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STATE-BUILDING

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN POST-CONFLICT STATES
REFLECTIONS FROM TWO CASE STUDIES IN WEST AFRICA

A JOINT INITIATIVE BY THE

WORLD BANK'S FRAGILE AND

CONFLICT-AFFECTED STATES

GROUP (OPCFC) AND THE

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAMME'S BUREAU FOR

CRISIS PREVENTION AND

RECOVERY (BCPR)

THE WORLD BANK

UNDP

FRAGILITY and CONFLICT

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AFR	Africa Region (World Bank)
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEMAP	Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program
IAA	International assistance agency
IMF	International Monetary Fund
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OPCFC	Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries Group (World Bank)
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNMIL	United Nations Military Intervention in Liberia
WBI	World Bank Institute

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FOREWORD

A sustainable path out of conflict and fragility lies in a State's ability to develop and harness national capacities. For states to become more stable and effective, individuals and institutions must have the capacity to mediate conflict peacefully, and develop and implement policies that can guide economic and human development. Supporting the development of the capacities to build and maintain the institutions of the State remains a core priority of development assistance, especially for countries where fragility remains endemic and where conflict often recurs.

In 2009, with funding support from the Norwegian and Australian Governments, a small team from the World Bank (Fragile and Conflict-Affected States Group) and the UNDP (Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery) reviewed a number of programs in Sierra Leone and Liberia to assess their contribution to state-building and the development of national capacity.

This paper and its companion piece *'State-Building: Key Concepts and Operational Implications in two Fragile States'*[1], reports on that assessment. This paper also draws on the views of international experts who convened in Washington DC in June 2010 to discuss the effectiveness of recent approaches to capacity development.

The paper seeks to provide a fresh perspective on capacity building in post-conflict countries and reflects critically on whether our current efforts are working. The paper reviews capacity development approaches through the lens of peacebuilding and state-building and draws from the experience of human development beyond the aid world. It calls for the international community to challenge current approaches and seek new ways to build the dynamic capacities that a state, particularly one recovering from conflict, in order to fulfil the development aspirations of its citizens.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the World Bank, United Nations, or their respective Member States.

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[1] World Bank/UNDP 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Capacity development is essentially a form of change with a variety of different aspects—cognitive, personal, organizational, political, physical, social, financial, and institutional. It is about people taking up new roles and skills, thinking in different ways, doing different things, and entering into new relationships. It is about the way complex human systems shift and grow and move over time. The need to understand this dynamic of change is heightened in post-conflict countries as individuals, organizations, and systems emerge from collapse or severe dysfunction.

It might be helpful at the outset to admit that we still have little systematic, tested understanding about how and why development happens in countries such as Sierra Leone and Liberia. Progress depends on persuading hundreds or even thousands of groups and individuals to change the way they work, a transformation people will accept only if they can be persuaded to think differently about hierarchy and authority, risk, personal safety, professionalism, informal loyalties, and other factors.

This report is partly based on observations from joint visits to Sierra Leone and Liberia by UNDP Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery and the Fragile and Conflict-affected Countries Unit of the World Bank in 2009. It also draws from the wider literature on capacity development and statebuilding in fragile/post-conflict states. This summary gleans from these observations, discussions, and readings some of the more salient points on capacity development in post-conflict countries.

CAPACITY CONTEXT OF POST-CONFLICT COUNTRIES

DEVELOPING RESILIENT CAPACITY in any context is challenging. Many factors increase the complexity of capacity issues in post-conflict states. The context usually remains characterized by uncertainty, underlying tension, and many unresolved grievances. The physical constraints reinforce the barriers to progress. The legacy of trauma can remain largely unaddressed. The disruption and damage to the social fabric makes it more difficult to create the capacity to develop capacity. And not least, the effects of the various transitions (e.g., the move to elections) can briefly open or shut down windows of opportunities for capacity development and accelerate political predations on public sector organizations.

The concept of capacity itself needs to be seen differently in post-conflict states. In particular, it needs to be deepened and broadened in order to capture the non-technical factors that shape its emergence. The post-conflict context creates unique demands on international assistance agencies (IAAs) that should lead to rethinking many aspects of IAA policy and practice.

- Capacity development takes place in a context of ***collapsed and fragmented*** organizations and institutions requiring participants to think how best to address that particular condition.
- A focus on ***formal*** organizations as key actors is necessary but not sufficient. ***Informal***, traditional, donor, and criminal networks also exert influence.
- The influence of ***power and politics*** is pervasive in shaping and inhibiting capacity development and needs to be factored into the crafting of all interventions.
- Most capacity development participants must face a pattern of ***dilemmas***, ***paradoxes***, ***and traps*** as the processes of change unfold, a pattern considered more influential and more intractable in post-conflict states than in comparable low-income states.
- Constant ***transition and change*** happens in all countries. But the Governments and IAAs in Sierra Leone and Liberia face particular challenges for managing a variety of transitions, schedules, and deadlines that act to undermine the development of national capacity.

PROGRAMMING IMPLICATIONS FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN POST-CONFLICT STATES

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IS essentially a form of change and transition. Outside interveners need a *change theory* (as opposed to a *results chain*) to understand and manage the shift from

one capacity configuration to another. Many system changes will unfold in the process. Participants need some awareness of these dynamics and a sense of what they can influence and/or change and what they cannot.

- With few established rules and institutions, small organizations, informal coalitions and networks, the behavior of ***individuals***—their interests, actions, values, influence, control—in country organizations in Sierra Leone and Liberia significantly mattered.
- Two ***analytical approaches*** or "mental models" of capacity development seemed to underlie most of the thinking in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Most technical assistance was implicitly aligned with the *direct or planned approach* model with all its attendant contributions and blind spots. Civil society gravitated much more to the *indirect or emergent approach.*
- Capacity analyses have historically been oriented to diagnosing, indentifying, and addressing country needs. In the process, however, not enough attention has been given to clarifying ***absorptive capacity*** or ***readiness*** or willingness to act. This trifecta of strategic direction, country commitment, and ability to implement seems critical in Sierra Leone and Liberia.
- Governments in Sierra Leone and Liberia emerged from conflict with significant challenges to their ***legitimacy***. Any process of capacity development has to contribute to a social contract that encourages citizens to maintain a connection to the state and support a change agenda.
- Tension frequently exists in post-conflict states between IAA-supported interventions designed to generate ***performance*** and those focused on developing ***capacity***. In many cases, the need for short-term action without country capacity leads to only secondary attention paid to capacity development
- Few issues in capacity development in post-conflict states seem so misjudged as the ***time and timing*** issue. The implementation time needed for programs is invariably and chronically underestimated. Short-, medium-, and long-term interventions can and do get muddled up.
- Like other statebuilding activities, capacity development is never linear. The ***sequencing*** entanglement in capacity development is difficult to unravel. There are limits to both macro and micro scheduling, but while capacity development interventions need to be responsive and adaptable, they cannot simply start without any sense of priority or strategy.
- Most capacity analyses tended to focus on institutions or structures or processes of some kind but the role of ***leadership*** as a contributor to capacity development is important. Any engagement around leadership needs to consider the complexity, opacity, and the dynamic nature of power and influence.
- More intractable issues—the personal, organizational, and political dynamics—have emerged in shaping country ***ownership***. Dealing with the ownership dynamic has turned out to be a good deal more problematic and complex than the aid community had imagined.

IMPLICATIONS FOR IAA POLICY AND PRACTICES

THE PARTICULAR NATURE of the capacity development challenges post-conflict countries pushes IAAs to come up with imaginative and less formulaic approaches. They must be more nimble strategically and operationally, listen, learn, and respond, and be more aware of and sensitive to a changeable implementation environment.

- The IAAs need well-grounded capacity development ***strategies*** at all levels. Currently capacity development efforts are on the whole under-strategized, under-operationalized, under-energized, and under-funded.
- The ***country and institutional context*** should be the starting point of any serious capacity analysis. In line with this established line of thinking, IAAs need to shift their own emphasis from the application of more *imported* interventions to ones that are more *customized.*
- The current development orthodoxy, including in post-conflict states, emphasizes predicting, measuring, and achieving performance outcomes. ***Results-based and performance management methodologies*** can apply in many instances but are not without downsides. The challenge is to get away from one-size-fits-all and come up with a range of approaches that suit a variety of situations.
- Two familiar problems with ***technical assistance*** did reappear in Sierra Leone and Liberia: first, the difficulties in managing technical assistance to make a significant contribution to capacity development; and second, the pervasive systemic pressures that drive its overuse especially in fragile situations.
- Virtually every capacity analysis in Sierra Leone and Liberia called for greater ***coordination and collaboration*** on all sides.

Yet the constraints to complex joint action on the issues remain pervasive. Many fixes were evident in both countries. The IAAs were trying to co-join their programs but in the absence of strong national leadership, the level of program coherence remains highly variable.

- Capacity development strategies tend to be void of discussions on ***costs***, both to countries and to donors. And yet cost issues, especially the operational and recurrent variety, kept emerging in Sierra Leone and Liberia basically due to lack of financing available from the two Governments and the additional costs to IAAs for higher-level support for capacity development.
- ***Practical concepts*** and ***frameworks*** to guide capacity development remain illusive. Some tools exist, yet few use them systematically in daily work or for extended periods of time. This pattern seems to intensify in post-conflict states.
- Structural, political, and institutional constraints create the potential for a whole series of ***risks and failures*** in post-conflict states, a serious challenge to capacity development. And yet IAAs and governments do little to acknowledge these risks and seek actively to manage them.
- The process of ***communication***, ***outreach***, and ***connection*** has to do with creating basic understandings, inducing support from groups outside the particular intervention, finding creativity and space in unlikely places, and earning legitimacy in ways that fits the culture and politics of a particular country.
- Working in a post-conflict state puts a premium on the abilities of both countries and donors for ***learning***, adapting, and adjusting in a complex, rapidly changing, and uncertain environment. The ability of IAAs and their national partners to work in such an environment often appears limited.

II.
THE CONCEPT OF CAPACITY

Few discussions are more tedious than trying—once again—to come up with a 'definition' of capacity that has real operational value across a varied range of circumstances. Some definitions are narrower and more focused on problem solving, carrying out technical functions, and performing. Some are broader and are more concerned about country systems being able to survive, grow, and create value. Readers may feel more comfortable with one type or the other.

What matters more is the second stage of the discussion—coming up with a shared operational framework that practitioners derive from applying the overall concept of capacity to the specific set of circumstances they are facing. Some may talk about capacity through training workshops. Others may have an image of capacity as governments being able to address and solve national service delivery issues. Still others may be thinking about the capacity to unite and inspire. An initial challenge for participants is therefore to agree on a range of shared ideas, strategies, assumptions, and vocabulary that helps them to talk about capacity issues and act on them in a productive way.

Capacity is that combination of skills, attributes, and relationships of a human system that enables it to create development value for others.

A. GAINING A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF CAPACITY

ALL FORMULATIONS OF THE concept of capacity have at their core the idea of the ability or the willingness, power, resources, and skills of people to do something. From a development perspective, capacity thus has to do with the ability of people to work together to generate some sort of positive developmental gain over time. It is about intentional collective action.

Capacity is a potential state. It is the condition of a football team as it lines up to start the game. Capacity is not *by itself* about actually playing or doing things. Performance, on the other hand, relates to action, delivery, production, implementation, and execution. These two states—capacity and performance—are intertwined. They need to be assessed in relation to each other. And they are not direct and linear. Performance can, for example, go down in the short term as the participants work through the disruptive effects of a capacity development intervention that unsettles a country organization.

Most practitioners have little patience with the idea of capacity as a development end in itself. It is usually seen as strictly instrumental or a means to something more important, as in the perennial question, *Capacity for what?* Or *what capacity is needed to implement IAA-supported interventions?* That is *not* the position taken in this report. It is about the ability to keep generating the capacity that sustains the development process. The point here is that *only* if capacity in some form is seen as an end in itself or as a critical form of development in and of itself will participants, including IAAs, see the need to balance and trade-off its demands versus those of other performance ends such as health or education.[7]

Capacity is seen in this report as an element of a human system and is made up of the competencies of individuals and the collective capabilities of the system itself.[8] In a variety of ways, individuals develop abilities and skills across a range of activities. To do this, they need access to resources, funding, space, leadership, and many other elements. These competencies contribute, in turn, to the emergence of collective capabilities

such as program management. These capabilities, in turn, contribute to the overall capacity of the system, which could be an organization or a network or any organized collective body. This capacity can be understood in terms of its performance, resilience, positioning, integrity, effectiveness, and legitimacy.

Many competencies and capabilities assume a specific form such as technical skills required in an environmental assessment. Some have to do with organizational and logistical functions such as project or information management or strategic management. But others will be in the form of a general function that focuses more on human behavior such as creating and sustaining relationships or mediating conflict. As such, capacity can have a psychological aspect such as confidence or determination or trust.

Capacity can also be viewed as made up of fundamental competencies such as levels of national literacy or numeracy or proper work behavior. And it also has to do with looking after the health, coherence, protection, and vitality of a human system. Capacity systems must therefore have the ability to do policy analysis. But they must also develop the capability to act, to learn, and to adapt.

Such competencies and capabilities can be located in public sector organizations, in NGOs, in communities, or in private firms.[9] They can be in service delivery organizations with tangible outcomes or in advocacy groups with hard-to-measure services. They can also be in networks or even informal coalitions of country actors. Capacity can be found in "nested" systems ranging from the individual to the organizational to the sectoral to the regional, country, and global levels.[10]

Capacity is also intertwined with statebuilding, governance, and peacebuilding. Such activities need to generate their own capabilities to be effective. And they obviously contribute to the emergence of capacity in formal organizations and institutions.

B.
QUESTIONING A SOLE FOCUS ON CAPACITY

THE DEMANDS OF post-conflict states prompt questions about the value of a sole focus on capacity issues. It is not difficult to detect a kind of *capacity development fatigue* emerging. A sole focus on capacity development as an activity associated with organizational and institutional engineering (i.e., the technical upgrading of formal organizations through the use of technical assistance) seems inadequate. But so does a view of capacity as some sort of macro-concept into which all others such as governance and statebuilding must be subsumed.[11]

Existing capacity development theories and strategies are still far from robust or based on much more than advocacy and generalized good practice. It seems at times that such theories still seem unable to answer even basic questions about which approaches to capacity development and change work best under a variety of conditions.

In certain instances in which quick action is necessary to stabilize a situation, conventional long-term capacity development focused around technique and knowledge transfer seems irrelevant and a waste of time. The pressure of events in some post-conflict states needs participants to rethink the complex relationships between capacity, performance, and results under a variety of conditions.

What seems to be happening is the start of a rethinking of concepts such as capacity, statebuilding, and governance. Capacity development, as used in this report, is intended to refer to a process that is wider and deeper, that focuses on a broader range of public and statebuilding issues, that is shaped through state/society interaction, and that is more reflective of the country context.

I.
INTRODUCTION

This report provides a general analysis of the capacity issue in post-conflict states and its support by international assistance agencies (IAAs).[1] The analysis draws from a wide range of literature on the subject of capacity development and on-site visits to Sierra Leone and Liberia in 2009.

Analyses of capacity issues alone (without the focus of a post-conflict setting) have an inherent tendency to generate misunderstandings given the wide-ranging definitions and perspectives. The *we-don't-know-what-we-want-but-this-isn't-it* phenomenon is pervasive in the world of capacity analyses.

Having said that, it seems that efforts at supporting capacity development needs in any country through a coherent strategic approach should address five basic issues—three on program strategy and two on participant capability:

Strategy issue #1. *In what sectors and development activities should external interveners such as the World Bank and the UNDP focus their interventions, including capacity development? Are there 'core functions'—security, anti-corruption, service delivery, public financial management, rule of law—that should be targeted first? Or should interventions go in a different direction?* This is the strategic programming choice to which countries and donors normally devote a lot of attention.[2]

Strategy issue #2. *What kinds of 'macro' capacity development strategies should be tried given the type and direction of the programming decisions in strategy issue #1? Should there be more decentralization or privatization or contracting out? How should the health sector be reconfigured after the conflict? What should be the role of government—coordination, regulation, or implementation—or of country non-state actors? Should there be more reliance on developing the capacity of networks or market-based solutions?*

Strategy issue #3. *What kinds of 'processes' or approaches to capacity development might have the best chance of working with strategy issues #1 and #2? What might be a workable approach to personal, organizational, and/or institutional change? Should capacity development center on supply-driven technical assistance or more demand-side facilitation? Should capacity development focus on conventional 'machine building'? Or should it have a broader reach to include awareness raising, participation, relationship building, coalition building, learning, and a different pattern of incentives? What interventions will have the best chance of changing human behavior?*

Country capability issue. *Given their level of political commitment, resources, and absorptive capability, will governments and organizations have a reasonable chance of actually implementing the preferred donor-supported interventions?*[3] *How are the issues of feasibility and absorbability addressed as opposed to that of need? What about country ownership and readiness?*

IAA capability issue. *Do external interveners such as the World Bank or UNDP have the capabilities, resources, and*

Author's note on the use of IAA: I use the generic term *international assistance agency (IAA)* rather than 'donors' or 'multilaterals' to refer to organizations that provide concessional financing and technical support to post-conflict states. This does not come from a wish to add to the long list of terms and acronyms that are already in use. But it is difficult to find one label that covers all international organizations. Neither the UNDP nor the World Bank, for example, is a donor in the strict sense of the term. The UNDP does fit well under the term 'multilateral'. The acronym 'IDA' is already in widespread use; hence, the use of IAA, which can also be taken to cover international nongovernmental organizations and bilateral agencies.

commitment needed to make an effective contribution? How can they organize themselves to make their capacity development interventions more effective? To what degree are they part of the capacity challenge in post-conflict states?

Most capacity analyses still focus primarily on the questions in strategic issues 1, 2, and 3, which reflect a long-standing donor preoccupation with diagnosing and addressing development need. This report, in contrast, focuses more on strategy issue 3 and the two capability issues on the assumption that the dilemmas of feasibility, execution, and implementation need more serious attention than they have received to date. Of course, any serious effort to come up with an effective capacity strategy has to address and integrate all of these aspects. Some macro interventions, for example, may be highly desirable from an IAA perspective but are not wanted or feasible from a country perspective. And visa versa.

Any serious effort at a capacity development strategy at any level must involve serious thinking and strategic management to have a chance of getting the various pieces of the capacity puzzle to fit together over time. Based on the experience in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the assumption in this report is that the challenges of achieving more integration and coherence in any capacity development strategy is likely to be *greater* in post-conflict states compared to other low-income countries.

Almost all capacity analyses in international development are still written from the IAA or external perspective, including this report. We need many more accounts from the country's side that can give insight into what is likely to be a quite different view of capacity development in general and IAA contributions in particular.[4] The issues of legitimacy and ownership, for example, would look quite different to country participants than they do to donor staff and consultants.

This report discusses the usual constraints, gaps, and weaknesses in the capacity situation in Sierra Leone and Liberia. There are also reasons for selective optimism about capacity development in post-conflict states. Important gains in capacity have been and can still be made in Sierra Leone and Liberia. People in these countries have skills and tremendous resilience. Strategies that address strengths as well as weaknesses are crucial.

There is a growing skepticism about the continuing relevance of capacity building as a developmental approach, especially in fragile or post-conflict states.[5] Some are exasperated by its apparent ambiguity and ungraspability. This report also touches on the issue of *capacity fatigue* and the rethinking necessary to deal with it.

The World Bank and the UNDP are a bit lumped together in this report. But they are obviously quite different organizations with different mandates. The UNDP can implement projects directly (direct execution) in cases of lack of government capacity. Or it can shift to national execution in most other cases. The Bank does no direct implementation. The same lumping point could be made for Sierra Leone and Liberia, which have both similarities and major differences.

This report was designed to cover conditions in states that are loosely known as post-conflict. We chose to use the term *post-conflict* to emphasize the huge impacts of the conflicts in both Sierra Leone and Liberia on capacity development. The term "fragile state", which includes many states with no history of civil conflict, does not capture this aspect. It is also true that post-conflict loses its relevance as countries evolve toward more stable conditions.

The report is partly based on the results of visits to Sierra Leone and Liberia in 2009. It also draws from the wider literature on capacity development and statebuilding in fragile/post-conflict states. An earlier version of the report served as a background document for a Joint UNDP (BCPR) and World Bank (OPCFC, WBI, AFR) Experts Workshop on Capacity Development Challenges in Fragile States held in Washington, DC, June 15–16, 2010.[6]

III.

CAPACITY CONTEXT OF POST-CONFLICT STATES

Countries coming under the general classification of post-conflict states differ a great deal in their history, their politics, their challenges, and their potential. The national histories of Sierra Leone and Liberia are quite different. Sierra Leone was a British colony; Liberia became independent in the 19th century and has a unique Diaspora given its historical ties to the United States. Many of the current ministers in Liberia are American citizens. Before discussing the capacity context in post-conflict states, it is important to understand the circumstances faced by Sierra Leone, Liberia, and other similar countries.

Rwanda suffered a catastrophic genocide but with manageable damage to its infrastructure. Liberia, in comparison, lost almost all its physical assets, including bridges, roads, schools, health posts, and communication systems. In Mozambique, the conflict produced clear winners and losers. In Liberia, the winners and losers were more difficult to discern; many perpetrators of abhorrent abuses continue to sit as elected officials. While religion plays a significant role in the Southern Sudan, it appears less important in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Somalia has no state financial resources of any kind. Angola is flush with cash from oil revenues. Sierra Leone seems relatively stable in the short term; Southern Sudan struggles to contain militias and other armed groups. And within countries, sectors and regions and individual organizations can differ dramatically.

Sierra Leone and Liberia, with populations of 6 million and 3 million, respectively, have both suffered civil wars of unfathomable brutality. In Sierra Leone, most of the civil war was fought between groups in rural areas. Many of the main central government departments escaped destruction. Liberia, in contrast, saw a good deal of fighting in its capital city, Monrovia, and widespread collapse of its government infrastructure.

