

Human Resource Management and Development



The Primary Sources of lessons in this document are projects within DFID's Rural Livelihoods Programme (RLP). The evidences for these lessons mainly come from evaluations of the projects carried out by the Rural Livelihoods Evaluation Partnership (RLEP). The evidences in this document are included as key findings. The Thematic Lessons Paper (TLP) series documents are available in many formats based on stakeholder demand for product style identified through a communications needs assessment survey. This document is the 'Master' or full version of TLP, which includes more detailed lessons clustered under key issues and their evidences recorded as key findings. The TLP series also has available a two page policy brief or 'Summary Sheet' both in English and Bengali. All the documents produced under TLP series are accessible at www.lcgbangladesh.org/rlep.

Thematic Lessons Papers (TLP) are intended for stakeholders who are involved in policy/programme design and influencing, in order to assist them in making informed decisions in the future.

The TLPs draw together experiences of livelihoods programme in a particular thematic context. This paper focuses on the Human Resource Management and Development theme. The lessons in this document are grouped under the following key issues:

- Policy and Strategy
- Systemic Barriers to the Development of HRM/D
- Training Management
- Human Resource Development (HRD) and Training
- Establishment of Specialised Training or HRD 'Wings'
- Resource Supply in HRD and Training
- Management of Training Information Systems

**8 PROJECTS
WITHIN
DFID'S
RURAL
LIVELIHOODS
PROGRAMME
(RLP)**

1. Fisheries Training and Extension Project- II (FTEP II)
2. Agricultural Services Innovation Reform Project (ASIRP)
3. Research and Extension in Farm Power Issues (REFPI)
4. Poverty Elimination Through Rice Research Assistance (PETRRA)
5. Support For University Fisheries Education and Research (SUFER)
6. Fourth Fisheries Project (FFP)
7. CARE Rural Livelihoods Programme (CARE RLP)
8. Community Based Fisheries Management (CBFM2)

KEY LESSONS SUMMARY

1. All aspects of strategic HRM/D, training management, HR planning, personnel development and performance management require a committed and sustained public sector reform process to become a reality at the organisational level. A project located within a single department cannot do this.
2. The lengthy process of strategy development is a productive learning process for concerned personnel, the legacy of which, may be future initiatives once junior and middle ranking staff becomes promoted to senior decision and policy-making ranks.
3. Policies and strategies demanded by Ministries will be readily accepted by the relevant Ministry with less consultation between stakeholders but as long as these are not implemented (i.e. box ticking exercise) the learning process and long term potential strategy development and implementation is lost.
4. Reform in training management was successfully demonstrated within the boundaries of Rural Livelihoods Programme project log frames but was never successfully institutionalised. Too many barriers exist to coordinate projects and the organisations' knowledge and skill development under one training management system.
5. Similarly two projects attempted to develop strategic HRD with one project (ASIRP) succeeding by getting the HRM/D strategic plan approved at Ministerial level. Upon implementation (as with partnership funds) this worked best with the lower administration units and junior ranking officers.
6. Nevertheless, projects efforts demonstrated that new systems are possible, staffs are capable and with effective leadership, overarching commitment at the highest levels supported with a reasonable budget reform can be a reality.
7. Organisations find it increasingly more difficult to respond to the ever more complex systems in which they work. Lessons from the RLP (i.e. 8 DFID funded projects) reveal that organisations require a more diverse skill base [e.g. social science, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), Management Information System (MIS), Information Technology (IT), community management, gender, livelihoods analysis etc.) but the technical skill base should not be neglected (reiterating the value of a HRM/D strategy vertically integrated with an organisational strategy).
8. Although the developments of coordinating units (Training or HRD Wings) were enhanced by projects mandated to reform HRD, they never really went beyond merely coordinating the projects' own training programme in a reformed systematic manner.
9. Furthermore, if 'Wings' are to be successful they must be credible in the eyes of the whole organisation by employing competent staff at least with formal training in HRM/D. Further elevation of its profile and intent can be attained by the 'Wing' being steered by a senior level committee headed by the organisational executive.
10. The functions and purpose of government training centres are dependent on paradigmatic shift in training management systems which are an element of, and dependent on, a HRM/D strategy. Therefore, despite substantial staff training, training centre refurbishment and re-equipping, the management processes and structures at training centres remains largely unchanged.
11. If projects not labelled as 'training projects' utilized the services of professional trainers then quality of training and evaluation of training could be better assured.
12. Resource allocation and training material development may become less repetitive and more cost effective if the process is coordinated by a strong centralised unit working closely with all projects. Cross learning and resource sharing could be improved between RLP projects.
13. Resource and equipment supply and overseas training should remain an important feature of donor-funded programmes/projects. There is a trend to move away from this due to lack of sustainability or utilization of skills imparted but evidence from RLP shows that an important attribution of resource supply is that it ameliorates access to relevant persons and open doors for reform processes.

