INDIVIDUAL LEARNING AND BUILDING ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY FOR DEVELOPMENT

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SUMMARY

Building capacities and capabilities for international development is an ongoing subject for debate, further fuelled by recent interest in learning and knowledge. This article focuses on how, and the extent to which, individual learners in education and training programmes for development policy and management interact with their organisations to build capacities and capabilities. It demonstrates some of the ways that individual learning and organisational capacity are linked by examining case studies from Uganda, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The article reflects on the complex nature of this interaction and on the broader challenges of linking learning to development.

Key words: development policy and management, individual learning, organisational learning, capacities, capabilities.

INTRODUCTION

A question for organisations working nationally or internationally for social and economic development is how to build capacity to meet new demands and challenges in rapidly changing and increasingly complex arenas. Such arenas include the social, economic and technological drivers of and obstacles to development, and the policies

and actions of the many other players in development, from the World Bank to community organisations. They also include contexts of deep social and political conflict, multiple cultures and languages, remoteness and isolation as well as the impact of changes in the international economy. These challenges require development organisations constantly to be learning and adapting to new terrain.

This article is about how the learning of participants in education and training programmes in development policy and management influences the capacities and capabilities of their organisations. As suggested, there has been much interest in the need to build capacities and capabilities for development, and thus in the role and nature of learning in development organisations[3]. There is a growing focus on the role of knowledge for development (World Bank, 1998; Stiglitz, 1999; Chataway and Wield, 2000; King, 2002; King and McGrath, 2004), including how knowledge is gained and what role is played by informal as well as formal processes. The number of educational and training programmes, toolkits and manuals directed to managers and practitioners in development - as in other - organisations is growing fast.

However, education and training programmes for development tend to focus on capacity-building in the individual learner, although organisations investing in such capacity-building usually anticipate that there will be wider benefits from individuals' new knowledge and skills. Whether and how this increase in 'human capital' translates into increased organisational capacity and capability is not generally the direct concern of education and training institutions. Equally organisations may not have a clear idea about how individuals' education and training enhance their work or lead to increased capacity and organisational change.

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[3] Works include: Eade, 1997; Fowler, 1997; Gaventa, 1999; Hulme, 1989; Kaplan, 1993; Korten, 1980; Rondinelli, 1993; Roper and Pettit, 2002; Uphoff, 1996.

This article is based on research into four postgraduate programmes in development policy and management. The programmes, three in Southern Africa and one in the UK, were all part-time and directed to people who worked in development directly or in organisations that contribute to development, whether in the state, non-governmental or private sectors. They included three distance learning programmes: University of South Africa (UNISA) - MBA; Zimbabwe Open University - Development Management; Open University UK - Development Management; and one block release programme: Southern Africa Political Economic Series (SAPES) Trust - Policy Studies. They were specifically designed to enhance capacities and were expected to lead to the application of new or enhanced knowledge and skills in the workplace.

The research methodology was developed and implemented by members of the four institutions whose programmes were under investigation (Ayele et al., 2002; Johnson and Thomas, 2003). It combined a questionnaire to course participants across the four programmes (354 responses) and to their line managers (81 responses) with 18 detailed case studies of instances where application of learning had been said to have an organisational effect (case studies 'by repute' [Thomas, 1998]). In a previous paper (Johnson and Thomas, 2004) we used the research results to discuss moving the assessment of educational effectiveness of the programmes from participants' attainment to changes in their work practice and to organisational change. Here we build on the case study data to analyse the mechanisms of interaction between individual course participants and their wider organisational and developmental contexts, to see how and in what ways individual learning can influence organisational capacity-building.

The title of this article refers to organisational capacities but the argument also concerns organisational capabilities. Platt and Wilson (1999) note that capability is the ability to implement and operationalise capacity, capacity being the potential. Equally, Forbes and Wield (2002) equate capabilities and competencies: 'those skills that make the firm good at using its assets or putting knowledge to work' (ibid, p. 182). For our purposes, we use capacity as the human assets and potential for capability, and capability as the ability/skills to operationalise and implement capacity. In more general terms, we also use the current terminology of organisational learning (Argyris and Schön, 1996) to denote the broad processes of change in capacity and capability in organisations.

In the sections that follow, we first reflect on the relationship between individual and organisational learning - or capacity-building - and then briefly outline the nature and substance of education and training in development policy and management. The subsequent section posits patterns or axes along which individual learning and organisational capacity-building can be linked, which we then examine in the light of examples from five case studies. The conclusion reflects on the complex links between individual and organisational learning and raises some wider purposes for learning in the context of development.

INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

The organisational impact of individual learning has historically been the focus of training as well as professional education. Lynton and Pareek (2000) suggest that there are two ways of conceptualising training. The first views training as a linear process of learning and application on the part of the trainee. The second sees it as an interactive and complex process involving several kinds of opportunity for practice and reinforcement, including a positive organisational environment. Thus, say Lynton

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and Pareek: 'The simple linking of individual training and effective action ignores the manifold problems of introducing and sustaining change in an organisation' (ibid, p.33).

On the first conceptualisation, education and training programmes that promote capacity-building in development policy and management are usually directed to professionals and practitioners already working in the field. Thus an effective learning process needs to take existing experience into account and build on it. This implies that constructivist and transformative approach to learning is required, viz.: 'an active process in which meanings are constructed by learners' (Atkins et al., 2002, p.124). A constructivist approach holds that learning involves integrating old and new knowledges and being able to apply learning in new ways and to new situations. This constructivist, reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983) approach to learning is particularly important for supporting change agents in the context of development.

On the second conceptualisation which involves the interaction with the organisational environment, Argyris and Schön (1996) provide useful insights. They note that individual inquiry into an organisational problem can often lead to the discovery of mismatches between 'expected and actual results of action' (1996, p.16). The discovery of these kinds of dissonance create feedback loops, leading both to individual learning and to proposals for organizational change, which might be incremental or an improvement to existing practice (single-loop learning) or might lead to reconceptualising practices and structures (double-loop learning). However, to have a wider effect, change of any sort promoted by individual discovery needs to be embedded in the organisation. Such a process is certainly a challenge for potential change agents undergoing professional education and training. Moreover, individual and organisational learning/capacity-building do not necessarily take place at the

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same pace, and personal/professional goals and processes and organisational goals and processes could well diverge, leading to irresolvable dissonances.

Thus, one mechanism that may link individual learning to organisational capacity-building is the dissonances and feedback loops that Argyris and Schön have analysed. Senge's notion of team learning may also apply in some contexts, that is the idea of a facilitated dialogue in which 'people become observers of their own thinking' (1990, p.242). Senge also suggests that team learning can become a microcosm for wider, organisational learning (ibid, p.236). Another mechanism may be in the formation of what Lave and Wenger have called 'communities of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991; further developed in Wenger, 1998). Communities of practice are based on the mutual engagement of people in the pursuit of shared enterprises through which repertoires of knowledge and skills are developed. An alternative proposal that builds on - or relates to - Wenger's idea is that of affinity spaces (Gee, 2005), or a '*space* in which people interact, rather than *membership* of a community' (ibid, p.214; italics in original).

Other insights about links between individual learning and organisational impact come from education. For example, in the literature on work-related learning, it is assumed that that in professional programmes of study there is some kind of 'transfer' between academic learning and its expression in the workplace. There is considerable debate as to how this occurs and what is involved. However, as learning theorists such as Eraut (2004) have pointed out, it is too simple to think only of a direct transfer of learning to the workplace. There is not only the rest of the iceberg under the water that is tacit knowledge with which new learning interacts (ibid, p.220). Eraut suggests that there is a 'performance domain' and a 'performance period', in which theory and practice intersect over a period of time and in which new learning either may not have

the space to be realised or the realisation is so implicit or embedded in practice that learners are not conscious of it.

There is still an underlying issue of the processes through which individual learning and organisational capacity-building interact. For the purposes of this research, we counterposed two models of how learning is applied. One was a linear model, where knowledge gained from programmes of study was directly transferred to work practice by the individual. The other was an action learning approach in which both individual and organisational learning occurred through cycles of action and reflection, involving interactions of the individuals' learning at 'key moments' with other people and with the needs of the organisation. We hypothesized that such key interactions acted as catalysts for change. Although it was assumed that both models would be present, a question for the research was whether one model was a better explanation than the other and under what conditions. The analysis of the case studies below combines these models of applications of learning by individuals and the organisational models outlined above.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Investigating how individual learning might translate into wider organisational capacities and capabilities is a challenge for all professional education and training, but is a particularly pertinent issue with respect to development. Development involves debate between alternative visions of change with different and sometimes incompatible underlying values. Certain kinds of skills are needed to manage change in uncertain and complex political environments. Such skills have their foundation in the notion of development as purposive action (Thomas, 1996), rather than a process of historical change (ibid; Cowen and Shenton, 1996). Although in practice there is

