplying what may be perceived as technically better, and often more comprehensively funded solutions.

Advice

1. **Identify and support reformers**. The institutions and individuals with legitimacy and incentives to support reform and capacity development may not be immediately apparent; the likely resistance to change may not be apparent either.[8] Finding genuinely reform-minded partners and supporting the constitution and empowerment of effective coalitions for reform and capacity development may require more attention to:
   a. Extending networks, by meeting and connecting with a variety of actors affected by or engaged in the reform and capacity development agenda – institutions and individuals, state and non-state, men and women, at both national and community levels – in a variety of settings, both formal and informal.
   b. Actively seeking inclusion of clients/citizens as well as providers, including legitimate NGOs, women's groups, professional associations and private sector associations.
   c. Building the trust and confidence of national institutions and individuals to accept external support for their endeavours by being reliable, predictable and transparent.

2. **Make capacity development support demand-led not supply-driven.** Capacity development support that is driven by the international community risks being accepted but not owned by national partners. It may be accepted because of the benefits and associated power it provides to individuals (jobs, workshops, travel opportunities) or organisations (cars, computers, operating budgets), as well as the immediate ability it may confer on organisations to perform better. Solutions that are financially supported by international partners may thus be attractive for legitimate reasons that are not related to effective, durable capacity development. In addition, technically and financially elaborate and comprehensive "solutions" can quickly exceed the absorptive ownership capacity of the national partners, and purported "best practice" may not be "best fit" for the national context. The level of readiness for change and resulting national ownership of capacity development can be enhanced by:
   a. Helping national actors to realistically identify demand by working with them to i) properly analyse and articulate changes that are desirable and ii) identify the motivations, incentives and energy for and against change (genuine dialogue that does not create a false demand based on the perceived priorities of supporting organisations), and iii) assess the change management and leadership capacities available and identifying measures to enhance these capacities as an integral, early part of the capacity development process.
   b. Utilizing a variety of perception mapping techniques and tools, e.g., perception surveys, one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, to gain nuanced understanding of the local context. This approach could help identify priority needs and areas of quick wins; inform programme design, implementation and impact evaluation; and track progress on policy implementation and highlight when adjustments are necessary. The process of engaging citizens through perception work can contribute to building citizen confidence in national

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[8]See Principle #2 and related Advice for detail on analysis of forces for and against reform and capacity development.

and sub-national institutions by signalling a change in the way the state engages with citizens and communities.

c. Adjusting support to better fit demand. Help partners understand the change that is possible, and not just the change that is desired. This requires engaging various stakeholders and making adjustments to align with level of readiness, such as designing a more incremental approach, slowing down implementation and extending the timescale, or reducing the scope and changing the focus of support.

3. **Accommodate to the level of readiness for change.** There may be a level of commitment to reform and willingness to move forward in a new positive direction, but there may also be entrenched resistance and lack of regulations, policies, plans, and systems needed to facilitate change. Adjusting to the level of change readiness may include:

a. Bypassing blockages. It may be that readiness for change is weak in one part of an organisation or system of organisations but not another part, or in one of the stakeholders but not in the others. Changing the sequencing of capacity development support horizontally to another department or unit in the partner organisation, or vertically to a higher authority, may find the readiness that is needed to start, creating space to work on softening blockages and increasing readiness in other areas of the organisation(s). Mobilising influential stakeholders outside an organisation may be a better or important additional initial vehicle for change rather than working from or only from the inside.

b. Considering temporary disengagement. If resistance or indifference is more powerful than incentives to change, it may be better to disengage than to continue, if acceptable within the given UN mandate. This might involve suspension of activities until demand for support improves, or it might involve responsibly closing down the support over a suitable period of time and in close dialogue with the national partner. Such decisions need to be carefully considered at the appropriate managerial level for their political and operational implications.

4. **Make explicit what national ownership entails and monitor it.** The imperative of national ownership for effective capacity development is globally accepted. But the observance of this imperative is inhibited because what national ownership means is rarely made explicit and evidence-based, and often interpreted as identical to the prerogative of recognised authorities to define their needs for capacity development support. This is, however, not sufficient for the effectiveness of capacity development support which most often requires a much broader ownership base, as well as technically sound design. Consider working with national partners to define indicators of national ownership, such as effective involvement in and leadership of policy development and programming; actual outreach and broad coalition-building around a reform agenda; implementation of measures to reduce resistance; and involvement of societal groups including women, youth and minority groups. Consider additionally working with national partners as they periodically monitor indicators of national ownership and supporting them in taking corrective action if off-course. Furthermore, consider defining indicators for support from UN entities engaged in capacity development, to clarify joint responsibilities and enable accountability of all partners.

5. **Lead from strength.** The role of the UN must be based on its comparative advantages in having a holistic and contextualised approach to supporting capacity development. The UN can therefore ensure that capacity development support is based on:

a. The creation of an inclusive space for dialogue among national stakeholders.

b. Effective brokering of interests and positions among national and international actors.
c. In-depth analysis of the context and the institutional capacities needed for peacebuilding.
d. Solutions adapted and adaptable to often fast-changing national contexts.

Further resources

- From Rhetoric to Practice: Operationalizing National Ownership in Post-Conflict Peacebuilding, Workshop Report, UN Peacebuilding Support Office, June 2011
- Supporting Capacity Development in Conflict and Fragile Contexts: Lessons Learned from the Field, UNDP, 2012
- The Enabling Environment for Capacity Development, Perspective Note for Busan Process, OECD-DAC, January 2011
- Understanding and Integrating Local Perceptions in Multi-Dimensional UN Peacekeeping, draft study, DPKO, February 2013

Principle 2: Analyse and manage the political aspects of capacity development.

The situation

Capacity development processes are likely to affect power distribution and relations as much as technical performance. The national context in post-conflict situations is particularly complex and fluid, often making it difficult to foresee the intended and unintended consequences of capacity development support on power relations. The tendency to import technical solutions that have worked well in other countries and that are of interest to donors often overcomes the need to analyse the situation and adapt support to current realities. Capacity development support must be designed and provided with full awareness of how political and technical elements are intertwined – with a keen understanding of the implications of where and how support is allocated and which groups will actually benefit or lose from enhanced performance of, say, a land reform effort or a more even distribution of resources (funds, teachers, nurses etc.) between a capital and other areas in a country. In providing support, the UN must endeavour to develop a full and deep understanding of the historical, political, social and institutional context, dynamics and capacities; include a wide array of actors in its analysis and interventions; and consider the consequences of its interventions on power relations among targeted institutions and individuals.

Advice

1. **Conduct institutional and context analysis, involving national partners as appropriate.** Scanning the context both initially and along the way is necessary for designing capacity development support that is politically feasible, and for adjustment of the support when the context changes. Analytical tools have been developed by the UN as well as others and have been used to good effect to provide the necessary insights.[9]
   a. Identify the likely forces for and against capacity development for peacebuilding through a stakeholder analysis that identifies support and resistance; reasons for such; how powerful

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[9]See further resources section below.

and influential stakeholders are; their level of legitimacy; and how those that are against can best be managed.

    b. Identify the political consequences of potential capacity development support, by assessing who the "winners" and "losers" would be (e.g., which institutions and individuals would receive financial support, which would see improved performance, reputation and legitimacy), and how the existing balance of power among various institutions and individuals – state and non-state, formal and informal, men and women, modern and traditional authorities – would change.

