**Ontario Council for International Cooperation (OCIC)**

**National & Regional Capacity Building Programs Roundtable**

**Wednesday, September 18: 13h00-15h45**

**Centre for Social Innovation, Toronto**

**Facilitators:**

Kimberly Gibbons –Executive Director, OCIC

Isabelle Kim –Director, Community Learning, OCIC

**Note-taker:** Nancy Cardwell

**Participants Present/Affiliations (in no order):**

1. Nadia Dijinnit – Programming planning/Partnership specialist, Congo Sanctuary and Development, Toronto
2. Padma Ugbabe – Program Assistant, comdu.it
3. Isabelle Hachette – Program Coordinator, World Accord, Kitchener
4. David Myhre – Director, My Oral Village, Toronto
5. Su McLeod – Youth Engagement Coordinator, The Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF), Toronto
6. Aysha Dawood – Program Manager, Oikocredit Canada, Toronto
7. Jakub Nemec – Program Director, Salanga, Ottawa
8. Kristin Douglas – Executive Director, Ethiopiaid Canada, Ottawa
9. Ken Wong – Volunteer, OCIC member organization
10. Neha Beri - Parliamentary Affairs Manager, Results Canada
11. Habiba Desai – Project Consultant, Belove Consulting
12. Myuri Komaragiri– Assistant Program Coordinator, International Development Studies, University of Toronto, Scarborough

*Isabelle K initially welcomes people and asks participants to reflect on the questions on slide 1 about capacity building within their organizations and to fill out the SPUR Intake survey.*

**Welcome, Introductions and Land Acknowledgment– Isabelle Kim**

**Context Setting Slides 5-9 -Kimberly Gibbons (Kim)**

Kim checks in with attendees about half of whom are OCIC members and the other half new to OCIC. She moves on to provide context about OCIC, ICN, SPUR Change and the other events happening. Recently there have been 3 funds created/announced by GAC to support SMOs, including Fund for Innovation and Transformation (FIT) and Spur Change 5-yr capacity-building program) is one example. We are interested in learning from you re: what the broad spectrum of needs and goals are for small, medium and large organizations.

-Invites participants to think through needs and goals, be creative, looking for new insights and innovations.

**Capacity Building Slides 10-15 – Isabelle K**

Isabelle K provides a rationale for the task/activity – to get at questions/experiences about capacity building, to share stories, learn from challenges, hear aspirations moving forward and what will help us get there.

**Task/Activity Slide 11**

*What images, sounds, feelings, thoughts, learning experiences come to mind when you think of ‘capacity building’?*

Participant Responses:Frustration, sadness, potential, roots, solid foundation, security

**Task/Activity Slide 12**

Isabelle K reads out OCED definition and asks for resonance, reactions.

Participants’ feedback:*(\*many phrases are verbatim)*

* participants react strongly to the word “specialist”
* the term ‘specialist’ – so many people are left of out of this capacity building definition, strengthening, we should be actors, it is sad for those left out
* “Specialists are those on the ground living the lives”, “it represents a top down hierarchy again”
* “This kind of definition makes a lot of sense” but represents a certain transmission/interpretation of knowledge and “people are measured against it”, it is a right way of thinking but it is one way of thinking
* One way,” top down approach”, “not representative of all those involved”
* The idea of “partnerships, collaboration is not represented”, it is an “isolationist definition”, “I’m surprised by it.”
* It’s up to us to identify ‘specialists’ and “consider different types of knowledge”, “lots of different knowledge systems not represented here”, need to start “advocating and integrating knowledge systems”, “human exchanges on the ground are also capacity building.”
* “I wonder what ‘human, material’ and development mean?”, there can be many definitions, this is a “view that is very narrow”, “thinking of the partnerships, there has to be more about partners”, “What about exiting?”, “The people are left now, how do they continue to strengthen” their capacity and populations afterwards? “How is it on the ground? “, self-sufficiency can be developed, recognized and valued, taking into account “the vision of the partners in the field”
* This definition has a “quantitative vibe to it rather than qualitative” – leaves out “the idea of the quality of the work in capacity building.”
* “words missing are: ‘recognition’, ‘mobilization’, “moving forward not just staying in place and talking, not just developing ideas in the box”, getting outside of what you already know.
* How to build on the inside of an organization, but what about the external (forces/structures) that impact, “security is really important here” – “it protects you while you are building your capacity, there are practices in place” but then still “lack the ability to make the impact”, there can be a “disconnect”, “the host organization is important but internal structure must be there”.
* This definition is missing people, “everybody at the same level” instead of looking at training etc., “it is a unilateral definition”, “doesn’t look at different strengths of the stakeholders”, doesn’t articulate where we’re at, where we’re going.

