

SECOND GMG/KNOMAD WORKSHOP ON LEARNING

Educating in the 21st Century: Perfecting Learning on Capacity Development Projects

*Hosted by KNOMAD, and IOM & UNITAR as co-facilitators of
GMG's Task Force on Capacity Development*

14 March 2014
IOM Headquarters, Geneva

Summary

Background

On 14 March 2014 at the IOM Headquarters in Geneva, the World Bank, UNITAR and IOM hosted the Second GMG/KNOMAD Workshop on Learning. In a series of workshops funded by the World Bank's Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD), the Workshop served as a second opportunity to offer a privileged space for migration practitioners to study the impact of training interventions, and understand how trainers can better "learn from the learning experience."

A first workshop took place in New York on 15 November 2015. The results of this discussion are available at: <http://www.knomad.org/cross-cutting-themes/capacity-building>.

Main Messages

The discussion began with a focus on **bridging the gap between academia and policy-makers**, who often "speak a different language." It was posited that academics can really make a difference in specific fields such as data analysis. But there is an increasing trend toward government outsourcing work to academics that require "quick fix" solutions and that are often not empirically based. In this context, the ethical challenges sometimes faced by academics should not be underestimated. In the migration field, myths and misperceptions are having a real impact on policy, and policy is often negatively affecting the lives of people.

Education has a central role to play in enlightening the public, politicians, and migrants (who, it was stressed must also be provided the opportunity to learn their rights and responsibilities). As stated,



“objective debate is shrinking and it is precious, worth defending.” In this context, according to one participant, education-oriented activities (including training) must focus on: striking the right balance between knowledge and skills; understanding the differential impact of a training intervention; and measuring the relationship between impact and value (investment).

Reaction to this introductory exchange included **a presentation on knowledge** in its various forms (Professor Patrick Jackson, American University). Participants acknowledged that you cannot change an individual’s mind simply by providing facts; it is essential to know that there are different kinds of knowledge, and to tailor instructional design in relation to the form of knowledge you intend to illicit. There are three forms of knowledge¹:

- *“Knowing that” (facts) – knowing why it is important;*
- *“Knowing how” (skills) – knowing how to do a skill; and*
- *“Knowing from within” (judgment) – knowing how to apply knowledge.*

The last form of knowledge, *“knowing from within”* refers to judgment or practical wisdom, what one participant described as *“the knowledge experience.”* Capacity development activities and tools can most commonly, explicitly, intend to increase people’s knowledge of facts and/or skills. They are just as frequently, however, about implicitly changing their worldview. This form of knowledge generally emerges from challenging our existing understanding, and cannot always be transmitted through rationalization. More interactive and labour intensive methodologies will be used to elicit tacit knowledge. Assessing impact on this form of knowledge by measuring whether a training intervention has influenced individual and related organizational behaviour can be difficult (see below). Indeed, it is up for debate whether the emergence of tacit knowledge in and of itself lends itself to change.

The **role of the facilitator** is often to help people articulate what they already know or how they are approaching a particular issue. His/her role should then focus on modifying or improving this knowledge or approach. A facilitator should refrain from underestimating the contributions of participants. A primary responsibility of the facilitator is to study his audience and have a solid sense of their profiles prior to the training intervention. The surfacing of tacit knowledge is not the change that is intended, but it is creating the right mindset for change. The facilitator needs to continuously break things up to keep the discussion going. Facilitators should be very conscious of their own knowledge and biases and sometimes get out of the way and simply let the sharing take place.

Seven capacity-development initiatives (projects or projects drafts) were presented by: the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), ITC-ILO, UN Women, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the Joint

¹ Boyer also presented a similar typology borrowed from Benjamin Bloom: “knowledge; skills; attitudes”.





Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI) (see below). Most shared information prior to the Workshop with the facilitators.

The afternoon began with a video presentation on **technology-enhanced learning** (Evan Silberman, New York University). Participants were queried on their exposure and interest in integrating technologies into the learning experience. It was emphasised that when crafting capacity development activities and products, the needs of the intended learners and related learning objectives should first be considered. Technology-related considerations are secondary; they are a means to an end. One example cited was that of students who were required to tweet before class and discuss these tweets during class as a means of engagement and as a way to supplement course content.

