**REPORT FROM THE SEMINAR ON**

**ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT (OCA)**

**19th and 20th of March 2015, Brussels**

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**Thursday 19th March**

**Opening**

After a short introduction by Paola Simonetti and Diego López, the key objectives of the seminar and the agenda are outlined: in order to improve capacity development strategies, it is necessary to assess how these are contributing to stronger unions. The aim is therefore to focus on shared ways of evaluating capacity development, namely organisational capacity assessment. For this we will discuss key elements of trade union organisational capacity and capacity development, and set the basic components and most appropriate methodologies for trade union organisational capacity assessment (OCA).

**Organising and capacity development**

**Huib Huyse,** researcher from the HIVA Institute of the University of Leuven, introduces the concepts of capacity and capacity development by first inviting participants to discuss and present examples of successful capacity development processes. He highlights the importance of individual skills and competence vs collective capacities and the capacity of an organisation (potential), as well as the context. He shares the definitions by Baser & Morgan of capacity: “Emergent combination of individual competencies/skills, collective capacities (capabilities), assets and relationships that enables a human system to create value” and capacity development: “process of enhancing, improving and unleashing capacity.”

Huib mentions the specificities of the trade union setting in which the context is crucial, the interaction framework is specific and the playing field is being constantly changed. He underlines that capacity develops from within and that it is a non-linear and iterative process which is influenced by internal and external factors.

**Emily Paulin** from theITUC Global Organising Academy (GOA) introduces the ITUC Organising Programme. The ITUC wants to lead change in workplaces and to expand the number of workers in democratic unions. An integrated approach has been devised with regional organisers constantly following up at national level. To this end, the GOA organises regional academies, national follow-ups and a yearly Global Organising Academy.

In the discussion which ensues, it is acknowledged that organising is part of capacity development, the questions that come up are whether organising means bigger unions, or stronger unions or both? How to deal with the challenge of organisational autonomy? How to structure organising in time at a national level but also in a framework of international solidarity?

**Key elements for trade unions in capacity development**

The afternoon session begins with work in three groups to list (a maximum of) ten key capacities of highly successful unions per group, as well as (a maximum of) five components which these capacities should consist of. To contribute to these discussions the Trade Union Development Effectiveness Principles are listed and a specific emphasis is made on the sustainability principle.

In the presentations of the group work the following items were identified as key capacities in all three groups: organising, negotiating skills, communication, mobilising, democratic structures, financial autonomy, and the ability to lobby (policy, society, etc.). Other capacities came up in just one or two groups: coherence; service to members; planning; monitoring and evaluation; organisational structure; and the ability to resolve issues.

See *Annex 1 Results of the working groups on key elements for TUs in capacity development.*

**Introduction to organisational capacity assessment**

Huib Huyse introduces the concept of organisational capacity assessment. He points out that the output of capacity development processes can entail “hard” capacities (structure and procedures, skills level, …) and can also involve “soft” capacities (leadership, learning culture,…). The process of capacity development leads to performance, contributing to ownership, driving adaptability, advancing sustainability, which in its turn will result in achieving the development goal. This will then again feed capacities (soft and hard) so the process becomes circular.

The first OCA tools that were used focused on skills; then especially on hard capacities; later on, on soft and hard capacities; and, eventually, some OCA tools now go very far in addressing this whole circular process.

**Friday 20th March**

**Organisational capacity assessment frameworks used by trade unions**

After a quick review of Day 1,the seminar continues with presentations by participants on their organisations’ experiences with OCAs.

**Tjalling Postma** of FNV Mondiaal presents the version of the “Five Capabilities Model” (5C) they use. He sums up the Five Cs as the Capacities to Act and Commit; to Achieve; to Relate; to Adapt and Renew; and to Achieve Coherence. Each capability has sub-components and a scale of four levels (basic, developing, maturing and leader) has been developed to rate these.