**Task/Activity Slide 16 – 7-Word Stories in 2 Groups**

Isabelle K asks for another approach to illustrate capacity building. She divides the room into two groups (positive experience with capacity-building group/negative experience with capacity-building group) to create a 7-word story-avoiding any names or identifying terms.

**Participant Response to Story Share – Negative Stories Side**

**“***Our power-centric resistance brings poor design and loss of focus leaving us in silos.”*

* “the negative reveals the positive.”
* Power/protections that we don’t share because we are afraid to share.
* Lack of direction, sometimes we don’t know where we are actually heading.
* “On demand” – there is no on-going effort to build capacity.

**Participant Response to Story Share – Positive Side**

*“Learn, systems, listen, exchange, community, collaboration, reflect.”*

* A member of this group provides context from which the story/words came
* A process where it’s a constant neverending process of learning, systems need contexts, fast changing dynamics in today’s world, important to listen to someone who is different, all parties have to exchange ideas, community is key, finding a sense of community and open-mindedness, identify action points to collaborate7 words are not linear
* This is the opposite of what we found – “in my life what you say has never happened”; not being able to put lessons learned into practice, talked the same issues. It is interesting that the negative group story is the exact opposite of the story that the ‘positive group’ came up with.
* We KNOW what should/would work; so why doesn’t it? Where are the barriers, where is the disconnect?
* The world is highly variable, the same people, the same organizations in the same region can have different experiences.
* We need to work together on the continuum.

**Task/Activity** - **Areas of Capacity** **Slides 17, 18**

Isabelle K asks participants to review the conceptual framework, “Areas of Capacity” in an NGO

and within participants’ own organizations. Participants identify strengths by putting a check mark next to the areas that apply to them/their organization, and putting an “X” next to the areas they would like to strengthen **\****Please see Appendix A below, Areas of Capacity poster panel data.*

**Task/Activity – Learning Methods Slides 19, 20**

This addresses the “what” and the “how”: what people would like to see in these areas, aspirational ideas that target capacity building, how to move the methodology towards sustainability. *\*Please see Appendix B below, Learning Methods poster panel data.*

**Ensuing Conversation/Questions regarding Learning Methods**

A discussion begins around “community of practice”. Isabelle K describes it as an apprenticeship model, something that happens “in community”. Informal group, peer-to-peer learning, sharing common practices. Participants help by providing examples.

* WE Adapt is a platform where you can be part of the “experts” and exchange knowledge and information.
* “Outcome Mapping” is an online organization that provides relative ways of gathering information, you can become an evaluator.

*Isabelle K asks participants to think through: What is my practice, what are my communities, what would my/our ways of learning together be, mentoring, different ways?*

* example INEE (Inter Agency Networks for Education in Emergency) shares resources and publications, the space here, CSI itself, is another example of a learning community.
* Where would a “community of practice” be hosted: in-person and/or online? Are there other examples of community of practice in Ontario?
* Yes, there are CoPs of teachers, nurses, all kinds of professional associations, youth engagement, etc,.

**Task/Activity – 2 Positioning Statements**

Participants are asked to respond to where they stand given the two statements. There is more agreement with statement 2.

**Participant Responses to the 2 Statements**

* Informally, learning is shared, enabling condition would be favouring this transmission of knowledge, not part of actual training, some guidance on how to share, ease of sharing.
* not useful to share in the organization but with partners in the field, “the more I get trained, the more competent I become, then I can strengthen the capacities of those in the field”, we should consider not only within, but with our partners and members because even sharing with other networks is organizational strengthening.