2. **Apply a conflict-sensitivity lens in determining whose capacities and which capacities to develop.** Existing UN engagement and assessment tools should be considered by agencies across the spectrum of engagement – peacekeeping, humanitarian and development – when designing capacity development support.[10]

    a. Engage a broad cross-section of stakeholders, particularly those who may have been historically excluded from the peace process and who may play an unconventional yet critical role in consolidating the peace settlement going forward, e.g., women, youth and minority groups. Ensure participation of these groups particularly in mapping of existing capacity assets to have a more complete picture of the current situation.

    b. Identify capacities (at the level of the enabling environment, organisation and individual) including those that already exist but may be hidden or overlooked, upon which capacity development can be built.

    c. Assess capacities specific to peacebuilding and the strengthening of a political settlement, such as capacities to mediate conflicts and build consensus, facilitate dialogue and conflict resolution, develop and use non-competitive models of change.

    d. Assess whether capacity development of a particular national institution, set of institutions or sector has the potential to fuel conflict or reduce it, and whether capacity development support can be inclusive without being confrontational. For example, ensure involvement of the private sector in capacity development plans so that it does not contribute to conflict in reconstruction.

3. **Minimise opportunities for political resistance.** Capacity development support must be designed to minimise the potential for political roadblocks:

    a. Provide options, not prescriptions. Providing options, with their advantages and drawbacks, leaves the political negotiation as well as the ownership to national actors, whereas making prescriptions or even recommendations may provoke resistance from those who see them associated with a particular stakeholder, or group of stakeholders, and politically motivated.

    b. Support processes that promote legitimacy. Establishing legitimate institutions – formal as well as informal – is an important goal in post-conflict contexts and capacity development support to institutional processes, such as inclusive consultation and policy-making processes, may often be a more effective approach compared with premature development and promotion of new policies, legislation or wholesale restructuring attempts.

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[10]See further resources section below.

Further resources

- Post-Conflict Needs Assessment Tool Kit: Note on Capacity Assessments, UNDG, 2009
- Capacity Assessment Methodology User Guide, UNDG, 2008
- Institutional and Context Analysis Guidance Note, UNDP/Oslo Governance Centre, September 2012
- A User's Guide to Civil Society Assessment, UNDP/Oslo Governance Centre, 2011
- FAO Approaches to Capacity Development in Programming: Processes and Tools, FAO, 2012
- Political Economy Analysis, How to Note, DFID, 2009

Principle 3: Adapt capacity development support to fit the national context.

The situation

In a complex and unpredictable post-conflict environment, importing best practices and managing according to a linear programming process without flexibility are not effective. Implementation of capacity development interventions is likely to take place amid frequent changes in the security situation, political realignments, leadership and personnel changes in national institutions, and changes in national and development partner priorities and programmes. Design and implementation of capacity development support are further complicated by the need to promote international norms and standards, such as human rights and transparency, in contexts where adherence to these is still weak. To avoid importing or (re)inventing solutions that do not fit or work, the UN should connect to national dynamics by building on existing national capacities and being flexible and pragmatic in its programming. At the same time, the UN must balance strict adherence to its norms and approaches with the ability of its partners to gradually progress towards valuing and observing them.

Advice

1. **Customize support to build on existing national capacities and initiatives.** Designing capacity development support that builds on existing capacity means letting go of off-the-shelf, pre-packaged capacity development projects, modules, and blue-prints, recognising that successful capacity development processes are organic and thrive when multiple experiences and options are brought to the table and validated and tested by those owning the process. Linking to existing initiatives driven by national stakeholders, however embryonic, may yield better results than starting a new initiative from the outside. Existing capacity development analysis, assessments and initiatives should be reviewed. Further dialogue with and among key actors may be needed to clarify the picture regarding:
    a. National stakeholders, in terms of their capacities as well as their roles and mandates, interests, motives and incentives and level of legitimacy.
    b. National capacity priorities, capacity assets and initiatives that are on-going, and capacity constraints that need to be overcome for capacity development to work.

2. **Be pragmatic and flexible in planning and programming.** For national capacity development responses to work in highly dynamic environments, UN Mission and Country Team planning and programming processes, such as the Integrated Assessment and Planning and Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF) processes, must be flexible enough to allow for changing partners, re-phasing, and revising inputs and outputs. Regular

monitoring of capacity development effectiveness and performance enhancements is indispensable to allow timely adjustments and accountability for results. International partners should work with national owners to:

   a. Shape support in such a manner that flexible adaptation of activities and immediate outputs does not require lengthy bureaucratic appraisal and approval processes.
   b. Gather evidence to assess progress, e.g., through low-cost rapid feedback mechanisms that gather input from a cross-section of stakeholders.
   c. Hold (more frequent) reviews to analyse evidence, determine and approve changes, if necessary.

3. **Promote adherence to international norms and standards, starting with the reality of the situation on the ground.** International partners should in all areas be pragmatic and practical, but not at the expense of core UN principles, such as human rights, gender equality, and environmental sustainability.

   a. Acknowledge that progress often still needs to be made with respect to meeting international norms and standards, and jointly identify the key issues (e.g., in terms of protection, equality, corruption).
   b. Support national institutions, including parliaments, media and civil society, to address key issues, as an integral part of national capacity development responses.
   c. Analyse adherence to international norms and standards in situation assessments and set up mechanisms to monitor progress towards them. It is important that monitoring of progress towards adherence becomes the responsibility of credible national state and non-state institutions, including at community level, rather than the responsibility of development partners.

4. **Balance support across various points of entry: the enabling environment, institutional and individual levels.** Discuss entry points and approaches for capacity development support that improve performance:

   a. Go beyond capacity development of individuals to consider developing the capacity of the organisations and institutions in which they work, how to improve their systems, procedures and structures.
   b. Explore how to improve the environment in which these organisations and institutions operate, by strengthening the space and capacity of citizens, media and oversight bodies to demand transparency and accountability. In settings where policies, laws and regulations are not strongly enforced or enforceable, direct voice and accountability measures may be a necessary complementary or even primary course of action to strengthening the enabling environment.
   c. Sequence capacity development interventions for maximum impact, e.g., developing institutional capacity might be required before investment in individual capacities would be worthwhile (and vice versa).

Further resources

- Joint Guidance Note on Integrated Recovery Planning using Post Conflict Needs Assessment and Transitional Results Framework, UNDP and WB, 2007
- Practice Note on Capacity Development in Transition Countries, UNDP, 2007
- Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on Support to Non-UN Security Forces, DPKO, 2011
- Voluntary Guidelines to Support the Progressive Realization of the Right to Food, FAO 2005

Principle 4: Prioritise the feasible within the context of national priorities, including critical capacity gap areas.

The situation

In post-conflict contexts, peacebuilding needs as well as capacity development needs always exceed by far any ability to meet those needs. Typically a capacity assessment will produce a long list of capacities that need to be developed (functional, technical, hard, soft, etc.) – in various national institutions or parts thereof, at various levels, for various groups of staff, or various organisational systems, processes, and policies – and call them all priorities. Capacity development plans then become over-ambitious, implementation becomes diffuse, and subsequent evaluations highlight lack of focus, progress and results. The UN should work closely with national and international partners to narrow the focus of national capacity development priorities based on the extent to which they are relevant and feasible. The process of prioritisation should be part and parcel of a country's overall policy, planning and budgeting processes.