**Veerle Lens** of CSC Belgium explains her organisation’s approach, centred on three cross-cutting issues: gender mainstreaming, environment/climate, and strengthening the quality of training. These are used together with the partner organisations to rate the extent to which they have been working on the issues, and list two items from each for future work within their programme. An evaluation process is included (progress, lessons learned, etc.) each year of the programme.

**Maresa Le Roux** explains how they established their model based on the 5C Model using the partner’s logical frameworks. The CGSLB developed a seven-point scale to rate the advances on different components of their programme (from “done nothing” to “fully integrated”). She notes that the best practice coming out of the exercise includes having a clear aim with it; establishing a shared responsibility; keeping it simple; limiting the scope; and linking with M&E.

**Danuta Dobosz** explains that the Solidarity Centre uses the TU-CapSAT instrument. The tool is used internally to evaluate each partner; scores and justification are kept internal. The TU-CapSAT instrument is currently based on six components: collective bargaining, democracy and sound governance, financial management, gender integration, organising and recruitment, and policy advocacy. Every component is divided into different elements and a score based on four levels (start-up, development, expansion/consolidation and fully integrated) is given for every one of them; the emphasis is not on reaching the highest scores but on showing progress.

**Hanneke Smits** explains that the CNV uses the 5C Model as well, in combination with the Civil Society Index and an organisational checklist (which gathers information from organisations on certain issues such as representation, agreements, services, administrative organisation, financial situation, governance, human resources, etc.). For the 5C Model, CNV identified five key performance indicators for each capacity; these are quantified using a five-level score system called “awareness scale” (from non-awareness to full implementation).

**Sigrid Bergfeldt** explains that LO/TCO developed an assessment tool which is used in its work with the GUFs and Swedish affiliates, in addition to which they have a logical framework approach project handbook and an application format. The tool is mainly for compliance with financial management and project management standards.

In the discussion which ensues, it becomes clear that representatives from GUFs, SSOs and the ITUC respectively, have questions concerning each other’s exact role and conceptions of OCAs. Avoiding additional burden on already overstretched staff, the exact delimitation of the concept of OCA (does it apply to a project or to an organisation as a whole), and fundability of partner organisations are among the issues which are being raised. The confusion which is sometimes caused by the lack of a homogenous model is underlined; others mention the competition this can in some cases entail between SSOs.

**Key elements for trade unions in organisational capacity assessment**

A second group work is initiated in three groups to reflect on how to make OCA more effective, the methodologies that should be used and how to work towards a shared approach.

In the presentations of the different working groups the need for a shared approach and instrument on OCA is brought forward. In order to **make OCA instruments more effective** some of the issues that are brought forward are: transparency, the need for a participatory instrument, horizontality, keeping things simple and practical, limiting the number of OCA tools per partner, having open ended questions, taking contextual differences into account, negotiating requirements with donors.

With respect to **methodologies**, the working groups consider that the most appropriate methodology for OCA is a simple model based on an adaptation of the 5C model, involving hard and soft skills and integrating the trade union development effectiveness principles. The baseline should play an important role and so the issue of different practices on baselines and the need to share these is something that should be looked into.

In order to **work towards a common approach** several issues are raised such as: the need to broaden the debate within the trade union family, do advocacy work with donors to promote a comprehensive approach, regionalise the development of an OCA instrument, take into consideration national contexts, consider OCA as part of the evaluations, there should be no impositions and the process should be similar to that followed for the TUDEP.

See *Annex 2: Results of the working groups on key elements for TUs in OCA.*

**Conclusions – evaluation**

Individual participants evaluate the past two days as generally very positive. The learning experience, identification of a common area of work as well as certain issues on methodology (regional approach, 5Cs, …) are singled out as good elements coming out of the seminar.

