



INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

Initiative in Education & Lifelong Learning

Certificate Programme

Civil Society Building

Unit 5

Strengthening Civil Society

Units Of Certificate In Civil Society Building

Unit 1: Civil Society – Meanings, Origins, Functions, And Interpretations

- Historical And Cultural Roots Of Civil Society
- Wider Aspects Of Civil Society
- Civil Society Organisations In South Asia

Unit 2: Civil Society And Other Actors

- The Trinity – State, Market And Civil Society
- Civil Society And The State
- Civil Society And The Market
- Civil Society And Donors

Unit 3: Civil Society And Development

- Development – Meanings, Origins And Evolution
- Examples Of The Work Of Civil Society Organisations In The Field Of Development
- Emerging Issues And Challenges

Unit 4: Civil Society And Democracy

- Civil Society, Democracy And Governance
- Bringing About Change – Practical Interventions By CSOs To Strengthen Democracy And Improve Governance
- Bringing About Change – CSP Work At Policy Level To Strengthen Democracy And Improve Governance

Unit 5: Strengthening Civil Society

- Why Capacity Building?
- Aspects Of Capacity Building In Civil Society
- Current And Future Issues

Unit 6: Civil Society In A Globalised World

- Globalisation
- The Effects Of Globalisation On Civil Society
- Current Issues And Challenges For The Future

Table Of Contents

S. No.	Contents	Page No.
	Introduction	4
	Learning Objectives	4
5.1	Why Capacity-Building?	5
5.1.1	What Do We Mean By Capacity?	5
5.1.2	What Do We Mean By Capacity Building	6
5.1.3	Principles Of Capacity Building	7
5.1.4	Aspects Of Capacity Building	8
5.1.5	The 'How' Of Capacity-Building	12
5.2	Aspects Of Capacity Building In Civil Society	15
5.2.1	Building Organisational Capacity Of Csos	15
5.2.2	Building The Capacity Of The Civil Society Sector As A Whole	24
5.2.3	Building The Environment In Which Civil Society Functions	27
5.3	Current And Future Issues	35
5.3.1	Bureaucratic And Legal Constraints	35
5.3.2	Different Perceptions	35
5.3.3	Use Of External "Expertise"	37
5.3.4	Widening The Net	38
5.3.5	"Far Too Busy"	38
5.3.6	"Overheads"	39
5.3.7	"Telling The Story"	39
	Summary	40
	Recommended Readings	40
	References	41

Introduction

Having formed an understanding of civil society and the important contributions it makes to development, democracy and governance, we will now explore how civil society can be strengthened to enable it to make such contributions more effectively. Unit 5 will explore the concept of capacity building, as it applies to civil society. With the help of some illustrations, we shall also look into the main aspects of capacity building in civil society – organisational capacity, sectoral capacity and environmental capacity. In conclusion we will introduce you to some of the critical issues related to civil society capacity building. These are, however, not comprehensive; we encourage you to critically assess and analyse others.

Learning Objectives

After completing this Unit you will be familiar with:

- What capacity and capacity building mean in the context of civil society and civil society organisations (CSOs)
- How capacity within CSOs can be strengthened
- How capacity in the civil society sector as a whole can be strengthened
- How capacity in the wider environment which affects civil society and CSOs can be strengthened
- Current and future issues concerning capacity building in civil society

5.1 Why Capacity Building?

5.1.1 What Do We Mean By Capacity?

Let us begin with a very brief summary of some of the main things we have already learnt about civil society in the previous Units:

- While it can be simply defined – the result of individual and collective action for the public good – civil society is in its nature complex and multi-faceted.
- Civil society has multiple roles and functions in the arenas of both development and democracy, including acting across a broad range of aspects of development – economic, social and environmental; facilitating people’s participation in all such aspects of development; formulating and advocating for new policies to underpin such development; enabling and fostering public debate and involvement in democratic processes; building social capital and social cohesion; monitoring the performance and impacts of government and the corporate sector; promoting participatory democracy and inclusive governance, and much more.
- Civil society has, and/or needs to develop, relationships with the other two actors of the trinity; to nurture links and relationships within its own component parts, and with particular actors such as donors; and to do all this at every level from local to global. All these relationships make distinctive demands on civil society.

Nowadays it is widely recognised that in the rapidly changing world in which we live, individuals and organisations need to be able to function and indeed prosper in and contribute meaningfully to such a world. One aspect of change familiar to all of us is that of technological change: no sooner has new hardware or software come into existence, and been mastered by those needing to use it, than another innovation comes along. As we have noted in previous Units, for civil society organisations (CSOs) many other things have changed and are still changing. These include the

political, legal, professional, and resource environments in which CSOs work; and, of course 'globalisation', which we will discuss in more detail in Unit 6.

It therefore follows that at all levels, from that of an individual to that of a large CSO seeking to act for the public good, there needs to be the 'capacity' to undertake a large, complex and ever-changing set of tasks.

To understand what capacity means, it is useful to note, firstly, that dictionary definitions use the word 'power' when defining it. Webster's dictionary, for example, defines it as 'the power to hold'. Secondly, it is informative to draw an analogy with the internal combustion engine. In it, three things are mixed together to create power – air, petrol and an electric spark, which ignites the other two. Analogically, the three elements that both individuals and organisations, and the groups and associations they form, need to create the power represented by civil society are:

- 'Knowledge', which is gathered from education and life experience;
- 'Skills', which are learned from training and also from life experience; and
- 'Qualities' of a personal nature which enable the individual or organisation to be flexible, adaptable, communicative, altruistic, committed, motivated, tolerant, progressive, innovative and creative, including being able to learn and re-learn new knowledge and skills continuously, as the world changes.

Capacity in the civil society context can then be defined as the totality of the organised effort (i.e., the power) of civil society to fulfil its mission.

5.1.2 What Do We Mean By Capacity Building?

Very simply, it means building the three ingredients of knowledge, skills and qualities. But given that modern society is changing rapidly and continuously, it is not enough for individuals or the organisations they comprise to build and then retain the capacity to do the job currently at hand. In a changing world, that alone is insufficient.

Here we should note that this is part of the reason why the term ‘capacity building’, while commonly used (and used here), is felt to be inadequate: it implies that the process has a finite beginning and end, as if it is to be done once and then everything will be fine! It also implies ‘building from scratch’, as if an individual or organisation possesses no existing capacity, which would be rare. The term ‘capacity-strengthening’ is preferred by some because it is more positive and forward-looking in its tone.

THINK TANK

You are preparing to speak in a debate on the following motion:

“That this house believes that of knowledge, skills and qualities, only the latter are relevant and necessary to those wishing to prosper in today’s changing world”

Will you speak for or against the motion?

In less than 100 words, summarise the points you would make in your speech.

