

Promoting Civil Society Organization's Governance Through Capacity Building: A Review of Literature

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Abstract

This paper offers a critical review of the prevailing capacity-building approaches in the context of civil society organizations and asserts that the deficit model of capacity building best serves the essence of the empowerment theory since it considers the internal and external factors while assessing the capacity with the engagement of stakeholders and helps design tailor-made capacity-building interventions. Analyses are based on the literature review – both from academia as well as those of development organizations helping build the capacity of civil society organizations. Descriptive analysis of the findings infers that the one-size-fits-all approach doesn't help build the capacity of civil society organizations that vary in size and volume. It is found that existing organizational capacity assessment tools share a common weakness of not assigning relative weightage to the capacity dimensions. Based on the outcome of the extensive review, it can be concluded that capacity building has a significant contribution to organizational governance that comprises an improvement in quality of service, engagement of stakeholders in decision-making, and increasing accountability provided that the capacity building considers visible and invisible organizational culture, internal and external factors across individual, administrative and institutional levels while designing the intervention.

Keywords: Capacity Building, Enabling Environment, Governance, CSOs

1. Introduction

1.1 Putting the Capacity Building and Civil Society Organization's Governance into Context

Capacity building is a widely used approach across sectors. Capacity building is one of the most fashionable (Hubbard & Light, 2004) terms, and the interest in this

topic has continued to rise (Akol, Brunie, Kalema-Zikusoka, Petruney, & Wamala-Mucheril, 2014) across sectors and nature of organizations. Also, the concept of capacity-building has been used widely in civil society organizations, Healyb, Kapucua, & Tolga (2017) have further noticed that even

academia is increasingly concerned about capacity-building and the CSO's promise for achieving higher levels of organizational effectiveness as a result of the interventions made in the capacity-building.

Concerns like who initiates the capacity building and for what purpose determine the approaches, methods, and subsequently, the effectiveness of the initiatives. Concerning the capacity building of the nonprofit sector, a part of civil society organizations and donor programs are considered to contribute significantly. To build the capacity of CSOs donors have designed and implemented various combinations of the initiatives. Apart from direct funding to the CSOs, these initiatives include advocacy for legal and regulatory reform, partnerships, and coalition formation for program implementation (Howell & Pearce, 2000). In addition, Ajaz (2010) reinforces this claim that growing concerns among donors that the failure of the projects and programs is due to the poor capacity of functionaries encouraged them to invest in capacity building, which in some cases, according to Harden-Davies & Vierros (2020) is the results of international legally-binding agreements. Pieces of evidence suggest that capacity building has remained a priority, but with different nomenclatures. Though all four High-Level Forums of OECD on Aid Effectiveness held in 2003, 2005, 2008, and 2011 emphasized the capacity of partners as a core principle, Akoi, Brunie, Kalema-Zikusoka, Petruney, & Wamala-Mucheri (2014) argue that it is not a new phenomenon, rather has been labeled as capacity development, strengthening, or enhancement (Brough & Potter, 2004) at different times by different scholars and practitioners.

Donor's initiative, however, is not free of criticism. Antlov, Brinkerhoff, & Rapp (2010) are among those who made an even strong argument that capacity building

has followed the 'supply creating demand' approach, and civil society organizations that widely implement donor-designed programs, including capacity building initiatives, fail to articulate their immediate capacity needs.

The governance of CSOs is a growing concern of academia and development practitioners. Higher the understanding of CSO as an apparatus for policy intervention and the subsequent flow of growing funding to the sector higher is the concern about CSO's functioning at the individual and collective front (Cairns, Harris, & Young, 2005). Since it is claimed that CSOs are vehicles to hold the government to account apart from serving their constituency in many ways, the way CSOs are themselves governed is gaining attention. Despite the claim to have possessed sufficient evidence of civil society organizations enabling the community to engage with government (Agostino & Kloby, 2011), the extent to which the spillover of the investments in CSO's capacity manifests in the community capacity in an attributable manner, is a vital issue while assessing the contribution of capacity building in promoting governance.