INTRODUCTION

The basic tenet for Human Resource Management and Development (HRM/D) is that the people working in an organisation are its greatest asset for achieving objectives. HRM is a coherent and holistic approach to the management of people that requires and develops organisational structures and systems, individual attitudes and behaviour. Commonly HRD refers to 'training' or development of skills and is regarded as part of HRM. Other principle elements ascribed to HRM may be; recruitment, induction, performance management, career development and reward and recognition.

HRM/D is described as a process governed and directed by policies, strategies, rules and culture. A simple strategic model is comprised of four key components viz; Mission, Objectives, Strategy, Implementation and Review. The term 'strategic management' defines the process by which these long term aims, the strategy and implementation are managed. Strategic HRM deals with the longer-term people issues as part of the strategic management of human resources, in accordance with the intentions of the organisation's future direction, translated by its organizational strategy and mission statement.

Implementation of strategic HRM is dependent on efficient vertical integration between organisational strategy and HRD/training strategy or policy (i.e. the links between the HR activities and the organisation's strategy and, the horizontal integration which refers to the links between the HR activities themselves and to the fact that the conduct of one HR task may influence the conduct of another).

Projects within the RLP located in Government Departments have attempted to develop and implement HRM, HRD and Training management strategies; Skill and knowledge development by supporting project prescribed training events has been traditionally the mainstay for donor funded projects. Where project intervention has attempted to develop strategic processes at higher levels within institutions the more difficult it has become.

THEMATIC LESSONS

Key Issue 1 Policy and Strategy

During the last decade donors have shifted from direct skill and knowledge enhancement through intensive training programmes to developing in-house capability by creating a resource base and developing a training policy and HRD strategy to cement together a set of objectives and guide partner institutions.

Key lesson for 'better practice'

A systematic approach to HRD with a clear strategy and action plan can be developed and implemented at the Divisional and District level involving field officers and managed by a central Training Wing but still does require project support and funding. Therefore, given the 'enabling environment' two GoB Departments have demonstrated within the RLP, effective implementation of strategic processes for training management and HRD at the Divisional, District and Upazilla administrative levels. The details of these better practices may be located in ASIRP and FTPE2 documentation.

Lessons Learnt

- Projects located in government departments are unable to successfully reform organisational policy and develop HRM strategies because the whole process is too dependent on wider public service reform.
- Even then the development of policies and strategic plans for HRM/D in Government departments may only be sustained with full Departmental and Ministerial backing driven by radical reform of public service management systems. Projects generally successfully complete strategies through a long iterative and consultative process in which participants benefit from inter-sectional discussions and learn more about organisational analysis and strategic planning processes.
- Projects striving for strategic interventions form working committees and many consultative workshops. If the end result is not a working strategy then considerable time has been forfeited from the core business of the organisation and this may be detrimental to organisational performance. Solid guarantees at the most senior level must be sought before embarking on such a long and time consuming process. Developing strategies without the guarantees and merely hoping that champions at the very senior level will take the process forward after strategy development by projects is a very risky strategy for organisational reform.
- A 'policy' requested by the Ministry to a project will be approved very quickly but evidence is still patchy regarding implementation.
- Capacity to change through projects is easier to mediate at the local level (e.g. new approaches, integrated working partnerships etc.) and can result in direct and immediate beneficial impact on poor people's livelihoods but these are not sustained due to a lack of organisational support for these changes. Host government agencies regard projects as the vehicle for direct delivery not to influence organisational change or the 'rules of the game'.