5.1.3 Principles Of Capacity Building

Three essential principles of capacity building are evident from this earlier explanation:

- Firstly, capacity building is a continuous and ongoing process: different stages of the establishment, evolution, growth and change of an organisation will require different types of capacity.
- Secondly, we have seen that there are many different types of organisations in civil society: including (to give just a few examples) institutionalised, formally structured intermediary organisations; informal community, religious and cultural associations; and social movements. Each type needs different types of capacity, comprising a mix of the three elements (knowledge, skills, qualities). We cannot therefore talk about CSO capacity building in terms of ‘one size fits all’. We will look at this aspect in more detail shortly.

- Thirdly, capacity building is a self-reflecting and evolutionary learning process: in a CSO it needs to be done not because external influences (such as this course) say that it must be done, but out of self-motivation.

5.1.4 Aspects Of Capacity Building

To understand capacity building of civil society, it will be useful to see four different aspects of capacity:

- i. Individual capacity
- ii. Organisational capacity
- iii. Sectoral capacity
- iv. Societal capacity

These aspects are not mutually exclusive, as you no doubt know there is some amount of overlap among them; however it would help to study them separately.

Individual Capacity

Individuals or citizens are important components of civil society. Their contribution is essential for the pursuit of the common public good. In the capacity building framework we are discussing, individual capacity means capacities of individuals in existing organisations; and of individual change agents like citizen leaders and social activists who exist outside collectives and citizens' associations. For individuals within organisations, especially formal organisations, individual capacity needs would include issues like leadership development, staff development, gender sensitivity, etc. (This will be discussed in greater detail later in the Unit.)

In order to facilitate social change and good governance, citizen leaders and social activists have an important role to play. This includes sharing information and raising awareness among fellow citizens about their rights and duties; facilitating and strengthening citizen collectives and actions for monitoring state policies and

programmes; facilitating citizen action for the common public good; and asserting and demanding for responsive and participatory governance. For individual change agents capacity strengthening, thus, will include, among others, strengthening:

- a. *Society building needs*: how to undertake social mobilisation, manage differences and conflicts in community and, social exclusion
- b. *Influencing needs*: giving voice to emerging issues affecting the community and negotiating solutions on the community's behalf; strengthening their credibility.

For citizens it would include, among other aspects, educating them about their rights and responsibilities as citizens. In most cases, citizens' rights are emphasised; their responsibilities tend not to be highlighted. For capacity building of citizens, both rights and responsibilities need to be strengthened.

Organisational Capacity

In simple terms we can say that the capacity of any organisation, whether in civil society or the public and private sectors, consists of (Tandon, 2002):

- *Intellectual capacity*: This is not just what an organisation possesses in terms of knowledge or intellectual property. It also includes its analytical abilities, its vision, its moral and ethical base, and its ability to systematise, analyse and synthesise its own experience
- *Institutional capacity*: This is needed to make an organisation's capacity more than the sum total of the capacities of the individuals that comprise it. It includes the organisation's internal and external systems, relationships, and linkages
- *Material capacity*: This includes an organisation's physical and financial assets and resources

Alternatively, we can break down the capacity of CSOs into the following elements (Tandon, 2002). Note how the importance of different elements varies across

different types of CSOs and the extent to which any or all of the knowledge-skills-qualities ingredients are involved in them.

- *Human Resource Development (HRD) capacity:* In all sectors, the greatest and most valuable asset any organisation possesses is its people, whether they are staff in the case of formal CSOs, or members or volunteers in the case of social movements. Indeed, many argue that this is truer in CSOs than in organisations in the private sector, by virtue of the qualities of commitment and altruism displayed by the individuals that comprise them. It follows that HRD is not just about upgrading the skills and knowledge of people to enhance productivity (as it is usually taken to be in the private sector), but also about nurturing and enhancing their personal qualities.
- *Task capacity:* This is about an organisation's ability to establish, manage and continuously improve the specific tasks that it undertakes. These tasks may take various forms according to the types of organisation. For example, they may take the form of establishing and running specific projects or programmes in the case of formally organised development orientated organisations, or campaigns to influence policy by social movements, or efforts to build tolerant relationships within a community by community based associations or networks at a national or even global level.
- *Systems capacity:* To be effective, organisations need systems of various kinds. These include those relating to financial management, decision-making, planning, monitoring, information management, communications, and personnel management. These systems will be more sophisticated and complex in formal, institutionalised CSOs, but even in informal associations, while they may be simpler, systems will nevertheless be needed.
- *Information capacity:* The basis of a good decision-making system is the existence of a capacity to document, access and make use of the information relevant to such decisions. Such information is also relevant to an organisation's

research and advocacy activities. Again, the level of sophistication required for this capacity will vary according to the type and purpose of each CSO, but the saying 'information is power' is relevant to all CSOs, regardless of their level of formality or specific purpose.

- *Material and physical capacity:* Physical and material assets are needed by any organisation. These will very likely include 'hardware', such as buildings, vehicles, office equipment (including appropriate information and communications technology) and specialist equipment in the case of larger, institutionalised organisations. Among informal associations, the capacities needed will be more of the character of 'software', i.e., people's energies and efforts. And, of course, financial resources, too.
- *Strategic planning and renewal capacities:* For this, it is essential for a CSO to have effective governance arrangements. A simple management committee of members will be all that is needed in the case of an informal community based association, but a more formal Board of Trustees or Directors will be needed in more formal intermediary organisations. As well as having proper governance arrangements, organisations of all kinds need to have the ability to reformulate their policies and practices in response to changing conditions and circumstances.
- *Relationships capacity:* It is essential for CSOs of all kinds to have the capacity for good relationships not just internally, and within civil society as a whole, but with the public and private sectors and other key actors such as donors, at every level – from local to global. The internal relationships will very likely be more important in informal groups, while the external ones will be more important for social movements, networks, and policy influencing organisations.

Sectoral Capacity

Just as the capacity of a CSO is more than the sum total of the individuals comprising it, the capacity of civil society as a sector is more than the sum total of

the internal capacities of the various and diverse CSOs that operate within it. The task of building and nurturing links and relationships within its own component parts, or in other words, building the sectoral capacity of civil society, requires four key actions (Brown & Tandon, 1994):

- The creation of forums for identifying shared issues and building shared perspectives
- The promotion of mechanisms to represent key sectoral issues
- The building of systems to develop sector human resources
- The creation of processes for learning from sector experience

Environmental Capacity

As well as building the capacity of their own organisations, and across the sector as a whole, CSOs need to work to strengthen the capacity of the environment in which they and the sector as a whole function. Without a good legal system and policy environment that supports sustenance and growth of CSOs, they may find that their capacities are not enough (Tandon, 2002).

Important as the existence of such a supportive environment is, however, there is much more to it than that. Here, we come back to individuals, to the wider public, and to citizens at large. It is the attitudes and actions of all such people that not only influence civil society, but also produce it. Their capacities and capabilities are crucial to the good health of the sector.

5.1.5 The 'How' Of Capacity Building

The importance attached to capacity building in CSOs cannot be denied. CSOs, large and small, formal and informal have realised the need for a professional approach rather than an amateur one. In response, there has been the emergence of a number of capacity building providers including not only 'Support CSOs' (CSOs that specialise in providing capacity building services to other CSOs) but also government departments, businesses and private consultants. A plethora of capacity

building tools and approaches have been developed, including participatory training, organisational development and strategic planning interventions.