Advice

1. **Do only what is most relevant; less is likely to be more.** Capacity development interventions should be aligned with collectively agreed peacebuilding goals and objectives. In addition to national peacebuilding priorities, the critical capacity gap areas identified through the UN's Civilian Capacities Review process may be a useful filter by which to determine priorities for capacity development support. The table below breaks down the overarching goal of peacebuilding into the critical capacity gap areas and the similar goals identified by the g7+ group in the *New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States*.

UN Secretary General's Civilian Capacity Progress Report, 2011	g7+ New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, 2012
Critical capacity gap areas	*Peacebuilding and statebuilding goals*
Basic safety and security – disarmament and demobilization, police and security sector reform and governance	Security – Establish and strengthen people's security
Justice – corrections, criminal justice and judicial and legal reform	Justice – Address injustices and increase people's access to justice
Inclusive political processes – political party development and public information	Legitimate politics – foster inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution
Core government functionality – aid policy and coordination, legislative branch and public financial management	Revenues & Services – manage revenue and build capacity for accountable and fair service delivery
Economic revitalisation – employment generation, natural resource management and private sector development	Economic Foundations – generate employment and improve livelihoods

Capacities for ensuring access to minimal basic services in areas such as health, education, food security and nutrition, and water, can also be considered in the prioritisation process, as determined by the evident needs of the population.

The critical capacity gaps areas and peacebuilding and statebuilding goals listed above are still very broad. By focusing on drivers of conflict and fragility, national actors and international partners can define more precisely critical areas in which capacity development support should be prioritised.

2. **Do what is feasible.** The quickest route to prioritisation is to do only what is feasible among the most relevant, because the reality is that much of what is identified by capacity assessments is not doable when political, technical, and financial dimensions are taken into account. Doing what is feasible means:
    a. **Following the path of least resistance.** The capacity development process needs the sustained support and commitment of a critical mass of stakeholders to the change, and processes of change, that capacity development will bring. This commitment can be assessed in various ways: availability of stakeholders, contribution of stakeholders (e.g., material, financial, human resources), and leadership or initiative stakeholders have already shown.
    b. **Addressing concrete problems.** Addressing specific issues rather than pursuing grand designs may lead to quicker results and hence build momentum and support for further initiatives.
    c. **Being mindful of sequence.** Oftentimes, the development of certain capacities is dependent on the existence of other capacities. Partners should understand what has to be in place before other interventions can be undertaken, and be realistic about how long it takes to build these prior capacities if they do not exist.
    d. **Ensuring adequate resources.** While capacity development interventions are not necessarily expensive, they can take place over a long period of time. Funding in post-conflict contexts is often relatively short term, so partners may need to understand the feasibility of mobilizing resources for longer periods of time and align capacity development responses with realistic funding amounts and terms. In addition, capacity development support can require a large number of people. Partners should seek to source the requisite number of appropriately skilled (both in their technical area and in capacity development) personnel to support the intervention, which can be difficult if the intervention is on a large scale and in a difficult working environment.

3. **Integrate capacity development prioritisation into policy, planning and budgeting processes; use these processes to build consensus on priorities among national actors and international partners.** National planning processes, including the development of a national recovery development plan or an (Interim) Poverty Reduction Strategy, should be used to establish capacity development priorities. Such plans may be informed or launched by a Post Conflict Needs Assessment or Transitional Results Framework of the World Bank and UN Development Group that can aid in the identification and prioritisation processes. Internal UN Mission and Country Team planning processes, currently organised around the Integrated Assessment and Planning and UNDAF processes, can be used to establish the priority areas of support for capacity development from the UN.

The g7+ New Deal process commits all parties to support inclusive country-led and country-owned transitions out of fragility based on a country-led fragility assessment developed by the g7+ with support of international partners, a country-led one vision and one plan, and a country compact to implement the plan.

Prioritisation of support areas is a highly political process, and focus and parsimony will only result if senior level managers in the UN, and in national and international partner institutions, exert disciplined and strong leadership, building relationships and dialogue mechanisms that enable collective decision-making and subsequent adherence to agreed planning frameworks.

Further resources

- UN Policy on Integrated Assessment and Planning (2013), and the Integrated Assessment and Planning Handbook [under development]
- Common Country Assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework Guidelines, UNDG, 2010
- Operational Note on Transitional Results Matrices, UNDG and World Bank, 2005
- Technical Brief on Programming Principles: Capacity Development (including integrating capacity development in the Common Country Programming Process), UNDG, 2009
- Joint Guidance Note on Integrated Recovery Planning using Post Conflict Needs Assessment and Transitional Results Frameworks, World Bank and UNDP, September 2007
- Developing National Sustainable Development Strategies in Post Conflict Countries, UNDESA, 2011
- Study on Implementation of Fragile States Principles, OECD, 2011

Principle 5: Take a strategic approach to capacity development, balancing support for quick wins and long-term results.

The situation

In the aftermath of conflict, balancing quick wins with sustainable long-term solutions is often a challenge. Populations are often in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, security has to be maintained and consolidated, and confidence in the political settlement and the state quickly re-established. At a time when state capacity for coordinating, regulating and/or providing services is weak, international partners are often asked to provide the necessary services directly. Direct implementation, however, does not by itself lead to stronger national capacities and is not a long-term solution. Well-designed capacity development responses, in conjunction with direct implementation if necessary, can increase the impact on national institutions and accelerate the achievement of peacebuilding objectives. Poorly conceived, uncoordinated and ad-hoc capacity development activities often fall short of expectations, because activities do not reinforce one another and are not designed to lead to increased competencies, improved performance or sustainable results. The UN must take steps, from the outset, to support national institutions to lead implementation, and when necessary in emergency settings, to pursue capacity supplementation or direct implementation in conjunction with supporting the development of national capacities.

Advice

1. **Ensure capacity development has a results focus.** Capacity development processes should increase the ability of organisations and systems to perform, sustain their performance, and manage change and shocks. Impact, outcome and output-level results should be articulated for any capacity development support. This results focus can be strengthened by:

a. Asking the question 'capacity development for what?', by jointly clarifying and agreeing the strategic changes that are desired, and sharing a vision of what it would look like.

b. Establishing a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework which measures results not only in terms of immediate activities (e.g., trainings conducted) but also in terms of outputs (e.g., skills acquired through training), outcomes (e.g., an improvement in performance, e.g., in health service delivery) and impact (e.g., a change in the security, well-being, participation, etc. of the population). Ensure M&E framework includes indicators, benchmarks and targets for all of these results levels in the short and the long term. Ensure national as well as sub-national institutions are included in the M&E framework.

c. Planning for quick wins. Identifying quick wins is important for building trust and credibility, and demonstrating that reform is possible. Quick wins are most likely to be output and outcome level, operational rather than strategic, based around solving specific problems and visible to staff.