On a closing note, it is noted that the expectations at the beginning of the seminar have been accomplished. The seminar came up with a first approach to what are considered the key capacities to strengthen, these capacities and their subcomponents will be clustered and further discussed within the partnerships working group to agree on common elements. The interest to work towards a shared OCA tool has been manifested with some considerations to take into account in this work, such as: democratic ownership, having a participative process, keeping things simple and practical, working on flexible and adaptive approaches to OCA, working on learning tools, keeping an open mind. Trade union leadership should also be involved in this process.

Many of the OCA models that have been presented have been driven by donors so it is important to work towards a common position on evaluation and assessment mechanisms for discussion and negotiation with donors.

After having put forward shared criteria during this seminar, continued input will be important in order to reach an integrated approach. In the next months the main elements of the work on OCA will be discussed in the online Partnerships Working Group and a meeting of the group will be organized around the month of September to review the work.

**ANNEX 1: RESULTS OF THE WORKING GROUPS ON KEY ELEMENTS FOR TUS IN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT.**

**What are the key capacities of highly effective unions? List a maximum of 10 capacities.**

**What should the components of these key capacities be? List a maximum of 5 components.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **GROUP 1** | **GROUP 2** | **GROUP 3** |
| 1. **Class representativeness:**
2. Increased membership
3. Sense of belonging
4. Updated registry which truly reflects the reality
5. Identification
6. **Clarity of objectives:**
7. Reflection of the necessities of the members
8. Consensus building
9. Leadership
10. **Democratic mechanisms (gender equality and non-discrimination):**
11. Transparency
12. Transparent processes for the selection and election of leaders.
13. Freedom of association
14. Horizontal information
15. **Organisation:**
16. Clear division of responsibilities
17. Elaboration of strategies.
18. Training and workers’ education
19. **Communication:**
20. Marketing
21. Capacity to elaborate own information.
22. Social media capacity.
23. **Negotiation:**
24. Technical capacity
25. Elaboration of own measurements and diagnostics.
26. Negotiation strategy
27. Sectorial weight and pressure.
28. **Mobilisation:**
29. Sectorial discipline
30. Resources
31. Leadership
32. Internal communication - dissemination and communication towards society.
33. **Planning, monitoring and evaluation:**
34. Methodology
35. Recognition of the need to prioritise the elaboration of planning policies
36. Technical capacity.
37. Collective and constructive evaluation
38. **Financial autonomy:**
39. Internal resources management capacity.
40. Concrete and effective mechanisms for the collection of dues.
41. Accountability
42. **Political and sectorial coherence:** correspondence between union objectives and union action (transversal components)
 | 1. **Capacity to organise (for representativeness):**
2. Good communication skills
3. Administrative capacity (e.g. membership database).
4. **Capacity to asses needs:**
5. Good communication skills
6. Methodological skills
7. Analytical skills.
8. **Ability to resolve issues:**
9. Capacity to formulate proposals and advocacy and negotiation skills
10. Recourse to data and information
11. Capacity to create alliances/networks
12. Ability to mobilise
13. Practicality
14. **Capacity to influence decisions/change (promote enabling environment):**
15. Lobby and advocacy skills
16. Capacity to create alliances/networks
17. Capacity to promote values
18. Campaigning skills.
19. **Capacity to sustain the organisation:**
20. Capacity to be self-critical
21. Capacity to mobilise resources (human, financial, material)
22. Capacity to develop as an organisation (adapt and self-renew)
23. Clear and transparent internal policies and procedures
24. Effective leadership in line with vision and mission
25. **Education and training capacity:**
26. Skilled professionals
27. Networks with educational/research institutes.
28. Ability to ensure activation after sensitisation and training
 | 1. **Ability to grow members (increase membership):**