All this has however tended to create the mistaken impression and misnomer that external intervention (actors and tools) is necessary to build and strengthen capacity in civil society. Here it will be important to remember the principle we noted earlier that capacity building should be a 'self-reflecting and evolutionary process'; or, in other words, the different aspects of capacity that have been outlined are very often best strengthened through the process of a 'Do It Yourself' (DIY) approach. For example, the capacity to engage with government departments on a specific issue, whether of policy or practice, can in itself prove to be a greater learning influence than attending a structured workshop on 'Strategies for Engaging with Government'.

We should also note that while some capacity building can and should be done by CSOs themselves (HRD, strategic planning, etc.), some others are best done through collective and cooperative efforts with other CSOs (such as building sector networks or creating issue-focused coalitions). And on some other matters they will need to work with other sectors or actors (such as donors, governments, businesses, the general public) (Brown, 2006).

Support Organisations

In the civil society of many countries', 'Support CSOs' have emerged to deal with various aspects of these challenges. Brown (2006) has identified five kinds of such sector support organisations:

- National associations and issue networks have emerged to deal with sector fragmentation and relations with state agencies
- Human resource and organisation development agencies have emerged to cope with amateurism
- Research and information institutes have emerged to help improve the information and knowledge base of the sector

- Financial resource organisations have emerged to help organisations deal with resource sustainability
- Inter-sectoral bridging organisations have emerged to foster improved relationships between the three sectors

Support organisations don't restrict themselves to just providing financial support to CSOs. Their strategic positioning in the market and economy has led them to be inter-sectoral links (Brown, 2006).

A number of issues of importance arise here. Firstly, it is important that the emergence of local support agencies is facilitated, lest the only external support available to CSOs in the South be from those based in the North. Secondly, the institutional sustainability and capacity of the existing support organisations in the South is an emerging issue of concern. Donor support for supporting the work of such organisations is reducing and there is also a need to address the issue of "who will enhance the capacities of the capacity builder?"

Thirdly, until recently, the more formal, institutionalised CSOs involved in development interventions (non-governmental organisations, voluntary development organisations, non-governmental development organisations, etc.) were considered the main or most important manifestations of civil society, especially by government and donors, and thus the main focus of capacity building efforts. It is only in recent years that attention has begun to be given to the capacity-building needs of other types of CSOs.

Fourthly, with donor support for institutional capacity building reducing, as noted above, the challenge for them is to recognise the need to build long-term institutionalised partnerships with CSOs in the South, rather than short-term project-focused partnerships.

5.2 Aspects Of Capacity Building In Civil Society

In this section, we will focus in greater detail on some key aspects related to capacity building of CSOs.

5.2.1 Building The Organisational Capacities Of CSOs

We outlined these capacities briefly in the previous section. They are:

- Human Resource Development (HRD) capacity
- Task capacity
- Systems capacity
- Information capacity
- Material and physical capacity
- Strategic planning and renewal capacities
- Relationships capacity

Let us now look at each of them in detail.

Human Resource Development Capacity

As we have noted, people are the most precious asset in any organisation and this is truer in CSOs than in organisations working within other sectors of the trinity. It follows that HRD is not just about upgrading the skills and knowledge of people to enhance productivity, but also about nurturing and enhancing their personal qualities.

HRD is focussed on the continuous development of these people, as well as efforts to upgrade the skills, knowledge and personal qualities of people involved in CSOs, whether as paid staff or as members of more informal grassroots groups. HRD in more formal organisations will include staff recruitment, induction, training, continuous performance appraisal, and improvement and team building. The

maintenance of good personal relationships within all types of organisations is important, as are gender-sensitive policies and, above all, an organisational culture in which people feel empowered and enabled to achieve their individual personal goals as well as those of the organisation. Without all these HRD policies in place, formal organisations will experience high staff turnover and more informal ones will lose members, and there will very likely be internal conflict and dispute and the consequent undermining of the capacity of organisations to achieve their vision of a good society.

Two important aspects of HRD in CSOs, as highlighted by Tandon (2002), are worth highlighting:

Leadership: The first relates to leadership and applies to all CSOs, whether formal or informal, large or small. Many CSOs are established by an individual or a small group of people highly motivated and committed to their vision of social change. These people are sometimes referred to these days as ‘social entrepreneurs’. Through their HRD policies and practices, CSOs need to deal with the ‘downsides’ related to these founder/leaders.

One downside is that many of the founder-leaders want to directly participate in the activities of the organisation that it had initially set to do. But they also need to maintain leadership roles for efficiently running the organisation. Many founder-leaders often find maintaining this balance a difficult task (Tandon, 2002).

Another ‘downside’ is what is usually called ‘leadership succession’. The founder/leaders are often charismatic individuals, powerfully motivated and highly skilled. Their organisations can become extremely dependent on them. If HRD in the organisation does not create spaces and opportunities for staff or members to develop and exercise their own leadership skills and qualities within the organisation, the viability and sustainability of the organisation as a whole can be threatened. All too often, CSOs have collapsed, or spent many years rebuilding, after the departure of their founder-leaders because they relied too heavily and for too long on the leadership of a single person.

Professionalisation: While all types of CSO need to be professional in their approach to work, the demand for the same is much higher for more formal, institutionalised CSOs. This is a result of the increasing complexity of issues being addressed by them and the expectations from within the sector and from donors, for high-quality, well-focused work. So, increasingly, among the ranks of CSO staff, particularly in the larger, more formalised organisations, can be found many with needed professional qualifications, such as engineers, natural resource management specialists, accountants, and the like. This change creates new dynamics within CSOs, and new challenges for their HRD policies and practices, not least as regards remuneration levels, and differences of opinion between ‘activists’ and ‘professionals’. The task is to make such dynamics productive rather than disruptive.

Task Capacity

To be able to undertake tasks as varied as establishing and managing development projects and programmes in the field, advocating for policy change, mobilising and empowering people, or communicating and networking with other people and organisations, CSOs must have the technical capacities required. CSOs also need to have capacities related to the evaluation and monitoring of their activities, no matter whether they are local informal associations, social movements or large, formally-structured organisations. Only through examination of how they are progressing towards their goals can CSOs know whether they are having the desired impact.

Systems Capacity

Systems are what connect the inputs CSOs make – in the forms of the skills, knowledge and personal qualities of their members or staff – and the other resources that are put into their projects and programmes – with the outputs and impacts of the work. Without such systems the 3 ‘Es’ – economy, efficiency and effectiveness – are unlikely to be achieved. As we have noted, in informal grassroots groups the systems are likely to be simple, but in a more formal organisation the systems will be more complex and comprise several components.