Both countries lost a major proportion of their skilled professionals during the conflict through death, disappearance, and emigration, perhaps amongst the greatest losses in recent human history.[12] The conflict in Sierra Leone, from 1991 to 2001, resulted in a displacement of 50 percent of the population and the death of 2 percent. Liberia, where conflict lasted from 1989 to 2003, found one-third of its population displaced and one-third of its population killed. Both countries also suffered economic collapse; the GDP in Liberia fell 90 percent between 1987 and 1995, one of the largest economic declines ever recorded. Both countries remain desperately short of all kinds of technical and organizational skills.[13]

Sierra Leone and Liberia remain near the bottom of the Human Development Index.[14] The physical health of both populations declined dramatically during the conflicts.[15] Sierra Leone now has the highest rate of child and maternal mortality rate among member countries in the World Bank Group. Yet, both countries have extremely young populations. Sierra Leone has the biggest youth demographic bulge of any country in the world.[16]

Since the end of hostilities, Sierra Leone and Liberia have held successful elections: Sierra Leone in 2007 and Liberia in 2004.[17] But both have long-standing failures in governance stemming from the exploitation of the rural hinterland by urban-based elites in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown; and Liberia's capital, Monrovia. Both countries have porous borders that have served as launching pads for raids into each other's territory. Both countries are seeing increases in human trafficking, drug trading, and other international criminal activity since the end of the two wars. Consequently, both countries are struggling with major corruption issues, both having been rated in the bottom 10 among African countries listed in the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index.[18]

For some analysts, the capacity challenges in post-conflict states look much the same as they do in most low-income countries. The World Bank Joint Country Assistance Strategies for Sierra Leone and Liberia look surprisingly like those from other states in Africa. But in discussions, a number of significant differences did emerge that could and should affect the way donors approach capacity issues in post-conflict countries. This chapter provides an overview of these outstanding differences.

A. NATURE AND DEMANDS OF POST-CONFLICT STATES

CAPACITIES—IN FORMS of organizations, institutions, behaviors, and values—derive their positioning, freedom of action, resources, support, and legitimacy in part from the wider society in which they function. At one end of the spectrum, countries with a high social cohesion and high capabilities (e.g., Australia, Costa Rica, Germany, and Singapore) have an enormous advantage in generating reinforcing cycles of capacity development. At the other end, countries with low cohesion and low capabilities often get trapped in dysfunctional patterns of behavior in which most efforts at capacity development are undermined, captured, or immobilized.[19]

This report emphasizes the differences in aid planning and management that arise between conventional low-income states and those emerging out of conflict and collapse. It points to the need for donors to rethink the way they do their work in post-conflict states.

Sierra Leone and Liberia were in this latter pattern before the conflicts. Both suffered from ethnic divisions, rural–urban cleavages, a stark disconnect between the state and society, a culture of impunity, and an historic inability to foster inclusiveness and legitimacy. The length and brutality of the ensuing conflict, in turn, undermined a good deal of the social capital that still existed in the form of collaborative norms, patterns, reciprocity, communication, and trust. Post-conflict states, including Sierra Leone and Liberia, usually have more difficulty in generating a basic level of collective action in support of some sort of development effectiveness.[20] They usually lack groups or coalitions or formal organizations with enough power, space, energy, critical mass, and motivation that can make a difference.[21]

The IAAs are faced with the challenge of playing a much wider range of roles, including facilitator, protector, political analyst, technical adviser, and implementer. The IAA procedures that fixate on control, accountability, and risk aversion should be supplemented by approaches that promote faster implementation, experimentation, adaptability, and responsiveness. The capacity development challenge in post-conflict states applies as much to donors as it does to countries.

Most of the conventional aid tools and techniques that are applied widely in aid planning and management, such as strategic planning, project and results-based management, capacity assessment, conventional reporting, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are not likely to be a good fit in their current form in post-conflict conditions. The current formula for aid effectiveness (i.e., country ownership, donor harmonization, results-based management) also struggles for various reasons.

The functioning and even basic purpose of formal organizations in post-conflict states needs to be thought of differently compared to those in more stable states. Mental models based on global generic patterns and good practice are not likely to add much value and may end up as one more capacity development intervention. Informality, hidden agendas, survival strategies, complex relationships and incentives, elite bargaining, and shadow systems exercise real influence. The crucial state/society relationship also frequently needs to be reconfigured. Performance is important in helping do that, but social accountability and legitimacy is as well.

Activities in post-conflict states usually involve contributions from a wide range of international actors, most of whom have different agendas. The difficulty of gaining and sustaining any kind of coherent approach to capacity development is higher in post-conflict states despite all the claims for whole-of-government or harmonization or coordination.

The point here is the need to rethink the capacity development issue in post-conflict states. And such rethinking applies not only to the *what* and the *why* and the *who* and the *when,* but also, crucially, the *how*—from the perspective of the country and the IAA.

B.
CAPACITY SYSTEM COLLAPSE AND FRAGMENTATION

IN PRACTICE, IT IS hard to grasp the implications of infrastructural and organizational collapse in a country when viewed from a world of formal, well-functioning organizations. Liberia remained in a physically wrecked post-conflict condition with destruction of government buildings, schools, bridges, businesses, ministries, public transportation, power, hospitals, and homes.[22] Liberia's road system received little or no maintenance for two decades during the conflict and ended up in a state of serious disrepair. Certain regions remain cut off for 4–5 months at a time in the rainy season despite the small size of the county. Virtually everyone interviewed for this report in Liberia cited the roads issue as a key barrier to national capacity development.

Virtually everyone interviewed for this report in Liberia cited the roads issue as a key barrier to national capacity development.

Capacity development in Sierra Leone and Liberia thus takes place in a world of fragmented, dysfunctional, and broken systems. Former Liberian President Charles Taylor targeted much of the formal public sector for destruction in an effort to concentrate power and resources under his personal control and eliminate any potential sources of opposition. Many of the formal structures thus ceased to function during the conflict especially outside the main urban areas.[23] The shrinking flow of operating funds, in particular, affected government service delivery in the small cities and rural areas. This included the military, the police, the judicial system, and the district governments. The institutional destruction still seemed pervasive with whole ministries needing to be put back together, physically, organizationally, and psychologically.[24]

Organizations everywhere are essentially patterns of personal and institutional relationships that sustain access to resources, protection, and knowledge. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, many of these connections were shattered and fragmented during the conflict. Command, hierarchical control, and communication broke down. Most logistical and operational support systems disintegrated. Most planning efforts ceased. Key staff departed, were killed, or simply disappeared. Organizational manuals and policy statements disappeared. Some government ministries lost everything in the conflict, including buildings, transport, desks, chairs, paper, staff, and institutional memory in the form of lost files and missing staff.[25] And just as important, many of the broader inter-organizational systems (e.g., the government financial or the justice system) fell apart. New patterns appeared such as non-state actors starting up informal operations or existing agencies with few resources going in and little performance going out.

From an historical perspective, efforts at capacity development in post-conflict states such as Germany and Japan could build on historical traditions and national memories of effective public institutions. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, such national memories, for the most part, do not exist or have been hollowed out by decades of conflict and neglect.[26] Many public institutions from the pre-conflict era remained as symbols of oppression or exclusivity. Service delivery, for example, has never been an important national objective in either country especially in the hinterlands. Strong relationships between state and society had never existed in either country.[27] Post-conflict capacity development was faced with the challenge of overcoming these negative legacies.

In practice, the formal organizational structures in many public sector organizations frequently added up to a small group, a minister, and a few senior staff, tenuously connected to a huge, unproductive, operating level and with few skills.[28] As a result, most public sector organizations in Sierra Leone and Liberia have a huge missing middle level.[29] Yet in most normal situations, this middle group was the one that had the executive capacity, did the operational work, and connected the top of the formal structure to the lower levels. Without the commitment and involvement of this group, capacity development as a process of change lost traction and the ability to move forward. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, staff who remained at the middle level had few support systems or access to operating funds.

During the conflict, Sierra Leone and Liberia also lost the ability to develop and sustain their own capacity. The growth of civil society virtually stopped. Many other capacity-building organizations—universities, polytechnics, training colleges, secondary and primary schools—ceased to function.[30] Skilled staff emigrated at unprecedented rates in recent global experience.

Given these liabilities, most public agencies in Sierra Leone and Liberia no longer had the capacity to execute or perform complex functions.[31] They could negotiate and plan at a basic level. Many might be able to devise strategies of one kind or another. Most could create the appearance of activity. But they could not manage complex systems as part of any approach to implementation.

Inducing some coherence out of these fragmented systems—reconnecting people and organizations—seems one of the real capacity development challenges in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Developing or maintaining the capacity of collapsing systems, especially those having to do with service delivery, involved all sorts of dilemmas and constraints. It was difficult to avoid country systems ending up with a patchwork of different systems, strategies, and interests given the number of new and different actors providing support. New junior-level, technical assistance staff arrived in both countries, including many from the Diasporas, with quite different ideas about what and how to manage.[32] New organizations, such as anti-corruption agencies, appeared. New philosophies such as performance management, decentralization, and contracting out came into fashion. Different IAAs with different programs and different views about capacity development began to pull and tug at these country organizations, which in many cases were in no position to debate these issues.

C.

EFFECTS OF PSYCHOSOCIAL TRAUMA ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

BOTH SIERRA LEONE and Liberia suffered great damage to the social fabric and pattern of human relationships that people everywhere need to generate collective action.[33] But as has been the case in other post-conflict states, issues related to devastating psychological, emotional, and spiritual legacy of conflict and brutality have not appeared on the development agenda in any serious way in Sierra Leone or Liberia.[34] In only one formal meeting with Liberians was the subject raised. Few external organizations in Liberia, with the exception of the Carter Center and the UNDP, have given even limited thought to the issue.[35] Country governments seemed unwilling to use aid funds for this purpose. Donor agencies also found it difficult to address such an issue within their conventional programming. Most conveniently they relied on the idea of the individual resilience of individuals to overcome the legacies of war. In the end, capacity development was still seen as functional, economic, and organizational rather than psychosocial.

Yet this legacy of trauma could have profound implications for the process of capacity development especially with regard to the psychology of collective action.[36] People developed a wariness of collective action and ended up trusting few outsiders. In the memorable phrase of one Liberian interviewed, "our minds are still armed". In addition, this sense of trauma can persist over time and can be transmitted across generations.[37]

These attitudes could have profound effects on group and organizational behavior. People tended to focus on the immediate and the tangible. There was less collaboration on supplying public goods[38] Getting private interests to contribute to the wider public interest became more difficult. A tendency to get rich quick at all costs increased.[39] The effects of trauma could shape attitudes and behavior with respect to trust, co-operation, learning, hierarchy, imagination, risk, sharing of information, memory, meaning and identity, adaptiveness, leadership and followership, and planning—all attributes normally associated with effective capacity development. There was also evidence that the legacy of trauma affected individual health and physical well-being.

The empowerment of traumatized people became a real challenge to efforts at capacity development. The answer to the question—*To what might people commit given the legacy of trauma and why and how?*—requires thoughtfulness in a context where formal, legal, or physical protections are still not available to most citizens. The development of individual competencies is particularly needed to address the psychological and emotional aspects as well as the purely logistical and functional ones.[40] Put another way, outsiders needed to think carefully about what would constitute incentives for the survivors of trauma.[41]

D.
NATURE OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL ACTORS

EQUALLY IMPORTANT AS *Capacity for what?* is the question *Capacity of, or for, whom?* In many cases, the implicit image of organizations in post-conflict states is that of small but deficient pieces of formal, functional machinery. These actors apparently need a major tune up, a host of spare parts and training for the mechanics that will look after them. The transfer of generic techniques—good practice—and their disciplined application can be critical for eventually getting them to produce outputs and outcomes.

Sierra Leone and Liberia can produce and generate only a limited range of organizational structures and behaviors, bearing some of the following characteristics:

- Organizations are not 'separated' from society in the sense of having a detached identity. The ruling coalition will frequently use its power and resources to buy off dissenters or maintain coalition stability.
- Organizations end up as fiefdoms of their leaders. In practice, informal networks and patron/client relationships shape behavior. The behavior and role of individuals matters the most.
- Major decisions can frequently be made outside the organization.
- The formal shell of the organization is mostly symbolic and protective. The energy in the system lies on the informal side.
- Most are inherently unstable and subject to collapses and abrupt shocks and disruptions.
- Decisions based on mostly unwritten and uncodified minutes, reports, and agreements are not protected or respected.
- Most organizations run on a closed, unspecific, and confidential system. The predictive style of results-based management also fails most of the time.
- Inefficiency and internal chaos can be intentional.
- Few can afford any kind of long-term view or strategy. Plans are put in place to mollify donors and other external groups.
- Accountability is hard to ensure in a context of weak demand and little idea of the public interest.

Much of the process of change in Sierra Leone and Liberia seemed to take place at a covert, informal, almost-invisible level. Social and personal networks shaped communication and decision-making. Political pressures and protection mattered. Informal systems provided support to individuals and groups functioning in difficult circumstances. Country participants could access hidden resources, both financial and human and unknown to many of the external participants, for a variety of purposes. Few change processes in either Sierra Leone or Liberia seemed to work if they undermined or weakened the informal mechanisms, which generated energy and momentum in the system.

Informal systems provide support to individuals and groups functioning in difficult circumstances.

None of this is to say that such organizations characterized above cannot be effective. Or that post-conflict states cannot produce more modern organizational actors. What it does imply is the impetus to better understand the nature of specific organizational actors requires approaches to change and capacity development that fit the actual structure and behavior of such an actor.

E.
PATTERNS OF COMPLEXITY, UNCERTAINTY, AND UNPREDICTABILITY

WHAT SEEMED OBVIOUS in Sierra Leone and Liberia was the unsettled and uncertain nature of the organizational and institutional systems in public, private, and civil society sectors.

Both societies, even before the conflict, operated with a lack of formal, enforceable rules or institutions that could guide behavior. The conflict then had the effect of destroying the few that did exist. A paramount challenge that faced both countries was finding an effective way to prevent the recurrence of the conflict and in general to avoid further violence.[42] Part of the challenge of capacity development was to help country participants re-establish these rules and relationships.

The fragmentation could be seen in all aspects of national life, especially the political. Groups and organizations had a difficult time in forging a consensus or shared understanding and

then having it last to enable some sort of operational progress. The barriers to collective action were pervasive. Most organizations in the two countries appeared to lack the capacity for a self-managed transformation driven by effective internal learning and adaptation.

The turnover at senior management level is constant as staff leave to join the aid system or the private sector. Politicians could be tempted to curtail the independent power of the public sector by accelerating staff rotations and preventing political/bureaucratic coalitions from coming together. In Sierra Leone, for example, past elections have led to a sudden turnover in public sector and parastatal staff based on political and personal affiliation.

Organizational and functional systems usually designed to provide some sort of predictability did not function properly in either country. The most obvious example would be the procedures for distributing funds from the central government to rural districts and service providers. Effective support and logistical systems, so necessary in all public sectors, were usually lacking or functioning at a low level.

The continued functioning of capacity systems appears to depend to a large extent on a selected set of key relationships and personal involvements deep in the heart of the system (e.g., between the Permanent Secretary and the President or between two ministers from a particular geographic area). In countries such as Sierra Leone and Liberia, the nature of power seemed intensely personal and relational. Such relationships could fracture easily and undermine the whole direction of a program. Based on this fragility, capacity bubbles could quickly appear, expand rapidly, raise hopes and illusions, and then suddenly pop and collapse.

The instability of both countries derived in part from their geographical location. The porous borders allowed protagonists in one country to seek refuge in another. Charles Taylor, for example, former President of Liberia is now on trial in The Hague for atrocities committed in Sierra Leone.

Sierra Leone and Liberia were struggling to emerge from a permanent state of instability. Using a current typology, development situations in such states can be classified as *simple, complicated,* and *complex.* The *simple* problem is clear both in terms of ends and means and lends itself to detailed planning, controlled implementation, and precise measurement. The *complicated* problem is more intractable but can still be solved given the application of current levels of knowledge and experience. *Complex* situations will have high levels of uncertainty, ambiguity, conflict, and lack of predictability. Existing formulas or good practice may be of little help in addressing them. Customization, rapid learning, and adaptation may be the only way forward. The dilemma here is that most capacity development situations in post-conflict states are complex. But most donor procedures remain configured to address the simple and the straightforward.

F.
INFLUENCE OF INFORMALITY, GHOSTS, AND MULTIPLE SYSTEMS

INSTITUTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL informality seem pervasive in both Sierra Leone and Liberia. The IAAs, not surprisingly, tend to focus their capacity support on the (supposedly) apolitical and modern structures such as ministries, agencies, strategies, parliaments, statutes, and policies that are familiar to outsiders. And yet in both countries, informal patterns of norms, unwritten rules, patterns of human behavior, customs, and institutions had a major influence on shaping individual and organizational behavior.[43]

The informal organization seemed more powerful and resilient than the formal counterparts, many of which had lost trust and legitimacy over the years. Capacity in the form of formal organizations had been, in some cases, reduced to shell (or ghost) structures sustaining the informal and reassuring the external participants. Informal systems could have the power to bring down the Government or to obstruct its reform program in certain key aspects. But informal networks based on personal ties and loyalties could also be instrumental in keeping aspects of the public sector from collapsing further. An important capacity challenge is thus to encourage the migration over time of some elements of authority, decision-making, and legitimacy from the informal to the formal.[44]

The underlying capacity complexities are apparent in Sierra Leone and Liberia. In practice, power, legitimacy, and resources are distributed across five main systems:[45]

- ***Formal systems*** are expanding with a good deal of donor support. Both countries had begun to implement major programs in public sector reform. In Sierra Leone, the post-conflict period had also seen the growth in non-ethnic civil society organizations such as NGOs, Rotary Clubs, credit groups, churches, and Islamic fraternities. The national capacity development strategy in Liberia focuses almost entirely on the formal.
- ***Informal systems*** consist of hidden patronage networks, personal relationships, coalitions, and elite groupings that come out of neo-patrimonial relationships connecting different groups and regions to the center. More attention in any capacity analysis or assessment is needed into the informal system given its fundamental importance.
- ***Traditional systems*** revolved around institutions such as the chiefs and other indigenous practices, including the religious, where the depth of cultural and historical roots varies.[46] This system could intermingle and compete with the formal state as in the cases of the relationships between chiefs and local governments in Sierra Leone,[47] or between formal and traditional systems of justice.
- The donor-funded ***parallel policy and management system*** in both countries had reached a size and scope with the potential to by-pass and/or overpower the formal. The danger here is of IAA technical assistance and contract employees ending up doing most of the economic and fiscal management, program design and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. In Sierra Leone, in particular, this parallel system included such structures as joint sector and thematic working groups and separate delivery organizations such as project implementation units.
- ***Criminal system*** frequently intertwined with the informal had emerged in both countries.[48] International gangs have begun to use countries in West Africa for diamond smuggling, money laundering, human trafficking, and drug trading to Europe.[49] In the medium term, the danger exists of criminal groups and networks taking over whole ministries or government agencies.

All kinds of complex interrelationships between the formal and the informal or between the informal and the criminal or between the formal and the parallel are possible in post-conflict states. A country can have informal institutions that complement the modern and the formal or it can have several governments. Hidden networks and coalitions of provincial "big men" in Sierra Leone, for example, exerted significant control over policy-making at the center. In some cases, elite groups in the shadow state maintained their patronage power by stripping resources out of the formal (public sector) system and distributing through the informal to maintain their power and position.[50]

Patterns of informal behaviors, power, resources, relationships, groups, networks, and structures, which can operate as a hidden but coherent system, run parallel with the modern at times and intertwine with it sometimes.

What all this amounted to in Sierra Leone and Liberia was a complex, interconnected mix of the formal and the informal, the explicit and the implicit, the open and the hidden. It is, of course, true that all countries may have these intertwined systems to some degree. The difference in states such as Sierra Leone and Liberia was the likelihood of the greater power and influence of the traditional, informal, the parallel, and increasingly the criminal systems.[51] Capacity models from high-income countries face difficulty in gaining traction, effectiveness, and legitimacy in this context.

This leads directly to the need for more complex assessments of the interaction of these systems.[52] And post-conflict states are more likely to have many different sources of credibility, resources, and legitimacy—all of which leads in turn to a series of questions: *Which system can command the most legitimacy with which groups? Which system is likely to exert the most control over delivering goods to citizens? What is the incentive for bureaucratic and political elites to make genuine efforts to develop the capacity of the formal sector given the hidden rewards available from informality? How will the interactions of these systems shape change and reform in the public sector? How should we think differently about capacity development given these complex relationships? What should be the implications for donors of focusing their support on perhaps the most fragile of all the country systems?*

G.
INFLUENCE OF POWER AND POLITICS

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN any human situation is also about allocating authority, access, resources, control, and power. In some instances, capacity development can proceed in a relatively apolitical fashion (e.g., the enclave of a central bank protected by powerful international supporters such as the IMF and the country participants having a shared understanding and acceptance of international practice). In others such as forestry departments or universities, conflict over power, authority, and organizational identity can go on for generations.[53]

In Sierra Leone and Liberia, political power and practice were structured in particular ways. In the case of Sierra Leone, the political system, with similar patterns in Liberia, had some of the following characteristics:[54]

- General system of patrimonialism,
- High levels of political disorder,
- Lack of institutionalization,
- Limited adherence to formal rules and procedures, and
- Resort to personal and vertical solutions.

The international development community has long been both unwilling and unable to synthesize the technical and the political. Much of this attitude is now changing with the acceptance of the importance of political economy.

Post-conflict states tend to generate political and economic systems whose main priority is societal control and stability, elite survival, and the avoidance of violence. Some sort of dominant coalition sets the rules that indirectly govern the who-gets-what aspects of capacity development.

The rules for use of political power in Sierra Leone and Liberia—its source, nature, application, and abuse—was not settled in either country given their recent histories. But if we accept that capacity development in any lasting form depends mainly on the crafting, acceptance, and upholding of these rules especially by elites, then the process of putting in place the legitimate institutions that both countries so badly need could take decades to play out. This sense of a political time-scale needs to be balanced off against the bureaucratic and the programmatic to come to any sensible estimate of time required.