*Isabelle K asks what would make that happen, easier to share it out, reaching out to your stakeholders.*

* better understanding of the gaps, I don’t see where they are, not trained to see where they are, better assessing where I’m at, I’m learning lots but I don’t know what’s needed”, FIAP is an example, there is so much out there in all of these approaches, discerning what is the best,
* We go to trainings that are long 2,3, or even 4 days – hard to come back and implement all that depth, spreading out the trainings more by coming back in a month, here is your homework assignment, “chunk-able” assignments, lots of overwhelming info, more chunked training that you can follow up with, hand off who should go to which sessions, strategize.

*Isabelle K asks about SMOs in particular. Is there anything about these 2 statements that are particular to the SMOs? How do we build capacity as individuals within an organization and organizations, including SMOs to achieve gender equality in support of the other FIAP action areas and the SDGs. What would enable effective capacity building to achieve those goals?*

* Breaking down some of these challenges, resistance to change, individuals take things personally, on a human level how do we get people to open up to new possibilities, understandings for the Canadian context?
* Involving senior management from SMOs, recognize pre-existing strategies, directors should share their own experiences, the process of integrating and getting to sustainability, how can we share that experience or learn from others whose work aligns with ours? The senior management need to provide this theory of change to align with others, there needs to be some structure.

*Isabelle K asks what conditions are necessary, what ingredients, buy-in, people, supports…?*

* the organizations in our sector especially SMOs have high turn-over rates; supports have to be put in place by people but the knowledge is at the organizational level, knowledge management has to work together
* coordination, what is our intent, what is already out there, there is already much out there, there is a lack of time, it has to be beneficial to us, the organization, coordination and communication amongst stakeholders, getting the government involved, getting the key stakeholders involved because we are being trained, we ultimately need to get funded, so what do donors want, it is a power situation
* people need to see outside of the donors and how they can exchange ideas, innovate to look for different funding streams, competing for the same funds brings tension, community of practice would bring together experts from SMOs to determine what could help each other
* with the climate crisis and the impact, we have to look at working holistically, within FIAP there are so many fields, we need to understand about working in silos, we better start thinking differently around SDGs because there is less money out there
* SMOs’ board members should attend events like this, helps with employee turnover, my knowledge leaves with me, board often there longer than staff, more board engagement
* SMOs in relation to gender equality, you can look at inequality, if you want to create solutions to reduce the inequality then women’s issues automatically come up and then you start to develop those initiatives, gender is never alone as an issue, when you are dealing with the inequality issue you want to make more jobs specific to women, then you have to look at the solutions because the solutions can also beget other inequalities – ie. Which women? The design has to be careful of that. Example on the ground is women not being able to work because of school hours.
* you must develop an understanding of the constraints and incentive structures that grant makers and analyze that, how the private philanthropy world works, impact of funders, SMOS in general are really challenged to understand that mindset, SMOs - it’s a capacity gap, I spend a lot of time shepherding organizations and I think that relationship building is important.

**How Can We Work Together – Slide 23 - Kim**

* Challenge that SMOS don’t get retained, impact stories of SMOs are valid, dynamic, solidarity based, come from community, agile and adaptive
* Biggest asset is “us”, coming together with our sharing and learning
* OCIC is not the staff, it is a council – leveraging funding from government is critical
* Communicate - Feedback will be fed into programming
* Evaluation forms are filled out and returned

**Appendix A – Areas of Capacity Poster Data**

**Organizational Development**

* Governance/Board Development – 6 x, 2√
* Management – 3 x, 1 √
* Strategic Planning – 3.5 x, 3 √
* Risk Management – 5.5 x, 1 √
* Financial Management -2.5 x, 2 √
* Human Resources Management – 5 x
* Security Management – 3 x, 1 √
* PSEA and Safeguarding Policy – 4.5 x
* Knowledge Management and Sharing – 6 x, 1 √
* Volunteer Management – 5 x, 1 √
* Communications, IT, Social Media -5 x, 2 √
* Cross Cultural Communication – 3 x, 3 √
* Others: “Code of Conduct” – 2 x

**Program and Project Implementation**

* Partnership Development and Management – 3.5 x, 3 √
* Project Cycle Management – 2 x, 3.5 √
* Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning – 3 x, 3.5√
* Participatory Tools and Approaches – 4 x, 1 √
* Rights-based Approaches and Social Inclusion – 2 x, 3 √
* Advocacy – 2 x, 3 √

