Training for Transition (TFT)

Capacity Development for Organisations Working with Vulnerable Groups

Love is a pre-condition for Learning and Development

THEORY OF CHANGE

**Training of Trainers Manual
for
Community Systems Strengthening**

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Training for Transition

Capacity Development for Organisations Working with Vulnerable Groups

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1. Developing a Theory of Change

If we are serious about social impact, the first thing that we need to do is clarify and make explicit our assumptions about how change happens in our context. We need a clear picture of what success looks like, and what we think are the necessary preconditions for achieving and sustaining success. In other words, we need to clarify and make explicit our theory of change.

The first step is to identify the problem that we are addressing in order to map out our theory of change. If we cannot clearly identify the problem that our institution is addressing, our activities will be haphazard and irrational.

Once the problem is identified, there are two dimensions to a theory of change.

• Identifying what we think needs to happen to achieve and sustain the changes, or outcomes, that we want to see. It is called **mapping the outcome pathways** to success.

• Identifying who (people or institutions) we think can influence these outcomes positively or negatively. We call this **mapping the activity ecosystem**.

With a comprehensive theory of change in place, we can work out the ways in which we think we can (independently and with others) contribute most effectively to **achieve the specific impacts** we desire. And in our **outcome** pathways we have a ready-made set of **outcome indicators** that we can use to measure our progress in bringing this impact about.

While logical framework models might not always be helpful in developing overall long-term strategies, they can be useful to help design specific short-term strategies where the inputs, activities and objectives can be clearly defined within the overall framework of a theory of change.

The more our theory of change and our strategies are **understood** and **shared** by the **other constituents of our interventions**, the easier it is to work together in a systematic way to achieve impacts that matter to all – **especially those most affected** by what we do.

The process begins with a group coming together with a facilitator to imagine a **vision of success**.

The participants then try to identify all the changes needed for the vision of success to be realised. The theory of change emerges or unfolds through a facilitated process in inquiry and dialogue. Participants may hold different views and perspectives but should share the same broad commitment for change. The more the voices of **all constituents** are reflected, the richer the dialogue is likely to be. The pre-conditions for success is then arranged **into set pathways** for desired **outcomes**.

The process of developing a theory of change makes us think critically about "what we do now", question our assumptions, see things through different eyes and come to a **new and shared**

understanding that reveals the full complexity of our context and helps to map pathways to the outcomes we desire.

In order to develop a good theory of change, we need to think in terms of plausible outcomes that we can realistically influence.

Outputs: the products and activities that you do e.g. training.
Outcomes: what we see as a result of our outputs.

An outcome statement describes a result, a change that has taken place. The facilitator has to constantly remind participants to re-phrase statements as results, till people have consciously mastered this.

Example:
Outcome statement: Women in the community have organised groups and support structures to protect themselves and children from violence.
Need statement: Women in the community need to protect each other and children from violence.

It is the facilitator's responsibility to check;
1. Is it written as an outcome?
2. Does it describe changes that we can plausibly enable or facilitate in the people groups, institutions or environments for which it is envisaged?

A good theory of change incorporates the perspectives of all constituents, has explored all assumptions that underpins beliefs about what will work and why and what strategies are likely to be most effective in the short, medium and long term.

The outcome of facilitating a **Theory of Change** will provide;

- A clear picture of what long-term sustainable success looks like for core constituents.
- A clear and testable hypothesis about how you understand the context in which you work and what you think needs to happen to achieve success.
- Clear pathways of short term and intermediate changes (or outcomes) that you think are pre-conditions for success.
- Clear achievable intermediate outcomes that can help you plan short term strategies and collaborations that contribute to long term impacts.
- A set of indicators of success that you can use to monitor and report on your increasing contribution to long-term sustainable impacts.

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2. Developing the Vision

How we imagine success is critical: A vision of success is a clear picture of the achievable and sustainable future that the organisation would like to see in the context in which it works. It can still be aspirational. The organisation does not have to feel that it can achieve the vision on its own.

A vision of success should not be a perfect and unachievable perfect state.

The vision must be **plausible** (reasonable, believable, credible) – it must focus on changes in and between people, groups and institutions that the organisation can realistically influence (not an idealised state that is unachievable).

It must be **dynamic** – it should be a snapshot of a complex and dynamic system in which people and institutions are working effectively in relationships with each other and with outside agencies to solve problems and enhance the well-being of citizens and the environment.

The institution is **not** the centre of the universe.   The community where the change is being enacted is. It is one of a number of constituents acting in concert and influencing the outcomes.

Creating a vision of success involves identifying the key players (individuals, groups and institutions) and then describing the desired behaviours, attitudes, capabilities, values and the relationships between them in a situation where change is always happening.