The interrelationship, between power and capacity, matters at the project and program level as well. Which organizations and which staff get access to what resources are crucial factors. *Who benefits?* and *How?* are key questions in capacity development even at the micro or individual level. The behavior and interests of individuals, groups, and factions that surround a capacity system need to be included in any exercise in capacity mapping. Making that connection between the political economy and the state of the public sector becomes a key analytical task of the donor.

H.
EMERGENCE OF WIDE-RANGING CAPACITY NEEDS AND INTERVENTIONS

CHARACTERISTICS OF POST-CONFLICT states include a wide and varied range of capacity needs and opportunities at all levels and in all forms. Some can be quite sophisticated and formal. Others will be basic, informal, and simple. Some may see capacity development mainly as a technical or functional issue. Others emphasize the political and psychological aspects. Given this variety, conventional approaches to capacity development become simply one of many possible interventions that must be matched up with needs and feasibility.

The IAAs and governments need to address this range of needs with flexibility and imagination. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, we could see a range of capacity interventions at work that went beyond the usual approaches:

- ***Quick-acting capacity interventions (or surges) can make a difference in the short term.*** In Liberia, the Emergency Capacity Building Support, the Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals, and the Senior Executive Service were established to attract skilled Liberians into the public sector.

- ***Helping elite groups in Liberia come to some kind of accommodation*** was exemplified by the support to peacebuilding and awareness-raising by the United States Institute of Peace and the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington.[55] This type of intervention goes back to an earlier point: that peacebuilding, statebuilding, and capacity development may frequently intertwine.
- ***Building social capital and support networks*** were evident in the Enhancing the Interaction and Interface between Civil Society and the State to Improve Poor People's Lives in Sierra Leone, which was working with the Government on a national collaboration strategy.[56]
- ***Awareness raising and attitudinal change in support of reform*** was an undertaking by the Sierra Leone's task force on attitudinal change. In Liberia, two key civil society actors were the Center for Promotion of Democracy and the Office of Women Lawyers.
- ***Connecting capacity systems at various levels*** (e.g., chiefs, councilors, parliamentarians, professional staff, donors and service providers at the district level) through poverty reduction strategies.[57]
- ***Addressing the needs of particular groups with the inclination to restart the conflict.*** In both countries, youth in general would be in this category.[58]
- ***Building coalitions and partnerships in both the public and private sectors*** with the capacity to advocate for and actually deliver development results. The Liberia Development Alliance, a private sector coalition, was one example.

I. PRESENCE OF DILEMMAS, PARADOXES, RISKS, AND TRAPS

ALMOST ALL EFFORTS at capacity development in post-conflict states by both country governments and IAAs are continually faced with dilemmas, paradoxes, risks, and traps. Country organizations get trapped in low-demand, low-support, low-performance systemic patterns from which they cannot escape without outside help.[59] The IAAs push for improvement in one direction only to find that things are getting worse in another. The drive for more efficiency undermines organizational sustainability. More IAA control lessens some risks but increases others.

External help and even control may be crucial at the beginning of post-conflict operations to stabilize the situation and make citizens believe that something—anything—is being done to make their lives better.[60] And yet as the process proceeds and parallel structures are created, IAAs and countries reach some sort of tipping point beyond which direct IAA control and execution begins to marginalize the government and undermine the very country capacity that is needed to make any kind of sustainable difference.

External efforts at capacity development in Sierra Leone and Liberia appeared to be unaware of dilemmas or of being close to the point of falling into one trap or another. Most IAA documents in Sierra Leone and Liberia at some point called for a comprehensive approach. But when the intervention was designed to be simpler and more tightly focused, the lack of attention to those broader factors made it lose effectiveness. *Can a 'simple' approach to capacity development produce the initial platform that can, in turn, allow for more 'complex' approaches over time? Can analysis and experimentation lead to finding the small interventions that can make a big difference?* It is also difficult for IAAs to push for results and capacity development effectiveness while at the same time allowing country participants to find their own way. The sense is that this pattern of dilemmas, paradoxes, risks, and traps is more widespread and more intractable in Sierra Leone and Liberia and other post-conflict states than in comparable low-income states. But such a condition does not have to lead inexorably to stalemate and immobility. **BOX 3.1** elaborates further on responses to dilemmas, paradoxes, risks, and traps.

J. CHALLENGE OF TRANSITIONS, SCHEDULES, DEADLINES, AND TIMING

TRANSITION AND CHANGE is constant in all countries. But both Governments and donors in Sierra Leone and Liberia were challenged with managing a variety of transitions, schedules, and deadlines that applied to capacity development interventions. Sierra Leone and Liberia seemed much more liable to entanglement with *time* and *timing* issues as they tried to move out of the immediate post-conflict phase.

BOX 3.1

RESPONSES TO DILEMMAS, PARADOXES, RISKS, AND TRAPS

Post-conflict states have capacity needs in all areas of national life. And they need the development of a wide range of capabilities. In response, the boundaries of capacity strategies stretch to the point where they are indistinguishable from the development process itself. And then the focus on capacity itself disappears.

Any effort at capacity development needs improvement in individual skills through mentoring and training. Yet the more skilled staff become, the more marketable they become and the faster they move to better jobs.

A range of service delivery options need to be maintained in case some cease to function. And yet the fragmentation of delivery options is one of the bad outcomes that can appear in many post-conflict states.

The high incidence of corruption in post-conflict states can lead IAAs to insist on transparent and tightly controlled financial management and procurement. But such an approach can easily lead to a slow-down in operations, disempowering local institutions, and undermining capacity development.

External funders are reluctant to pay for the overhead and operating costs of NGOs and other civil society groups on the grounds of encouraging sustainability. These groups in turn, feel pressure to comply in an effort to maintain program funding. They end up trapped in a vicious cycle of under-achievement.a

Efforts to work with informal actors and a wider range of country actors may threaten the interests of certain elite groups whose commitment is key to supporting capacity development. Ownership, in certain instances, may be a barrier to moving forward.

Adapting to country culture can make it easier to get external interventions to take hold. And yet accepting country practices can also legitimize dysfunctional structures and ideas.

[a]For an analysis of this pattern, see A.G. Gregory, and D. Howard, "The Nonprofit Starvation Cycle", *Stanford Social Innovation Review,* Fall 2009.

BOX 3.2

A BALANCED VIEW FROM THE FIELD

It is important not to get carried away with the dysfunction of the capacity situation in post-conflict states. In certain instances, it is important and justifiable to take a more optimistic view of the potential in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

In common, everywhere, people in these two countries have abilities, take ownership of valued activities, feel committed about certain things, and want to make their lives better. In many capacity situations, we saw inspired leadership, political protection, staff pride and energy, and ethnic resilience that kept things functioning. Older dysfunctional institutions may have been shattered. And donor pressure for reforms may have the potential for more of an impact.

The point here is that these strengths exist but sometimes not in a form that technocratic interventions can easily recognize and use. Latent invisible strengths, like market opportunities in high-income countries, may be hiding in plain sight. A key challenge for IAAs is helping put in place processes of capacity development that can help unlock these assets and put them to productive use.

Judging from the situations in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the overall pattern is a complex mixture of the dysfunctional and the hopeful. Some areas remain impossible to reform in the short or medium term and should be avoided regardless of need. Others may present real possibilities. In Sierra Leone, two peaceful, legitimate elections for President, Parliament, and local councils have been held. A good deal of progress has been made on reintegration and reconstruction. Major improvements have been made to the military and the police. There has been substantial decentralization to district councils. The functions of financial management and procurement are said to be better.

In Liberia, virtually all UNMIL staff with experience during the immediate post-conflict period pointed to the substantial progress made since 2004 in local government, tax administration, and election management. The Liberia Institute of Statistic and Geo-Informational Services and other such organizations are beginning to function well. The Liberian private sector has shown energy and promise. The challenge for both countries and IAAs is to have a sense of these conflicting patterns and the ability to take advantage of the opportunities.

Much of the work in Sierra Leone and Liberia suffers from the pattern of chronic underestimation of the time required for effective capacity development. Part of this has to do with trying to fit such activities within the bureaucratic schedules of donor agencies. Part has to do with too much attention paid to the organizational engineering aspects and too little to the development of relationships, political initiatives, mindsets, and changed behaviors. Some international development agencies could live with this complex process of quasi-developmental activities. Others found it more difficult.

Many of the schedules and targets are set by external actors (e.g., political actors in bilateral IAA countries, and the UN Security Council) responding to agendas of little consequence to needed capacity development in the country. The mandate of the United Nations Military Intervention in Liberia (UNMIL), which has played a huge role in capacity development in Liberia, is scheduled to end in 2012. Combined with the usual pattern of short or transient donor attention spans, capacity development processes in post-conflict states frequently end up trapped in schedules, deadlines, and exit points that make little sense in terms of normal organizational or institutional evolution. **BOX 3.2** provides a perspective by the author of impressions of activity on the ground in Sierra Leone and Liberia in terms of capacity development.

IV. PROGRAMMING IMPLICATIONS FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN POST-CONFLICT STATES

Given these capacity challenges in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the question emerges, *so what? What are likely to be the implications for capacity development efforts?*

One specific area of capacity development as a form of change that needs much more analysis and research is that of the emergence of collective capabilities. *How do capabilities form under a variety of conditions and in support of a variety of functions, both logistical/technical and otherwise? How can we better understand the complex systems changes that are involved?* Efforts to address these questions in Sierra Leone and Liberia were some of the least instructive. People espoused one theory only to actually implement another. As capacity development interventions became ever more complex and multi-layered, the range of capacity development strategies that seemed to be at work expanded dramatically with little real effort at encouraging more coherence. The IAAs and countries tend to have answers to the *what, when,* and *why* questions. But they are frequently vague on the *how* issues. Many approaches to capacity development seemed poorly conceived in many of the interventions we looked at.

A. IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR AND CHANGE

THE USUAL DISCUSSION about *levels* of capacity development in post-conflict could be heard in Sierra Leone and Liberia. And in recent years, both theory and practice have emphasized the importance of going beyond the focus on the individual. But the critical importance of individuals—their interests, their actions, their values and background, their influence, and their control for better or worse—was also evident in both countries. In a context of few established rules and institutions, small organizations, informal coalitions, and networks, the behavior of individuals in country organizations in Sierra Leone and Liberia mattered crucially.

The importance of individuals at the operational levels of country structures influenced the perennial debate between the so-called *hard* and *soft* approaches to change. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, capacity development was basically about people changing their individual behavior. And yet we still know little

of operational use as to why people in post-conflict states are motivated to make those changes.[61] *How does knowledge contribute to the social capital that can in turn, help to strengthen institutions? How can people better learn to reflect on their own behavior and move to new levels of awareness and learning? What kinds of relationships help with this process? And what, if anything, can donors do to contribute and support such an activity?*

It is, of course, true that IAAs may have little to contribute in this area of changing complex human behavior. Perhaps as a result, they gravitate to the technical, the rational, and the logistical. But they do need to accept the importance of the emotional and the psychological especially in countries with searing memories of the past. At the very least, they need to try to do whatever is possible to avoid undermining country motivation.

B. EVOLUTION AND STAGES OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

THIS PROCESS OF capacity development was a complex one in Sierra Leone and Liberia for two reasons. First, both countries themselves were moving, albeit at various speeds, from immediate post-conflict to the initial transition and on to early recovery; and the broader context for capacity development was constantly shifting. Second, the capacity systems themselves (e.g., groups, organizations, networks) were also evolving through stages and becoming more complex in function and structure. **Box 4.1** provides an hypothesis of an actual change process.

Almost all formal organizations, which were visited in preparing this report, in both countries were struggling to regain their structural integrity and coherence. District governments and Parliament were two of the most obvious. Almost all were seeking to re-establish an identity and finding a contribution or niche that could lead to public value. Many need new legislation that could underpin new roles and functions.[62] The likelihood in post-conflict states, however, is that most formal organizations may have regressed back to the early stages of capacity development. That pattern, in turn, has implications for the type of technical assistance that would be needed, the absorptive capacity of the organization, and the time required to make progress.

The early stages relate to putting in place the strategies, structures, systems, and staff that make up the organizational hydraulics—the technical or functional—of the system in question. The IAAs, not surprisingly, focused on the transfer of technique and knowledge in the short term. And yet the key survival capabilities—to act, to cope, to be resilient, to create space, to adapt, to relate, to communicate, to create legitimacy—tend to emerge later in the process. Such collective capabilities usually only emerge over an extended period of time. Getting these capabilities routinized and institutionalized was a particular challenge in both countries.

BOX 4.1

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT EMERGING THROUGH STAGES

Overall capacity emerges out of a combination of interacting processes and appears to proceed through stages. One hypothesis about actual change process emerges from the following:

- Individuals acquire skills, competencies, motivation, confidence, access to resources, and support structures.
- Collective capabilities begin to cohere and form in a variety of areas such as technical and organizational functions, social and human behavior.
- These collective capabilities themselves balance and reinforce each other as the organization or system becomes more varied and complex.
- The organization performs in various ways and in the process, searches and hopefully finds some sort of niche or area of contribution.
- The system establishes relationships and networks of support that can help ensure its survival, legitimacy, and access to resources
- The organization or system strives to institutionalize itself and acquire some sense of sustainability.

The latter stages extend into the medium and longer term, laying at the heart of the capacity development challenge. The risk for donors was the strengthening or creation of shell organizations and institutions that had no resonance or rootedness in society with few useful outputs. Missing in both Sierra Leone and Liberia was the capacity to protect and sustain a complex process of change under difficult conditions over a long period of time. The IAAs usually compounded the problem by running out of patience soon after the early stage of knowledge transfer and functional upgrading. This pattern had already begun to unfold in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Gaining coherence is a dilemma that is more heightened in post-conflict states. Most organizations have been fragmented and need support across the board. Yet they did not have the absorptive capacity to take on complex programs of capacity development especially in the short term. Some got stuck at a certain point in their development and could not get unstuck using the conventional methods that got them to that point.

A good deal of formal capacity development in Sierra Leone and Liberia had to do with positioning rather than just functional upgrading. Disabled organizations such as schools and health posts were trying to re-establish old roles. Others such as county councils were trying to establish new ones. What ensued was a complex pattern of institutional and organizational change in which various actors jostled for position and survival, searched for resources and legitimacy, sought support and protection, and tried to craft new identities or get rid of old ones. Capacity building from this perspective had to do with helping key groups to develop new patterns of relationships, awareness, and acceptance; and of seeing their connective systems and then connecting them in some way to citizens.

C.
TWO MENTAL MODELS OF CHANGE AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

FOR THE PURPOSES of the analysis, two approaches or "mental models" of capacity development seemed to underlie most of the thinking in Sierra Leone and Liberia.[63] These are the *direct or planned approach* and the *indirect or emergent approach.* Most technical assistance, for example, was implicitly aligned with the direct model with all its attendant contributions and blind spots. Civil society gravitated much more to the indirect.

The *direct or planned approach* to capacity development has been a mainstay of development cooperation for over a half century. The heart of the direct perspective is the assumption that the participants in any capacity development intervention are autonomous actors who will choose to do better if they know better. They are willing but unable. The assumption here is the value of human intentionality and cognition. Objectives can and must be figured out in advance. Planning is key.

The *indirect or emergent approach* is based on a quite different set of assumptions and a different rationality. The focus is on finding a pattern of capacity opportunities in the structure and behavior of the country—its political, economic, cultural, social, historical, and psychological aspects. A key assumption of the indirect perspective is the importance of these country political and economic systems in shaping the emergence of capacity in the form of organizations and institutions. This approach tries to come to grips with dynamics of complex systems change. This perspective puts forward a different *cause and effect* rationality compared to the direct approach. This approach has much less emphasis on prediction and control. It is much more *bottom-up* and emergent compared to the more *top-down* of the direct approach.

Table 4.1 outlines two *ideal types* or approaches to designing or crafting a capacity development intervention.

Both approaches have strengths and weaknesses. At its worst, the direct approach can reinforce the artificiality and disconnection of the state from the rest of society and can undermine existing informal arrangements that actually work better. External support can sustain this divide and lessen the incentives for state actors to base capacity building on country resources and institutions. The end result is a mismatch between state and society that severely limits any process of capacity development. A danger of the indirect approach can be the loss of coherence and direction.

We need to appreciate the interconnections between these two approaches. They can be cast as archetypes or opposite ends of the capacity spectrum. They do, of course, differ on the purpose and nature of change. And they are

TABLE 4.1

Aspect	Direct approach	Indirect approach
Direction of initiative	Top-down	Middle-up-down or bottom up
Style	More technocratic and engineering	Hard and soft
Standards of performance	Tends to optimal	Tends to good enough
Role of technical expertise	TA expert-driven	Expert facilitated
Focus on gaps and strengths	Focused more on gaps and weaknesses	Focused more on strengths, assets participant energy
Attitude to control and learning	Oriented more towards structure and control	Oriented towards organic adaptation and learning
Nature of objectives	Clarity of ends and means	General strategic intent
Attitude to context	Focus on how system should work	Focus on how system does work
Attitude to planning	Faith in programmed change	Faith in emergence and evolution
Approach to results management	Focus on end state results	Focus on incremental discovery
Outlook	Limited perspectives especially the technical	Multi-perspectives
Nature of change	Knowledge transfer and changes to formal structures	Partnership and coproduction
Systems view	Reductionist emphasis on the parts	Systems emphasis on wholeness.
Analytical biases	Emphasis on analysis, design and prediction	Emphasis on observation and experimentation
	Ideology – the what	**Process – the why, when, and how**
View on expansion	Emphasis on scaling up and expansion	Emphasis on organic growth
Emphasis and orientation	Emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness	Emphasis on relevance, legitimacy
Comparative advantage	Best suited to addressing simple and complicated situations	Best suited to addressing complex situations

based on different conceptions of development. But in real life in post-conflict states, only a few capacity challenges can be resolved by relying solely on one of these approaches. Every organization, for example, needs technical and functional skills to do something. And every technical organization is part of a larger complex human system that needs to respond and adapt and draw resources from its context in a variety of ways. The issue is the balance and the synthesis in a particular case.[64] What may be needed in many post-conflict states is a complex range of interventions, the direct in some limited instances, the indirect in others, and finally many *hybrid* interventions that try to incorporate the strengths of the indirect and informal into the direct and formal. One of the best examples of both these approaches at work has been the reform of the security sector in Sierra Leone.[65] The evolution of the implementation of the national capacity development strategy in Liberia will likely be another.

D.
NEEDS, ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY, AND READINESS

CAPACITY ANALYSES HAVE historically been oriented to diagnosing, identifying, and addressing country needs. In the process, however, not enough attention has gone into clarifying absorptive capacity or readiness or willingness to act. We know that political and bureaucratic systems generate space, opportunity, and dead-ends.

A tension will usually exist between visions of *transformation* and those more to do with *incremental change.*[66] Certain groups, including many from outside, tend to see capacity collapse as an opportunity to put in place something new and more functional.[67] But they may have less understanding of the potential system-wide risks of dramatic attempts at

reform.[68] Internal groups have a much better sense of these internal dynamics and the costs of uprooting structures and practices that have long been effective and that have survived the long period of conflict. But these internal groups can also miss windows of opportunities that might close abruptly in the future. In many situations, it is not clear if *windows of reform opportunity* exist only at the early stages of reconstruction compared to later in the process. *Do capacity 'windows' shut or widen later on? Does this system have the absorptive capacity to integrate the capacity development intervention that is under discussion?* The experiences in Sierra Leone and Liberia tend to suggest that external enthusiasm for clean slates is not always advisable. This trifecta of strategic direction, country commitment, and ability to implement seems critical in both countries and largely shaped outcomes in the medium term.

Effective capacity development should be based on some sort of policy agreement or even an informal, shared understanding of the way forward in a particular sector. There should be enough elite political accommodation to allow some societal consensus on the type and nature of various organizations and institutions that were needed to deliver development value. In addition, it helps if a basic strategy of change has some sort of understanding and momentum behind it, including that between the IAAs and the governments.

Capacity development in many cases can amount to a patient search for small opportunities and pockets of energy, which can possibly be scaled up for greater impact. The implication here is the need for *venture capacity development* (i.e., IAAs supporting varied small experimental projects that can generate knowledge or country patterns of energy and commitment and build relationships based on these).

E. IMPORTANCE OF LEGITIMACY

CAPACITY, IT HAS been established, needs a broader interpretation in post-conflict states. State/society relations and particularly the importance of legitimacy must be included as key aspects. Governments in Sierra Leone and Liberia emerged from conflict with significant challenges to their legitimacy. The absence of such legitimacy may have provoked the conflict in the first place. Any process of capacity development has to generate some form of societal acceptance over time. It has to contribute to some sort of implied social contract that encourages citizens to maintain a connection to the state. Capacity in the form of legitimacy, it turns out, is something that is conferred from the outside as well as developed from the inside.

Country actors themselves have the main role in addressing the legitimacy deficit. But external groups can contribute something to this stage of capacity development.

The IAAs need to be aware at least of the legitimacy issue and its importance as an element of and a contributor to capacity. And they need a broader view of legitimacy itself. In some cases, legitimacy may mean a kind of acceptance amongst groups in the political and bureaucratic systems. Or more likely, it can come from the usual performance and service delivery improvements that dominate donor interest. Charles Taylor in Liberia won a certain amount of legitimacy in the 1997 presidential election in Liberia as the only candidate who could impose some order of sorts.

Capacity development can end up as part of an imported and imposed set of institutions that gets little traction or credibility in post-conflict states and ends up as ghost or shell structures with little sustainability or legitimacy.[69] Such interventions are usually initiated in the early stages of capacity development, but there is usually little public demand or understanding. The interventions can end up being kept on life support to maintain international standing or maintain the flow of financial resources. They can frequently end up as shell structures and get stuck in low-support, low-expectation, low-performance traps from which they cannot extricate themselves.

The *do-no-harm* principle can come in at this point. The IAAs must be careful to at least not de-legitimize groups and individuals with whom they work. Or, conversely, be careful about appearing to legitimize people with unhelpful agendas. And IAAs need to be conscious of the degree to which their own struggles for legitimacy with domestic audiences can undermine efforts at legitimacy at the country end.

F. CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AS THE MANAGEMENT OF TRANSITIONS AND HYBRIDS

THE MANAGEMENT OF transitions seemed particularly important in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Programs dominated by technical assistance had to find a way to transition to a structure that relied much more on country expertise and systems. Capacity

development strategies had to shift from being dependent on donor operational financing to one financed much more from country resources. Organizations focused much more on survival needed to reach a point of self-sustaining performance. A real danger in post-conflict states is that of capacity development processes getting stuck and trapped by failing to manage a particular transition.

The IAAs might therefore be looking at a range of non-traditional actors, including informal networks, coalitions, hybrids with decision-making structures, transitional structures, and operational capacity outside the normal formal boundaries. Unique hybrids may emerge at the country level that may look nothing like the conventional models of international good practice.[70] This issue of capacity *transitionals* (or hybrids) appeared in many of the discussions during the country visits. The IAAs have familiar organizational capacity and delivery models for the short and long term. But those that can function in the mid-range are not being utilized. Sierra Leone and Liberia seemed to need a range of actors—regional service authorities, quasi-government agencies outside the public service, special implementation units, trust funds, separate capacity development facilities, provincial reconstruction teams, the use of non-state actors, traditional courts, decentralized service development units, and capacity development facilities.[71] Many of these are decentralized, voluntary, and issues oriented, both public and private.[72] In Liberia, the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) was one of the best examples of a mid-term transitional structure. But these structures all needed to come with a reintegration and mainstreaming approach built into them from the outset to avoid the creation of a permanent, parallel system.

G. INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PERFORMANCE AND CAPACITY

TENSION FREQUENTLY EXISTS in post-conflict states between IAA-supported interventions designed to generate performance and those focused on developing capacity. In many cases, the need for short-term action in the absence of country capacity leads to the drive for results with only secondary attention paid to capacity development. In other cases, technical assistance staff are tasked by IAAs and countries to focus on task accomplishment. The IAA staff themselves frequently have to sacrifice learning and reflection in the interest of keeping projects and programs moving forward.[73]

We can contrast these two approaches to change. The first—the performance approach—is usually driven from the top of a structure. It is more planned and programmed and targeted. Performance is seen as the end. Capacity is quite clearly a means to help implement the changes needed to achieve performance. Incentives for staff usually figure more prominently.

The second—the capacity-focused approach—can go in quite different directions. The goal here is the development of key capabilities. A capacity development approach is usually much more process and learning oriented. It is less programmed and more emergent as participants figure out new roles, relationships, and behaviors. Capacity development is an end in itself and can be given space and resources that would otherwise have gone to getting immediate results. Participation, as well as more emphasis on values and culture, matters. Technical assistance is designed more to facilitate than to energize performance.

The tension between the two is likely to be greater in post-conflict states given the pressing needs for short-term action. The challenge is to find a more integrated approach to change that can somehow combine performance and capacity. In the end, the aim is a kind of rising spiral, in which performance leads to capacity, leading to greater performance.

The two approaches can be consciously sequenced with performance and task accomplishment coming before capacity development. The reverse does not seem to work. Programs and interventions that make space and resources available for learning and reflecting can accomplish both objectives. Training programs, particularly on-the-job training, can be designed to integrate working and learning.

Clearly, a leadership style that combines task and performance with that of capacity development enables the integrated process to take hold. Technical assistance staff need to be clear on the possible dilemma and find ways of structuring their role accordingly.

H. TIME AND TIMING

FEW ISSUES IN capacity development in post-conflict states seem so misjudged as time and timing. The implementation time needed for programs is invariably and chronically underestimated. Implicit judgments ("progress appears disappointing")

on achieving objectives seem completely disconnected from any serious analysis of the time needed to accomplish anything significant. Short-, medium-, and long-term interventions get muddled up. Impatience for results grows at the same time that IAA are also proposing ever-more complex reform programs. Capacity development activities in particular can lag behind other elements given the dynamics of change involved. Some end up trapped in a repeating pattern of inappropriately fit interventions.[74]

The growing understanding of the effects of political economy has encouraged the need to keep in mind a long-term perspective on capacity development.[75] Capacity, especially in the form of the emergence of sustainable organizations and institutions in the public sector, is essentially the outcome of political bargaining or actual conflict.[76] Part of this process has to do with the transformation of a multiplicity of meanings and values into some sort of shared values.[77] In many countries, we can see this *long-wave* evolutionary perspective bumping up against the *short-wave* engineering view commonly held by both governments and IAAs. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, efforts at decentralization, for example, showed both approaches. Different groups, including ministries, parliamentarians, local politicians, and community groups, contested over power and legitimacy at the local level. Much of this reflected struggles that had been underway for decades. At the same time, IAAs were helping to refine techniques to do with performance budgeting and reporting. The challenge here is for participants to get the two processes to overlap and reinforce each other in a positive way.

What can be done in the short term (3 to 6 years) to stabilize an organization? How can a very short-term intervention best be designed to lay the basis for medium- and long-term approaches? With regard to the time and timing issue, what seems to be important is to treat it as a design question that requires serious analysis in terms of contextual factors, historical patterns of implementation, the political economy of change, and others. Simply stuffing capacity development interventions into the constraints of donor approval and budgeting systems seems a recipe for more missed opportunities and possible failures.

I. SEQUENCING OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

MOST POST-CONFLICT STATES have immediate short-term needs that should be addressed. The sequencing entanglement in capacity development in post-conflict states is a difficult issue to unravel.[78] Participants are dealing, directly or indirectly, with at least four time-related issues:

- Absolutely critical interventions to help prevent state collapse or at least the restart of conflict (e.g., the short-term reform of the police);[79]
- Interventions with potentially urgent impacts that would be needed in the short and medium term to help ensure state stabilization (e.g., putting in place basic financial control systems or approaches to dispute resolution);
- Interventions that must be started in the short term but whose potential benefits and impact may not appear until the medium or long term (e.g., law enforcement or certain aspects of the rule of law); and
- Interventions whose commencement can be deferred for the medium term (e.g., some forms of service delivery).[80]

The strategic objective here is for IAAs in post-conflict states to act with urgency, focus, scale, and effectiveness. Many country programs now talk of capacity surges to help ensure stabilization. In Liberia, the UNDP-supported Emergency Capacity-Building Support Project was designed to place senior Liberian officials in public service to stabilize its functioning quickly. In some cases, this emphasis could mean deferring attention to conventional capacity development interventions that are important but not urgent. What seemed to work in Sierra Leone and Liberia was a process of sequential 'muddling through' in which some activities were structured and phased and others were reactive to events.

An undue emphasis on sequencing can lead IAAs back into an undue reliance on planning, scheduling, and targeting that can quickly lose sight of political dynamics or country capacity to implement. Larger trends and patterns of statebuilding and political change can shape sequencing.[81] There are thus limits to the possibilities for both macro- and micro-scheduling of capacity development activities in terms of phasing, timing, and rolling out activities as part of a centrally directed set of interventions that build logically on each other into a coherent whole at process end.[82]

Another key element is the respective roles and degree of control of IAAs and country governments in sequencing these interventions. In some cases, IAAs may control short-term efforts at stabilization with no anticipation of later country involvement. In others, the country may take the lead. What seems important is some sort of strategic sense of the broader

process unfolding over time (i.e., focusing on key short-term interventions, balancing the short-, medium- and long-term aspects and managing the transition from IAA control to country implementation). *What can be done in the short term that can have long-term capacity and performance benefits? What would a capacity development strategy look like in a project implementation unit charged with carrying out short-term tasks?*

Some literature refers to a need for the achievement of a sort of shared national vision to precede the effective sequencing of capacity development. In particular, there needs to be a consensus on the *core functions* of government, an issue that is highly political in every country. There was no indication in Sierra Leone or Liberia of such a political consensus magically appearing in such fragmented political conditions. *Can some sort of political coalition emerge that can generate a form of collective direction and sequencing? How can capacity development interventions best be designed in the absence of such a consensus?*

Some sequencing strategies may be needed but are simply not politically or organizationally feasible. Improvements to service delivery, for example, might not be possible in the absence of reforms to the broader public sector, or in the absence of a major program of infrastructure development in the form of roads, offices, and power. In addition, sequencing can place untenable demands on country organizations in terms of planning, budgeting, and coordination. Countries may not have the capacity to sequence capacity interventions that depend on implementation of other activities. Put another way, the issues of simultaneous activities and interdependence may be as important as sequencing. Effective sequencing implies the careful management of transitions from short to medium and long term, which are difficult to design and manage.

These questions reiterate some of the sequencing and timing challenges that demand careful consideration in post-conflict countries. *From the same perspective, can the IAA community manage these streams of sequencing that achieve both capacity and performance goals? Can, for example, the program objectives, the technical assistance, the contractual accountabilities, the program structure, the projected results, the reporting, and the staffing be designed in a way that can do both? Can they build and then reintegrate the transitional and the hybrid in the right way and at the right time? Can they put in place the aid coordination mechanisms to make sequencing a shared activity?*

J.
MORE EMPHASIS ON LEADERSHIP SYSTEMS

THE IAA COMMUNITY in general has re-discovered the role of leadership as a contributor to capacity development.[83] Most capacity analyses in recent years have tended to focus on institutions or structures or processes of some kind and not enough on leadership. Leaders in a small post-conflict country can have a disproportionate effect on the actions of other people particularly in the absence of settled institutions and organizations. Most organizations in Sierra Leone and Liberia and other such countries remained reflections of whomever had power over them. And most networks were webs of individuals in relationships and not organizations. Capacity development in many situations could add up to helping leaders (or capacity entrepreneurs) do what they already intended to do.

Any new reinvigoration of leadership roles would benefit from reflection on past limitations. There is a limit to the benefits of fixating on characteristics of individual leaders and the degree to which they demonstrate attributes and capabilities familiar to Western audiences. What seemed more relevant in Sierra Leone and Liberia was the role of leaders, élites and coalitions in shaping and sustaining new and locally appropriate institutions for the promotion of stable polities, economic growth and inclusive development. *What conditions, factors, or incentives could help to induce elite groups to abandon predatory behavior and opt for more collective action in support of developmental goals?*[84] *What incentives did elites actually have to stop benefitting from disorder and fragility? Why exactly would they want to support capacity development?*

The potential to abandon predatory behavior appears to be not simply dependent on rational thought or donor encouragement. In many cases, leaders are members of country elites that show common patterns of thought and behavior. Members of such groups frequently face a dilemma by either embarking on major reforms and losing support from important interest groups or going for modest incremental changes that can fit within the accepted boundaries of safety and privilege.

Organizational leadership in a post-conflict state would appear to face particular capacity challenges. Many formal structures have collapsed or fragmented. What appears to

matter in such conditions is the ability of leaders/managers to re-establish connections and relationships, and to create some sort of coherence, safety, and confidence. Leaders also need followers or at least the energy of a committed group behind them if they hope to make progress.[85] The leadership issue thus ties into those of ownership and change.

What appears to matter . . . is the ability of leaders to re-establish connections and relationships, and to create some sort of coherence, safety, and confidence.

The IAAs tend to support leaders who share their own self-perceived characteristics—educated, progressive, forward looking, and more. But this fondness for like-minded *champions* can frequently produce relationships with people with little domestic power. The IAAs benefit from familiarity with country conditions and sources of authority that individuals in the country bring to the process of capacity development. The IAAs want to avoid *betting* on leaders as champions.[86] Reforms can be undermined if too closely linked to an individual who falls from favor.[87] And some leaders can end up blocking capacity development by their attempts at controlling the growth of an organization or system long past the point of utility.

Different kinds of strategies exist in support of leaders.[88] The search for leadership should extend beyond the top level of the formal systems of government and civil society. Informal leaders have importance in Sierra Leone and Liberia. And leadership at the middle levels of public sector agencies could, in practice, be more important than top levels in the capacity development process. Some potential leaders may be intellectual but may have no political credibility. Some may be excellent in soothing the IAA community but have no ability to make governmental systems work for a particular purpose. Part of the assessment process lies in understanding the mix of leadership in a particular situation and its effects on capacity development and performance.

It seemed to be the case in Sierra Leone and Liberia that each effort at capacity development revolved around the activities and interaction of a few key people—capacity entrepreneurs, benign protectors, members of informal coalitions and networks, "big people", and a few influential specialists. The process effectiveness depended largely on the relationships among this controlling group. Once coherence and collaboration collapsed, the entire intervention was put at risk.

Leadership for political change and economic development is one thing, as support of capacity development is another. One of the key contributions that a leader can make is to understand and explain the nature and source of capacity problems. In this sense, what programs may require in terms of leadership is capacity entrepreneurship.[89]

K.
DYNAMICS OF COUNTRY AND IAA OWNERSHIP

AID EFFECTIVENESS CONFERENCES in Paris and Accra focused on the importance of national or country ownership to development effectiveness. An assumption has been that limiting the intrusiveness and supply-driven practices of IAAs would help create the space for country actors to claim the driver's seat, leading to more attention to county priorities, more use of country systems, more encouragement of country leadership and motivation, and eventually greater development effectiveness. This connection had become unbalanced given the variation in power, capabilities, and resources between funder agencies and partner countries. The aid relationship needed to be reshaped. By reshaping the aid relationship, the well-intentioned people especially in the countries would have more space, commitment, and opportunity to do the right thing.

There are still limitations in understanding and addressing the issues associated with country ownership especially in post-conflict Sierra Leone and Liberia. More intractable issues have now emerged (i.e., the personal, organizational, and political dynamics involved in shaping country ownership), most of which got little attention in the earlier discussions centered on the influence of the aid relationship. Dealing with the ownership dynamic has thus turned out to be a good deal more problematic than the aid community had imagined. A series of questions surrounding the issue of country ownership are presented in **Annex A.**

After the visits to Sierra Leone and Liberia, there was an uneasy sense with the application of the broad concept of country ownership. Nobody is downplaying the importance of country control, motivation, and determination; but it comes with risks and downsides that have been downplayed in the current

international embrace of ownership as the latest key to aid effectiveness. In practice, relying on the power of the general principle of country ownership tends to absolve many of the participants, both in the country and in the IAA community, from sorting out a number of tricky political and bureaucratic issues that lurk beneath the surface of any capacity intervention. In particular, the concept does not shed much light on the two key aspects that are needed for real ownership: first, a coalition of country actors arising out of the bureaucratic or political system that has the power, the authority, the capacity, the intentions, and the determination to put in place the capacity needed to create some sort of public value; and second, an IAA system (i.e., program design, contracting, reporting) that has been reconfigured to support country control and commitment.

The challenge in Sierra Leone and Liberia is to get beyond the vague notion of ownership and look more directly at the dynamics of interests, beliefs, and commitments involved in energizing—or not energizing—capacity development. More evidence of the connection between commitment and ownership is required.

An equal concern should be about too little IAA ownership, (i.e., too little patience for the long haul, too much temptation to try and support capacity development on the cheap and in the short-term, and too little inclination to adapt their own policies and procedures to meet these new challenges). What seems to matter is not simply the strength of country ownership but rather the complex interrelationships between these two ownerships—of countries and IAAs—and the way they interact to generate capacity outcomes.

V.
CONSEQUENCES FOR IAA POLICY AND PRACTICE

The IAAs face many of the same imperatives for capacity development that they are also urging on their country partners. In practice, the commitment and ownership of IAAs to adapt their own capabilities to the needs of particular countries is a key piece of the capacity puzzle. If supporting capacity development in post-conflict states is a major priority for IAAs, some major reform and adaption would be needed.

The particular nature of the capacity challenges in Sierra Leone and Liberia puts a premium on IAAs coming up with imaginative and less formulaic approaches to capacity development.[90] The business-as-usual approach to capacity development can still work in some stable contexts. But the challenges of capacity development in post-conflict states create a graveyard for predictions and detailed planning. As a result, they have the potential to expose the gaps in IAA capabilities.

Little of this will be easy. The IAAs, for the most part, have historically had an ambiguous, somewhat hesitant approach to capacity issues.[91] Many claim that capacity development is the critical issue in their work and that they are focusing on it as a key priority. But it is hard to sustain that argument looking at activities on the ground. In the current aid environment, the capacity development issue comes with too many risks and liabilities. Knowledge is limited. Success rates remain low. Devising strategies to implement complex change, in particular, remains a puzzle.

The process and outcomes of capacity development are also littered with intangibles that cannot be measured or claimed. It fits uneasily into the current results paradigm. The main benefits of capacity development are suspected to be long term or long past the point when the credit can be claimed by any of the current participants. For different reasons, neither IAAs nor governments have given the capacity issue much sustained attention over the years. Both are far more interested in policies, prescriptions, strategies, intent, results, and the commitment of funds.

Capacity development is not a priority for the Millennium Development Goals. It has never been the subject of World Development or Human Development Reports. It is usually not effectively addressed in poverty reduction strategy papers or other such exercises. The attention it received in the Accra Declaration and other such efforts seems mainly symbolic. More to the point, capacity development has had no powerful domestic advocates in IAA countries comparable to those pushing for gender, human rights, climate change, or even statebuilding. As a development activity, it still does not command the attention, resources, leverage, and priority it needs to gain real effectiveness. Most IAAs are simply not organized for making a substantial contribution to capacity issues.

This chapter looks at issues that donors should address if they wish to build their effectiveness in capacity development.

A.
CRAFTING IAA STRATEGIES FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

A KEY OBJECTIVE FOR IAAs is formulating well-grounded, multi-level capacity development strategies. However, neither the UNDP nor the World Bank appears to have a clear approach to capacity development in Sierra Leone and Liberia. At present, the capacity development efforts in both countries seemed under-strategized, under-operationalized, under-energized, and under-funded. And both Governments seemed to use the issue more as a slogan than any kind of defined objective.

A basic decision facing IAAs and governments had to do with the following questions: *Should capacity development be seen simply as a program component or should it also be treated as a program in its own right? Does it merit sustained independent attention? Or is it simply to be factored into on-going development interventions on an intervention-by-intervention, as-required basis? Or can it be both—that is, an independently conceived approach to creating and/or strengthening capacity and also integrated into technical and sectoral interventions?*

The World Bank's Country Assistance Strategy in Liberia followed the *program component strategy.* It set out what amounts to a loose collection of capacity components of projects and programs. It was decidedly less than a program or an objective in its own right. In the documentation, it is described as a "cross-cutting" issue that can be found throughout the programs at various levels of scope and intensity. From this perspective, capacity development was not a program or an objective in and of itself, and it required no dedicated staff units or time or resources beyond those included in regular programs.

The problem with the program component approach was the resulting lack of focus, intensity, learning, and coherence. The design of many capacity development interventions was implicitly delegated to technical assistance staff and government direction with only modest experience and interest. Nobody was responsible for the quality and effectiveness of the interventions. In Sierra Leone, the World Bank seemed taken aback by the lack of capacity development outcomes associated with project implementation units. The lack of any systematic program or point of management hindered learning, experimentation, and strategic thinking. Basing a capacity development strategy on a project-by-project basis did not seem effective in terms of coherence and effectiveness.

What would a capacity development strategy look like? What value would it add and to what? The analysis of the efforts to put in place a national capacity development strategy give some hint of the challenges involved in answering these questions. But in the case of Sierra Leone and Liberia, the World Bank and UNDP had to make a series of choices with or without the benefit of careful thought and analysis. **Box 5.1** gives 10 main issues and supporting questions to consider when an IAA is formulating a strategy for capacity development.

Sierra Leone and Liberia and other post-conflict states offer particular challenges to IAAs at both the strategic and the operational contexts. The potential choices and needs are enormous. The Government may be uncertain of its priorities or have a range of hidden agendas. As a result, IAAs can devise capacity development strategies that are clear, understandable, concrete, measurable, time-bound, coherent, and ineffective.

Capacity development interventions can lose traction at any time and at any level in a post-conflict country, more so than in other states. Any strategy needs constant adaptation and renewal.

Outsiders in general and donors in particular can easily persuade themselves that their interventions are determinant and that they can actually build capacity directly through an elixir of clever strategy, well-designed technical assistance, and a strong dose of results-based management. Their interventions can be helpful and, in some instances, critical. But outsiders in the capacity game remain marginal players struggling with issues that they only vaguely understand and do not control. This does not imply fatalism or the inevitable failure of any kind of intervention. But it does infer the need to be realistic about the leverage that external interventions can have.

B. UNDERSTANDING AND INTEGRATING THE COUNTRY OR REGIONAL CONTEXT

THERE IS AN ACCEPTED line of thinking in international development that the country context should be the starting point of any serious capacity analysis.[92] In line with this understanding, IAAs should shift their own emphasis from the application of more generic, imported interventions to ones that are more customized to the particular country context, reinforcing local expectations of function, and not preconceptions of ideal forms, as the means to determining the more suitable approach.[93]

BOX 5.1

ISSUES CONFRONTING IAA IN FORMULATING A CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

1. What is the 'vision' of peacebuilding, statebuilding, and capacity building that an IAA is attempting to support in the country? What are the choices it is confronting and which choice is it making and why? Is the direct support of social cohesion a part of that vision? How can these approaches be combined effectively?

2. What is it trying to do in terms of capacity development? In particular, can the technical/functional be adapted to reflect country patterns of behavior, institutions, values, and attitudes? How does it intend to address both the formal and the informal? How will it help to facilitate and guide change?

3. Does the IAA have the basic diagnostic processes in place to help staff address the capacity issue? If so, are the implications broadly understood? If not, what aspects have to be improved? Is there, for example, any kind of a 'state of the state' analysis that looks at current trends in the public sector and its interface with the non-state domain that would influence any capacity development strategy?

4. What are the key dilemmas that the IAA will have to face as it tries to support capacity development? How will they be recognized? How can they best be addressed? How, for example, is the donor going to manage its increasing involvement in issues that have real political elements?

5. How does the IAA see its capacity development role in the country changing over time? How would that be negotiated and managed? And with whom? How would that affect the 'aid relationship' over time?