CSO's contribution to democratic governance has been applauded (Antlov, Brinkerhoff, & Rapp, 2010). They are believed to have provided community members the opportunity to voice their concerns and take appropriate action on those pertinent issues. Agostino & Kolby (2011) claimed scholars have argued that democratic governance resulting in informed decision-making (Callahan, 2007; Cohn-Berman, 2005) depends largely on citizen involvement. Similarly, citizen involvement is considered a key to capacity building (Cuthill & Fein, 2005), and increased trust in the institution (Keele, 2007). It applies equally to CSOs' context as well since they claim to continue serving the beneficiaries (target groups/stakeholders)

and the state of citizen engagement determines the extent to which CSOs fulfill the downward accountability. Hence, how CSOs effort in building community capacity bounces back towards CSOs organizational capacity by holding them to account (in terms of transparency, accountability, rule of law, etc.) is another concern. Agostino & Kloby (2011) considers that reciprocal readiness of civil society and the community is important for the effective engagement of the community in governance. They believe that while CSOs should continue serving as a resource and willing partner to citizens, citizens on the other hand should remain purposefully engaged with the CSOs.

Investment in an organization's capacity building is a deliberate effort that intends to achieve a tangible result, particularly improved performance. As Cox, Jolly, Van Der Staaij, & Van Stolk (2018) argue, organizations invest in capacity development with a purpose. Cairns, Harris, & Young (2005) add to this. They argue that most scholars, interested in organizational capacity are more concerned about the results. They further add that capacity building intends not only to help organizations deliver quality results efficiently but also to be environmentally sensitive by dealing with external as well as internal environments. In addition to the present understanding of taking capacity building within the scope of the organizational sphere, Antlov, Brinkerhoff, & Rapp (2010) opine that enabling CSOs to address their capacity constraints is essential so that they can contribute to democratic consolidation and its continued progress. It implies that investment in capacity building not only contributes organizations to delivering effective and efficient services but also contributes to strengthening democracy and governance.

Woodhill (2010) consider that the capacity determines the state of governance. He

believes that the notion of governance deals with the way various stakeholders such as communities, organizations, nations, and the international community interacts making decisions for the common good. However, the extent to which the legal environment is enabling in the country context determines the opportunities for cooperation and collaboration between government and CSOs (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2002).

Though capacity-building is claimed to have contributed significantly to growth and governance, there is a need to see whether the contribution of capacity building towards governance is one-way traffic or whether they reinforce each other. While referring to the cases of universities, Asu-Okang, Egbula, & Wonah (2019) claims that building the capacity of an organization promotes good governance, the absence of which results in weak programs and poor service delivery. Similarly, Hubbard & Light (2004) argue that organizational capacity contributes to achieving programmatic outcomes.

There is a concern about the conditions when the capacity-building efforts better contribute to the performance, an element of civil society governance. To assess how capacity building promotes governance of CSOs I reviewed literature from academia and development organizations from different sectors and levels – national as well as international, bilateral as well as multilateral organizations. I used Mindjet Mindmanager software to organize ideas and themes were generated to capture the essence of reviewed literature. Based on the findings of the literature review, this article highlights the conditions that promote CSO governance and their effectiveness. Unlike the common understanding that all capacity-building efforts contribute to better organizational governance, this article challenged this perception, investigating

the reasons for the capacity-building interventions' failure in doing so.

This article proceeds as follows. The next section describes and contextualizes capacity-building and its contribution to the CSO governance debates. This is followed by the finding and discussions section where various challenges are discussed that capacity-building initiatives need to address for it to promote organizational governance. The conclusion section highlights policy and programmatic implications, particularly how development organizations, including civil society organizations, better design their capacity-building program to promote governance.

1.2 Despite its Widespread Use, the Capacity-Building Concept Suffers Conceptual Contestation Emerging from Contextualization.

