


Summary Note: TIMOR LESTE, LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS, 2001-2002

The Capacity Building Assistance and Development Project (CAD)

From 2001 to 2003, a series of workshops and technical assistance activities were undertaken in Timor-Leste through the Capacity Building Assistance and Development (CAD) project, financed by a DGF grant approved and managed by the Post Conflict Fund (PCF). The development objectives of the CAD were to:

- ✓ enhance participants' skills in managing transition;
- ✓ unite a broad range of Timorese leadership and society in building an anti-corruption strategy; and
- ✓ help participants enhance their skills in international negotiation and conflict management.

2001-2002: WORKSHOPS ON LEADERSHIP & ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

The leadership and organizational management component of the CAD provided training and skills-building for governance in transition, economic leadership, and nation-building. The overarching goal of the component was to build social capital among a wide range of Timorese leaders, from all levels of society, by providing assistance in:

- (i) analyzing and diagnosing complex situations and difficult issues in economic governance and exercising leadership and authority in this environment;
- (ii) exploring new and different ways of intervening, and in this context, strengthening participants' ability to elicit and manage commitment from others, create strong working partnerships with individuals and organizations, and have a decisive impact on government operations and objectives;
- (iii) analyzing the tactics of mobilizing groups, communities, and organizations to address "adaptive challenges" and contribute to progress, while also exploring mechanisms to maintain national cohesion among divergent groups and communities; and
- (iv) discussing leading and adapting in the midst of societal, political, and organizational change.

The component activities were specifically planned and delivered to support the emerging institutions of economic governance through three transition phases: the peaceful transition through the election of a Timorese constituent assembly (August 2001), the subsequent formation of an independent government (June 2002), and the analysis of the first 100 days of the independent government's administration in (December 2002). Dr. Dean Williams, from the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, was the lead facilitator.

The following activities were completed in the design and delivery of this project component:

1. **Team coordination meetings:** Frequent internal country team meetings were organized to review desired impact and discuss potential pressure points, risks and opportunities. A strategy for participant selection was developed in the course of such meetings, because the right mix of participants was seen as crucial factor in creating the desired impact.
2. **Participant selection:** A mixed group of Timorese leaders, with either formal or informal authority in the society, were identified as target participants for the workshop sessions. A set of objective criteria was created for selecting the session participants to ensure they were representative of the various socio-political and socio-economic groupings.
3. **Assessment mission:** An assessment mission was conducted in January 2001 to determine the relevance of the proposed component and gather data on pressure points (to reconfirm the information/ideas discussed in the internal team meetings). The assessment included a series of one-on-one interviews with approximately twenty-five stakeholders and potential workshop participants. Interviewees were asked who they thought should attend, to validate the selection criteria already drafted. The assessment process as a whole, not only helped to gather information to feed into materials development — it also built ownership and trust in the workshop process, because the beneficiaries became co-creators of the workshops in which they were to participate.

4. **Materials/Preparation:** Practical exercises, case studies, and a participant’s manual were developed for the sessions. Leading up to workshops, participants were frequently visited to discuss concerns prior to the workshop to ensure their presence and full participation in the sessions.
5. **Workshops:** Three separate residential workshops were delivered under this component, each undertaken in a “retreat” setting over a four to five-day period for mixed groups of stakeholders (totaling 70 people). To best respond and adapt to the most pressing challenges facing participants, topics and themes were first selected based on their relevance to the participants, and were then analyzed within the structure of identified pressure points and theories of leadership.
 - It would be difficult to overstate the degree of tension and concern surrounding the development of the first Governance in Transition Retreat in June 2001: an increasingly fractured and politicized urban elite was frustrated at their lack of participation in the transitional government, and the urban and rural population had seen very little of the “peace dividend” they had expected. While there were several key leaders who had committed immediately, most target participant leaders ranged from enthusiastic to skeptical to resistant and (in a few cases) obstructive; the Bank country team were on unfamiliar “non-economist” terrain where success seemed more dependent on relationships than technical or policy inputs; and the UN transitional administration was wary of any action that might affect the increasingly political dynamic as elections approached.
 - The enthusiastic reports of participants in the first workshop, especially from those who had been skeptics, created a momentum in which leaders of important social and political “spoiler” groups found themselves curious enough to participate – or unwilling to be perceived as “left out” or “not a leader” – and thus the circle of participation widened substantially.
6. **Facilitated Support to Governance:** At the specific request of the Prime Minister and his cabinet, the facilitator who led the residential workshops returned to Timor-Leste in mid-December 2002 to facilitate small-group sessions, to address the leadership challenges facing the new government in prioritizing policy actions and improving service delivery in key areas.

Workshop Themes: The key ideas and concepts presented in the three “retreat” workshops with East Timorese leaders included the following:

- mechanisms to mobilize people and resources to address problems and produce results;
- processes to create dialogue for problem understanding and problem solving;
- tools to increase the quality of intra-group/party collaboration and alliances;
- methods to distinguish between leadership, power and authority;
- processes to generate and sustain a compelling future for the country; and
- exercises for innovative, bold and courageous leadership in the face of many obstacles.

