

The Bear and the Bee Sting

– balancing and bridging organisational capacity development

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... Kierkegaard on capacity development...

'At man, naar det Sandhed skal lykkes en at føre et Menneske hen til et bestemt Sted, først og fremmest maa passe paa at finde ham der, hvor han er og begynde der. Dette er Hemmeligheden i al Hjæpekunst. Enhver der ikke kan det, han er selv i Indbildning, naar han mener at kunne hjælpe en anden. For i Sandhed at kunne hjælpe en Anden, må jeg forstaa mere end han - men dog vel først og fremmest forstaae det, han forstaaar. Når jeg ikke gjør det, saa hjælper min Mere-forstaaen ham slet ikke. Vil jeg alligevel gjøre min Mere-forstaaen gjæddende, saa er det, fordi jeg er forfærdeligt stolt, saa jeg i Grunden i stedet for at gavne ham egentlig vil beundres af ham. Men al sand Hjælp begynder med Ydmygelse: Hjælperen må først ydmyge sig under Den, han vil hjælpe, og herved forstaa, at det at hjælpe ikke er at være den Herskesygeste, men den taalmodigste, det at hjælpe er villighed til indtil videre at finde sig i at have uret, og i ikke at forstaa, hvad den Anden forstaaar.' Kierkegaard: 'Brudstykke af en ligefrem meddelelse' (18??).

... Moby on capacity development...

Fundamentalism (of any kind) troubles me. The world is too big and too intricate to conform to our ideas of what it should be like. In my experience I've found that most fundamentalists aren't so much attached to their professed ideologies as they are to the way in which these ideologies try to make sense of a confusing world. But the world is confusing, and just because we invent myths and theories to explain away the chaos we're still going to live in a world that's older and more complicated than we'll ever understand. So many religious and political and scientific and social systems fail in that they try to impose a rigid structure onto what is an inherently ambiguous world.

I'm not suggesting that we stop trying to understand things. Trying to understand the world can be fun and, at times, helpful. But if we base our belief systems on the humble assumption that the complexities of the world are ontologically beyond our understanding, then maybe our belief systems will make more sense and end up causing less suffering (1999).

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Preface

Ever since graduation I have worked with organisational development. I started off as university lecturer on the topics of organisational development and strategic management. Wanting to get more hands on experience I continued to positions as internal organisational consultant in Copenhagen Municipality and later external organisational consultant in the Danish Authority for Local Municipalities. From there I became a manager in a production company in Thailand, - sometime chance and unforeseen opportunities takes us strange and wonderful places! This made it possible for me to return to the interest I have always had in working internationally, - my thesis was on the organisational aspects of the Kampuchean refugee situation -, and I have the last seven years worked as an international organisational consultant involved in design, implementation and evaluation of development projects all over the world.

This working paper is based on the practical and theoretical knowledge I have gained during my working career, and it expresses a, hopefully valuable, contribution to the continued improvement of the understanding, design, implementation and evaluation of organisational development projects, - projects that is supposed to improve organisational performance.

Having studied and worked extensively with organisational development projects over the last decades, I still I most admit, am constantly being puzzled and surprised by the complexity of organisations, by the difficulties in controlling impact or the ability to create continuity. In fact, it is my experience that surprises, unexpected events, unpredictability, the constantly changing agendas during implementation, is more the norm than the exception, when I have been involved in design, implementation or evaluation of organisational development. The key issue, I have realised, is not to use the best practice, a well-known organisational development formula, the most approved approach or rational method, but to *balance* the attempt. I have seen too many organisational development attempts fail because they focused too narrowly, were too inflexible, or had a too single minded understanding of how the organisation worked. Understanding the different component in organisational development, and then to balance and apply them in the correct doses at the right time, it for me the key to undertake good organisational development attempts.

The need to improve the delivery of organisational development projects I have especially felt working in the international sphere, where international multi- and

bilateral aid projects, sponsored by World Bank, UN, Danida, GTZ, etc., increasingly have focussed on organisational development as a main component in their projects. It has surprised me that so few of the lessons learnt, approaches, methods, innovations, theories that has been gained in a non-international settings - and reported upon in the professional organisational development literature - are being used in the multi- and bilateral organisational development projects. I hope that the working paper can contribute to better ground the multi- and bilateral organisational development attempts in the professional organisational development practice and theory. This working paper can therefore be seen as an attempt to *bridge* the international multi- and bilateral projects with the practice that has been gained by implementing organisational development projects in non-international settings and with the organisational theory that has developed, rapidly in the last decade, based on these experiences.

This working paper is my modest attempt to *bridge and balance* very delicate and complicated aspect of real world organisational change and development attempts.

1 Introduction

This working paper is about *organisational capacity development (OCD)*, about development projects aiming at improving organisational capacities.

OCD has evolved to be a dominating development strategy. Past development failures have led to the recognition that capable organisations are needed to support and sustain development services and development at large.

Presently, most development projects have elements of OCD. Some projects have a direct focus on OCD. Others have OCD as secondary objectives, e.g. when physical implementation projects are used to concurrently change certain working procedures. The question of how to work with OCD is therefore relevant for almost all people involved in programming, designing, implementing and monitoring development projects.

Throughout the working paper, reference is made to the consultants, change agents or *capacity developers*. These are the persons responsible for making the change happen in any organisation. Many different people fulfil this role. Whoever it is that is heading the management of change, - a manager, a staff, a team, appointed formally or informally, a consultant, - this working paper refers to them as capacity developers. It is hoped that managers and consultants alike find the working paper relevant and useful for the attempt to bring an organisation in a certain direction.

To work as capacity developers is, as many have experienced, not a simple matter. Here are some of my main points that I will elaborate throughout the working paper:

Working on different levels

Developing organisations are far from only about organisational restructuring, provision of management systems or training of staff. An organisations capacity is determined by a highly complex and dynamic interplay between an almost infinite number of human, organisational, network, institutional and societal factors. Recognising that organisational capacity is determined by so many different factors it becomes evident that OCD must also target this complexity and work on different levels.

Thinking in four different but complimentary ways

To find a little structure in the chaotic and overwhelming task of developing organisations I suggest a framework of four elements or rationalities – rational, human, political and experimental – four different but complimentary ways of thinking when understanding organisations and organisational capacity as well as when designing, implementing and evaluating OCD projects.

Acknowledging that OCD fundamentally is about people

One key aspect is that for organisations to develop, people must develop. Managing and achieving development in individuals is therefore a challenging undertaking for any manager or capacity developer. Of course buildings, technology and products can be changed, but if an organisation is to really develop, then the people within that organisation also need to change and develop the way they do things. People are not objects that change because a plan or office memo says they should. They have minds of their own and can decide to react in any way that they choose.

Acknowledging that OCD is about working in complex and dynamic settings

Because change involves people and people react in different and sometimes unpredictable ways, change is more than the development of a plan. In fact, most of what happens in an organisation is pretty uncontrollable. New things evolve continuously; new political agendas, new technologies, new staff, new conflicts, opportunities, problems. Ask any manager about the importance of being able to cope with the unexpected, the uncertain, the never-ending new agendas. A failure to appreciate this can lead to fatal flaws within many development plans that are otherwise very impressive in their detail and scheduling.

The working paper is therefore also about *complexity*, about understanding and acknowledging the real life difficulties, complexities and paradoxes that surround the attempts to develop organisational capacities. It is argued that managing change is a long and normally complex process. Organisational improvements are not something that can be just mapped out in a formal project plan. Change does not happen as a result of a plan; it is much more complex than that. In particular, it is emphasized that one reason change implementation is complex is because successful change depends on the development of a context sensitive approach. In OCD projects, there is a never-ending need for making judgements; judgements about what approach is most suited to a particular change context, judgements about what to do now during implementation, judgements about how and what to evaluate. There is no cookbook in the world of OCD.

Managing processes

Does this mean that the nature of organisations and organisational development is so complex, that it is virtually impossible to manage change and development? Whilst I accept that people are unpredictable and can react to change in many different ways, and that the unexpected and uncertain is unavoidable issues, I still take the view that the *process* of change should be attempted managed. Normally we cannot control or predict the outcome. But to a large extent we can plan and facilitate processes. Furthermore, given the way some organisations operate, the development process can be better managed in some organisations than in others. This means that the management of OCD is a competence that can be developed over time by practitioners.

Balance & mix

The working paper is finally about balancing and mixing. It is about striking a balance and what key components should be balanced between. OCD is very much about making balanced judgements and then act, hope and see what happens.

I strive at presenting a state of the art approach to OCD. Though, the focus is not on presenting the best way, its in on presenting balanced views, approaches, that can be used to develop balanced, mature, context-specific attempts of capacity development. Extremes, one-best-way, over use of tools and best practices are out. Multi-views, multi-disciplines and mixed approaches are in!

The bear, the bee and the bee sting

Three parts	Any OCD project consists of three parts; the receiving organisation, the delivering capacity developer and the actual delivery of the development attempt. When trying to explain the main points in the present working paper, I have often used the metaphors of the bear, the bee, and the bee sting to describe these three parts.
The bear	The bear symbolises the receiving organisation. The bear uses a mix of capacities to survive, learn and fit into the environment, its uses its experience, knowledge and intuition. The body of a bear is strong, hairy and difficult to get to – and symbolises the complex, the rather difficult to understand and the hard accessible. Good capacity development attempts must include a <i>balanced assessment of the bear</i> , which includes for example an understanding of the mix of different capacities required and used by the bear, and an acknowledgement of the complexity that surround the bear.
The bee	I use the bee to symbolise the capacity developer; buzzing around, disturbing, often annoying and poorly navigating, but sometimes effective and elegant. Good capacity development attempts include <i>balanced capabilities of the bee</i> , which for example are a mix of analytical and judgemental skills and relevant attitudes and personality.
The bee sting	The bee sting I finally use to symbolise the delivery of capacity development efforts; the attempt of the bee to sting into the fur of the bear, sometimes successful, often not, and almost always with a passing effect. The good ingredients here include <i>balanced design and delivery of the bee sting</i> , which for example means that the design and delivery should be able to balance the simultaneously use of participation, ownership and process-orientation and the achievement of action and immediate results, the simultaneously use of front stage and backstage activities, the simultaneously use creativity, innovation, flexibility and still getting somewhere.



The three facets of capacity development

The working paper is structured according to these three metaphors

Chapter 2 concerns the bear and looks at organisations and organisational capacity and outlines a mental framework that will be used in the following chapters. The mental organisational framework consists of four elements or rationalities, namely rational, human, political and experimental.

Chapter 3 provides a small test and illustrates that we know leave the clarifying and often rather simple world of theory and mental frameworks and move into the complex, and individual, world of application.

Chapter 4 focuses on the bee sting - the OCD project - and looks at the options available for designing OCD projects. Four key design elements are elaborated; design of the overall approaches/objectives/areas for the OCD attempt, design of outputs, design of processes and activities and finally the much necessary analysis of the specific context the OCD has to be applied to. Focus is on design elements and kaleidoscopic configuration of these elements in the actual design of a specific OCD project.

Chapter 5 concerns the bee and tries to go inside the head of the bee - the capacity developers - in relation to the implementation of the OCD attempt. What specific implementation issues arises when trying to implement these complex, human-oriented, development projects, and what are the important characteristics of a good bee and a good delivered bee sting is some of the issues that will be elaborated.

Honey for the money or pain control, or in other words, monitoring and evaluating OCD projects, is finally the theme for chapter 6. Based on the previous chapters I will attempt to outline how the bear, the bee and the bee sting can be monitored and evaluated.

The intentions are good

The purpose of the working paper is to present a fairly coherent framework for capacity development that can be used to achieve a balanced understanding, design, implementation and evaluation of OCD projects. In addition, the working

paper also hopes to support a process of developing a common vocabulary for the field, for example when designing capacity development projects or when preparing proposal, progress, or evaluation reports.

....but be aware....

A main struggle in the preparation of the working paper has been to strike a balance between making a simple and user-friendly presentation, and at the same time avoid oversimplification. This is especially essential in the present working paper given the nature of the subject in question; the overwhelming complexity of organisations and the task of understanding and developing organisations.

One main aim with the working paper is to contribute to a greater acknowledgement of the complexity, in-predictabilities and chaos of organisations, and then act based on this. Oversimplification in presentation therefore contradicts the very aim of the working paper!

As the work has progressed I have become increasingly aware that the writing style used - the objective attempt to describe the world as we see it and describe what we think should be done - is a straight jacket that might contradict the very intention with the working paper.

It is important to stress that the working paper should only be seen as a attempt to describe, in a normal, objective language, what I think capacity development is and how capacity development projects could be planned, designed, implemented and monitored. This language is and will always be rudimentary compared to the real life complexities, paradoxes, situations. Take the smallest incidents, and a book could be written about it. Maybe I next time should attempt to use the writing style of a novel to express my points. It would for sure give depth and insight into the art of doing capacity development, it would provide stories, humour, unsolvable situations, paradoxes, backstage stories on power, politics, corruption, you name it, all the things that is almost impossible to catch with the objective language we are caught with in the sake of – yes, of in fact what? Maybe the next progress report, the next evaluation report should contain short stories!

The working paper concerns a topic in which I have a lot of interest, and is, however insufficient, an attempt to put to paper some of the ideas and opinions I have on the topic of capacity development. I hope the working paper will be fruitful to practitioners, and hope it can help the reader to find a little structure in chaos and confusion! It, at least, has for me.

