



Glossary Knowledge Management and Capacity Development

This online-glossary compiles definitions of terms that are used in Knowledge Management and Capacity Development.

Capacity	<p>Capacity is the ability of people, organizations, systems of organizations, and society as a whole to define and solve problems, make informed choices, order their priorities, plan their futures, and to implement programmes and projects to sustain them.</p> <p>The term capacity is used in different ways. On the one hand, it includes, generically, the ability to understand and to solve problems, to set priorities, to recognise opportunities, and to effectively and efficiently attain performance. Changed or improved performance is thus an expression of learning and corresponds to increased capacities. The term is primarily applied to organisations, a network or a system, whereas the term “competencies” is used in reference to an individual. Both include the methodical and specialised know-how and practical experience to structure complex processes, social competencies/capacities such as intercultural communication, the capability for teamwork, for dealing with conflicts and the ability for self-reflection. On the other hand, capacity also designates the specific knowledge, skills and competencies or capabilities that are prerequisite for achieving results. For an individual, this can imply technical know-how in the field of agriculture, the practical use of computer software, the operation of machines, etc. As a composite of the most varied attributes, <i>capacity</i> can be applied to individuals, groups, organisations, networks and even to institutions/systems. The social and communicative aspects that are especially important for structuring processes of change become predominant in international cooperation. These are often referred to as <i>soft capacities</i>, in other words leadership, processes, structures, external relationships, as opposed to <i>hard capacities</i> such as infrastructure, technology, finances.</p> <p><i>DAC 2005, CapDev SDC</i></p>
Capacity Building	<i>See Capacity Development.</i>
Capacity Development	<p>Capacity development is a process by which individuals and organizations increase their abilities to successfully apply their skills and resources toward the accomplishment of their goals and the satisfaction of their stakeholders' expectations. – The aim of capacity development is (1) to improve the performance of individuals, organizations and networks by increasing their potential in terms of resources and management, and (2) to agree on an appropriate institutional environment which enables the performance of individuals, organizations and networks.</p> <p><i>NORAD 1999</i></p>
Change Management	<p>In thinking about what is meant by „change management“, at least three basic definitions come to mind:</p> <p>1. The task of managing change One meaning of managing change refers to the making of changes in a planned and managed or systematic fashion. The aim is to more effectively implement new methods and systems in an existing organization. The second</p>



	<p>meaning of managing change is namely the response to changes over which the organization exercises little or no control (e.g., legislation, social or political upheaval, the actions of competitors, shifting economic tides and currents, and so on).</p> <p>2. An Area of Professional Practice Change Management is the task of managing the general process of change that is laid claim to by professional change agents. Change Management helps clients to manage the changes they face, the change happening <i>to</i> them or to help clients to <i>make</i> changes.</p> <p>3. A Body of Knowledge Third definition of change management: the content or subject matter of change management. This consists chiefly of the models, methods and techniques, tools, skills, and other forms of knowledge that go into making up any practice. The content or subject matter of change management is drawn from psychology, sociology, business administration, economics, industrial engineering, systems engineering, and the study of human and organizational behaviour. For many practitioners, these component bodies of knowledge are linked and integrated by a set of concepts and principles known as General Systems Theory.</p> <p><i>Fred Nickols 2000</i></p>
<p>Community of Practice</p>	<p>A Community of Practice (CoP) is a group of committed people with the concern of sharing their expertise and knowledge in a common domain of professional activities in order to perform their tasks on a high quality level. Knowledge-sharing and learning are stimulated by problems and challenges of professional practice, and are thus action oriented. CoPs exist without formal hierarchy; their structure is mostly informal and function-oriented. Members participate mainly on the basis of a clearly defined task conferred upon them by their organization.</p> <p>The six essentials of a Community of Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a Community. A Community has active members (more and less active ones). Being a community represents something special for the members. There is a lively interest for the community and its topics. And the community has a certain priority. It is not just "the thing I am doing after six in the evening". Members like to meet and to share. • There is a Domain. A CoP has a clear domain, a thematic orientation, neither too narrow nor too large. This domain is relevant and meaningful for the members; they are interested in this specific domain. • There is a Practice. Each and every member has his/her own practice within the domain of the CoP and members know about each other's practice. One's own practice serves as a kind of reality check when sharing experience, concepts and strategies. Verifying in one's own practice what is shared and discussed in theory is one of the essentials of a CoP. • There is Motivation. A CoP exists only through the motivation of its members, visible in their personal interest and in the priority they attribute to the CoP in their daily activities. • There is a Mandate. The mandate of the organization(s) concerned defines, on the one hand, the thematic focus with the declared interest



