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THE POWER OF GENDER-JUST ORGANIZATIONS

TOOLKIT FOR TRANSFORMATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING



OXFAM
Canada

Acronyms

CBOs	Community based organizations
CSOS	Civil Society Organizations
ET	Evaluative Thinking
GAL	Gender Action Learning
MTLR	Mid-Term Learning Review
MSC	Most Significant Change
NGOS	Non-Governmental Organizations
OM	Outcome Mapping
WTL	Women's Transformative Leadership

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WHY A TOOLKIT ON ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING FOR GENDER JUSTICE?

In 2009, Oxfam Canada piloted a set of practical tools to support the implementation of its global capacity building program for women's rights and gender justice with a diverse set of local civil society partners.¹ These tools were developed in response to a number of challenges:

- We wanted to link gender-sensitive, institutional capacity assessment to the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of *capacity building programming*. A number of the tools we had used in the past were not strong on gender and/or failed to sufficiently integrate needs assessment within a broader framework of program cycle management.
- We needed a flexible set of tools, attentive to the complexity inherent in organizational capacity building as well as to the diversity of our partner portfolio: we work with mixed-organizations as well as women's and feminist organizations; our partners are of different sizes, formations and different stages of organizational growth and they work in very different regional and country contexts.²
- We wanted a set of tools that was reasonably 'light' as well as participatory, enabling partners to engage in self-reflective processes and learning about changes in their organizational capacities over time.

The tools we developed included a Capacity Needs Assessment Tool (CAT) along with participatory tools for ongoing program monitoring of changes in organizational capacity. The tools were constructed in relation to organizational *capacity domains* outlined in the Oxfam Canada capacity building model (summarized below) and were designed to support transformative organizational change for gender justice.

Our experience with these practical tools, particularly feedback received from field staff and partners, has encouraged us to share them more widely. In this toolkit, we present a set of revised tools, updated and expanded to reflect further improvements suggested by those who have used the tools in recent years. Changes include: 1) the structuring of the tools more overtly around a capacity building programming cycle framework, with guidance provided for each stage of the program cycle; 2) a new five domain capacity building model building on program learning to date³; and 3) more facilitation guidelines for carrying out CAT exercises. Some of the new tools are still being tested. We see this Toolkit as a work in progress. We intend to keep it up to date by revising it regularly and making new versions available on the Oxfam Canada website: www.oxfam.ca



¹ This refers to the conceptual framework and tools developed and documented in the Oxfam Canada-CIDA co-funded *Engendering Change Transition Program*. Since then the tools have been used for cooperatives and networks as well as partners implementing humanitarian programs, in addition to our portfolio of long-term development partner NGOs and CBOs. We have not yet been able to summarize lessons learned and make revisions to the Toolkit for use specifically with cooperative, networks or humanitarian partners.

² The accompanying document *Conceptual framework for transformative organizational capacity building* provides more information on the partner organizations with which Oxfam Canada works.

³ The earlier tools were constructed around a three-capacity domain model, as described in Annex 1, in the document *Conceptual framework for transformative organizational capacity building*.

About this toolkit

The objectives of this toolkit are:

- to outline a program management cycle for transformative organizational capacity building on gender justice;
- to provide a set of tools for designing, monitoring and evaluating transformative organizational capacity building on gender justice.

The toolkit can be used independently of the accompanying document *Conceptual framework for transformative organizational capacity building*; nonetheless, you may find it helpful to review that document outlining the Oxfam Canada organizational theory of change for gender justice, along with its capacity building model, which provide the foundation for the approach and tools presented here.



Who should use this toolkit?

This toolkit is designed primarily for practitioners who have responsibility for managing relatively large, multi-year organizational capacity building programs on gender equality and women's rights, involving multiple partners. These practitioners may work in Oxfam or other development NGOs and support capacity building programs with local NGOs and CBOs.

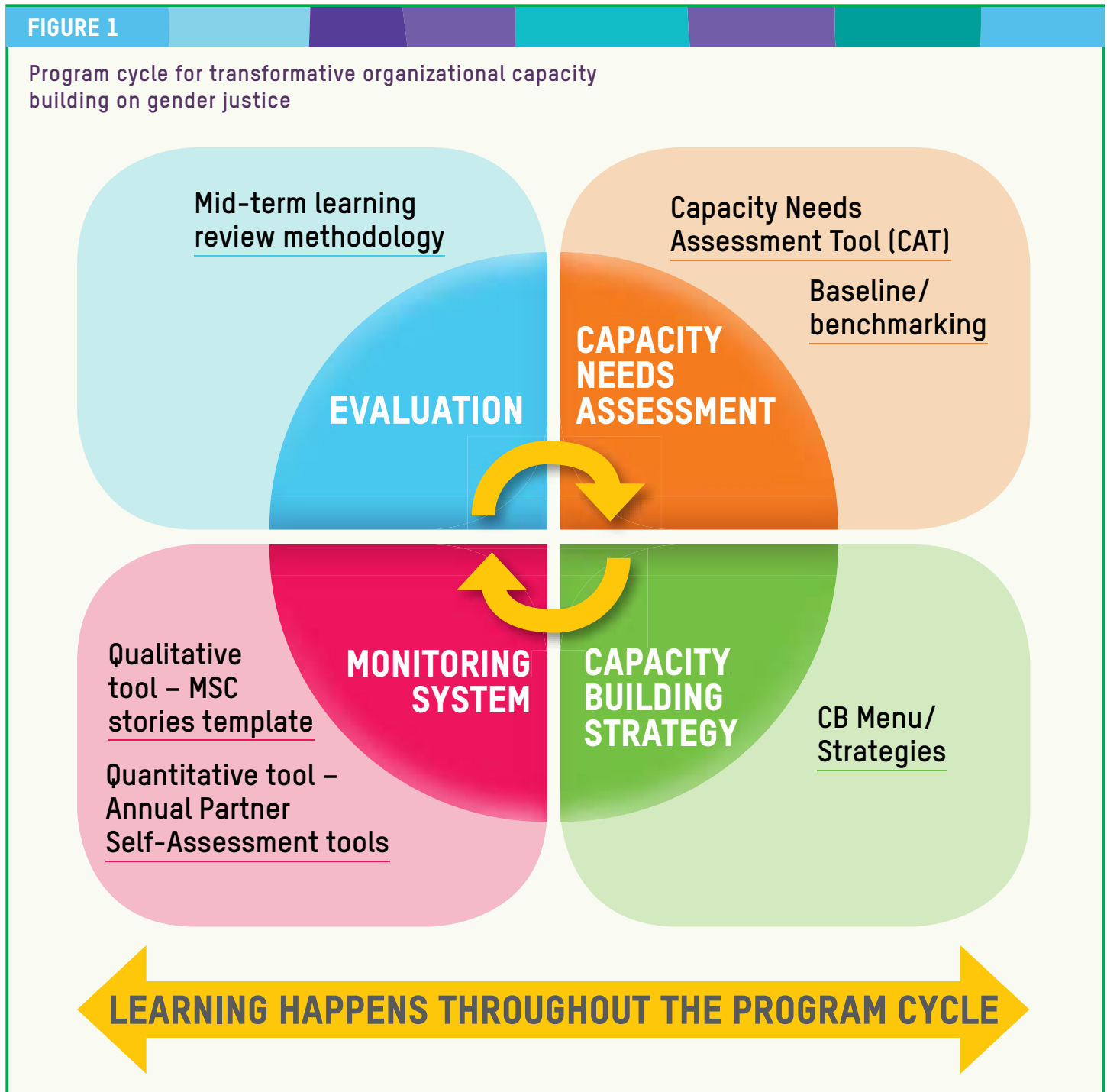
While the approach is designed mainly for practitioners managing multi-year, multiple partner capacity building programs, the toolkit is also of relevance to other organizations interested in taking a more systematic approach to organizational capacity building on gender equality and women rights. Oxfam Canada partners have found the capacity needs assessment templates and the monitoring tools very useful in supporting their internal organizational capacity building efforts. Some have picked up and used these tools for their own purposes beyond the Oxfam Canada partnership. For Oxfam Canada, the tools have helped us tremendously in strengthening our ability to design more coherent organizational capacity building programs, which are relevant to partners' needs, as well as to monitor and evaluate those programs.

How do I use this toolkit?

This toolkit is divided into four sections, each corresponding to part of the cycle of program management we have designed for an organizational capacity building program on gender justice. **Figure 1** provides a graphic to illustrate this.

FIGURE 1: Program cycle for transformative organizational capacity building on gender justice

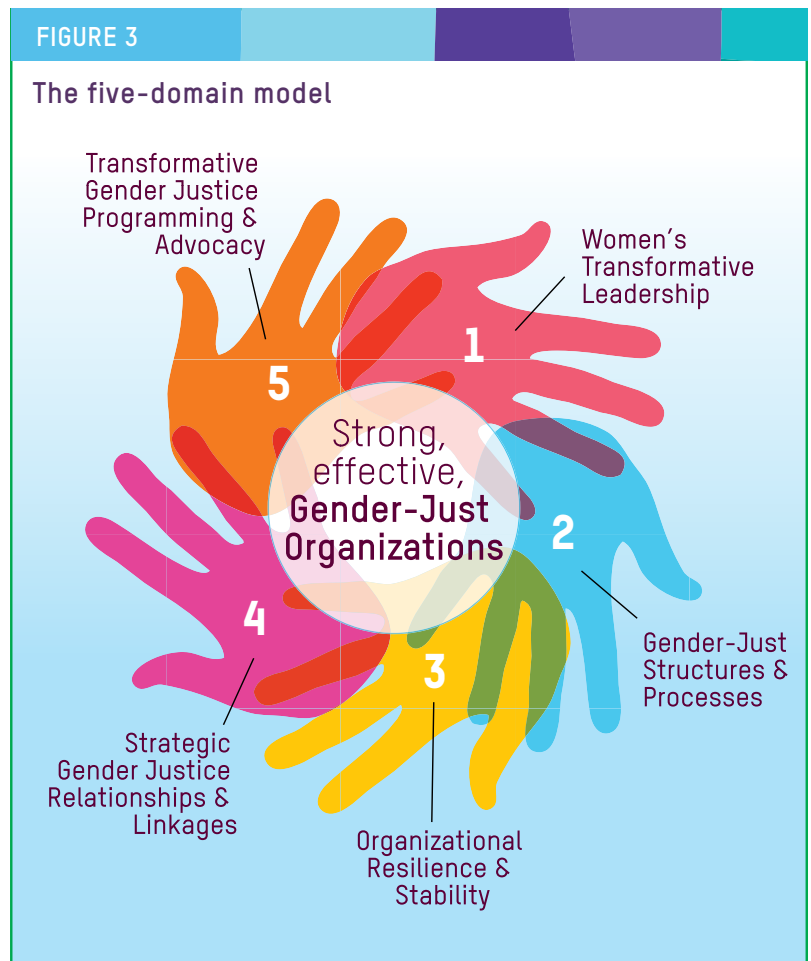
The section on the **capacity needs assessment tool (CAT)** outlines the steps to support a participatory assessment of a partner organization’s capacity for gender justice work. The completed CAT provides a baseline for monitoring progress over time. The section on developing a **Capacity Building Strategy** outlines a process for moving from needs assessment to supporting partners in prioritizing focus areas for capacity building activities, responding to real needs they have identified. Several monitoring tools are proposed to form a capacity building **Monitoring System** with an emphasis on ongoing self-monitoring by partners and annual reporting as part of the capacity building program. Suggestions for rolling-up monitoring information from multiple partners are also given. The final section of the toolkit outlines options for the **Evaluation** of an organizational capacity building program on gender equality and women’s rights, building on feminist assessment methods.