considerable elision between the two ideas of development, this distinction can be a useful heuristic. The first idea is of particular concern to those working in development organisations, whose explicit purpose is to bring about change. The second is the setting for all organisations working in a development context, including private companies which do not explicitly promote social and economic change, but whose activities might well result in wider wealth creation and improved standards of living, even though the organisational goals are commercial and profit-seeking. In both cases, there is a need for 'change agents' who are able to stimulate innovation in their organisations and, in the case of development organisations, to promote social goals and development principles throughout and beyond the organisation.

Programmes in development policy and management tend to promote frameworks, concepts and skills that combine 'command and control' with enabling and empowering perspectives (Thomas, 1996). Skills in leadership, decision-making and people management are needed, as are being able to engage in participative processes, reflection and negotiation. In the case of development management in particular, Thomas (ibid) outlines a possible 'curriculum', which includes: conceptualising social change and policy development as a process involving public action; an understanding of political and economic context and the policy environment (including in situations of conflict and social upheaval); the role and mechanisms of institutional development in social change; skills areas such as project design, management and appraisal, negotiation and brokering (to which might be added techniques such as mapping and modelling); and investigative methods. Other skills might include policy analysis and strategic thinking and action, and being able to apply ethical principles in analysing change processes.

The above 'outline curriculum' in development management implies learning both 'hard' and 'soft' skills. 'Hard' skills include the techniques and tools of particular content areas (for example, for project design and management) and general tools for analysis and action (such as mapping and modelling). 'Soft' skills involve learning how to be reflective and reflexive, how to negotiate with people, how to think differently in given situations. In practice, the division between hard and soft may not even be appropriate, as one type of skill may need the other and be modified by it, and thinking and action might combine different elements in different ways.

Constructivist, experiential, 'reflective practitioner' approaches informed the pedagogy of all of the four programmes referred to in this article. They all combined theory with practical skills, using the participants' own experience as well as case studies as sources of empirical materials for analysis and reflection. They sought to develop participants' problem-solving, critical and evaluative skills by presenting conceptual frameworks and contextual information for them to apply to practical situations. Assignments, projects and dissertations provided mechanisms for ensuring interactive learning by asking participants to demonstrate application of learning to particular problems or issues in the work environment.

FROM INDIVIDUAL TO ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING[4]

Investigating and interpreting the organisational impact of individual learning is challenging. Determining simple relations between cause and effect is not possible because of the complexity of organisational contexts and the many variables that might influence how organisational learning/capacity-building occurs. The following analysis is thus based on suggested patterns emerging from the case studies, based on

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[4] All 18 of the case studies in the research are reported fully in Appendix C of Ayele et al., 2002 and analytically in Johnson and Thomas, 2003.

the intersections of some key variables.[5] One type of intersection was *contextual*:
between the individual's position in the organisation and the size of the organisation,
on one hand, and the extent to which organisational change was planned or forced on
the organisation, on the other. The other type of intersection was based on *learning*
dynamics: the experience of dissonance and the potential for group learning, on one
hand, and the extent to which direct application of an individual's learning took place
or whether the individual's or group's learning influenced more general interactions
within the organisation (our models of learning outlined above). In practice the cases
illustrated a mixture of these variables as well as other factors - no single case fell
simply into one type of context and one type of dynamic, although some elements
might have been more influential than others.

Here we present five illustrative cases from Uganda, Zimbabwe and South Africa[6].
We include some of the contextual parameters where appropriate (the first set of
intersections) and demonstrate the dissonances experienced by organisations and how
individuals have acted to enable or influence the organisation to learn and move on
(the second set of intersections). We then provide some further reflections in the
concluding section.

Example 1: group learning interacting with the organisation in a context of forced
change

> A former South African State Corporation initiated in the early 1960s by the
> Nationalist Government had been experiencing drastic changes. After the
> election of the democratic government in South Africa in 1994, the
> government subsidy was cut substantially over a number of years, and the

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[5] Other variables than those immediately identified here were also involved and we reflected them in
the final section.
[6] All the examples in this section are necessarily much abbreviated and adapted accounts.

personnel were retrenched. The new Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) had to

make the organisation commercially viable and ensure that the staff and

management reflected national demographics.