As will be discussed later, perhaps the most important aspect of 'systems capacity' for CSOs is the ability to make judgements about what systems, and at what level of formality and sophistication, are required. Just as small and informal organisations do not need complex systems, large and formal organisations need to beware the danger of relying too much and for too long on the loose and informal systems that will very likely have characterised them in their early years. While knowledge and skills are of paramount importance, good systems rest also on the personal qualities of those involved in them, most obviously good inter-personal relationships.

Information Capacity

The system for managing and making good use of information is so essential for any CSO that it deserves separating out as a 'system' from those mentioned above. An information management system has many uses, but two can be singled out.

- Firstly, such a system ensures that internal decision-making systems are well-informed. Too often, CSOs and other organisations tend to lose or forget the knowledge they have accumulated when making decisions, although this tendency is more marked among the larger, more formal organisations. Local, informal organisations are better at keeping and building up local knowledge, and indeed at passing it on from generation to generation.
- Secondly, the information accumulated, often over many years of hard-won experience, represents an important aspect of the material and physical assets of CSOs: it is their 'intellectual property'. Accumulated knowledge and skills are not only valuable in informing decision-making, they are potentially an 'output' of great value: informing other organisations of lessons learned, and the wider public of what has been achieved.

Material And Physical Capacity

Although, as noted previously, this is much more than a matter of financial resources, such resources are of critical importance. Here, CSOs need to ensure that their financial resources are sustainable and, in turn, doing so means not

becoming solely or overly dependent on single and/or external sources of finance. The development of the capacity to build local, indigenous sources of finance is crucial for the long-term sustainability of CSOs. Holloway (2001) identifies three main ways in which such finance can be raised:

- Accessing new finance (from public and private sources)
- Generating new finance (from engaging with the market through, for example, the establishment of revenue-earning social enterprises)
- Capitalising on non-financial resources (through, for example, making greater use of volunteers)

At the same time, those organisations that supply external resources, such as donors, also need to play their part and avoid any tendency for their funds, through the conditionalities associated with them, becoming means by which donors, rather than actual needs, dictates the nature of the work of CSOs.

Strategic Planning And Renewal Capacities

In a world characterised by rapid and continuous change, this capacity is of critical importance. No matter whether they are local or global in their reach, all kinds of CSOs need, all the time, to look ahead and this means predicting change, or at least responding quickly to it rather than perpetually being overtaken by it. At the same time, however, CSOs also need the ability to know when change is needed, which means being able to distinguish between short-term 'fads' and 'fashions' and longer-term trends. Too much and too rapid and unnecessary change (for its own sake) is as dangerous as too little.

In essence, CSOs need to think in long-term strategic parameters to articulate their vision and to sharpen their impact. CSOs need continually to be asking questions about both the 'what' and the 'how' aspects of their work. This will be done informally in smaller grass-roots groups, but in larger, more formal and institutionalised CSOs, it will be done through the formulation on a regular basis of 'strategic plans' covering, typically, a 3 to 5 year period. The development of such plans will involve extensive and intensive consultations, not just internally among staff but also externally with

the communities served by or otherwise having a stake of some kind in the organisation. Even such strategic plans should not, however, be rigid, defining documents, because needs and circumstances, as noted, can and do change all the time. Review mechanisms are thus an important aspect of these capacities.

NOTE BANK

Organisational Development (OD) in CASA

CASA (Church Auxiliary for Social Action) is a nearly 60 year-old development NGO, with its roots in the Christian faith. It began its operations with relief and rehabilitation programmes when the current leadership took over in late 1970s. A review of CASA's Vision, Mission and Strategy was undertaken which gave a more development-oriented thrust to its programmes and operations.

In 1992 PRIA was approached by CASA to facilitate a process of Organisational Development (OD). OD is a systematically planned and deliberate strategic intervention in the life of an organisation, which assists in organisational renewal. Through a series of internal and external consultations, senior leadership in CASA had already begun to reformulate CASA's vision and mission when PRIA was approached.

PRIA's role

An initial contract was drawn up by CASA to enable PRIA to play a flexible facilitating role. In the course of the next three and half years, PRIA played a variety of roles:

1. As a first step, a week-long residential workshop was held for nearly 20 senior staff (including the director), to orient them to develop a common framework for a mission-oriented social change organisation; to understand the meaning and implications of OD in such an organisation; and identify a core team to work with PRIA to plan the next steps for the OD process
2. PRIA worked with this core team and the OD coordinator (so designated by the director of CASA) to plan the process of facilitation of an organisation-wide understanding of its new Vision and Mission
3. It was agreed to build the internal capacity in CASA to carry forward this process and its follow up. The first such capacity identified was training and facilitation. Through a series of 'training of trainers' programmes nearly 125 such trainer/facilitation events took place in CASA over the next year
4. The positive experience of developing an organisation-wide understanding of the vision-mission-strategy of CASA prompted the core team to undertake a systematic and comprehensive constituency mapping analysis. A group of nearly 100 such facilitators were trained by PRIA to undertake detailed constituency mapping analysis. It was found that the revised vision-mission-strategy underrated the reformulation of CASA's relationship with its various partners and other constituencies in different programmatic and geographical contexts
5. The results of the exercise were synthesised to evolve a profile of emerging roles and

requirements for CASA. A residential workshop examined the organisational implications of this synthesis. PRIA also facilitated understanding of issues of CASA's organisational structure and systems during this workshop. The leadership of CASA then made plans for future restructuring and reorganisation in light of the above

6. Subsequently, PRIA assisted the OD coordinator and core team to plan future HRD strategies in the light of the requirements of new roles for CASA and its staff. PRIA also facilitated workshops on strategic planning and programme planning, monitoring, and evaluation

Rajesh Tandon of PRIA notes that sustained assistance from PRIA enabled CASA build its capacity from within. Further, the ownership by CASA of the process and the continuous involvement of the leadership of CASA gave it credibility.

According to Sushant Agarwal of CASA, the OD process 'sharpened the future directions of CASA'. There was greater sense of commitment among the CASA staff towards the vision and mission of the organisation and thanks to the OD process new roles emerged for the organisation and there was substantially greater clarity about development perspectives within the organisation and among its partners.

(Agarwal & Tandon, 1996)

Relationships Capacity

In building relationships within and beyond the sector, CSOs need to know when and where a relationship needs to be cooperative in its nature; where it should be characterised by advocacy and thus be more adversarial; to understand that relationships that need to be built locally, nationally, regionally and globally; and to avoid becoming so focused on the work at hand, that external relationships are left unattended. While good relationships require knowledge and skills, they are very much about qualities such as tolerance and understanding, flexibility and adaptability. These relationships will be discussed more fully in the following section on capacities related to the sector as a whole and to the wider environment.

NOTE BANK

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF GRASS-ROOTS GROUPS

The need for transparent, responsive and accountable institutions of local self-governance has drawn many local informal citizens' collectives and networks into active roles. These include networks of social groups of women, *Dalits*, tribals and other marginalised groups. PRIA and its partner organisations have used participatory training-learning methodologies to enhance the capacities of these groups to negotiate and interface with the relevant institutions.