Process
- Get people to reflect on the productivity of the 'current way of doing things' with existing activities. Get them to think about what will be left behind once the capacity development institution is gone.
- Capture in 15 words or less the essential transformation.

1. Get people out of complacency, satisfaction or delusion about what they are doing now.
2. Open the space for a bolder long term outcome (vision).
3. Get people thinking - and expressing themselves succinctly and clearly – getting to the core of their purpose and reason for being – but in lively (everyday) speech. The language must not make the objective seem unachievable.

Start out with brainstorming some of the changes that participants want to see in their community.

When the intervention (in this case, community systems strengthening project) is dead, what must be written on the tombstone? What essential transformation would have occurred?

It must be interesting "*I wonder what the story is*?" Must be the question of anyone who read the epitaph.

Generate Epitaph Examples. The facilitator then draws the different thoughts together into a coherent statement.

Examples:
- Here lies the first organisation that provided real services in our community.
- We empowered 1000 young people.
- We helped our local community to be self-sufficient.
- We brought our people into the modern world.
- We educated 120 women in child protection, 120 young people in peace building, 120 adults in procuring food for our community and 120 health educators.
- We gave back to our community, control over their own lives.
- Live a good life free from poverty, violence and ignorance.
- The Community Systems Strengthening project helped the local community to live in a safe and healthy environment as active citizens of their own environment.

Inclusion
- Community leaders and representatives and engage confidently and effectively with government, commercial companies and other agencies to promote the interests of the community.
- Community leaders inspire their citizens to participate actively in their own development.
- Local businesses support the initiative.
- Children and young people have access to quality, culturally responsive education close to where they live.
- Local community enjoys the same rights and public services as other sectors of society.
- Modern rights and values are in balance.
- Local people are fully represented in the different sectors of society.
- Local communities are adequately represented in public decision-making and policy-making – especially those that affect them directly.
- The rights of local communities are guaranteed.

Pathways
- Have been identified in the "community systems strengthening" approach
- It can be added to, as a result of the process.

Capacity Development as a Nation Building Method
Most institutions focus on getting communities to hold governments accountable. Whilst this is an important element of democracy, where governments refuse to change or are unable to do so, people need some control over their environment.

For this reason capacity development should act as a form of "*community systems strengthening*", so that people do not remain powerless and sink into deeper deprivation, due to a lack of service delivery.

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It is a process of equipping community organisations to undertake the necessary functions to realise a changed state in their own environment, as active citizens, able to access local government and other support and advocate for change, if not.

1. They examine how much they collaborate with other stakeholders including local government. "*If the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain*."
2. Creating a formal communication between the state and intended beneficiaries.
3. Developing the community organisation's internal strengths and systems.
4. Creating effective programmes, services and advocacy campaigns where needed.
5. Assessing the measurable impact of their work on the lives and experiences of the beneficiaries.
6. Nation-building: Accessing government resources that exist at local level.

"*Empower our communities*."

The need was identified by the health committee members themselves.

Good Practice: Good practice assesses the following;

1. **Leadership**: Good governance, financial management, strategic planning and sufficiently skilled personnel.
2. **Community mandate**: The community supports the intervention and the organisation consults with the community. Consultation implies feedback.
3. **Open and transparent**: No hidden agenda, shared budgets and outputs, outcomes.
4. **Clear set of objectives**: A three – five year plan exists outlining the interventions.
5. **Awareness and understanding**: The capacity development initiative clearly seeks to assist communities to find solutions to their own problems.
6. **Sufficient time and resources**: The plans and support are realistic with relevant competencies.
7. **Impact**: Clear benefit for intended beneficiaries.

Indicators of success can be adapted as a result of additional information. (See end of document for example of indicators);

3. Approaches to Partnerships

Equal partnerships should have the following critical elements;
- Critical examination on the quality of partner relationships
- Clarity about roles, responsibilities and accountability
- Definition and measurement of capacity building
- Develop partnership skills

Purpose and Method:
Method on community entry;
- Develop a comprehensive list of partners that match our intention and establish a process for systematic internal assessment of the quality of structural integrity and programme needs.
- Select from the list a diverse representative sample of organisations whit staff who will benefit from 'community systems strengthening model'.
- Examine in more depth their experience and programme content to draw together the common elements, best practice and significant variations to incorporate into our process.
- Build a robust analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of existing NGO work and lessons on existing contextual challenges
- Develop and agree on partnership guidelines prior to project initiation
- Identify research priorities

Research: research partnerships are more than just information gathering. Research partnerships includes relationship-building and capacity development, where there are shared goals and objectives and mutually beneficial outcomes.