**External Relations**

* Government Relations – 3 x, 4.5 √
* Networking -7 √
* Donor Relations – 5 x, 3 √
* Fundraising – 4 x, 3 √
* Stakeholders Engagement – 3 x, 4 √
* Private Sector and CSR – 2 x, 2 √
* Advocacy – 4 x, 2 √
* Public Engagement and Global Citizenship – 4 x, 4.5 √

**Program and Project Development**

* Context Analysis/Gender-based Analysis – 2x , 5.5 √
* Stakeholder Analysis – 6 x, 2.5 √
* RBM: Theory of Change, Logic Model and Tools – 5 x, 1.5 √
* Proposal Writing – 4 x, 3.5 √
* PIP Development – 5 x, 1.5 √
* Grant Management (contract, M&E, finance) – 4 x, 1.5√
* Concept Notes – 3 x, 3 √
* Others: “Risk Analysis” – 3 x, 1 √

**Sector Knowledge/Expertise**

Emerging Trends in…

* Education – 5 x, 1√
* Health – 5 x, 1 √
* Economic Development – 2 x, 5 √
* Natural Resource Management – 3 x, 2 √
* Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship – 2 x, 3 √

**Resource Mobilization**

* Fundraising – 3 x, 3 √
* Institutional Funding – 3 x, 3 √
* Innovative Financing – 3 x, 3 √
* Corporate Social Responsibility (private sector) – 5 x, 1 √
* Volunteer Mobilization (national and international) – 3 x, 4 √
* Others: “Wealth Creation Models” – 2 x, 1 √

**Appendix B – Learning Methods Poster Data**

**Online Webinar, Courses, Etc.**

* Max 1.5 hours per session
* Record session
* Share contact info of participants
* Max of 2 presenters who have contrasting approaches to discuss with active moderator
* Max 1 hour with 2-3 presenters/presentations and at least 1 presentation illustrating an example/case study
* Use to build on/connect/follow up with and on face-to-face learnings, short workshop, semi-conference
* Be sure that other courses do not already exist elsewhere (universities, on other platforms)

**Short Workshops (up to 3 hours in person)**

* Small group
* Highly skilled/very direct presentations/solutions
* Interactive
* Opportunities for networking
* Opportunity for follow up, further learning
* Detailed description
* Option to dial in (virtual)
* According to goals/needs
* Sending information before to participants so they can really share
* Making links to other resources that are linked
* Inviting other key stakeholders
* Ensuring that participants put into practice, ie. How can this be done? Follow up sessions

**Individual Learning, Listening to Podcasts, Attending Courses…**

* Free/24 hour online availability, easy access, no other downloads, multiple devices
* Access to online resources with same (log-in) if available
* Podcast – cover and individual/single focus over a series of podcasts and opportunity to build on those (awesome for commuters)
* Easy to access, use and return back or share with colleagues

**One-on-One Individual Coaching/Mentoring**

* Flexible hours
* Get to choose (who) you want to meet, rather than just getting paired up
* Database of professionals willing to share knowledge
* I don’t know who/what my network is. It would be awesome to have the opportunity to connect more intentionally with those who are doing similar/or have done similar work to build capacity
* Commitment to 2-3 sessions (1-2 hours each)
* No specific education/requirements/prerequisites

**Seminars/Conferences (over days)**

* Breaks after each session for networking, spread out the day, do not flood information all day, keep it interactive, moving
* Clear outcomes/next steps reached by end of conference, opportunities to continue engagement
* Option to attend partial event
* Action plan oriented, clear objectives
* Don’t try to fit everything over days, make time reasonable and not over packed with agenda items

**Community of Practice**

* Online and in person (according to needs and goals)
* Inviting other stakeholders, those that are not in the room (usually included)
* Integrating our partners so we can strengthen our capacities together
* Sharing our unintended impacts (both positive and negative)
* Inviting other types of experts
* Facebook group or linkedin, post articles, knowledge sharing, videos, opportunities, other contact details,
* Clear goals and roles for members
* An inventory of existing communities of practice in Ontario
* Sharing on the ground experiences, preferably by end users/client
* Online member engagement platform
* Some meetings in person/virtual with 1 or 2, 5-8 minute presentations on a topic, followed by a discussion

**Others**

* Connect SMOs and other NGOs for networking and knowledge sharing that work in the same countries
* Connect SMOs that have offices in the same city