2 The bear – understanding organisational capacities

2.1 Organisational capacities

The bears capacities	How to get a hold of what capacities the bear - the receiving organisation - holds and could and should develop. A bear uses a mix of capacities to survive, learn and fit to its environment. It uses its experience, knowledge, intuition. Capacity is something the bear possess. It is certain abilities and competences. For a bear this is like how to avoid hunters, catching fish in the river, scratch on the tummy.
...and the organisations...	Also organisations need a number of capacities in order to stay fit. But what capacities do an organisation have and need. What capacities does it have to balance in order to stay fit, survive, develop, be efficient.

Lets take an example *The task to manage an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) system*

An organisation has the task to manage the EIA system in a State. What capacities are needed in order to manage the EIA system? First a few words on EIA systems. The EIA system is a system, where proponents of development activities are obliged to submit to the government an environmental impact assessment report before commencing with the activities. Normally the project proponent will hire an environmental consultant to undertake the EIA study. The EIA report will be forwarded to the government that based on a review will either environmentally approve or not approve the project. The key component in the process are therefore:

EIA process table....to be written

In order to undertake an EIA system effectively, it is my experience that four organisational capacities are essential, namely the capacity to:

- Plan, rationalise and structure activities and processes in relation to the management of the EIA system in order to get standardised outcomes of the approval process
- Attract, maintain and develop human resources needed in order to administer the EIA system
- Use, maintain and expand influence and power in relation to secure that the EIA system has sufficient acceptance support from its key stakeholders, including politicians
- Experiment and innovate for continuous development and survival of the EIA system in order to secure that the system does not get too stiff and over-bureaucratic.

That all these different capacities are required, is interesting, as on the first glance, it would seem that the only capacity needed to undertake this rather rational system, would be rational capacities, but this is not so. All of these different capacities are required.

If all is not present the EIA system will sooner or later fail. If rational capacities are not present, lacking or underrepresented, the system will lack transparency, objectivity and procedural straightforwardness. If human capacities are lacking, inappropriate professional or technical handling of the EIA system will occur. If political capabilities are lacking, the EIA system might lose its legitimacy and support and will be sidetracked in relation to other governmental approval systems. If experimental capabilities are lacking the system will 'go bureaucratic', it will not develop and respond to the continuous new demands and technologies, and will within a short time frame probably lose its relevance.

The four organisational capacities

Organisational capacity can be seen as the combined capacity of an organisation to:

- Plan, rationalise and structure activities and outputs
- Attract, maintain and develop human resources
- Use, maintain and expand influence and power
- Experiment and innovate for continuous development and survival.



Figure 2.1. The capacity of the bear (a circle around the bear)

I therefore operate with these four capacities: **Rational, human resource, political** and **experimental** capacities. These four capacities are regarded as the main capacities any organisation need in order to survive and develop, in order to undertake their task effective and reasonable.

Overview of the four different organisational capacities

Rational capacities	Human resource capacities	Political capacities	Experimental capacities
The organisations ability to plan, rationalise and structure activities and outcomes	The organisations ability to effectively use its human resources	The organisations ability to use, maintain and expand its influence and power	The organisations ability to experiment and innovate for continuous development and survival
Deals mainly with structural effectiveness and efficiency	Deals mainly with attracting, motivating and developing the organisations human resource	Deals mainly with power relations and coalitions	Deals mainly with creativity, innovation and mobilisation of interests and networks

Rational capacities

Rational organisational capacities are mainly based on the ability to make rational calculations. The rational capacities revolve around concepts like planning, objectivity, clear statement and definition of objectives, outputs, responsibilities, deadlines and budgets. In-effectivity is failure to specify goals, tasks, milestones and budget clearly, and poor management and project control.

To be rational capable means for example to make planning and implementation unfold in a logically sequenced manner. Solutions are not identified until the problem has been clearly defined. An effective solution is not selected until the various

options have been systematically compared. Implementation does not begin until there are clearly specified tasks and responsibilities. The progress of implementation is systematically monitored and deviations from plan are corrected, and implementation is bounded in terms of people, money and time.

Rational organisational capacity is in sum the organisations ability to plan, rationalise and structure activities and outputs, and deals mainly with structural effectiveness and efficiency.

Human resource capacities

Human resource organisational capacities are mainly based on the ability to understand and use the nature of people to create efficiency in the organisation. Involvement, participation, ownership, communication, commitment and trust are here conventional wisdom in specifying requirements for successful organisational development and capacity. The human organisational capacities rely on sensitivity to the needs and interest of a range of stakeholders.

Human resource organisational capacity is in sum the organisations ability to effectively use the organisations human resources, and deals mainly with the ability to attract, sustain, use, develop, motivate and dismiss the human resources of the organisation.

Political capacities

Political organisational capacities are mainly based on the ability to use influence, power, negotiations, and manipulations to achieve desired goals. Political capabilities deals with understandings of the conflicting power centres in and around organisations and the formulation and use of effective political power backstage activities to reach outputs and aims.

Political capacities concerns sensitivity to the power and influence of key individuals and groups in the organisation, and how patterns of power and influence are altered. The capacities concerns negotiation and selling of plans and ideas, changing or manipulating perceptions of the context and how it legitimises proposals, and the use of accepted organisational rituals further to legitimise organisational actions. Also the engagement in symbolic action, which will trigger, signify and reinforce organisational actions in shared assumptions about the organisation and its purpose, is a political capacity.

Political organisational capacity is in sum the organisations ability to use, maintain and expand the organisations influence and power, and deals mainly with power relations and coalitions.

Experimental capacities

Experimental organisational capacities are mainly based on the ability to experiment and innovate for continuous development and survival. Political capabilities deal with understandings of the ever-changing context the organisation is operation within and the continued response and changes needed for relevance and effectiveness in the organisational activities to reach outputs and aims.

Experimental organisational capacities concern the ability to deal with uncertainty, the unexpected, coincidences and powers external to the knowledge of the actors.

This capacity focuses on the unending need for organisations to develop, renew, rethink, experiment, being able to deal with emergent unforeseen event and issues.

Experimental organisational capacity is in sum the organisations ability to experiment and innovate for continuous development and survival, and deals mainly with creativity, innovation and mobilisation of interests and networks through experimentation and testing.

Apply the distinctions
– a test

It is my experience that these four capacities well cover the needed capacities of an organisation. The main question is not whether they are correct (though I will try to justify them in chapter 3.2), the questions is if they give meaning, sounds reasonable, helps us understand, design, operate better when trying to develop organisational capacities. For me they give reason. It is my experience that when in real life situations applied to organisational life, they in general cover very well what capacities an organisation is required to have in order to stay fit.

In fact, I find that the distinctions used between these four categories - the rational, human, political and the experimental - can be applied to a number of specific organisational issues. Take for example the capacities required to be good balanced managers, or to analyse the functioning of a organisation or the design of a capacity development effort, to determine the capacities required of the capacity developer in the implementation phase, or to evaluate output and impact of organisational development projects.

The framework can be intellectual and practical very stimulating. Try yourself to apply the distinctions on different recent organisational issues you have experienced, e.g. the capabilities of your manager in relation to the management of a specific area, the understanding of why a change attempt succeeded or failed, why an apparently straightforward matter after all was not so straightforward.

In the following chapters I will try to apply the distinctions, and the insights gained within each, to the understanding or organisations in chapter 2.2, to test your stand in relation to these four organisational capacities in chapter 3, to the design of a capacity development effort in chapter 4, to determine the capacities required of the capacity developer in the implementation phase in chapter 5, and finally in chapter 6, to evaluate output and impact.

2.2 Framing the capacities - organisational pictures

I have chosen to use these four distinctions firstly and mainly because they give reason, secondly because they in many ways are the outcome of the last more than one hundred years of organisational studies and attempts at understanding organisational structures, behaviour and actions.

Four understandings

The four capacities build on different ways of understanding organisations. These different ways can be seen as *spectacles* or pictures to understand the different ways organisations function. The four spectacles each give a distinct insight and understanding of how an organisation operate and can be understood. And they

therefore set the scene for determining the four capacities organisations possesses, sometime in the right amount and balance, sometimes not.

The rational machine

Understandings of organisations as **rational machines** builds on a century long practical and scientific tradition. Understanding organisations as machines has been dominating from the industrial revolution and up to the 1960's, and does in many ways still tends to dominate our way of thinking.

This traditional view on organisations is derived from Newtonian physics. The view presents the world as stable, predictable, unaffected by observation, and having clearly discernible causes and effects. From this perspective the organisation is like a machine: Its parts determine the whole, and the whole is best understood by analysing its components. The machine model is evident in many current organisations. It can be seen in mechanistic thinking, focus on organisation structure, rigorous analysis and measurement, search for root causes, decreasing variation, statistical quality control, extensive instructions for workers, increased specialization, drive for efficiency, and centralized command and control.

Looking through the rational spectacles organisational behaviour and capacities is being determined by rational calculations. The rational organisation revolves around concepts like planning, objectivity, clear statement and definition of objectives, outputs, responsibilities, deadlines and budgets. This understanding has given much insight into organisations, in particular how they would like and pretend to work, and has lead to organisations that are better at creating predictable, reliable and fast outcomes, e.g. predictability in processes of approvals for bureaucratic systems, which particularly is an important capability for the public sector, because it contributes to democracy, transparency and fairness. However, sometime the rational approaches works, and sometime they do not.

Some of the most significant theoretical influences on understanding organisations as rational machines have been Frederic Taylor, Max Weber, Henri Fayol, Burns & Stalker, Henry Mintzberg and the idea of the rational economic man. Academic fields such as economy and the natural sciences have influenced the rational picture of organisations.

The human system

Understandings of organisations as **human system** builds on a widespread support for social or human aspects in the last part of the 20th century. Out of this evolved determinants of organisational behaviour emphasising the complexity of humans, human processes and interactions and organisational culture.

Looking through the human spectacles organisational behaviour and capacities is being determined by human motives, commitments, wishes, longings, motivations. The human organisation revolves around concepts like participation, commitment, involvement, motivation of people in and around the organisation. The behaviour of people becomes the main locus looking at organisations through the human system spectacles.

Some of the major influences here have been Charles Lindblom, Chris Agyris, Edgar Schein and Rosabeth Kanter. The organisational understandings made relate to fields such as sociology, psychology and anthropology.

The political body

Understandings of organisations as **political system**, stressing the importance of the capacities of power, interest and conflict handling, is not as legitimate or recognised as the rational and human understandings. Power and influence are still in many respect taboos. The political understanding is rooted all back to the works the late 1800s. However, for a century the ideas were little visible, but had a revival in the 1970-80s.

Looking through the political spectacles organisational behaviour and capacities is determined by power struggles and conflict of interest. Day-today power bases and struggles – the little p of politics; President Bush and the rest takes care of politic with a capital P. The rational and human understandings see organisations as instruments for undertaking specific well-defined tasks, and pretend that it is possible to avoid the role and use of politic, power, conflicts. A number of observations however contest the validity of this assumption. The political perspective on the contrary sees organisations as centres for power, interests, influence, coalitions, conflict and struggle for resources. Political capabilities deals with understandings of these conflicting power centres and the formulation and use of effective political power backstage activities to reach outputs and aims. It also deals with the use of symbols and symbolic actions to gain support, legitimacy and acceptance. Some has said that *half the work that is done in this world is to make things appear what they are not*. This is rather close to what my experiences on why things are done in organisations. A quite substantial part is in fact done to show a good face, to cover up, to pretend, to look active, modern, in forefront, when it actually behind the curtains looks a little different.

Some of the key influences in organisational theory here are Jeffrey Pfeffer, Gerald Salancik, J. Kenneth Benson, Bacharach and Baratz, Robert Dahl, Herbert Simon and James March.

The complex adaptive system (CAS)

If you place in a bottle half a dozen bees and the same number of flies, and lay the bottle horizontally, with its base (the closed end) to the window, you will find that the bees will persist, till they die of exhaustion or hunger, in their endeavour to discover an (opening) through the glass; while the flies, in less than two minutes, will all have sallied forth through the neck on the opposite side.... It is (the bees') love of flight; it is their very intelligence that is their undoing in this experiment. They evidently imagine that the issue from every prison must be where the light shines clearest; and they act in accordance, and persist in too-logical action. To (bees) glass is a supernatural mystery ... and, the greater their intelligence, the more inadmissible, more incomprehensible, will the strange obstacle appear. Whereas the feather-

brained flies, careless of logic ... flutter wildly hither and thither, and meeting here the good fortune that often waits on the simple ... necessarily end up by discovering the friendly opening that restores their liberty to them (Gordon Siu, in Peters and Waterman, 1982:108).

The question is, do we too often design OCD for bees, not realising that what is needed is the testing, experimental, trying-and-learning approach of the flies, because it is by this that flies adapt, create, innovate and thereby survives. Have we forgotten that organisations most often behave as flies, not bees?

The fourth understanding, the organisation as a complex adaptive system (CAS), is the newcomer in the understanding of organisations and their capacities. The first three places people in the role as controller of the world, and organisations. By using our intellect and feelings we make things happen, we control organisations. The fourth understanding of organisations as complex adaptive systems leaves people a more humble and reduced role in relation to the chains of occurrences we are part of. Uncertainty, coincidences and powers external to the knowledge of the actors, plays here a more crucial role.

If organisations were as simple and controllable as prescribed in the rational, human or political understanding, probably fewer examples of failures would exist. Many recent organisational studies have, however, shown that the organisations are less rational, non-linear and much more complex than normally assumed and planned for. Organisations are seen as a complex process of involvement of an often vast number of actors, representing different levels and sections, pulling in different directions, in pursuit of personal and organisational goals, in a setting of multileveled activities, different forces of bureaucratic momentum, manipulation of the structural context, etc. In short, real life organisational development (and setbacks) takes place as a result of quite unpredictable processes and are hardly controllable.