Though the term capacity building is used in different sectors, and even with different connotations, the term conceptualized in numerous sectors including CSOs, shares some common features. For Agostino & Koby (2011) capacity building of CSOs meant to enable them to be better organized and engage with government, and effectively interact with the community so that the needs of both communities and individuals are better addressed. This notion of capacity includes the synergistic effects of individual competencies and organizational capabilities to advance an organization's mission (Calms, Harris, & Young, 2005). Similarly, EuropeAid defines capacity as the manifestation of three types of ability that include performing tasks and producing outputs, defining and solving problems, and making informed choices (Cox, Jolly, Van Der Staal, & Van Stoik, 2018). This notion leads to a belief that the capacity as conceptualized in other contexts is valid to CSOs as well since CSOs, key players of the CSO landscape, constitute a group of people working for mutual as well as public benefits and consequently engage various

stakeholders, including the governments across sectors and levels. It implies that the idea of building organizational capacity is applicable across sectors and types of organizations.

It is not uncommon that many terms in the development landscape suffer from contextual conceptualization, particularly regarding the politics and positioning of the concerned organization. Despite significant effort and investments, capacity building has remained a vague term (Acquaye-Baddoo, Fowler, & Ubels, 2010). Capacity is perceived differently across organizations, as sectors have varied sets of motivations. Since culture is a primary determinant of organizational capacity, a multidimensional notion, it has a substantial impact on how the idea has been operationalized (Cox, Jolly, Van Der Staal, & Van Stoik, 2018).

Whether organizational capacity constitutes an enabling environment is also a subject of argument. One school of thought considers organizational capacity inclusive of enabling environment, external to the direct influence of the organization, whereas the other school of thought considers it to be the capacity that is within the sphere of direct organizational influence. According to Yu-Lee (2002), an organization's ability to carry out its activities or the enabling variables that permit an organization to carry out its functions and realize its goals is influenced by the environment. The enabling factors include a legal and regulatory framework that influences the capacity of CSOs to function (Brinkerhoff, Hans, & Rapp, 2010). To be specific, since the capacity of CSOs to sustain themselves without external support depends on how the value is placed on charitable giving and cross-border philanthropy the extent to which the legal framework is inclusive of this factor also influences the CSO capacity. On the other hand, Eisinger (2002) considers organizational capacity as the

sum of processes, management practices, or attributes that collectively supports an organization to fulfill its mission.

Some scholars consider the broader human system as a beneficiary of the capacity. According to OECD (2006), capacity is manifested in the collective ability of individuals, organizations, and society to manage their affairs successfully, but Acquaye-Baddoo, Fowler, & Ubels (2010) consider that capacitated human system can perform, sustain itself, and self-renew.

It implies that capacity is not a static state or quality. The skills to act and self-organize, generate growth results, relate, adapt and self-renew, and integrate are five distinct but interrelated essential characteristics that are thought to be present in all organizations and systems (Baser & Morgan, 2008).

Another way of defining capacity is based on distinctions between the levels that get benefits from the capacity. In addition to three levels (individual, organizational, and institutional) of capacity, the United Nations Development Program distinguishes capacity by types: functional and technical. This distinction is problematic since it still depends on the organizational context of how the functional and technical skills are operationalized. For example, some organizations might consider monitoring and evaluation as technical skills, but for some, it might be functional skills. On the other hand, Acquaye-Baddoo, Fowler, & Ubels (2010) while quoting Morgan (2006), consider the overall capacity of a system constitutes the competencies (i.e., specific abilities of individuals), and capabilities (i.e., specific abilities of the organizational sub-system).

Capabilities, competence, and capacity are somewhat considered synonymous in general, but scholars have elaborated on the distinction between these three seemingly

similar terms. What Cairns, Harris, & Young (2005) share about the distinctions between organizational capacity and organizational competencies or capabilities as proposed by Franks sounds easy to follow in the CSO context. According to Frank, capability refers to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the individual or group and their competence to fulfill their responsibilities, whereas capacity refers more broadly to the overall ability of the individual or group to perform the responsibilities. This distinction implies that capacity, not the capabilities or competencies, is more prominent for the organizations to perform better.