Brief overview of Oxfam Canada's Framework for organizational capacity building for gender justice

Oxfam Canada focuses on organizational capacity building because we believe that strong civil society organizations (CSOs) are key agents of change in achieving gender justice in all societies. We take a responsive approach to capacity building, recognizing that each partner is distinct, operating in its own context and at a different stage of organizational growth. Regardless of their context, organizations are themselves embedded in social structures and practice through which gender inequality and other forms of discrimination are perpetuated. Our theory of change holds that partners can become more effective change agents related to gender equality and women's rights at the local/community level when their organizational structures, policies, procedures and programming are also democratic and gender just.

Our organizational capacity building model highlights five domains of change to foster **strong, effective, gender-just organizations**.



CAPACITY DOMAIN	CAPACITY AREAS (Organization or staff competencies, functions, skills)
DOMAIN 1: Women's Transformative Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflective leadership on gender and diversity • women's confidence and leadership capacity
DOMAIN 2: Gender-Just Structures and Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'living the values' • Gender-sensitive HR policies and practices
DOMAIN 3: Organizational Resilience and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategic planning • mobilizing resources and financial management • gender-sensitive monitoring, evaluation, learning and accountability
DOMAIN 4: Strategic Gender Justice Relationships and Linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relating and networking • communicating and sharing learning and knowledge
DOMAIN 5: Transformative Gender Justice Programming and Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design and implementation of programs with strong gender mainstreaming • design and implementation of stand-alone, women-focused programs • gender equality and women's rights-focused advocacy and campaigning

This model emerged from program learning over the past three years, and builds on a previous three-domain model. In revising the model.⁴ In revising the model, our aim was to bring into sharper focus key capacity domains that we and our partners have begun to identify as particularly important for building gender-just organizations: specifically, women’s transformative leadership and external relations and linkages with other organizations working towards gender justice.

Essentially, the five capacity domains are designed to guide and support organizational change strategies in a complex system. Each capacity domain represents an aggregation of a number of individual and organizational capacities, competencies, functions, skills that, taken together, contribute to creating overall ‘capacity’ in each domain. Taking a complex adaptive systems approach⁵, we see the five capacity domains as interconnected and interdependent. That is, change in one is likely to affect changes in the others. In practice, of course, capacity building activities may be designed to address skills and functions that touch on multiple domains — or may indirectly impact on multiple domains even if they are designed primarily to build one skill set. At the same time, we recognize that organizational change is complex and as such it is rarely a straightforward, linear process, particularly when addressing challenging dimension of change in organizational gender power relations.

Further information on the five capacity domains can be found in Part 1 of the Capacity Building Package, which includes change stories from partner organizations to illustrate the domains and how they are related.

⁴ The three-domain model emerged from the Oxfam Canada-CIDA co-funded *Engendering Change Transition Program* which ended in February 28, 2009 and has been used extensively in the first three years of the current Oxfam Canada-CIDA co-funded *Engendering Change Program* which ends in 2014. A comparison of the three — and five-domain — models is available in *The Power of Gender-just Organizations: A Conceptual Framework for Transformative Organizational Capacity Building*.

⁵ A ‘Complex Adaptive Systems’ approach views organizations as “human or social systems that evolve organically in unpredictable ways in response to a wide range of stimuli and through multiple interactions. See T. Land, V. Hauch, and H. Baser, *Capacity Change and Performance, Capacity Development: between planned interventions and emergent process Policy Management Brief*, No. 22, March 2009, ECDPM, p.2.

THE POWER OF GENDER-JUST ORGANIZATIONS

TOOLKIT FOR TRANSFORMATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING



TOOLKIT SECTION ONE CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND BENCHMARKING



CAPACITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND BENCHMARKING TOOL (CAT)

In capacity building programs, assessment of existing capacity provides the basis for planning and implementation as well as monitoring progress. A good capacity assessment exercise can ultimately help to strengthen an organization and achieve results. It also enables an organization to take a less piecemeal approach to complex and often inter-related capacity building issues. As a result, they can be more strategic about capacity building interventions and prioritize activities based on needs and available resources.

The Capacity Assessment and Benchmarking Tool, known as the CAT by Oxfam Canada staff and partners, is designed to support a **participatory needs assessment** of an organization's capacity for gender justice work, based on the capacity domains defined in Oxfam Canada's capacity building model. Dozens of Oxfam partner organizations have participated in some form of the CAT over the past three years. Learning from practice has informed the process outlined in this section.

The CAT uses a self-assessment methodology combined with external facilitators acting as 'critical friends'. The assessment methodology builds on Oxfam Canada's feminist principles of assessment described below. The role of the facilitators — who ideally have a good knowledge of and relationship with the partner organization — is to probe and challenge participants to think more deeply about their organization. Together, participants in the exercise build consensus around the specific capacities they have currently and those they need in the future in order to strengthen their work on gender equality and women's rights. Thus the CAT draws on the unique knowledge, experience and perspectives of the partners in order to identify and then assess their own organizational capacities. Feedback from partners suggest that the CAT exercise is much valued for its ability to open up an internal 'conversation' about perceived gaps between aspirations with regard to gender justice goals and current capacity levels. This is an important point. It attests to tool's ability to facilitate a participatory process that builds momentum for organizational change which takes shape in the capacity building strategy.

The capacity building model recognizes each organization may have a distinct pathway of organizational change — the systems and procedures required for a large NGO will likely be different than those of a small, newly formed CBO, for example. And small CBOs may never need to 'grow' to the point of turning into larger, more differentiated, NGOs. Assessments of capacity and the corresponding capacity building program need to take into consideration how individual organizations develop and grow. Oxfam Canada's capacity building approach and tools can be used for a group of organizations with similar characteristics, yet they also provide sufficient flexibility for use with organizations of different types and in different stages of growth.

The capacity areas are loosely defined so as to enable organizations to identify what capacity changes they may need to make, given their particular form and evolution, to meet their missions and goals. The capacity building model does not prescribe a rigid set of criteria with the intent to 'professionalize' organizations, though for some this may be part of their own vision of organizational change. At the same time, building on Oxfam's experience, the CAT provides some generalizable capacity domains that we believe contribute to building strong, gender-just organizations and can be used as a basis for planning, reflection and learning.



It is important to note from the outset that the CAT is not as comprehensive as many institutional assessment tools or gender audits. As noted above, we have tried to bring into sharper focus a limited number of capacity domains that we and our partners have identified as crucial to the development of strong, effective, gender-just organizations.

The guidance notes below explain the purpose of the CAT, the value of the CAT to a partner organization, and some of the principles underpinning the CAT and our capacity building model more generally. This information is of relevance in your initial discussions with partner organizations to encourage them to participate in the CAT exercise as part of developing a strategy for organizational capacity building. The CAT is most usefully carried out after the initial partnership has been agreed upon but before the key components of a partner specific capacity building program are determined. (A modified CAT can also be used as a basis of a partnership conversation, if needed.)

Clarifying the purpose of the CAT:

- The CAT is a guided self-assessment tool to structure a dialogue on existing organizational capacity strengths, weaknesses and gaps.
- It is designed to support an organizational conversation for reflection, analysis and planning (it assumes broad participation).
- It is not designed as an external ‘evaluation’ of capacity or performance measurement (*not* for decision-making about entering into or continuing partnerships).⁶
- It is not a full institutional assessment or a gender audit; instead, focuses on a few key capacity areas that we believe contribute to building strong, effective organizations with the capacity to advance gender equality and women’s rights.

Why carry out a CAT?:

- To consolidate a picture of an organization’s current capacities around five capacity domains critical in building strong, gender-just organizations.
- To create a baseline on organizational capacity for (self) monitoring purposes over a given timeframe.
- To generate information to identify capacity needs and support the identification of capacity building priorities.
- To contribute to the design of a Capacity Building Strategy and related capacity building activities.

Principles underlying the CAT and the capacity building approach:

- **Carried out in the spirit of shared inquiry and co-learning** that encourages ongoing reflection and learning in their different contexts for all participants, including facilitators.
- **Of mutual benefit** that warrants the commitment of time and resources.
- **Voluntary participation** by partners based on an understanding that future funding will not be jeopardized by either participating or declining to participate, or by the outcomes of the assessment. The CAT is not an evaluation: it is a tool for reflection and learning.
- **Expertise is in the room**, and the workshop will elicit this knowledge, along with respecting ‘multiple ways of knowing’ consistent with feminist assessment principles, rather than providing ready-made frameworks or ‘best practices’.
- **Forward looking stance** where the assessment is primarily about assisting future planning.
- **Respect for assessment information** — partners agree on what happens with the workshop information (including photos), and how it is handled (how it is recorded, shared and reported, what is public and what is not).

⁶ It can be adapted for use as a tool for the purposes of discussing initial partnership; if so, this must clear from the outset.

Ideally, the CAT should be completed in a one- or two-day participatory workshop. A proposed workshop methodology is outlined below. Further guidance is included in the related annexes. Where time does not allow for a workshop, the CAT templates can be completed by NGO (donor) staff as a 'desk review' based on partner reports and prior knowledge of the organization. NGO (donor) staff should then arrange a meeting with one or more representatives from the partner organization to walk through the related templates, during which they can add examples to the template and negotiate scores. Another option Oxfam field staff has used is that of a structured teleconference going through the templates with (one or more) partner staff. Oxfam program staff have also had good experiences using the CAT with a group of partner organizations, who come together for the workshop.

In multi-year programs, the CAT can be used at strategic junctures to re-assess progress and to adjust strategies accordingly. Here, we outline a process for an initial CAT exercise, with the assumption that it can be used as the basis of an annual exercise, though scaled down if needed.

Preparing for a CAT workshop:

Who should facilitate?

It is suggested that program staff with good knowledge of and relationships with the partner organization facilitate the workshop — playing the role of 'critical friends'. With careful planning, joint facilitation with staff from the partner organizations has also been successful. Clearly, the facilitation role depends upon the nature of the relationship of your organization with the partner. If in doubt, it is possible to engage a local external facilitator with good knowledge of the participating organization and of gender and organizational change.

Who should participate?

Those who have facilitated CAT workshops suggest a minimum of six and a maximum of fifteen participants from the partner organization as a guide for enabling a rich, participative process. Participants should come from different functions and levels of the organization (including Board and volunteers) to ensure that different experiences and perspectives are present in the room. Participants should also represent the diversity of the organization's staff composition.

Oxfam staff members facilitating the CAT have found that partners appreciated having information about the CAT process prior to the meeting, including a copy of the template. In some cases, partners have taken a trial run at completing the CAT template with a larger group of staff members than are able to participate in the meeting itself, thus ensuring that a wider range of voices are heard.

Conducting a document scan

Prior to the workshop, it is important to review any documentation that already exists regarding the partner organization's capacity on gender equality and women's rights and to encourage participants to reflect on this information as well. Useful background information might include the following: strategic plans, institutional assessments, monitoring reports, and evaluations as well as institutional and programmatic policies. Reviewing recommendations of gender audits is advisable. All this background information is useful to facilitators as a means of further probing responses and assessment of capacities that arise during the workshop itself.

Documenting the workshop

The CAT workshop is designed to capture a lot of information in a relatively short period of time. Good documentation of the workshop is essential and a strategy for documentation should be put in place prior to the event. We recommend that two program staff facilitate the CAT, for example, taking turns to facilitate and to document the discussions. It is also important to complete and validate the CAT template with participants either during or shortly after the workshop.