6. How is the IAA going to encourage country ownership?

7. How does the IAA see the role of technical assistance in contributing to capacity development? How will that role change over time? What is the role of the IAA in facilitating that evolution?

8. What is the intent in terms of working with other actors, (e.g. other donors, non-state actors, the private sector, etc)? How will those relationships be managed and by whom?

9. Does the IAA have the capabilities to address these issues and help manage them effectively? Does it have the capacity to do serious capacity assessments? Does it have the operational budget to implement such an approach? If not, what changes would have to be made to the strategy?

10. What are the lurking dangers of an IAA program making things worse? For example, what is the likelihood of improving state capacity to be even more captured, oppressive and predatory? What can be done to lower the risk?

Three aspects of this contextual issue seemed important in Sierra Leone and Liberia:

- ***Structural features*** that shape the existing patterns of capacity such as history, regionalism, political economy, patterns of behavior, national myths and images, ethnic composition, nature and distribution of resources, and levels of social capital.[94] *How did this country get to where it now is? What accounts for its most striking patterns of collective behavior*
- ***Nature of the country's bureaucratic, institutional and political systems.*** *How do they actually work? What are their strengths? What are the traps? Who benefits from the political system? What is the nature of the management systems already in place? What forces, interests, and incentives are currently holding various capabilities in place for good or bad? What are the resources available? What is the political space for reform? Where is there evidence of commitment, energy and motivation? What changes are already underway? What can the system likely absorb or accept in terms of capacity development?*[95]
- ***Context of the aid systems*** that are supporting the capacity interventions under discussion. The outcomes of capacity interventions come about through the interaction between two complex systems: that of the country and that of the aid system that is engaged in inducing change in that country system. The context of that aid system (i.e., the pressures, incentives, myths, current fashion, and patterns of behavior) should be factored into the analysis.

The IAAs have increasingly emphasized universalized and homogenized knowledge over customized country knowledge.[96] Knowledge about technical subjects (e.g., financial manage-

ment, water resource development) and administrative practices (e.g., performance management, monitoring and evaluation) have become more valued compared to country-based knowledge. This trend has often been strengthened by the insistence of country governments anxious to be perceived as using state-of-the-art methodologies.

The demands of aid coordination, harmonization, and decentralized functions have required a great deal of field staff energy and attention. Many bilateral donors have been converted, as a consequence of their fieldwork, into contracting and processing agencies with little residual capacity for research and analysis, especially at the country level. And, despite their complaints about donor agencies importing inappropriate models, it is not at all clear that country governments are totally interested in donor agencies developing real insight into local systems.

The IAAs are faced with a decision about developing their capabilities for working in post-conflict states. Any effort at improving the understanding of country systems implies a deeper shift in donor behavior, mindsets, and structures. The influence of contextual factors can underpin a quite different mindset about how organizational and institutional change happens. From this perspective, capacity is an evolved response to a variety of contextual factors rather than a consciously engineered activity, which simply takes context into account.

The IAAs need a better sense of which contextual analysis is essential from the outset and which is simply good to have available. *How much is needed to start? Which can be added through experience and operational learning? How can a field office be organized for continuous learning? Can it develop the ability to put together a composite picture of a country or a sector or an issue from disparate bits of information and insight? How, for example, the political and the technical best be synthesized at the country level? How can regional and global knowledge be factored in? And can that understanding be fed into decision-making effectively?*

Tools and frameworks are available to help donors address the contextual issues.[97] But, alone they are not a viable solution to gaining a serious understanding of context. The issue is not so much their availability as is accessibility and usefulness to a range of practitioners, including in country governments. The IAAs need to address more than the *what* question but should also seek answers to *So what?* and *Now what?*

Some staff in field offices should be dedicated full-time to building contextual knowledge, with more built in rewards and incentives for doing so. That change would, in turn, have implications for postings, promotions, and hiring. External and in-country institutions could also be engaged to conduct research and work on selected topics. The respective efforts could be coordinated and shared with other IAAs. In addition, a network of country analysts and observers on retainer could keep aid staff up to date on more immediate political and economic developments.[98]

The IAAs should be able to integrate the contextual knowledge into their own operations and those of their country partners and technical assistance staff. Some shared sense of the significance and implications of contextual understanding needs to be in place for it to be useful. The IAAs have to decide if they wish to develop their own capability for contextual analysis given all their other priorities and the constraints to actually doing it.

C.
MANAGING THE IAA ROLE, RELATIONSHIPS, AND CAPABILITIES

THE IMPLICIT CHOICE in terms of IAA capabilities seems to be between two options: (a) decide that the challenge of balancing the volume, speed, and focus of their overall programs precludes the added effort and investment needed to get their capacity development interventions up to the next level of effectiveness, or (b) decide that the special demands of working in a post-conflict state rules out anything approaching business as usual.

In the first option, incremental improvements can be made to technical assistance, monitoring and evaluation, and a few other aspects. Additional efforts such as more political economy analysis may not generate much in the way of added benefits. For the second option, an expanded and more complex level of IAA capabilities especially at the field level are necessary—a much higher level of contextual analysis, more direct monitoring and supervision, more learning and experimenting, more attention to coordination and facilitation, more time devoted to crafting strategy, more field-based analysis, more focus on developing and managing a complex range of relationships, and so on. *What capabilities will be needed to support the capacity development program? Which ones are critical? Which ones are underdeveloped? Which ones are both?*

This second option is deceptively difficult. The typical pressures that come with the development business tend to act against it (i.e., too little time); there is the pressure to get results; the lack of staff incentives to spend time on ambiguous, possibly unproductive activities that have no career value; and the shortage of staff in smaller field posts. These factors do not imply a return to a pattern of direct IAA control. But they do mean a greater IAA investment in indirect support and involvement.[99]

The range and complexity of the capacity issues make it unlikely that technical assistance, training, restructuring, workshops, and system upgrades—the usual capacity development suspects—can make a real difference by themselves in most cases. And yet the possibility of applying a much wider range of interventions, a much more comprehensive option, is unlikely within the current IAA resources and time available.

The unsettled, fast-moving, conditions of post-conflict states put a premium on IAA capacity for the strategic management of relationships of all kinds at all levels. Staff must have this competence plus the time and inclination to focus on this activity. The IAAs in Sierra Leone and Liberia were faced with managing diverse and shifting patterns of relationships with governments. Some early patterns had the UNDP, the World Bank, and other IAAs, for example, playing intrusive roles in designing and managing recovery programs in the absence of government leadership and capacity. Over time, they needed to shift and rebalance as they tried to move to a more collaborative relationship. To make matters more complex, this process of relationship change needed to go at different speeds for different interventions in different ministries and departments.

Many IAAs have been trying to shift from *retail* to *wholesale* delivery in their capacity development work, meaning greater attention goes to supporting the work of country actors who, in turn, do the operational delivery and/or execution. But many formal organizational actors in Sierra Leone and Liberia have collapsed or been severely weakened. The opportunities for wholesale delivery (e.g., partnerships, contracting out, or intermittent support) thus became much less than in many other low-income countries. This situation could have two implications: first, a greater attention on the part of IAAs to working with individuals, informal groups, and networks that emerge on the other side of the conflict; and second, a need for IAAs to revert to some degree to more retail activities, a role that comes with its own dilemmas and challenges.

Another issue in this discussion is that of *procurement.* In some post-conflict states, the high levels of technical assistance contracts, equipment supply, and infrastructure can amount to 60–70 percent of the entire program. The pace of capacity interventions can be set by the speed of the procurement (e.g., vehicles, generators, temporary housing). Many low-income countries rarely have the capacity to manage such loads. The UNDP or the World Bank, in many of these cases, must be able to either supply the capacity or make a major effort to assist country governments. The UNDP has put in place fast-track procedures to reduce workload and add speed and flexibility in post-conflict states.

Capacity development in Sierra Leone and Liberia and other post-conflict states usually turns out to be a labor-intensive exercise that can eat into administrative budgets and staff time at all levels.[100] Managing whole-of-government relationships and increased donor coordination can impose huge burdens on IAA field staff. Any additional project, however small in nature, just compounds the constantly growing responsibilities of budget preparation and reporting. The combined effect can put enormous pressure and time constraints on IAA field staff and can limit opportunities and space for more complex reflection and planning.

Incumbent on IAAs is the encouragement and support of country participation, providing strategic facilitation or mediation, and creating and sustaining new connections and relationships in the process. The IAAs must try to broker and energize change rather than direct it. But again, this role must be played in such a way that does not preempt or overshadow indigenous country processes. In many cases, IAAs must carefully pass credit on to country participants even when under pressure to demonstrate results to domestic groups.

If capacity development in post-conflict states is to be given more attention, the nature of field staff jobs would need to change. In Sierra Leone and Liberia there was a noticeable variety of relationships and demands ranging from high-level analysis to managing logistics to entering into a constant exchange and dialogue with various groups. The capacity demands of post-conflict states put a premium on the decentralized UNDP and World Bank staff with more generalized skills. A centralized IAA model based on sectoral or technical skills does not appear to offer the coherent, multi-disciplinary approach that is often needed in such countries.

D.
ADAPTING RESULTS-BASED AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT orthodoxy, including in post-conflict states, puts emphasis on predicting, measuring, and achieving performance outcomes. Much of this approach has been codified into increasingly structured approaches to *results-based* and/or *performance management,* which are now close to being of universal acceptance.[101] Many analysts doing work in post-conflict situations also see these approaches as essential to development effectiveness.[102]

Results-based and performance management methodologies carry significant risks and disadvantages characterized by uncertainty, complexity, and lack of consensus such as those in Sierra Leone and Liberia. One inherent dilemma is that of premature and inflexible clarity in the short term, focusing attention on capacity results that in the light of implementation in the medium and longer term may not be appropriate or even feasible. The power of prediction seems especially low in post-conflict states. The Carter Center in Liberia, for example, did a good deal of upfront thinking and analysis of their future role in capacity development in Liberia but was still faced with major rethinking and adjustment once they encountered field conditions.

Results-based and performance management also tends to shift donors toward the achievement of tangible, short-term outcomes that can be easily measured.[103] This is not conducive to sustainable capacity development. Simply put, many of the current results-based practices induce and reward people for achieving and measuring the wrong things.[104] They have an in-built bias for product over process, which when linked to contractual payments could, for example, take technical assistance out of the capacity development business. They tend to shrink the space for adaptation and experimentation. They tend to focus almost entirely on organizational and institutional formality. In the process, they can end up as symbolic activities giving little insight into the deeper patterns of system behavior at the country level.

Particular downsides emerge at the intersection of theories of change and the application of results-based methodologies. Results-based management can evolve into a substitute for, rather than a complement to, a theory of change guiding a capacity development intervention. Applying a layer of results-based management onto a program that has few strategic or theoretical underpinnings seems a recipe for misplaced outcomes. They tend to focus on measuring pieces and not the whole of the capacity puzzle. And they can induce IAAs to support projects that best fit within the measurement confines of the results-based orthodoxy. At its worst, results-based management can degenerate into a kind of program accounting and control device and an end in itself servicing the control needs of IAAs at the expense of capacity development effectiveness. Few capacity targets and indicators in Sierra Leone and Liberia seemed to have any resonance for country participants.[105]

The challenge is to get away from one-size-fits-all approaches and come up with a range of approaches that can fit a variety of capacity situations in post-conflict states.[106] Some capacity development interventions—the so-called conventional *problems,* such as those focusing on introducing techniques of financial management—may lend themselves to more specification of means and ends.[107] Others in which the outcomes are much less predictable—the so-called *messes*—need a more experimental approach in which the feasible and relevant objectives and measures are discovered through successive approximations. In the end, IAAs are faced with combining the adaptation needed for an effective capacity development strategy with the more predetermined demands of results-based management.

But most IAAs have not yet crafted and applied these more varied techniques and would benefit from consideration of ways for moving forward toward a results-based management approach:

- Combine up-front strategic thinking with the evolution of more specific results and outcomes—sequencing in which experimentation leads to more direction and clarity—or, combine in some fashion the techniques and assumptions of results-based management and complex adaptive systems thinking.
- Emphasize learning, continuous adaptation, experimentation, and country participation as results (seemingly more appropriate than the conventional accountability and control versions).
- Avoid results-based schemes that substitute for serious thinking about change, performance, and value. And such schemes need to be only one way out of many methods that contribute to an overall judgment on capacity development effectiveness. Qualitative analysis and stories can be useful in assessing capacity results.

- Results-based management schemes need to be legitimized and made useful for skeptical country bureaucrats who must in many cases supply the energy, resources, information, and commitment needed to make the schemes function.

E.
DESIGNING AND MANAGING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN A POST-CONFLICT STATE

THE CONDITIONS OF POST-CONFLICT states can also present dilemmas connected to technical assistance. At first glance, the importation of technical assistance seems a natural response to the obvious—an acute lack of country skills and a huge backlog of needs and work. But it is also likely that dysfunctional side effects of technical assistance can be even worse in post-conflict states. There are particular technical assistance issues connected to post-conflict conditions in the context of Sierra Leone and Liberia: first, the challenges involved in getting technical assistance to make a useful contribution to capacity development; and second, the systemic pressures in the aid business that drive the overuse of technical assistance especially in post-conflict situations.[108]

Most conventional technical assistance interventions are preceded in post-conflict states by activities of UN peacekeepers and other immediate post-conflict staff. In Liberia, a total of 107 civil affairs officers of the UNMIL were still in the country in 2009 doing everything from helping to formulate a national youth policy to trying to strengthen the capacity of the NGO community. The transition from these interventions to the more conventional technical assistance needs to be managed carefully.

Getting all the varied actors in this complex system to focus in a coordinated way on capacity development faces real barriers in generating a shared direction. The Ministry of Finance can have one view, and the Ministry of Transport another. Senior staff in a country ministry may favor more technical assistance. The external firms recruiting and managing technical assistance have their corporate interests. The technical assistance staff will have a personal set of objectives. It is not clear who in this cast of characters has the real energy and commitment to embed a capacity development strategy in a technical assistance intervention.

That lack of energy applies in particular to senior managers in government. Their influence gets too little attention in the analysis of why technical assistance is unable to contribute much to capacity development. Most such managers have a long-term, general interest in capacity development and a short-term, immediate need to get work done. Few technical assistance staff will engage seriously in a capacity development effort without the daily operational space provided by country managers.

Both Sierra Leone and Liberia Governments showed some signs of classic behavior of dealing with large flows of technical assistance, including the lack of capacity to impose their priorities on donor preferences. Part of this behavior was country criticism of technical assistance in the aggregate and on principle, combined with the continued acceptance of more technical assistance even in cases where it was not needed or even not wanted. This behavioral pattern, which can be seen in many other post-conflict states, has partly to do with the uncertainty faced by mid-level ministry officers when contemplating the refusal of technical assistance that is perceived to be free but tied into donor priorities. In addition, technical assistance staff can be more obedient and, in some ways, more manageable than country staff who have more complex personal, ethic, and political agendas that can complicate life for senior national managers.

With the exception of project implementation units, issues such as deployment of country counterparts, coaching and mentoring, transfer of knowledge and techniques, design of training programs, or reporting relationships of technical assistance staff seemed to get little sustained analysis and discussion.

The deployment of technical assistance personnel seemed totally neglected as a subject of discussion in both countries. Most of the countries' technical assistance staff seemed vague or somewhat uncertain about their role in capacity development.[109] One implication is the need for Government, the World Bank, and the UNDP to be more directive about the capacity development aspects of technical assistance programs.

Without that countervailing influence in Sierra Leone and Liberia and other such states, the inexorable tendency is for the design and implementation of technical assistance to end up in a conventional default position of task accomplishment combined with modest amounts of training and knowledge transfer. Most of the more demanding aspects of capacity development—contextual analysis, systems approaches, wide-ranging change strategies, balancing the easy and the hard, or the short and the long term—seemed to fade quickly into the

background at the project or program level. Capacity development interventions in post-conflict states, using a significant amount of technical assistance, need governments and donors to impose an agreed upon strategy.

The capacity development of formal organizations in more stable situations usually progresses through rough stages toward greater complexity and scope. Individual competencies develop and expand, as do the more collective capabilities. In post-conflict states, the likelihood however is that most formal organizations may have regressed back to the early stages of capacity development. That pattern has implications for the type of technical assistance that would be needed, the absorptive capacity of the organization, and the time required to make progress.

Getting technical assistance personnel with the appropriate skills and inclination to encourage capacity development seemed a major constraint in Sierra Leone and Liberia. And the solution of hiring country-based personnel did not always present an easy solution. Those country personnel could bring complex personal agendas and in certain cases *less* legitimacy required to press for reform with former colleagues. Members of the Diaspora, particularly in Liberia, seemed to have less patience with country practices and behavior than their technical assistance colleagues from other countries.

Most staff on technical assistance assignments were unable to bring their families to Sierra Leone and Liberia, a condition that affected the long-term approaches to capacity development. In practice, the technical assistance turnover seemed high. To make matters worse, this frequent turnover was mirrored with IAA and country government staff also shifting in then out of projects. This pattern led to a pervasive barrier of getting people who have both international experience and knowledge of country practice and behavior. Perhaps the most promising technical assistance pattern on display in Sierra Leone and Liberia was the sourcing of expertise from Ghana and Nigeria and other countries in the Africa Region. Compared to those from high-income countries, such technical assistance personnel come with major advantages such as more comparable experience, more cultural connections, closer geographical proximity for repeat visits, and lower costs. This rise in regional technical assistance may, in fact, be the key innovation in both countries, keeping in mind the potential, reciprocal problems in the country of recruitment where capacity might be thin.

The contribution of training in most countries to organizational as opposed to individual improvement has seemed limited. It has become conventional wisdom to de-emphasize the value of training as an element of capacity development. But the extreme shortage of people in both Sierra Leone and Liberia may require special efforts to train many more people in at least the medium term. Saturation training has worked in other settings.

In conclusion, the type and purpose of technical assistance needs adapting as Sierra Leone and Liberia evolve through the recovery phase. Interventions that are designed to be direct and intrusive in year 1 may need to transition into something more indirect and facilitative by year 5. The UNDP, World Bank, and the Governments need to lay down basic strategies and principles of capacity development that they want accepted and implemented by technical assistance staff. That suggestion, in turn, would depend on thinking through their approach to capacity development in a more systematic fashion, and then sharing the emerging experiences during implementation with technical assistance personnel.

F.

STRENGTHENING THE NEED FOR COORDINATION AND HARMONIZATION

PEOPLE ENGAGED IN STATEBUILDING and peacebuilding and capacity building are in the business of helping with system reconstruction in post-conflict states. And they must try to do it through the complex systems under their own umbrella. Doing so without coordination and harmonization can create huge transaction costs for all. Virtually all capacity analyses in Sierra Leone and Liberia called for greater coordination and collaboration on all sides.

Many fixes for coordination have been happening in Sierra Leone and Liberia where IAAs are trying harder than ever to merge their programs.[110] Whole-of-government approaches were more and more in use. Country ministries and departments were trying to work together to reduce fragmented decision-making. Trust funds and pooled arrangements were in use in both countries. During visits to Sierra Leone and Liberia, evident patterns were observed with regard to the efforts and problems in dealing with coordination and harmonization.

Neither Government had experienced people (with the obvious exception of the President of Liberia) with strong competencies in coordinating the capacity development interventions of IAAs. Both Governments needed additional help and leverage to do this. Worth considering would be the type of joint monitoring

system, which has shared objectives and accountabilities for both IAAs and countries and which is now in use in Mozambique and Tanzania. Under this approach, external and internal monitors report periodically on the coordination performance of both government and the donors. A mild form of *naming and shaming* can be used to strengthen this approach.

Post-conflict states appear at times to be starting over or even to be in a sort of capacity vacuum. Such a situation tends to energize donors to escalate their level of prescription and advocacy beyond normal levels. They tend to become capacity entrepreneurs looking for buyers and owners in the government marketplace. The result is a rise in the supply of potential interventions to be coordinated.

Another source of the increased supply comes with the pervasive nature of capacity interventions. In Sierra Leone and Liberia, most IAA-supported interventions claimed to be in the capacity development business. Such interventions are notoriously difficult to coordinate given the different definitions, methodologies, perspectives, sectoral influences, and conflicting views of implementing agencies. Access to reliable information about what is being delivered compounds the problem. Both the World Bank and the UNDP have faced challenges even when coordinating capacity development interventions within their own organizations. The danger here was of uncoordinated IAAs tugging and pulling on weak country organizations in an effort to implement their particular approach to capacity development.

The issue of capacity development coordination presented a choice for governments and IAAs. *Did they want to fashion a broad compact or agreement that would guide the actions of all the actors in a particular country in terms of their efforts at capacity development?* A national capacity development strategy was one possible way to coordinate the flow of international support to Liberia. *Or did they want to move more incrementally and opportunistically on a program-by-program basis? Or could they manage to induce coordination at a variety of interconnected levels?*

In Sierra Leone and Liberia, there was an obvious need for the UNDP and the World Bank to go beyond the usual information sharing. The UNDP could provide capacity development support to Bank operations. The Bank could consider some support to the national capacity development strategy. Some collaboration on the joint use of mapping and assessment frameworks could be tried in the interests of joint action. Both organizations could, in the future, do more to co-ordinate their approaches to decentralization and the rule of law. Analytical and research support from either side could be shared.

Increased coordination usually comes in the form of an unfunded mandate for donor agencies. Both the World Bank and the UNDP are usually urged to do more coordination by various groups that are unable or unwilling to give them the necessary financial and staff resources to do it. The World Bank office in Liberia, for example, was more than willing to collaborate more with the UNDP on rule of law issues but had no personnel with the time and background to participate. This reinforces one of the underlying themes of this report—donor support of capacity development is a good but under-resourced intention.

Too much emphasis on coordination and coherence can impose staff costs on government officials and IAA country offices, which could over-dominate more substantive issues. Too much harmonization can lead to thinking and acting in terms of the lowest common denominator; this inadequate fix can block the imagination, ingenuity, and experimentation that are so badly needed in post-conflict states. A block of coordinated donors can more easily impose solutions on country governments but can undermine the motivation and ownership that drives national efforts.