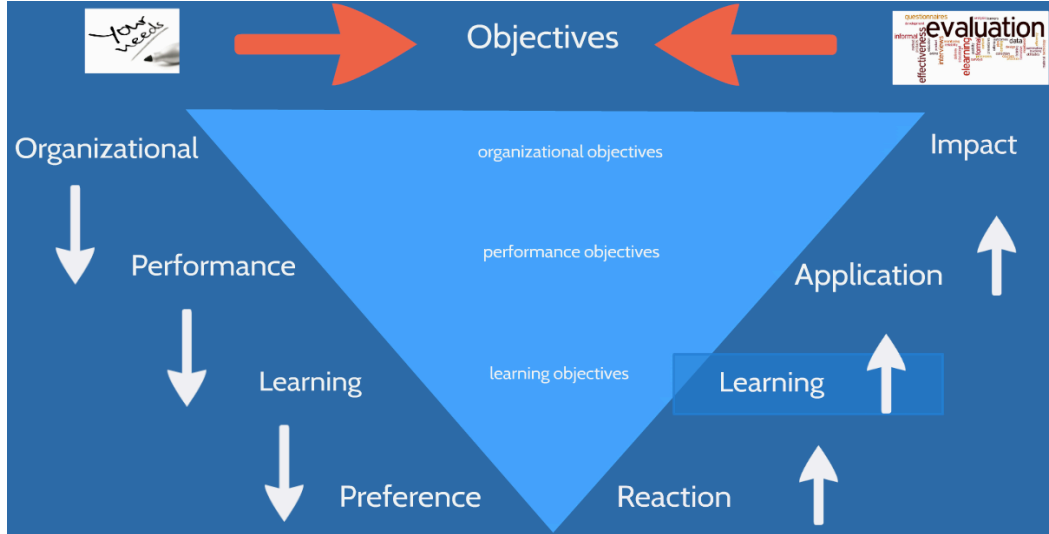
A specific form of online course known as Massive Open Online Course (“MOOC”) was discussed at some length. MOOCs are available to anyone anywhere in the world. Their approach to developing effective training for that large an audience (up to 200,000 persons) was questioned. Is the objective of online learning to deliver content? Or is it to facilitate learning? Learners need to be actively and meaningfully engaged. This is difficult through learning that is solely delivered online.

The last working session of the day concentrated on **monitoring and evaluation, learning how to measure learning outcomes** (Brook Boyer, UNITAR). Most of UNITAR’s activities are related to learning outcomes (about 65 per cent of the total activities), and half of these activities are delivered online. As a training entity first and foremost, for UNITAR, there is a high correlation between accountability and delivering (training) results.

In focusing on the learners, curricula should be designed to reflect what they already know and what they can and cannot do. Further, beyond learning needs, curriculum design should capture what learners are intended to do with acquired knowledge. Indeed, when people are exposed to content, it is assumed that they will be learning, but there is no proof that this is actually the case. It is essential to begin by assessing organizational needs when developing training curricula. Thereafter, one must study individual performance needs. There may be a performance gap that is related to an organizational issue. It was emphasized that training is not necessarily the answer to every capacity development problem.

The amount of knowledge and skills you weave into a training activity depend on the needs assessment. The desired result of a training activity is what learners do with the skills and knowledge they have acquired, which results in a change of attitudes. The extent to which participants internalize knowledge and skills is very difficult to assess. There are all kinds of factors to be taken into account, such as frequent changes of staff and political will at the top.





Participants were challenged by the statement that, in most cases, needs assessments do not go far enough. Understanding the intended impact is central to initiating a training intervention. The impact was compared to the ripple effect of a pebble thrown on still water. Participants were asked to consider, by way of example, whether their training activities intend (as impact) a first large ripple or the smaller successive ripples that follow. (This tied into the morning conversation on what has more impact: Training ten colleagues from the same ministry or ten counterparts from different countries?)

A first assessment can be the reaction of learners on the process. How did the training go? How useful was it? To what extent did it meet the learning objectives? This is the reaction level, which is based on perception. While useful for the information it provides, care must be taken in interpreting the results. Too many evaluations happen at the reaction level, too little at the learning level. It is more important to know the application of a training activity, which is directly relevant to the performance issues that called for the training intervention in the first place.

Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability are five evaluation criteria of training. Nevertheless, not all interventions will be evaluated according to these five criteria. For instance, evaluating impact may be too time-consuming and/or costly. However, evaluating one criterion without others may lead to false perceptions, and fail to provide an objective account of the assessed impact of a given training activity.

Capacity Development Initiatives Presented

Generally speaking, all presenters raised the issues of: instructional design and its connection with learning objectives; understanding and measuring the impact of a knowledge activity on a target group; and explaining impact to others, in particular to donors and other vested parties.