Setting and Structure

Substantial informal time, entirely unstructured, was spent eating, walking, and playing football; the group was physically isolated in a beautiful mountain *pousada* with no phone service at all; more than 90% of them were transported by UN helicopters and thus personal vehicles were not available for “escapes”. The presence of more than 60 UN peacekeepers providing a security cordon around the facility (perceived a necessary because virtually all of the Timorese political leadership, including the presumptive President and much of the soon-to-be-elected Cabinet and Parliament, were present) also prevented staff from various leadership factions from coming into the facility with “urgent” distractions.

Workshop Format and Content:

In order to focus on tools and practices for elevating leaders’ performance and dealing with difficult problems, the facilitator first sought to create a “holding environment” in which difficult conversations could be effectively undertaken. Early discussions engaged participants with facilitation using Socratic inquiry to uncover underlying assumptions, premises, and beliefs, thus allowing new models, frameworks and approaches to be explored, considered and mastered. Moving forward in this “holding environment for difficult conversations”, the facilitator

helped the group work directly with the immediate concerns and objectives faced by participants, using their most urgent and immediate concerns as the fuel for the ongoing study of and learning on leadership and authority.

Case Studies: Case studies of problems other countries have faced were used to illustrate certain principles and practices. Participants were asked to prepare a case study of a personal leadership challenge they had faced in the past, or were currently facing; these were used to enable challenging topics to be raised.

Videos: The training used video to illustrate practices and principles supporting key workshop themes.

Small group work: Participants worked in small groups for case study analysis and experiential exercises. Small group work helps in concept understanding, sharing of experience, and collaborative inquiry.

Participants' Assessment. Participant's comments after the workshop series highlighted both the perceived *ex ante* risks and the benefits accrued as judged by the participants themselves. Each of the workshops was scheduled for a time in the transitional period when stresses in the institutional relationships exposed both the low level of social capital among the cross-section of leaders and the increased difficulty of economic policy-making in that stressed institutional context. Participants unanimously felt that the retreat was an extremely valuable exercise not only because of the practical skills that they learned, but also because the workshops created an understanding of their role in contributing to progress in East Timor. Participants suggested future workshops be organized to include both "advanced" courses and follow-up or refresher courses; that other workshops include both leadership and technical topics, such as planning and economic management, government management systems and structures, and community development; and that the use of case studies was valuable and that more cases be used in the future. Even participants who had been very skeptical *ex ante* at the potential benefits from this work suggested *ex post* that more workshops be organized for all levels of East Timorese society, and also include diverse participants such as national government representatives, youth groups, university students, veterans/veterans associations, women's groups, religious institutions (the church's participation was considered extremely important for some participants), and other civil society groups. Finally, participants judged that workshops in the future should give even more examples of other countries who either have emerged from, or are in the process of, nation building; and that there be a mechanism in the future to use the workshops to build an ongoing process of inclusive dialogue.

2002: WORKSHOPS ON LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION

As a follow-on to the leadership training and organizational management component, the CAD project also delivered two communication workshops for a mixed group of East Timorese leaders from the government, political parties, and civil society organizations. The first workshop was delivered over two full days for a mixed group of participants, principally for ministry directors and technical staff; a half-day workshop was given for Ministers and Vice-Ministers. A total of approximately 50 participants were trained in a wide range of communication concepts, including: answering questions effectively; responding to "loaded" questions; focusing "fuzzy" questions; using body language; making allies with the media; distinguishing questions not to answer; holding press conferences; and understanding media "do's and don'ts".

Participant's Assessment. Participants completed evaluation forms following each session; a WBI questionnaire was used as the basis of the evaluation forms. Results from 31 director-level participants showed that the majority of participants rated the course as very good/outstanding in terms of meeting their training needs (a total of 74%), very good/outstanding in increasing their knowledge/capacity (a total of 90%), and directly applicable to their work (a total of 87%). Participants were also asked to rank the pace, theory, practical content, presentation and participation in the course, in terms of adequacy or excessiveness. A total of 16 participating directors replied that the training was adequate, 8 rated the course as in-between adequate and excessive, and 4 participants said it was excessive.

2004 - 2005: YOUTH LEADERSHIP FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (YOUTH-LED)

As a follow-on to the CAD, a Post Conflict Fund grant was approved for specific interventions, including retreats and workshops, to be designed by and delivered for a wide spectrum of Timorese youth leaders, seeking to build their skills, confidence, and ability to engage with Government in both technical discussions and political processes.

This summary note was prepared by the LICUS unit in OPCS, as a companion to the "Dissemination Note on Leadership Workshops, 2001-2004" jointly issued in December 2004 by the LICUS unit and the Public Sector Governance unit in PREM. The content of this summary was reviewed by the workshop organizers responsible for the event. For further information on the Timor-Leste workshops, please contact Laura Bailey or Barbry Keller in LICUS.