G.

MOVING TO AN EXPANDED SET OF CONCEPTS AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

MANY ANALYTICAL TOOLS and frameworks for capacity issues already exist. Yet, as has often been the case, when the newly designed tools and frameworks are presented in some form, few people actually use them systematically in their daily work for extended periods of time. This pattern seems to intensify in the context of post-conflict states where few frameworks have gained the allegiance of both donors and country participants. *Why is this?*[111]

Most frameworks are designed by IAAs or consultants to at least partly address their own concerns. Such frameworks frequently serve as transmitters of international good practice, or as efforts at methodological standardization, or as expressions of the particular perspective of an individual donor. But they may not be useful solutions to specific local problems especially in a post-conflict context. Many approaches, for example, assume the universal benefits of technical rationality. But country practitioners may not find them helpful in addressing

the difficult political and implementation issues that they must confront on a daily basis.

Frequently focused on only one aspect of a complex problem, most frameworks do not get past the utility/complexity dilemma.[112] Most are exercises in fragmentation and part-by-part analysis. The insights generated can disguise as much as they reveal.

Few analytical frameworks and tools have much appeal for senior decision-makers in country organizations that rely much more on intuition, accommodation, finesse, and intentional ambiguity to address complex issues. Mid- and lower-level country participants will have their own tacit, indigenous frameworks, which may vary by position. Administrative ministry officers, for example, might have a much more complex mental model of their work environment compared to that held by the donor staff. The ministry officers, whose main aim is survival, may silently contest IAA models that focus on results and accountability. The relationship of such customized, tacit country frameworks compared to generic, explicit IAA models require more attention, in particular, to localizing the assessment function using country-based organizations and frameworks.

It was possible to detect assessment fatigue in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Some organizations were perceived to be tired of being subjected to endless IAA assessments. Middle managers in these same organizations have little incentive or time to collect the data that is almost always missing on capacity issues. And the trust that is needed for key parts of the analytical puzzle to emerge is usually not present in the early stages of any design process. Most capacity baselines have limited utility for this reason.

Assessment frameworks, whose scope goes beyond the obvious and the familiar (e.g., objectives, structure, systems, outcomes, staff) and ventures into the political, the cultural, the historical, or even the psychological can generate discomfort and resistance from both donors and governments. Resorting to tools and frameworks can frequently represent an easy way out for IAAs unable to address the harder tasks of capacity assessment and analysis, (i.e., the development of a deeper in-house capability to support a range of capacity interventions).

What analytical frameworks and tools might be helpful in the post-conflict world of capacity development? Are there analytical techniques that can be both insightful and manageable? Can they have a reasonable chance of integrating the contextual, the technical, and the organizational? Can they resonate in any way with country staff?

There are several analytical frameworks and tools that might be useful if carefully used. Some of these—*Rapid Results, Political Economy,* and *Capacity Mapping and Assessment*—are already used in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Some of the others, such as *Dilemma and Trap Analysis* and the *Agreement and Certainty Matrix,* are not widely used at present. Explanations of these two framework models and others are provided in **Annex B.**

The way forward on capacity mapping and assessment in countries such as Sierra Leone and Liberia might take the following points into consideration:

- All external interveners need to restrain their enthusiasm for complex analytical methodologies.[113] What seems to matter more is the willingness to listen to various groups, analyze their meanings, look at the development issue from a country perspective, and learn from rather than merely study the people involved.
- What matters more in terms of the use of tools and frameworks is their contribution to the development of broader capabilities for strategic thinking and management by external actors such as the World Bank and UNDP. Such capabilities require the synthesis of a variety of skills and structures, including action research, facilitation, awareness, and analysis. Some of the tools and frameworks discussed in Annex B might not be suitable for country practitioner use; but they could help staff in the UNDP and World Bank offices.[114]
- Methodologies need to address more than the usual gaps and constraints, although these remain a crucial part of the analysis.[115] It will be equally important to look for latent or hidden strengths, opportunities, energies, and possibilities.[116] It may be, for example, that good performance—the so-called *pockets of productivity*—comes not from capacity per se but by the nature of the work being done, by the groups that support it, by the serviced constituencies, and by the political factors that shape its functioning. Assessment frameworks need to be able to cover these broader systems issues as well.
- Capacity mapping frameworks should focus on what organizations can actually do as opposed to identifying what assets they have or how they are structured. (There is a line of thinking that interventions should be designed to the level of capacity and reviewed for expansion as capacity increases incrementally.) Still missing are analytical frameworks that can give practitioners insight into the development and interaction of competencies; capabilities; and capacity of complex, multi-actor systems.

- It is possible to speculate on what should be included in any capacity assessment methodology for use in a post-conflict state. For example, issues to do with informality, legitimacy, absorptive capacity and readiness, relationships, history, political economy, human system dynamics, networks, coalitions, and ownership would need more attention than they get in conventional frameworks. Assessing capacity in structures other than formal organizations would be needed.
- There is a need to devise analytical frameworks that are accessible to and usable by country practitioners (i.e., participatory diagnostics); at issue is diffusion and mainstreaming. Much of the national capacity development strategy in Liberia, for example, is premised on the capability of the Government to carry out serious self-assessments of capacity across the range of departments and agencies. And yet much of the assessment work done to date is too complex for most country practitioners to find useful.
- If the World Bank and the UNDP are serious about leaving a legacy of capacity thinking in Sierra Leone and Liberia, they would further encourage the Governments to see the value of such investment in development of country capabilities for capacity mapping and assessment. This could include collaboration on a *capacity development industry* in countries that have the capabilities to do research, analysis, consulting, and program delivery. University institutes, private research groups, and consulting firms would seem to be the obvious actors to assist and encourage.
- Finally, the World Bank and the UNDP should provide more in the way of policy and logistical support to the capacity interventions they support. One possible way of doing this would be the design and provision of something approaching a *capacity development toolkit* that could provide guidance on addressing capacity issues across a range of circumstances. It could be updated regularly to reflect changes in government and donor policy.

H.

BETTER WAYS TO ADDRESS RISK AND FAILURE

MUCH OF THE ANALYSIS of capacity issues in Sierra Leone and Liberia remains optimistic in terms of potential progress. Yet, the constraints in the structural, political, and institutional context of post-conflict states create the potential for risks and failures. It is also important to keep in mind that the potential for risk extends to both governments and individuals in post-conflict states. Few country actors get rewarded for experimentation and innovation. Individuals, in particular, can encounter danger to career and life by challenging vested interests during an effort to develop capacity.

What are some approaches to managing risk and failure?

Putting the potential rate of risk and failure in perspective, the brutal fact is that most efforts at organizational and institutional change fail *everywhere* most of the time, *especially the first time,* including in the private sector in high-income countries. Most capacity development efforts in post-conflict states are going to fail. The challenge here is in applying serious judgments (i.e., balancing the excusing and tolerating of poor outcomes with the recognition of the need for greater realism in judging those efforts and outcomes). The principle of *good enough* capacity development that could be applied over a realistic timeframe would help.

The World Bank is searching for ways to address and manage risk. Development agencies, by the very nature of their work, cannot make a sustained contribution to development outcomes by avoiding risk. The need in post-conflict states is for more systematic risk management by which both IAAs and country governments do more to identify risks and make a conscious effort to monitor them over time. This approach, in turn, requires greater knowledge of specific country conditions and more ongoing monitoring. Field staff would logically be in the best position to track the dynamics of political and bureaucratic risks within country governments. A country program would have to be crafted to have a balanced portfolio.

In practice, the failure of most capacity development interventions is the price of doing business. The few successes—the high returns—will more than compensate for the many failures. *Can IAAs be more open about publicly addressing the risks and failure that lie in wait for any effort at capacity development in states such as Sierra Leone and Liberia? Or are IAAs condemned to implicitly promise levels of success in capacity development in such countries that are simply unachievable?*

The most effective way to address risk is not to generate ever more complex designs in a desperate effort to foresee and control all the difficulties. A more promising option would be to come up with more general designs and then focus more on

adaptation and re-design during implementation. The IAAs would, in effect, highlight projects and programs facing major risks and then shift scarce operational resources from initial design to ongoing implementation support, monitoring, and supervision. One issue here is that the current incentive system inside IAA agencies, including promotions and career patterns, is heavily oriented towards design and not implementation. This is yet another indication of the difficult internal changes facing IAAs as they try to come to grips with the challenges of working in post-conflict states.

I. LEARNING, RESEARCHING, MONITORING AND EVALUATING CAPACITY ISSUES

AN ASSUMPTION OF THIS report is the critical need for rapid, real-time learning in post-conflict states. Working in a post-conflict state puts a premium on the abilities of personnel within both countries and IAAs to learn, adapt, and adjust in a complex, rapidly changing, and uncertain environment.[117] *What is happening and what is emerging? Are the 'right' results being achieved? What is unexpected? What are the patterns? What should be done differently and why and when?* To address these questions, donors need to focus on learning and reviewing and rethinking. And they need to try and encourage the same qualities in their country partners. Effective ways to research, report, monitor, and evaluate become critical.

Such abilities remain works in progress for all the international development agencies in Sierra Leone and Liberia, including the UNDP and the World Bank.[118] All but the most determined will usually feel defeated by barriers to effective learning, including the amorphous nature of the capacity concept, the absence of reliable data, the uncertainty of change, the pressure of events, the lack of incentives, psychosocial legacy of conflict, the reluctance to question, and the vested interests of potential learners. The IAA country offices also seem understaffed given the pressure and intensity of events. Space and time for reflection are usually the first to get short-changed.

This paper has pointed to the unsatisfactory state of *analysis* and *research* on a variety of capacity issues.[119] There is little empirical, tested evidence in either Sierra Leone or Liberia that is readily available to practitioners that sets out robust answers to *What capacity development strategies work?* And, *for whom?* And, *under what conditions?* And, *why?*

The following points should be considered in the challenge to improving the analysis and research on capacity development in Sierra Leone and Liberia:

- ***Carry out action research*** on specific programs in both countries that can provide decision-makers among donors and governments with useful insights. Such analysis needs to be done quickly to meet real-time needs.
- ***Develop country capacity for research and analysis on capacity issues.*** Neither country has enough research institutions or private consulting firms that can conduct analysis on capacity issues.
- ***Expand analysis and research on broader capacity themes*** for both countries' programs either at respective headquarters or in other countries. Both country programs seemed to have little access to relevant support.
- ***Improve ways of disseminating and synthesizing any capacity development analysis and research*** with other country program activities (e.g., health policy or environmental protection) in a way that is accessible for practitioners.
- ***Share learning and coordinate analysis and research*** with the wider aid community in both countries.
- ***Be prepared to conduct research and analysis in a difficult context.*** Security issues, political pressures, other donor concerns may dictate action over investigation and analysis. In practice, the need for rapid decision-making in a post-conflict situation might always overwhelm the pace of data gathering and reflection.

One possible way to accomplish both research and analysis is for the World Bank and the UNDP to include some financial support for research on capacity issues at the country level. Some activity is, in fact, already underway in both Sierra Leone and Liberia on political economy and other topics. Particularly in these countries, it is important to have a better understanding of the trajectory of organizations in post-conflict states as they move through various stages—dysfunction to stability—with "good enough" progress and not to just focus on the "excellent" or well-performing public sector organizations.

As for monitoring and evaluation, the methodologies underlying the capacity development efforts are uneven in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Both the World Bank and the UNDP recognize their need to improve the effectiveness of their respective M&E approaches to capacity development. Resource inputs and performance metrics, as usual, get the most attention; but the

more strategic and intangible aspects of capacity development (e.g., legitimacy, resilience, sustainability, coherence, dilemma management, mastering change) get very little. And the heart of the matter—the actual nature of capabilities and capacity in Sierra Leone and Liberia and the various pathways of their evolution and emergence—remains unaddressed. The IAA community does not yet have a tested, accessible way of doing capacity development evaluations in post-conflict states.

The evaluation of capacity development in Sierra Leone and Liberia faces the same issues that are present on the assessment side. A much wider range of formal and informal actors (e.g., coalitions, inter-organizational relationships, informal networks, hybrid structures) need attention in addition to the usual suspects in the public sector. At the same time, more attention should be paid to informal monitoring systems in both countries, including gossip and storytelling. Such an activity would triangulate with the contextual analysis talked about earlier.

Countries themselves need help in developing their M&E capacity. In Liberia, the M&E Unit in the Ministry of Economic Planning is the predominant country actor. In Sierra Leone, the Statistics Sierra Leone and the Development Aid Coordination Office of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development is responsible. The challenge comes with helping the two countries design M&E systems that do not quickly degenerate into symbolic ritual; there is nothing to gain from the production of costly data that is not used for any particular operational purpose. Another challenge is to help both governments create incentives for mid-level staff in public agencies to support monitoring and evaluation, considering the bulk of the work will end up on their desks. And finally, both the UNDP and the World Bank can help develop the capacity of independent groups to monitor the work of public sector agencies.[120]

In Sierra Leone and Liberia, it may be advisable to have two different kinds of evaluations: (a) those focused on accountability using high-level external participation and (b) those focused on learning using high-level country staff.

There may be a need in both countries to rethink conventional M&E approaches to capacity development. In real life, *summative* evaluations are usually not designed to give busy managers at either the country or the IAA level much in the way of useful information that can help daily decision-making and operations. Instead of going with conventional M&E, it might be useful to experiment with a technique called *development evaluation,* which is designed to combine monitoring and evaluation and provide participants with rolling evaluation function over the course of program implementation.[121] Both the UNDP and the World Bank could also experiment with a variety of other M&E techniques such as Most Significant Change and Outcome Mapping. Emerging methodologies for evaluating the behavior of complex systems might also be tried.[122] **Box 5.2** adds some additional points for consideration in monitoring and evaluation.

J. COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

MUCH THINKING ABOUT capacity development comes with a functional, introverted focus. The IAAs have traditionally been inattentive to communication outreach during project design or implementation. And yet it seemed clear in Sierra Leone and Liberia that outreach and connection in various forms played a key role in improving both capacity and performance. Most IAA-supported interventions contained groups and individuals (e.g., in ministries, community groups, civil society organizations, and legislatures) who did not understand the role of IAAs, the concept of capacity, the role and limitations of technical assistance, or utility of government policy.

A significant part of the capacity development process in post-conflict states has to do with creating basic understandings, inducing support from groups outside the particular intervention, finding creativity and space in unlikely places, and earning legitimacy in ways that fits the culture and politics of a particular country. Any number of terms—*public sector marketing, social marketing, strategic communications, relationship building*—could describe this function.[123] All are focused on building commitment to and energy for capacity development across a wide range of groups and individuals.

The communication and connection capability in Sierra Leone and Liberia is limited. Informal communication systems and their reliance on rumors cannot serve the full needs of a modern state. In Liberia, the road system was still rudimentary. Television coverage was marginal. Newspapers did not circulate much beyond the main urban areas. The UN radio system had national coverage but could not address regional and local issues with equal depth. On the other hand, private radio stations reached much of the population and had proven effective in promoting national reconciliation and healing.

The more encompassing process of statebuilding depends in part on the capability of public agencies to disseminate its message to a wider range of groups and actors. There is a sense in

BOX 5.2

OTHER POINTS ON M&E

It would seem timely to rethink the utility and relevance of results 'chains' and the associated idea that capacity development unfolds in a linear sequence beginning with 'inputs' and moving through 'outputs', 'outcomes', and 'impact'. This classification may still be useful as an IAA accounting system. It may still work in simple stable situations. But it no longer applies in capturing the phenomenon of emergent change in complex systems.

Barriers remain to conducting effective M&E, such as issues dealing with the lack of shared meanings and mental models. Attempts at causal analysis (*What caused what?* and *What led to what?)* are usually contested and open to a quite different interpretation. Logistical and security issues intrude. The effects of inappropriate timeframes need to be addressed. And in some cases, governments can be unsettled by analyses that go into sensitive issues such as leadership, political economy, and others.

More thought needs to be given to the issues involved in M&E in conflict-affected societies.[a] Issues include the ethical dilemmas faced by researchers, the risk of access to information, communication strategies, political and logistical challenges, and the potential impact of the findings and on whom.

There is usually a pervasive lack of data on capacity issues in post-conflict countries especially on process issues. This problem is compounded by the destruction of buildings and files, the disappearance of staff, and the frequent reluctance of people to talk openly about issues to do with power, corruption, and so on. Baselines in many cases do not exist and only emerge after trust and confidence is established.[b]

The conventional program objectives—efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability—usually assessed in evaluations seem awkward when applied to capacity issues in Sierra Leone and Liberia. Not only do they conflict in many instances, but their pursuit in some instances can be problematic. That of 'efficiency' in particular can make little sense given the need for patience, experimentation, and addressing complex human issues.[c]

[a]The International Development Research Center is working with International Conflict Research located in Northern Ireland on a project entitled Evaluating Research in and on Violently Divided Societies.
[b]Efforts are being made in Liberia through the national capacity development strategy to put together baselines for measuring human and institutional capital.
[c]For an account of the struggle of Dr. Paul Farmer to get international agencies to move beyond 'efficiency' with respect to TB treatment in Haiti, see Tracy Kidder, *Mountains Beyond Mountains* (Random House, 2004).

Sierra Leone and Liberia of the need to develop the capability to communicate in all the key government organizations.[124] Activities might include helping country groups and individuals to raise their awareness of change, to manage or raise public expectations, and to explain key issues such as the outcomes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Liberia. Budgets and staff resources are required to make a critical difference in this arena.

Ways of communicating in Sierra Leone and Liberia and other post-conflict states will likely rely more on indigenous channels and traditional actors, going beyond the usual forms of marketing and advocacy in more highly developed communications strategies. Communication *along the cultural grain* has promise. The images and messages may be quite different. In addition, the possible politicization of any more formal, modern communication campaign might introduce other complications into the process.[125]

K.
CRAFTING A NATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

CRAFTING AND IMPLEMENTING a national capacity development strategy was at play in Sierra Leone and Liberia.[126] In both countries, strategies and plans existed or were under preparation for national development, poverty alleviation, sectorwide approaches, anti-corruption, water, health, human resource, Millennium Development Goals achievement, and more.[127] In Liberia, the UNDP was making sustained efforts to help the Government design and implement a national capacity development strategy.

This report has already analyzed the barriers to effective planning in post-conflict states. Part of the problem is the

difficulty in coming to any real consensus on the purpose of such a national capacity development strategy, the meaning of capacity as an objective of government policy, and the complexity of implementation:

- Some promote a conventional plan guiding investments in capacity over a 10- to 20-year period.
- Some, especially in government, prefer focus on one or two key issues. The Government of Liberia seemed most interested in issues to do with human resource planning.
- Some prefer a coordination and facilitation device, which depends more on scenario planning, learning, adaptation, piloting, and incremental implementation rather than predictive targeting especially in the early stages.

The efficacy of national capacity development planning strategies in post-conflict states should be seriously reconsidered. Faith in big plans of any kind now gets less support than in the past.[128] Economists see market mechanisms as a better way to allocate resources.[129] The political economy perspective questions the likelihood of big plans generating much in the way of sustained political support. Complexity theory emphasizes the need for more emergent actions that eventually coalesce into something resembling a coherent direction. It questions the detailed planning approach with its inflexibility in the face of uncertainty, conflict, and lack of agreement.[130]

In post-conflict states, it is best to take a principles-based approach to national capacity development planning strategies. One implication may be to recast the purpose of a national capacity development strategy as a kind of mainstreaming and facilitation effort. From this perspective, such a capacity development effort would be less a plan and more a means of policy advocacy and a forum for aid coordination in capacity issues. Such an approach can also function more as a communication device and a way to keep a group of diverse actors moving in the same general direction. From this perspective, both Governments and IAAs need to do more to co-create strategic direction with respect to capacity development. A strategy will more likely emerge and evolve over time in response to changing events and ideas.

Such a principles-based approach could be used to influence the capacity development aspects of other strategies and budgetary processes, including any national development plan, joint assistance, program designs, peace consolidation, and poverty reduction, all of which are usually deficient on capacity and implementation issues. Building the capability of government to design and cost out major capacity development interventions would be a contribution.

Any associated support unit to a national strategy could provide technical support to specific capacity development initiatives wanted by a government. It could, for example, manage any capacity development fund or facility that might be established. This capacity development unit could also serve as technical management and support group, an advocacy unit, and an IAA coordination point for capacity issues. Ultimately, the key objective should be to develop the capability of the government to manage national processes of capacity development over time. This objective could be at the heart of any long-term compact between the government and the participating donors.[131]

Governments may have a particular view of their purpose and utility, which may or may not be workable in a national capacity development strategy. The task for IAAs would be more to help governments think through the value and implementation of such strategies and help guide their evolution in the medium and longer term towards something that can make a genuine contribution.[132]

VI. FINAL OPERATIONAL POINTS

Are the challenges to achieving effective capacity development in post-conflict states much the same as they are in other low-income countries? Or are there real differences that outside interveners (i.e., IAAs) need to take into account? These questions are meant to help the development community determine what it is up against in operational terms in trying to help build capacity in post-conflict states.

A. SPECIFIC CHALLENGES OF POST-CONFLICT STATES

THE APPLICATION OF GENERIC, imported, technical, apolitical solutions typical of the past few decades to address gaps and constraints in formal country organizations using technical assistance is not likely to be effective as the *main* capacity development strategy. The other usual suspects—more transparency and objectivity, universality, product-focused, planned change—are also likely to make only a limited contribution. What is required to supplement and in some cases replace the conventional is something more customized, more varied, and more imaginative:

- Engage with a wider range of stakeholders to get a sense of the space and opportunities available;
- Make a particular effort to gauge the issues to do with feasibility and implementability as opposed to need and desirability;
- Focus on the nature of the relationships involving control, power, communication, trust, and motivation between IAAs and their country partners.