The UNISA MBA Programme was seen as a relatively quick way for

technically qualified staff with leadership potential to become competent

managers and to increase the proportion of black managers. After the first ten

participants displayed success on the programme and improved performance

as managers, numbers were increased to cohorts of twenty. With senior

management support, the MBA participants formed a group called 'The

Young Professionals', which met on a regular basis to discuss issues

pertaining to the organisation and to identify situations in the workplace to

which course concepts could be applied. After a while, the company found

those on this programme to have a practical strategic focus not present in a lot

of the existing senior managers. This was such a noticeable quality that they

were invited to participate in the annual senior management strategic planning

session. Generally, the participants on the programme are seen and

experienced as adding immense value to the transformational objectives of the

business. (UNISA CS1; JJ, JR and line managers; February 2002)[7]

Why were programme participants able to contribute to organisational change and

catalyse organisational capacity building? This was evidently a case of forced change.

Course participants were not in senior positions but they formed an influential group

(a community of practice) that was being trained for seniority. Their own group

practices interacted with the strategic changes taking place in the organisation.

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[7] The sources are the case study code and number, the initials of the interviewees (course or programme participants) and the date of interviews.

However this (and other case studies) also reinforced other research findings from the survey that applying learning required a positive organisational environment. Organisations having to adapt to externally driven change are potentially a source of 'dissonance' - the sort of driver identified by Argyris and Schön. Although this case might not be an extreme example in this respect, it does focus on changes that were needed to adapt to new situations, the roles of programme participants, and how 'embedding' was leading to wider organisational learning.

Example 2: someone in a key role applying learning directly to direct change

> A course participant, who was fund-raising director for a rural development NGO in Uganda, changed the staff appraisal system by using the idea of keeping a time log from one of her courses. She got every staff member to keep a time log for one month. Then a comparison of what they actually did with their job descriptions was used as data for staff appraisal. Each person had to agree it was correct, explore why there were differences and then agree a revised job description. This brought out several interesting conclusions. For example, the Executive Secretary's log showed he was spending too much time on the detail of other people's work, when he should have been concentrating on policy and external relations. Also, the administrative staff had clever ways of avoiding things – too much of other staff's time was spent on administration.

> Several staff changes were instituted as a result of this process, including splitting the position of Administrative Secretary into two, and terminating another person's contract. In addition, the participant successfully proposed the merging of two departments. Also, for a period of about six months, she introduced short weekly administrative staff meetings during which workloads

were discussed and more proportionately distributed. Even though staff are no longer logging their work-time, she thinks that the organisation has a tool in its institutional memory that is known to be effective and could be used again if need arises. (OU CS1; NO and line manager; January 9th and 11th, 2002)

In this instance, the course participant had a key role in the organisation. She was also concerned with how the organisation could become a more effective development organisation. She was able to direct an internal process of review, applying directly a technique she had learnt in her course. A personal dissonance was detected in the actual and expected behaviour of the overall organisation director, while the overall process had unexpected 'actual results' which led to further individual learning and organisational change.

Example 3: a director of a small development organisation uses his learning to instigate fundamental change

The course participant was originally co-director of a merged non-governmental organisation with twenty-two staff, working in an increasingly uncertain socio-economic and political environment in Zimbabwe which was creating a lot of organisational tension. The participant 'knew emotionally that the only way was to split' and his study 'gave him the concepts to explain felt differences and the analytical tools to find ways to resolve it', as well as 'confidence to go beyond emotions and come to a conclusion'. For him, the most significant organisational benefit from his study was 'Clearer focus on what we do and why we do it', and he was able to apply his learning to 'restructuring different units with different values and missions in their work'. He ended up running his own part of the business as a separate NGO with only

five staff with a clear emphasis on its core activities and values. (MDASA

CS1, TD, 31st August 2001 and 27th June 2002)

In this case, a process of organisational change was driven both by the external environment and by the course participant being a co-director of the organisation. Moreover, it is also a case where the mis-match or dissonance becomes so acute that organisational learning within one organisation was not possible. In this case also, one of the courses - a voluntary sector management course - had a particular impact on the director. Although we have only provided a short summary, it is also evident that the course participant was both applying learning directly (concepts/analytical tools) *and* interacting with the wider development context and the difficult situation in his organisation.

