**Discussion-Oriented Organizational Self-Assessment**

**(DOSA) Tiarnach Mooney, based on the work of**

**Beryl Levinger and Evan Bloom**

**Date of self-assessment:**

**Facilitator:**

What does Capacity Strengthening really mean?

Capacity strengthening within the wider field of development has taken on so many meanings and absorbed into all the elements of humanitarian programming that it has been reduced to a project slogan. For the concept to be useful it must not be so general as to serve as an umbrella objective with few indicators rendering it’s impact analysis meaningless nor should it be used where simpler concepts such as training or organizational strengthening would more accurately reflect reality.

The distinction between capacity building and cooperation projects is very relevant as the former involves an engagement and taking responsibility for the progress the core institutional traits. The latter can be based nominally around resource transfer and focuses on the desired outcome above the ability of the local partner to manage the process independently and sustainably.

In order to transition from a collection of CS projects to a full program, we must look at the core components of Capacity Building and how best we can integrate them into program considerations that are most relevant to our efforts with partners. The idea of core capacities brings forth the characteristics that determine how well an organization can use what resources are at its disposal. They reflect behaviors within institutions that enable them to evolve and respond to the changing needs of their environment by adapting their approach to and use of available resources.

To break down the “ core capacities “ provides a richer understanding of what skills for an institution, based principally on technical skills and human resource development, are fundamental in the sustainable pursuit of a stated goal. An outside intervener cannot build this capacity within an organization, Capacity strengthening is something that institutions do for themselves, at best, and we can provide information and facilitate resourcefulness by harnessing and building on local commitment. We can facilitate the process but not deliver the desired outcome.

* To be guided by key values and a sense of purpose
* To define and analyze their environment and their own place within the greater scheme of things
* To define the issues and reach working agreements on purposes or mandates
* To manage and resolve conflicts
* To formulate strategies
* To plan and act on those plans
* To acquire and mobilize resources
* To learn new skills and approaches on a continuous basis
* To build supporting relationships with other parties
* To assess performance and make adjustments
* To meet new challenges proactively, by adjusting agendas, approaches and strategies

What does this mean for the roll out of a CSP?

We need to choose the qualities that we want to support in our partnerships and knowledge transfer objectives

* To define and analyze their environment and their own place within the greater scheme of things Assessment formats, impact evaluation tools, section in regular reports that indicates progress against an overall plan for the project
* To define the issues and reach working agreements on purposes or mandates / To build supporting relationships with other parties mandatory advocacy goal, What is our ask with this project? How are we reaching it?
* To plan and act on those plans workplans to be part of standard proposal writing and assessment
* To acquire and mobilize resources Self reliance in terms of funding should be an underlying goal in all agreements that Watchlist signs ( part of our responsible exist strategy)
* To meet new challenges proactively, by adjusting agendas, approaches and strategies Accompaniment throughout the project process and evaluation by CSP as to how well changes and adaptations were integrated by the partner?

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**I. Human Resource Management**

**Discussion:**

a) When was our most recent staff training?

b) How often over the last 12 months have we held staff training events?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | We routinely offer staff training. | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | | | | |

**Discussion:**

a) For our three most recent staff training events, what evidence is there that they strengthened staff capacity and performance?

b) To what extent were the areas of improved staff capacity relevant to our human resource needs?

c) To what degree did these training events prepare staff to respond to our strategic objectives?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Our staff training directly contributes to the achievement of our organization’s strategic objectives. | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | | | | |

**II. Financial Resource Management**

**Discussion:**

a) What practices and procedures do we have in place to help us avoid deficits?

b) How often do we employ these practices and procedures?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **We *regularly* use**  **established procedures to maintain our revenue and expenses in balance.** | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | | | | |

**Discussion:**

a) What are our organizational objectives this fiscal year and to what extent are these mirrored in our

current budget?

b) What *specific steps* of this year’s budget planning process facilitated consideration of mission and

programmatic priorities?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **The budgeting**  **process leads us to allocate funds in a**  **way that closely**  **reflects our**  **organizational**  **priorities.** | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | | | | |

**Discussion:**

a) How accurate were last year’s financial projections in relation to actuals?

b) How timely is the distribution of reports on financial projections versus actuals?

c) Do we have contingency measures currently in place if projected revenue fails to materialize?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|  | **Our financial management practices lead to accurate financial projections.** |  |  |  |  |  | |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | | | | | |
|  | **We *regularly* modify our program expenditures based on findings presented in our internal financial reports.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|  | **Our financial contingency measures prevent operational disruptions.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |

**Discussion:**

a) Over the past year, what problems, if any, have we had regarding delayed transfer of funds to the field

or our partner organizations?

b) What mechanisms are in place to ensure that money flows to the field or partner organizations in a

timely manner?

