Course transfer - a tripod capacity building approach

This item was submitted to Loughborough University's Institutional Repository by the/an author.


Additional Information:

- This is a conference paper.

Metadata Record: https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/2134/29275

Version: Published

Publisher: © WEDC, Loughborough University

Rights: This work is made available according to the conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) licence. Full details of this licence are available at: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/

Please cite the published version.
This paper presents Capacity Building (CB), Technical Assistance (TA) and Partnership Building (PB) as key elements to successful knowledge transfer, in this case course transfer. Water Supply and Sanitation for Low Income Communities course was transferred from WEDC in UK to UMI in Uganda. On the basis of the case, a Tripod Model is advanced as key to successful implementation of course transfer. The paper recommends CB at the local level instrumental to sustainability of course transferred especially when external support ceases.

### Introduction

Course transfer can be regarded as a form of transfer that involves sharing of ideas, knowledge or experience from one individual to another by means of mentoring, training, documenting and other collaboration. Argote and Ingram (2000)[1], define knowledge transfer as how ideas, and experience acquired in one situation applies (or fails to apply) to another. To achieve effective course transfer, three important elements ought to be considered, namely: Capacity Building, Technical Assistance, and Partnership Building.

This paper presents course transfer as a tripod capacity building approach, and is divided into the following sections:

- Concepts of knowledge transfer;
- Case of Course Transfer from WEDC to UMI; and
- Lessons learnt as well as recommendations.

### The concepts of knowledge transfer

#### Capacity Building

Capacity Building (CB) is constituted by efforts expended in developing human skills or societal infrastructures within a community or organization. In the case of course transfer, Capacity Building should be composed of development of institutional, financial, political and other resources, such as technology at different levels of an organization in the community.

Mitchel and Sackney (2000)[2], liken course transfer to a fragile ecosystem that is susceptible to damage by some conditions. Care should be taken to minimize risks of failure in the flow of knowledge benefits. This therefore characterizes course transfer to: -reinforcing (strong personal abilities, interpersonal relationships, as well as organizational structures) and limiting processes. In this regard, a community audit tool entitled “community capacity index”, as detailed in table one is important in establishing the level of capacity built in the community with a view of maximizing the reinforcing processes and minimizing the limiting ones affecting course transfer. The index can also serve as an important tool for monitoring and evaluation of the capacity built in course transfer, or for improving future related projects.

#### Technical assistance

Technical Assistance (see Table 1) should be considered important in facilitating quick exposure, understanding, and adoption of high value knowledge and experience for effective results on the ground. Technical Assistance will also aid standardization of knowledge and performance for easy supervision, monitoring and evaluation, as well as comparison of results on Global scale. However, the level of Technical Assistance from the source at the top to the recipient at the local level should decline with increasing time. This will enable easy gauging of capacity development of the recipient organization for self-sustainability.

#### Partnership building

Execution of course transfer requires twining relationships between developed institutions (eg. in the North) and developing institutions (eg. in the South).

This can facilitate fast adoption of knowledge available else where to solve the prevailing problems at hand. However, special consideration should be given to participatory approaches in problem identification, analysis, prioritisation and solving. This is hoped to ensure appropriate policy development and adoption of knowledge relevant to specific target recipient.

### Tripod capacity building approach – The case of WATSAN course at UMI

Practical experience in the execution of the course entitled “Water Supply and Sanitation for Low Income Communities” at Uganda Management Institute depicts course transfer as a tripod capacity building approach. Water Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC) of Loughborough University in UK transferred the course in
1998/1999 to Uganda Management Institute (UMI). The approach covers the aspects of:
- External knowledge, market expertise and supply of funds;
- Implementing agencies; and
- Local expertise and other capital resources.

**External knowledge (expertise) and funds**

During the execution of the course, external assistance was in form of technical personnel from Water Engineering and Development Centre (WEDC) of Loughborough University in United Kingdom (UK). WEDC developed the initial curriculum and on a declining basis, the WEDC personnel have been teaching on the course. Initially, WEDC participated on the teaching up to 70% of the total contact hours in 2003; this has declined to 40% in 2005. Donors have provided complementary funds to Government of Uganda through the Directorate of Water Development (DWD). DWD contracted UMI, who in turn sub-contracted WEDC to undertake Institutional Capacity Building of UMI and participate in teaching. UMI has received a number of items to support its capacity (see Table 2).

WEDC has also undertaken institutional capacity development, which has included training UMI staff and equipping the UMI library through securing appropriate training materials and arranging short courses and study tours one in the UK and another in South Africa.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCD Projector</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printer</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopier</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water testing equipment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Table 2. Capacity building items |
its successful outcome so far. However, the execution of the course transfer has also faced challenges. For example, where there are many people in the country who have knowledge in various aspects of water and sanitation, there were found to be inexperienced trainers. This necessitated a training of trainers’ course to conducted for facilitators on the course. Late disbursement of funds affected the schedules of implementation of the project. Some applicants could not meet the stringent selection criteria. While some lacked authentic academic papers, others could not be released by their employers for both modules of the course.

Learning lessons, conclusions and recommendations
In light of the experience gained during the implementation of the Water Supply and Sanitation course for low-income communities, the following are learning lessons, conclusions and recommendations.

Learning lessons
Successful course transfer is a tripod approach that necessitates participation of a wide range of stakeholders. These include; external professional firms like WEDC, that provide expertise, knowledge and funds; the implementing agencies in the recipient geographical destinations (countries) who provide conducive environment for implementation of knowledge transfer; and local resources in form of expertise and other capital resources.

The external support should decline in proportion to extent of capacity built so that by the time the external support is build the transfer is complete and sustainable. Capacity building at the local level is therefore important to ensure self-sustainability for continued operation of the course especially after external support ceases.

The host Institution, in this case UMI, should be able harness locally available resources in terms of policy support, expertise and corporate image and to allow growth of strong personal abilities, interpersonal relations, and institutional structures at local levels that are necessary to support sustainability.

Conclusions
In conclusion, whereas a tripod is necessary to prop transfer of a course from one institution to other, once propped, one stand can be withdrawn to leave two firmly standing. By the end of the five-year project period, Uganda Government and its line ministries and UMI can sustain the course when WEDC and donors have withdrawn.

Recommendations
The Tripod model should be encouraged during which capacity building at the local level in terms of personal abilities, interpersonal relations, and institutional structures to etc emphasised to enable self-sustainability.

At the time of pull out of foreign support, twining relationships should continue between UMI and Loughborough University to sustain or enhance desired standard set.

References
Argote L. and Ingram P. (2000), Knowledge Transfer: A Basis for Competitive Advantage in Firms, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburg.

Bush R, Mutch A, and Dower J (2000), Is there evidence that Capacity Building works?


Contact address
Sylvester Kugonza P.K
Senior Consultant –Uganda Management Institute
E-mail: pskkugonza@umi.ac.ug

Dr. Albert Rugumayo
Visiting Lecturer
Department of Civil Engineering
Makerere University
E-mail: rugumayo@energy.go.ug