Example 4: a senior civil servant in a large government ministry struggles to implement change

> In this instance, a programme participant worked in a department in the
> Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare in Zimbabwe. The
> major functions of the department are to co-ordinate social protection
> initiatives, micro-enterprise development and integrated poverty programmes,
> to act as a source of finance integrated with external funds, and to formulate
> social policies.
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> As director of the department, the participant was the most senior of three
> officers supported on the SAPES Trust MPS Programme by the Ministry. The
> participant, who has long experience as a public servant, said that he lacked
> solid theory to comprehend the social issues he was dealing with. He claimed
> that since completing the SAPES Trust MPS Programme he was able to

analyse government policies affecting the department from a multi-dimensional angle including political-economic-social and gender perspectives. As director, he managed to impart some of the knowledge gained to his counterparts and subordinates through position papers and meetings. According to the Permanent Secretary, his contribution to both departmental and inter-ministerial meetings was much more 'enlightened' than before he went for the MPS programme. He also used the materials from the MPS programme to illustrate how policies are formulated, implemented, monitored and evaluated.

Although a clear definitive impact on the department is not easy to pinpoint, the participant claimed that he was able to suggest more efficient ways of implementing and monitoring some of the projects being run under his department. The Ministry also now insists on gender considerations for all its policies, while the policy making process has become more 'consultative' in nature – a view that is shared by the Permanent Secretary.

However the participant finds himself in the middle of competing forces. For example, when he advised that the money from a large project be distributed through micro-finance institutions, politicians wanted the money to be disbursed directly to recipients. In addition he finds that his advice on donor policy, based on the insights from his study programme, is not heeded because of the Ministry's need for resources and other political and economic constraints faced by the recipient Government. (SAPES CS1; GS, line manager and another former SAPES Trust MPS participant; 23rd August 2001)

There are several dissonances apparent in this situation, many of them contextual. The participant's position in a large organisation with competing pressures makes it hard for him to apply his learning except in a fairly constrained way, in spite of his relatively senior position. Again, there is a combination of attempts to apply techniques such as those involved in policy formulation, and interactions with the organisational environment, for example around gender awareness. It is however a struggle for this participant to embed new practices in his organisation.

Example 5: the director of a NGO adopts a process approach to organisational change

This case is a NGO for children with disability in Uganda which started as an expatriate organisation that has become localised. It has 30 staff, including those in its regional offices. From its origins as service providers, this organisation now focuses on children's rights. It identifies needs and works with government ministries to enable different types of social provision, and with families to raise social awareness and provide contacts for income generation activities. It also increasingly undertakes lobbying.

These changes gave scope to the director - a programme participant - for making organisational changes. He claims that the GDM programme has been instrumental in his shifting the organisation to a 'process approach': 'a means of organisational learning through the action-learning-planning process' and as a way 'to help build trust with our partners through participation in the process'. Whereas the NGO used to have a 5-year programme with specified outputs to be attained, a formal process of periodic review and consultation with stakeholders was applied both at district and national levels. In addition, also triggered by the director's study materials, the NGO has been reviewing

the log-frame approach to project planning with the UK Department for International Development, and has been carrying out participatory data collection and participatory performance assessment.

However the director has also found it hard to get everyone in the NGO to understand the changes. He noted:

'I am the one doing the course, the others are not, so they cannot see things the way I see them and in some cases there is resistance because of fear of the unknown. Once people are used to doing things in a particular way they resist change especially where they do not fully understand the changes being introduced.

…My approach has therefore been to convince my colleagues in the Kampala office with whom I interact on a daily basis. The close contact enables me to explain things to them more clearly and once they are convinced then I have support in bringing the field staff on board and this is done gradually.' (OU CS2, JA, 14th January 2002)

In this final example, the programme participant was the director of the organisation, thus in a position to make changes. In addition, he had an opportune moment in which to plan change and could use his learning to help him. However, even being in this position, it was a challenge to build capacity organisation-wide. In this instance, dissonances emerged in the course of trying to bring about change. The director was in effect trying to build communities of practice in the organisation and was both applying tools (log-frame) and ideas (participation) directly as well as promoting wider interaction and discussion in the organisation's future. It would be inappropriate to assume that these changes resulted merely from the director being a course

participant. The interaction between his academic study, his and others' tacit knowledge and the demands of organisational change might however have been key elements in the organisational learning process.

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSION

The above cases demonstrate some mechanisms by which individual learning can help build organisational capacity for development. We now reflect further on this relationship.