Key Findings

- The initiation of the New Agricultural Extension Policy (NAEP) formulation exercise originated in the Agricultural Sector Support Project (ASSP), a Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) affiliated project, which reinforced the view that the exercise was dominated by DAE and hence the responsibility for the NAEP is generally perceived as laying in DAE and the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) rather than GOB. Despite the considerable efforts of consultation during formulation and post formulation stage there are key groups who have been “involved” but not “committed”.
- The DAE published strategic plans, which covered the periods of 1999-2002 and 2002-2006. The first one could not be implemented due to frequent change of leadership, fund constraints, lack of senior commitment and support from MoA and too much project ownership. The second strategic plan, addressed many of these weaknesses and incorporated many of the lessons from the first strategic plan. There are elements of the plan which the project Technical Assistance (TA) did not agree with (e.g. recruit more Block Supervisors) which is an indication of improved DAE ownership. Presently it is too early to say if this plan will succeed on delivering NAEP policies.
- Similarly the Department of Fisheries also developed Aquaculture Extension Strategy and Aquaculture Extension Action Plan which is project driven (FFP) and as of yet, more than one year after completion the action plan has not been implemented throughout the organisation or fully sanctioned by Ministry.
- The Human Resource Development and Management Vision Committee under the auspices of FTPEP-II developed a HRD five year action plan in both English and Bangla and a 2020 Vision Plan. The action plan chalked out the processes and tasks to develop the necessary structures, resources, personnel and processes to formulate improved training management, HRD strategies, MIS and eventually strategic HRM for the Department.
- To develop policies projects look for 'windows of opportunity' and 'champions'. In 2001 there was significant GoB rhetoric revolving around HRD which led to a workshop on HRM/D development opened by the Honourable Minister. It transpired later that the rhetoric was for increasing support for direct funding to training and staff development but not strategic HRM/D. The aforementioned plans for Department of Fisheries (DoF) were reportedly not approved because it lacked descriptions of training areas, specific courses and university formal courses.
- Similarly the Institutional Development Training Plan (IDTP) in DAE became 27 courses in DAE to focus senior staff on Institutional Development using training as the mechanism. The outcome was invariably transferral, retirement or faced with the reality of the organisational context little change could be done.
- A training policy recently developed by FFP on request from the Ministry was approved within two months of receipt. Project driven policies may take literally years of consultation and development involving tremendous investment but are never approved by the parent Ministry. Indeed the Training Policy published in 2002 as part of the 1999-2002 strategic HRM/D plan never went beyond a description on paper (ASIRP 10 year review Vol. 2). One interesting point to note is that much of the material to develop the Ministry requested DoF training policy was drawn from the previous FTPEP-2 & FFP five year action plan and 2020 Vision Plans, mainly because of the short time gap and some individuals were involved in both. The policy is presently with Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MOFL) whilst they compile policies from other departments with the view of developing a national training policy.

Key Issue 2 Systemic Barriers to the Development of HRM/D

If human resources are an organisation's greatest asset then the effective management of this asset would potentially lead to a 'quantum leap' in overall organisational performance thus justifying focusing support for the HRM development process. However there are a number of systemic barriers which ought to be highlighted.

Lessons Learnt

- Generic elements of HRM are probably the most important barriers to most endeavours striving to achieve organisational change e.g. new extension approaches, managements systems, M+E, MIS, strategic planning, restructuring, HRD, gender reform etc. If gains can be made in these areas then evidence suggests from the RLP projects working in government Departments, comprehensive sustainable reform for all interventions is more likely to be successful.
- Departmental staff had responded well to essential training in management and core HR elements but without a clear mandate for change these skills tended to become eroded over time (evidenced by project training evaluations). The lesson here is that the HRD principle of training to close a skill gap for 'today's' requirement and not what might be 'tomorrow's' requirement must be adhered to.
- GoB level of preparedness is generally quite low. The table below is based on subjective analysis prepared by a national consultant familiar with DAE and ASIRP.

Table 1 General level of preparedness for organisational change in DAE

Barriers/issues	Capacity	Willingness	Remarks
Pay rise	No	Yes	Public sector reform required and reduce dependency on renting seeking
Change of bureaucratic culture	No	Limited	
Developing team work/spirit within the organisation	Limited	No	Many senior officers maintain control and command attitude
Giving autonomy to their staff	No	No	Lack of trust
Systems of staff appreciation	Yes	Limited	Keen to introduce but lack of trust in assessment
Corrective measures for poor performance	Limited	Limited	There may be some external pressure
HR planning	No	No	Requires organisational plan and commitment
Staff recruitment	Limited	Yes	External pressure make difficult to fair selection of candidates
Better utilisation of staff	Yes	Yes	Political pressure may stop it
Succession plan	No	No	Promotion is done on the seniority basis
Change of organisational structure if required	No	Limited	Support from Ministry and probably beyond is vital
Mechanisms of developing good leadership	Yes	No	Difficult to practice in present organisational context.
Stopping frequent change of head of the organisation	No	No	Threat to senior officers in the queue
Increasing budget for extension activities	Yes	Yes	Practice of routing through projects 'mainstreamed'
Enhancing promotion	No	Yes	Only possible through adoption of HRM approaches
Changing promotion criteria (seniority)	No	No	Require total reform of public service system
Reduce donor dependency	Limited	Yes	Improve efficiency in-house and divert funding from development (projects) to revenue i.e. operationalise core business.
Improve management practices	Yes	Yes	Constrained by other factors.
Design/redesign job description	Limited	Limited	Variable
Introducing accountability	Yes	No	Change in organisational culture and overall 'rules of the game' first.