	<p>of the organization in a concrete outcome; on the other hand, the mandate gives open space for self-commitment to its members (working time and financial resources).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a “horizontal” or “diagonal” structure. Finally, a CoP is a structure beyond organizational boxes and lines. Most CoPs make a link between organizational units and between organizations. Horizontal and diagonal links are very typical for a CoP. <p><i>BeraterInnen News 1/2005</i></p>
Competence	<p>Corresponds to the generic aspect of Capacity with respect to an individual. see Capacity</p>
Data - Information	<p>Data Data are characters joined together by a syntactic relation. Example: k + g = kg (Kilogram)</p> <p>Information Information is the result of human interpretation of data. Example: "Heating oil is so inexpensive that now is the time to make your purchase." <i>Auer Consulting und Partner: ABC des Wissensmanagement www.hrm-auer.ch</i></p>
Drivers of Change	<p>Typically, donors have sought to bring about change through technically sound programmes supported in country by individual champions of reform or change. Increasingly, the importance of understanding the underlying political systems and the mechanics of pro-poor change has been acknowledged. In particular, the role of institutions – both formal and informal - and underlying structural features are coming to be recognised. The Drivers-of-Change approach has sought to incorporate each of these components and to better understand the interaction between them. A conceptual model has been developed and a number of terms defined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Change</i> includes negative as well as positive change. • <i>Agents</i> refers to individuals and organisations pursuing particular interests, including the political elite; civil servants; political parties; local government; the judiciary; the military; faith groups; trade unions; civil society groups; the media; the private sector; academics; and donors. • <i>Structural features</i> includes the history of state formation; natural and human resources; economic and social structures; demographic change; regional influences and integration; globalisation, trade and investment; and urbanisation. These are deeply embedded and often slow to change. • <i>Institutions</i> includes the rules governing the behaviour of agents, such as political and public administration processes. They include the informal as well as formal rules. Institutions are more susceptible to change in the medium term than structural features. <p><i>DFID 2004</i></p>
Empowerment	<p>Empowerment represents both a goal and a method for SDC in its work. It is an emancipation process in which the disadvantaged are empowered to exercise their rights, obtain access to resources, and participate actively in the process</p>



	<p>of shaping society and making decisions. The activities of SDC are designed to strengthen the poor and destitute in bolstering their self-esteem and identity, and thus their self-confidence, and in enhancing their ability to analyse problems and develop potential solutions of their own.</p> <p>SDC</p>
<p>Experience Capitalization</p>	<p>Experience Capitalization is the transformation of (individual and institutional) knowledge into capital by those involved in order to change a collective, institutional practice. Aimed at changing one's own practices or structures, it can be described as a "learn now for the future" process.</p> <p>Experience documentation, on the other hand, in addition to its archiving and accountability functions, is directed at "learning in the future" and making information available to third parties. The objective is to establish a retrievable memory.</p> <p>Experiences refer to knowledge won practically by experiencing, perceiving, acting and observing context and effects.</p> <p>Capitalizing on experience paves the way for changing practices or procedures, projects and programmes, concepts, strategies, and policies. At the same time, it makes individual and institutional knowledge relevant to, and useable by organizations. Each project to capitalize on experience must be precisely defined and should attempt to answer questions which are formulated as specifically and prospectively as possible. The application of experiences – or the investment of "knowledge" capital – should be planned with as much consensus as possible, and implemented as a project of change. The purpose of experience capitalization has only been achieved once a practice has actually been adjusted. Consolidated experiences are not automatically implemented as a logical consequence of experience capitalization. On the contrary, it depends on the willingness of those involved to realize changes.</p> <p><i>Guide to Thematic Experience Capitalization (SDC Flyer)</i></p>
<p>Good Practice - Best Practice</p>	<p>Exemplary solutions or processes that lead to top achievements are referred to as "Best Practices". It is often reasonable and helpful to renounce seeking "the" best solution and instead to re-examine the pertinent well established, proven solutions or so-called "Good Practices", thereby leading to their further improvement.</p> <p>The formulation of "Good" or "Best Practices" is a pragmatic procedure. It systematizes and capitalizes existing, successful experiences – both one's own and those of other organizations – compares different solutions that have been implemented in practice, evaluates them in terms of the corporate objectives targeted, and uses this as a basis for determining what constellations and methods of procedure make the best contribution to achieving one's goals.</p> <p>W&F</p>
<p>Institution</p>	<p>Institution and system denote social and political rules, fundamental values and formal and informal norms. They constitute the context-specific, political, socio-economic and cultural framework for the various actors in the system and define their behaviour. The system also includes the specific tasks and functions of its actors (so-called sub-systems), the reciprocal relationships between these, and the formal and informal incentives to maintain and improve the system itself. The delimitation of a system must be determined from case to</p>