First, there are simple cases which can be explained by the notion of linear application of knowledge and skills. As in Example 2, individuals may acquire new knowledge, new ways of understanding or new techniques, and apply them in their organisations. We suggest that in general these are cases where organisational objectives are agreed and tasks are fairly clear, so that both individual and organisational learning is about doing things better and more efficiently. However, the process of embedding is rarely straightforward, so the application of specific techniques becomes *organisational* learning only through interaction with existing organisational routines.

In more complex cases, the relationship between individual learning and organisational capacity building is better explained in terms of learning cycles linked through 'key interactions' which may result from, or may give rise to, dissonance and hence catalyse change. These include cases where an organisation's direction is not fully agreed, which is not unusual given that value conflict is endemic to development management and that external constraints may force change. Organisational learning in such cases is a much more diffuse process than the embedding of a particular technique. The kind of individual learning which results in increased confidence through the adoption of reflective practice can promote organisational flexibility,

better coping mechanisms and the ability to regain at least partial control in the face of uncertainty.

It is possible for the learning of single individuals to help build capacity at organisational level, but only where the individual is in a position of considerable influence, as with the examples of directors of small and medium organisations included in the cases above. An exceptional individual might be able to act as a 'change agent' and catalyse organisational learning from a junior position, but we did not uncover any such cases in our research that went beyond getting the organisation, or the individual's immediate work group, to agree to adopt particular techniques or ideas.

Cases of more far-reaching organisational learning generally required that group learning mechanisms were in play, so that individual learners had access to some form of 'learning community' to complement their interaction with their study programme on the one hand and their organisation on the other. In some cases in this study, a group within an organisation formed a 'community of practice'. In other cases, not included in this article, individuals attempted to spread their learning to others in their organisation, and often wanted to enrol colleagues in study programmes, arguing that the impact of a group would be proportionately greater than that of a number of individuals.

Under what conditions do these mechanisms result in organisational learning and hence greater capacity for development? There are some crucial factors which help ensure that individual learning is of a kind that could potentially have an organisational and developmental impact: the relevance of curriculum; and the motivation and 'learning style' of the individual learner (Johnson & Thomas, 2004). In terms of curriculum relevance, case studies that add or relate to the learner's

experience and activities that enable learners to draw on and reflect on their experience are key components, as well as engaged forms of tuition support whether built into the materials, face to face or by electronic means. However we suggest two further factors that assist in translating individual into organisational learning: opportunity and support. There must be *opportunities* for trying out new ideas that will simultaneously reinforce individual learning and have real organisational impact, whether straightforwardly in terms of demonstrating a technique that can then be adopted more widely or through setting up an organisational dissonance. And there must be *support* both for the individual in their learning and for the uncomfortable process of organisational change likely to result.

In our research, we found that support from the employer often played an important role in allowing participant learning to contribute to organisational capacity and capability, particularly by enabling 'learning interactions', giving recognition to the importance of study programmes, and facilitating contact between course participants. Many cases, however, are not ideal in this sense. Sometimes the organisational setting supplies opportunities but not a great deal of support, for example in the case of the director of an organisation acting alone, or a junior individual prepared to experiment and try to change things by themselves. In other cases the opportunities are not available. Either an individual is in no position to implement any new ideas, or the organisation is too heavily constrained externally.

Here the distinction between capacity and capability is helpful. Either individuals or organisations may have increased their capacity without necessarily having the capability to implement change. However, for individuals, their capacity is not restricted to single organisations and may be carried by them when they move from one organisation to another. Thus one might consider the possibility of developing

capacity across a whole sector, supported by generating multiple 'communities of practice' that straddle different organisations. This process would, however, constitute *institution* building rather than *organisational* capacity building. It is also important not to idealise the potential for communities of practice in contexts of conflicting norms, values and multiple forms of inequality.

Although we can see how individual learning and building organisational capacity are linked, and that these links are complex and include other many other factors, we should not reduce development to the capacity and capability to achieve development goals. As noted above, development is also a historical change process beyond any single organisation and involves clashes between competing visions. While building organisational capacity for development is extremely important, it is a big mistake to equate development to something that can be achieved by a programme of action that only requires sufficient capacity to be implemented. Development includes learning and capacity building as central values in their own right. In this sense, then, organisations working in and for development can help to promote such values by engaging with programmes of study, with their staff who participate in them and promoting a culture of learning whether formal or experiential or both - while understanding that there is never a direct translation from individual to organisational learning.

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