Looking through the CAS spectacles organisational behaviour and capacities is being determined by processes of *self-organising*. The basic assumption is that organisations are complex and rather unpredictable systems, where self-organisation is a key feature to support and amplify. Self-organising can shortly be described as self-generated and self-guided processes with low degrees of hierarchical or external control, that results from the utilisation and sometime planned enhancement of random, accidental and unexpected events. There is no overriding system or method, but primarily a large number of small steps that points in the same direction. Self-organisation is participation at its extreme.

Self-organising is seen as a surer way to transform an organisation than big change plans and top down strategic planning. Self-organising is an innovation pipeline with tolerance for stupid ideas and failures, but not totally random, because we can encourage innovation, we can get better at thinking unconventional, we can get better at judging which innovations has a change to survive and which not. But we can never predict exactly which of many apparently good ideas finally will make it.

There is no substitute for variety, and the idea is therefore to try to sting as many times as possible to find the one that actually works. The role of managers and capacity developers is here not to create the strategy but to find strategy in the rich pattern of ideas bubbling up, often from below, from the turbulence created by self-organising.

Understandings of organisations as complex adaptive systems build on a widespread research in complexity and adaptation in physical, biological and human aspects primarily in the last decade of the 20th century. The new sciences of chaos, complex adaptive systems, non-linear dynamics, and quantum theory all provide new ways of thinking about causality in natural systems. Various writers have taken these ideas and applied them to organisation behaviour and management approaches. Pioneers in this field has been Stewart Cleeg, Niklas Luhman, Gareth Morgan, Ralph Stacey, van Maanen, Nils Brunsson, Karl Weick, Richard Rorty (on a more philosophical level) to mention a few. The emerging organisational understandings made relate to other fields such as physics, meteorology, evolution theory, biology, psychology and philosophy. They all are concerned with how complex systems adapt to uncertain environments.

An historical view

To be written. Including time frame figure.

Balancing the pictures

Does an organisation operate rational? Yes, but it also consists of humans with diverse feelings, ambitions, likes and dislikes, it is certainly political and it is finally also a complex unit, often very difficult to understand and predict. It is at once each and all of the above.

Then danger in only using one spectacle is that we do not see the blind spots, and our understandings and approaches become to narrow and one-dimensional, because the way we think about causes of organisations behaviour determines how we contract, assess, intervene, and evaluate during the interactions with client organisations. If we see causality in terms of traditional rationality - if we see an organisation as a machine, - then we only look for rational behaviour, activities, outcomes, performance and will only try to reengineer its functions or replace dysfunctional parts. If we see causality as an equilibrium seeking resolution of tension, - if we see an organisation as an human consensus seeking structure - we only look for systems of human behaviour and only try to find ways to unfreeze, solve and refreeze human interactions. If we causality in the unpredictable self-organising way – if we see organisations as complex adaptive systems, we only look for signs of self-organising, unpredictability and chaos, and will only try to increase self-organising and responsiveness to events.

This would be wrong. We have to try to understand all at once, and we have to understand them separately, because there is no one foundation, no one new integrated framework, for understanding organisations or for the assessment, intervention, and evaluation of organisation development efforts. An organisation, like people, is simultaneously rational, consensus-seeking, power oriented and complex unpredictable. Therefore there is no easy one way out, only an attempt to try to learn, to include, to experience as much as possible, and based on this to try to make assessments and judgements.

We therefore have to understand organisations, - how they operate, behave, interact, achieve -, by using different organisational spectacles. There is a need for diversity in the way we understand organisations. To quote Moby again: *Fundamentalism (of any kind) troubles me. ... the world is confusing, and just because we invent ... theories to explain away the chaos we're still going to live in a world that's older and more complicated than we'll ever understand. So many ... scientific systems fail in that they try to impose a rigid structure onto what is an inherently ambiguous world*. We have to be much better at balancing understandings, approaches, tools, methods, and in this working paper, design, implementation and evaluation of organisational development projects.

This need for balancing understandings the different rationales of organisations, can be illustrated by Saxs often quoted, but seldom printed, poem on the blind man and the elephant:

By John Godfrey Saxe (1816-1887)

It was six men of Indostan To learning much inclined Who went to see the Elephant (Though all of them were blind) That each by observation Might satisfy his mind	The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear, Said: 'E'en the blindest man Can tell what this resembles most; Deny the fact who can, This marvel of an Elephant Is very like a fan!'
The First approached the Elephant And happening to fall Against his broad and sturdy side, At once began to brawl: 'God bless me but the Ele- phant Is very like a wall'.	The sixth no sooner had be- gun About the beast to grope, Than, seizing on the swing- ing tail That fell within his scope, 'I see', quoth he, 'the Ele- phant Is very like a rope!'
The, second, feeling of the tusk Cried, 'Ho! What have we	And so these men of Indostan Disputed loud and long, Each of his own opinion

here
So very round and smooth and
sharp?

To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of a Elephant
Is very like a spear!

The Third approached the
animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within
his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake:
'I see', quoth he, 'The Ele-
phant
Is very like a snake!'

The fourth reached out an
eager hand,
And felt around the knee,
'What most this wondrous
beast is like
Is mighty plain,' quoth he;
'Tis clear enough the Ele-
phant
Is very like a tree!'

Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in
the right,
And all were in the wrong!

Moral

So oft in theologic wars,
The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
Of what each other mean,
And prate about an Elephant
Not one of them has seen!

2.3 The bear – the fundamentals

The four capacities and the relating four different frames for understanding organisations are essential to keep in mind for designing, implementing and evaluating organisational development attempts. But in fact I find, that some even more fundamental features are necessary to frame the attempt to understand and develop organisational capacities.

These features have become increasingly important for organisations during the last decades, where changes, innovations, information is increasing at a pace nearly impossible to grab. Organisational capacities exists in this ever-increasing complex and changing environment, and OCD is not possible without an deep, almost intuitive understanding of the fundamental organisational context wherein the capacities develop.

The fundamentals

In the following I will present three fundamental characteristics of the bear, the receiver of capacity development attempts. These characteristics are extracted from recent organisational studies, especially political and CAS studies. Together they form what has developed to be a common ground for understanding organi-

sations, and they are essential for a serious understanding of how OCD projects can be designed, implemented and evaluated.

It should be mentioned that the characteristics presented oppose past understandings of organisations. Unfortunately these, often inadequate, understandings still tend to dominate the OCD field. In the following I will try to apply a state of the art approach to capacity development, also in order to counter the present over-usage of old techniques and understandings of organisations and organisational development.

Organisations are (i) **complex and unique**, opposed to the widely use of theories and models generalising organisational behaviour, (ii) **streams of processes**, opposed to the understanding that organisations are fixed structures with static objectives, outputs and activities, and (iii) **multi-rational**, opposed to more one-dimensional understanding of organisations.

Organisations are complex and unique

Recent organisational studies, stresses the importance of understanding organisations as a *strangely integrated and complex network of people and entities*.

Organisations are living organisms with countless determinants affecting their development and functioning. Thus, any organisation should be viewed as an unique case with its own characteristics, objectives, problems and opportunities determining its capacity. This implies that not two organisations are the same.

Theories and models might help us to see possibilities and qualities in this complexity, but theory cannot make reality less complex by putting reality into models. This sounds obvious, but is not in a world longing for 2+2 rationality and simplicity and where the stars are people who try to simplify reality in order to create clear and simple messages. The high level of real life complexity in organisations includes for example that:

- Organisations consist of many persons and groups with *different and often contradictory objectives, aims and preferences*. One-dimensional top-down organisations, with for example clear decision making structures, are far from the normal situation
- Aims, objectives, outputs, results, are most often clouded in ambiguity and different interpretations. Hence, *ambiguity* becomes a predominant feature of organisational behaviour. Open agendas, clear policies or objectives, continuity, continuous monitoring, are not the rule but the exception
- Important key organisational actors are to be found inside as well as outside the formal organisational structure. Organisations are much more *open, dependent and linked to their surroundings* than is traditional understood.

Simple mechanistic, rational theories or solutions often seem more convincing, both for the consultant and the recipient. But if there is a need to be loyal to the real world and to create real life changes, it is necessary with a more complex understanding of the organisations.

Organisations are streams of processes

The more one moves into organisations, the more almost chaotic they seem to be for example in relation to their decision making, planning activities, responses to pressures, and formulation of policies and strategies compared to actual implementation. Traditional rationality seems to disappear the more the actual organisational processes are studied and understood. What is said is often not what is done, and often much more time and energy is used on symbolic (promotional) activities than on formal functions and responsibilities.

Opposed to the traditional rational understanding, organisations can best be understood as fluid and ever-changing processes of decisions, co-ordination and integration efforts.

This is interesting, also because when organisational behaviour is to be understood, it is important to note that also managers and staff in real life mainly is interested in processes. They care about cooperation, their friends and enemies, their reputation, the power games, the political agenda, in short the multiple muddling-through processes an organisation consists of. They care surprisingly little about results or impacts, on whether short- or long-term objectives have been reached, on fulfilling predetermined plans. Who is interested in the plan developed two years ago? Managers and staff are interested in here and now processes.

The result is that organisations tend to *focus on processes rather than results*.

In a world stressing results and measurable success, results are of course interesting; do organisations take the right decisions, do they develop, do they survive. Unfortunately, organisational studies have repeatedly shown that whether an organisation takes the right decisions, succeeds, improves or survives, is in fact an empirical question, which means that it is first after the fact that we can see if for example a decision was a good decision, it is not something we can see upfront. Good organisational results are controlled by all different kinds of situation specific factors and uncontrolled coincidences, and can therefore in general not be duplicated or repeated by other organisations.

The all-important factor to understand (and duplicate for capacity developers) is therefore not so much the results that organisations reach, *but how they decide, plan, coordinate, integrate (the processes) in what surroundings (the context)*. It is the processes and contexts, which taken together, creates good or bad results. What should be understood is therefore not so much what they decided, planned, reached, but *how they did it*.

Organisations are multi-rational

Organisations are made of and controlled by people, and people are not only 2+2 rational. They are also subject to and use feelings, intuition, creativity, power games and manipulations etc. The multiple determinants of human behaviour combined with the complexity of organisations described above imply that organisations are fairly little rational in the traditional sense of rationality. An example of this is the way decisions are taken in organisations:

- Decisions can for example be the result of deliberate, planned, calculated and controlled actions (*the logic of traditional 2+2 rationality*). Examples would

be decisions that are made upon rational calculations, studies, cost-benefits analysis, impact assessments

- Decisions can be the result of existing rules, roles and habits (*the logic of identity*). Examples would be decisions based on traditions, on predetermined bureaucratic rules and regulations, on what is regarded acceptable decision making in the given role or structure
- Decisions can be influenced by the interactive environments organisations are part of and depend upon (*the logic of networks*). Examples would be decisions based on imitation and copying of what key external actors in the network do, on timing, on the need to keep up, be modern, or on direct demands from key players in the surroundings
- Decisions can be symbolic, because in real life is the results of decisions often an irrelevant rather than a central element in the understanding of decision-making (*the logic of symbols*). Examples would be decisions based on the need to promote an organisational picture of effectiveness (for example ISO 9000), on political or moral correctness, on social responsibility or modernity (for example Total Quality Management).

What is reasonable, sensible and rational is therefore not only the decisions and actions that is based on scientific mechanistic rationalities (the logic of traditional 2+2 rationality). Most often a mix of the above rationalities influence and determine decisions and organisational behaviour. And it is important to stress that decisions made on traditions, adaptations, imitation, power, symbols etc. might be fully reasonable and lead to relevant organisational development and improvements.

Fundamentals, not
fundamentalism

The fundamentals outlined do not pretend to be the Truth. On the contrary, they stresses that the world is too big and too intricate to conform to our ideas of what it should be like. But we should continue to try to understand things, and these three I find is a good starting point for understanding. Trying to understand can be fun and, at times, helpful. And if we base our understandings on the humble assumption that the complexities of the world are beyond our understanding, then maybe our belief systems will make more sense and end up causing less suffering – and better attempts at capacity development. *The most exciting phrase to hear, the one that heralds new discoveries, is not Eureka – I found it - but rather ‘hmm.... that’s funny...’ Isaac Asimov*

3 Test – before we start

OCD attempts are about people trying to manage and impose development. The ideas, perceptions and values of the capacity developer are therefore not a secondary matter. Before I in the next chapters will continue with ideas on design, implementation and evaluation of OCD, you might like to test your initial stand on how you think organisations works and should be attempted influenced. Tests are poor tools, I know, but on the other hand, they might focus our attention, they might help us to remember, and why must we always be so serious. You may therefore wish to complete the following small test before reading the next chapters to gauge how your practice matches different organisational understandings and approaches.

Select the one or two best answers to each question below. If all choices are equally appealing, leave the item blank. Darken the circle to indicate which answer(s) you chose. When you complete all questions, count the number of a, b, c, d's you selected. Record the numbers in the totals boxes at the end of each page. Then add all together and complete the profile.

1. When I contract with a new OCD receiver, I: a b c d
 - a) Guarantee specific outcomes
 - b) Shape client's expectations for outcomes
 - c) Indicate what I expect as outcomes
 - d) Acknowledge that the outcomes will emerge over the span of the project.

2. When I begin a project, I: a b c d
 - a) Follow a clear step-by-step process
 - b) Begin with a clear plan, but am willing to change over time
 - c) Begin with a plan, but expect to change over time
 - d) Plan a first step and plan subsequent steps as I collect more information.