B. INTERCONNECTIONS OF PEACEBUILDING, STATEBUILDING, AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN POST-CONFLICT states cannot be seen as putting in place some kind of apolitical structures disconnected from the bigger political and social trends underway in a society. Despite their separate spheres, peacebuilding, statebuilding, and capacity building overlap and intertwine. Peace building creates the security and the confidence to underpin capacity building. State building provides some strategic framework and direction to the choices and operations of capacity development. Disconnected choices, on the other hand, could lead to bad outcomes. Building the wrong kinds of institutions, for example, can hinder the development of state legitimacy and threaten the stability of the peace. These three activities can reinforce each other or can undermine each other. And all their interconnections put a premium on the strategic management of donor interventions and the need for productive relationships with country partners.

The political economy of capacity development in post-conflict states is usually decisive. Capacity development strategies that focus solely on the technical and functional may survive only in isolated protected islands of activity. A pervasive challenge for both countries and IAAs is to engage in capacity development that combines performance and results in the short term with legitimacy and relevance in the medium and longer term. The issue of *who benefits* from any increased performance is key.

C.
NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT OF IAA OWN CAPABILITIES

THE DEMANDS OF CAPACITY development have policy and operational implications for donors in precisely those areas where their capabilities are in question—contextual understanding, adaptiveness and flexibility, integration and coordination of effort, patience, and a long-term view.

The IAAs should decide more explicitly what kind of a capacity contribution they wish to make to post-conflict states given their other priorities and interests. *How important is capacity development in their shifting priorities? Do IAAs only have the resources and staff to continue with current approaches to capacity development? Should they continue to muddle through and to do it on the cheap with the resources and assets that are already in place? Or do they want to make increased efforts in terms of building their own capabilities to support these kinds of interventions? Or, do they want to transform the way they engage in capacity development? How and by whom would this issue be decided?*

The significance here is likely to center on factors to do with political economy, culture, strategic choice, and patience. The IAAs need to be transparent about their ownership and their capacity to sustain their own support. Understanding and supporting complex change, including the emergent variety in support of capacity development, is a particular challenge. A more robust and accessible body of practice is needed. The IAAs and their country partners need the capability to combine learning, experimentation, and adaptation. This will involve regular stocktaking, an emphasis on communication, monitoring, and differ combine both centralized and decentralized approaches to their work. That need has implications for IAA structure, staff incentives, and policies.

ANNEX A. QUESTIONS SURROUNDING COUNTRY OWNERSHIP

Country ownership has become a widely applied mantra but divining the reality of ownership is elusive. The assumption in the IAA community is that increased ownership leads to improved results. That may be true under certain circumstances and strategies. But it may also be untrue under other circumstances and time scales. The question for both IAAs and county governments is *which efforts are in which categories? When does an enhanced state of country ownership help set up a virtuous cycle that leads to better outcomes? And can IAA procedures and incentives support that cycle?*

To what extent is the expression of ownership the rhetoric of a narrow elite than a broader and deeper expression of community commitment to the endeavor?

- The evolution of ownership in Sierra Leone and Liberia had a lot to do with the nature and legacy of the peace agreement, the line-up of the winners and losers, and their willingness to abide by any agreements. *Who in a country after the conflict gets to 'own' country ownership? Is it an issue that the conditions cited by IAAs for effective ownership are rarely in place?*[133] *Who in the country political system can induce and enforce country ownership?*
- *If politics are still conducted mainly on a neo-patrimonial basis that, by their very nature, do not focus on the general welfare and the public interest, what does ownership mean in such a context? And whose ownership? Who gets to have ownership 'rights' and how? Commitment to what exactly? And why? What happens when the 'wrong' people from a donor perspective—people who benefit from dysfunction and weak capacity—take ownership of an external intervention? Or the 'right' people own the wrong things?* Ownership may be strong in terms of country control but non-existent in terms of changing existing organizational structures and practices.
- *If ministers and senior public servants in either country do not or cannot control or even manage their own departments, who can credibly deliver on the basis of country ownership at the senior levels? If ownership and commitment are themselves outcomes of the form of an organizational capability and not so much a condition or a starting point, how exactly do countries develop that capability? What allows a country or even an organization to commit and act? And what, if anything, can donors do about it? Can IAAs actually do anything to 'ensure' country ownership as a program outcome?*
- *If post-conflict states are entering a prolonged period of instability and contestation, how can country ownership be expected to be in place for longer than the short term? How does 'short-term' country ownership match up to 'long-term' donor commitment? Or visa versa? If the ownership of an external intervention is seen to be vested in one group of country actors, will other individuals and groups then start to disown it? How can ownership survive the rapid turnover of country actors?*
- *Ownership supposedly has to reside in inter-organizational systems and informal networks such as those for security or financial management or health. How is it understood in post-conflict states who is in the system and who is not? To what degree does ownership extend to the individuals, the groups, the task networks or coalitions whose involvement is critical for any kind of effective implementation on the ground? Do the people and groups whose resources and energy are critical for implementation on the ground have ownership? Are, for example, the informal actors also included? How does such collective ownership work and shift over time?*

One of the challenges facing IAAs is conducting a serious search for country ownership, motivation, and commitment. In some ways, this reverses the usual design and programming

logic. The task then is to find motivated individuals and groups and then support whatever capacity development efforts they are promoting rather than the other way around. We are talking here about country vision, motivation, and entrepreneurship and matching them up with windows of opportunities and enabling circumstances.

- *If, as is now claimed, country ownership is essential for development effectiveness, then what happens when such ownership is weak or non-existent on key interventions?*[134] *How do IAAs tell when country ownership is 'good enough' and conversely 'not good enough'? At what point should IAAs exit as a result of deteriorating local commitment? What happens when resistance to an external intervention is a sign of country ownership?*
- *Are there institutional set-ups in a country that promote space and country ownership?* The mandate of the Government Reform Secretariat in Sierra Leone, for example, is to 'drive' public sector reform. *Is that the best way to get country ownership of reform? What kind of institutional set ups would work best in what conditions to encourage country ownership? How can the design and management of technical assistance, for example, be done to foster broad-based country ownership? What kind of an approach to program design, for example, can best foster the collective creative energy at the country level?*
- Ownership usually refers to the preferences of senior urban-based elites mainly in government ministries who are knowledgeable about global models and approaches. But such preferences are usually disconnected from the practices of the majority of the citizens. *How do wider groups of people get to 'own' imported practices? What, for example, are parliamentarians expected to own? Is ownership just a state-centered issue? Is civil society part of ownership? How does a beneficiary-focused or a 'bottom-up' approach to ownership work?*
- *Can a country with minimal financial resources effectively take 'ownership' of an IAA-funded activity? If Sierra Leone pays less than 20 percent of its development costs, can the imbalance given the IAA share of over 80 percent ever lead to serious country ownership? Can good intentions to get beyond aid dependency succeed in the face of these kinds of imbalances? Do heavily aid-dependent countries actually have any incentive to exert their ownership in the face of IAA dissatisfaction?*
- *What power and control are IAAs willing to give up or trade-off in order to create the space for countries to exercise more ownership? More fragmentation? Less accountability? More risk? Is there any domestic support in IAA countries for that argument in high-risk contexts? How is risk shared in an era of greater country ownership? Can IAAs accept that country ownership should equate with country control and power?*
- The IAAs, for example, usually struggle to understand a key aspect of the ownership issue in a post-conflict state (i.e., the attitudes, motivations, and interests of different groups of participants.) *Who are these people and what do they want?* This similarly happens in donor countries. *Why would country participants be 'able' but 'unwilling' to do the right thing? Why would country participants oppose options that seem obvious from a development perspective?*
- *Are there, in practice, different kinds or patterns of country ownership? Some that are themselves fragile and easily undermined? Some that are supported by informal actors whose interests are unknown to external agencies? Some that have a good deal of political support and interest? Others that have none? And is it possible that different types of country ownership fit well with different kinds of external interventions?* For example, *are there such things as 'vertical' and 'horizontal' ownership and how they fit with different kinds of interventions? Does the IAA community have a good sense of what the legal term 'ownership' actually means in operational terms to different country groups in different country settings operating in non-English environments?*[135]
- *How do the qualities of 'readiness' and 'absorptive capacity' relate to that of ownership? Are they the same or are they different? Are all three needed? To do what?*
- *Are there particular issues associated with the ownership of capacity development given its inherent lack of tangibility and meaning? What would such ownership look like? Why would it happen given other options and opportunities?*

ANNEX B. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

There are several analytical frameworks and tools that might be useful if carefully applied in post-conflict environments. Included below are brief explanations of their purpose and potential applicability.

Scenario planning. A number of techniques exist for putting together stories or scenarios of different voyages into the future.[136] These could be useful in avoiding the temptation of the 'one-best-way' thinking that limits creativity. In so doing, it could open up the discussion of different alternatives and possibilities for capacity development.

Rapid Results. This technique of mounting 100-day efforts aimed at achieving specific goals seems well suited to conditions in a post-conflict state. Rapid Results does not require the in-depth, up-front analysis. It focuses on specific problems and can offer operational help to mid-level managers. It can generate action and results in the short term. Greater country commitment may, in practice, be a potential outcome of a Rapid Results approach.[137] The World Bank Institute (WBI) has used Rapid Results in its work in Sierra Leone, especially the decentralization program with good results.

Checklists. A key attribute of any analytical framework in countries such as Sierra Leone and Liberia would appear to be simplicity of use. Complex tools requiring large amounts of new data do not appear to have much operational feasibility or country interest. One approach that meets this criteria would be basic general checklists of issues and questions that could guide the work of both donor and country participants. A good deal of experience is now available about how to construct such checklists and how to use them in daily operations.[138]

Power relationships. Much of capacity development actually unfolds in the context of human relationships that are shaped by power and authority. Practitioners need some basic ways of assessing the impact of power in a variety of settings and the onward implications for change and capacity development. A tool called the Power Cube has been specifically designed for this.[139]

Dilemma and trap analysis. Any capacity assessment frameworks need to help illuminate the dilemmas and traps. There needs to be as much attention to 'trap' analysis as to 'gap' analysis.[140]

Agreement and Certainty Matrix. This framework can be useful in highlighting the management implications of capacity development interventions that go beyond the conventional 'close to agreement and close to certainty' scenario, which emphasizes conventional concepts such as clear objectives, cause and effect, results chains, inputs, and outputs. Most situations in post-conflict states come with either little certainty or little agreement, or both.[141]

Social networks and linkages. In many post-conflict states, informal networks within and outside formal structures house a good deal of the decision-making authority, motivation and commitment, access to resources, information flows, and individual loyalties.[142] Many of the ideas that underpin capacity development are spread and communicated through such networks. Methodologies are now available to map these connections.

Political economy. Country actors have their own tacit, personal frameworks for thinking about political factors, many of which are not obvious or even accessible to outsiders. The issue then becomes the ability of outside actors such as donors to think through their own mental model of political economy. Some

progress has been made with respect to methodologies, a trend we can see at work particularly in Sierra Leone. The DFID sponsored a Drivers of Change study in March 2005.[143] The World Bank commissioned a useful study on political economy in October 2008 and is extending the work in other sectors including power and decentralization.[144] Indeed, a number of IAAs are now devising frameworks for political analysis that are now being tested in a number of countries.[145]

Appreciative inquiry. Post-conflict countries do have genuine strengths, hopes, opportunities, pockets of energy, and commitment. The effectiveness of capacity interventions is determined to a large degree by their ability to tap into these sources of strength. Appreciative inquiry is a methodology designed to discover and encourage these resources.[146]

Complex adaptive systems. Capacity development in a post-conflict country usually deals with groups of individuals (e.g., in an organization) or organizations, including governments that are linked together in some way in an informal network or system. There is now an emerging way of thinking, namely complexity theory or complex adaptive systems thinking that can help to explain the unpredictable behavior of such systems. This set of ideas has implications for program design, for planning, understanding complex change, for thinking about achieving results, and for monitoring and evaluation.[147] A good deal of operational research is now underway around the world on how best to use the ideas in complexity theory in development.[148] The University of Brisbane in Australia, for example, is doing complexity research in Solomon Islands, a fragile state in the Pacific.

NOTES

1 I use the phrase 'post-conflict' in this report to emphasize the huge impact of the conflicts in both countries on capacity development. The term 'fragile' which includes a large number of states with no history of civil conflict does not capture this aspect. But it is also true that the term 'post-conflict' loses relevance as countries evolve towards more stable conditions.

2 The UN strategy document for peacebuilding presented (July 22, 2009) by the Secretary General identifies rebuilding the army and police, strengthening the rule of law, supporting political processes, building the civil sector, establishing tax and other public administration systems, and promoting stronger economies through job creation.

3 This comment mirrors that of the Director of the Kofi Annan Institute at the University of Liberia, namely that Liberia knows what to do but not how. Governments and donors in both countries are seen as much weaker at implementation than they are at policy and programming.

4 See, for example, K. Abouassi, "International Development Management Through A Southern Lens" *Public Administration and Development,* vol. 30 (2010).

5 The Dili Declaration recognizes the "limited effectiveness of capacity development approaches" and calls for new lines of action.

6 The report is one outcome of two joint missions organized by the World Bank's OPCS and the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) in June and July 2009. Two other country reports resulted from this mission as well as a companion piece on statebuilding: Sue Ingram *State Building—Key Concepts and Operational Implication in Two Fragile States* (World Bank, March 2010). All mission reports and terms of reference can be found at www.worldbank.org/fragilityandconflict.

7 For the same debate in the private sector, see Jim Collins, and Jerry I. Por ras, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies* (HarperCollins Publishers, 1994).

8 A system is defined as an entity that maintains its existence and functions as a whole through the interrelationships amongst its parts or elements.

9 There is a literature on evaluating empowerment in development. See for example, Peter Oakley, (ed.), *Evaluating Empowerment: Reviewing the Concept and Practice* (INTRAC, 2001). Also Deepa Narayan, (ed.), *Measuring Empowerment: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives* (World Bank, 2005). This latter book defines empowerment as "the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives."

10 Take for example macro-capacities; see *The Atlantic Century: Bench Marking EU and US Innovation and Competitiveness,* (European-American Business Council, February 2009).

11 The concept of 'good governance' can also be said about 'capacity': Merilee Grindle, "Good Governance: The Inflation of an Idea," *Harvard Kennedy School Faculty Research Working Paper Series* (June 2010, p. 1).

12 45% of Sierra Leone's professionals fled during the period 1992–2002.

13 Sierra Leone has a total of 84 doctors for the whole country, including 5 pediatricians and 1 gynecologist.

14 Sierra Leone at 180 and Liberia at 169 according to 1980 Human Development Index.

15 The world figure for infant mortality per 1,000 live births is 54. Across Sub-Saharan Africa, the figure is around 100. In Liberia, the number is 157, in Sierra Leone 170.

16 In Sierra Leone, 42% are under 15, 34% between 15 and 35

17 Carol Lancaster, *We Fall Down and Get Up: State Failure, Democracy and Development in Sierra Leone* (Center For Global Development, Washington, D.C., 2007).

18 Sierra Leone is ranked 146 out of 180 on the 2009 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index.

19 Seth Kaplan, *Fixing Fragile States: A New Paradigm for Development* (Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., 2008).

20 The Government of Sierra Leone is currently formulating a national collaboration strategy.

21 "The most important weakness of a segmentary society is its inability to achieve collective action at a large scale for extended periods of time": F. Fukuyama, *State Building in The Solomon Islands,* unpublished memo (July 9, 2008, p. 4).

22 In Liberia, one survey estimated that 242 out of 293 health clinics were looted or damaged.

23 A point emphasized in our interview with representatives of the NGO, InterPeace in Monrovia which works in the rural areas.

24 One policewoman in Liberia talked about capturing criminals and then having to ask to use their cell phones to notify police headquarters. Police have to sleep in tents outside their stations or place of training with no uniforms, raincoats. Parliament must get the permission of the Ministry of Finance to rent a car. And so on.

25 About 50% of all Liberian professionals fled the country during the civil war.

26 Dr. Amos Sawyer of the Governance Reform Commission was of the opinion that Liberia has never in its history had a functioning public sector especially in the hinterland.

27 Most of the health and education systems in Liberia were built by churches and NGOs.

28 Almost half the support staff have no high school education equivalency

29 Estimated in Sierra Leone to be about 2% of total staff.

30 DFID estimates that 75% of all educational institutions in Liberia were destroyed during the fighting.

31 In Sierra Leone, AfDB, DGID, EC, and World Bank established a memorandum of understanding in 2006 to begin multi-donor budget support. Thirteen percent of total overseas development assistance (ODA) now goes through the budget and a further 14% through various program-based approaches. Recent initiatives have been provided in the form of sector-wide approaches (SWAps) and multi-donor trust funds. In Liberia, no ODA goes directly through the budget and the government systems.

32 Over half of all staff in security and economic management institutions in Liberia come from the Diaspora.

33 This is an issue in all post-conflict states; see N. Colletta, and Michelle Cullen, *Violent Conflict and the Transformation of Social Capital: Lessons from Cambodia, Rwanda, Guatemala and Somalia* (World Bank, 2000); and Kimberly Maynard, "Rebuilding Community: Psychosocial Healing, Reintegration and Reconciliation at the Grassroots Level" in K. Kumar (ed.), *Rebuilding Societies after Civil War: Critical roles for International Assistance* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997).

34 The foreword by President Sirleaf to the National Human Development Report 2006 talks about "continued deep psychological stress and trauma."

35 The UNDP has supported some psychosocial work in Liberia by Dr. Hilary Denis; see NHDI 2006, p. 32; and K. A. Maynard, "Rebuilding Community: Psychosocial Healing, Reintegration and Reconciliation at the Grassroots Level," in K. Kumar (ed.), *Rebuilding Societies after Civil War: Critical Roles for International Assistance* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997).

36 By way of comparison, one analyst estimated that individual Cambodians were exposed to an average of 16 traumatic events in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge period; see Derek Summerfeld, "The Psychosocial Effects of Conflict in the Third World," *Development in Practice* (1991, p. 161).

37 "It is estimated that as many as 40% of the population are suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome"; Paul Bennell, *From Emergency Recovery to Community-Driven Development: The National Commission for Social Action in Sierra Leone,* paper prepared for the LICUS Program, (World Bank, January 2005, p. 4).

38 "Once the reputation for honest interaction has been lost, the incentive for honest behavior in the future is greatly weakened and the cost of enforcing transactions increases exponentially"; *African Capacity Building Foundation Occasional Paper #3* (2004).

39 *Validation and Analysis of Civil Servants Census, Final Report* (Update, January 2008, p. 12).

40 M. Nussbaum, "Capabilities and Human Rights," *Harvard Human Rights Journal,* Vol. 20, 2007.

41 For the work of an organization that specializes in addressing trauma issues, see www.vivo.net.

42 See Douglass North, Jon Wallis, and Barry Weingast, *Limited Access Orders: An Introduction to the Conceptual Framework,* paper prepared for workshop on How Institutions Matter: The Interplay of Economics and Politics as the Drivers of Development (World Bank, June 3–4, 2010).

43 C. Pycroft, and R. Butterworth, "Where Capacity Is Not the Only Problem: Moving from Generic Capacity Building to Support for Issue-based Change in Nigeria," *Capacity Development Briefs #12* (World Bank Institute, September 2005).

44 *Problem-driven Governance and Political Economy Analysis,* (World Bank, 2009, p. 41) puts forward four relationships between the formal and the informal—complementary, accommodating, substituting, and competing or subverting.

45 'Systems' defined here as the configuration of ways in which people collaborate and work together.

46 Sue Ingram comments on the relationship between the formal and the traditional systems in *State Building—Key Concepts and Operational Implication in Two Fragile States* (World Bank, March 2010, p.15). See also C. Logan, "Traditional Leaders: Can Democracy and the Chief Co-Exist?" *AfroBarometer,* Working Paper #93 (2008).

47 The role of chiefs is a contentious with some observers pointing out that the institution of chiefdom had lost its traditional legitimacy sometime ago. Chiefs in the Liberian system are apparently quite different than those in Ghana or Nigeria.

48 UN Office on Drugs and Crime, *Drug Trafficking as a Security Threat in West Africa,* November 2008. Peter Pham, "The Security Challenge of West Africa's New Drug Depots," *World Defense Review,* 2007

49 See J-F Bayart, S. Ellis, and B. Hibou, *The Criminalization of the State in Africa* (James Currey, 1999). The same pattern is evident in Haiti and Afghanistan.

50 William Reno, *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone* (1996). For a specific example of the destruction of the formal and the rise of the informal, see Toby Dodge, *Inventing Iraq: The Failure of Nation Building and a History Denied* (2003); and Griff Witte, Taliban Shadow Officials Offer Concrete Alternative, *Washington Post* (Tuesday December 8, 2009).

51 P, Chabal and J-Pascal Daloz, "Whither The State?" in *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* (chapter 1, 1999)

52 "The challenge is to harness the culture of Africa to fund such workable hybrids for the rest of the continent. The overall lesson is that outside prescriptions only succeed where they work with the grain of African ways of doing things" *Commission for Africa* (2005, p. 35).

53 For a history of institutional change in Liberia, see Amos Sawyer, *Beyond Plunder: Toward Democratic Governance in Liberia* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005).

54 J. A. Robinson, *Governance and Political Economy Constraints to World Bank CAS Priorities in Sierra Leone* (World Bank, 2008).

55 Howard Wolpe, and S. MacDonald, "Burundi's Transition: Training Leaders for Peace," *Journal of Democracy,* vol. 17, #1 (January 2006).

56 www.enciss-sl.org

57 For more about the process of 'seeing systems,' see Barry Oshrey, *Seeing Systems: Unlocking the Mysteries of Organizational Life* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 1995).

58 See, for example, P. Peeters, W. Cunningham, G. Acharya, and A. Van Adams, *Youth Employment in Sierra Leone: Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities in a Post-Conflict Setting,* (World Bank, 2009)

59 For more on "traps," see T. Addison, C. Harper, M. Prowse, and A. Shepherd, *The Chronic Poverty Report 2008–2009: Escaping Poverty Traps* (Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2009). Jeff Sachs in his Reith Lectures for the BBC focused on four development traps—poor nutrition, debilitating disease, terrible infrastructure, and high fertility. Paul Collier also talks about wider development traps in *The Bottom Billion,* (Oxford University Press, 2007, chap. 2).