Key Findings

- Experiences in DoF and DAE cite low pay as the root causes of poor performance and job dissatisfaction. Promotion is based simply on seniority and not on merit. There is no policy of placing skilled and sincere people to the senior positions it is done by length of service. FTEP-2 and ASIRP created a human resource database to improve HR planning in succession, recruitment and training but it was seen more as a threat to the status quo; a system that the seniors themselves had most to gain from.
- The Block Supervisor and overseas tour award scheme (FTEP-2) was tremendously popular for most employees but even the cheaper Block Supervisor awards were not ultimately taken on by DAE. The popularity was largely due to its fairness, meritorious application process and rewards given to those who deserved them.
- The organisational culture that dominates these departments promotes an attitude of centralised planning and decision-making thus preventing empowerment of skilled employees to take responsibilities for their roles. All projects demonstrated that field staff empowered with undertaking project initiatives could perform to a high standard. For example, ASIRP under DAE introduced a successful decentralised bottom up planning and budgeting system. Under this system, DAE's extension activities are planned annually at the Upazila and District level. The planning at the Upazila level is guided by Farmers Information Needs Assessments (FINA) carried out in all the blocks with the participation of group of farmers. In the same project the partnership schemes (see 'Partnerships' in this series) were most successful at the Upazila level i.e. the Upazila Partnership Initiative Fund (UPIF). Under FTEP-2 and FFP field staff planned and executed the extension training programme very successfully when guided by the project. CARE-RLP went one step further and adopted more of a process approach which empowered field workers to adapt to changing circumstances driven by the beneficiaries themselves, although a high degree of coordination with other agencies and high degree of facilitation skills is required for this to succeed.
- Another HRM constraint is the use of the Annual Confidential Report (ACR), a system which projects were unable to modify. It is outdated and does little to improve teamwork, lacks transparency and is largely bureaucratic and mechanistic system. The staff's performance tends to be judged, not in terms of beneficiary impact but in terms of behavioural issues.
- Leadership, organizational skills and management are fundamental to HR development. To some extent the implementation of these skills are constrained by the aforementioned barriers however there is a lack of such skills inherent in the GoB Departments of RLP. FTEP-2 recorded through its database analysis that over the years these skills had been (especially management) provided to officers both in-country and overseas but without a mandate to utilize the skills much of the knowledge gained was lost over time.

Key Issue 3 Training Management

The management of training is one of the functional components of delivering a HRD strategy. It is the process in which training and skill development is administered according to a set of defined standard practices. All training is usually coordinated centrally and managed by training centres and training managers.

Key lesson for 'better practice'

If good training management practices and use of skilled master trainers developed by projects is to be sustained overarching reform of organisational HRM/D strategies and approaches should be a conditional prerequisite. For government departments this probably means HR reform for the entire public administration.

Lessons Learnt

- The management of training is an organisational function that projects can have greater impact upon reform without formal Ministerial approval but full internalisation of the process does ultimately require formal changes to service rules and a fundamental reform of organisational structure. Projects circumvent outdated training rules and facilitate necessary cooperation between senior staff across sectional administrative levels.
- Effective training management processes can be developed successfully under the auspices of a project and are appreciated by those involved. However, the new procedures are project driven and without an organisation wide mandate tend not to be implemented by other projects.
- The organisational staffing structure and chain of command is such that a number of senior officers in Departments would need to actively participate and coordinate in the management process (projects can facilitate this). Cross-cutting and inter-sectional working

relationships are commonly not practised well. The organisational culture tends to favour a system working along lines of patronage, sectional territoriality, service length and fierce rivalry. Internalisation of training management is unlikely without an apex body coordinating training headed by a Director reporting to the Director General and all training interventions funded by projects are channelled through the apex body.

- The development of acceptable training management procedures is a lengthy process but it does expose senior personnel to systematic strategic planning. Furthermore, the development of training management practices can represent a 'quick-win' pilot (two years) demonstrating effective annual planning, implementation and evaluation bound by a long-term strategy.
- The development of master trainers is an expensive process and although the personnel involved in this process respond very well to their training, their longevity in this role tends to be limited to the project duration.