3. My intervention processes and procedures: a b c d
 - a) Never vary
 - b) Are standard, but I make customized changes
 - c) Usually follow similar patterns
 - d) Are designed to meet the unique needs of each client.

4. I believe that I can predict the reaction of a client organisation: a b c d
 - a) All the time
 - b) Most of the time

- c) Sometimes
d) Never.
5. When I plan an intervention, I collect information from: a b c d
a) Top management
b) All management
c) Key personnel in selected departments
d) All levels across the organisation.
6. Individuals in the organisation should be valued for: a b c d
a) Compliance with rules
b) Honesty about sources of success and failure
c) Increasing their level of competence
d) Creating patterns.
7. I prefer to begin my interventions: a b c d
a) At the top of the organisation
b) With a key decision maker
c) Where there is the most need for change
d) At any organisational level with any group.
8. A team is empowered by: a b c d
a) A strong leader
b) Member interactions
c) Alliances with others
d) Autonomous individuals.
9. In effective organisation decisions are based on: a b c d
a) Individual preferences
b) Team/unit consensus
c) Team/unit rules
d) Cumulative experience of individuals.
10. As a facilitator of change in an organisation, I: a b c d
a) Give expert advice on organisational change
b) Hold a mirror up to the organisation
c) Share insights about the organisations pattern and behaviour
d) Learn and teach.
11. An effective change facilitator should be able to: a b c d
a) Squeeze ambiguity out of a system
b) Explain why there is ambiguity in the system
c) Help people feel comfortable in ambiguous situations
d) Use uncertainty and ambiguity to increase organisational capacity.
12. I collect information about the success of an intervention: a b c d
a) Only if the customer insists on it
b) At the end to provide a final report for the client
c) At the beginning, middle, and end

- d) During every interaction with the organisation.
13. When I observe an organisation, I look for: a b c d
- a) Roles that individuals play
 - b) Power relationships
 - c) Personal interactions
 - d) Patterns of behaviour across the organisation.
14. A major factor in increasing the speed of change in an organisation is: a b c d
- a) Competitive energy
 - b) Collaboration
 - c) Mutual respect and trust
 - d) Learning about the process of change.
15. When you are facilitating organisation change, you should begin with: a b c d
- a) The task that is most critical to the top managers
 - b) The simplest issues, so the group will build confidence over time
 - c) Actions most likely to succeed
 - d) The issues that is most accessible.
16. Organisation history is important because: a b c d
- a) It predicts the future
 - b) It gives information about potential resistance
 - c) It provides stories to use in encouraging change
 - d) It builds the capacity for future action.
17. Differences in an organisation: a b c d
- a) Distract from the focus of the work
 - b) Provide variety in problem identification and solving processes
 - c) Keep people engaged and interested
 - d) Provide the impetus for transformation.
18. A highly functioning organisation: a b c d
- a) Meets a set of pre -defined criteria
 - b) Reflects the vision of its CEO.
 - c) Satisfies the needs of all of its internal and external stakeholders.
 - d) Fits into the niche formed by customers, competitors and resources.
19. Change in an organisation is like: a b c d
- a) Tuning a machine
 - b) Freezing and unfreezing
 - c) Growth through developmental stages
 - d) Perpetual evolution.
20. I am a successful facilitator of change because I: a b c d
- a) Know what will happen before it happens
 - b) Provide processes that are predictable
 - c) Am flexible in the face of adversity
 - d) Work with the patterns in the system.

	a	b	c	d
GRAND TOTAL				

Profile

Scoring Instructions: In the table below, circle the number of responses you have in each category. Darken the space beneath the level you marked. The columns that result are the profile of your Organisation Development Approach.

A's	B's	C's	D's
20	20	20	20
19	19	19	19
18	18	18	18
17	17	17	17
16	16	16	16
15	15	15	15
14	14	14	14
13	13	13	13
12	12	12	12
11	11	11	11
10	10	10	10
9	9	9	9
8	8	8	8
7	7	7	7
6	6	6	6
5	5	5	5
4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3
2	2	2	2
1	1	1	1
0	0	0	0
Rational development approach	Human development approach	Political development approach	Emergent development approach

There is of course not best profile. And then again, a balanced score is what I in this working paper try to argue for. If you mainly are an A, you may approach your work with a belief that OCD is best accomplished by clear, predictable and rational means. If you mainly are a B you may approach your work with a belief that OCD is best accomplished by participation, involvement and consensus. If you mainly are a C, you may approach your work with a belief that capacity development is best accomplished by trying to influence key actors, using power, convincing, negotiation. If you mainly are a D, you may approach your work with a belief that OCD is best accomplished by being able to manage the unexpected, by learning on the way and by creating organisational self-organisation.

Each of the approaches may be appropriate depending on the situation, but it is my experience that, sooner or later, all of them should be used in order to get the best development, and an unbalanced score profile might therefore indicate that the test is poor or that you might have to considering using more multi-levelled approaches when managing OCD projects.

4 The bee sting – designing organisational capacity development

The bee sting

How then, to influence and change organisational capacity. What can an OCD project do? Not much alone for sure. A development project is mainly to be seen as a catalyst that can create some turbulence in an organisation. And, if lucky and skilfully designed and implemented, bring the organisation in the direction wished so by key actors in the organisation. The project is not, and should not be, the centre of the world. A project is a bee sting.

It is probably a fact that the success of a capacity development attempt is strongly dependent on the human factor, for example the ability to build relationships. This, however, does not mean that knowledge of different design techniques is unimportant. Design *is* a focal point for good attempts at developing organisational capacity.



Figure 4.1. The design of the bee sting (focus on the arrow)

OCD defined

4.1 Design of OCD

Once upon a time there was a shepherd tending his sheep at the edge of a country road in rural Wyoming. A brand new Jeep Grand Cherokee screeched to a halt next to him. The driver, a young man dressed in a Armani suit, Cerrutti shoes, Ray-Ban glasses, Jovial Swiss wristwatch and a BHS tie, jumped out and asked the herder: "If I guess how many sheep you have, will you give me one of them?" The herder looked at the young man, then looked at the sprawling herd of grazing sheep and said: Okay."

The young man parked the Jeep, connected his notebook and wireless modem, entered a NASA site, scanned the ground using satellite imagery and a PS, opened a database and 60 Excel tables filled with algorithms, then printed a 150 page report on his high-tech mini printer. He turned to the herder and said: "You have exactly 1,586 sheep here."

The herder answered: "Say, you are right. Pick out a sheep." The young man took one of the animals and put it in the back of his vehicle. As he was preparing to drive away, the herder looked at him and asked: Now, if I guess your profession, will you pay me back in kind?" The young man answered "Sure." The herder said immediately "You are a consultant." "Exactly! How did you know?" asked he young man. "Very simple," replied the herder. "First you came here without being invited. Secondly, you charged me a fee to tell me something I already knew. Thirdly, you do not understand anything about my business, and I'd really like to have my dog back."

The above quite nicely hints in reverse the three main features that characterize good OCD, and which should form main components of any design:

- Firstly, OCD is when the need for and the content in the capacity development efforts are realised, accepted and formulated by the customer as a support or **help** to solve specific problems or develop the organisation in a specific direction. Ownership and participation are therefore unavoidable ingredients. *OCD don't come without being invited*
- Secondly, OCD is when the main **output** is improvement of general or specific rational, human, political and innovative capacities of the recipient organisation. *OCD don't bring nothing, but tries to be an useful development opportunity*

- Thirdly, OCD is when the main **input** is a process of delivering – appropriate - organisational strengthening, team development, organisational learning, human resource development, management improvements, networking or other like-wise soft services. *OCD don't take dogs, but tries to understand and be part of the development process.*

Context specific
OCD design

Although OCD is a competence that can be learnt over time, a one best way to develop organisational capacity does not exist. OCD is and will always be context specific, and therefore also needs to be context specific designed (and implemented).

One of the dangers with prescriptions on OCD is the tendency to try to advocate an ideal or best practice design, because what worked well in one context may be a poor indicator of what will work well in the current context. Best practice prescriptions may imply that the formula that worked in one organisation is generally applicable, when this may not be so. It is important to remember what was unique about a specific development situation, for example a newly established department or a high technology organisation, and it is important to appreciate and acknowledge what is unique and specific about the current context.

Contextual judgement becomes the competence required of a capacity developer rather than knowledge of the ten best change recipes from other organisations. This is not to say that previous experience is irrelevant. Best practices, case stories, experiences can be very important for illustrating what might be possible.

...an example of
an OCD design
....

Design for improvement of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) system for the Environmental Assessment Section within the Environmental Department. This OCD project was designed during a 2-week period by the Department and the external consultants. The following gives a short overview of the final design.

The **objective** of the OCD is Effective EIA management for the Environmental Assessment Section within the Environmental Department, and the general **approach** to the design is to develop four key areas in relation to effective management of the EIA system, namely:

Technical development in order to develop the sections technical EIA capacities (rational OCD). The project approach to technical development is the development of EIA Handbook, Guidelines and Manuals, which is closely linked to the main task and responsibilities of the EIA section. These outputs cover all main functions of the section, and therefore also cover the main technical development areas for the section during the project period.

Training in order to develop the sections human capacities in dealing with the EIA system (human OCD). The project approach to training can be summarised as development and implementation of tailor-made training packages, based on the developed handbook, guidelines, manuals, and on training need assessment. The technical outputs and the training need assessment will determine and specify the areas that require further upgrading of qualifications and skills. The training output is linked to the production of the technical outputs, in order to strengthen relevance, participation in planning and execution, and appropriate timing.

Networking and awareness raising in order to strengthen key stakeholders support for the use of EIA system (political OCD). The overall approach to networking is the 'natural opportunities' and 'go-slowly' approaches. A number of natural opportunities will be attempted pursued, like seminars in the development of the technical outputs, inter-departmental best practice visits, study tour, invitation to other departments to participate in the training activities, awareness campaign in relation to the technical outputs. It is foreseen that a number of opportunities will arise during implementation, based on the production of specific outputs and training activities, and these will be pursued according to the projects' strong focus on networking and awareness. A primary aim of the project remains to be the strengthening of linkages between the section and other departments and key stakeholders concerned the EIA systems relevance and effectiveness. The go-slowly approach will be applied, because it is found that it might be detrimental to initiate networking and team building activities, if the capacity to sustain these is not available. This means that networking activities will only be initiated, when the section can provide sufficient back- and follow-up.

Innovation in order to strengthen the sections ability to continuously renew and improve the EIA system (experimental OCD). This, the last capacity development approach applied by the project, will focus on the implementation of specific pilot activities and on the introduction of continuous review mechanisms and possible adjustments. This approach will include the testing of new ways of processing EIA reports in close cooperation with key stakeholders, project proponents and business associations. It will furthermore include the testing of new ways of continuous monitoring the effec-

tiveness of the EIA system in order to adjust and change existing procedures. Finally it will test the usefulness of increased transparency gained through for example the use of the Departmental homepage and public hearings.

A total of 8 **outputs** are planned, namely:

- A Handbook on EIA Policy & Procedures
- Guidelines for selected prescribed activities, min. forestry, oil palm plantations and river sand and stone mining
- A Manual on EIA Auditing
- An EIA Training Package implemented
- Interdepartmental EIA Review Panel established
- EIA Compliance Survey after two years of implementation
- Min. two targeted awareness campaigns, one to the Industry and one to the political level
- Pilot testing min. 3 specific mitigation measures in collaboration with Project Proponents.

An implementation process, defined through a number of **activities**, have been planned for each output, namely:

Output 1. A Handbook on EIA Policy & Procedures.

- External consultants to prepare a draft EIA Handbook based on interviews with all staff in the section, with external key stakeholders and on literature review of other EIA systems applied in other countries. The draft Handbook shall be presented at an internal workshop for discussion followed by an external workshop before being final The preparation of the EIA Handbook and EIA Guidelines. These will be distributed to, and meetings held with, a large number of key external stakeholders, local EIA consultants, NGOs and business associations

Output 2. Guidelines for selected prescribed activities, min. forestry, oil palm plantations and river sand and stone mining

- The Guidelines will be prepared by xx

Output 3. A Manual on EIA Auditing

- xx.

Output 4. An EIA Training Package implemented

- xx.

Output 5. Interdepartmental EIA Review Panel established

- xx.

Output 6. EIA Compliance Survey after two years of implementation

- xx.

Output 7. Min. two targeted awareness campaigns, one to the Industry and one to the political level

- xx.

Output 8. Pilot testing min. 3 specific mitigation measures in collaboration with Project Proponents.

- xx.

4.2 Framing the design I – the three design elements

What is interesting and fascinating about OCD design, as illustrated in the example above, is not only what elements are used in the design, but also how these elements have been mixed and balanced in order to get the actual design.

I will in the following first try to pull the example apart, and look at the different parts of which it consists, thereby indicating what elements can be used to build an OCD project. After that I will look at the difficult task of putting the parts together, to configure the design elements, in order to come out with an appropriate, consistent, context-specific design.

The three OCD design elements

The three elements that might be used to design an OCD project, as indicated in the example, are:

- *Element 1: Choose **area, objective and main approach**.* In the example the area chosen for improvement was the EIA system in the EIA section, the objectives was an improvement in the effectiveness of EIA management, and the general approach used was to focus on four approaches, namely technical development, training, networking and awareness and innovation. This element concerns the decision on the content of the development, in what areas it is essential to achieve development

- *Element 2 Design outputs.* In the example outputs to be reached was specified through eight outputs. This element concerns the consideration, selection and design of appropriate outputs. The key outputs in relation to OCD relates to rational, human, political and experimental outputs that might be included in the actual design
- *Element 3: Design processes and activities.* In the example the process and activities to be implemented was outlined for each of the eight planned outputs. This element concerns the consideration, selection and design of processes and activities for implementation of outputs. The design of processes in relation to OCD concerns likewise the design of rational, human, political and experimental processes and activities.