Workshop materials and equipment:

- Flip charts and flip chart paper
- Lots of coloured markers
- Several packages of 3x5 file cards (white and two different colours)
- Large post-it notes
- Sticky dots
- Handouts of templates and other annexes as required
- Copies of an evaluation form
- A digital camera to record flip charts
- A video camera to record change stories if possible

The workshop should be held off-site if possible.



The workshop process

Introductory session

As part of the introductory session of the workshop, we suggest that you take some time to familiarize participants with the purpose of the CAT, the value to partner organizations of undertaking a CAT, as well as some key principles underlying the approach that have been outlined above. The information can be shared via power point or flip charts, tailored as required for individual workshops. A sample Agenda is included in Annex 1.

Setting the scene

Time permitting, there are a number of ‘setting the scene’ activities that can be carried out prior to embarking on the CAT process.

At a minimum, it is important to place the CAT in the context of Oxfam Canada’s conceptual framework for transformative organizational change outlined in Part 1. If participants are already somewhat familiar with the various capacity domains upon which the CAT templates are based, they will find the structure of the templates easier to follow.

Similarly, the capacity areas around which the template is organized relates loosely to the ten characteristics of **strong, effective, gender-just organizations** (Annex 2) identified by Oxfam Canada partners.⁷ You can start the session, for example, by discussing the degree to which the partner organization shares this vision and what, if any, additional elements they would suggest.

Similarly, facilitators may find it useful to introduce participants to Gender@Work’s *Integral Framework* (Annex 3). *The Integral Framework* has been used as a tool to understand changes that need to happen at both the organization level as well as changes that need to happen at the societal level to bring about gender justice. Oxfam and Oxfam partners have found the framework useful for both purposes; indeed, a discussion on the framework helps partners to link internal change to external change.

Briefly, the *Integral Framework* suggests that to achieve gender justice shifts are needed at multiple levels — individual, organizational, community, national and global — and in four main areas: women’s and men’s consciousness; women’s access to resources; informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices; and formal institutions, laws, policies. Exploring the *Integral Framework* helps partners to strengthen their analysis of whether or not they have the skills and strategies in place to support these types of changes through their programs and advocacy work, for example. It encourages them to ask: What kinds of skills and strategies do organizations need to have in place in order to support transformative programming and advocacy? What new skills and competencies need to be built to support changes to happen in the four areas and at the various levels described in the *Integral Framework*?

⁷ These characteristics emerged from data analysis of partner feedback as part of the *Engendering Change Program Mid-term Learning Review: Final Report*, November 25, 2011, Oxfam Canada, available at <http://www.oxfam.ca/sites/default/files/MTLR%20Final%20Public%20document.pdf>.

In addition, we propose two activities to help set the scene for the rest of the workshop.⁸ The first activity provides an opportunity to explore with participants their ideas on what organizational capacities are needed to support work on gender equality and women's rights. The second enables participants to explore in a structured way what transformative leadership means to them and how it can be supported. It also provides an opportunity for the facilitators to reinforce the centrality of Women's Transformative Leadership to Oxfam Canada's organizational capacity building model.

ACTIVITY 1: Do we have the capacities to support the work we want to do on gender equality and women's rights?

Approximate Time: 40 minutes

Purpose: to reach consensus on a set of organizational capacities that the participants believe to be important for supporting and promoting greater gender justice.

Materials: A flip chart and markers

Process:

1. Introduce the purpose of this component — namely to develop a set of organizational capacities that participants believe are important for gender justice work. Participants should keep in mind the stage of 'development' of their organization — thinking about the life cycle of an organization or organizational development phases [See Annex 4]. For example, small, new organizations cannot expect to have the same kind of capacity as large or older organizations, nor will different types of organization have the same capacities.
2. Discuss the concept of 'capacity' — what the word means. Note that capacity includes: the IDENTITY of an organization (purpose, and profile etc.); WHAT it does; HOW it operates (procedures, structures, management etc.); and its RELATIONSHIPS (with participants, donors, government, other organizations etc.). Note that the word 'capacity' is often more than a single activity or position in the structure. Give examples from Oxfam Canada's own definitions and capacity areas if needed, but really this is to set the scene.
3. With the group, develop a list of organizational capacities. Write down all ideas on a flip chart, then cluster similar kinds of activities together — be as clear as possible about what each category includes to avoid a lot of overlap among categories. Ask the group to explain what is in each category by giving examples. If there are capacities that are very important, but not yet present in their organization, these can also be on the list. If there are more than eight separate categories, ask participants to reduce the list by SELECTING OUT THE LEAST important (could be with a show of hands), based on their perceived lack of impact or influence on gender equality/women's rights goals of the organization. Begin to explore linkages with Oxfam's capacity areas, noting any major divergences that can be addressed in the CAT process.
4. Optional: Introduce the concept of 'transformative' organizational change. What does this mean to participants? What are the capacities needed to support transformative organizational change in their opinion? Are they included in their list above? This exercise can be done in small groups or pairs, with a plenary to flip chart, discuss and organize ideas that emerge.

⁸ These activities draw on resources that were developed for Oxfam Canada by South House Exchange, Ottawa, as part of the draft document *Gender Assessment Guide*, January 2009.

ACTIVITY 2: Metaphors of women’s transformative leadership

Approximate time: 40 minutes

Overview: This exercise aims to explore the qualities of leadership that women do or can bring to their work by using stories, similes, poetry or metaphors, rather than traditional brainstorming or conversation. A metaphor can evoke an emotional response to an experience of women’s leadership, which can be positive but may require careful facilitation (see Facilitator’s notes below). The most context-appropriate approach can be decided in advance of the workshop. The exercise also encourages participants to think about what kind of support is needed within organizations to nurture women leaders. It provides an opportunity to look more broadly at the concept of transformative leadership: What does it mean? Who can exercise it? What are the specific characteristics of Women’s Transformative Leadership? As background, facilitators should take a look the section on Women’s Transformative Leadership in Part 1 of the Capacity Building package which explains the centrality of Women’s Transformative Leadership to Oxfam Canada’s capacity building model.

Materials: A flip chart and markers; optional handout (Annex 5), Oxfam International, Statement on Oxfam’s *Support to a Transformative Approach to Women’s Leadership* (n.d.)

Process:

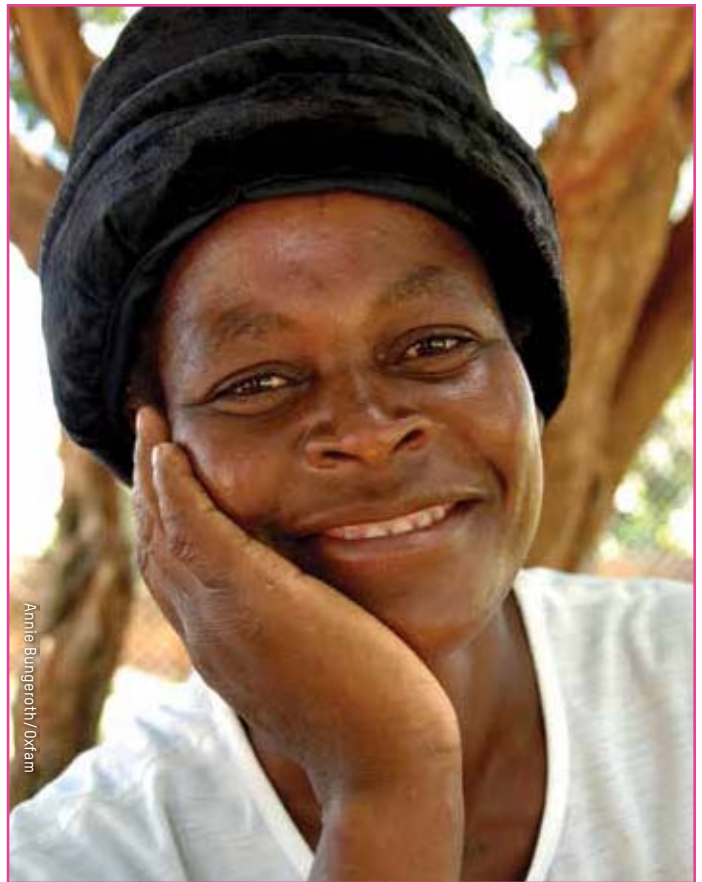
1. Explain the purpose of the activity: first, to reflect on the nature of women’s leadership in the partner organization, and second, to consider ways that women’s leadership can be nurtured in organizations. Remind participants to explore different ways women support, participate in, and lead change processes that have an impact on gender relationships and women’s rights. These roles and means can be either direct or indirect. Women might take on leadership roles through formal positions, expertise, deep commitment, networking and through informal working relationships. Leadership can also be shared or divvied up in different ways.
2. Begin by breaking into groups of three. Ask each small group to take a moment to reflect on an example of women’s leadership (from their organization or other experiences they may have had) that was really effective or transformational in some way. Ask people to share the examples or stories. Ask each group to pick a metaphor or image that seems to express this kind of leadership: “When you think about effective women’s leadership, what image comes to mind? (It could be anything — a symbol, animal, item, cultural ritual, type of music, etc.). You might give an example: *Women’s leadership is like ‘great jazz combo’*. Then explain why.

Give each group about 10 minutes to pick an image, allusion, etc.

3. In the full group, share the metaphors. Discuss the qualities of leadership that are implied or depicted by the metaphors or images, etc. Probing questions include:
 - Can women be “leaders” without being in formal leadership positions?
 - What difference do women make as leaders in your organization? What difference do women make as leaders in promoting gender equity and gender justice ?
 - Is there anything distinct about women’s leadership ‘styles’ that may require the organization to foster new ways of working (e.g. decision-making, structure of meetings, etc.)?
 - What kinds of policies or practices might support or promote women’s transformative leadership?
 - What other leadership forms may be supportive of fostering strong, gender-just organizations? What does transformative leadership mean to their organizations?
4. Conclude by making linkages both to the role of women’s transformative leadership in Oxfam Canada’s theory of change and to the importance of organizational leadership in advancing women’s rights and gender equality.

Facilitators Tip:

This topic can be sensitive — especially when some of the organizational leaders are in the workshop. Ways to deal with this important topic should be raised in advance of the workshop with the representative(s) of the partner organization. The focus should be on the general qualities of women’s leadership and ways of supporting and promoting women leaders in the organization. Depending on the organization, it may also be appropriate to expand the discussion to explore the diversity of women and other groups within the organization, and their roles as leaders. Facilitators must watch for signs of discomfort or confusion. Keep reminding participants that this discussion is meant to surface the positive side of women as leaders — that is, it is about the good qualities and effectiveness of women as leaders, and NOT about any issues around performance. One option may be to start with a focus on women’s leadership in the community, then explore similar characteristics of women leaders inside the organization. Prior knowledge of the organization will help to surface areas that need additional probing; for example, in organizations with a clear absence of women’s leadership, careful thought will need to go into probing obstacles and challenges, and how these can be met over time.



ACTIVITY 3: CAT Step 1 — Identifying current capacities

Approximate time: We have not specified time allocations for each part of this exercise. This depends on group size and the overall time available for the CAT. The ideal would be one full day but it can also be done in 3-4 hours if required.

Purpose: Step 1 supports participants to identify the current capacities of their organization through a facilitated conversation structured around the five Capacity Domains and twelve Capacity Areas. The outcomes of the discussion are documented in the CAT Template for Step 1 and become the program baseline.