2. **Foresee transition to long-term capacity development from the outset.** Quick impact projects as well as longer-term support should be designed with sustainable capacities, stronger institutional performance and a consolidated peace settlement as the goals. International partners can incorporate sustainability into their capacity development support by:

a. Designing quick impact initiatives from the outset to eventually be part of comprehensive initiatives and programmes that aim to develop resilience and sustainability of national systems and institutions.

b. Ensuring that quick impact interventions are at a minimum coordinated with national institutions and other international actors working in the same sector, as they might also be in a position to support the intervention and even to maintain it in the future.

c. Engaging in dialogue with relevant national institutions and stakeholders about the future scope and role of public sector institutions, private sector and civil society when it comes to regulation, social protection and service delivery in the long term, and ensuring that the scope, the future recurrent cost, and the capacities required to maintain the quick impact interventions or services are feasible within realistic projections of human and financial capacities.

d. Involving relevant national institutions and their personnel in assessments, prioritising, planning, implementation and supervision/monitoring of capacity development interventions – as partners and/or staff.

e. Partnering with national organisations from the private or non-profit sector, in instances when capacity supplementation or direct implementation is pursued, particularly when fulfilling core government functions. Direct implementation should be done in a manner that allows relevant national partners to accompany, participate and monitor the implementation closely in a framework of full transparency and close consultation regarding plans, budgets and management processes.

3. **Commit to accompaniment, transition and exit.** Three things are certain when external partners arrive to support post-conflict countries: some of them will be there for the long term, there will be no shortage of transitions (of contexts, leadership and personnel, programmes, partnerships, etc.), and most will leave one day. In this context, support to capacity development needs to:

a. Commit to accompanying national institutions over the long term, which means that even agencies with short-term mandates should consider their relationship with national institutions from the perspective of the national institution itself, and coordinate and plan

with those external agencies that can make a long-term commitment so that the national institution is not suddenly and prematurely abandoned.
   b. Plan for transitions, to minimise the disruption to national institutions and loss of momentum or even reversals in capacity development processes, every time that there is a change of internal or external partner, the end of a project and the beginning of a new one
   c. Develop a clear and credible exit strategy, based not on the needs of the international partner but on the needs of the national institution, and based on a realistic timescale which recognizes that capacity development of national institutions in the immediate aftermath of conflict is likely to take a decade rather than a year or two.

4. **Integrate efforts to strengthen national capacity into quick impact projects**. Even when capacity supplementation or direct implementation by international partners is pursued as a necessary short-term strategy, peacekeeping, humanitarian and development capacity development activities can be undertaken at the same time to help strengthen national and sub-national public institutions, markets and households by:
   a. Providing national and sub-national institutions as much opportunity for "learning by doing" as possible.
   b. Pursuing pro-poor job creation as part of programme strategies. This may include work for cash programs, public works maintenance programs, or the expansion of front line public service delivery in education, health or environmental care programmes. Implementation of such programmes can from the beginning be embedded in and work with existing institutions and have an exit strategy.
   c. Procuring goods and services from the national market where possible. This helps create jobs in the private sector and strengthens the capacity of local businesses. It can also prove a more cost-effective approach for the UN.
   d. Providing cash transfers to households. This helps reduce poverty and protect individuals and families from on-going hardship, while enabling households to demand better performance of local businesses and pursue income-generating opportunities themselves. [11] Cash transfer programmes can also help strengthen the state-citizen relationship by bolstering the position of the state as the guarantor of social welfare.

5. **Consider Capacity Development Facilities.** Capacity Development Facilities, or similar approaches, are specifically designed to coordinate activities and resources of multiple actors and provide access to resources for new and emerging capacity development needs in a quick manner. Such facilities have been tried and tested in various post-conflict contexts over the last decade and have proven to respond flexibly to rapidly evolving demands for capacity development support and to result in more strategic, well-coordinated and results-focused activities.

6. **Consider whether National Capacity Development Plans are the appropriate mechanism.** It is important to be strategic and comprehensive about designing, implementing and measuring support to capacity development. However, experience is mixed on system-wide, whole-of-government national capacity development plans separated from other national plans. Such plans may span from development of the education sector to a narrower focus on how international assistance should work, and thereby become unwieldy and/or require a significant amount of resources to

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[11] For example, a cash transfer programme in South Africa reduced the poverty gap[11] by 47%[11] and approximately doubled the share of national income for the poorest 20%.

develop. While institutions or facilities with a government- or sector-wide capacity development mandate and a clear strategic focus may be effective, it should be carefully assessed if National Capacity Development Plans are helpful as alternatives or additions to the integration of capacity development interventions in existing strategic planning processes.

7. **Improve the design and management of technical assistance.** Technical assistance can have a variety of purposes including direct implementation, policy advice, compliance with development partner modalities and capacity development**.** In post-conflict contexts, the pressure is usually on implementation, on producing specific outputs or outcomes, with less attention given to the growth or development of the responsible national personnel or organisation. However, there are a number of approaches that can be used to strengthen capacity development without hindering implementation and even improving it.
   a. Before international advisors are recruited, their specific contributions should be discussed in the context of a capacity development plan and overall peacebuilding objectives. Their skill sets, and remuneration, should be commensurate with, and not exceed, the work needed.
   b. Plan a transition from capacity supplementation and direct implementation to a coaching, mentoring or advising role as part of an exit strategy from the very beginning of the project.
   c. Shift the accountability of the technical assistance from the supplier to the host organisation, by involving the host organisation in the design of the technical co-operation package, the preparation of the terms of reference and the selection of the technical assistance, and the management and reporting of the technical assistance
   d. Put more emphasis on collaborative reflection and learning, not just doing and re-acting or implementing a rigid, linear workplan. Ensure that learning occurs at both the national and sub-national levels. Experience shows that participatory processes of reflection and learning are critical elements of managing change.
   e. Don't assume that just because technical assistants have technical skills they also have capacity development skills. Define indicators, benchmarks and targets at the outset of their engagement and agree that progress will be assessed not only on personal outputs but also on capacity development outcomes. Closely monitor progress of technical assistants, discuss capacity development challenges, and adapt approaches and activities as necessary.

8. **Go beyond off-the-job training.** Capacity development responses have to go beyond the training of individuals, to address the constraints in the organisations and the wider policy environment in which individuals work. Most capacity assessment tools include analysis of organisational, institutional and environmental assets and constraints, but the capacity development responses that emerge from these assessments tend to focus on class-room or workshop-based training without consideration of how the individual skills acquired through training can be absorbed and applied in the work place. Training should therefore focus on on-the-job training and be accompanied by:
   a. Measures that make off-the-job training relevant and applicable in the workplace, e.g., involving managers in the design, delivery and follow-up to training; with on-going monitoring and coaching in the workplace.
   b. Organisational and institutional development process that complement training by making changes to the policy, regulatory, structural or systemic constraints to improving work performance, including remuneration and reward.