The actual design can be seen as a specific applied configuration or mix of these three different design elements. To make the right design is like to use a kaleidoscope to find the most beautiful configuration or design. I will return to this. First to the three elements.

4.2.1 Design element I – the choice of area, objective and main approach

Who to choose

The basic in the choice of the area and objective of the OCD is simple. The choice of which organisational areas and capacities should be attempted developed, and what objectives should be reached, depends solely on the wishes of the recipient. The receiver chooses what area and associated capacities should be developed. The receiver chooses what objectives should be formulated.

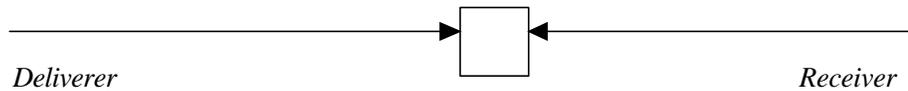
The final decision on what area to develop with which objectives is the recipients, but it is also my experience that the good choices on area, objectives and approaches in particular most often is a result of a constructive and innovative ping-pong-period between the receiver and the deliverer before the final choices are made by the recipient. There might only be one to lead, but it takes two to tango.

One aspect here is to strike a good balance between the contextual knowledge the manager has about his organisation and its need (based on maybe years of presence, on thousands of stories, episodes, power struggles, etc.) and the analytical and design knowledge of the capacity developer (based on maybe years of experience with OCD). And it is probably so, that when contextual or analytical knowledge becomes a feeling, a deep knowledge, rather than an intellectual mechanism, the chance to strike a good design is the better. And to get this feeling experience counts:



Deep analytical knowledge

Deep contextual knowledge



What to choose

In general, the aim of OCD should clearly specify the area or topic to be developed and who should be involved in the development, or in other words, development of what for who.

Normally the key is to relate OCD to the *organisations ability to undertake specific objectives or task*, - the organisation being the whole organisation, parts hereof, or even including key stakeholders outside the formal organisational borders. Here the important part is that the choice of objectives or tasks has to be work-related, specific, straightforward and understandable for all involved in the OCD. All should know and be able to relate immediately to the aim and direction of the development attempt; - *To develop an effective EIA system for the EIA section.*

Should they, particularly in OCD, also include which capacities should be developed? This in fact is a little tricky, because sometime the objectives could and maybe should include and openly spell out which rational, human, political and/or experimental capacities should be attempted developed to undertake these specific objectives or tasks; - *To develop the EIA units technical capacity to undertake compliance monitoring of approved EIAs* -, while in other cases, these capacities should certainly not be openly documented or written down but kept backstage, hidden; - *To develop the EIA sections ability to gain support from key stakeholders for an effective EIA system.*

Of course it is also possible, but more untraditional, to relate the objectives, in general terms, towards one or more of the *organisations general capacities*, for example the organisations general capacity to rationalise, to use and develop its human resource, to be powerful and influential, and/or to experiment, innovate and stay fit; - *To develop the EIA unit capacity to continuously renew and modernise the EIA system.* Objectives here would not relate directly to specific work-related areas, but would focus on the general capacities and abilities, on increase in the general abilities on how to do, not what to do. Learning, self-organisation, sustainability comes here in the forefront. This kind of objectives would certainly also make sense, but they are rarely seen, and should probably also be dealt with

care, because they can be difficult to formulate, can decrease specificity and therefore might lead to less effective OCD attempts.

More on *writing it down* later.

4.2.2 Design element II – the design of outputs

For each objective of an OCD attempt, there is a pool of possible outputs that can be planned and tried implemented in order to reach the chosen objective. Many different ways of finding these possible outputs can be used. I will introduce, again, the distinctions between the four different organisational understandings, - the rational, human, political and experimental -, because I think this distinction provides the best and easiest way of keeping our focus on the most relevant, but sometimes forgotten, aspects. It gives in my opinion the best existing method for *remembering it all*.

Overview

Overview of four different focuses for design of OCD outputs

Rational OCD outputs focus on:	System improvements through rationalising, organisational redesign and revision of procedures
Human OCD outputs focus on:	Change in behaviour and conceptions for groups of people through modification of processes of interactions, communication, self reflection and learning
Political OCD outputs focus on:	Influencing key actors and distribution of positions and resources through modification of control and power structures
Experimental OCD outputs focus on:	Processes of self-organising, networking and patterns of interactions and interpretations through better self-organising of daily activities, accidental moments and possibilities for learning

Designing rational OCD outputs

...the examples from the example..

In order to strengthen the EIA sections formal rational capacities in dealing with EIA the following outputs were planned:

- *A Handbook on EIA Policy & Procedures*
- *Guidelines for a minimum of three selected prescribed activities*
- *A Manual on EIA Auditing.*

Design of rational outputs

Rational outputs are designed to increase the organisations capacity to plan, rationalise and structure formal activities, outputs and achievement of the organisation. This type of output is well known and by far the majority of OCD outputs designed fall under this category. They concern e.g. management information systems, organisation structure, workflows, financial systems, formal decisions making procedures, organisational redesign, revision of procedures, guidelines and manuals for work flows and responsibilities. Improvements in these areas are in-

tended to lead to increased formal organisational capacity for planning, rationalised decision making and use of effective procedures and structures.

The overall aim is, through systems changes, to influence effectiveness and efficiency.

Examples of relevant areas for rational designed outputs include:

- *The development and implementation of new management systems*, as for example ISO 9000, EMS, MIS
- *The change in work flow and procedures*, for example through developing manuals for monitoring and enforcement, changes in the processing procedures for land applications, increasing speed and quality in the processing of EIA reports
- *The development and implementation of plans, strategies and policies*, for example regional plans, water catchment plans, biodiversity strategies, environmental policies, regulations and guidelines.

Designing human resource OCD outputs

...the examples from the example..

In order to strengthen the EIA sections human resource capacities in dealing with EIA the following outputs were planned:

- *A tailor made EIA training package.*

Design of human resource outputs

Human resource outputs are aimed at increasing the organisations capacity to effectively use its human resources, and deals with the ability to attract, motivate, involve, use and develop the human resources of the organisation. The aim is to create changes in behaviour, conceptions, and knowledge for groups of people, and thereby improving efficiency and effectiveness.

Examples of areas for relevant human resource designed outputs:

- *Increased knowledge through training outputs*, which includes for example a training needs assessment (TNA) and the subsequent planning and execution of formal training programmes
- *Increased learning capacity*, where the aim is to increase the organisations ability to learn. The typical outputs here concern training, motivation, change in processes of interaction and communications, for example new ways of conducting meetings, sharing information, gathering information and learning from experience
- *Changes in incentive systems*, which include changes in salary, appraisal, evaluation systems, for example introduction of MBO, team or output based salary.

...the example from the example..

Designing political OCD outputs

In order to strengthen the EIA sections formal political capacities in dealing with EIA the following outputs were planned:

- Interdepartmental EIA Review Panel established.

Design of political outputs

Political outputs are mainly aimed at increasing the organisations capacity to use, maintain and expand the organisations influence and power base, and deals mainly with power relations and coalitions. These outputs therefore deals with understandings of conflicting power centres and the formulation and use of effective activities, for example influencing key actors, to reach organisational outputs and aims.

The political outputs aims at improving the power base including modification of control and power structures, or in other words, changes in distribution of positions and resources.

Changes in organisation structure, physical lay out, location of offices, information flows and accessibility, reward and promotion systems, new management development programmes, new administrative systems, steering committees, task forces, are all examples of front stage activities that can be used to directly or indirectly influence for example distribution of power, influence, positions, prestige, budgets and information, to highlight and prioritise specific issues or to encourage or discourage particular behaviour.

The following provides examples of areas for relevant front stage political outputs that can be used for OCD:

- *Organisational structures.* As there is no one best organisational structure, there will always be a range of options to organisational structures, and it is often important to find a solution that minimise adverse implications, and instead can be sold as offering new opportunities
- *Reward structures.* These can be used for example by rewarding new and desired behaviour by new payment schedules, subtle shift in promotion policy, creating new career paths to support those who support changes, appropriate promoting of key supporting individuals, are another e of indirectly change organisational behaviour
- *Task forces.* These can be created, ad hoc, around specific issues or problems, to generate reports and analyses that promote change in the desired direction. The front stage agenda of the task force may be to do a feasibility study, the backstage it to generate evidence supporting and justifying proposed changes. Appointed co-ordinators can handle contentious issues and deal with contentious decisions
- *Symbolic formalising of changes.* This is for example when ad hoc arrangements (pilot tests) are made formal by adding them to the organisation struc-

ture, when new structure are being public displayed to celebrate the new structure, the celebration of the appointment of new personnel to key positions. Such symbolic actions will send the signal that these changes are not reversible

- *Information structures.* This might involve creating certain information channels to improve understanding and commitment or reducing the flow of information to certain groups in order to reduce their influence and possibility to act and control. Information is power
- *Supportive groups.* The power base of certain supporting groups can be attempted improved compared to others for example through increased information, knowledge, money, better organisation, competence, autonomy, political linkages, etc.
- *Increased involvement of key stakeholders or pressure groups,* for example involvement of local politicians in activities that will result in positive exposure, involvement of NGOs in steering committees or in implementation of activities
- The ability to create commitment and participation through active involvement of key stakeholders in planning and decision-making is absolutely essential. But other strategies should however also be considered in order to create commitment and participation, for example *incentives in terms of money or the like (an economical output approach), co-opt leadership or contract management*
- *Increased resource base or decreased resource dependency,* for example creation of new income generation possibilities, introduction of green taxes.

Designing experimental OCD outputs

...the examples from the example..

In order to strengthen the EIA Sections formal experimental capacities in dealing with EIA the following outputs were planned:

- EIA Compliance Survey after two years of implementation
- Min. two targeted awareness campaigns, one to the Industry and one to the political level
- Pilot testing min. 3 specific mitigation measures in collaboration with Project Proponents.

Design of experimental outputs

The experimental way of thinking concern creation and implementation of appropriate experimental and innovative processes, and a number of outputs, that would support the development of organisational experimental capacities exists, and can be incorporated in the design at the beginning of an OCD..

The experimental development approach is aimed at increasing the organisations capacity to experiment and innovate for continuous development and survival, and deals with creativity, innovation, mobilisation of interests and networks.

It is probably so that the experimental elements and capacities are more relevant in some settings than others. The organisational capability for creativity and innovation are an all-important feature for organisational effectiveness and survival for organisations operating under complex, non-linear and unpredictable conditions, like for example IT department, political headquarters, health organisations, while organisations existing under more stable conditions, for example waste water treatment plants, accounting departments, might need a little less of this capacity. But then again, it has been empirically shown that even high reliability organisations, like nuclear power plant, aircraft carriers, fire fighting crews, to a high degree relies on creativity, deep knowledge, focus on failures, trust, innovation, break-down of hierarchies, continuous learning and sharing of experience, especially when something really has to be done or when continuous development is in focus!! (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001).

Overall design of experimental outputs focus on strengthening of the organisations capacity to look at and improve routines and daily activities - the summing of the flies - by continuous exploitation, experiments, innovations, adaptations and imitations. It also focuses on strengthening the ability to acknowledge and deal with, and even support, the unexpected, the ambiguous, the unpredictable, also in the design of OCD. Experimental OCD do this by designing outputs that focus on for example *self-organisation, networking, creation of possibilities for continuous learning, and pump gunning (setting the organisation under pressure)*. The following provides examples of these areas for relevant experimental OCD outputs:

- Creating and using *self-managing teams, loose coupling, networks and networking* are often keys to achieve and influence processes of *self-organising*. This would for example be initiation of teams given a number of open-ended problems with no fixed solutions, but maybe with a fixed lump sum budget for implementation. Or teams to undertake and become responsible for work processes from start to end, teams being directly connected with suppliers and customers, team-based compensation systems. In all this managers mainly would function as coordinators, coaches or facilitators
- *Connecting staff, work groups and organisations with key stakeholders, other organisations, other sources of information and ways of doing things* to achieve and influence processes of *increased networking, connectivity and loose coupling*. This would for example be deliberate use of a number of internal and external networking teams, increased use of modern interaction technologies, support trans-organisational professionalism. The aim is to create as many links as possible between different actors in and outside the organisation, one of the most important being relevant similar professional societies. Where rational or human outputs mainly focuses on control and integration, for example structured planned schedules for interaction, and regards loose coupling between persons and units as a problem, these outputs, on the

contrary, focus on and regards dynamic, flexible, open-ended and accidental interactions and exchange as the starting point to support

- *Creating possibilities for continuous learning to achieve continuous adaptation and organisational fitness.* Complexity and continuous change increases the need for organisations to continuously look for new ways of describing aims, problems and solutions. The fact that no single true structure, problem, solution exists, increases the need to continuously look for the best and most appropriate structure, problem and solution at a given time, in the given setting with the given key organisational actors. Continuous learning becomes essential. The keywords for adult learning are *experience-based, simplicity and fun*. Outputs focusing on learning should therefore be characterised by enactment, curiosity, play, exploitation, experiments, accidental momentums and imitations; all important for the creation of new knowledge and understandings, or in other words, continuous learning. A remedy for development is therefore also the opposite of seriousness; Play, games, interesting experiments and challenges with the possibilities for unexpected results. Many times we are so - unnecessary - serious!!
- *Pump gunning to generate numerous new ideas and hopefully thereby achieve real life impact.* For every one hundred bee sting attempted, only few will probably succeed! If OCD attempts want to make a real life impact or find new ideas with the power to enthral the receiver, hundreds attempts or new unconventional ideas must probably be generated. This means that we should forget the big strategy, the one great idea, but instead should dream up thousands and try to implement many of them. One way to generate many ideas and possible real life OCD is the *pump gun strategy*; the design and attempt to implement many outputs, maybe simultaneously, to set the system under pressure, create the new, the unexpected, the unplanned, but hopefully, the self-organized and the innovative. This is, of course, to walk a thin-edged blade, because if we fail, the result will be confusion and frustration. But on the other hand, do we not always have to walk that blade! Other ways would for example be to create internal competition, offer small seed money to fund a handful of new-rules demonstration projects, create easy possibilities for teams to form, because teams normally generate more and better ideas and individuals.