	<p>case. <i>CapDev DEZA</i></p>
<p>Knowledge</p>	<p>Knowledge refers to the totality of acquired information and skills that an individual utilizes in solving problems. This encompasses both theoretical insights, as well as practical day-to-day rules and habits of behavior. Knowledge is information perceived and utilized by individuals in guiding their actions. Information can be used by an individual only in the form of knowledge. In contrast to information, knowledge is bound to the person and is furthermore always structured by the individual so as to represent his or her expectations in terms of causes, effects, and connections. Pieces of information can be processed automatically, and this can already constitute an enhancement of value and/or a contribution to the task of converting it to knowledge. Knowledge can either consciously be formulated or able to be formulated in language (explicit knowledge) or not (implicit knowledge).</p> <p>Explicit Knowledge: is expressly and clearly able to be formulated in words and figures, documented, and substantive. It can easily be shared, but is suitable only for pieces of knowledge that are not too complex and possess a low degree of dynamism or mutational probability.</p> <p>Implicit knowledge: is not expressly stated, but rather non-explicitly intended, unsaid, to be deduced from the circumstances. Implicit knowledge is not or cannot be formulated in words and figures. It belongs to those by whom it is carried, and is the wealth stored in the heads of colleagues. It is characterized by being identified and distributed only with difficulty.</p> <p>Experience refers to knowledge won practically by experiencing, perceiving, acting, and observing context and effects.</p> <p>Scientific Knowledge is acquired information which has been substantiated and submitted to severe validation axioms, and is institutionalized in the sciences. Scientific knowledge must be well-founded and able to meet with approval in any competently and rationally conducted debate.</p> <p><i>Probst, Raum, Romhardt: Wissen managen. Wie Unternehmen ihre wertvollste Ressource optimal nutzen, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung GmbH, Frankfurt am Main, 1997; W&F</i></p>
<p>Knowledge for Development</p>	<p>Knowledge is a key asset and a key resource for development. The aim of activities related to knowledge sharing and knowledge development is that the partners in the South and in the East have access to and control over the knowledge necessary to overcome poverty and injustice.</p> <p>The countries and SDC partners in the South and East require knowledge to ensure their independent development. The SDC's aim is to assist them by providing its knowledge and experience as a targeted contribution. Knowledge Management (KM) and a culture of learning are thus understood as instruments to enhance the quality and effectiveness of international cooperation. Together with its partners, the SDC learns from its experiences, incorporates the new insights into its activities, and fosters learning processes.</p> <p><i>Knowledge Management – on the Road to becoming a Learning Organization (SDC Flyer)</i></p>
<p>Knowledge Management</p>	<p>Knowledge Management is a conscious strategy aimed at getting the right knowledge to the right people at the right time, and helping people share and put information into action in ways that strive to improve organizational</p>