The process typically begins with profiles and databases of citizens' collectives and their leaders being prepared. Capacity building interventions then include mounting a series of short-duration training programmes for and with the collectives, with the aim of strengthening their understanding of and perspectives on local self-governance and citizenship. In addition, regular meetings and ongoing support and guidance are provided to the collectives and their leaders. Exposure visits are also important to facilitate learning of the leaders of grass-roots groups. Interface workshops and meetings between citizen collectives and local government institutions are also found to be very effective in strengthening capacities of the citizen groups to negotiate and initiate dialogue on specific development issues and problems.

In addition, video shows and conferences are other methods used for strengthening the capacities of citizen collectives and their leaders.

(Bandyopadhyay & Nambiar, 2004)

THINK TANK

Getting the balance rights

We noted earlier that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to CSO capacity building. The above-described components of organisational capacity will need blending in different ways according to the particular purpose of each CSO. Here, let us refer back to the classification of CSOs in India with which we concluded Unit 1. In the exercise below we reproduce the five main types and their sub-types. In the new third column we ask you to note down which *three* of the organisational capacities we have outlined above you feel are most needed in each type or sub-type of CSO.

CSO Type	Purpose	Three Most Important Organisational Capacities Needed
1. Traditional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in regulation of social relations of families and communities • Governance and protection of natural resources 	
2. Religious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charity, assisting the poor and social service 	
3. Social Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reform of society, initiations and governance 	
4. Membership Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping their members 	
4a Representational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent and advance common interests of particular category of citizens vis à vis the 	

	state	
<i>4b Professional</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To advance their professional/ occupational identity • Provide opportunities for exchange/ support to members 	
<i>4c Socio-cultural</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the social, cultural recreational needs of their members 	
<i>4d Self-Help</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address problems facing their communities • Some also serve the needs of their members 	
5. Intermediary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To advance a wider societal cause or broader public good 	
<i>5a Service delivery</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide services, like education and health care, drinking water, sanitation, micro-credit, etc. 	
<i>5b Mobilisational</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise and empower local communities and marginalised sections • May also include service delivery 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to other CSOs or other intermediary organisations 	
<i>5d Philanthropic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources to other CSOs 	
<i>5e Advocacy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocating on a particular cause 	
<i>5f Networks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend their collective voice and strength 	

5.2.2 Building The Capacity Of The Civil Society Sector As A Whole

We identified four key ways of building the capacity of civil society as a whole in the previous section:

- The creation of forums for identifying shared issues and building shared perspectives
- The promotion of mechanisms to represent key sectoral issues
- The building of systems to develop sector human resources
- The creation of processes for learning from sector experience

Let us now look at each of them.

The field of sector-wide civil society capacity building has changed a great deal over the past 10-15 years, for the better. Whereas sector-wide approaches were rare, the kinds of forums, mechanisms, systems and learning processes described here have emerged over recent times in spite of the difficulties referred to and the issues discussed later. They have also developed at many levels – from local to global (the latter will be described in more detail in Unit 6).

The Creation Of Forums For Identifying Shared Issues And Building Shared Perspectives

As we have noted in previous Units, civil society is highly heterogeneous. CSOs within the sector come in all shapes and sizes – ranging from very formal organisations to very informal associations. Their purposes and visions are highly diverse. In addition, within civil society there is contestation, debate and power struggles. This kind of diversity can negatively affect the sector's capacity to deal with larger issues owing to the possible fragmentation among its members (Brown & Tandon, 1994).

In spite of this, sector-wide capacity has to be built. Commonly this begins with networking and discussions between organisations having shared purposes within the sector (such as women's organisations, social movements, and organisations

involved with issues, such as health and environment, etc.). Ever-stronger links between such organisations have come into existence over the past two decades, functioning not only at national and sub-national levels, but also internationally.

The Promotion Of Mechanisms To Represent Key Sectoral Issues

Mechanisms known as ‘national umbrella’ organisations exist in many countries. Originally founded to promote cooperation and information sharing within the sector, these umbrella organisations, in spite of the lack of resources that characterise many of them, have evolved into organisations that are able to identify, through consultation among members and research, issues that affect the sector as a whole and then represent them to the appropriate bodies. The single most important issue among these is that of government laws and regulations affecting the sector, and relationships between government and the sector.

In addition, CSOs form coalitions and alliances (sometimes involving other bodies such as the media) to address particular needs and causes that arise from time to time, often on a temporary and ad hoc basis.

Brown and Tandon (1994) give examples of such coalitions against fundamentalist forces in various South Asian countries. India saw the formation of the ‘People’s Campaign for Secularism’. In Bangladesh, there were a series of attacks by fundamentalists on organisations that were engaged in education and empowerment of women. As a result, the Association for Development Agencies of Bangladesh (ADAB) was formed. ADAB worked in collaboration with other actors like media, academia, workers’ movement, women’s movement and cultural groups.

But networks, coalitions and alliances and indeed such bodies as national umbrella agencies do not automatically, by their very existence, represent the building of sectoral capacity. When CSOs get together to attempt to articulate and address common issues, their great diversity can just as easily generate disagreements as common ground. It is necessary to build tolerance, trust and reciprocity if umbrella bodies, coalitions and forums are to succeed. This aspect of capacity building thus takes time and effort.

Based on research carried out in 2000-01 involving case studies of seven alliances built within the civil society sector, in Asia-Pacific, Africa and Latin America, the International Forum on Capacity Building (IFCB) identified five capacities that are needed to build alliances within the civil society sector (IFCB, 2001):

- *The capacity to initiate joint action on social issues that are meaningful within the national context:* This includes the ability to interpret the environment and articulate visions and strategies; to convene allies; and to facilitate discussion
- *The capacity for collective leadership:* This requires individual leaders to put the collective sectoral good before the self-interests of individual organisations
- *The capacity to organise a connected yet flexible alliance:* This requires structures that may be loose initially becoming more organised with time; good information sharing; and the generation of required resources by alliance members
- *The capacity to mobilise external resources appropriate to alliance objectives:* This includes identifying appropriate donor agencies, and alliance members working together to secure the needed funds
- *The capacity to sustain the efforts:* The capacity to sustain the pursuit of the desired goal and to sustain the cooperative effort, over time

The Building Of Systems To Develop Sector Human Resources

We have examined HRD in the context of CSOs. Larger CSOs have the capacity to be able to run their own training courses and other forms of HRD, and even offer such services to other organisations and individuals, as PRIA is doing through this course and others. But smaller CSOs may lack such in-house capacity.

To cater for their needs, Support Organisations have come into existence in many countries. Participatory Rural Initiatives Programme (PRIP) in Bangladesh, for example, provides training, consultancy and programme development support to strengthen the capacity of small development NGOs, as well as to other NGO

Support Organisations and CSO networks and forums. In the UK, an organisation called International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC) exists to provide support and advice to CSOs on the various ways they can evaluate their work. Links between CSOs and academic and research institutions are strengthening capacity in the field of research techniques.

The Creation Of Processes For Learning From Sector Experience

While many CSOs are very good at developing new learning, some are not so at storing and using such learning and above all sharing it. Why is this the case?