a.) Make space to reach all types of workers (e.g. youth desk, vulnerable worker task force)1. **Self-finance, be self-supporting:**
2. Dues collection/registration
3. Fair distribution on all policy levels
4. Adequate dues structure
5. **Ability to lobby policy and society:**
6. Analytical skills/expertise
7. Relationship skills/network
8. Advocacy skills
9. **Ability to improve working conditions:**
10. Good collective agreements (negotiation skills, internal/external acceptance)
11. **Provide good services for members.**
12. Going the extra mile
13. Accessibility
14. Know your membership base
15. **Legitimacy of the union ( for its members but also as an actor in society):**
16. Recognised social partner
17. Democratically established structure
18. **Democratic leadership that serves the interests of all members:**
19. More horizontal structure
20. Understanding and accepted gender balance
21. **Inclusiveness to potential members within groups of migrant workers, informal** **workers, precarious, domestic:**
22. Link to capacity 1
23. Going outside standard work scope.
24. **Communication and networking** **internationally and domestically:**
25. Affiliation to other similar organisations
26. Established communication channels: between members and union
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**ANNEX 2: RESULTS OF THE WORKING GROUPS ON KEY ELEMENTS FOR TUS IN OCA**

* **How can we make OCA instruments as effective as possible? What are the dos and don’ts in the use of an OCA?**
* **What methodologies are considered the most appropriate and why?**
* **How do we work towards a shared approach on OCA?**

**How can we make OCA instruments as effective as possible? What are the dos and don’ts in the use of an OCA?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **DOs** | **DON’Ts** |
| **GROUP 1** | * The instruments have to be participatory
* Horizontality
* Practical
* Simplicity
* Professional
* Synergy between the political and the technical.
 | * Paternalism
* Theoretic exercise
* Complex
* Not technocratic
* Be naive around the particular interests behind development cooperation (influence of the private sector)
 |
| **GROUP 2** | * Shared approach by ITUC would be welcomed
* It should be an instrument which can be used internally by all affiliates: self-assessment, drawing out internal dialogue.
* Bottom-up approach with international affiliates.
 |  |
| **GROUP 3** | * Transparency with partners
* Involve partners
* Have open ended questions
* Take into account contextual differences.
* Look at what partners are using themselves.
* Combine OCAs where possible.
* Try to negotiate with back donors on requirements.
 | * Have too many OCA tools per partner
* Make it too long.
* Put pressure on partners to do too much.
* Do OCAs where there are multiple partners (workload issue)
 |

**What methodologies are considered the most appropriate and why?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **GROUP 1** | **GROUP 2** | **GROUP 3** |
| * 5 C Method (complete and coherent)
* Verify that the Trade Union Principles for Development Effectiveness are integrated.
* Simplify the process – look among partnerships for a mechanism of simplification.
 | * Should be simple
* 5Cs
* Involve hard and soft capacities
* Short/ single-issue indicators (normative)
* Scoring: basic quantitative and qualitative scores
 | * Ownership-based
* Participatory analysis
* Start with baseline
 |

**How do we work towards a shared approach on OCA?**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **GROUP 1** | **GROUP 2** | **GROUP 3** |
| * Broaden the debate to the trade union family.
* Advocacy work with governments to promote a comprehensive approach.
* Joint work for the creation of a shared instrument on OCA.
* Regionalise the development of OCA
 | * Willingness to share between partners
* Could be basis for selection of partners but it doesn’t have to be
* Drawing out dialogue between partner organisations
* Value and use of results have to be determined in dialogue with partner organisations
* Basis for further development with partner organisations if/as back donor requires
* There should be no impositions
* Something similar to the TUDEP process
 | * Take into consideration national context.
* Reduce repetition
* Use OCA as project application
* Include OCA as part of the evaluation
 |

**Considerations on the conception of partnerships from GROUP 1**

* The partner is a socio-political subject
* It is difficult to measure with technical indicators
* There are different worldviews with different idiosyncrasies and cultures. Need to create a previous mutual agreement.
* Create a sincere political atmosphere for the cooperation framework.
* Need to clarify the implications/instances of all the development cooperation process.
* Equilibrium between particular interests behind development cooperation and the social interest of workers.