4.2.3 Element III – the design of processes and activities

The importance of the how

We must know the objectives, we must specify outputs, and this is probably what we normally use the most of our time on. But in OCD, in fact the third main design element, the design of processes of activities, of the how, is maybe the most important element.

It is generally accepted that the main impact of OCD projects not so much can be related to what is achieved, but to *how* it is achieved. Impact is not the plan or report but how the plan or report is being made, not the actual decisions taken in the meeting but how the meeting is conducted, not the implemented outputs but

how the outputs were reached. This means that the deliberate planning of *what activities should be implemented how and when*, - the flow, sequence, or process of the implementation of the OCD, is the crucial aspect to deal with.

The double importance of the how

The importance of *the how* is not only important and should be considered in relation to the output related project activities. *The how* should also be related to the speed, flexibility, accountability, visibility and the management of *the project itself*. If for example the project in general is poorly managed (inflexible, bureaucratic, etc.), then the capacity development effort will suffer seriously, because capacity development to a high degree also is *learning by seeing*. There has to be consistency between preaching and practising.

In capacity development projects organisational learning is not only what is taught or preached. If the capacity development efforts for example advocate transparent use of budgets, un-bureaucratic and decentralised systems or flexibility, it is extremely important that the management and implementation of the project itself can demonstrate these values and principles. Too often, unfortunately, it is seen that the actual design (and implementation) of projects are distorted with for example bureaucratic procedures, inflexibility or non-transparent use of budgets, again, *do as you teach*.

Lets take some typical examples of how activities and processes normally are planned and described:

Xx

Xx

This will not do in the future. We have to become more innovative, probably also more explicit and specific, we have to sell the implementation process as interesting, fun, stimulating, innovative, but, at the same, as safe and under control. In OCD this is probably a, maybe the key to being a good and professional capacity developer.

For each aim of an OCD, there was a pool of possible outputs, and likewise, for each output, there is a pool of different and possible activities that can be planned and tried implemented in order to reach the output. I will also here use the distinctions between the four different understandings, the rational, human, political and experimental, again because I think this distinction provides the best existing way to remember it all, to get the how right.

Overview

Overview of four different focuses for design of OCD activities and processes

Rational OCD processes focus on:	Calculation and consequences, problem analysis, redesign and orders
Human OCD processes focus on:	Consensus, accept, process of identification, information and training

Political OCD processes focus on:	Negotiations, convincing, articulation of interests, manipulation and coalition making
Experimental OCD processes focus on:	Enactment, curiosity, exploitation, experiments and imitations

Design of rational processes and activities

Designing rational OCD processes and activities

Rational OCD *processes* are in general characterised by calculation and consequences, problem analysis, redesign and orders. Implementation is often designed using the rational phased cycle concept, where the main emphasis lies with clear statement and definition of objectives, outputs, responsibilities, deadlines and budgets. Focus, and the main indicators for development, is on the delivery of specified specific outputs.

The typical rational process would include development of a strategy, getting confirmation of top level support, identification of tasks, assigning of responsibilities, agreement of deadlines, initiation of activities, monitoring, acting on problems, closing down and communication of results.

The rational process rest on the assumption that planned development unfolds in a logically sequenced manner. Solutions are not identified until the problem has been clearly defined. An effective solution is not selected until the various options have been systematically compared. Implementation does not begin until there are clearly specified tasks and responsibilities. The progress of implementation is systematically monitored and deviations from plan are corrected, and implementation is bounded in terms of people, money and time. Successful implementation is attributed to the timely implementation of these aspects, and to the effectiveness of the monitoring and control, which ensure the project stays on target.

Typical rational oriented *activities* for OCD would focus on the:

- xxx. xxxx
- Xxx. Xxxx.

Design of human processes and activities

Designing human OCD processes and activities

Involvement, participation, ownership, communication, commitment and trust have become conventional wisdom in specifying requirements for successful development interventions. Human-oriented *processes* relies on sensitivity to the needs and interest of internal and external stakeholders, and the underlying assumption is that if people are able to say ‘I helped build this’ they will be more willing to live with, support and sustain it. The establishment of ownership through an appropriate process becomes essential.

Typical human oriented *activities* for OCD would focus on the:

- *Use of project/working groups.* The establishment and use of groups consisting of consultants and staff to plan, implement and evaluate project activities is an effective and almost unavoidable ingredient in capacity development ef-

forts. Most effective is to establish core teams that are embedded in a network of contacts and information. Furthermore is the use of ad hoc or temporary structures, such as task forces or project teams advisable. Project groups when used proper can secure participation, commitment and active involvement of key stakeholders in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project outputs. This could also include joint participation in planning, review, evaluations in order to share positive and negative lessons learned

- *Use of innovative/not traditional techniques for meetings, group work, implementations.* Consultants should bring in and show new ways of doing things. This could range from how to conduct meetings, for example using structured brainstoms, how to plan and undertake a row a project group meetings, for example using either the problem solving or the ideal situation method, how to implement, for example through involvement of stakeholders not usually involved
- *Deliberate planned activities for on-the-job training.* This could include for example weekly specific issue sessions, introduction programmes for new staff, study groups, best practice visits, attachment programmes, monthly formal presentations
- *Focus on group training.* Recognising the importance of group work and sharing of information for organisational effectiveness, training should create opportunities for establishment of groups and information sharing. This could for example happen through sending groups of staff together on training courses and seminars that involve both personal and professional challenges or through creating challenges which can be experienced and overcome collectively
- *Use of twinning arrangements, attachment programmes and best practice visits* in order to include and exchange practical experiences between professional colleagues. Learning from colleagues, from experience gained by similar organisations, is probably one of the most effective ways of training. Two types of exchange techniques have been found to be effective: Exchange visits (best practices visits) where local agencies visits and review similar aspects of other agencies work procedures, and exchange of staff (attachment programmes or job replacements), where staff from one agency temporarily stays and works with other agencies to see work approaches, use of technology, decision making procedures.

Designing political OCD processes and activities

Design of political processes and activities

Political *processes* are in general characterised by negotiations, convincing, use of articulation of interests, manipulation and coalition making, by establishing legitimacy. Political processes have two levels; open front stage and hidden back stage processes. At the design phase, probably only front stage political processes should be considered, designed and put to paper. We might however in the design phase, consider and design front stage processes that can be used to influence backstage. Back stage political activities can be indirectly considered, but should

not be put to paper, they can only be designed indirectly. A number of rational, and therefore not so dangerous, political front stage processes and activities can be used to influence for example the distribution of power, influence, positions, prestige, budgets and information.

Typical political activities for OCD would focus on the:

- Xx
- xxx

Design of experimental processes and activities

Designing experimental OCD processes and activities

We have to develop the capacity for innovation and adaptation, also by creating appropriate experimental, innovative and adaptive *processes*. The aim is to increase the organisations capacity to experiment and innovate for continuous development and survival by creation of processes characterised by creativity, innovation, mobilisation of interests and networks.

The aim of the experimental processes is to initiate new concepts of reality, to create new, not yet fully known, issues and ideas for attention, debate and resolution, and mobilising concern, energy and enthusiasm of these issues in an evolutionary fashion. Development is seen as a cumulative process of smaller-steps, and the process is an evolutionary one of trial, error, experimentation and learning. Rather than focusing at the macro strategic level, experimental processes focus on the powerful processes of change and development that occurs at the micro level, where individual relationships, interactions, small experiments, interpretations and simple rules shape emerging, creative and effective patterns.

The experimental OCD process should in general be characterised by enactment, curiosity, play, exploitation, experiments, accidental momentums and imitations; all important features in the creation of new knowledge and understandings. One remedy for development is here the opposite of seriousness; play, games, interesting experiments and challenges with the possibilities for unexpected results constitute an important feature for experimental processes.

Typical experimental *activities* for OCD would focus on:

- *Use of self-organising groups*, for example the initiation of teams given a number of open-ended problems, no fixed solutions, but a fixed lump sum budget for implementation
- *Networking activities*, like extensive use of modern interaction and information technologies, and connecting staff, managers, work groups and organisations with their environments, key stakeholders, other sources of information and ways of doing things
- *Continuous learning* by for example continuous use of pilot tests, experiments, review, feedback, evaluations, to increase information to an organisation concerning its own functioning

- *Action learning* by continuously creating close linkages between interventions, learning processes and daily organisational life, routines and daily activities.

The experimental *activities* corresponds closely to the output areas, in fact they are almost identical. This is unavoidable, as in the experimental approach, processes become outputs and vice versa. It is not here possible to de-link the way to the goal from the goal itself!

4.3 Framing the design II - the context analysis

One thing is to make a good design, another is to make the right design. This requires *analysis and judgement of the actual context for the OCD*. The concern is here the *analysis of the OCD context*, the examination of the organisational features pertinent to the OCD situation, such as the scope of development required, the time frame, the diversity within the workforce and the capability for development within the organisation.

This also concerns *judgement* of what are the most *critical* features of the current situation. In any organisation, the contextual features do not carry equal weighting - some will be more important than others. So, for instance, in some organisations the existence of strong professional groups may create diversity among the workforce. Professionals, such as engineers, will often identify more readily with the values and aims of their professional association rather than with their employing organisation. On the other hand, in organisations, which employ few professionals, this feature may not be so critical.

The best practice models put forward by many frequently suggest that there are universal formulae that can be applied to any organisation that needs to undergo change, e.g. 'you must get senior management support before attempting to manage change'. This may be true for many OCD situations, but perhaps for certain organisations senior management support may block to the implementation of OCD or the capacity developer may need to start with some other intervention and hope to gain senior support later on in the process.

What this means is that instead of identifying best practice solutions, we need to start looking for best questions. I argue that the internal and external context of the organisation should be examined in order to determine the appropriate change process. Some of the features considered in this analysis may, for example, be power relationships, whilst others will be very specific to OCD management, such as readiness for OCD and OCD resources and capability.

There are in sum two parts to the analysis of context. The first part is the analysis of different context features. The second is the determination of which of the features are most critical in any particular context, and how this affects the design choices made.

The analysis

Assessing the context influencing the design parameters (area, objectives, approach, outputs and processes) is, by experience, not a simple matter. One problem is the numerous amounts of different factors that could be studied, and the difficulties in selecting and focusing on the most important. Others, and equally disturbing, is the lack of appropriate methods to assess, often within a short time frame, for example staff qualifications, power structure, the political context, etc. I have never seen a practical, and decent, described method for assessing context. Many exists, but they are either extremely theoretical, like dividing the surroundings in five levels, or they do not give a realistic approach to how this information on context should be attained (many has studied specific organisations in years to reveal for example the culture or backstage power structure of organisations, and still describe that they not fully can lay out the picture). Therefore I instead will try to rely on my experience. What do I in fact myself look for when trying to access, in a short time span, the context for a new OCD project. What aspects and areas would I try to investigate, ask questions and interview about.

I find eight features that can have a considerable influence of the choice of design:

Scope	Is the required outcome minor or major? Does the OCD affect the whole organisation, or is it only concerned with a particular division or department perhaps?
Time	How much time does the organisation have to achieve this OCD? Is it in crisis or is it concerned with long-term strategic development? Are key stakeholders, such as the politicians or other departments, expecting short-term results from the OCD attempt?
Resources	How much cash or spare human resource is there to divert towards the OCD attempt?
Capability	How capable or competent is the organisation at managing OCD and how widespread throughout the organisation is this capability? How much change has the organisation and its individual staff experienced in the past? Is there an expertise at an individual level for handling OCD?
Readiness	Are staffs aware of the need for change? If they are, how willing and motivated are they towards the change? How much support generally is there for the development and changes the OCD should bring? How much understanding is there of the scope needed?
Power	Where is power vested within the organisation? For the OCD to be successful who are the major stakeholders within and outside the organisation whose support must be canvassed? How much latitude of discretion does the OCD unit possess? Is it part of a larger group or is it relatively autonomous? From where is the or-

	organisation depended on its resources?
Diversity	Is the staff group concerned diverse or relatively homogeneous in terms of its values, norms, and attitudes? Are there many subcultures or national cultures? Are there different departments or divisions or is it one particular staff group? With whom or what in the organisation do different staff groups identify - their team, job, department or the whole organisation?
Preservation	To what extent is it essential to maintain continuity or preserve certain practices, processes or assets? Do these constitute invaluable resources or contribute towards a valued stability or identity within an organisation?

Scope Scope is the required outcome of the OCD, varying from limited scale through to more radical developments aimed at transformation of an organisation. Scope is also affected by whether the whole organisation has to develop, or just one division or department of it.

The scope of the OCD determines just how much change is necessary. There are two aspects to scope - the depth of the OCD required in an organisation and the physical spread of OCD across the organisation.

