

Philippines Australia Human Resource Development Facility (PAHRDF)
Evaluation Framework: A Synthesis of the Program Theories on
Institution Capacity Building and Workplace Training

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Introduction

This paper is divided into two major parts, namely: the Facility Program Theories (Part I) and the Facility Evaluation Framework (Part II). Part I presents the Facility program theories on institution capacity building and workplace training and how these theoretical considerations have guided the development of its evaluation framework. The discussion follows the following sequence:

- Defining the program rationale
- Clarifying the Facility's program theories, and
- Identifying the critical program areas and linkages.

Part II is aptly labelled the Facility Evaluation Framework. It basically brings together the different elements of institution capacity building and workplace training into a coherent whole. The Evaluation Framework can only be relevant and meaningful to the extent that it reflects the Facility's guiding program theories.

I. FACILITY PROGRAM THEORIES

Succinctly defined, a program theory is a "theory or model of how a program is expected to cause the intended or observed outcomes." It establishes the link between and among program resources, activities and the projected results at various program implementation and result levels through the formulation of causal hypotheses. A program theory may also include contextual variables (economic, political, organizational, psychological, environmental and cultural) that may impinge on the quality of program implementation.¹

Defining the Facility program rationale

The Philippines Australia Human Resource Development Facility (PAHRDF) has been created to build and enhance capacity of partner institutions in service delivery and its corresponding administrative governance support, particularly in Human Resource Management and Development (HRMD). Its goal is to contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable equitable development in the Philippines.

¹ Bamberger, M., Rugh, J. and Mabry, L. *Real World Evaluation. Working Under Budget, Time, Data, and Political Constraints* (London: SAGE Publications, 2006), p. 437-438

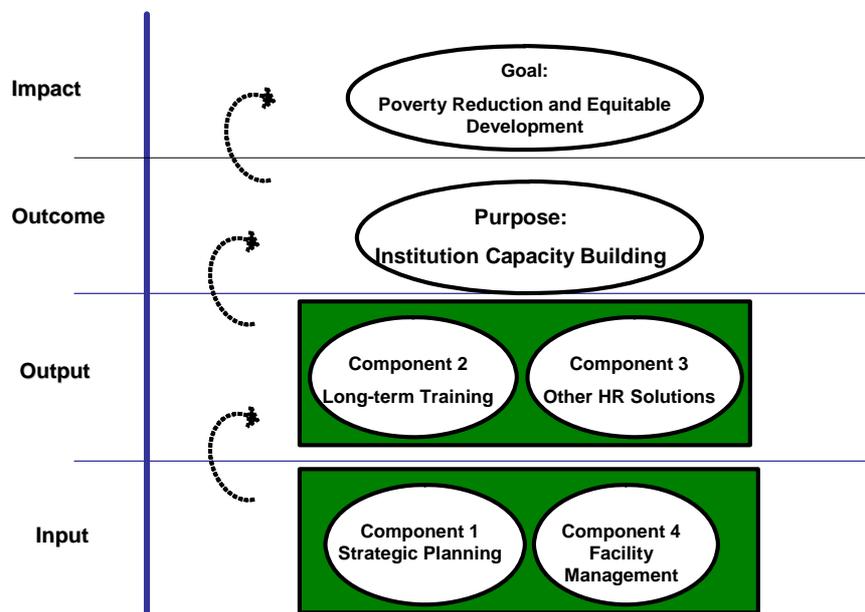
The Facility’s task demands a change management approach that supports strategic capacity enhancement, first of the individual, and second of the partner institution.

The Facility’s Logical Framework (or the logframe as it is commonly referred to) remains the Facility’s *raison d’etre*, the primary reason for its continued operation and consists of the following elements:

Goal	To contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable equitable development
Purpose	To build and enhance capacity of targeted institutions in service delivery and its corresponding administrative governance support, particularly in Human Resource Management and Development (HRMD)
Component 1	Strategic Planning
Component 2	Long-term Training
Component 3	Other Human Resource (HR) Solutions, i.e., Short-term Training
Component 4	Facility Management

The first question that the Facility had to deal with was brought about by the need to clarify the underlying vertical logic of and the corresponding linkages among these elements. It was through the use of contribution analysis on four levels of project results (input, output, outcome and impact) that the Facility was able to establish the relationships.