	<p>performance. KM needs to focus on creating a culture of knowledge-sharing and learning.</p> <p>Knowledge Management is a permanent striving for learning, for adapting to new conditions and challenges, and for accordingly changing practices (including programmes, procedures, organizational structures) with a view to improving these practices, doing the job better, and increasing effectiveness. Knowledge management illustrates the fact that knowledge – basically with people and in people’s hearts and minds – is itself a resource.</p> <p>Accordingly, knowledge management encompasses the totality of all approaches, strategies, and methods for the purpose of creating an "intelligent", i.e., a learning organization. In this sense, the three core pillars of knowledge management are jointly formed by people, organization, and technology. In end effect, knowledge management not only represents a social challenge, but is embedded in social development as well.</p> <p>Development work has always been centered on people and their resources, including (experiential) knowledge. Knowledge management points at the need for building or continuing to build capacities to learn and to change based upon what people know, and at strengthening this same resource in people. This is where knowledge management contributes to the empowerment of the poor (Knowledge for Development) and where the business and organization development agenda converges with the poverty and development agenda. This is also the place where platforms (for learning) are most adapted.</p> <p>Both Knowledge Management and Capacity Development (see Capacity Development) are approaches which focus on the same general topic, i.e. learning, while providing frameworks, at different levels, to increase effectiveness. Knowledge Management provides the frame and offers guidance on how to become a learning organization. Capacity Development (CD) is a process by which individuals or organizations increase their abilities to successfully apply their skills and resources towards the accomplishment of their goals and the satisfaction of their stakeholders' expectations.</p> <p><i>W&F</i></p>
<p>Learning</p>	<p>Change in how we understand and interpret the reality that surrounds us. Learning implies changing and adapting our practices.</p> <p><i>W&F</i></p>
<p>Learning Organization – Learning in Organizations</p>	<p>A "learning organization" is one which is in a state of constant mutation. It supports individuals, groups and the organization as a whole in an on-going process of improvement by bringing about changes with respect to structure, steering potential, context perception and awareness, stock of information, and behavior. The "organizational learning" taking place in a learning organization is targeted – as an active, critical analysis of its own specific context – at constantly improving the collective inventory of knowledge and behavior in order to generate enhanced organizational efficiency.</p> <p>http://www.phil.uni-erlangen.de/economics/bwl/lehrbuch/hst_kap3/org_vgl/org_vgl.htm, Status 22 July 2003</p> <p>A learning organization actively incorporates the experience and knowledge of its members and partners through the development of practices, policies, procedures and systems in ways which continuously improve its ability to set</p>



	<p>and achieve goals, satisfy stakeholders, develop its people and achieve its mission with its constituency. (Aiken and Britton 1997)</p> <p>This includes: "(1) systematic problem solving, (2) experimentation with new approaches, (3) learning from its own experiences and past history, (4) learning from the experience and best practices of others, and (5) transferring knowledge quickly and efficiently. (Garvin, Harvard Business School; in Skyrme/Amidon 2002)</p> <p>A learning organization provides a conducive environment for learning at five levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning individuals ... change how they understand and interpret the reality that surrounds them. • Learning groups ... develop shared insights through interaction among themselves, based on confidence and trust. • Learning organizations ... incorporate experiences and new insights into their organizational skills, procedures and cultures. They do this thanks to the transfer of insights gained by individuals and groups. • Learning partnerships ... constitute common ground for successfully meeting the challenge the partners are facing jointly, basing their partnership on shared values and negotiated collaboration. • Learning on the level of the international system ... refers to the development of a political, legal and socio-economic framework, i.e., a set of rules. <p><i>W&F</i></p>
<p>Learning Partnership</p>	<p>Platforms for knowledge development and learning composed of several organizations and/or individuals collaborating in view of reaching a common goal.</p> <p>Assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners have particular needs and interests. • They join forces in order to learn how to jointly cope with a common challenge. • Partners are prepared to change and to adapt their practices. • "Learning partnerships" require "informality" initially and need "formality" once learning is underway. • "Learning partnerships" require time to be built and established. It takes time for partners to get to know one another, to know each other's aims, interests, practices, perspectives, cultural background, and to build willingness, openness, mutual respect and a particular identity. <p>Developing a learning partnership includes clarifying and agreeing upon ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the challenge the partners are jointly facing • the contribution each partner makes • roles of the partners in tackling the common challenge • practical steps and outcomes