Understanding of Partnerships - A relationship of mutual respect between autonomous organisations, founded upon a common purpose, within defined expectations and responsibilities.
- It can be established with or without a formal contract.
- They can be small community-based organisations or large humanitarian institutions. A humanitarian partnership is one in which two or more bodies agree to combine their resources to provide essential goods or services for disaster survivors or people living with considerable deprivation, that impacts on the human rights.
- Partnership requires mutual trust, accountability and respect
- It means talking about equality in the partner relationship
- Where resources or finances are concerned; "*The hand that gives is higher than the hand that takes*." Sometimes the term partnership is inappropriate for a relationship that involves the transfer of resources (financial) as the term implies equality, yet it is used to mask imbalances of power between the provider and the recipient.
- If the pool of money is held by an implementing agency then the recipient organisation should get, at least, the same value in capacity building to improve their outputs and their ability to source their own funding.

- It has become commonplace for larger institutions to include community 'partners', even though they are not on the same level. The community partner might not yet be ready to manage finances but should receive the kind of support that will push them forward.
- The word partner has become devalued because it is often a form of securing funding for the larger institution, with no real benefits for the community based organisation.

Various phases of partnership building;

Step 1	Partner implementation
Step 2	Sharing information
Step 3	Deciding together
Step 4	Acting together
Step 5	Supporting initiatives
Step 6	Handing over/ exiting

Partner Implementation	External, Institutional leadership and initiative	Larger institution sets the agenda and describes how the work should be delivered within its strict confines as per the donor agreement.
Sharing Information	Two-way learning process	Larger institution listens to suggestions and ideas but retains management control over how the work is delivered.
Deciding Together	Shared Agenda	Larger institution and partners decide course of action together. The community partner acts and the larger institution supports monitoring and evaluation.
Acting together	Shared, joint initiatives	Institution and partners have equal say and influence over decisions and outcomes. Both act, review and monitor together.
Supporting partner initiatives	Devolved power and resources	Institutions help partners achieve their goals within a framework of grants, advice, training and mentoring support.
Handing Over Exiting	Partner Control	Community partner has financial and reporting responsibility. Resources are handed over.

Some agencies have strategic partnerships which do not necessarily involve funding. There are clear quid-pro-quo or power elements underpinning the relationship where one partner brings research strength and another advocacy or community development methods.

Partner relations may change over time and it is important to work with the understanding that the community partner will not always be a recipient of training or re-imbursement, but will evolve to source and manage its own funding.

Genuine partnerships require;
- Being transparent and open and accountable partners on all funding decisions.

- Abiding by the values and principles of mutual respect, mutual accountability and humility in our conduct with partners. This should be binding through a community entry contractual agreement.
- Ensuring that teams and staff who work with partners are inducted, trained and briefed to be aware of power dynamics, respect the partners and avoid patronising or domineering attitudes and behaviours. These include making sure that the following exist; efficiency, respect, commitment and inter-personal regard for each individual.
- Responsiveness to partner needs – two way process.

Reasons for the Partnership
1. The Theory of Social Change (In this case, the Community Systems Strengthening model) must be the basis for the relationship.
2. Sustainable developmental goals: There is no point to any intervention if communities do not have control over its sustainability.
3. Greater cost effectiveness by sharing resources and building in an evolving element e.g. training of trainers and avoiding duplication.
4. Greater impact through a shared vision.
5. United efforts and resources to influence policy and exchange information, skills and advocacy.
6. Promotes ownership and responsibility.
7. Reduces potential for dependence.
8. Builds capacity.
9. Ensures mutual knowledge transfer and learning.
10. Adapt to changing needs.
11. Improve reach, scope and accessibility of services.
12. Facilitates relationships between stakeholders.
13. Reduce trauma and increase, safety, health and opportunities for progress.

Elements Required for Successful Partnerships;
1. **Acceptance of difference**: All partners do not have to conform to one way of doing things. Accept uniqueness of individual partners and develop inter-dependence. Value diversity rather than require assimilation. "*Our way is the right way.*"
2. **Communication**: Clear, effective and continuous communication to ensure that all parties have the same understanding about process, timeframes, content and roles and responsibilities.
3. **Sharing values and strengths**: Partnerships can be more meaningful when sharing capacities and resources and we allow for risks in experimentation. "*My way or the highway.*" Creates a lot of conflict and dissatisfaction and could result in discord, partners withdrawing or becoming sullen and unresponsive.
4. **No blame**: 'Failures' are lessons and responsibility should be shared in risk taking.
5. **Honesty**: A prerequisite. If honest intentions are not stated, the community partners with less power might recognise dubious intentions or feel exploited, although they

might not state it. Instead they will simply stop participating. (Fight, submit or flight options).