Key Findings

- The introduction of new management systems for implementation of training courses and to a lesser degree plans for self-development generally worked well for the project led training plans, especially if the daily allowances and stipends were acceptable to most staff. Under these conditions a number of different approaches to management of training may be explored but may not be sustained without adequate remuneration.
- Under a Divisional HRD strategy the FTEP-2 successfully developed a fully independent (except for project financing) training management process from training needs analysis at District level, planning at Divisional level, centralised coordinating by the DoF Training Cell and fully autonomous implementation at the training centres utilizing visiting resource persons. This training management process was generally well received by government officers involved and demonstrates that this kind of system can work but only with the 'glue' of some projects or possibly institutional mainstreaming. It is also dependent upon the nature of the project. The FFP in the DoF funded by World Bank co-funded by the same donor (DFID) were unable to emulate the process, mainly due to administrative barriers particularly release of funds to the training centres.
- Both ASIRP and FTEP-2 tried in their respective departments to change job responsibilities and roles. The management of training and HRM/D must be executed by a Director otherwise a coordinated institutional process can not be implemented if training heads of training centres report independently and directly to the Director General (DG). Although a Director was appointed to a newly formed Training Wing in DoF, accompanied with an Officer Order from the DG, no change in training management processes was recorded.
- Under the auspices of ASIRP and FTEP-2 a cadre of master trainers was developed to train staff, NGOs and other stakeholders at respective training institutes. The quality of trainer as stated in evaluation reports was of a high professional standard but at high investment cost (overseas training) and long development period (approximately Tk three lak per trainer and one to two years in the case of FTEP-2 and DoF). Their additional role as trainer to Upazila Fisheries Officer (UFO) worked well because sharing the training requirement amongst 72 officers meant one or two engagements per year depending on training subject. This also overcame the problem of the present reluctance of dynamic staff to be posted to training centres. For DAE, diploma courses attracted good quality trainers to the training institutes. Reports suggest that the role of the DoF master trainers remains uncertain until ongoing Departmental HRD strategy is developed and approved by the Ministry. Many of the trainers supported by ASIRP have been transferred away from the Agricultural Training Institutes.

Key Issue 4 HRD and Training

For decades this has been the main focus of development assistance through infrastructure development (e.g. training centres), resource supply and training. This is still important within the RLP with the training projects attempting to deliver the training through new strategic initiatives (changing the 'rules of the game') and non-training projects (i.e. those not specialising in training management development) struggling with more complex community management and social issues without professional trainers on the teams.

Key lesson for 'better practice'

The best results for skill development are when projects combine elements of HRD approaches; participatory needs assessment prior to formal courses (with stringent evaluation) followed by intensive mentoring and support over a period of 6 months to one year (e.g. CARE RLP, FTEP-II and FFP) and in two projects (FTEP-II and ASIRP) performance appraisal linked to rewards.

Lessons Learnt

- This is still an area that all projects can excel in raising skill and knowledge levels, improving self esteem and confidence. Sustained and progressive staff development can yield improved services to beneficiaries even in the absence of a coherent strategy.
- Organisations and their staff working in natural resources are severely lacking in conflict management, community support and social development skills and are constrained in implementing their programmes in a more holistic way.
- For best results training should be implemented by professional trainers and not administered through a cascade training approach.
- Training activities tended to be managed on a semi-commercial basis responding to the needs of projects, rather than host agencies, which tends to diminish the role of a HRD strategy and Training Wing unless the projects are incorporated into an already established strategy.
- Projects not specifically labelled as training projects need to engage the services of professional trainers to improve delivery and evaluation of training objectives.
- The Resource Centre Model developed by ASIRP had a positive impact in terms of farmer contact. The high level of enquiries made by women farmers is particularly significant, and it makes it a strong candidate for mainstreaming.
- NGOs benefit substantially from training; they offer a nationwide presence, with built-in women and poor focus and access to funds but GoB/NGO attitudes preclude strategic partnerships for services delivery which is a constraint to maximising client benefits. Cost-effectiveness is unclear.
- Training is often considered important for the wrong reasons e.g. prestigious and possibly lucrative overseas trip, additional income, relief from office mediocrity, meet friends and colleagues. This trend may be reversed if the overall structure and promotional processing for a career in these agencies conform with the principles of HR planning so that officers may specialise or be motivated to do so.
- Overseas training should be built into a career and promotion plan which ideally forms part of an overall HR organisational plan and training overseas is only justified if gaps in the personal development plan cannot be filled in-country. Lessons learned from the RLP reaffirm the widely held belief that although overseas training may have some positive short term gains, skills are often eroded over time, if not part of an overall HR development plan.
- Improved selection of candidates for postgraduate training was achieved by introducing a merit-based selection system managed by a committee of senior officers but rigidly driven by DFID and DANIDA projects. However this was not mainstreamed and only ever had tacit approval by GoB.
- Short study tours are useful for introducing ideas but not skills. However, use of new ideas must be carefully considered. For example, it was learned that during overseas tours new technologies and projects witnessed by the visitors may not actually be performing well at all (contrary to glossed over presentations) and most certainly, if all the issues were known, may even fail if introduced to Bangladesh. There is a danger of inappropriate introduction of new technologies and ideas through study tours.
- Use of regional study tours and exposure visits as rewards for good performance across the country were adjudged to have had a very significant impact on overall project output.