Materials: Flip charts, markers, CAT Step 1 Template

Process:

1. Participants should be divided into small groups (e.g. along functional lines). Each group is given a copy of the CAT Step 1 template as a basis for discussion. In groups, participants can walk through the domains, discussing examples from their organizations and documenting these on flip charts.

Remind participants to reflect on any information they have reviewed (strategic plans, evaluations, gender audits, etc.). Draw attention to the second column “Suggested progress markers”, noting that they are guidelines for discussion only. Encourage participants to provide concrete examples of ‘capacity’ in the various domains, in addition to any other important information to nuance the assessment, for example, information on contextual factors, recent changes in funding situation, recent evaluations of partner capacity by other donors or internal evaluations/peer reviews, planned capacity building initiatives funded by other donors, etc.

It is important to stress that these domains and capacity areas are conceptual tools to support discussion and reflection on how organizations function and change. Organizations are complex systems and are a lot more ‘messy’ than the

typology used by Oxfam Canada. Participants should not get too concerned about what fits where, and any strong concerns/disagreements with the Oxfam Canada typology should be acknowledged and recorded.

2. Groups then come together into a plenary session. Each group feeds back their examples of existing capacities for each domain, sharing and discussing examples. Facilitators can ask questions and probe further to examine to what degree the examples of positive steps cited by participants are being implemented in the organizations, exploring blockages and areas of resistance. Reference can be made to background documentation from the organization as well as to Activities 1 and 2 if they have been completed. It is important to note different perspectives emerging from different groups/levels of participants.
3. Facilitators should take care to ensure that the information is flip-charted or copied directly into a master copy of the template for Step 1.

Facilitators Notes:

Remind participants that they are not being asked to simply 'tick the boxes'. Concrete examples should be provided, with reference to any challenges or obstacles they may be facing. Similarly, additional 'progress markers' can be added based on the discussion.

You may find it helpful to complete Step 1 and Step 2 for each capacity domain before moving on to do Step 1 and 2 for the next domain.

STEP 1: IDENTIFICATION OF CURRENT CAPACITIES

Domain 1: Women's Transformative Leadership

Overview of Domain: Fostering women's leadership capacities is an important dimension of building gender-just organizations, as is their confidence to work toward transforming existing power relations — within institutions and in society. Within mixed organizations, actions may be needed to ensure that women hold decision-making positions and/or have the confidence, capacity and opportunity to influence the organization's agenda. Within women's and feminist organizations fostering Women's Transformative Leadership may mean supporting processes that explore the characteristics of feminist leadership, particularly in relation to core values and respecting differences in age, class, sexual orientation, for example.

Capacity Area	What Capacity Might Look Like	Notes on Your Organization
Capacity for leadership on gender and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision, mission and core principles compatible with Gender Equality and Women's Rights • Board and Senior management champion gender equality and women's rights • Specific staff positions and spaces devoted to promoting gender equality and women's rights (specialist staff, women's caucuses, gender and diversity working groups, etc.) • Reflective processes to support positive organizational change on gender and diversity 	
Capacity to nurture women's confidence and leadership capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's leadership development strategy exists (Training and mentoring) • Positive recruitment/promotion policies to achieve gender equality/diversity in staffing, especially in decision-making positions • Management actively seeks the opinions of women in organizational policy development 	

STEP 1: IDENTIFICATION OF CURRENT CAPACITIES

Domain 2: Gender-Just Structures and Processes

Overview of Domain: The focus of capacity building in this domain is to support the alignment of key organizational structures and processes with organizational commitments to gender justice. This includes identifying and implementing specific changes to organizational structures, policies and practices, particularly human resources policies, to ensure that an enabling environment is created for gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness. There is overlap between this domain and domain 1: leadership may be a key factor in pushing for changes in organizational structures and processes.

Capacity Area	What Capacity Might Look Like	Notes on Your Organization
Capacity to 'live the values' of gender equality and women's rights (individual and organizational)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Equality (and Diversity) Policy, Action Plan and/or Strategy, including accountability mechanisms • Gender and diversity awareness and sensitization at all levels • Flexible working and/or work-life balance policies exist, and are widely used by staff • Childcare/nursing/toilet facilities and/or arrangements for travelling staff exist and are widely used by staff • Anti-harassment, HIV/AIDs, sexual orientation policies exist and are used by staff • HR systems and Procedures documented and available to staff • Investment in professional development and training of staff 	
Capacity for collaborative management and decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative management approaches and decision-making styles • Processes and approaches in place for conflict management • Accountability systems exist and are used (e.g. staff attitudes surveys, complaints mechanisms) 	

STEP 1: IDENTIFICATION OF CURRENT CAPACITIES

Domain 3: Organizational Resilience and Sustainability

Overview of Domain: Organizations may need to strengthen capacities in a range of areas, beyond those specifically related to gender equality and women’s rights, as part of their pathway to becoming strong, effective, gender-just organizations. The functions, competencies and skills emphasized in this domain include strategic planning, resource mobilization and financial management, and organizational level monitoring and evaluation, including accountability and performance related issues.

Capacity Area	What Capacity Might Look Like	Notes on Your Organization
Capacity to undertake strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Plans developed, implemented and reported on • Leaders/Managers take action to make changes in line with strategic decisions/ direction • Strategic plans developed with input of participatory consultations with stakeholders, particularly women 	
Capacity to mobilize and manage resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems and documented guidelines in place for financial management and budget preparation and monitoring, including spend on gender equality • Clearly defined fundraising strategy and staff expertise allocated to raising funds • Diversified funding base • Knowledge of donors 	
Capacity for gender-sensitive (organizational) monitoring, evaluation, learning and accountability systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of sex-disaggregated data⁹ and gender objectives and indicators in progress reports and evaluations • Gender-sensitive/feminist organizational level monitoring and evaluation systems, methods and approaches • Organizational monitoring, evaluation and learning systems explicitly explore gender power transformation • Clear, systematic processes to document results and lessons learned and to feed them into program improvement • Complaints mechanisms that women program participants can access 	

⁹ All data gathered should at the minimum be disaggregated by sex and age. In addition, it is useful to disaggregate by other relevant factors such as ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation and physical ability.

STEP 1: IDENTIFICATION OF CURRENT CAPACITIES

DOMAIN 4: STRATEGIC GENDER JUSTICE RELATIONS AND LINKAGES

Overview of Domain: This domain focuses on building or supporting organizational capacities to foster alliances, networks, and movement building. The kind of structural and institutional change we believe needs to happen to realize gender justice requires collective efforts and mobilization of citizens through CSOs to bring about and sustain societal change. Related to this, CSOs need strong communication skills and abilities to exchange and share learning about what works in making change happen. This domain also focuses on building capacities related to communicating and sharing experiences, strategies and results.

Capacity Area	What Capacity Might Look Like	Notes on Your Organization
Capacity to relate and network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong networking and collaborative skills • Established relations with range of stakeholders (including government and private sector where appropriate) • Active member of gender equality/ women's right-related networks and coalitions • Clarity on role/space within the gender justice sector 	
Capacity to communicate and share learning and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in external learning events/activities on gender equality and women's rights • Dissemination of information on program strategies and success to wide range of audiences • Seeking out relationships to learn and share experiences • Generating knowledge and information on gender equality and women's rights 	

STEP 1: IDENTIFICATION OF CURRENT CAPACITIES

Domain 5: Transformative gender-just programming and advocacy

Overview of Domain: This domain focuses on building capacity to design, implement and evaluate transformative gender justice programming and advocacy. We use this term to describe programming and advocacy that seeks to challenge and change the systemic causes of poverty, injustice and gender equality. It means developing programs and advocacy work through a lens of gender and power analysis, and building capacity related to monitoring, evaluation and learning about what gender justice change looks like and how it happens.

Capacity Area	What Capacity Might Look Like	Notes on Your Organization
Capacity to design and implement gender-sensitive programs or projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program/project cycle informed by gender and power analysis, including different roles and needs, problems and opportunities of (different groups) of women relative to those of men • Women and men (community-level) participate in program development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation • Program objectives and results statements explicitly include gender equality and women's rights outcomes • Gender equality and women's rights mainstreamed into all thematic programs 	
Capacity to design and implement women-specific programs or projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program/project cycle informed by gender and power analysis, including different roles and needs, problems and opportunities of (different groups) of women relative to those of men, and women's specific programs developed as appropriate • Women and men (community-level) participate in program development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation 	
Capacity to undertake gender equality and women's rights focused advocacy and campaigning work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly articulated advocacy agenda and priorities on gender equality and women's rights • Investment in gender-sensitive policy research and analysis • Advocacy and negotiation skills • Participation in informal/formal coalitions with gender justice advocacy objectives • Facilitating local women's influence in regional/national/international advocacy/campaigns and fora 	

ACTIVITY 4: CAT Step 2 — Rating Current Capacities

Purpose: Step 2 supports participants to rate their current capacities across the five Capacity Domains/twelve Capacity Areas on a scale from 0-4. The process generates rich discussion on perceptions of current levels of capacity in relation to desired or aspirational capacity.

Materials: Flip charts, markers, Template for Step 2, 3x5 cards, camera, video camera

Process:

1. As above, participants should be divided into small groups (e.g. along organizational ‘functional’ lines or according to the capacity domains). Each group is given a copy of the CAT Step 2 template for reference purposes. Instead of completing the template, a visual method, the Socratic Wheel, can be used as a method of structuring the discussion. Before breaking into groups, the purpose of the exercise and the Socratic Wheel¹⁰ should be explained; namely, i) to assess and rate the partner organization’s current and aspirational capacity in the different areas in the capacity domains; ii) to create a visual representation of the partner organizations current and aspirational capacities by the end of the program.
2. Rating organizational capacities: Create a wheel on a series of flip charts (one for each group) and assign a criterion from each Capacity Area to each spoke (12) of the wheel (or the Capacity Area itself). Mark the scale 0-4 on each spoke, from the center (0) to the outer edge of the wheel (the highest value). An alternative is to prepare 5 flip charts (one for each of the capacity domains, and for each group to cover one domain). For each domain, transfer the names of the 2-3 related capacity areas from the Template to the “Organization Capacities Wheel” on a flip chart, placing one capacity at the end of each spoke. **See Figure 4, page 24**
3. Explain that the groups will now rate the current capacity levels in the organization (referring back to Step 1). Put


Facilitators Tip:

Take a picture of the Wheels and transfer the information on the flip chart to a piece of paper. Give the flip chart of the Wheels to the partner participants. Add this information (the ratings and categories) along with the description of each, to the Step 2 template. Include notes on any major discrepancy in ratings that emerge from groups/plenary. Capture ideas about future needs and any discussion about obstacles.