9. **Consider co-location as the default option.** Co-location, or the physical location of technical assistance personnel in the national institution with which they work, can strengthen the capacity development focus of technical assistance. This gives the technical assistance personnel more opportunity to build the essential good working relationship with those leading the capacity development process, and facilitate the required deep understanding of the organisation, its dynamics and context. It also enables national partners to take more advantage of the knowledge and skills the technical assistance personnel have to offer.

   a. When should co-location not be considered? There are certain circumstances under which co-location may not be relevant. These include:
      - Where the threat level to staff safety and security is moderate to high and cannot be reduced.
      - Where the probability is high that co-location would significantly reduce the effectiveness of the operation because of the need for independence, impartiality and neutrality (e.g., humanitarian activities, human rights monitoring/reporting).

   b. What forms of co-location should be considered? Co-location can take several forms, each reflecting a different degree of integration in the host institution.
      - International personnel may be based full-time or part-time in the host institution, but full time is preferable. Where international personnel are present part time, because they also have a workspace in the supplying organisation or because they work across several national institutions, this can limit the advantages of co-location, especially in contexts where national institutions have difficulty in planning and expect immediate availability of their personnel (e.g., as a Minister would expect instant presence of a civil servant).
      - International personnel may also share a workplace within the structure of the national institution or have a stand-alone office, set up by the supplier, such as in a Project Implementation Unit, within the national institution. Stand-alone offices can have the advantage of being easier to resource (equipment, communication, electricity, stationery, etc.) and control, but the disadvantage of taking leadership and ownership away from the national institution. Significantly, they often create significant disparities with other parts of the institution, and should therefore be avoided.

   c. How to get the most out of co-location? Experience suggests that co-location contributes most to capacity development when:
      - It is aligned with the absorptive capacity of the national institution. Measures to assist the national institution to take full advantage of co-located international personnel include finding committed leadership and staff in the national institution, clearly identifying accountability and reporting processes, and overcoming some of the infrastructure, equipment and running cost constraints of the hosting organisation.
      - The creation of oases or silos of excellence is prevented, because these encourage dependence on outside resources and are suggestive of an institution that cannot sustain the intervention. Reducing dependence and enhancing sustainability may require reducing the amount of input and/or extending the time-frame, reducing the implementation and substituting role of the international personnel and agreeing an exit strategy that eventually integrates the roles of the international personnel into the structure and processes of the national institution.
      - The demand for international personnel from the national institution is not driven by the real or perceived physical resources that are expected to come with it.

- There is full and transparent agreement on many of the modalities mentioned above: accountability, reporting, additional material resources, details of co-location, hand-over and exit strategy.

Further resources

- Handbook on Monitoring and Evaluating Development Results, UNDP, 2009
- Quick Impact Document, DPKO, 2007
- Civil Affairs Handbook, DPKO, 2012
- The Contribution of UN Peacekeeping to Early Peacebuilding Strategy, DPKO, 2011
- The Development Co-operation Directorate (DAC) International Network on Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) monitors international engagement with the world's 40+ fragile and conflict-affected states and helps improve international engagement in these countries. Resources are available at the following website: http://www.oecd.org/dac/conflictandfragility/
- Supporting State and Governance Capacities in Post Conflict Transitions, UNDP E-discussion, 2008
- Technical Cooperation in Fragile Situations, Guidance Note (draft), EuropeAid, 07.01.11
- Capacity, Complexity and Consulting: Lessons from Managing Capacity Development Projects, ODI, 2012
- Using Training to Build Capacity for Development, World Bank, 2008
- Coaching and Mentoring for Capacity Development: The Case of South Sudan, African Security Review, 21.1, March 2012, pp15 – 30

Principle 6: Draw on countries with experience of transition, especially from the global South.

The situation

Countries emerging from conflict typically confront a wide range of urgent demands to strengthen their national institutions, yet often face a critical shortage of capacity to meet priority needs quickly and effectively. Experiences of countries from the global South that have successfully emerged from conflict with strengthened institutions that have prevented a relapse into conflict may be of help to countries in transition. In this context, South-South and triangular cooperation is a valuable approach in supporting national capacity development. Recent experiences have demonstrated the benefits of recruiting human resources from neighbouring countries, to the extent that these neighbouring countries have not played a part in the conflict. This increases supply at reasonable cost, and often offers cultural, ethnical and linguistic affinity that ease peer-based on-the-job approaches and enables "honest gap-filling" until nationals are available and competent to take over core functions. The UN should tap these underutilized sources of expertise to get the right person in the right place at the right time.

Advice

1. **Use diaspora and resources from the global South, checking availability first through the CAPMATCH system.**[12] In supporting capacity development, South-South and triangular cooperation

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[12] CAPMATCH is a self-service online platform whose purpose is to better match the demand and supply of specialised civilian capacities for countries emerging from conflict. It is owned and monitored by the UN Civilian

and diaspora return programmes can provide personnel more skilled and experienced than national resources and more understanding of the national context than other international hires. More broadly this kind of South-South collaboration can support improved regional cooperation and the return of the diaspora can encourage new investment in the country of return. A number of steps can be taken to make use of expatriate and regional personnel:

    a. Support the establishment of policy, regulatory and legal measures needed to make use of a country's diaspora, whether in the public or private sector.

    b. Support the development of an incentives plan (monetary as well as non-monetary) to attract and retain diaspora, mindful of the tensions that this may produce with nationals that do not have access to such benefits.

    c. Support the development and implementation of a communication strategy to the general public regarding the rationale for and benefits of using the diaspora.

    d. Support the design and launch of an knowledge and mentoring network, that creates connections between highly skilled nationals living abroad and their country of origin and provides a structure for them to make their knowledge available to their home country without necessarily returning home (temporarily or permanently). The network could be expanded to create similar connections between personnel from the global South and the affected country.

2. **Provide or request expertise through the UN's online platform CAPMATCH**. CAPMATCH is a simple mechanism to connect those seeking capacity development experience and expertise with providers from across the globe, in the areas of security, justice, inclusive political processes, core government functionality, and economic revitalization. CAPMATCH could be a useful tool for countries to share their experiences with national capacity development, as well as for the UN to seek and connect with possible providers from the global South in areas where they may themselves have already faced and addressed challenges linked with national capacity development programmes. CAPMATCH offers the potential for strengthened global partnerships and enhanced opportunities for South-South and triangular cooperation.

    a. Post a request on CAPMATCH: Member States as well as United Nations Missions and Country Teams can register on CAPMATCH and post specific capacity needs in the five critical capacity gap areas.

    b. Create a posting as a provider on CAPMATCH: Member States and non-government organisations that have acquired expertise in the five critical capacity gap areas can share their experience globally and connect with potential requesters.

3. **Explore arrangements with countries from the global South to fund national capacity development.** Although many countries from the global South have underlined the need for stronger financial support to strengthen national institutions, funding can sometimes be difficult to secure. Partnership models to support capacity development have emerged, such as offers from countries in the global South to partially finance exchanges of expertise complemented by triangular funding and expertise from donor countries.

Capacities Team, and focuses on the five areas most commonly identified as the critical capacity gaps for countries emerging from conflict or crisis: safety and security, justice, inclusive political processes, core government functionality and economic revitalization. CAPMATCH is aimed at governments, CSOs, UN Country Teams and missions, not individuals. The platform can be accessed at https://capmatch.dfs.un.org/

Further resources

- CAPMATCH (self-service online platform designed to match the demand and supply of specialised civilian capacities for countries emerging from conflict) https://capmatch.dfs.un.org/Capmatch/
- UNEP South-South Cooperation Exchange Mechanism (online interactive portal designed to improve access to information, best practices, methodologies, advisory services and training opportunities that can enable communities to better manage their natural resources and local environments) http://www.unep.org/south-south-cooperation/
- Review of South-South Cooperation, UN 2011
- The Contribution of Diaspora Return to Post-Conflict and Fragile Countries, Partnership for Democratic Governance and OECD, 2010

Principle 7: Minimise the risk of undermining national capacity through the use of national and international capacity.