60 "Every major previous attempt at public sector reform has been driven by the exigencies of crisis considerations. Under such circumstances, initiatives have been preoccupied with ameliorating the crisis facing the government neglecting the need for longer-term institutional reforms"; *National Human Development Report in Liberia,* p. 41.

61 See Geert Hofstede, "Motivation, Leadership and Organization: Do American Theories Apply Abroad?" *Organizational Dynamics* (Summer 1980).

62 The Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, for example, could not find the legislation setting out its own mandate.

63 In his book *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization* (Doubleday, 1990), Peter Senge discusses 'mental models' based on previous work by Chris Argyryis. People everywhere develop defensive routines that insulate these mental models from scrutiny and examination. People develop 'skilled incompetence' which allows them to avoid the discomfort posed by new ideas and learning.

64 T. Land, V. Hauck, and H, Baser, *Capacity Development: Between Planned Interventions and Emergent Processes, Implications for Development Cooperation,* ECDPM Policy Management Brief, #22 (European Centre for Development Policy Management, March 2009).

65 For an account that focuses on the British contribution, see P. Albrecht, and P. Jackson, *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997–2007* (UK Government Global Conflict Prevention Pool, 2009).

66 "The main challenge in this regard derives from the fact that the crisis tends to bring about new policy preferences and strategic directions for which few actors are adequately prepared. The extent of such change requires major, systematic transformation of the governance framework. Conversely, it implies that policy process and state/society relationships should be based on completely new foundations and supported by a solid political and social realignment"; Nenad Rava, *Progressive Governance and Inclusive Policy-making in Turbulent Periods* (Sept. 24, 2009).

67 Typical of the 'transformation' view is *Haiti: A Once-in-a-Century Chance for Change, Beyond Reconstruction: Re-envisioning Haiti with Equity, Fairness and Opportunity,* Oxfam Briefing Paper 136, (March 2010).

68 Derick Brinkerhoff has set out four degree of capacity development change—reinforcement, integration, transformation, and reinvention. See "Developing Capacity in Fragile States" in *Public Administration and Development,* Vol. 30, Issue 1, February 2010, p 66–78.

69 The example of Somalia is the one that proponents of this view cite the most. "These extensive and intensive informal mechanisms of self-government . . . are virtually invisible to external observers whose sole preoccupation is often with the one structure that actually provides the least amount of rule of law to Somalis . . . the central state" in K. Menkhaus, "Governance without Government in Somalia: Spoilers, State Building and the Politics of Coping" *International Security,* 31(3) (2006/7).

70 For an example from Somaliland, see Timothy Othieno, *A New Donor Approach to Fragile Societies: The Case of Somaliland,* Opinion (Overseas Development Institute, 2008)

71 See Albert Hirschman, "The Autonomous Agency as Hybrid," *Development Projects Observed,* (1967, pp. 153–9).

72 M. Shafik, "From Architecture to Networks: Aid in a World of Variable Geometry, *Ideas4* Development (2009).

73 For analysis of some the dilemmas involved in these kinds of issues, see M. Beer and N. Nohria, "Resolving the Tension between Theories E and O of Change," in M. Beer, and N. Nohria, *Cracking the Code of Change* (Harvard Business School Press, 2000)

74 "The minimalist state in Afghanistan must be rebuilt at breakneck speed;" Ahmed Rashid, *Afghanistan: Let's Keep it Simple,* Washington Post (Sunday, September 6, 2009).

75 The IMF estimates that it took 200 years to develop sound budgetary institutions in countries such as France, the United Kingdom, and the United States; see Richard Allen, *The Challenge of Reforming Budgetary Institutions in Developing Countries,* IMF Working Paper (International Monetary Fund, 2009).

76 R. H. Bates, *Prosperity and Violence: The Political Economy of Development* (W. W. Norton & Company, Ltd., 2001).

77 "A measure of the time it takes for institutionalization to become sustainable can be approximated by estimating the time it takes to transform the multiple meanings of the actors into shared meanings, shared meanings into agreements, these agreements into desired actions:" N. Boyle, *Putting Theory and Practice to Work in Institutional Development (ID): A Case Study,* (undated, p. 22).

78 "Thus capacity building in vulnerable states necessitates well-calibrated, properly sequenced, and carefully coordinated cross-sect oral engagement by bilateral and multilateral donor agencies" Hrach Gregorian, *G8 Security Sector Capacity Building in Fragile States: Examining Effectiveness and Coherence,* paper prepared for Canadian Defense and Foreign Affairs Institute (May 2010).

79 In the South Sudan, the lack of a functioning policy force threatened to undermine the referendum in early January 2011. Out of desperation, the Government of South Sudan minister in charge of internal security proceeded to recruit about 7,000 police trainees over 2–3 months. Actual training began

in an open field with no instructional facilities, little housing or even sanitation. The UNDP and other donors quickly provided tents, food, and temporary buildings for a police-training system that was 'good enough' to meet the urgent needs for policing in the preparation for the referendum in January 2011.

80 "In Sierra Leone, DFID's political economy and conflict analysis concluded that security and the rule of law were pre-conditions for progress in other areas: it also found that building the state and transforming formal and informal power-sharing mechanisms were critical to the peacebuilding process. The DFID and donor partners took difficult choices about what to prioritize and how to manage the tensions between short-tern and long-term objectives. It was agreed that in the first few years, DFID would invest in (i) building the key capacities of the state, and (ii) supporting progress on security to sustain the peace. Service delivery and growth promotion were seen as second generation reform areas with budget support the main delivery mechanisms. Part of the rationale for limiting support to service delivery initially was that other development partners would cover this sufficiently. The recent Country Program Evaluation found that this did not hold true, highlighting the importance of continually re-assessing priorities and monitoring assumptions"; see DFID, *Building the State and Securing the Peace,* Emerging Policy Paper, (June 2009, p. 19).

81 See Thomas Carothers, "How democracies Emerge: The Sequencing Fallacy" *Journal of Democracy,* 18/1 (2007).

82 The Update in Liberia (p. 22) has a relentlessly technocratic model called the Capability Building Staircase model: "In arriving at a 'correct' sequence, GOL stakeholders will have essentially followed a four part process. First, the long-term objectives will have been clarified. Second, the stakeholders will have worked backwards from the desired end point. Third, they will have considered the current situation in detail. Fourth, they will have developed sequential action plans to close any gaps."

83 See, for example, David Brady and Michael Spence (eds.), *Leadership and Growth,* Commission on Growth and Development, Adrian Leftwich, *Leaders, Elites and Coalitions Research Programme* (www.lecrp.org, 2010). The UNDP and the World Bank Institute are also collaborating on the Global Leadership Initiative Research Program. See also G. Heidenhof, S. Teggemann, and C. Sjetnan, *A Leadership Approach to Achieving Change in the Public Sector: The Case of Madagascar,* World Bank Institute Working Paper (World Bank, 2007).

84 See Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *Challenges for New Leadership Teams in Fragile States,* Capacity Development Briefs (World Bank Institute, 2007).

85 For the experience in The Solomon Islands, see Laura Bailey, *Building Post-crisis Capacity in The Solomon Islands,* Capacity Development Briefs (World Bank Institute, 2009).

86 The assessment of the evaluator of World Vision's programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina was that "while training of individual representatives from organizations is a highly effective means of individual capacity building, it is poorly suited to building organizational capacity."

87 Sue Ingram has also points out the ethical issues involved in picking champions and, in the process, exposing them to danger from which they cannot (or will not) be protected by a particular donor; Sue Ingram *State Building—Key Concepts and Operational Implication in Two Fragile States* (World Bank, March 2010, p. 18).

88 The Woodrow Wilson International Center in Washington in Liberia focused on mediating and breaking down barriers and mistrust between key leadership groups (say between the army and politicians). The Senior Executive Service in Liberia provided financial incentives for senior Liberians to take leadership positions in the public sector. Other IAAs trained key groups from which a leader might emerge. In this sense, they were targeting a generational group rather than individuals. For a UNDP approach, see UNDP Practice Note 2008.

89 This kind of person is highlighted in David Bornstein, *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

90 "External actors tasked with supporting statebuilding in Somalia would simply not be able to import fixed statebuilding project templates, could not insist on standardized judicial and other systems, and would have to learn to work with local polities in Somalia on their own terms rather than attempt to transform them into images in their own likeness. That level of programmatic flexibility and local knowledge has not been a strong suit of international aid agencies in the past. This is especially true of statebuilding programs which are amongst the most formulaic, unimaginative, work-shop infested enterprises in the whole foreign aid portfolio"; Kenneth Menkahaus, "Somalia: Governance vs. State building" in C. T. Call with V. Wyeth (eds), *Building States to Build Peace* (International Peace Institute / Lynne Rienner Publishers, Colorado, 2008, p. 212).

91 For an earlier analysis of the same pattern, see *Donor Support for Institutional Capacity Development in Environment: Lessons Learned* (OECD, 2000, pp. 17–9).

92 *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations* (OECD, 2007). In Sierra Leone, the UN Peace Building Mission seemed to have the capability for political analysis and its dissemination across the UN system.

93 Dr. Amos Sawyer of the Governance Reform Commission in Liberia remarked that amongst his biggest surprises was the reluctance of donors to customize their interventions to fit Liberian conditions.

94 "The central message [. . .] is as applicable to statebuilding as it is to peacebuilding: donors must be sensitive to the specific context in which they are intervening, that is universal templates seldom can make an effective contribution to statebuilding and donors need deeper knowledge of the history and diversity of the country"; M. B. Anderson, *Do no Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—or War* (Lynne Rienner Publishers/Colorado, 1999, p. 4).

95 "The greatest challenge is appreciating and managing the political, social and financial reality within which this project is being implemented" quote from the Diaspora Support Project in Sierra Leone.

96 Dr. Amos Sawyer, the Chairman of the Governance Reform Commission in Liberia, remarked that one of his biggest surprises had been the difficulty in getting donors to customize their approaches to fit Liberian conditions.

97 See *Tools for Institutional, Political and Social Analysis of Policy Reform: A Sourcebook for Development Practitioners* (World Bank, 2007), and *Understanding Local Context: The Use of Assessment Tools in Conflict and Fragile States,* draft (International Peace Institute, 2009).

98 People met in Sierra Leone and Liberia would be willing to play this role. One person pointed to his cell phone that (he claimed) rang every ten minutes keeping him up to date on the latest political and economic developments in Liberia.

99 This general point about the need for more institutional adaptiveness in donor agencies is not new. For a detailed analysis, see "The Bank's Institutional Arrangements" in the OED evaluation entitled *The World Bank's Experience with Post-Conflict Reconstruction,* (World Bank, 1998). It is also the case that the Bank is still working on implementing the recommendations of the 1997 Word Development Report on public sector work. The long-term perspective applies to donors as well as countries.

100 ". . . that a lack of recognition of the need for investment in staffing in parliaments and governing authorities that given rise to a culture that seeks 'funding that implements itself. This is not viable in normal contexts; it is even less viable in early recovery contexts where the management, security, and supervision costs of implementation escalate"; M. B. Anderson, *Do no Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace—or War* (Lynne Rienner Publishers/Colorado, 1999, p. 8).

101 "It makes sense to link payments and strategies as tightly as possible to outcomes. The old aid model was to track money spent and other inputs; this is no longer good enough. . . . Taking results-based aid to its logical conclusion gets you to a proposal like Nancy Birdsall's innovative cash-on delivery aid, where money is only disbursed after results have been audited"; Todd Moss, *Dambisa Moyo's (Serious) Challenge to the Development Business* (Center for Global Development Essay, April 2009, p. 5). See also N. Birdsall, W. Savedoff, and K. Vyborny, *Cash on Delivery: A New Approach to Foreign Aid with an Application in Primary Schooling* (Center for Global Development, 2009)

102 A. Ghani, M. Carnahan, and C. Lockhart, *Stability, State-building and Development Assistance: An Outside Perspective* (The Princeton Project on National Security, 2006).

103 "Work that produces measurable outcomes tends to drive out work that produces immeasurable outcomes"; J. Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1989, p. 161).

104 "If we fail to convince Congress, the public and others who make funding decisions that many reforms do not show up on quarterly reports or annual statements but take years, then we will lose funding and mandate to participate in long-term change efforts. This will result in 'quick win' pathologies where small, superficial changes are in heavier demand than systemic changes"; from Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff, "International Development Management: A Northern Perspective," *Public Administration and Development* (2010, p. 109).

105 "It is important to understand that the success of the neo-patrimonial state was measured domestically by both rulers and ruled, in terms of how well it performed according to the criteria relevant to the workings of the informal political sphere. Outside Africa, however, achievement was gauged in terms of how the state performed according to the criteria applied to its modern Western bureaucratic equivalent. While African politicians attempted to placate both domestic and foreign (particularly donor) constituencies, their ability to do so rested on their being able to fulfill utterly divergent demands"; Patrick Chabal, *The State Of Governance In Africa,* Occasional Paper #26 (South African Institute for International Affairs, Feb. 2009, p. 6).

106 One analyst has set out three different kinds of results-based methodology—the strategic, the competitive, and the improvement-focused. See Ken Stephenson, Chapter 3 on "Results-based Management" in G. Anderon, (ed.), *Shaping International Evaluation, A 30-Year Journey,* (Univeralia Consulting Company, 2010).

107 For example, Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability, Performance Measurement Framework (PEFA Secretariat, World Bank, June 2005).

108 For the same patterns in Afghanistan, see S. Michailof, *Review of Technical Assistance and Capacity Building in Afghanistan,* Discussion paper (Afghanistan Development Forum, undated, p. 6). "Unfortunately, the lessons of the weaknesses and frequent failures of these three to four decades of TA and capacity building projects in Africa do not seem to have influenced donor policies in Afghanistan. The lessons and international best practices which in the 1990s were drawn out of approaches conducted in extremely low capacity context seem to have been lost in the emergency of Afghanistan reconstruction."

109 One exception was the decentralization technical assistance team in Sierra Leone. Their presentation to a workshop on decentralization in Freetown showed a good deal of thought about the issue.

110 The Government of Liberia has completed its Paris Declaration Survey on Aid Coordination and Harmonization.

111 www.reflectlearn.org

112 "The consultant firm that links its prestige to dealing with one set of variables (e.g., systems and structures) because that is where its operational experience lies, runs the risk of doing a superlative job on an irrelevant issue"; Charles B. Handy, *Understanding Organizations* (Oxford University Press, 1993, p. 16).

113 "Much of the material remains unprocessed, or if unprocessed unanalyzed, of it analyzed, not written up, or if written up not read, of if read, not used or acted upon. Only a few minuscule proportion, if any, of the findings affect policy and they are usually a few simple totals"; Robert Chambers, Revolutions in Development Inquiry (Earthscan, 2008, p. 49).

114 A useful discussion can be found in S. Otoo, N. Agapitova, S. Fisher, *The Need for a Conceptual and Results-Oriented Framework in Capacity Development: Discussion of a New Approach,* WBI Capacity Development Briefs (April 2009).

115 AusAID issued *Strengths-Based Approaches: Advantage's and Disadvantages.*

116 See, for example, D. K. Leonard, *Where are 'Pockets' of Effective Agencies Likely in Weak Governance States and Why?* A Propositional Inventory, Working Paper #306 (Institute of Development Studies, June 2008).

117 For a description of the ways that the U.S. Government is building learning processes into its effort to improve the capacity of the American health sector, see Atul Gawande, "Testing, Testing" (*The New Yorker,* Dec. 14, 2009).

118 See for example, Elliot Berg, "Why Aren't Donors Better Learners?" in Jerker Carlsson and Lennart Wohlgemuth, (eds.), *Learning in Development Co-operation* (Expert Group on Development Issues, 2000). Also Jenny Pearson,"Pushing at a Half-Open Door," *IDS Bulletin,* Vo. 41 (May 2010).

119 Note that in many instances, a bias exists at the field level against any activity labeled as research.

120 S. Kosack, C. Tolmie, and C. Griffen, *From the Ground Up: Improving Government Performance with Independent Monitoring Organizations* (Brookings Institution Press, 2010).

121 For more details, see J. A. A. Gamble, *A Developmental Evaluation Primer* (The McConnell Foundation, 2008); F. Westley, B. Zimmerman, and M. Q. Patton, *Getting to Maybe: How the World Is Changed* (Vintage Canada, 2006); and Michael Quinn Patton, *Developmental Evaluation: Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use* (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 2011).

122 B. Williams and I. Imam (eds.), *Systems Concepts in Evaluation: An Expert Anthology* (EdgePress/American Evaluation Association, 2007).

123 See, for example, C. Cabanero-Verosa and H. R. Garcia, *Building Commitment to Reform through Strategic Communication: The Five Key Decisions* (World Bank, 2009); and S. Kalathil, with J. Langlois, A. Kaplan, *Towards a New Model: Media and Communication in Post-Conflict and Fragile States,* Communication for Governance and Accountability Program (World Bank, 2008).

124 UNMIL still provides 80 percent of the funding for radio broadcasting in Sierra Leone.

125 Sierra Leone tried to put in place a National Communications Plan with UNDP support in 2005. According to the International Crisis Group, the program was then taken over by the Government to disseminate SLPP propaganda during the election campaign. The effort was suspended by the new Government pending an investigation.

126 The Paris Declaration Indicator 4 requires support of counterpart national capacity development strategies in which country participants exercise effective leadership over the capacity development program supported by international development agencies.

127 One other informal calculation for Sierra Leone was that of about 35 strategies or plans under preparation involving the Government and the donor community.

128 "It is important to understand the significance of a strategy in the process and to begin with developing a national capacity-building strategy. A strategy gives a road map that integrates, into coherent whole, desired goals, intended interventions and assumptions to be monitored. It provides a broad approach that is comprehensive in scope and focused on targeted interventions on strategic issues and challenges to achieve desired results. A strategy is also aimed at producing optimal results. Consequently, an initial step towards building post-conflict Liberia is for the Government to formulate an integrated comprehensive capacity-building strategy with a focus on creating individual, institutional and societal capabilities to manage development affairs" *National Human Development Study for Liberia,* p. 50.

129 Readers will be familiar with the criticism by economists on the role of planning in development cooperation. See, for example, William Easterly, *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* (The Penguin Press, 2006); and Owen Barder, *Beyond Planning: Markets and Networks for Better Aid,* Working Paper 185 (Center for Global Development, 2009)

130 In an interview. H. Courtney talks about four perspectives on strategic planning—a single view of the future, some alternative views of the future, a range of possible futures, and true uncertainty with not even a range of possible future outcomes; H. Courtney, *A Fresh Look at Strategy under Uncertainty* in www.mckinseyquarterly.com, April 2009.

131 Closing the sovereignty gap would be at heart of any long-term compact. See A. Ghani, C. Lockhart, and M. Carnahan, *Closing the Sovereignty Gap: How to Turn Failed States into Capable Ones* (Overseas Development Institute Opinions, July 2005).

132 Market mechanisms might be part of a national capacity development strategy. This methodology may not fit conditions in some countries but challenges the conventional approach to designing and implementing such a strategy; Clifford Zinnes, *Tournament Approaches to Policy Reform: Making Development Assistance More Effective* (Brookings Institution Press, 2009).

133 "Capacity development requires strong domestic political ownership at the highest levels with wide participation, transparency and clear accountability," *National Human Development Strategy,* p. 17.

134 One sliding scale or typology for country ownership is the following: (a) clear demand, (b) interest but no leadership, (c) interest but no capacity, (d) general lack of interest in the decision community, and (e) disinterest or hostility in the same community; Fred Carden, *Knowledge to Policy: Making the Most of Development Research,* (IDRC, 2009).

135 In most societies, the term 'ownership' has to do with legal possession of a tangible object. It does not translate into motivation or commitment or the protection of collective or personal interests.

136 See, for example, Peter Schwartz, "Steps to Developing Scenarios," Appendix in *The Art of the Long View: Planning for the Future in an Uncertain World* (Currency Doubleday, 1991).

137 R. H. Schaffer, and R. N. Ashkenas, *Rapid Results: How 100-Day Projects Build the Capacity for Large Scale Change* (Jossey-Bass, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2005).

138 See Atul Gawande, *The Checklist Manifesto: How To Get Things Right* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2009).

139 www.powercube.net.

140 Such analyses are discussed in R. Paris and T. D. Sisk, *The Dilemmas of State Building: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations* (Routledge, 2009).

141 See Ralph Stacey, *Complexity and Creativity in Organizations* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 1996)

142 For an amazing account of using social networking tools to find Saddam Hussein after the end of the Iraq War, see C. Wilson, "Searching for Saddam" in *Slate Magazine* Feb. 2010.

143 T. Brown, R. Fanthorpe, J. Gardner, L. Gberie, and M. G. Sesay, *Sierra Leone: Drivers of Change* (The IDL Group, 2005)

144 James A. Robinson, *Governance and Political Economy Constraints to World Bank CAS Priorities in Sierra Leone* (Harvard University, 2008)

145 OECD, *Survey of Donor Approaches to Governance Assessment* (2008).

146 See F. J. Barret, and R. E. Fry, *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Approach to Building Cooperative Capacity* (Taos Institute Publications, 2005): also C. Sampson, M. Abu-Nimer, C. Liebler, and D. Whitney, (eds), *Positive Approaches to Peacebuilding: A Resource for Innovators* (Pact Publications, 2003)

147 The Association of Women Lawyers in Sierra Leone in many ways operated on the basis on complex systems theory by intervening in a variety of ways and places (e.g., the courts, legislature, bureaucracy, the media, informal networks, and rural communities) to create systems change in support of women.

148 See ODI, *Exploring the Science of Complexity Theory,* Working Paper #285 (2008); Samir Rihani, *Complex Systems Theory and Development Practice: Understanding Non-Linear Realities* (Zed Books Ltd., 2002); L. Douglas Kiel, *Managing Chaos and Complexity in Government: A New Paradigm for Managing Change, Innovation and Organizational Renewal* (Jossey-Bass, 1994); and E. E. Olson, and G. H. Eoyang, R. Beckhard, and P. Vail, *Facilitating Organization Change: Lessons from Complexity Science* (Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, 2001).

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