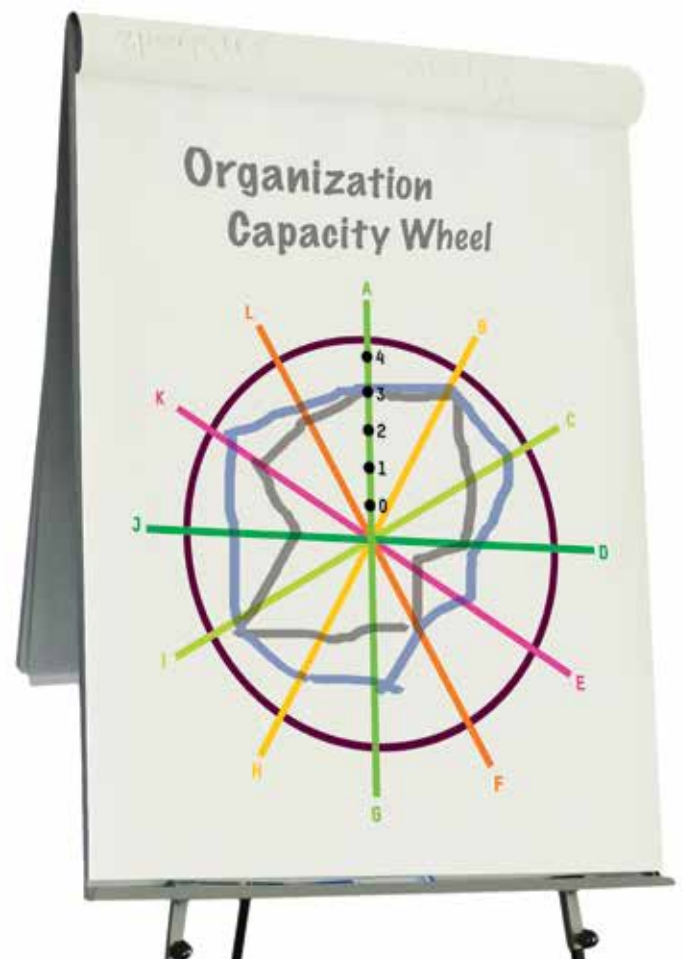
FIGURE 3

Organization Capacity Wheel with Example of Ratings

Current capacities 
(rated against organizational goals for gender justice)

Capacities in future 

Scale: 0 = Almost no capacity in this area
1 = A little — needs lots of improvement
2 = A fair amount — not enough to reach organization’s goal
3 = Good situation with some room for improvement
4 = Ideal level of capacity with little room for improvement



¹⁰ The use of the Socratic Wheel is adapted from Jacques M. Chevalier and Daniel J. Buckles, *The Social Weaver: A Handbook for Collaborative Inquiry, Planning and Evaluation*, available at <http://www.sas2.net/>

the proposed scale on a flip chart along with the meaning of each point on the scale (the capacity areas). Review the proposed scale and capacity areas, and get general agreement — be sure everyone understands what each point on the scale means. Explain that this exercise is meant to provide a score for each capacity area, which will then be used to help them monitor changes in capacity over time as well as to help prioritize capacities for the Capacity Building Strategy in Toolkit Section Two.

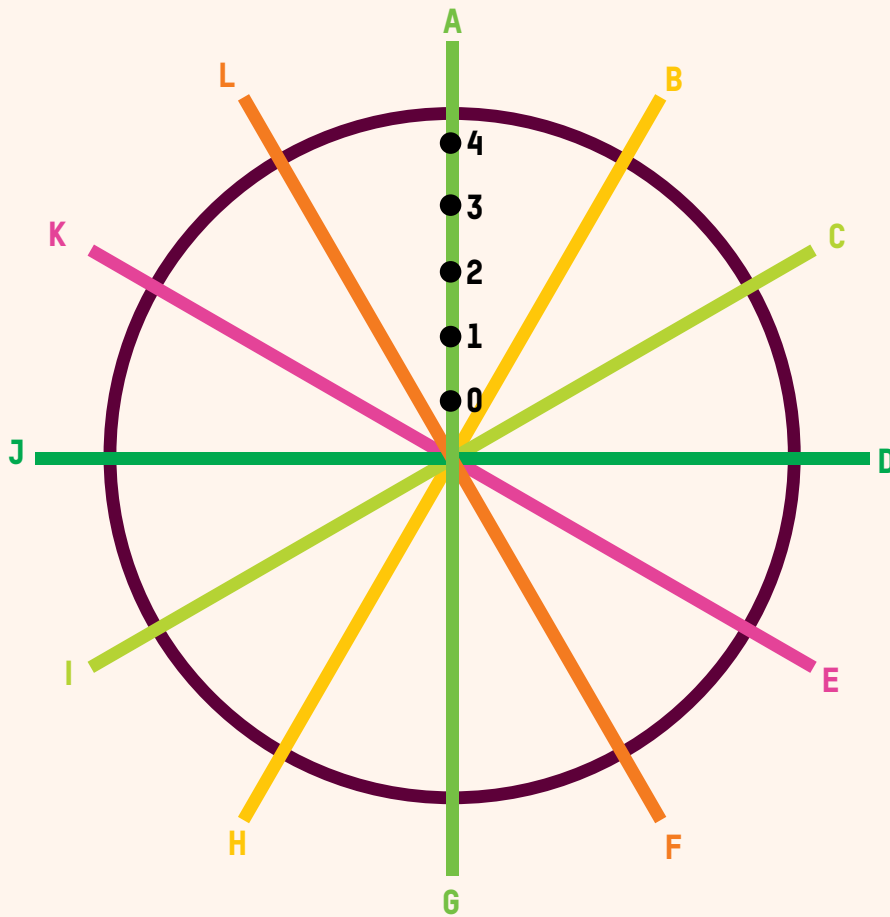
4. Ask participants to discuss in groups how they would rate their current organizational capacity against their organizational aspirations for gender justice. This should not be rated against a very broad social vision which is well beyond the capacities of any one organization, for example, the goal that all women live free from violence. They should focus instead on whether they believe their organization has the capacity they think it needs to fulfill its mission. If there is no quick consensus, do an average of the group. [NOTE: if you suspect there are big differences among individuals, and it seems important to capture the spread, ask people to write their rating score on a small piece of paper collect the sheets — then do the average — but keep a note about the range of scores.] In this way, rate each category and mark the average at the appropriate spot on each spoke of the wheel. When finished, draw a coloured line to connect the rating points.
5. Discuss the ratings — any surprises? Why are some capacities higher and other capacities ranked lower? What features of the organization explain the results in the capacity area? Explain that while the scoring is to some degree subjective, participants are encouraged to provide concrete examples to ‘justify’ the scores they have arrived at. Note that in the master template used to document the workshop, space is provided for the score to be explained and substantiated.
6. Conduct another rating that reflects on the following question(s): *Where you want your organization to be in three years (or two or five years if people prefer)? or What you would consider your Ideal Capacity?* Mark these points on each spoke as well, and draw a second line to connect the points (use a different colour, or a dotted line) to show the difference between now and future state. Note any significant differences.

See Figure 3, page 22

7. Optional step: Clustering. Participants are invited to move around the room with their wheel, looking for other wheels that resemble their own, forming twins, or families of wheels with a very similar overall profile. Each family of wheels prepares and presents to the whole group a brief description of what their wheels have in common. When a family of wheels presents their similarities, other groups move away if they feel their family wheel profile is very different, or come closer if the similarities are more important than the differences. At the end of the exercise, participants can plan strategies that draw on different but complementary family wheel profiles.
8. Full group reviews the results. Facilitation questions include: Does everyone agree with the ratings for each capacity? Look at the change over time — any surprises? Where is the momentum for these changes (leadership, expertise, networks)? Discuss what capacities need to be strengthened to help you to move towards your ideal state over time.

FIGURE 4

Our Organization Capacity Wheel



Scale:

- 0 = Almost no capacity in this area
- 1 = A little – needs lots of improvement
- 2 = A fair amount – not enough to reach organization’s goal
- 3 = Good situation with some room for improvement
- 4 = Ideal level of capacity with little room for improvement

A Capacity for leadership on gender and diversity

B Capacity to nurture women’s confidence and leadership capacity

C Capacity to ‘live the values’ of gender equality and women’s rights

D Capacity for collaborative management and decision-making

E Capacity to undertake strategic planning

F Capacity to mobilize and manage resources

G Capacity for gender-sensitive monitoring, evaluation, learning and accountability

H Capacity to relate and network

I Capacity to communicate and share learning and knowledge

J Capacity to design and implement gender-sensitive programs or projects

K Capacity to design and implement women-specific programs or projects

L Capacity to undertake gender equality and women’s rights focused advocacy and campaigning

STEP 2: RATING OF CURRENT CAPACITY LEVELS

Domain 1: Women's transformative leadership

	Capacity Area	0	1	2	3	4	Specific examples to substantiate score
1	Capacity for leadership on gender and diversity						
2	Capacity to nurture women's confidence and leadership capacity						
	Totals (Maximum 12)						Total for Domain =

STEP 2: RATING OF CURRENT CAPACITY LEVELS

Domain 2: Gender-just structures and processes

	Capacity Area	0	1	2	3	4	Specific examples to substantiate score
3	Capacity to 'live the values' of gender equality and women's rights						
4	Capacity for collaborative management and decision-making						
	Totals (Maximum 8)						Total for Domain =

Scale:

- 0 = Almost no capacity in this area
- 1 = A little — needs lots of improvement
- 2 = A fair amount — not enough to reach organization's goal
- 3 = Good situation with some room for improvement
- 4 = Ideal level of capacity with little room for improvement

STEP 2: RATING OF CURRENT CAPACITY LEVELS

Domain 3: Organizational resilience and sustainability

	Capacity Area	0	1	2	3	4	Specific examples to substantiate score
5	Capacity to undertake strategic planning						
6	Capacity to mobilize and manage resources						
7	Capacity for gender-sensitive monitoring, evaluation, learning and accountability						
	Totals (Maximum 8)						Total for Domain =

STEP 2: RATING OF CURRENT CAPACITY LEVELS

Domain 4: Strategic gender-just relations and linkages

	Capacity Area	0	1	2	3	4	Specific examples to substantiate score
8	Capacity to relate and network						
9	Capacity to communicate and share learning and knowledge						
	Totals (Maximum 8)						Total for Domain =

Scale:

- 0 = Almost no capacity in this area
- 1 = A little — needs lots of improvement
- 2 = A fair amount — not enough to reach organization's goal
- 3 = Good situation with some room for improvement
- 4 = Ideal level of capacity with little room for improvement

STEP 2: RATING OF CURRENT CAPACITY LEVELS

Domain 5: Transformative gender justice programming and advocacy

	Capacity Area	0	1	2	3	4	Specific examples to substantiate score
10	Capacity to design and implement gender-sensitive programs or projects						
11	Capacity to design and implement women-specific programs or projects						
12	Capacity to undertake gender equality and women's rights focused advocacy and campaigning						
	Totals (Maximum 12)						Total for Domain =

Scale:

- 0 = Almost no capacity in this area
- 1 = A little — needs lots of improvement
- 2 = A fair amount — not enough to reach organization's goal
- 3 = Good situation with some room for improvement
- 4 = Ideal level of capacity with little room for improvement

THE POWER OF GENDER-JUST ORGANIZATIONS

TOOLKIT FOR TRANSFORMATIVE
ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING



Oxfam

TOOLKIT SECTION TWO CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT



CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT TOOL

This section provides guidance on how to move from an assessment of current capacity (CAT Steps 1 and 2) towards the intentional design of a capacity building strategy. The aim is to support partner organizations to take a more systematic approach to organizational capacity building based on an assessment of needs and priorities.¹¹



If time permits, the Capacity Building Strategy exercise is ideally completed as part of the CAT workshop, following on from Steps 1 and 2. If not, it can be completed as a follow-up exercise between a team of staff from your organization and your partner organization. If the latter course is followed, it is very important that the outcomes of the CAT are documented and validated with the partner organization in advance of that conversation.

Purpose: The exercise supports a structured conversation with the partner organization on areas requiring attention, based on an assessment of current strengths and gaps (Steps 1 and 2). The output is a draft Capacity Building Strategy in the form of the completed template which can be further elaborated as required.