Figure 1: Vertical Logic and Linkage



As Figure 1 illustrates, Facility Management (Component 4) is considered an input, i.e., the quality and quantity of financial, human and material resource utilisation undertaken in pursuit of the Facility's goal. Strategic Planning (Component 1), which is also an input component, focuses on the decision-making process needed for effective targeting and annual work programming. These first two components contribute to the accomplishment of the output, i.e., Long-term Training and Other HR Solutions (Components 2 and 3) for key personnel of partner institutions. These concretely refer to the individuals' enhanced capacities to: 1) deliver quality administrative and technical work in pursuit of their respective institutions' mandates; and 2) contribute to the achievement of their institutions' development agenda. The purpose that the Facility has been designed to achieved is considered the outcome. These are results that directly benefit the institution in terms of improved capacities. The Facility's goal, i.e., contributing to poverty reduction and sustainable and equitable development is considered the impact.

Clarifying the Facility's program theories

The questions that the Facility has grappled with at the onset of its operation are: "What exactly is institution capacity?" and "What is capacity building in this context?" Clarifying these two cornerstone concepts has led the Facility to the formulation of its program theories.

Broadly defined, "institution" (or what some other scholars would refer to as "organisation") means the coming together of people and resources into a functioning unit to effectively pursue common goals through coordination of activities, which involves some type of structure.² Institution capacity, therefore, is the ability of a partner institution to effectively perform these tasks and activities to produce the necessary results in pursuit of its development mandate and strategic objectives.

Institution capacity building, on the other hand, is a change process that focuses on the overall performance and functioning capabilities of the institution and how strategies, policies, processes, competencies and resources can be developed to effectively pursue the institution's mandates and objectives.

In his paper entitled "Capacity Enhancement Indicators. A Review of the Literature" Mizrahi (200) has arrived at the following conclusion about capacity building.³

² Heffron, Florence. *Organization Theory and Public Organizations. The Political Connection* (New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1989), p. 2

³ Mizrahi, Yemile. *Capacity Enhancement Indicators. Review of Literature* (World Bank Institute Working Papers, 2004), pp. 14-15

- Capacity building goes beyond its tradition notion of focusing on strengthening human skills through training only and should recognise the broader context that includes the facilitating organisational and societal environments;
- Capacity building acquires strategic and operational value only when it is anchored in concrete organisational and development objectives, i.e., it is essential to always ask, “Capacity for what?” and “Capacity for whom?”;
- Capacity building is a dynamic process of learning and adaptation and to gauge the effectiveness of the process, it requires the definition of benchmarks or standards that allows for the assessment of different levels and areas of capacities; and
- Capacity building depends primarily on the existence of political will and the commitment of the institution to champion strategic organisation change. (The Facility, as shall be explained later, refers to this as executive sponsorship and is, in itself, a capacity attribute.).

The Facility strives to address the problem that has kept the goal of successful and sustainable capacity building development elusive. As the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has correctly identified, the problem is the tendency to concentrate on the training of individual skills without consideration of the larger organisational context.⁴

Guided by various studies in the field of institution capacity building and organisation development (e.g. UNDP/GEF’s Capacity Development Indicator Framework, Capacity Development Institute’s Core Functions, Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria for Business Management Systems and the Philippine Quality Awards), the Facility has identified 11 key institution areas where capacity should be developed. These capacity areas, as the Facility labels them, are the following:

Planning and Policy: The development and formulation of long-term objectives, goals, strategies, and priorities; the translation of strategic directions and priorities into sound policies; the monitoring and evaluation of results;

Project Development: The formulation and undertaking of the overall planning and co-ordination of a project from inception to completion; aimed at meeting the client's requirements and ensuring completion on time, within cost and to required quality standards;

Administrative Service Procedures and Systems: The implementation of plans and policies through the development and documentation of appropriate procedures, structures and systems for general services, including procurement, facilities management and records management;

Information Systems: The development, installation and maintenance of information technology (IT) in information collection, processing, storage, display, and dissemination; may include computers, telecommunications and office systems or any combination of these elements;

⁴ Mizrahi, Yemile. *Capacity Enhancement Indicators. Review of Literature* (World Bank Institute Working Papers, 2004), p. 6

Resource Management. The development and management of the generation, allocation, budgeting and utilization of financial and other resources to ensure effective provision of these resources to program/ project priorities and concerns;

Leadership and Teamwork: The cultivation and development of leadership skills at all levels so that there is availability of qualified leaders who can mobilize the institution towards its goals; the building and supporting of teams and work groups to be high performing, empowered and self-managing;

Organization Development: The holistic and systemic management of improvement initiatives through diagnosis, design, implementation and evaluation; taking into account key organizational elements, such as strategy, structure, systems, skills, staffing, leadership styles, and shared values.