Whether it is explicit or implicit, the capacity dimensions include governance as well. While conceptualizing the organizational capacity, Cox, Jolly, Van Der Staaij, & Van Stolk (2018) propose four key elements that include governance, culture, leadership, and infrastructure. They have explicitly mentioned governance as one of the capacity dimensions. On the other hand, the European Commission considers that the six-box model best captures the capacity dimensions: structure, leadership, internal relationship, rewards, coordinating and control instruments, and strategy (Cox, Jolly, Van Der Staaij, & Van Stolk, 2018). Though this definition doesn't explicitly mention governance as one of the capacity dimensions, the way the European Commission conceptualizes capacity as a key factor to transform inputs to outputs implicitly considers governance a vital element in converting the resources to its deliverables, one of the key elements of governance. However, the extent to which these elements carry relative importance is subject to the organization's maturity, mission, priorities, portfolio, and stakeholder community (Cox, Jolly, Van Der Staaij, & Van Stolk, 2018).

What framework better explains the organizational capacity also depends on

the key elements –internal and external to the organization. Dynamics between individuals and organizations generate complexities that have to be well taken into consideration while developing the framework. Kaplan (2000) supports the idea that an organization involves individuals. Being complex in themselves their relationships are also complex too. Fowler & Ubels (2010) think that capacity building has to thus respect this complexity as much with individuals and with small groups, as with the larger system.

The use of seemingly similar terms has given an impetus to a concern about whether capacity building, capacity development, or capacity strengthening means the same thing. Despite having been predominant in the development strategies for a long, Brough & Potter (2004) believe that capacity development, strengthening, or enhancement are synonymous with capacity building, a term that Eade (2007) and Kaplan (2000) consider a sophisticated synonym for mere training or short-term skills building, yet widely accepted. Cairns, Harris, & Young, (2005) also have the same opinion that capacity-building is a broad term and those who use it often do not distinguish building organizational capacity from building capacity at the individual, community, or institutional levels, rather they see it as action or process which improves abilities to perform. The term capacity building is found to be organizational culture-sensitive as well. While the UN agencies call it 'capacity development' the European Union calls it capacity building. Despite this, capacity building is an umbrella term for capacity enhancement, capacity strengthening, and capacity development.

However, as Acquaye-Baddoo, Fowler, & Ubels (2010) argue, it is not necessary to make this distinction between capacity building, capacity development, and capacity-strengthening a vague and

complex. Rather, they advocate emphasizing the 'why' part of capacity building. They believe that capacity building should not be vague since it is an inherently relational and living phenomenon that always deals with a concern: capacity for what? They argue that any living system interacts with its environment in a two-way relationship and thus becomes a part of politics.

2. Findings and Discussion

2.1 The Capacity-Building Framework Needs to Consider the Interplay Between Both Internal and the External Environment

Once the capacity is considered contextual and is subject to the constant interplay with the external environment the static framework may not best support making capacity-building work. As Kaplan (2000) argues, a paradigm shift is required to understand and develop an organization's capacity if it is intended to yield the best results of the capacity-building intervention. Shifting 'from static framework to developmental reading' needs a full-fledged commitment toward its inherent openness to the environment as well as working with complexity in processes of human change. Fowler & Ubels (2010) believe that the extent to which the cultural aspects (which exist and operate unconsciously) in organizations manifest in their behavior should be taken into consideration. However, they also firmly believe that the elements (vision, culture, structure, and skills) are necessary, but the mere presence of these elements is not sufficient for making any organizational capacity. This implies that the capacity framework needs to observe both visible as well as invisible elements (that are observable only through the effects they have).