c) How effective are these mechanisms?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Our cash management**  **procedures lead to**  **the timely**  **disbursement of**  **funds.** | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | | | | |

**Discussion:**

a) When was the last time we reviewed the level of reserves in relation to our annual operating budget?

b) For how many months could we maintain our current level of operations if we were solely dependent

on the reserves we currently have on hand?

c) What concrete measures are we currently taking to enhance our reserves?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **We work to establish cash reserves equivalent to 25% of our annual operating**  **budget** | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | | | | |

**III. Service Delivery**

**Discussion:**

a) What are representative projects in our current program portfolio and who are the stakeholders

in these projects?

b) For the projects identified, what are some concrete examples of stakeholder involvement in each

of the processes listed below?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Stakeholders in our programs are engaged in:** | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **Assessing needs** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Designing projects** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Implementing**  **projects** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Monitoring projects** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Assessing their**  **impact** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Discussion**:

a) For the projects identified in the preceding question, to what degree are *traditionally underrepresented* stakeholders ( e.g., rural poor, women, ethnic minorities) engaged in the tasks listed

below?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Traditionally under-represented stakeholders are engaged in:** | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **Assessing needs** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Designing projects** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Implementing**  **projects** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Monitoring projects** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Assessing their**  **impact** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Discussion:**

a) For the same representative projects, what impact indicators are we using to track progress

toward meeting project objectives?

b) To what extent does the evidence that we have in hand (e.g., internal and external evaluations)

suggest that we are achieving intended impact?

c) To what extent does the evidence that we have in hand suggest that we are enhancing capacity in our partnerships?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Our projects:** | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | ***routinely* use result based indicators to**  **track progress in**  **achieving objectives.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **are routinely**  **monitored through internal evaluations.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **achieve intended**  **impact as**  **demonstrated**  **through internal and external evaluation.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **enhance local**  **organizational capacity as**  **demonstrated**  **through evaluation.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Discussion:**

a) For the same representative projects, to what degree have we addressed each of the

sustainability issues listed below?

b) To which kinds of sustainability (environmental, economic, political, social, cultural) do we pay most

attention?

c) Least attention?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Throughout the project**  **cycle (design,**  **implementation,**  **monitoring, and impact**  **assessment), we give**  **adequate attention to:** | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **Economic**  **sustainability (how**  **recurrent costs**  **associated with**  **project activities will**  **be met).** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Political**  **sustainability (how project**  **innovations will be**  **accommodated**  **within the framework**  **of existing laws,**  **policies, and political**  **institutions).** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Institutional**  **sustainability (how**  **the long-term**  **viability of**  **institutions created**  **through project**  **activities will be**  **maintained).** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Cultural**  **sustainability (how**  **project-supported**  **innovations fit within**  **the framework of**  **existing norms,**  **values, roles, and**  **practices).** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Discussion:**

a) With respect to the same projects, how was technical support to the field provided?

b) To what degree has this technical support to the field been timely and appropriate?

c) What discernible impact has this technical support had on meeting project objectives?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **The *quality* of technical support for our field-based**  **activities contributes**  **to achievement of**  **project objectives.** | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | | | | |

**IV. Communications**

**Discussion:**

a) Over the last 12 months, what kinds of information about our work have we shared with our constituency and the general public?

b) In the context of *all* the information we present to our constituency and the general public, what relative priority have we assigned to information about our *impact*?

c) How effectively do we demonstrate the impact of our work to constituency and the general public?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **We *routinely* share**  **information on our**  **progress in achieving our mission through our communications with:** | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **Constituency** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **General public** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Discussion:**

a) Over the last 12 months, to what kinds of donors (e.g., bilateral, major foundations, corporations)

have we submitted narrative and financial reports?

b) What is the quality of the information we have provided in these reports?

c) To what degree have these reports increased donor confidence in our work?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **Timely external**  ***financial reports* contribute to donor**  **confidence in our**  **programs.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Timely *narrative reports* contribute to**  **donor confidence in**  **our programs.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Discussion:**

a) Over the past 12 months, what has been the frequency and nature of our organizational contacts with

policy makers?

b) To what degree are these contacts part of an ongoing communication strategy?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **We *regularly* engage**  **relevant policy**  **makers and**  **institutions in**  **dialogue related to**  **our mission.** | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | | | | |

**Discussion:**

a) Over the past 12 months, what feedback on our performance have we gathered from donors,

constituents, and/or the general public?

b) What are some concrete examples of changes we have made on the basis of this feedback?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **We *routinely* use**  **feedback from the general public and**  **our constituency to**  **improve performance.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**V. Organizational Learning**

**Discussion**:

a) Is the prevailing flow of information top-down or bottom-up? Is information exchanged horizontally, e.g..between field offices?