Human Resource Management: The development and management of HR processes pertaining to planning, recruitment and selection, succession planning, compensation and benefits, employee welfare, organization design, job design, job description, competency profiling and human resource information;

Human Resource Development: The development and management of HR processes pertaining to training and development, training management, performance management, career planning and development, coaching, mentoring, knowledge management and change management;

Service Delivery Procedures and Systems: The institution can establish, implement, manage and sustain The key service delivery mechanisms in relation to The mandate and external clients; and

Partnership Building: The formation, strengthening and mobilisation of stakeholder support to achieve development goals and enhance service delivery.

The building of capacity in each of these areas usually begins with the development of personnel competencies. The Facility, however, believes that besides personnel competencies, there are four other important capacity attributes. The Facility calls these capacity attributes vital institution sustainability mechanisms. These are:

Accountability and Ownership: the capacity to clearly communicate and understood expectations. Mechanisms exist to hold people accountable for the realisation of these expectations.

Regularity and Meeting of Standards: the capacity for functions and tasks to be conducted on a predictable frequency. Mechanisms to ensure standardization of implementation are present.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement: the capacity to regularly review accomplishments, functions and processes in order to identify areas for improvement.

Executive Sponsorship: the capacity to officially/formally adopt improvements and innovations. Top management is the champion of said efforts and initiatives.

The next question that the Facility grappled with was, “Given the Facility’s understanding of institution capacity building, how then should the Facility assist partner institutions?” The Facility answered this question by developing and documenting its own theory on workplace training. This theory is anchored in the belief that the need for capacity building stems from a concrete gap that exists between an institution’s current capacity and the necessary capacity to achieve its development mandate and agenda. All Facility HR activities, therefore, should specifically target documented capacity gaps. These should be designed to produce mutually agreed upon outputs that are critical in the strengthening of the five vital capacity attributes in the institution capacity areas mentioned earlier.

The Facility’s workplace training philosophy considers learning and the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude as the foundation of any institution change agenda. It also compels the partner institution to assess capacity in relation to its development thrusts and to think beyond mere learning input and output by also taking into consideration internal process improvements and customer satisfaction and development.

Identifying the critical program areas and linkages

Clarifying the Facility’s program theories also brings about the additional benefit of being able to identify those program areas and linkages that are critical to its success. Customising the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) approach to organise the various elements of the workplace training philosophy and institution capacity presuppositions, the Facility was able to establish its capacity building hierarchy from the following perspectives:

- Individual or group learning and growth: pertains to acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes to advance staff professional development; referred to by the Facility as the HR activity perspective;
- Internal Process Improvements: pertains to institution capacity areas and capacity attributes that enable the institution to respond to the needs of its clientele; improvements result from enhanced competencies; referred to by the Facility as the institution capacities perspective; and
- Customer Development: examines the extent of development and satisfaction of clients (e.g. sectors, partners, constituents, target beneficiaries, etc.) as a result of the development assistance; referred to by the Facility as the poverty alleviation and equitable development perspective.

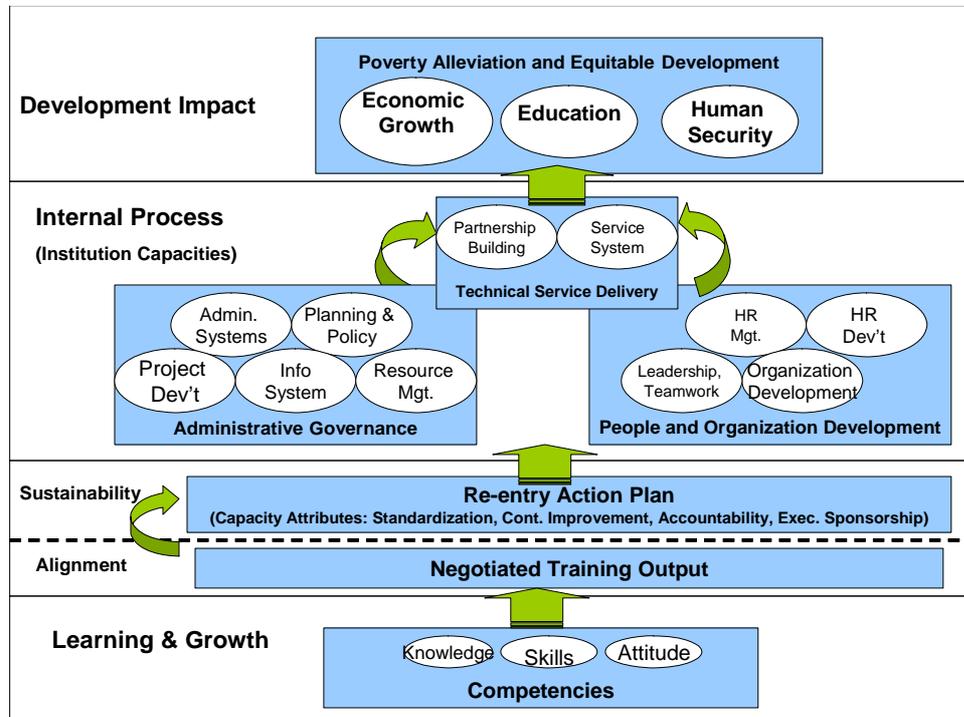
The Institution Capacity Development Strategy Map⁵ (Figure 2) demonstrates how these three perspectives come together. Worth mentioning are two Facility mechanisms that straddle between the HR activity and institution capacities perspectives. These are: 1) training output and 2) re-entry action plan.