Materials: Flip charts, markers, Template for Capacity Building Strategy, Capacity Building Activities Menu tool, sticky dots

Process:

The process outlined here assumes that the exercise is completed as a plenary session, in the form of a ‘prioritization’ exercise, as part of the CAT workshop.

1. Facilitators should flip chart the twelve capacity areas, with the related scores from Step 2. Each participant is given six sticky dots. Based on completed Steps 1 and 2, participants are asked to identify up to six of the capacity areas for special attention, allocating their dots accordingly (more than one dot can go on a capacity area, if desired).
2. Suggest that they start by looking at the capacity areas with the lowest scores (for example, where they rated 1 – ‘a little – needs a lot of improvement’). Remind them that ‘focus’ is a good practice concept related to capacity building efforts. In general, good capacity building efforts do not try to address all areas at once. Instead, it is important to focus on a few areas, particularly ‘high leverage’ areas that can have a positive impact on other capacity areas. For example, participants might choose to give added weight to capacities listed in the Women’s Transformative Leadership domain if they agree this capacity can be seen a driver of transformative change in other domains.
3. Facilitators then summarize the ‘results’ of the prioritization exercise, i.e, looking for clusters and asking participants to comment on them and make suggestions of ways they could begin to strengthen capacity in those areas. Once some degree of consensus has been arrived at, the participants can move to action planning, using the Capacity Building Strategy template. This can be done as a plenary or in groups, working through the columns (with flip charts to record information).

¹¹ This tool draws on methodologies found in *Organizational Capacity Development: Pact Organizational Development Toolkit*, Pact’s Learning Series Publications, January 2010, PactWorld.org

4. A key tool to be used in the completion of the template (Column Three) is the Capacity Building Activities Menu (Table 1). The exact activities to be supported, and by whom, will likely need to be part of a broader discussion, beyond the workshop setting. However, participants should be encouraged to view this exercise as an opportunity to think strategically about their priorities for capacity building and to consider a range of possible sources of funding for the activities they identify (i.e. from a number of external funders or internal sources). Clearly, if staff from your organization has decision-making authority in this regard, then the workshop space can explore possible options.
5. This exercise helps to outline the components of an organizational Capacity Building Strategy for gender justice. The scope of the strategy will depend on the organization’s needs, commitment and available resources. The Capacity Building Strategy should be something that is owned by the partner organization and not entirely determined by the resources your organization can provide to support capacity building activities. Nonetheless, the template can provide a structured basis for agreeing on a package of capacity building activities you are able to fund over a given programming period. The Capacity Building Menu offers a selection of activities that can be used to strengthen capacities in each of the capacity domains, though other activities can also be discussed.
6. It is recommended that a follow-up meeting or conversation be arranged with key staff from the partner organization for a debriefing session about the CAT and a confirmation of the Capacity Building Strategy, particularly as it pertains to your own capacity building programming support. Oxfam Canada staff have found it useful to prepare a one-page document to summarize the outcomes of the CAT and the Capacity Building Strategy exercise and to confirm with partners a process for circulating this within their organization.

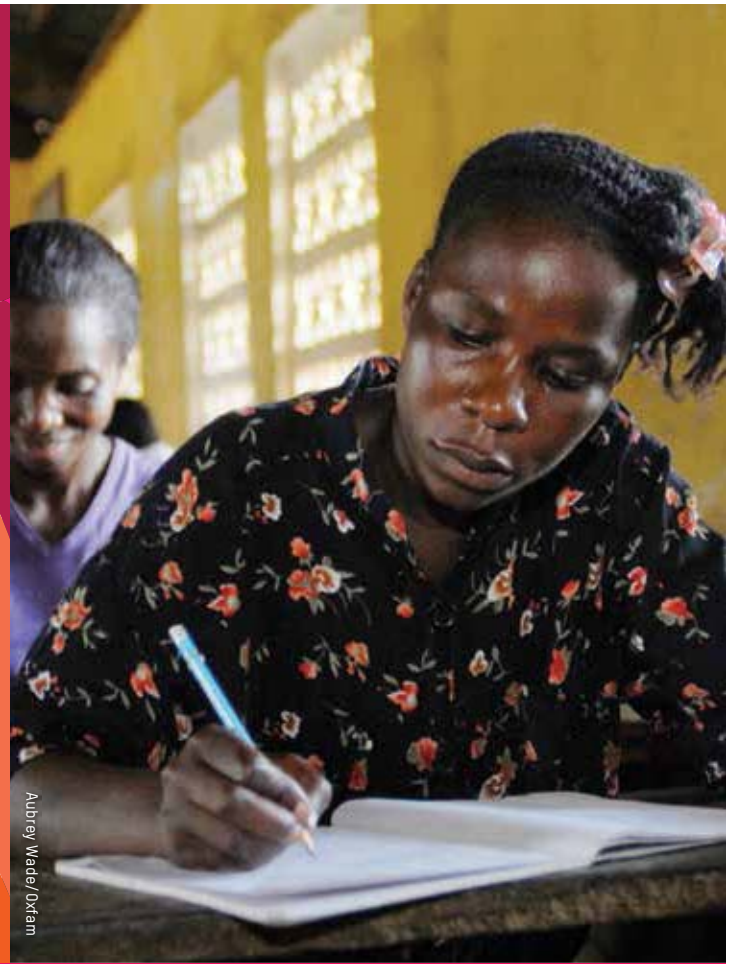
Capacity Building Strategy Template: Identifying Focus Areas			
Priority Focus Area (reference capacity area/domain)	Summary of actions needed to achieve desired capacity level (and timeframe)	Proposed capacity building activities to improve capacity level (reference Capacity Building Menu)	Capacity Building Resources required, possible funding sources
<p><i>Example: Capacity to undertake Strategic Planning</i></p> <p><i>Make note of Step 2 rating and record the results of the prioritization exercise. Example: ranking of 1 in Step 2, and priority 30 in prioritization exercise (e.g. 15 participants allocated 30 dots in total)</i></p>	<p><i>Example: Strategic Plan developed by next year</i></p>	<p><i>Example: Create space for strategic planning initiative within next year</i></p>	<p><i>Examples: Senior Management to attend training on Strategic Thinking and Planning (Supported by Oxfam)</i></p> <p><i>Secure a skilled facilitator to support strategic thinking process, preferably local (seek funding from X via proposal process)</i></p>

TABLE 1: CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES MENU

Capacity Domain	Menus of Activities (not exhaustive!) <i>Add boxes for additional activities from your program</i>
DOMAIN 1: Women’s Transformative Leadership	<p>Organizational Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reflective organizational processes and spaces to explore transformative change <p>Individual Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Women’s/Feminist Leadership Development <input type="checkbox"/> Gender-sensitive Management and Board training
DOMAIN 2: Gender-Just Structures and Processes	<p>Organizational Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reflective organizational processes and spaces <input type="checkbox"/> Integration of gender into organizational vision, mission, core principles <input type="checkbox"/> Organizational Gender and Diversity Audits <input type="checkbox"/> Development of gender and diversity policies and action plans <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual harassment policy development (or other gender-sensitive policy development) <input type="checkbox"/> Gender and diversity HR policies/practices development <input type="checkbox"/> Work/life balance policies development <p>Individual Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Gender and diversity awareness training for staff
DOMAIN 3: Organizational Resilience and Sustainability	<p>Organizational Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Planning Facilitational Services <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting Software <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Management Systems Development <input type="checkbox"/> Development of Accountability System <input type="checkbox"/> Development of Strategies for Organizational Learning and Change <p>Individual Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Training in strategic planning <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Management Training <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising Training <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting Training <input type="checkbox"/> Results-Based Management Training
DOMAIN 4: Strategic Gender- Just Relations and Linkages	<p>Organizational Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitating networking, alliances/linkages on Gender Equality and Women’s Rights issues <input type="checkbox"/> Communications Strategy development <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge Sharing Strategy Development <input type="checkbox"/> Information Sharing initiatives <p>Individual Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Communication skill development <input type="checkbox"/> Information technology, video, social media skills training <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitation and negotiation skills building
DOMAIN 5: Transformative Gender-Just Programs And Advocacy	<p>Organizational Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Development of gender-sensitive program Monitoring/Evaluation/Learning systems <input type="checkbox"/> Development of gender toolkits <p>Individual Level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Training in gender analysis and rights-based approach <input type="checkbox"/> Training in gender policy analysis and research <input type="checkbox"/> Training in gender-sensitive advocacy, lobbying and campaigning <input type="checkbox"/> Training in planning, implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, Gender Equality and Women’s Rights advocacy and campaigns <input type="checkbox"/> Training in gender budgeting, gender budget monitoring and other policy monitoring tools <input type="checkbox"/> Training in Monitoring/Evaluation/Learning

THE POWER OF GENDER-JUST ORGANIZATIONS

TOOLKIT FOR TRANSFORMATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING



Aubrey Wade/Oxfam

TOOLKIT SECTION THREE MONITORING AND LEARNING



MONITORING AND LEARNING TOOLS

Ongoing monitoring and learning is a critical part of an intentional and systematic approach to organizational capacity building. Regular monitoring helps partner organizations: 1) to follow the implementation of a capacity building strategy; 2) to measure progress in building capacity; 3) to reflect and learn about the factors that have contributed to or impeded change; and 4) from this information, propose adjustments to the program. That said, organizations are complex systems. This presents many challenges for monitoring and evaluating capacity building initiatives effectively. These challenges are far greater for capacity building related to gender-just organizational change given the fundamental shifts required both in individual (staff) attitudes and behaviour and in organizational culture and practice.



Howard Davies/Oxfam

The sections below explore some of the challenges associated with monitoring and evaluating organizational capacity building and present ideas about how these challenges can be addressed by using a 'learning system' approach.

Toward a feminist methodology for assessing organizational change

Assessment and learning to strengthen organizational change efforts need to acknowledge the specific features of such change processes and then ensure that steps are taken to accommodate these by selecting appropriate methodologies. Some key features of gender and organizational change processes are outlined below:¹²

- Progress towards gender justice and transforming power relations does **not follow a linear or predictable trajectory**.
- There is **no objective measure of 'success'** with regards to organizational change. Figuring out whether something works or not often entails first articulating what 'working' or 'success' means to the actors involved. Their definitions will likely differ according to organizational and cultural contexts. This requires the use of participatory monitoring and evaluation processes, and a **valuing of self-assessment methods**. One example of the outcome of such a process with partners is their vision of a *strong, effective, gender-just organization*.
- Attempts to change organizational power relations and 'rules of the game' rarely go unchallenged. Assessment approaches must be able to **capture and interpret backlashes and resistance to change** as possible evidence of impact and effectiveness, not necessarily of failure. In some instances, maintaining the status quo, may also be evidence of success.
- Similarly, **organizational change can happen in ways that are not necessarily transformative of gender power relations**. Methods must be used to 'get at' this nuance. Increased numbers of women in decision-making positions, for example, may not provide the tipping point towards gender-just organizational change if they are unable to push through their transformative agenda. At the same time, changes in attitudes and behaviour related to gender and diversity that signal profound individual transformation are difficult to measure.

¹² For further information on methodological challenges and solutions see: Irene Guijít, *Assessing and Learning for Social Change, A Discussion Paper*, IDS, November 2007; S. Batliwala and A. Pittman *Capturing Change in Women's Realities: A Critical Overview of Current Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks and Approaches*, AWID, 2010; "Strengthening Equity-focused evaluations through insights from feminist theory and approaches", K. Hay, in *Evaluation for Equitable Development Results*, UNICEF, 2011; and Michael Quinn Patton, *Developmental Evaluation, Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use*, Guildford Press, 2011.