The locus of the capacity-building framework has to take different levels of human organizing into account. The

levels of such organizing vary in many respects. It could be dealing either with individual capabilities, organizations, or the sector as a whole. The locus further could be distinguished across sectors and levels of governance: micro (communities), meso (Palika/province), and macro (the nation-state). While highlighting the case from Bhutan, Vissar (2010) suggests that capacity-building efforts be effectively linked across levels by taking a broad view of how individuals could be supported in dealing with wider organizational, network, or institutional dimensions, and work with the formal institutions (regulatory frameworks), and informal institutions (cultural values) as well. A framework proposed by Cuthill and Fein (2005) also emphasized capacity-building as a collaborative local action requiring the engagement of local government. Since the capacity dimensions do not exist in isolation and organizations have a clear purpose for capacity building (Cox, Jolly, Van Der Staaij, & Van Stoik, 2018), the capacity-building framework should be tailor-made (Akoi, Brunie, Kalema-Zikusoka, Petruney, & Wamala-Mucheri, 2014) considering three levels of human organizing (i.e., individual, institution, and the sector as a whole).

2.2 Assessing Capacity Deficit is the Best Approach to Make the Capacity-building Effective

Understanding the options and consciously choosing the best one to build the capacity is not easy. This difficulty has political and practical dimensions (Cairns, Harris, & Young, 2005). Since the CSOs are supposed to achieve radical social and economic changes for the society, more specifically for the marginalized segment of the society, and the capacity building is considered as a building block towards that end, a lack of clarity on the purpose brings that ideological and practical dilemma in designing capacity building initiatives.

The deficit model (Harrow, as quoted by Cairns, Harris, & Young, 2005) is a common approach where capacity building is designed to fill gaps irrespective of how the organizational capacity has been understood by different organizations. Some well-known tools for organizational capacity assessment aim to facilitate identifying the capacity deficit. However, the number of capacity domains varies among different tools. McKinsey's Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) includes 10 capacity areas: aspirations; strategy; leadership, board, and staff; funding; culture; innovation and adaptation; marketing and communications; advocacy; business processes; infrastructure; and organizational culture (Cox, Jolly, Van Der Staaij, & Van Stoik, 2018). On the other hand, MCF tools include 4 capacity domains (Connolly, et al., 2003) such as leadership, adaptive, management, and operational/technical capacities. While both tools largely share similarities, the MCF tool focuses on fewer capacity components than OCAT. In addition, the capacity assessment methodology user's guide of UNDP has 13 capacity domains, including 8 core functional domains and 5 cross-cutting functional domains (Cox, Jolly, Van Der Staaij, & Van Stoik, 2018). One commonality exists between all three tools: proportional weightage of each capacity dimension is not assigned.

Since capacity building is not invested just for the sake of doing it, its benefit is a key concern for all stakeholders. For some, capacity itself might be synonymous with organizational effectiveness. However, Heshy, Kapucua, & Tolga (2011) argue that though capacity correlates well with effectiveness, they should not be considered synonymous. Akoi A., Brunie, Kalema-Zikusoka, Petruney, & Wamala-Mucheri (2014) are cautious if there is enough evidence of its proven impact on the development progress, the capacity-building efforts are found to

have a significant positive impact (Healyb, Kapucua, & Tolga, 2011; McKinsey & Company, 2001; Cairns, Harris, & Young, 2005) not just on organizational operations, but also on sustaining improvements over time (Eisinger, 2002; Bies & Millesen, 2005)

The capacity-building effort may not necessarily generate improved organizational effectiveness in the civil society organization. McKinsey & Company (2001) emphasized the conditions for capacity building to have a positive impact on organizational effectiveness. It emphasized that capacity-building efforts should be employed systematically across the levels of the organization avoiding doing it in silos. For McKinsey & Company (2001) systematic capacity building means it is individualized, holistic, and adopts sustained approaches, which they consider creates positive impacts within civil society organizations.