Outputs, in this particular context, are HR activity artefacts that concretely demonstrate that competencies have actually been enhanced. These outputs are concrete indicators of alignment between specific HR activities and the institution’s change agenda.

⁵ A strategy map is defined succinctly by Kirkpatrick (2006) as the visual representation of how a particular strategy (e.g. capacity building) is doing in terms of execution.

Alignment of outputs are ensured through an intensive participatory institution profiling process followed by HR needs analysis and which culminates in the designing of specific short- and long-term HR activities.

Figure 2: Institution Capacity Development Strategy Map



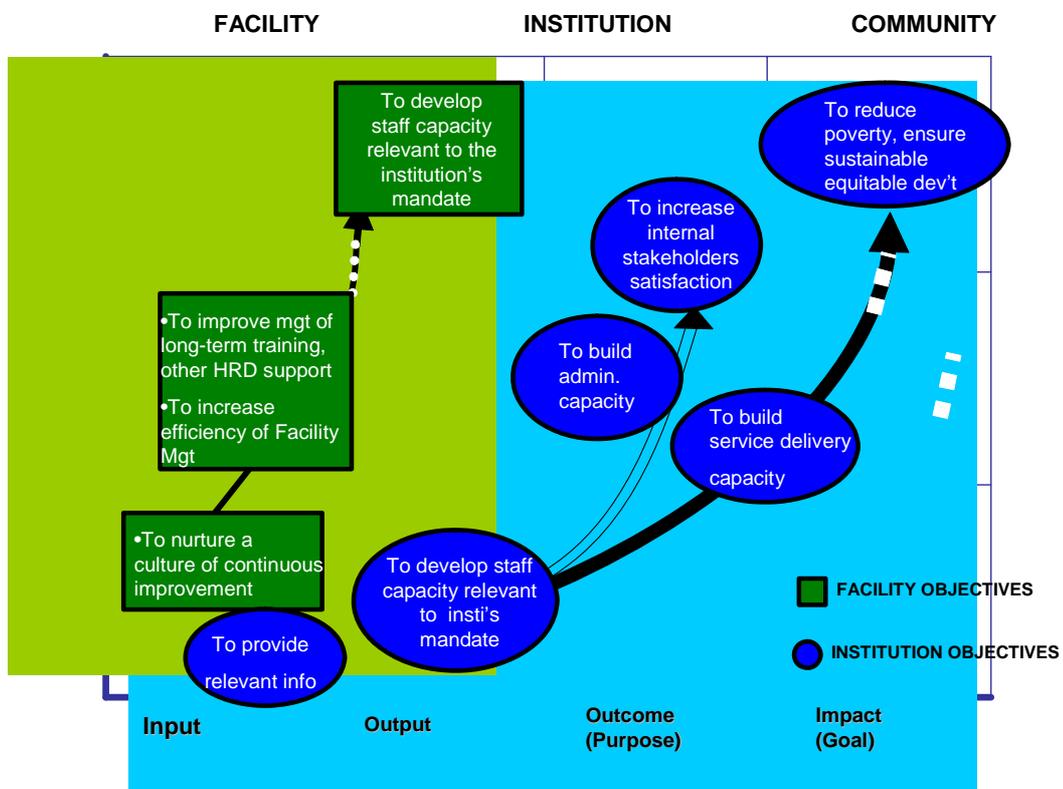
Re-entry action plans (REAP), are formulated as part of the participatory HR activity design process and should be implemented after the completion of an HR Activity or the course study. The REAP is the institution capacity road map that provides detailed steps in the adoption, institutionalisation and mainstreaming of HR activity outputs. It helps translates individual/group learning into specific institution capacity attributes. The REAP is the concrete mechanism that moves the output-level results to the outcome level of improved institution capacity.