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • joint practices of sharing experiences and knowledge, and developing joint concepts and solutions • practical ways of memorizing and disseminating lessons learnt and practices found appropriate <p>The quality of learning partnerships depends on ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the value it adds to partners, clients; • the awareness it raises in general; the interest it creates among decision-makers; • the involvement of “action” and related competencies • the ability to respond appropriately to demand • an appropriate enhancement of the “learning environment” <p><i>W&F</i></p>
Learning Processes	<p>Learning processes are changing processes, i.e., performance and decision processes, that aim at transferring insights gained – be it from the outside or from within – into relevant decision-making processes for changes in practices, programmes or structures. <i>W&F</i></p>
Lessons Learnt	<p>Lessons Learnt are project-specific and provide generally applicable guidance derived from the conclusions of an evaluation. <i>DFID</i></p> <p>“Lessons learnt” are most frequently used to formulate insights gained during reviews, evaluations, capitalization of experiences etc, often as compilations of many individual insights. “Lessons Learnt” and “Good Practices” are often translated into guidelines, strategies and policies.</p> <p>Lessons learnt ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have to transmit a message that is clear, constructive, useful, do-able, easily available; • have to address someone in particular; • have to convey the experience that lies at the root of the lesson; it should reflect the specificity of the individual insight; • have to be specific for future action. <p>Mark Steinlin from Helvetas proposes that “lessons learnt” be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific – clear and precise, delimitations, situation, circumstances; • Actionable – something concrete one can do; and • Recommendable – for future use by someone. <p><i>W&F</i></p>
Network	<p>In the context of international cooperation, a Network refers to a special form of cooperation between organizations, groups, or individual persons. Public or private actors collaborate for a certain period of time and work on a common task. They share a common vision and determine the formal or informal rules of the network on a consensual basis.</p> <p>The actors in a network organize themselves autonomously with hardly any formal hierarchical structural imposition. A network can either remain an</p>



	<p>informal association or decide to take on a more formal, juridical shape. A network can be aimed within an organization as an in-house grouping (e.g., the SDC's Environment Network or the Working Group for Knowledge), or it can be crosscutting and directed towards the exterior (e.g., AGUASAN or the AIDS Network). Network members are autonomous and decide for themselves on the resources that they want or are able to contribute.</p> <p>Members of networks are engaged in a process of learning in which they share their knowledge and perceptions among themselves, reflect upon this input, and thereafter synthesize and consolidate it into shared insights. Along with the common vision and the common objectives, it is their mutual <i>trust which forms the basis for learning and upon which the success of their joint activity depends.</i></p> <p><i>SKAT/GTZ-Studie 2006; Arthur Zimmermann. La gestion de redes, Quito, 2004</i></p>
<p>Organisation</p>	<p>Organisations refer, for instance, to the SDC, NGOs, a private commercial enterprise, or a community based organisation. They are created for an explicit purpose of executing a specific task and thereby substantiate their reason for existence, i.e., the division of labour. As dynamic, open systems, they can be distinguished with respect to the outside. They are performance-oriented, targeted towards a specific purpose, and focused on surviving. They dispose of their own resources, above all the knowledge and the experience of the co-workers and members, and have their own structures and rules.</p> <p>Learning in Organisations (-> Learning Organisation) becomes manifest in the way processes are adapted, rules changed, and structures modified.</p> <p><i>A. Zimmermann, Organisieren und Organisationen verstehen, GTZ, Opladen 1996; GTZ</i></p>
<p>Organisation Development</p>	<p>Organisational development is a change process undergone by organisations and organisational networks, and designed to enhance their performance. The process of change involves structures, processes and the people working in the organisation. It is important that the changes be steered in such a way that personnel are able to actively feed their potentials into the change process, and can then identify with and support its outcome. Organisational development processes are initiated for instance in response to new client demands, changing organisational environments, the introduction of new technologies, or the pressure of downsizing.</p> <p><i>The World of Words at GTZ</i></p>
<p>Organizational learning</p>	<p>Incorporation of knowledge gathered from past experiences into organizational skills, procedures and cultures. Learning implies changing and adapting the practices, programmes and structures of the organization. In a Learning Organization (see Learning Organization) people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, collective aspiration is set free, and people are continually learning how to learn together.</p> <p>Organizational Learning consists of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to adapt (single-loop learning), "doing things right", adapting by correcting errors; • Changing the inventory of possible reactions (double-loop learning), "doing the right things", optimization of the underlying framework conditions; and