Brown (2006) says that diverse CSOs need to have frank criticism amongst them so that they can learn from their errors that would, eventually, help the voluntary sector grow. But this is not possible in an environment where they are competing for the attention of donors and governments. Hence, Brown opines, it is important that governments and donors themselves allow for experimental programmes and reward frank assessments.

5.2.3 Building The Environment In Which Civil Society Functions

The Government Environment

We discussed the wider issues relating to the relationship between civil society and the government in detail in Unit 2. We studied four types of civil society-government relationship: dependency; adversarial, cooperation; and neutral. Further, in Unit 4 we looked at the factors that influence interaction with policy-makers. Building on the earlier discussions, we can state that to influence the government environment, CSOs need to understand that each of the four different types of relationship with government offer different opportunities to influence the government environment.

To take the discussion further, a key capacity to build or influence the government environment is that of public advocacy.

'Public advocacy is a planned and organised set of actions to effectively influence public policies and to get them implemented in a way that would empower the

marginalised. In a liberal democratic culture, it uses the instruments of democracy and adopts non-violent and constitutional means. The purpose of public advocacy is to advance social and economic justice, human rights, and the public interest and to make governance accountable and transparent. It is a value-driven political process' (Samuel, 1998, p. 2).

For civil society to work as a sector in order to influence public policy, three types of capacity are needed (PRIA & IDPAA, 2000):

- a. First, the capacity to 'build networks, coalitions and alliances'. These have already been discussed.
- b. Second, certain 'technical capacities' are needed. It would include capacities, such as macro-economic analysis and knowledge about the process for influencing policy.
- c. The third type of sectoral capacity needed is that of political capacity.

NOTE BANK

Four Stages Of Policy Influence

Policy influence is a cyclical process, consisting of four stages, which are likely to be repeated as successive cycles, as policy influence is rarely a one-off process.

1. The starting point is of Policy Systems Analysis – to understand the context of the policy, the actors who are key to the policy-making process, the nature of the process itself and the decisions taken;
2. The next stage is Policy Issues Analysis, where the problems relating to policies are identified;
3. From this the key issue to be taken up for policy advocacy is identified, together with the identification of opportunities for its pursuit;
4. Finally, there is the stage of Policy Implementation Monitoring, to look at what change, if any, has been achieved (not just in terms of the policy itself, but what had been learned among those involved for use on the next occasion that policy influence is sought)

(PRIA & IDPAA, 2000)

To summarise, it is important to note that public policy advocacy will succeed only if civil society sector is able to:

- *Develop an understanding of the socio-political realities:* Where do key individuals, not just in the bureaucracy but in political parties and the media, for example, stand on the issues involved?
- *Get issue recognised by general public:* Undertake the efforts required to get the issue recognised by the general public. The mass media plays an important role in this.
- *Choose and implement the right strategy and tactics:* Is the advocacy to be undertaken through private representation or more publicly, through marches, rallies, media campaigns, petitioning?
- *Effectively lobby among the identified key actors:* Building relationships, communicating across and nurturing this communication with the key actors.
- *Resolve conflicts:* Resolve conflicts that may arise among the actors involved in the advocacy

Other Institutional Environments – Private Sector And Donors

It is not only the government, through the law and public policy more generally, that creates (or does not create) the institutional environment needed for civil society and CSOs to be healthy and effective; there is also the private sector. Its culture and its policies and practices have an important effect on civil society: in particular where the extent of the market is wide and strong, its culture – of individualism and of the private good – will deleteriously affect the culture, and hence the capacity, of civil society.

The attitudes and practices of the donors that support CSOs are further equally important influences, as was also discussed in Unit 2. As with government legislation

and policies, and the private sector, CSOs must not merely monitor and accept the policies and practices of donors as they are, they need to work constantly to influence them. This applies equally well to the private sector and donor environments. If there is to be any chance of successful influence on the environments of all these other sectors and actors, CSOs and the sector as a whole need to attend to a central aspect of capacity building that we now discuss.

Building Civil Society Legitimacy And Accountability

To effectively influence all the actors included in the wider environment, CSOs themselves have to be seen as legitimate and duly accountable. Let us begin by understanding the meaning of the two terms:

Legitimacy: It can be seen as a right by which one can be and do something in society. It is the notion of legitimacy that gives the acceptance to an organisation as being lawful, admissible and justified in its position in society and the kind of work that it does.

Accountability: “A responsibility to answer for particular performance expectations to specific stakeholders” (Jagadananda & Brown, 2007, p. 9).

We raised this matter, along with some of those discussed above, in Unit 1. There, we pointed out that while governments can claim the legitimacy and associated accountability that comes from the ballot box and while the way the market functions creates legitimacy and accountability (to consumer and shareholder) in the private sector, in civil society, and especially in certain types of CSO the matter is cloudier. ‘What legitimates your actions?’ and ‘To whom are you accountable?’ are questions that are directed at CSOs and more generally at the sector as a whole. An important aspect of a strong, healthy and capable civil society sector will be that it gives serious attention to such questions.

Lack of legitimacy and accountability would lead to undermining certain organisation entities and operational capacities that are dependent on values and voluntary commitments (Jagadananda & Brown, 2007).

The need for CSOs to address issues of legitimacy and accountability arise due to the following reasons:

- Firstly, because CSOs mobilise people and public resources, they must be able to show that they are legitimate and accountable stewards of such resources
- Secondly, it is in the nature of CSOs that they have a range of diverse stakeholders – donors/funders, clients, allies, staff, members, etc. – to each of whom they must be accountable, even though different stakeholders may make different and possibly conflicting demands
- Thirdly, when CSOs take up causes and issues on behalf of the poor and marginalised, they may very likely and often be seen as not only challenging the views but as harming the self-interests of powerful actors in society, who will thus brand them as irresponsible at best and subversive at worst
- Fourthly, civil society is not necessarily seen as ‘the good guy’ when government or corporate corruption are exposed. CSOs may find themselves open to similar allegations, especially if seen as ‘an extension of government’ by virtue of their sub-contractual role, and/or ‘allies’ of business through partnership working arrangements
- Fifthly, there have been instances of problematic behaviour, or even wrong or dishonest behaviour, among CSOs, even those of previously high standing. The oft-quoted example of Greenpeace is a case in point. Its analysis of the costs of the disposal of an oil rig in the North Sea, on the basis of which a massive public advocacy campaign was mounted, was found to be entirely flawed and misleading
- Sixthly, because some of the more institutionalised larger CSOs receive funds from beyond the borders of their own countries, governments in particular have become suspicious of them. Increased global terrorism has heightened these concerns

- Finally, as we have noted, CSOs are no longer minor players operating in relatively obscure niches of social development programmes. Now, they are everywhere, from protesting on globally-televised streets against trade policies or dams or poverty, to work covering every aspect of human need and diversity, including the functioning of democracy itself. As their visibility has in consequence increased, their conduct has come under increased scrutiny

All this makes two demands on the civil society sector: to look and act inwards, for some of what needs to be done lies within organisations and the people that comprise them, and at the same time, to look and act outwards, for the rest of what needs to be done lies in the wider environment and the actors comprising it, within which civil society functions.