II. FACILITY EVALUTION FRAMEWORK

The Facility evaluation framework⁶ is a reflection of the unique complementation of the Facility's logframe approach to project management and its participatory approach to sustainable and participatory capacity building.

⁶ The actual Facility M&E Framework is composed of two segments, namely, the Capacity Building Strategy Matrix (Segment 1) and its corresponding Indicator Table (Segment 2). However, this paper focuses only on the Capacity Building Strategy Matrix (Segment 1) and for discussion purposes, shall be referred to as the Evaluation Framework.

Figure 3: PAHRDF Evaluation Framework



It is also an integrating framework of the various elements of the program theories on institution capacity building and workplace training through the following salient features:

Framework Parameters: These are represented by the Framework's horizontal and vertical axes. The x-axis (or the horizontal axis) roughly corresponds to the Facility logframe's hierarchy of results while the y-axis, on the other hand, depicts the three perspectives of the modified Balanced Scorecard.

The Engagement Areas: Located at the top of the framework, these areas pertain to the three relevant Facility engagement domains, namely: the Facility, the Partner Institution and the Larger Community. For evaluation of ODA capacity building to become truly relevant and functional, it should not be limited to the Facility alone. It makes the case for the need to meaningfully engage the institutions, and if possible, the community, in a participatory and empowering way.

Capacity Building Paths: The arrows pertain to general capacity building directions. The first arrow (→) traces the Facility's capacity building direction.

In the world of ODA capacity building, the Facility's efforts fall mostly in the input and output. It emphasises that most Facility logframe indicators are actually project management indicators vis-à-vis the capacity building indicators of the partner institutions. The second arrow (\Rightarrow) traces the capacity building path of a partner institution that strives for improved administrative governance which is primarily aimed at internal customers. The third and last arrow (\rightarrow) traces the capacity building of a partner institution for improved service delivery of external customers. Capacity building activities, in this case, fall under the service delivery capacity area cluster. This path illustrates how the partner institution strives to improve its institution service delivery capacities for the benefit of the larger community. Following this logic, it is the partner institution, rather than the Facility, that has and should have control, responsibility and accountability over organisational and socio-economic accountabilities, i.e., the Facility logframe's purpose and goal, respectively. The Facility can only be effective if the partner institution is aware, appreciates, and accepts its own change process.

Hierarchy of Capacity Building Objectives: The second and third capacity building paths, in essence, chart the institution's capacity building thrusts. Unlike project management, institution capacity building does not have a set timeframe; it's a continuous improvement process which is pursued even after the Facility has ceased to operate. Following the BSC approach, these thrusts are expressed in terms of strategic capacity building objectives. One of the distinguishing features of this framework is the effort to determine the causal links between and among these objectives. As Niven (200) puts it, "A well-designed Balanced Scorecard should describe your strategy through the objectives and... should link together in a chain of cause-and-effect relationships from the performance drivers in the Employee Learning and Growth perspective all the way to improved customer outcomes as reflected in the Customer perspective."⁷

The primary mechanism for documenting the cause-and-effect relationships between and among the strategic capacity building objectives is the Strategy Map. Figure 2 is an example of a typical strategy map albeit customised to reflect the Facility's program logic. It also illustrates the alignment of various institution capacity building objectives with its vision, mission and strategy (including capacity building). In the Framework, the Facility's strategy map consists of those objectives in squares and the partner institution's consists of objectives in circles.

⁷ Niven, Paul R. *Balanced Scorecard Step-by-Step: for Government and Non-Profit Agencies* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2003), p. 36

Conclusion

Maps, paths, axes, and other navigational metaphors have been used to capture the essence of key capacity building concepts. If there is one appropriate navigational metaphor that best captures the essence of evaluation, it is the voyager's magnetic compass. Like a compass, evaluation provides direction and becomes of utmost importance when program logic linkage becomes weak, the correct route to capacity building is not visible, or when the Facility and partner institutions alike have simply lost their way. If evaluation is a magnetic compass, then program theory is akin to compass's true north, i.e., the point from where the traveler's current location is determined and the point from which other directions are plotted. Program theory is the reference point that aids evaluation in determining what is valuable and what is not. As this paper has shown, it is only with clear program theory that a program becomes imbued with meaning and where program evaluation can become a tool for enlightenment and betterment.

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