- Organizations are themselves (micro) systems but are also **connected to wider systems that have an effect on how change happens** internally. Environmental, economic, political, social and other contextual factors can play huge, often unanticipated, roles in how organizations define and deliver on their missions. As a result, the best possible outcome measurement will involve documenting changes in line with the capacity building program’s goals and providing evidence that a **contribution** has been made to the documented change.
- **Organizational change processes take time and even incremental shifts must be valued.** There is often a divergence between expectations of change within the project/program lifespan and the amount of time it would realistically take to achieve the stated outcomes. This needs to be clarified and expectations adjusted accordingly.
- **The embedded nature of gender bias in organizations requires multiple assessment methods** — no single assessment framework can adequately capture all the dimensions of gendered organizational change processes. Multiple methods can however generate rich information to facilitate ‘sense making’ of capacity building strategies, interventions and outcomes.
- **Different stakeholders in the capacity building program may have different information needs** that require careful consideration from the outset regarding the uses and users of data generated by monitoring and evaluation. As above, this may require the use of multiple methods.

A learning system approach

Oxfam Canada takes a learning system approach to monitoring and evaluation of organizational capacity building. This learning system is designed to respond to the challenges noted above — it is an evolving approach which we are continuously working to improve. At the centre of the learning system is our theory of organizational change, briefly summarized above and explored more fully in Part 1 of the Capacity Building package. It is an essential framework for assessing our programs and learning what areas need improvement.

The learning system takes a *utilization focused perspective* that considers multiple stakeholders with different information needs and multiple accountabilities (back donors, INGO capacity building program officers, partner organizations, constituents) that are in play in any larger-scale capacity building program. Those providing support for the program will require evidence that it is meeting its stated objectives, which in turn will likely require some form of aggregation or ‘roll-up’ of the results across a portfolio of program partners. Such aggregated information is crucial to making sense of program outcomes and strategies as part of program learning and improvement for those implementing capacity building programs.

The information generated from on-going monitoring also has different uses for our partners, who are key participants in such sense-making exercises: measuring progress and making sense of ‘what is working’ and ‘what is not’ supports their efforts to achieve their gender justice missions. This information is also important for downward accountability to partner constituents who have the most to gain from building strong, effective, gender just organizations.

The learning system also integrates evaluative thinking (ET) — this refers to a way of thinking that involves a constant process of questioning, learning, drawing conclusions (lessons) and modifying programs (program improvement) in response to those lessons.¹³ *Evaluative Thinking* can be defined as follows:

[It is] “inherently a reflective process, a means of resolving the ‘creative tension’ between current and desired levels of performance. It allows us to define the lessons we want to learn, to determine the means to capture those lessons, and to develop systems that support us to apply those lessons in improving our performance. By going beyond the more time- and activity-bound processes of monitoring and evaluation it is learning for change.”¹⁴

Fundamentally, this is an action-oriented approach: it supports us to fix what is not working and to extend what is working well.

Given the diverse information needs — along with the methodological challenges of assessing gender-just organizational change — Oxfam Canada’s learning system involves the use of multiple monitoring methods (more will be said about evaluation methods in the next section of the toolkit). Mixed methods have a greater likelihood of capturing the knowledge and perspectives of different actors as well as the complex nature of the processes related to individual and organizational changes in support gender equality and women’s rights. We have tried our best to keep the tools relatively simple and user-

¹³ This section and the definition of Evaluative Thinking draws on IDRC’s work in this area. For further information see: [http://web.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/1226604834112265956911Chapter_5\[1\].pdf](http://web.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/1226604834112265956911Chapter_5[1].pdf)

¹⁴ Ibid.

friendly. At the same time, the tools are designed to bring some comparability across a range of partners participating in a program, and to facilitate the 'rolling up' of results across a program.

Tools for organizational capacity building monitoring and learning

Three tools are included in the toolkit:

- 1) Monitoring Tool #1: Capacity assessment monitoring chart
- 2) Monitoring Tool #2: Focus capacity building areas monitoring chart
- 3) Monitoring Tool #3: Significant organizational change story

In this section we provide an overview of the three tools. The following section provides fuller guidance on using these tools.

Monitoring Tool #1: Capacity assessment monitoring chart

This quantitative tool helps partners to monitor their progress over the twelve capacity areas through an annual self-assessment process that is essentially a scaled down version of the CAT. This tool can also be used by NGOs supporting capacity building programs to build up a picture of progress annually across the range of partners, by aggregating the scores of participating partners. It is particularly useful for back-donor reporting purposes.

Monitoring Tool #2: Focus Capacity Building areas monitoring chart

This qualitative tool allows partners to reflect on progress in the focus areas of the Capacity Building Strategy. The tool is designed to generate more depth in data and analysis of capacity changes that have potentially resulted from activities completed and to highlight areas for program adjustment. This analysis can be undertaken at the partner level as well as at the program level through an aggregation of data in the completed templates from partners.

Monitoring Tool #3: Significant organizational change story

Borrowing from Most Significant Change (MSC) technique¹⁵, this qualitative tool is designed to elicit reflection and learning on organizational (or individual) change processes linked to capacity building initiatives related to the program. Through a process of storytelling, the technique is used to encourage partners to dig deeper and to understand the critical events and enablers of organizational changes they have experienced. The stories provide rich data for program-level learning and improvement as well as evidence of organizational change (results).

There are other elements to a learning system that are not described here but which should be seen as component parts of the capacity building program's learning system. Information from these sources, where they exist, can be used to triangulate findings from the monitoring data. They are also crucial inputs into sense making exercises at the partner and NGO (donor) program level. These include, for example:

- Monitoring reports from partners visits by field staff
- Partner financial reports
- Partner learning events
- Partner case studies
- Capacity building program evaluations, self-assessment, peer reviews
- Evaluations of training programs (to track changes at individual level)¹⁶
- Gender Audits of partner organizations
- INGO annual review and reflection processes
- Constituency feedback mechanisms¹⁷ that provide information on partner satisfaction level

¹⁵ MSC is described in more detail below. See also, Rick Davies and Jess Dart, *The 'Most Significant Change' (MSC) Technique*, Version 1, April 2005 available at <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf>

¹⁶ Many of the strategies involve training of some form or other. There are many ways that the impact of training can be evaluated beyond end-of-training evaluation forms. For ideas about ongoing evaluation of the impact of training see: Oxfam Canada and PeaceBuild, *Gender Training and Fragile States: What Works?*, Workshop Report, January 2008.

¹⁷ For example, see: *Partner Feedback Report: Oxfam Canada*, Keystone Performance Surveys, INGO Partner Survey, Keystone, 2011, available at: http://www.oxfam.ca/sites/default/files/imce/partner_survey_oxfam_english_2011.pdf. Oxfam Canada partners participated in a confidential survey through which they were asked to rate and comment on different aspects of Oxfam Canada's performance. The responses were benchmarked against the other international non-governmental organizations. Keystone's approach holds that satisfaction is a proxy for impact: See www.keystoneaccountability.org

Frequency:

It is recommended that a Capacity Building program be **monitored on an annual basis**. One quantitative tool and two qualitative tools support annual monitoring (Monitoring Tools 1, 2 and 3).

Where there are back-donor requirements for **semi-annual monitoring**, we suggest a simple output or activity survey based on the Capacity Building Activities Menu, ensuring that you include the number of people reached (disaggregated by sex).

Process:

As part of program monitoring, we recommend holding a shortened CAT exercise annually with partners, ideally in the form of a 2-3 hour workshop with as many of the participants as possible who attended the initial CAT workshop. If this is not possible, a face-to-face meeting or teleconference between your lead staff and key staff from partner organizations should be organized.

MONITORING TOOL #1: Capacity assessment monitoring chart

As background to this monitoring exercise, minutes and completed templates from the previous year should be reviewed by all parties. Representatives from the partner organization should be encouraged to review their previous scores and to consider what changes may have happened over the past year to support or inhibit capacity levels in each of the areas. These can be noted in detail on a clean Step 2 Rating Template. Scores can then be transferred to Monitoring Template 1.

As you can see, Monitoring Tool 1 can be used to compare scores over time. The template can be transferred to an Excel spreadsheet or to survey software for ease of analysis.

It is important to remind participants that there may not have been direct interventions in many of the capacity areas, since the Capacity Building Strategy was designed to focus on a few capacity areas. Still, it is useful for them to continue to track changes across all areas, as changes in one capacity area may have had an (intended or unintended) impact on others. Or, indeed, other organizational dynamics may have contributed to capacity changes. These should be discussed and noted where relevant.

We have also found that partners may rate their capacities lower in the second year than the first, which may require some probing. Changes in an organization from one year to the next may negatively impact capacity in some way, for example. However, another possible explanation is the fear that evaluative exercises such as the annual self-assessment may jeopardize standing or future funding. Thus, some organizations might have rated themselves highly in the first year due to such a fear. As the program progressed, and trust deepened, there may have been a realization that they could be more nuanced and realistic about their ratings. Another possible explanation is that the capacity building activities undertaken in the first year surfaced for these organizations issues that had not been obvious at the first self-assessment. Thus lower ratings in the second year may reflect, at least for some organizations, their growing understanding of the depth of organizational change required to achieve their objectives. Finally, the inconsistency in scoring may also be attributed to the skill of the facilitator in opening up frank and honest discussions.

For program monitoring purposes, instead of monitoring changes across all twelve capacity areas, we suggest monitoring changes in the aggregate score for each of the five domains, especially for large programs with dozens of partners. Individual partners may find it more helpful to continue to monitor all twelve capacity areas internally.

In addition, for program monitoring purposes it may be useful to collect data from each participating organization for **one or maximum two indicators or proxy indicators** from each domain. These would have to be determined based on the focus and scope of your capacity building program. Sample indicators are given in Table 2.

MONITORING TOOL 1: ANNUAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT CHART

(It is advisable to do this as an Excel spreadsheet, survey monkey, etc.)

Capacity Domain	CB Strategy Focus Area?	Initial Assessment Rating, Date:	Re-assessment Rating, Date:	Re-assessment rating, Date:	Re-assessment Rating, Date:
Women's Transformative Leadership					
Capacity for leadership on gender and diversity	e.g. Yes	e.g. 2	e.g. 3		
Capacity to nurture women's confidence and leadership capacity	e.g. Yes	e.g. 1	e.g. 2		
Capacity Domain Total		3	5		
Gender-Just Structures and Processes					
Capacity to 'live the values' of gender equality and women's rights					
Capacity for collaborative management and decision-making					
Capacity Domain Total					
Organizational Resilience and Sustainability					
Capacity to undertake strategic planning					
Capacity to mobilize and manage resources					
Capacity for gender-sensitive monitoring, evaluation, learning and accountability					
Capacity Domain Total					
Strategic Gender Justice Relations and Linkages					
Capacity to relate and network					
Capacity to communicate and share learning and knowledge					
Capacity Domain Total					

MONITORING TOOL 1: ANNUAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT CHART (Continued)

(It is advisable to do this as an Excel spreadsheet, survey monkey, etc.)