Key Findings

- All RLP projects have developed the knowledge and skill of a very large number of trainers, extensionists, researchers, technicians, administrators, managers etc. Training in relevant technical skills have all lead to successful output achievement for most projects. Some notable experiences from the programme to share were i) junior field staff required a three stage training input (two in training centres for technical and training skills and a third encompassing a six month mentoring process at their place of work ratio of project mentors to field staff 1:12.) ii) three tier cascade training did not work but two tier did (ASSP); iii) NGOs, university teachers, private sector and government field workers all responded well to training in Value Based Research, sustainable livelihoods approaches (SLA) embracing the values of participation, equity, demand-led, gender sensitive approaches (e.g. PETRRA, SUFER, REFPI). Projects learned that approach to livelihoods issues is still too rigid and automated and not flexible in its use according to functional need. More experience in conceptual understanding and training in application is required; iv) CARE-RLP trainers more broadly acquainted with livelihood issues but to make the next step to empowerment and group organisational skills the trainers need to develop their skills further in facilitation, social analysis, advocacy and organisational issues especially as the self-help groups become more empowered and approach autonomy. A concern about overloading multi-skill requirement was registered.

- Operationalizing Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and developing community management programmes were constrained by a serious underestimation of the skill requirement for community management, conflict resolution, consensus building, gender and many other social-economic issues affecting rural communities.
- Careful merit-based selection of trainers and subsequent three stage training to master trainer level in which the third stage involved 'buddying' or mentoring with accomplished trainer during actual training interventions worked well in FTEP II.
- All big 'state' projects (FFP, ASIRP and FTEP II) had considerable problems in standardising training allowances or even succeeding in covering all needs without a stipend. In many cases there were clear indications that additional income was preferred over skill development (which is linked to promotion not being merit-based and lack of personnel development plans linked to performance). A standardised approach was developed by FFP and FTEP II but the DoF did not adopt this for all training in the department and never had any intention of sustaining it.
- Overseas training awards tend to be set at a fixed number in projects and become an automatic attraction to senior officers. Manipulation and forced placements of undeserving and inappropriate individuals for awards was often a source of unnecessary conflict between departmental/ministry officials and project staff.
- The postgraduate award selection committee (e.g. M.Sc and Ph.D) developed a well tried and tested procedure to select candidates over a two-year period but without integration into a committed HRM process long term sustainabilities was not assured. Despite the rhetoric, a systematic process of selection based on merit is not well received in government departments.
- Once junior government field staff were given the confidence in their work (e.g. 3 training stages including long mentoring process), given clear guidelines and degree of autonomy for planning, paid allowances direct and rewarded for good performance (quality assessment included), they demonstrated their ability to perform well as extensionists to transfer technology. ASIRP noted in its End of Project (EoP) report that “creation and maintenance of adequate technical skills among field staff is a problem that the DAE has been unable to solve”. The problem is the process of updating and broadening skills e.g. several technologies and links/understanding to other interactive livelihood processes and the capacity to become proficient in other skills e.g. socio-economic analyses, sustainable livelihood approaches, monitoring and evaluation practices, community management.

Key Issue 5 Establishment of Specialised Training or HRD 'Wings'

Implementation of strategic plan to develop an organisation's human resources must be coordinated and managed by a specialised unit often known as 'Training Wing' in Bangladesh although it does accurately describe its function. Essentially its main function would be to oversee the entire human resource management process but in the initial phases for GoB departments this would be more restricted to an assessment of training need as well as the development and implementation of annual training plans.