Time Time is to do with how long an organisation has to achieve OCD. Is the organisation in crisis or is it concerned with long-term strategic development? Time can also be affected by stakeholder attitudes, such as, are key stakeholders like politicians, the Ministry of Finance, etc., expecting short-term results.

Some organisations may wish to undertake change on an ongoing incremental basis, in an attempt to avoid the need to have to undertake more fundamental change, while others may wish a more quick transformation process.

How much time an organisation has to deliver OCD can be assessed through focus on interest of key stakeholders, sign of crisis, linkage to survival, income, power.

Capability Capability assesses how good the organisation is at managing OCD. Aspects that require consideration include the location of OCD expertise within the organisation, how much development and change the organisation and its staff have experienced in the past, and the degree of expertise for handling OCD at an individual, managerial or departmental level.

It is important to question whether an organisation possesses the necessary skills and abilities to manage OCD before embarking on OCD design and implementation. A capacity developer should not design an implementation process that the organisation is not capable of delivering. The research on OCD is littered with ex-

amples of organisations, which either implemented inappropriate OCD designs, or attempted OCD designs that were too sophisticated for their levels of OCD competence. This is also why many of the OCD initiatives that are heralded as transformation actually result in reconstruction.

Capabilities need to exist at three levels - the individual level, the managerial level and the organisational level. Individual capability is about the ability of individuals within an organisation to manage OCD within themselves. Anyone who has lived through a personal crisis such as a bereavement or divorce will understand that change can be an overwhelming experience. However, the more reflective the individual, the more they can expect to learn from the experience, and hopefully then be able to manage the process effectively if it reoccurs.

A second level of capability is at the managerial level of OCD. How able are line and general managers to advise and help their staff through the OCD process? For instance, does the management possess the appropriate communication skills to convey clarity about the OCD and a commitment to their staff? Do they possess the counselling skills needed to help their staff through OCD? Are any managers experienced in dealing with a number of different OCD initiatives at one time? Does the organisation know which managers within their staff have a high degree of competence at managing change and OCD?

A third level of capability for managing OCD is vested at the organisational level. OCD units can be established anywhere within an organisation. Some OCD experts may be located within the planning unit, the human resource function, or even in larger organisations in specialist Organisational Development units.

Finally, there is also a difference between an organisations ability to manage OCD incrementally and an ability to manage big bang OCD. Other organisations have a capability to manage incremental change. Some have developed a special ability to ride the waves of change over decades rather than years. Such organisations achieve this through a capability in incremental change that is based upon four skills: Constantly scanning the external environment, using management systems as information and communication systems, promoting flexible organisational structures and maintaining elements cultural identity for the purpose of consistency.

Capability is a difficult feature to assess in the short term. At an individual level there exists a plethora of psychometric tests that can indicate OCD capabilities, particularly among managerial staff. At the eve of the organisation it may simply require a resource audit of which staff have had experience of managing large-scale OCD programmes either in their current organisation or with previous employers. Surprisingly enough, depending on the size of the organisation, a simple questionnaire or focus group sessions with staff may uncover valuable experience in this area.

Resources

Resources is to do with how much resource the organisation can invest in the proposed OCD both in terms of cash and staff, and how much time managers have to devote to the OCD.

Many of the OCD programmes written up as showcase pieces feature large organisations undertaking the OCD. The danger is that small to medium-sized organisations try to mimic these larger programmes but without the same resources available for investment in initiatives. The result can be over-ambitious OCD announced at senior management level, which fizzles out at lower levels, because there is no means to manage a big-bang OCD. It is therefore necessary to consider what key resources are limited in any specific OCD scenario. These can, in part, be assessed through the use of a resource audit.

Resources can be divided into three main areas - cash, time and people. (i) Cash: Any OCD intervention that involve management development programmes, particularly offsite, are likely to be expensive and require considerable investment. Physical change assets, such as new technology, can also be expensive. Symbolic change, such as the relocation of offices or redesigning existing office layouts, can also require cash investment. (ii) Time: Difficult questions need to be addressed about how much time is available for senior managers to devote to leading the OCD. Middle managers often feel squeezed by the pressures of the OCD. They are expected to implement several different initiatives whilst at the same time continuing to deliver on all their normal performance targets. If a capacity developer wants line or general managers to give attention to OCD initiatives then he or she needs to consider creating time for them. Some organisations remove managers' responsibility for certain routine tasks for a limited period of time in order to create time for the implementation of the OCD. (iii) People: The issue of capability has already been considered, but quantity is also relevant. Are there sufficient people or managers who are competent in OCD management and committed to the OCD itself? Are these people sufficient to create the momentum needed for the OCD to be carried out?

Readiness

Readiness for OCD is to do with how aware staff is of the need for development and how willing and motivated they are towards the OCD. Readiness is also to do with how much support there is generally for the OCD, and how much understanding there is of the scope of OCD needed.

This feature helps capacity developers to assess how prepared staff is for the OCD. There are two aspects to readiness - the degree to which staff are aware that the OCD is necessary, and the degree of motivation staff feel towards the OCD. Staff can be aware at a rational level of the need for OCD but be unprepared at an emotional level to embrace change at a personal level. Alternatively, even an awareness of the need may be missing. Assessment can be made formally through mechanisms such as staff attitude surveys or more informally through focus groups.

Power

Power examines where power is vested within an organisation. It is to do with the identification of the major stakeholders (within and outside the organisation) and individuals or departments, which hold power in the organisation. Other issues include whose support must be canvassed and how much self-discretion the OCD unit possesses.

Power can be understood on many levels. Here it is considered from two perspectives - the personal power exercised within organisations by individuals or groups of people and the power of the organisation to determine its own future.

Understanding the personal power and politics within an organisation, and identifying the major power brokers, is critical before any design choices can be made. The best choice in design terms may not be achievable because of powerful coalitions who may block the OCD because of their own agendas. To give a practical illustration, in the health service the chief medical doctors are powerful figures. Any capacity developer within a hospital needs to be able to convince a critical mass of chief medical doctors that the OCD is necessary in order to get processes implemented.

In organisational terms, many OCD texts assume that an organisations management team have full latitude of discretion in terms of the choices they can make about OCD. In reality, many organisations are constrained in what they can undertake by their relationship with other institutions. As another example, public sector organisations contemplating OCD may not be allowed to choose the obvious or best course of action because of the constraints that are placed on them by their political masters.

A useful way of assessing who has power and their position on the proposed OCD is to use stakeholder/resource dependency analysis. A stakeholder/resource dependency analysis enables a capacity developer to consider what they can do to gain support for their proposed OCD from those who have power and are either against the proposed changes or are ambivalent to them. It also enables a capacity developer to consider how weaker stakeholders who are for the proposed OCD can be used to help endorse development.

Power, or lack of it, can influence the choice of OCD path taken. Where a division may badly need transformational OCD, they can be prevented from embarking upon such a route because other more powerful divisions, or the groups' centre, block their actions. Powerful individuals may block the OCD path. A powerful chief executive who feels a potential threat from the proposed OCD can squash a plan for transformation in favour of more modest realignment routes. Equally, an over powerful capacity developer or executive can insist on a OCD process which is disproportionately large in comparison with the problem it is trying to address. However, the developer or executive concerned may see this as a way of raising their profile and visibility within the organisation.

In circumstances where a capacity developer does not have the power to carry out the type of change they want to implement, they may choose to first go for a realignment OCD phase. The levers and mechanisms deployed would then be about winning the capacity developer the power needed.

Powerful individuals, such as managing directors or chief executives, can push through top-down and directive OCD. However, where the developer has identified powerful groups within the organisation whose support and commitment is needed then a more collaborative style may be appropriate. Paradoxically, highly

powerful individuals such as chief executive officers who take a leadership role can be counterproductive when the target for OCD is values and the culture they are trying to remove is one based on blame and fear. If the chief officer is seen as a bully but leads the OCD, staff will merely start to mimic the desired values because they feel threatened. This will not lead to significant OCD and the issue will never be addressed due to the atmosphere of fear.

Power is critical when assigning roles within an OCD process. If an OCD champion or leader is to be appointed then the capacity developer needs to pick a powerful individual or provide the individual with powerful backing. Then they also need to consider other powerful stakeholder groups and consider incorporating them in some way into the OCD process, particularly if these groups could be obstructive.

Specific OCD levers to deal with power include techniques such as breaking and reforming both formal and informal power structures within organisations, using the existence of cliques, networks and those with influence to gain buy-in for OCD, and resistance management.

Diversity

Diversity is to do with the degree of diversity that exists among staff groups affected by the OCD. OCD may affect groups or divisions with different subcultures, or different national cultures. Staff may also differ in the way they identify with the organisation through their team, job, department, division or the whole organisation. Professional groups may identify more with their profession than their employing organisation.

Many OCD texts assume that organisations are homogeneous. This is usually far from the truth. There are three aspects to diversity that can impact on the appropriateness of any OCD approach: (i) The extent to which there is uniformity or diversity within an organisation. Diversity can occur within an organisation because of existence of different national cultures, different subcultures, or different professional or occupational groups between divisions and departments. (ii) The impact of these sources of diversity on staff loyalty and commitment to the overall organisation. (iii) The extent to which the capacity developer wishes to reduce or increase levels of diversity as part of the intended outcomes of the OCD process.

Preservation

Preservation is the extent to which it is essential to maintain continuity in certain practices or preserve specific assets, either because they constitute invaluable resources, or contribute towards a valued stability or identity within an organisation. Assets include tangibles such as money, buildings and technology but also intangibles such as know-how, and staff loyalty or pride in the employer or product.

A key criterion for the capacity developer to consider is the extent to which there is a need to preserve the status quo within an organisation. There are two aspects to preservation. The first is being clear at what the organisations assets are, both tangible and intangible. Second is deciding upon what should or should not be preserved during the OCD process. If an organisation needs to undergo transformation, it is possible to overlook the existing sources of advantages that reside within the organisation. This is particularly the case if the assets are to do with

people who can find good employment elsewhere. Finally, it must be recognised that there may be intangible, cultural aspects of the organisation that need to be retained, such as staff loyalty, a team spirit, or extensive staff collaboration which in turn leads to sources of advantage such as creativity or better customer service. If an organisation's competitive position is based on its staffs creativity or customer service, then any change process that unwittingly destroys these features of the culture will damage the organisation. Aspects such as staff loyalty or team spirit can also be used to help facilitate the often-painful process of OCD.

The judgement

The second aspect in the analysis is the determination of which of the features and choices are most critical in any particular context, and how this affects the design choices made.

Some of the aspects rather easy, easy to access, easy to relate to project design, others quite difficult, I would, as always, go backwards, take the easy first and judge their influence on design first, thereafter,

For example, if the organisation has little time and few resources, there is no idea in launching a full-fledged OCD project, but a more incremental approach would probably be more appropriate.

It is in fact my experience that many failed OCD attempts would fail in quick assessment of 3-5 of the above parameters – readiness, resources, power – not appropriate to design and expectations

xxxxx

4.4 The design kaleidoscope – final configuration

Put simply, design is to select the objective, - develop what for who -, select the output, process and activities, - develop which capacities how -, and finally to make the design context sensitive, - develop the right thing at the right time.

Design of capacity development attempts is however in practice not a simple matter. Many aspects have to be considered, many factors influence design choices, and many possible approaches and designs can be applied.

So what to do confronted with the task to design an OCD attempt? What analytic kaleidoscope can be used? I suggest that three design elements should be applied and that the eight context aspects should be analytical considered in the design phase, and I like to use the kaleidoscope to illustrate the work of designing – the possibility to get different configurations by the use of the different elements and aspects.

The kaleidoscope is an analytical framework, which enables OCD designers to pinpoint key design parameters and contextual features of the OCD. But why call it a kaleidoscope? The Oxford English Dictionary define a kaleidoscope as 'a constantly changing group

of bright objects; a tube through which are seen symmetrical figures produced by reflections of pieces of coloured glass and varied by rotation of the tube'. The kaleidoscope does not give predictable configurations that lead to more formulaic OCD recipes. Instead the pieces of coloured glass, the three design elements and the eight contextual features, remain the same but are constantly reconfigured to produce different pictures for each OCD situation they are used to assess. Therefore, the OCD designs will also vary. Certain features infer certain design choices, but the potential permutations are endless.

A kaleidoscope means the beautiful form watcher (kalos (beautiful) + eidos (form) + scopos (watcher)), and a FINE KALEIDOSCOPE IS A WORK OF ART. Just look at these:



The glass pieces in the outer ring of the kaleidoscope would be the eight contextual aspects, while the glass pieces in the inner ring would be three design elements.

However, this is not a kaleidoscope that should be used rigorously or schematic, but when I think of what I in fact consider when designing, all the three elements and eight aspects are, sometimes almost unconsciously, evaluated and judged upon. Luckily in real life situations it is so that certain aspects, factors and approaches are more reasonable and immediately sensible, while others can be left out already after a quick assessment.

I have above outlined the content in the design elements and the aspects in the contextual analysis. The next is to actually make a configuration, an actual OCD designed project, of these elements. I will not pretend that I can give an overview of the possible OCD designs; the possible configurations and design options are numerous. Instead I will try to give some thoughts on actual configurations or designs.

Design with rational, human, political and experimental outputs and processes

A point to be made is that we have and should use much more than one approach for capacity development, and it is essential that qualified assumptions and deliberate arguments for choice of area, outputs and processes are made. Most important is to find a suitable balance of the different design elements. It might be that focus in a specific project is on one or two elements, but rational, human, political and experimental outputs and processes should probably always be included in the attempt to improve organisational capacities. The design and use of only one of these elements will never do the job. To design a project using only rational development outputs or processes is no longer appropriate; social systems, as organisation are, cannot be constructed and modified in the same way physical systems can.