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning how to learn (deutero learning), optimization of the classical learning strategies; those forms of learning that are necessary to be acquired in organizational learning. <p>http://www.phil.uni-erlangen.de/economics/bwl/lehrbuch/hst_kap3/org_vgl/org_vgl.htm, Status 22 July 2003</p> <p>W&F</p>
<p>Organizational Learning Cycle</p>	<p>The organizational learning cycle consists of four key elements: <i>capitalization</i> of experiences; <i>institutionalization</i> of aspects of general importance for being transferred and replicated; <i>dissemination</i> to interested fora; and <i>translation into practice</i>. Institutionalization includes formulation and adaptation of good practices, guidelines standards/norms, and policies as appropriate, and the creation and adaptation of related procedures and structures.</p> <p>W&F</p>
<p>Skills (Development)</p>	<p>In general, by skills development we mean the development of qualifications and competencies which are supposed to permit the individuals concerned to acquire and continually renew occupation-related proficiencies. This concept arises from a change in the domain of professional training and continuing education. Skills development takes place for the most part in the non-formal educational sector. In a comprehensive sense, it includes, along with income-generating educational measures, the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic as well.</p> <p>ÖFSE 2004</p>
<p>Story telling</p>	<p>Story telling is a form of communication that helps to subjectively capture and disseminate experiences in the most comprehensive way. At heart an oral mode, it is about taking time to meet face-to-face with people and share knowledge in a direct manner, an often underrated or neglected practice among the formal everyday working life of modern organizations.</p> <p>Stories and their meaning are embodied in people, and are inseparable from the tellers; however, they can be shared for the benefit of others and the meaning can be passed on. As vehicles, they do not contain static information, but rather shifting appreciations, meanings or memories of experience. They are usually shared only when the context triggers some connection between tellers.</p> <p>SDC assumes that translating experiences and lessons into story form enables easier and more efficient learning from others and their experiences. It is one way of increasing the overall level of knowledge</p>



	<p>sharing across SDC, as well as between partners and collaborators.</p> <p>Story: The vivid description of a chain of events – true or imagined – spoken or written in prose or verse.</p> <p>Narrative: The underlying structure, coherence or organization given to a series of acts; the way in which events are strung together to create sense and meaning.</p> <p>Organizational Story Work: The use of story-based methodologies to help achieve a specific goal or outcome.</p> <p><i>Story telling Guide, SDC/SparKnow, Practitioner’s Version</i></p>
<p>Support for Capacity Development</p>	<p>In the case of support to CapDev, there are external actors who are involved and influence the process. Effective support assumes a common value base, agreed roles and tasks, and a commitment to a common vision. It requires context-specific knowledge and a deepened understanding of the existing competencies, knowledge and know-how of the various actors on which it can be built up. Methodically, a vigorous analysis of the actors is indispensable. Support to CapDev should always be oriented towards partners, or end-users, and their tasks/objectives. High expectations are placed on all actors because multiple processes are running simultaneously on different levels that are linked to each other, yet each moving at its own speed.</p> <p>This in part explains the high demands made on structuring the process and the partially modest results in relation to input. CapDev support is closely linked to the principles of partnership and knowledge development. SDC orients itself on values and on the vision of a more just world (SDC Guidelines, 1999) and includes issues of Good Governance.</p> <p><i>CapDev DEZA</i></p>
<p>Systems Thinking</p>	<p>Systems thinking has an alternative strategy for simplifying complexity, namely going up a level of abstraction. Higher levels of abstraction lose detail, and it is the loss of detail that provides the simplification. The organisation is at a higher level of abstraction than the department or individuals within it. But the interconnection of the components is largely maintained in the process of abstraction. By retaining the connections and avoiding the tendency to break things down, systems thinking provides a holistic approach to understanding and managing complexity.</p> <p><i>Jake Chapman</i></p>