Key lesson for 'better practice'

If donors support a coordinated approach to systematic HRD cemented in project documents rather than prescribed project-specific training then the role of training wings to develop organisational and strategic HRD will become more apparent to GoB decision-makers.

Lessons Learnt

- Institutions do recognize the need to establish mechanisms to co-ordinate training (e.g. Training Wing of DoF and DAE) but there is an inherent difficulty of getting all projects to buy in to a common training management mechanism, lack of will at the senior level, confusion over the role of apex training institutions and Training Wing and insignificant revenue funding for training. Therefore the 'Wing' is established but as of yet does not have a primary role in HRD.
- Departments and more importantly the Training Wing itself lack staff trained in HRM/D and no provision to recruit HRM/D specialists. Departmental staffs lack the confidence in the staff of the 'Wing' to implement new HR related initiatives.
- Recently, The Government of Bangladesh has published and gazetted the Public Administration Training Policy (PATC). It states, *“Training institutions will enjoy financial and administrative autonomy...”* It also says *“Training institutions will make effort to become financially self-sufficient by generating funds through selling appropriately designed training packages”*. If implemented this is a step in the right direction but has still some way to go before the institutions are functioning according to an overall organisational strategic HR plan coordinated by the Training or HRD Wing.

Key Findings

- The apex institutions for training, Central Extension Resources Development Initiative (CERDI) and Fisheries Training Academy (FTA) for DAE and DoF respectively, are headed by senior rank officers, usually Director which means that the head of the Training Wing should be at least an equivalent rank. The creation of a new Director's post or revision of the staffing structure at the senior level requires Ministerial approval and therefore impossible to reform from within the Department.
- The training centers are not part of any strategic function; merely venues for occasional project-led training. The lines of command and reporting structures are confusing. Projects worked in a fragmented manner often contacting the training venues directly to host their own training events.
- DANIDA supported three month training programme in Copenhagen for HRM specialist to support FTEP-II led establishment of the Training Wing but upon return the concerned person did not have the necessary support and mandate to utilize these skills. Training in HRM should be requisite for all staff of the Training Wing and some positions should be made available to non-fisheries recruits who do specialize in HRM/D.

Key Issue 6 Resource Supply in HRD and Training

This relates to equipment, refurbishment of training centres and training material development and supply. These are areas donors have excelled in over the years and have served the institutions well although it can be argued better coordination between the donors and between GoB and donors could have improved overall resource utilization.

Key lesson for 'better practice'

Resource and equipment supply and overseas training should remain an important feature of donor-funded programmes/projects. There is a trend to move away from this due to lack of sustainability or utilization of skills imparted but evidence from RLP shows that an important attribution of resource supply is that it ameliorates access to relevant persons and open doors for system development.

Lessons Learnt

- Despite the benefits mentioned above the provision of equipment through projects reinforces the project isolationism (and thus departmental fragmentation) as project managers become more territorial to avoid loss or sharing of the resources. Holding Project Managers (which are artificially created post for the project) wholly responsible for equipment etc. enhances the 'ring-fencing' attitude.
- Projects create pockets of resource-rich centres within institutions which lead to an imbalance in organizational performance and sustainability.
- Resource development and supply is governed by project documentation and its concomitant objectives not organisational requirement. Sections receiving equipment through training projects face a funding vacuum for many years post-project resulting in rapid deterioration of equipment.
- Resource and equipment supply can have a positive effect on engaging staff constructively for other project activities even if it is not essential equipment for them to carry out project duties.
- Poor project coordination results in resource duplication especially development of training manuals and extension materials.
- There are poor or non-existent exit strategies for distribution and utilization of materials

Key Findings

- ASIRP had a very small budget for resources and equipment. This was evaluated as being a constraint on progress towards strategy and action plan development it is contrary to the expectation of a donor funded project.
- Without effective coordination FFP and FTEP-2 struggled to coordinate material development and resource allocation. Other projects funded by GoB replicated training and extension material.

Key Issue 7 Management of Training Information Systems

To replace laboriously compiled paper-based MIS of basic training information projects developed computerized user-friendly database systems to greatly improve planning, monitoring and decision-making.

Key lesson for 'better practice'

A computerized MIS is unlikely to be sustained within one section; it must become a department-wide functional component essential for effective performance of the organization. Training information is reliant on the sharing of data with other sections e.g. personnel data such as staff addresses, transfers, retirement date must be linked with the personnel section. These systems cannot function independently of one another. There must be vertical and horizontal integration.