Many OCD projects that has been designed using only or mainly rational outputs and processes, has failed in implementation and seldom reached the expected results or objectives (= actual organisational capacity improvements). On the other hand, the use of rational outputs today probably is an unavoidable element in all project designs. Projects have to look rational. The world is sometime fascinating and confusingly strange!

It is my strong belief that capacity development attempts always should be designed to develop all four organisational capacities. If for example we want to improve an organisations capacity to plan and implement an effective EIA system, it has to be recognised, that an effective EIA system is not only determined by the organisations rational planning capacity, but by the mix of its rational, human resource, political and experimental capacities.

....political outputs adds....

Another point to be made is that political outputs and processes always should be given consideration. Define the goals and the process of development clearly, monitor and control the process carefully, and involve those who are going to be affected, avoiding where possible the use of manipulation and threats, is probably the main methods that can be extracted from the rational and human-oriented approaches to design of OCD projects. These two types of defining outputs and processes tend to assume it is possible to avoid the role and use of politic, power and conflicts. Numerous observations and experiences contest the validity of this assumption. The political perspective adds that organisations also have to be seen as centres for power, interests, influence, coalitions, conflicts and struggle for resources.

Probably no OCD effort can solely be designed around a political approach. But the capacity developer can support the effectiveness of rational or human-oriented development strategies with political activities in order to maintain of support and block resistance of the development activities. Deliberate political strategies and activities, for example the planned use of pressure groups, project steering committees, planned involvement of politicians, business chambers, *has* to be considered and creatively designed and used.

Design of political outputs and processes is, however, tricky, and only few examples have been developed, described or reported upon. Political outputs are most often hidden - backstage. The reasons for this are several, but includes the fact

that to improve political capacities, strategies and methods can be illegitimate (for example withholding information, hidden agendas, irrelevant argumentations, threats, blocking implementation of decisions, etc.) and that more openness regarding these strategies normally would reveal that capacity developers act as tools for certain power bases within or outside an organisation. So, there has been few attempts to formulate development strategies for how to understand and deal with politics, power, conflicts in organisation, how to formulate political outputs, how to actively use politics, power, conflicts to reach organisational aims and OCD.

And this despite the common knowledge and experience by managers and project leaders, that politics and power in fact is one of, maybe the most important factor for successful OCD; the ability to for example create coalitions, to get political support, to link to upcoming and winning internal or external persons and coalitions.

Design of political output, processes and activities should basically be done on two levels, namely backstage and front stage, and it is important to stress that it is only the front stage political outputs, processes and activities that can and should be openly designed and formulated. People often resist changes that adversely affect their access to information, responsibilities, influence, autonomy and power base, and changes that directly, openly and too obvious have adverse effects will attract immediate resistance. The use of more indirect strategies are therefore often more appropriate. The broad aim is often to get people worried, to foster the concern that status quo is no longer effective, to change without directly adversely affect peoples power bases.

...experimental outputs and processes adds even more....

A third point to be made is that experimental outputs and processes adds even more and probably also always should be given consideration. The experimental approach is, however, like the political, a difficult one, and only few techniques or prescriptions have been developed, described or reported upon. This lack of techniques is rather surprisingly taken in consideration that most of the recent organisational studies shows, which probably has been common knowledge for managers and project leaders, that ambiguity, complexity and un-predictability in fact is one of, maybe the most important characteristics of most organisational settings, and therefore ought to be incorporated deeply into development attempts that aims at influencing organisations.

Probably, like the political approach, also no OCD effort can solely be build around an experimental approach. But the OCD attempt can and should support the organisations capacity to innovate, experiment, use creativity, and thereby better be able to steer and survive in an ever faster changing world. Deliberate experimental outputs, for example the planned use of teams, decentralisation of budgets, open ended problems and solutions, substantial networking *has* to be considered and creatively designed and used. As this is a new area there is a need, also for the OCD efforts, to take chances and experiment with the outputs designed and techniques used.

Procedural inter-linked-ness

A fourth point to be made is the interlinked-ness of the four activities in the design phase; the determination of approach/objective/area, the determination of outputs, the determination of processes and activities, and the contextual analysis. Often these four activities will be undertaken concurrently, maybe with a little head start for the determination of the objectives, but still with the actual choice of outputs and processes and the contextual analysis influencing back on what it is that is wanted – and can be – achieved, the objectives. Information derived from the contextual analysis might for example make some design options seem unworkable and others either possible or essential. For instance, *if* the organisation has only a small amount of money or staff resources to invest in development, some of the more expensive, educative styles of development, using expensive management development options, may not be feasible.

Content interlinked-ness

A final point to be made concerns the intricate relation and balance there is between designed outputs and processes and the targeted organisational capacities. It is not so, that we can design rational outputs, and then per automatic expect development and strengthening of rational organisational capacities. We could wish the world were as simple as that. But it is not. Rational organisational capacities, for example, are developed and strengthened in a delicate application of appropriate outputs, processes and activities. The organisational political capacities might be activated through a mix of openly expressed and designed outputs and the way some of the other outputs are undertaken. Its all a question of mixing and striking a balance.....

.... and I have returned to one of the main themes of the working paper, the need to strike balances, to make practical configuration, and the overwhelming need in real life for the ability to make judgement and justifications. This includes the ability to write the design down; decent, proper and professional.

4.5 The bee sting - writing it down

Design of OCD attempts has to be formulated and put to paper. This is however not a simple task, one because so many aspects are involved, two because not everything can or should be written down. OCD attempts have to very careful documented, and even the writing style becomes an important issue.

OCD is about attempting to influence people, to develop capacity by use of for example concepts, ideas and values. *Words and language therefore becomes crucial.* A creative and appropriate use of language can be used to strengthen acceptance of the OCD proposal and thereby of implementation. Correct use of language can for example influence the way OCD proposals are justified and received, broaden the boundaries of debate, hasten or retard the introduction of OCD, or overcome or create resistance.

A number of thumb rules can be suggested:

For ... sake, do not write down the analysis. The thumb rules starts with a maybe little controversial, do not. It has become common to include context,

problem tree, stakeholder, resource dependency, staff capability, etc. analysis and background information in the description and justification of OCD attempts. This is in my opinion a mistake. Xxx Analysis, the change that is either is negatively expressed, or more likely, do not catch the point, is wrong, over-simplifies, becomes insulting, look down upon the receiver, etc. is much too big, therefore better to avoid. The analysis is for internal purposes in the head of the designers, in the discussions between the receiver and the designer, and that's it. Instead the writing style should...

...focus on action, progress, and development, or in other words, use positive language. Choose words that *connote action and avoid words that connote delay*, and increase the acceptability of the OCD proposal by expressing them in *positive result oriented language*. This means *using terms such as develop, improve, grow, maintain, challenge, meet target, do, cut, eliminate, remove*, which all implies understanding, action and progress, and assures the recipient that the problem already has been well understood and that positive steps can be taken to make things progress and develop.

On the contrary should words and language that implies further study and analysis such as *review, study, define, monitor and investigate be avoided*, because such words tends to imply procrastination because more homework has still to be done, to imply the need for analysis that should have been carried out before the proposals were made public, to imply that the problems has not been understood, and a delay is probably, and that real life improvements first will follow much later.

A consequence of this focus on action is *avoid designing approaches using comprehensive baseline studies, analysis or reviews, as they can result in a lack of focus on action and getting things done*. It is normally better to go from the specific problem that has to be solved to the context that matters, to go from the specific to the general, not the other way around - that can left to the scientists. It is normally also better to avoid time-consuming and lengthy studies in the preparation for activities, and instead go direct and quick to action, for example through pilot activities, test periods, explorative action studies, etc.

OCD ideas and proposals should be expressed in such a way that they can be seen to fit with current values and ideals, because they are more difficult to challenge if they fit these normal frameworks. Arguments and justifications must use language that is acceptable in the organisation culture and that will be attractive to and not offend for example key senior managers. It is not uncommon, that OCD proposals phrased and justified in one format are regarded acceptable, while if phrased differently with other supporting arguments will be rejected out of hand. Communication should be *personalised* with respect to particular managers or management groups to get the necessary agreement and support. In general approximately the same language and methods as the organisation intended for change use, should be applied. If the organisation is a municipal engineering department, a pure experimental self-organising approach would probably be difficult to sell, whereas a LFA analysis, an ISO 9000 or an Environmental Management System would be easier

Write about support to present day problems - and long-term development!

Sometime tensions between the projects long-term capacity development objectives and the organisations short-term operational objectives can be seen. However, because the overall objective of capacity development projects is to help, and because the overriding focus of managers is action, it is extremely *important, also in the design, to link (some of the) OCD efforts to on-going, day-to-day processes, problems and interests of the recipient organisation.* OCD projects often only succeed if they are able to attach to on-going processes, key problems and political interests in the organisation. *Deliberate and simultaneous use of proactive and reactive approaches.* OCD efforts must adapt to customer conditions and needs (reactive), but should also contribute with proactive inputs in relation to examples of best ways and practices, innovations, new ways of doing things, helicopter views at problems and solutions

Be modest and ambitious. Sometime it is argued that project cycles are too short for OCD. However, the aim of projects is not take over or manage the organisation (only the managers and staff can secure and sustain capacity development). The aim is only *to give an input – a bee sting – to the continuous development of the organisation.* OCD attempts should be designed and described as bee stings, and should not last too long (who wants a bee sting that continues to hurt!). OCD attempts should create turmoil, activities, get things started and done, not promise sustainable forever lasting capacity development. Propose and implement *appropriate and small project management structures.* It is often seen that the project management and implementation structures gets much too complex, sometime even bigger and more complex than the structure of the recipient organisation. Project designs should be kept simple and transparent. Avoid for example organograms that place the project, and the consultants, in the centre. Show instead an understanding of the realistic role and position of consultancy inputs in organisations

Use specific language - use abstract language. The appropriate degree of specificity and abstraction in OCD design descriptions are a matter of judgement. Some dimensions may be more appropriately expressed in detailed terms, while others may be more appropriately left expressed as generalities, perhaps until a later time. In general, OCD attempts should be made specific, focused and grounded in immediate realities, if abstractness is a barrier to broader acceptance and understanding. And OCD attempts should be made wider and more generally applicable by clouding them with abstractions, if specificity is a barrier to broader acceptance across the organisation. However, vague and abstract descriptions are often too complex to attract committed support. People need to have a clear idea of what they are being asked to invest in. Therefore

... be concrete and specific, also because OCD attempts often lack specificity, it is important to be especially careful in designing *specific, measurable, understandable and agreed upon outputs.* The proposed approach, the process and the expected achievements, must be described, expressed, explained in understandable down-to-earth terms. If it is not possible within few minutes to describe the key aims, outputs and methods of a OCD attempt, something is probably wrong! Describe for example the main outputs and then list the 5-7 most important activities necessary for achieving each output. Do not detail activities in

activities necessary for achieving each output. Do not detail activities in 60 sub activities! Transparent, understandable and tangible outputs can sell an OCD attempts

Create realistic and modest relations between objectives, output, activities and input, and show a realistic understanding of the role of consultancy inputs in complex organisations. It is important to *show a clear understanding of the content and capability of capacity development efforts, including what can and cannot be expected*. Avoid for example overkill statements/assumptions, like that the expected output is the institutional strengthening of the Ministry of Finance and the input is a 5-manmonth input! Furthermore, underline that reaching the outputs will not automatically solve the problems (e.g. coordination problems) or fulfil the objectives (e.g. improved environmental conditions). It is important to show that the achievements of outputs is an attempt to solve the problems - problems we do not know all the causes to, problems that nearly always prove to be much more complex than expected. Avoid describing problem solving as a simple and rational matter. *Design and describe instead outputs as (one of many other) inputs to the process of solving the problem or developing the problem solving capacities of the organisation*

Write about flexibility. The need for using LFA and concrete outputs in the design approach is evident. However, it is also important to design projects so that they *continuously fulfil the recipient's expectations*. To follow the planned blueprint, and the many task to be done in order to fulfil the plan, might result in a lack of responsiveness to what the customers regards as the main aim and outputs of the project. The design has to allow for flexibility in order to continuously fulfil the expectations of the recipient. What does the recipient want to achieve at the start of the project, after a month, after two, and so on

Use effective, well-known and accepted rational description techniques. This could for example be the logical framework approach (LFA) that without doubt acts as a good front stage method indicating control, objectivity and good project management. Here, however, it is important *not to overdo the use of the LFA technique or other similar blueprint technique*. Overdoing would for example be to divide and subdivide the project in numerous outputs and sub-outputs resulting in lack of transparency and clarity, to use extensive theoretical context and gap analysis making the essential project idea disappear

But then again, maybe we also should start to use new ways of descriptions (a wish). Modern understandings of organisations stresses that no single perspective on an organisation exists, that an organisation is not a one dimensional thing that can be rational analysed and described, that there is no such thing as a factual description of organisational structures, problems, solutions, etc. Also capacity developers will interpret structures and processes from their own positions and perspectives. In anthropology three different ways of describing reality is used: The realist tale, that tries to describe the reality in objective terms, The confessional tale, which describes what the authors have experienced and learned through the assignment, The impressionistic tales that describes small key stories or novels of what have been experienced, thereby telling through a small story a

larger picture. Capacity developers use almost exclusively the realist tale, LFA descriptions, to report on the progress and results of the work. When working in social settings, with human problems and solutions, what would be refreshing is - sometimes - more advanced description techniques, like the confessional or impressionistic tales, were used, maybe only as parts of the 'realist' descriptions of what have been accomplished.