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ICMPD presented 2 projects (Building Training and Analytical Capacities on Migration in Moldova and Georgia (GOVAC) and Joint EU-ICMPD Project Migration EU eXpertise “MIEUX” to offer short-term technical assistance). Its capacity development work in the area of migration focuses on government officials. Challenges include: “training fatigue” and high turn-over rates. Thirty percent of participants who start a training are replaced by the end of the cycle. This requires a flexible approach and the integration of sustainability factors such as manuals and “training the trainers.”

The GOVAC Project establishes cooperation between academics and government officials who develop the outputs jointly. It involves traditional capacity development activities such as short-term internships, summer schools and a training manual. The aim of the partnership between government and academia is to transfer analytical capacities from academia to government and support self-sufficiency through a mutually supportive network. The second project, the Joint EU-ICMPD Project to offer short-term technical assistance, are demand-driven projects where governments can apply for technical assistance (for a maximum of 18 months) and formulate what they want out of it themselves. Experts are selected from EU institutions, as well as other government officials for a peer2peer approach. For both projects, the issues of evaluating short-term projects over the long-term, and measuring impact were raised.

The **Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)** presented its capacity development work in the area of migration and security. GCSP offers a range of courses ranging from master’s degrees to capacity development training and executive education for government officials. One introductory method cited is putting up a controversial statement at the beginning of a training activity and asking learners to take a stand. At the end of the training activity the same statements are put up to see if the mindset has changed. This is rarely the case, however, which proves that the mindset on migration and security issues is enormously fixed, and it is difficult to convince people. The **KNOMAD Thematic Working Group on Migration, Security and Development** outlined its current research through case studies, such as the impact of border control policies in Ethiopia.

ITC-ILO presented how the Labour Migration Academy (LMA) has refined its training approach over time through the feedback received since 2007. The LMA training activities include different target groups, which can be a challenge (e.g. government officials, employers’ organizations, etc.). People from different backgrounds are given a space to discuss with each other, but are also given time to discuss certain topics within their own sectors.

Methodologies have been developed and perfected that permit for capturing the attention of different categories of learners simultaneously. It was stated that surprisingly coffee breaks proved to be important learning moments. Training activities rely on a three-phase blended approach: online preparatory phase: so that the participants have the same kind of knowledge when they meet and also feel like they already belong to a group; face2face phase: during which a mobile component is



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added for interactive participation; and follow-up phase: contact through online tools such as Facebook to keep the participants connected.

There is an immediate evaluation to check if people understood the main key points, for which they get a certificate. One challenge is that learners generally do not have a good sense of what was useful during the training activity. It was considered more effective to inquire with them on what they enjoyed, and then a year later, ask them what they have remembered.

UN Women presented its new training manual entitled *“Gender on the Move: Working on the migration-development nexus from a gender perspective.”* When creating this manual, the aim was to turn available evidence-based research into a training tool to develop capacity, reorient the debate and promote alternative strategies. The manual includes a facilitators guide and 4 different training guides. One challenge cited was how to develop an instrument that would be immediately applicable and reach a broad spectrum of end users by addressing the needs of learners as well as trainers.

The **Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)** presented its training concept for government counterparts and its shared vision with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), with the aim to integrate migration-related issues into development agencies’ work. The training activities are 3 days maximum, and include participants from the Swiss and the German Governments. The trainers have no experience in migration, but are accompanied by SDC/GIZ members who do have experience. One challenge will be to craft a training product that motivates colleagues in the development sector to want to learn more about migration and development. In part, this will require using an operating language with which they are familiar and to which they are committed.

The **Joint Migration and Development Initiative (JMDI)** explained its new training concept that it is developing to support local authorities and other local actors in the field of migration and development in eight countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ecuador, Tunisia, Morocco, Senegal, Nepal and the Philippines. While local contexts differ, it was observed (from years of studying the issue) that common interests exist, as does the necessity to nurture the mutually supportive connection of communities across borders.

The new training tool (for which a workshop on methodologies took place in Geneva on 12-13 March 2014) will be delivered in the form of a modular toolkit with a core module and elective modules that can be self-selected by learners. The toolkit will be delivered through different streams: one, through a blended format (based on the LMA), and two, thereafter also online. Learners will be twinned with JMDI support representatives on the ground in the eight respective countries concerned.

Enclosures: Three PPTs presentations (AU, NYU and UNITAR)