b) Typically, to what degree did you perceive this information to be useful?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Information flows freely:** | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **Across Headquarters units and functions** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **To and from field**  **offices** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Discussion:**

a) Over the last 12 months, what have been our organizational priorities? What information was available to us as we worked through these issues?

b) To what degree was the information useful in achieving our organizational objectives?

c) How typical are these examples of informational resources within our organization in terms of content and timeliness?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **Shared information**  **is accurate.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Shared information**  **is relevant.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Shared information**  **is timely.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Discussion:**

a) Over the last 12 months, what data (qualitative and quantitative) have we routinely analyzed and reviewed?

b) What are some concrete examples of how this data analysis has influenced our practice?

c) To what extent does data analysis and review contribute to our organizational learning?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Information flows freely:** | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **We routinely collect**  **and analyze data**  **related to**  **organizational**  **priorities.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **We modify our**  **practices based on**  **findings generated**  **through data**  **collection and**  **analysis** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Discussion:**

a) Over the last 12 months, what are some of the most difficult organizational challenges that we have

faced?

b) To what degree have we used teamwork to resolve these issues?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **We use teamwork**  **effectively to achieve**  **our organizational**  **objectives.** | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | | | | |

**Discussion:**

a) Over the last 12 months what are three examples of staff participation (including field staff) in

planning and decision-making?

b) In each of these instances, how broad-based was this staff participation?

c) In each of these instances, how influential was this participation in the overall decision-making

process?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Our senior**  **management**  **involves staff in**  **participatory**  **planning and**  **decision-making.** | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | | | | |

**Discussion:**

a) To what degree did meetings over the last month lead to progress in achieving organizational objectives?

b) To what degree did these meetings promote organizational learning?

c) What are some specific examples of learning that emerged from these meetings?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Our staff meetings**  **directly contribute to organizational**  **learning and mission achievement.** | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | | | | |

**VI. Strategic Management**

**Discussion:**

a) Over the last 12 months, in what strategic planning activities have we engaged?

b) What conclusions about our operating environment did we draw as a result of these planning activities?

c) What changes did we make in our operations to reflect an enhanced understanding of the environment in which we operate?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **We use strategic**  **planning to examine**  **ourselves in relation**  **to our external**  **environment.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **We modify our**  **strategic objectives**  **based on findings**  **generated through**  **strategic planning**  **exercises.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Discussion:**

a) What are three important activities/initiatives that we have initiated over the last 12 months.

b) To what extent do these activities/initiatives reflect our strategic and operating plans?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **Our activities are**  **developed and**  **implemented in ways**  **that are consonant**  **with our strategic**  **and operating plans** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **We routinely track**  **progress in**  **achieving our**  **strategic objectives.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Discussion:**

a) What steps have we taken over the last 12 months to identify our constituency’s needs?

b) To what degree are our constituency’s needs changing?

c) What examples can we cite of programs that have been adapted over the last 12 months in order to

meet the changing needs of our constituency?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **We adapt our**  **programs to meet**  **the changing needs**  **of our constituency.** | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | | | | |

**Discussion:**

a) Over the last 12 months, in what institutional partnerships (formal and informal) have we engaged?

b) What concrete contributions have these partnerships made in helping us to achieve our strategic

objectives?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **We actively engage**  **in strategic**  **partnerships with**  **other organizations.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Our strategic**  **objectives are**  **achieved through**  **partnerships with**  **other organizations.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**VII. Security:**

**Discussion:**

In the course of the last year, have you had to consider a major security event (Elections, protests, violence)? If so, how?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **We have managed a major security event in the last year** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Staff and our constituency is satisfied with the way the event was managed** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Discussion:**

In the course of the last year, have you had to deal with a major security incident? ( violence against staff, car accident)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **We are satisfied with the security responses that we have.** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Discussion:**

What are the common practices when it comes to movement in the field? (what is the mode of transportation chosen and why?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **Staff feels safe when traveling with the organization in the field** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **The transportation plan meets our needs in the field** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Discussion:**

What are the modes of transport common to the community profile?

What is the community norm?

**Discussion:**

**Do our organizational policies reflect available norms?**

Personal / office security? What is the security norm?

What is the domestic benchmark?

What is the commercial benchmark?

What is the government benchmark?

What is the Ngo benchmark?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **Our security norms reflect the local minimum standards** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **Our security norms are sufficient to address the identifiable threats** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Discussion:**

When contemplating a visit by an international, what do you think of?

How are internationals perceived? Where are internationals expected to stay?

What is the tourist behavior and how does that influence the behavior expected from the international?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | **Strongly Disagree** | **Disagree** | **Neutral** | **Agree** | **Strongly Agree** |
|  | **We are well organized to manage visit by external organizations / staff** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|  | **We are well organized to manage the national /international dynamics** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

**Discussion:**

Have you had discussions with internationals on how to behave / dress?

Next Steps, Oxfam Advocacy / communication tool.