The situation

In the headlong rush to get many things done quickly, international partners may inadvertently undermine national capacity despite intentions to strengthen it, especially when actors fail to understand the collective impact of their individual actions. International partners use *national* personnel either directly, e.g., as UN national staff in Missions and Country Teams, or indirectly, e.g., contracted to carry out capacity development programmes and provide capacity development services. National personnel are used for a variety of reasons, e.g., as a way to increase national ownership of peacebuilding efforts; to provide insight to the national context; for direct implementation of programmes and projects; and as a way to develop capacity and contribute to sustainability of results. At the same time, international partners use *international* personnel, from the region and beyond, for a different set of reasons, e.g., to provide skills and clout not available nationally; and to provide a perceived impartiality in relation to different interests of national stakeholders. Both uses – of national as well as international personnel – can negatively affect the labour market, and it can detract from efforts to develop national capacities. The UN needs to analyse the possible unintended consequences of its efforts (and the similar efforts of other actors) and take steps to mitigate the negative effects.

Advice

When using national resources:
There are good reasons to source personnel from within the country instead of from without, e.g., their understanding of the local context, their networks and connections, their longer-term outlook and commitment, their local language skills, their value for money and the opportunity to create sustainable local suppliers of capacity development services (universities, training institutes, consultancy firms, etc.).

1. **Reduce the risk of wage distortions.** The recruitment of a large number of national personnel from the very often limited pool of available candidates with a secondary or tertiary education can quickly lead to considerable wage increases that make government (and also private sector) salaries uncompetitive and make it difficult for national institutions to retain their middle and higher-level staff at current wage levels. Efforts to keep such wage increases under control by conducting or taking note of national salary surveys and agreeing on salary levels commensurate with current

market levels have had mixed success. UN peace missions can participate in such efforts, provided this is done within the framework set by the International Civil Service Commission.[13] Keeping numbers down – simply recruiting fewer nationals and thereby not changing the demand-supply equilibrium that much – may be the only effective way to reduce distortions, and would be the result of a strictly focused prioritisation process.

2. **Mitigate the impact of staff departures on national institutions.** When staff do leave national institutions for opportunities to work with the international community, a number of measures can be considered to reduce the negative impact on national institutions specifically and public sector competitiveness more generally:
   a. Establish a secondment arrangement with the national institution so that at the end of the employment period the staff member would return, bringing back newly acquired knowledge and skills.[14]
   b. Discuss transition arrangements, especially the length of notice needed by the national institution to replace the staff member.
   c. Provide on-going professional development for national staff so that if and when they do return to the public sector, they bring with them enhanced skills. Learning could span managerial and administrative capacities or more technical capacities such as conflict management and resolution and policy analysis.
   d. Prioritise the nationalization of post in the UN Mission and the Country Team.

3. **Support national institutions in retaining staff by making them more attractive places to work.** There are a number of ways that national institutions can be supported to create work environments that limit the "pull" of employment opportunities in the international community, including:
   a. Salary supplementation and payment schemes, which help ensure that staff get paid and/or get paid a more attractive wage. Such schemes should be government-led, included in public budgeting and ideally supported by several international partners. UN Secretariat entities are, however, prohibited from providing such payments except within the context of special programmatic activities with appropriate flexible funding structures.[15] Ad hoc measures by individual actors or UN entities should be avoided as evidence shows that they uniformly create negative distortions and violate basic fairness and equity principles. Introduction of salary supplements to staff remaining in the civil service raises fiscal balance issues if such supplements are extended beyond smaller cohorts to say, teachers, nurses and police officers, and raises equity concerns if they are reserved for central government officers or disproportionately benefit the higher-level cadres through radical decompression of salary scales.

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[13] UN salaries are set on the basis of the Flemming principle which states that the salaries will be among the best without the absolute best in the locality. When a salary survey is conducted a number of national and international employers are surveyed.

[14] The Guidelines on National Professional Officers (NPO) approved by the ICSC provide for this, in that they say that NPO posts should be justified within the overall efforts of the United Nations system to increase national development.

[15] In the case of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and in exceptional situations, a credible justification and rationale of the <u>direct</u> contribution of the funded activity to peacebuilding is a fundamental requirement for providing such support.

b. Civil service reform measures, such as merit-based recruitment and promotion systems, and transparent standard grading and pay structures which remove some of the grievances of civil servants caused by arbitrary decisions, and reward staff who contribute most to improved performance of the institution.

c. Support to balancing budgets between salaries and operational costs. Often, public sector jobs have been created as part of patronage systems that may well be among the root causes of conflict as well as, paradoxically, a basic ingredient of the political settlement. The wage bill may effectively crowd out the operational funds needed for civil servants to perform their job. Balancing the budgets better is thus imperative to performance, but may often be politically very difficult. Offering support to operational costs on a projectized basis risks, on the other hand, picking winners and reinforcing client systems, as well as postponing the necessary reform. Finding a path way through this dilemma requires collective high level action of governments and the main international partners.

When using international resources:

4. **Ensure international resources are capable of strengthening national capacities.** Long-term international resources commanding global market rates should not be used simply to provide gap-filling technical assistance but fielded where they will clearly and significantly be able to contribute to create stronger national organisations, institutions and systems. Hiring managers may wish to consider adding criteria such as experience in the country, region or similar post-conflict context when hiring or contracting international resources.[16]

Regardless of whether using national or international resources, the UN is most likely only one of many international actors tapping into these resources on behalf of any individual post-conflict country, but the impact of its policies and actions are not necessarily limited to the scope of its intervention. The UN should coordinate with other international actors regarding common policies on using national and international resources in order to mitigate any negative collective effect on the national environment (e.g., labour market, wages, etc.). The UN should also use demonstrate good capacity development practices, by "walking the talk" whenever feasible.

Further resources

- Policy and Procedures for Engagement on National Salary Supplementation Schemes and National Salary Payment Schemes, UNDP, 2007
- Case Evidence on Brain Gain, Capacity Development in Action Brief, UNDP, 2007
- A Methodology for Assessing the Impact of Local Hiring and Local Procurement by Development Partners, Peace Dividend Trust (now Building Markets), 2011
- The Do No Harm Handbook, CDA Collaborative Learning Project, 2004

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[16] See Principle #5, advice #7 ("Improve the design and management of technical assistance") for further suggestions regarding increased effectiveness of international resources.

Principle 8: Build back better: develop new capacities that don't just replicate the past.

The situation

Strengthening existing capacities of those who already hold some degree of power does not necessarily move a country past those issues that contributed to conflict in the first place. Too often, stakeholders are politically and narrowly defined, and those who may have been excluded from policy-making, implementation and monitoring processes in the past continue to be so. Similarly, capacity needs are narrowly defined, and those capacities needed to overcome past conflict and contribute to achievement of peacebuilding objectives are overlooked. The UN should support reform and capacity development that addresses the fault lines of the past by developing new capacities among a broad set of stakeholders.