What is focused on in the capacity development intervention also determines the extent to which the expected level of effectiveness is achieved and whether the results are going to sustain. Though technical knowledge - expertise in knowing and doing - is important, explicit knowledge and hard expertise are not enough to bring effectiveness (Acquaye-Baddoo, 2010). Acquaye-Baddoo (2010) further highlights that effectiveness of capacity-building intervention depends on two things - knowledge of capacity-building practitioners, on which the intervention relies, and the relationship between the core capabilities areas that together make up the capacity.

2.3 Capacity-building Promotes Organizational Governance Provided It Addresses Some Inherent Challenges

Several challenges hinder capacity development. Poor attention to the recipient

organization's readiness (Pearson, 2011) is one of the challenges besides the supplier's poor ability to facilitate effective capacity building (Eade, 2007). Lack of consensus on the approaches and what constitutes best practices for capacity building is also one of the challenges. It is prevalent not only among capacity-building practitioners but also between its providers and recipients (Akol, Brunie, Kalema-Zikusoka, Petruney, & Wamala-Mucheru, 2014). Similarly, failure in identifying the real need for capacity building also hinders capacity building. Eade (2007) and Kaplan (2000) argue that many practitioners fail to differentiate between perceived or assigned and real needs for capacity building. They believe that the generalization of the term as a more acceptable and sophisticated synonym for mere training or short-term skills-building itself poses a challenge to capacity building (Brough & Potter, 2004). As a result, most capacity-building initiatives focus more on technical knowledge (Acquaye-Baddoo, 2010). Hence, the 'deficit model' helps identify the real needs of the organization and design appropriate means of capacity building.

The extent to which the learning is informing the capacity-building as such also determines its effectiveness (Akol, Brunie, Kalema-Zikusoka, Petruney, & Wamala-Mucheru, 2014). However, scholars doubt if the learning from one capacity-building initiative has been applied in the next course of similar action. UNDP (2009) realizes that

"...in the constantly evolving cycle of the [capacity building] process,

Mistakes are as useful to learning as successes", which demands that

successes, as well as failures, are unpacked to determine what can

be replicated, what can't, and why".

Since the capacity assessment tools are inherently reflective and the regular review and reflection on the status of organizational capacity are embedded into it the learning from the capacity-building efforts can easily be incorporated into the next phase of capacity-building initiatives.

If rooted in the local context, the capacity-building initiative gains relevance. The beneficiaries of the capacity-building should have space not only to identify their needs (which informs the approach and content of the capacity-building intervention) but to capture the learning and experiences. However, Kaplan (2000) has experienced the opposite, where instead of what the situation demands, many times capacity building practitioners deliver what is most easy for them to deliver. Akol, Brunia, Kalema-Zikusoka, Petruney, & Wamala-Mucheru (2014) consider this phenomenon as a result of failure to objectively assess capacity needs and see if those engaged in the process have competencies in building capacity. In addition, they have experienced that the beneficiaries are not consulted to share their experience with the capacity-building efforts, rather it is the views of the outsiders (such as capacity-building providers, external evaluators, or scholars). So, engagement of key stakeholders in the systematic capacity assessment process is a must to avoid this challenge.

Context sensitivity, particularly in linking broader context to the domestic issues (internal to the organization), enables organizations to perform well after capacity-building support. Capacity building is meaningful, effective, and resource-efficient when it best links local realities to international policies and practices to create synergies (Harden-Davies & Vioros, 2020).

Since CBOs vary in size and therefore require different approaches and methods for their capacity building (Healyb, Kapucua,

& Tolga, 2011) understanding the context is a key to identifying support, what organizational capacity-building is required for different organizations (Cox, Jolly, Van Der Staaij, & Van Stoik, 2018). Understanding the context includes understanding the agency's capacity for capacity building as well. Though CSOs have a need for their capacity building, the absence of strong desire and ability to utilize what has been gained through the capacity building fails the organization benefiting (Healyb, Kapucua, & Tolga, 2011) from the investment in capacity building.