As regards *strengthening their legitimacy*, CSOs need first of all to understand its dimensions. These are four-fold (Jagadananda & Brown, 2007):

- *Legal*: Complying with legal and regulatory requirements
- *Normative*: Operating in a manner that is consonant with widely held social values, norms and standards
- *Pragmatic*: Demonstrating instrumental value to stakeholders
- *Cognitive*: Doing things that 'make sense' in the eyes of wider society

Then, CSOs need to take action to strengthen their legitimacy. This action will include:

- In terms of their governance and structures, adopting models and practices that are as similar as possible to those which people regard as legitimate
- Keeping all stakeholders well-informed about the work being undertaken
- Where appropriate, meeting the requirements or expectations of stakeholders
- Conversely, working where necessary to challenge and change existing laws, norms and thus change the existing perceptions that frame what is and is not regarded as legitimate

As regards *strengthening their accountability*, four core accountability mechanisms have been identified (Blagescu, 2004). These are:

- *Transparency*: Having information, reporting and disclosure practices that result in the free flow of full information at all times about a CSO's work. This means much more than fulfilling the often very minimal (as we noted in Unit 1) legal and statutory requirements that apply to CSOs
- *Participation*: Involving stakeholders in decision-making to the fullest possible extent. For many CSOs this simply means practising what they preach!
- *Evaluation and monitoring*: If stakeholders are to be able to make judgments about the quality and effectiveness of the work, CSOs must have these systems in place
- *Complaints and redress*: The best public and private sector organisations have mechanisms for internal as well as external stakeholders. CSOs should emulate them so that questions and criticisms of their work can be quickly responded to

NOTE BANK

In the Philippines, six networks of NGOs developed a code of conduct and carried out peer reviews to certify NGOs complying with it. By 2005, more than 400 NGOs had been certified. On its part, the government agreed only to grant tax deductions for certified NGOs: this is thus a good example of sector-wide effort positively influencing the external environment

(Chamberlain, 2000)

In Ethiopia, a code of conduct was developed collaboratively by NGOs in 1998, and then formally endorsed by 165 national and international NGOs. The code covers community involvement, fairness and equity, ethics, governance, independence, communication and gender as well as transparency and accountability.

(GDRC, 2014)

It must be repeated, however, that these actions to strengthen legitimacy and accountability are not merely internal matters for individual organisations. They need to be complemented by sector-wide action that is directed outwards at the external environment, through collective effort to create and then transmit clear and coherent messages. Here again, civil society needs to address its tendency for fragmentation, inter-organisational, and inter-personal rivalry.

The Wider Public

Finally there is the environment we have called the wider public. In earlier Units we have noted that citizens (ordinary citizens) themselves see a 'good society' as being characterised by a strong, enabling, government and also a strong, active civil society.

CSOs need constantly to remind themselves that the primary role of people is not that of the client or beneficiary, whether of the state, the market or CSO, but that of the constituent. Without active, well-informed, concerned citizens, civil society will be weak.

What is required then? Beyond taking the steps described above to build their legitimacy and accountability, CSOs need to keep the general public constantly informed about their work, as does the sector as a whole. This needs to be done especially through the media. In some ways it means taking a leaf out of the private sector's book: while the terms 'public relations' and 'advertising' are distasteful to many in civil society, they need to be taken up and given new meaning by the sector. This is a current challenge for the sector: how to tell often complex or technical stories to the general public in accessible and credible language. We discuss this briefly at the conclusion of this Unit. Further, the citizens need to be educated about their rights and duties.

5.3 Current And Future Issues

In this brief concluding section, we examine some of the factors that have a negative influence on civil society capacity building.

5.3.1 Bureaucratic And Legal Constraints

“Effective utilisation of the existing capacity of voluntary organisations in India is inhibited by...bureaucratic rules and procedures, political harassment, intimidation and constant threats... Use of new capacity is further restricted when the ‘right to information’ is denied...” (Tandon, 2002).

5.3.2 Different Perceptions

In 1997-98, a series of studies were carried out by the International Working Group on Capacity Building of Southern NGOs (IWGCB), and they were subsequently published by the International Forum on Capacity Building (IFCB). The studies examined attitudes and priorities regarding capacity building among NGOs working in the South (i.e. the developing countries) among three groups of agencies – donor agencies (meaning ‘donors’ as defined in Unit 2 of this course); northern (international) NGOs (NNGOs); and southern NGOs (SNGOs) themselves.

The findings were very instructive, as this table comparing the capacity building priorities of the three types of agency show (Tandon & Bandyopadhyay, 2003):

TABLE: CAPACITY BUILDING PRIORITIES

Areas of capacity-building	Southern NGOs			Other agencies	
	Asia Pacific	Latin America and the Caribbean	Africa	Northern NGOs	Donors
<i>Individual</i>					
Leadership development	•		•		•
Staff development	•	•	•		
Gender sensitivity			•	•	•

Organisational					
Planning and strategic management	•	•	•		•
Organisational renewal and development	•	•		•	•
Project/ programme design and management	•		•	•	•
Monitoring and evaluation		•	•	•	•
Financial systems	•		•		
Information access, storage, dissemination	•		•	•	•
Research, documenting and perspective-building		•			
Resources					
Fund raising	•	•	•		
Local resource mobilisation	•	•	•	•	•
External Relations (includes sectoral and environment capacity)					
Policy research, analysis and advocacy	•	•	•	•	•
Networking with other NGOs	•	•	•	•	•
Networking with other CSOs			•	•	•
Collaboration with government	•	•	•	•	•
Collaboration with business		•			•
Clarifying NGO roles and identities	•		•		
Improving governance and accountability	•				
Strengthening public support				•	

THINK TANK

Stop for a moment. Do not read the paragraphs that immediately follow. Just study the above table carefully.

Draw out three brief conclusions from the results, in terms of different perceptions among the three types of agency and write them down here:

Conclusion 1:

Conclusion 2:

Conclusion 3:

Now you can continue reading ahead!

Brown (2006) concludes: 'Southern NGOs emphasise the need for organisational and sectoral rather than individual capacity building. This emphasis is particularly strong in Latin America and Asia where civil societies have longer histories than in most African countries. This emphasis...is even clearer with NNGOs and donor agencies that support capacity building...'

A more in-depth analysis of the findings show that within the sphere of organisational capacity there are clear differences between SNGO priorities, on the one hand, and those of donors and NNGOs on the other. SNGOs for the most part (excepting those in Latin America), for example, accord less priority to evaluation and monitoring capacity, an aspect strongly prioritised by NNGOs and donors. Donors give much greater priority to collaborative work with government and business than do the NGOs. Fundraising capacities are given high priority among SNGOs and none by NNGOs and donors.

Tandon (2002) has concluded: 'Different capacity building priorities among donors and their various choices of capacity building provider result in confusion and conflict among SNGOs.'