Advice

1. **Develop capacities of "new" stakeholders**. The international community historically partners with state actors, in particular the executive branch of government. Many different actors, however, have a stake in the political settlement and the peacebuilding agendas of the country – including the legislative and judicial branches of the state, formal and informal institutions, civil society, religious associations, the private sector, women and men, different age groups, as well as national and sub-national actors. Stakeholders who should be considered when capacity development support is considered include:
   a. **Traditional authorities**. Traditional authorities are very often the first point of contact that citizens have for solving local disputes, but the interface between traditional and modern political and legal processes is often confused and contested. The capacity of statutory and traditional authorities to work together more effectively can be an important step for peacebuilding.
   b. **Civil society**. Civil society in all its forms, from community-based organisations to advocacy platforms and religious associations, can have an important role to play in policy-making, service delivery, and accountability. But civil society is also often fragmented and aligned with forces that ignited conflict in the first place. The relationship between state and civil society is often complex and characterized by distrust, and regulation is often aimed at control or co-opting rather than peacebuilding. The capacity of both state and civil society sectors to engage with one another often needs to be strengthened, and the legitimacy of civil society actors and of the state are often closely dependent on such relationships.
   c. **Private sector**. Economic revitalization and service delivery rely on a vibrant private sector. Support from the international community can help transform the policy environment into a more enabling one for businesses. For example, support to business development services as well as umbrella organisations such as business associations and Chambers of Commerce can help the informal sector grow and become more integrated into the formal economy.
   d. **Women, youth and minority groups.** Overlooking the differential effects of conflict on men and women, age groups, and ethnic and religious minority groups creates missed opportunities for engaging different groups as agents of change. The exclusion of such groups, and not least women, from the process of reform and capacity development means their capacities remain underutilized, their needs go unmet and long-term strategies for peacebuilding are undermined. The seeds for future conflicts may even be sown. This vicious cycle can be converted to a virtuous one, so that engagement in reform and capacity

development opportunities by a broad set of actors brings a fuller and more nuanced perspective to post-conflict contexts.

2. **Develop new capacities**. New capacities, or more likely capacities that were under-developed in the past, that could contribute to peacebuilding and avoidance of relapse into conflict, include:
   a. **Capacity to lead.** Often in post-conflict contexts ethical leadership is in limited supply. The UN can focus on creating legitimate domestic space for champions, change agents, and reformers and strengthening their capacity to build trust and policy networks that can drive change.
   b. **Capacity to hold, and be held, to account.** In the public sector, accountability for results has the potential to be a powerful driver of performance, but accountability mechanisms are typically weak or directed at other objectives. Strengthening results accountability means developing the capacity of duty bearers/agents to be able to report on their responsibilities (particularly capacities that promote transparency, such as data collection and analysis and information sharing) and for rights holders/principals to sanction those who have not carried them out (for example, greater capacity of citizens and service users to voice their views and opinions).
   c. **Capacity to conduct multi-stakeholder processes.** A key way to strengthen the relationship between the state and citizens is by creating spaces for voice, representation and bargaining; using inclusive processes capable of mediating among opposing interests of groups and individuals. Capacities to mediate conflict, negotiate, build consensus, facilitate dialogue and conflict resolution are critical to creating legitimacy of state institutions.
   d. **Capacity to address inequalities**, to empower and to include marginalized groups, especially women, youth and minority groups. Experience has shown that women can be a powerful driver for peace, reconciliation and national development but often the role of women in society and politics has thwarted their potential. Similarly, for ethnic minority groups, they may have been excluded or alienated from mainstream political and development processes provoking instability and dissent. The capacity to integrate all groups into processes of the state is critical to achievement of peacebuilding objectives.
   e. **Capacity to develop partnerships and networks**. Many challenges in post-conflict contexts are beyond the scope of a single actor. Governments, civil society and the private sector have to work together, for example, for service delivery and economic revitalization. These new relationships require new capacities, such as state capacity to negotiate with extractive resources industry for better contribution to national development.

3. **Develop capacities at the sub-national level**. The majority of citizens, in post-conflict contexts or otherwise, interacts with government at the sub-national level. Capacity development responses that focus only on central administration or head office level in the capital risk having little impact on actors and citizens at the sub-national level.

The alternative of focusing capacity development only at the sub-national level is also not satisfactory, as it is unlikely that local communities will be able to sustain (financially and institutionally) initiatives that need higher-level support in terms of state allocation of resources, head office leadership and supervision, and an enabling policy environment.

The options available are either to develop capacity at different levels at the same time or to sequence capacity development support upwards or downwards between the levels. In practice, the pressure and incentives for prioritising the national level may often be considerable, making it

particularly important for the UN to apply a systems view to needs and opportunities to balance the national and the sub-national levels.

Further resources

- [Sourcebook on Women, Peace and Security](#), UN Women, 2012
- [http://www.unwomen.org/publications/un-women-sourcebook-on-women-peace-and-security/Gender and Post-Conflict Governance: Understanding the Challenges](#), UN Women, October 2012
- Gender Responsive Budgeting Web Portal, UN Women Website
- From Conflict to Peacebuilding – the Role of Natural Resources and the Environment, UNEP, 2009
- Women and post conflict political participation, DPKO and DPA, 2007
- Gender and SSR Toolkit, UN-INSTRAW and DCAF, 2005
- Building Civil Society in Post Conflict Environments: from the Micro to the Macro, Occasional Paper Series – What Really Works in Preventing and Rebuilding Failed States, Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars, November 2006

Principle 9: Make more use of national systems and capacities.

The situation

Only by using national systems and capacities can they be improved. Failing to use them misses an opportunity to strengthen them and causes international partners to take on undue risk associated with delivering results in a highly volatile environment. In the urgency of post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation, however, international partners are often inclined to look past this risk and establish parallel structures and systems, in the interest of delivering short-term results. While such short-term approaches may be fully justified and necessary, the UN should lean towards strengthening national capacities through "learning by doing," also in the periods where urgency concerns trump the longer-term capacity development and sustainability considerations. Further, the UN must carefully ensure that urgency concerns for immediate deliverables are balanced with the urgency of strengthening the legitimacy of national institutions by enabling them to deliver.

Advice

1. **Don't manage support as an either/or.** Positioning international support as an either/or proposition – either provide direct implementation or use national systems – misses an opportunity to strengthen capacities and enhance legitimacy in the short term. Direct implementation should be seen, from the beginning, as a partnership where the UN or international partners initially are the "doers," accompanied by their national partners, through a phase of "jointly doing" to a situation where the partners are doing, with the UN in the accompanying role. The transition can be slower or quicker, but keeping it in mind from the beginning and constantly monitoring progress (or regress, as the case may be) are key. This means working differently by:
   a. Working with and through national partners, rather than on one's own, from the very beginning. This means, for example, not attending meetings without a national partner, not representing the national institution but coaching a national partner to represent it, and not

carrying out analytical work, designing new systems or making policy recommendations except with and through a national partner.

    b. Saying "no" to some requests that would entail direct implementation. Rather than delivering directly, international partners might work with the institutions to agree on what can be done without external resources and how external support can assist but not replace what the national institution will do.

2. **Disburse aid funds through national partners and systems, with appropriate support and risk management as required**. International aid typically far exceeds governments' own revenues in post-conflict contexts. The majority of international aid, however, is not channelled through national partners or systems in post-conflict settings, but is managed directly by aid organisations, including the UN. Country-specific targets need to be set, and monitored, to increase the amount of aid disbursed through national partners, simultaneously using and strengthening country systems, and restrictive rules and regulations need to be revised. When UN systems are used, full transparency and sharing of procedures, budgets, disbursements and procurement processes should be part of the partnership and accompaniment process from the beginning.

3. **Adapt to national structures and systems.**
    a. Avoid making national institutions use the systems, procedures and policies of various international agencies, but support national institutions in strengthening their own. When effective parallel systems are used, this should be used as a learning opportunity to design stronger national systems as well as staff competencies.
    b. Instead of setting up Project Implementation Units, support national institutions in re-organising and re-structuring so that the intervention is properly integrated and institutionalized. If Project Implementation Units are unavoidable, they should be set up and managed at the direction of the national partner, and use of national systems should still be maximized. Project Implementation Units should be physically located in partner institutions whenever possible.
    c. Use position as the UN to encourage the international community to use national systems and capacities, in line with good capacity development practices, by "walking the talk" whenever feasible.