Context sensitivity of the capacity building requires that CSOs can navigate the external factors successfully. Since the extent of operational and political space (Brinkerhoff, Hans, & Rapp, 2010) across sectors and levels becomes a critical external determinant towards ensuring horizontal as well as vertical accountability (Brinkerhoff, 2005) the ability to successfully analyze these factors ensures the capacity building and its sustainability. In addition to the external environmental factors (such as funding trends, and beneficiaries' needs) that determines if CSOs can participate in capacity-building interventions (Healyb, Kapucua, & Tolga, 2011) there is a need to consider various interdependent dimensions of capacity (Cox, Jolly, Van Der Staaij, & Van Stoik, 2018) while planning for capacity building intervention.

The empowerment approach considers action-learning as the best means for building capacity since it is believed to support an organization master itself by reflecting on its actions and the environment. Cairns, Harris, & Young (2005) further believes that action research can best support organizations to excel beyond building competencies and skills in individual as preferred in the 'deficit model' of capacity building and empower them in a true sense so that they will be able to

retain their organizational autonomy from the powerful funders.

The readiness of an organization for change is one of the preconditions for the longer-term capacity building of an organization since it requires developing sophisticated processes, functions, and structures for improved organizational functioning (Cairns, Harris, & Young, 2005). However, the short-term and project-based nature of the capacity building (Harden-Davies & Verros, 2020) failed to generate this readiness on the part of the recipient organization as well as the donor for their lack of commitment to long-term external funding. Whether capacity-building support comes from government agencies or non-governmental organizations, the issue of maintaining the independence and distinctiveness of CSOs (Cairns, Harris, & Young, 2005) is as important as developing their capacity through partnerships.

The effectiveness of capacity building requires organizations to define their goal in explicit terms (Bishop, 2007) and the baseline performance measures (McKinsey & Company, 2001; Wing, 2004) along with an appropriate framework to evaluate the capacity building. The absence of these will make capacity-building a risky venture not only for funders who prefer visibility of their investment (Brown, 1980) but also for the organization whose governance including the results of capacity building is under surveillance radar. In addition, the disconnect between capacity-building providers and the CSOs about what to invest more in makes it difficult to design it from the long-term perspective, and subsequently in gaining a commitment to funding.

3. Conclusion

Since capacity-building is a common approach across sectors both practitioners as well as scholars are concerned about its

results. Growing investment from donors in training, workshops, and advocating for an enabling environment has even raised this concern further as to what extent the capacity building has supported enhancing governance in CSOs that are supposed to advocate for good governance. Despite the varied understanding of the elements and the framework of capacity building, there is a wider agreement that it should consider both the elements – internal to the organization as well as the external environment that influences an organization's ability to use its capacity for the common good. In addition, there is a common understanding that all three levels of capacity (individual, organizational and institutional) are to be considered for capacity building. Since assessment of capacity through a systematic process helps identify the gaps 'the deficit model of capacity building' better helps capacity building intervention in many ways: firstly, to assess the current status, secondly, to design a realistic plan for capacity building that is informed of the ground reality, thirdly to engage key stakeholders periodically in learning from the capacity building intervention, all of which is seen as lack of effort to build capacity which is labeled as 'supply-driving the demand' model. Engagement of stakeholders in assessment and periodic review helps gauge organizational readiness as well as in customizing the capacity-building support since the 'one-size-fits-all' approach doesn't help CSOs with varying sizes and capacities. Despite a range of organizational capacity assessment tools being in place, the number of elements of organizational capacity somehow differs from tool to tool. Similarly, these tools have weaknesses in assigning relative weights of these elements to the organizational capacity. In addition, many scholars and practitioners agree that capacity building has a significant positive contribution to

promoting organizational governance, including the improvement in the quality of service, engagement of stakeholders in decision-making, and increasing accountability among others. From the

empowerment theoretical perspective, capacity-building effort needs to focus on the action-learning to help the organization gain mastery of itself through the reflection of its actions and the environment.

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