Lessons Learnt

- Projects developed computer-based information management systems to support the HRD programme (mostly the project's own prescribed training activities) and trained local government staff to operate the system but without the whole HRM process institutionalised this met the common fate of part or all ending with the project
- Government departments do not have the IT capacity in terms of hardware (computers) and personnel specialising in sustaining these systems.
- Introduction of these may hamper development of more traditional and manageable systems. Once the organizations are able to prove sustainability in maintaining simple computerised office network then introduction of complex computerised management systems may be introduced.
- Every effort must be made to keep it simple and understandable.
- The maintenance of personnel databases tended to be met with suspicion for some influential employees rather than support.
- Involvement in the development process should engage as wide an audience as possible beyond the project envelope, particularly those that might find the system useful.

Key Findings

- The information systems developed by FTEP-2 are occasionally revisited but only by other projects and officers reporting to Ministry on specifically requested data. The Personnel Information System in DAE is still regularly used but not for HR planning.
- The response to MIS is also a lukewarm one as noted in an excerpt from the FFP Aide Memoire of May 2004; "Management Information System concepts are gaining increasing interest within the DOF but there is continued concern for the lack of provision to support monitoring and evaluation after the project. This requires urgent attention. As also noted in the last February 2004 Review, the capacity of the DOF to develop and apply data, and use this in strategic perspectives, still needs to be developed".

WAY FORWARD?

- **Public sector and institutional reform.** A coherent sector strategy is a prerequisite for sustainable HR strategy and supporting structures. Since this is probably at least a ten year process;

Departments need to develop improved in-house training management practices and utilization of training resources especially training centres and, effectively utilize their own resource persons (developed over more than a decade of donor supported capacity building) to improve and update the skills of junior staff and new entrants thus preventing knowledge erosion in the organisation.

Donors may support an overarching reform of HRM/D in the public sector but with concurrent funding to Departments that have established fully functional HRM/D units guided by an organisational strategy e.g. HRD strategy responds to a national fisheries/research/agriculture strategy (i.e. for DoF, Bangladesh Rice Research Institute, DAE)

- **Strategic groups.** The formation of a high-level strategic HRM policy group, and a lower level working group, to support the change process. The strategy group would be led by the Ministry of Establishment (MoE) and contain members from the Public Service Commission (PSC) and Ministry of Finance who are highly influential in HR management. In addition, there would be private sector/NGO representation to expand the knowledge base of HRM and share good practice.
- **Institutional Analysis.** Linking the Local Consultative Groups (LCG) to the 'Strategic Groups' is an opportunity to develop an institutional analysis study funded by the LCG donor representatives which may provide strategic direction for overarching public service reform for HR in the civil service. This would set in motion a programme to address HRM/D and could develop better performing Departments working in accordance with the reformation process. This provides donors with an opportunity to support skill development once again but this time as part of a public sector reform initiative.
- **Support for in-country HRM development.** The Bangladesh Society of HRM (BASHRM) has established itself as the only forum for HRM professionals within Bangladesh. If the Society were well developed, it could become the professional body for HRM in the country. Support could include a small scoping study to examine how the Society could be developed, where and how the public sector would fit, timescale for any support and long-term sustainability. The professionals affiliated with BASHRM may be utilized for the analysis recommended above and advise strategic groups.
- **Co-ordinated support for MIS Development.** There is currently duplication of MIS development for HRM systems. This could be established as a standardised system to meet all HRM needs. Support could include an initial review of current systems and an agreed plan on an integrated approach to MIS development.
- **Developing a Code of Conduct.** The purpose of a code of conduct is to provide a framework for accountability; maintaining safeguards and outlining clear statements of expected behaviour. All interested parties can use it as a point of reference. Standards should not be static but reflect the changing organisation and engender a sense of integrity offering assurance to the public (customers etc). It is a proven effective human resource management tool creating a sense of discipline and responsibility.

FURTHER READING

ASIRP & ASSP (2003): Organisational Development with the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) Bangladesh: A Ten Year Review. 1992-2003 (volume 1). October 2003. Dhaka, Bangladesh.

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Reeves, J. & Islam, Md. S. (2003): Review of Investment in Human Resource Development and Management. February 2003.

RLEP (2003-2004): End of Project Reports of FTEP II, ASIRP, REFPI and Output to Purpose Reports of CBFM2, PETRRA, SUFER, CARE RLP and Aide Memoir of FFP. Dhaka, Bangladesh.

More information on these themes and issues can be found in Project Output to Purpose and End of Project Review documents accessible at www.lcgbangladesh.org/rlep.