4. **Consider privileging local procurement.** Privileging local procurement means giving preference to hiring and to buying goods and services locally, thus stimulating the local market and encouraging its development. Local procurement also means further untying aid, not just in policy but also in practice, and adapting international systems of procurement to the local context while at the same time supporting the adoption of good procurement practices. Due consideration should, however, be given to the risk that sudden sharp increases in demand in the local markets from the UN may lead to price spikes that crowd out the poor.

5. **Manage risk**. It is possible that international organisations overestimate the risks associated with using national systems and underestimate the risks of not using them. Rather than not using national systems, international organisations can improve risk identification and assessment jointly with national partners, and improve risk management by gradually phasing out own control and supervision through strengthening and using appropriate national systems, controls, supervision and reporting.

Further resources

- Risk Management in Public Procurement, Discussion Note, UN Procurement Capacity Development Centre, May 2012
- The Accompaniment Approach: Eight Principles for Effective Aid Delivery. Office of the Special Envoy to Haiti, 2011Comparative Experience of Aid Information Management Systems in Post Conflict and Fragile Situations, UNDP, 2010
- What Women Want: Planning and Financing for Gender-Responsive Peacebuilding, UN Women Sourcebook on Women, Peace and Security, 2012

Principle 10: Lead and collaborate more effectively as the United Nations in support of national capacity development

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The situation

A coherent and collaborative approach to supporting capacity development across the UN system will have a more significant and sustainable impact on strengthening national capacities required to achieve peacebuilding objectives. Making the UN system work together and more effectively to achieve maximum impact on national capacity development in post-conflict contexts is especially challenging because of the multiplicity of UN agencies spanning three different mandates (peacekeeping, humanitarian and development) and the different incentives that come with the mandates, the planning horizons and the funding mechanisms. Considerable progress has been made over the last decade. Experience has shown that leveraging the comparative advantages of all the agencies to greatest effect first and foremost requires sustained and strong leadership and coordination on the ground in and of the UN system. It is beyond the scope of this Guidance Note to address the wider issues around UN coherence and reform, and the below is targeted specifically at enhancing the effectiveness of UN capacity development support.

Advice

1. **Promote national leadership of coordination for capacity development**. The UN system can greatly contribute to capacity development by supporting national institutions to develop and coordinate national and international partnerships for addressing peacebuilding goals. The UN can use its position to advocate for:
    a. Sectoral/thematic networks, co-chaired by national and international institutions, of all relevant national and international, state and non-state, agencies to jointly assess and address the capacity issues in their sector/theme and share lessons learned.
    b. Pooled resources and increased investment to fund joint, collaborative action for capacity development.
    c. Increased use of national systems and capacities for international aid disbursement and implementation.[17]

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[17]See Principle #9 and related Advice for detail on use of national systems.

2. **Lead for capacity development.** Coherent, collaborative and empowered leadership at all levels, driven from the highest-level representatives of the UN system in the country, putting the effective use of and strengthening of national capacities at the heart of the UN's activities across all agencies and mandates, is the single-most important factor for better, sustained impact. This personal and visible leadership dedication can be strengthened by structures and incentives which:
   a. Include strategic as well as operational prioritisation of coherent and collaborative capacity development support, observant of the principles outlined in this Note, as an explicit performance benchmark for leaders and as an explicit subject of public accountability to country partners and UN governing bodies.
   b. Empower and reward evidence-based, adaptive country-level decision-making by greater delegation of authority, budget responsibility, representation and strategic direction to the country leadership to champion capacity development, with concurrent strong accountability demands.

3. **Support flexible joined-up approach, driven by needs and demands on the ground.** Such support may well include non-UN partners, including legitimate NGOs. Joined-up support for capacity development should be driven by the substantive concerns derived from the country situation, and led by those with effective capabilities to do so. The emphasis should be on fostering effective joint leadership for implementation, rather than investing in elaborate plans as the primary means for coordination. Good practice to foster joint capacity development support includes considering:
   a. Ensuring that capacity development support feature explicitly in overall joint programmes.
   b. Prioritise, in overall UN Mission and Country Team planning processes such as the Integrated Assessment and Planning and CCA/UNDAF processes, clarity on strategic approaches for capacity development support that are relevant to the context, while leaving detailed specification of outputs and activities to those in charge of implementation.
   c. Making the budget process flexible enough to allow for more responsive programming.
   d. Pooling of resources for capacity development support.
   e. Identifying a clear management and oversight structure that provides a clear interface to national partners, for coordination, planning and reporting.
   f. Prioritising co-location of UN agencies units and departments, especially where working on the same sectors or thematic area. When UN staff or advisors support capacity development in national institutions, they should be co-located with those that they support.

4. **Support joint analysis and risk management.** Joint institutional and context analysis, change readiness and capacity assessments, and subsequent joint risk management are basic instruments for fostering coherent approaches to capacity development support. Good practice to promote joint analysis and risk management includes considering:
   a. Involving capacity development resources in country analyses conducted by UN actors across the spectrum of our involvement: peacekeeping, humanitarian and development.[18]
   b. Developing and using shared approaches to analysis.
   c. Developing and using a shared risk management instrument.

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[18] This would include any such analysis, e.g. Common Country Assessments, Strategic Assessments.

5. **Prioritise learning, continuity and consistency**. To manage UN capacity development support more seamlessly through the transitions from the immediate aftermath of conflict through to a stable and secure developmental phase, and to ensure continuous learning about what works, it is important to:

   a. Formulate an arrival strategy which will include knowledge sharing between new missions and existing UN agencies (and other humanitarian or development partners), particularly on capacity needs and assets, and national ownership and political commitment; mapping, assessing, revising and coordinating existing capacity development activities and plans; and involving the development agencies in the earliest stages of project/programme design of peacekeeping and humanitarian agencies with a view to supporting the long-term sustainability of national institutions.

   b. Establish inter-agency project cycle management mechanisms (such as joint assessments, programming, monitoring & evaluation) and a common knowledge sharing platform to coordinate implementation through sectors or projects where it is known that international support to develop national capacity will need to continue through the transition.

   c. Prioritise frequent and well-managed occasions for learning, notably through joint reflection on experiences, issues and changes in the context. Such reflective spaces should count on senior management presence and include national partners as relevant.

   d. Formulate a drawdown or withdrawal strategy (as appropriate) which specifically reference plans for developing the capacity of national institutions to assume greater or full responsibility for activities and services previously carried out by the departing agency where these activities and services have to be continued.

Further Resources

- Note of Guidance on Integrated Missions, Secretary General, February 2006
- UN System-wide Coherence, UNDG Website
- Resident Coordinator System Policies and Guidelines, UNDG Website
- The Management and Accountability System of the UN Development and Resident Coordinator System, UNDG August 2008
- Policy on UN Transitions in the Context of Mission Drawdown or Withdrawal, draft July 2012
- UNDP Policy on Early Recovery, UNDP, 2008
- Capacity Development and Aid Effectiveness, UNDP, 2008
- Good Practice Note on Incentives for Harmonisation and Alignment in Aid Agencies, OECD-DAC, draft 2007
- Capacity Development Facilities, Guidance Note, UNDP, May 2012