5.3.3 Use Of External 'Expertise'

Here we return to the question of the 'how' of capacity building: do we build our own capacity (perhaps on some matters in collaboration with other CSOs having similar needs) or do we bring in external 'experts' or 'private consultants' to fix the problem for us?

This is a question often asked in all kinds of organisations in the 'trinity'. The 'bring-in outsiders' approach will, of course, inhibit the development of 'in-house' capacity', although organisations that think this through will ensure that they 'own' the process themselves and will use the external expertise in training and facilitating roles rather than a pure consultancy.

But the issue of the use of external 'experts' to build CSO capacity is a problem area insofar as CSO capacity building is concerned. 'The drive to professionalise project

management has resulted in the often indiscriminate use of 'for-profit' private consultants, consulting firms and audit firms.' (Tandon, 2002).

As we have noted, while CSO Support Organisations dedicated to helping other CSOs build their capacities have emerged in recent years, the capacity building of CSOs of southern countries, especially of intermediary CSOs, is more usually done either by locally-based private consultants, or by consultants from northern countries and northern NGOs. A number of bilateral donors favour such approaches to capacity building, while in the case of multilateral donors, the approach to capacity building among CSOs is more through government agencies or departments. Unfortunately, few or any of these providers understand either or both of the southern and CSO contexts adequately enough to be able to fully assess capacity building needs of CSOs and respond appropriately and adequately to them. There has thus been a tendency to pay little attention to the needs and potential of South-based support organisations (Tandon & Bandyopadhyay, 2003).

5.3.4 Widening The Net

At the same time, most attention over recent years has been given to the capacity building needs of the more formal, institutionalised, intermediary CSOs. There is a pressing need to broaden this focus to strengthening the capacities of civil society actors beyond the intermediary CSOs, including local collectives and associations, self-help groups, representational groups (such as trade unions and unions of peasants and women workers) and social movements and socio-cultural collectives. Far too little work has been done on the capacity building needs of such CSOs and the best ways of meeting them.

5.3.5 Far Too Busy

There is another capacity inhibiting factor, familiar to all organisations in all sectors. Building capacity needs the devotion of thought, time and resources. Staff training is a good and simple example of this – people need to take 'time-out' from their often

pressing day-to-day work on projects or programmes in order to upgrade their skills or knowledge in a particular field. As a result, the work may suffer and, in turn, poor results may lead to the loss of the project/programme grant or contract, which, in turn, may threaten the very sustainability of the organisation:

‘The bureaucratic imperatives of (NGOs) require both results (which are hard to measure in capacity building) and quick compliance with the bureaucratic systems (proposals, reports, disbursements, evaluations).’ (Tandon, 2002)

And the result is that the capacity building takes second place.

5.3.6 Overheads

For all the increased attention given by CSOs and their donors over recent years, there is still a problem with resources. Donors and government contractor/funders both want results. They want the maximum proportion of the funds provided devoted to the job at hand. High ‘administrative’ or other overheads are anathema to them, and there is still a tendency to see capacity building, whether individual, organisational, sectoral or environmental, as such an overhead.

And the result is that capacity building does not even reach second place.

5.3.7 Telling The Story

Finally, as noted in the previous section, one of the capacities that CSOs and the sector generally need to develop is that of getting its message out clearly and accessibly to the general public. CSO and sectoral capacity for public relations is poorly developed and, as we will note in Unit 6, the global publicity that civil society gets from time to time when major summits of political leaders take place is often negative.

Civil society therefore needs to get its positive stories out, and there are many thousands of such stories to be told, especially among the smaller, less formalised organisations.

Summary

In the course of this Unit, we have looked into the meaning of capacity building in the context of civil society in general and CSOs in particular. Capacity building in the third sector is quite different from that in the private or public sectors. We have explored some of these aspects that need to be understood for strengthening capacities and capabilities in CSOs.

Recommended Readings

Tandon, R. (2002). Emerging Priorities in Capacity Building. In R. Tandon, *Voluntary Action, Civil Society and State* (pp 133-148). Delhi: Mosaic Books.

Fowler, A. (1997). Improving Performance. Process and Method in Developing NGDO Capacity: Making Capacity Growth a Way of Life. In A. Fowler, *Striking a Balance: A Guide to Enhancing the Effectiveness of Non-Government Organisations in International Development*. (pp 187-214). Earthscan.

Jagadananda and Brown, L. D. (2005). *Civil Society Legitimacy and Accountability: Issues and Challenges*. Johannesburg and Cambridge: CIVICUS and Hauser Center.

References

- Agarwal, S., & Tandon, R. (1996). CASA's experience from organisational development process- Challenges, advantages and contributions. *Institutional Development (Innovations in Civil Society)*, 3(1), 28-36.
- Bandyopadhyay, K. K. (2005, January). Strengthening citizen leadership for democratising development. *Innovations in Civil Society*, IV(2).
- Bandyopadhyay, K. K., & Nambiar, M. (2004, July). Promoting grassroots networks: A means of reforming governance. *Innovations in Civil Society*, 4(1).
- Blagescu, M. (2004, April). *What makes global organisations accountable? Reassessing the global accountability framework*. Retrieved January 16, 2015, from One World Trust:
http://www.oneworldtrust.org/publications/doc_download/36-2004-reassessment-of-the-global-accountability-framework
- Brown, L. D. (2006). *Civil society capacity building: Participation, legitimacy and sector development*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Hauser Center for Non-Profit Organisations, Harvard.
- Brown, L. D., & Tandon, R. (1994, November). Institutional development for strengthening civil society. *Institutional Development (Innovations in Civil Society)*, 1(1).
- Chamberlain, R. A. (2000). *Regulating civil society*. Manila: The Philippine Council for NGO Certification.
- Edwards, M. (2000). *NGO rights and responsibilities: A new deal for global governance*. London: The Foreign Policy Centre.
- GDRC. (2014, 8 August). *A glance at NGO code of conduct*. Retrieved January 20, 2015, from Global Development Research Centre:
www.gdrc.org/ngo/codesofconduct/africa-code.html
- Holloway, R. (2001). *Towards financial self-reliance: A handbook on resource mobilisation for civil society*. London: Earthscan.
- IFCB. (2001). *Building alliances with civil society*. International Forum on Capacity Building.
- Jagadananda, & Brown, L. D. (2005). *Civil Society legitimacy and accountability: Issues and challenges*. Johannesburg: CIVICUS and Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organisations.
- PRIA & IDPAA. (2000). *Strategica planning for advocacy, regional advocacy training programme, module III*. New Delhi: PRIA.
- Samuel, J. (1998). *Public advocacy in the India context*. National Centre for Advocacy Studies: Pune.
- Tandon, R. (2002). *Voluntary action, civil society and the state*. New Delhi: Mosaic Books.
- Tandon, R., & Bandyopadhyay, K. K. (2003). *Capacity building of southern NGOs. Lessons from international forum on capacity building*. New Delhi: PRIA.