6. **Consultation**: All partners have to feel equally valued and capable of supporting the programme objectives with ideas. Should not feel 'top down'. Use participatory processes to build trust and understanding.

7. **Principles**: Partnership principles must be jointly agreed upon.

8. **Address the tensions**: If we pretend that problems do not exist, we exacerbate them and make them more explosive. They eventually erupt, where they could have been easily addressed through a process of open communication and providing a platform to create clarity, especially in relation to budgets and financial control. These have reputational consequences for both partners.

9. **Documentation**: It is important to document all elements of the project roll out, particular in relation to innovation and best practice but also for appropriate accountability to the donor.

Selection of partners
- **Common objectives**: As previously stipulated based on shared objectives.
- **Introduction of systematic assessment**: Develop a baseline, tools and M&E framework so that the full process is fully understood and consistently documented.
- **Dialogue**: Structured conversation to get to understand the project aims and objectives, expectations, processes and intervention methodology.

4. Methodology

There are a range of different intervention methods including;
1. Guided self-assessment
2. Social Audits
3. Organisational scans
4. Facilitated processes (An expert assists the organisation to make decisions)
5. Research evaluation

The "*community systems strengthening*" model draws on various elements of these methodologies; e.g. Guided self-assessment on community entry, facilitated support for the training implementation and accompanying tools, development of social audits as an overall methodology for holding government accountable, identifying priority areas for research evaluation.

Information Collection on Phased Entry as a Model for Replication
Added due diligence in our roll-out will be related to full documentation of all stages of the programme implementation; Gathering hard-evidence is part of the dialogue process.
1. Data on organisations attending the community entry dialogues
2. Criteria shared and short-listed organisations approached
3. Service level agreement documents
4. Attendance registers of all activities
5. Meeting and minutes and challenges
6. Assessment tools and outcomes
7. Training content as manuals
8. Shared learning, strengths and weaknesses in approach
9. Exit strategy including continuity and hand over plans

Target community participates in selection of, and agrees to the indicators of success for the programmatic areas; E.g.

Young leaders have developed skills and capabilities through further education	Young people have access to further education and training	Graduates have a commitment to community/sense of community	Young people are involved in peaceful and productive activities
Vibrant, independent, community run preschools exist	At least 80% of children are in preschool.	Community members are trained as teachers and managers	The community is aware of the value of early childhood development
Capable local leadership work collaboratively and youth orgs are active in community affairs	Local education department supports intervention	Parents actively support intervention	Programmes based on the needs of children

About Training for Transition

TFT has an overall vision to contribute towards the scale-up and scale-out of quality service delivery for vulnerable communities. It provides capacity development, training, mentoring and training material to organisations that serve the needs of vulnerable communities.

As such, TFT has key strategic objectives which include:
- To provide higher level training on Project Planning, Project Management, Financial Management, Monitoring and Evaluation strategies for long-term sustainability and independence.
- To train adults to understand how to meet the developmental and safety needs of children living in under-resourced communities.
- To support children with life-skills to progress beyond limiting conditions.
- To network with other organisations with similar objectives.
- To mentor identified community-based activists for this training.

Mission

The mission of TFT is to technically assist community-based organisations to access quality training, relevant material, access peer networks, mentoring, coaching and develop systems for information sharing.

In the three years of the program, TFT intends to champion the creation, management and coordination of a standard of learning, sharing and problem-solving.

TFT experienced independent consultants who function at a high level of independence, with areas of specialty in either gender education, child protection, poverty alleviation or specific health areas, will ensure program sustainability and continuity of learning, using documented knowledge on 'Best Practice'; provides support to challenge scale-up and deliver high-quality interventions.

Partnership

In the Community Systems Strengthening initiative, the TFT primary partnership is with the Cape Metro Health Forum health committee members, Women on Farms and UCT's School of Public Health and its role is that of a development partner, in the form technical training and mentoring of developmental processes and content training for four programme areas namely; child protection, peace building, access to food and nutrition and health education.

TFT provides curriculum development, training, documentation of process, dissemination of learning and mentoring within a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework.

TFT, over the implementation period will continue to focus on developing strong partnerships with government and other service providers – to share material and resource development and to share learning. All TFT products, when complete, will be open-source.

Program goal

TFT's program goal is to create, manage, support and bring to scale a local, integrated model of service delivery to address the needs of under-resourced communities; it includes documentation of processes and sharing lessons learnt.

It also aims to influence the development of high quality, need-led training material and effective support systems.

The intention is to disseminate shared learning to influence positive practice in under-resourced communities.