Capacity Domain	CB Strategy Focus Area?	Initial Assessment Rating, Date:	Re-assessment Rating, Date:	Re-assessment rating, Date:	Re-assessment Rating, Date:
Transformative Gender-Just Programming and Advocacy					
Capacity to design and implement gender-sensitive programs					
Capacity to nurture women's confidence and leadership capacity					
Capacity for gender-sensitive program monitoring, evaluation and learning					
Capacity Domain Total					



Jane Beesley/Oxfam

TABLE 2: POSSIBLE OUTCOME INDICATORS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING ON GENDER JUSTICE

Capacity Domain	Possible indicators (quantitative and qualitative)
Women's Transformative Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of women in leadership roles/decision making positions • Designated structures/staffing for gender equality and women's rights • Level of staff satisfaction on transformative leadership <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Gender-Just Structures and Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of Organizational Gender Policy and Action Plan for gender equality • % of staff (disaggregated) taking advantage of family friendly or work-life balance policies • Staff satisfaction levels of implementation of Gender policy/action plan (m/f) <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Organizational Resilience and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue for gender justice work • Overall operating budget • % of budget allocated to mainstream and % allocated to stand-alone Women's Rights programs • Diversified funding sources <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Strategic Gender Justice Relationships and Linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External actors view organization as a credible player in gender justice fora • Roles organization plays in external networks and coalitions • Participation and leadership in external learning events on Gender Equality/Women's Rights <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Transformative Gender Justice Programming and Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of sex-disaggregated data in progress reports/evaluations • % of program logical frameworks/Results-Based Management results chains including Gender Equality/Women's Rights results statements and indicators • % of programs that overtly tackle power transformation • % of programs undertaking participatory gender analyses with program beneficiaries at community level <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

MONITORING TOOL #2: Focus capacity building areas monitoring chart

This tool focuses on monitoring and reporting on specific activities that have been implemented in relation to the focus areas in the Capacity Building Strategy. Either in a workshop setting or a face-to-face meeting, representatives from partner organizations should work to complete the monitoring tool, expanding as necessary for greater detail.

To begin with, the information in the first three columns should be inserted from the Capacity Building Strategy template. Then, partners complete the final column which asks for a summary of accomplishments and contributing factors, referring back to the completed CAT Templates 1 and 2 from the previous year.

Partners should be encouraged to share concrete examples of capacity building activities that your (NGO/donor) organization has supported, though they may also find the tool helpful for monitoring their capacity building strategy overall. The discussion should consider whether changes should be made to the Capacity Building Strategy in light of any significant findings from the annual review.

The information shared can be collated across program partners to add greater depth to the quantitative results from Monitoring Tool #1.

MONITORING TOOL 2: FOCUS AREAS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGY MONITORING CHART			
Priority Focus Area (reference capacity area/domain)	Summary of actions needed to achieve desired capacity level (and timeframe)	Proposed capacity building activities to improve capacity level (reference Capacity Building Menu)	Accomplishments: make a note of progress towards improving the capacity levels in each focus area, using CAT Templates 1 and 2 as reference points.
<i>Example: Capacity to undertake Strategic Planning/Internal Operating Systems</i>	<i>Example: Strategic Plan developed by next year</i>	<i>Example: create space for strategic planning initiative within next year</i>	<i>Example: Senior management attended strategic planning training contributing to new energy and vision for organization. Facilitator hired with strong background in gender equality and women's rights. Strategic planning session held in April 2012 involving 20 staff members/board/volunteers. New strategic plan currently being developed. Funding situation created challenges in raising money for women's rights work; resulted in narrowing focus of work which is reflected in Strategic Plan ,etc.</i>

MONITORING TOOL #3: Significant organizational change story

This tool is designed to elicit reflection and learning on organizational (or individual) change processes linked to capacity building initiatives related to the program. It borrows from the process of ‘storytelling’ in the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique. You may find it useful to review the MSC Manual for background information on the approach.¹⁸ The stories are used to dig deeper and understand the critical events and enablers of organizational change with partners.

In a workshop setting, facilitators support participants to identify stories and work through the key factors and actors in groups, to create a set of two to four change stories from the partner organization. Photographs or video clips may also be useful as supporting documentation for these stories.

Participants are encouraged to identify significant change stories that best represent their organization’s transformation or journey in becoming a more effective, gender-just organization. Facilitators’ role is to encourage partners to undertake analysis and reflection of their change stories to build evaluative thinking skills they can apply in different contexts.

Collectively, these significant change stories, documented through the Monitoring Tool #3 Template, give a rich picture of organizational changes and the factors that contributed to these changes. For a large capacity building program, it is possible to examine the set of stories for patterns of change across different regions and types of organizations, as well as exploring interesting outlier stories describing organizational change. For each annual monitoring exercise, it is possible to define parameters: for example, one year a suggested focus could be stories that relate to the capacity domain Transformative Women’s Leadership, while another year the focus could be capacity domain Transformative Gender Justice Programming and Advocacy.



Tom Petrasik/Oxfam

¹⁸ See Rick Davies and Jess Dart, The ‘Most Significant Change’ (MSC) Technique, Version 1, April 2005 available at <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf>

MONITORING TOOL 3: FOCUS AREAS FOR CAPACITY BUILDING STRATEGY MONITORING CHART

<p>Change Story:</p> <p><i>Please share a story about 'significant change' your organization has experienced over the past year which you believe is related to a capacity building intervention.</i></p> <p><i>Please indicate the related Capacity Domain if possible (to support the collection and analysis of the stories).</i></p>	
<p>Analysis of Factors and Actors</p>	Why was this change ('issue' or 'problem') perceived as important one in your context? (In other words, what was the issue the capacity building intervention sought to address?)
	What happened?
	Who was involved?
	Where did it happen?
	When did it happen?
	Why did it happen?
	What enabled the change to occur?
	What did your organization do with or as a result of this change?
	Why do you consider this change significant?

THE POWER OF GENDER-JUST ORGANIZATIONS

TOOLKIT FOR TRANSFORMATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING



TOOLKIT SECTION FOUR EVALUATION



EVALUATION

Through the *Engendering Change* program, Oxfam Canada has been able to use a variety of innovative, evaluative techniques at strategic moments in the program and to infuse Evaluative Thinking into the program life-cycle. However, a key challenge is that many of the standard monitoring, evaluation and learning tools and methods fail to address the needs and complex realities inherent in organizational capacity building for women's rights and gender equality. For this reason, Oxfam has experimented with elements of feminist program evaluation as an innovative method to measure, track, document and make sense of this type of capacity building.



At the beginning of the *Engendering Change* program, Oxfam designed some simple guiding questions for our evaluation strategy which included: 1) What works in capacity building?; 2) What is our added value in capacity building?; 3) What is the impact of our capacity building? These were developed in relation to our theory of change on organizational capacity building as well as our capacity building model.

In this section, we briefly describe two methodologies we used for the *Engendering Change* program:

- 1) a Mid-Term Learning Review (MTLR) methodology; and
- 2) a case study methodology.

We believe both methodologies can be adapted to other organizational capacity building programs.

Mid-term learning review: What works in capacity building and what value-added has been provided?

As we have not yet explicitly adapted this approach for broader use, this section provides a brief description of the *Engendering Change* MTLR methodology, rather than presenting a generic approach. As we work to refine this methodology, we will share updates via the Oxfam Canada website. In the meantime, the *Engendering Change* MTLR Report, including a summary of methods and results, is available at <http://www.oxfam.ca/sites/default/files/MTLR%20Final%20Public%20document.pdf>

The methodology engaged participants in a dynamic, reflective exercise to more systematically capture the strategic learning and results generated by the *Engendering Change* program. The approach uses adaptations of three evaluative methodologies: Outcome Mapping, Outcome Harvesting and Most Significant Change. Oxfam Canada brought a strong gender perspective to these tools, thus strengthening them considerably. We believe that using the combination of these three methods as evaluative tools helped create structured, in-depth, and facilitated conversations within the workshops.¹⁹

¹⁹ See for example, *Monitoring and Evaluation of Capacity and Capacity Development*, Workshop Report, ECDPM, May, 2006; and N. Simister, *Monitoring and Evaluating Capacity Building: Is it really that difficult*, Praxis Paper 23, INTRAC, January 2010.

The Workshops

The MTLR was comprised of three-day workshops held in the Americas, Southern Africa, and the Horn and East Africa in which approximately thirty partner organizations participated. The workshops held in each region constituted the principal data-gathering avenue for the MTLR. These workshops were designed to facilitate Oxfam’s participating partners:

- To tell stories of the change their organization had experienced during involvement with the *Engendering Change* program as they moved towards becoming a stronger gender-just organization;
- To collectively articulate what a strong gender equality and women’s rights organization looks like; and
- To foster commitment, creativity and initiative in monitoring and evaluating their programs and projects.

The workshop structure, agenda and outcomes, are available in the MTLR report. What follows is a description of the multiple methods used to generate a rich discussion and analysis of the *Engendering Change* program’s results along with factors contributing to those results.

The Mixed Method MTLR Approach

Outcome mapping

Outcome Mapping (OM) is a methodology for planning, monitoring and evaluating development initiatives that aims to bring about social change.²⁰ Outcome Mapping as a process helps teams to be specific about the changes they expect their program to contribute to and the actors their program will involve as well as key considerations in strategy development. Outcomes are measured in terms of the changes in behaviour, actions or relationships that can be influenced by the program.

For the MTLR, the evaluation team drew on these principles of the OM approach — including OM concepts around attribution and contribution, spheres of influence, and boundary partners. As well, the methodology incorporated OM’s seven-step *Intentional Design* process — primarily a design and planning tool, nevertheless the steps can be used to retrospectively analyze a program, making it useful for the purposes of a learning review.

Learning in the process

One of the assumptions of the evaluation team in proposing OM was that the participants would be able to develop ‘pathways of change’ — pathways that could be generalized to represent the large body of different organizations involved. However, because of the highly contextualized differences among the organizations, the evaluation team opted instead to present ‘critical enablers’ as a menu of options for organizational transformation, rather than a generic pathway along which they would track each organization. This process heeds the OM message that development is messy and complex, and that different entities/organizations will be further along, or more delayed, on a particular pathway of change, as each organization experiences its own unique set of challenges, setbacks, enablers, actors and factors.

The MTLR workshops honoured this complexity-oriented perspective by facilitating each organization to talk about particular contextual characteristics and how each influenced the look and pace of the transformation through which the organization was passing. While each individual organization may develop its own ‘change pathway’, rolling-up these pathways into an overall template may not be methodologically possible and would not necessarily represent any organization’s actual experience.

Most significant change

In order to dig deeper and understand the critical events and enablers of change for each participating organization, the evaluation team borrowed from the process of ‘storytelling’ in the *Most Significant Change (MSC)* technique.²¹ Applied in each of the three regional workshops, participants were asked to document detailed stories supporting what they felt were the

²⁰ See Sarah Earl, Fred Carden, and Terry Smutylo, *Outcome Mapping: Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*, IDRC, 2001, available at <http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Resources/Publications/Pages/IDRCBookDetails.aspx?PublicationID=121>

‘most significant changes’ their organization had experienced in a number of defined areas. It is important to remember that the evaluation team asked for the *most* significant stories. While recognizing that many important events and outcomes happen within an organization’s day-to-day operations and that any of these ‘stories’ hold interesting and significant information about the workings of the organizations in question, the evaluation team asked the MTLR participants to identify those significant change stories that best represented their organization’s transformation/ journey in becoming a more effective, gender-just organization.

Collectively, these significant change stories were examined for patterns of change within and across regions and organizations, as well as for identifying interesting ‘outlier’ stories describing organizational change. This process can be described as ‘*Outcome Harvesting*’. *Outcome Harvesting* is a utilization-focused, participatory tool which allowed the MTLR to identify, formulate, verify, and make sense of outcomes that the *Engendering Change* program influenced. *Outcome Harvesting* does not measure progress towards predetermined outcomes or objectives, but rather collects evidence of what has been achieved, and works backward to determine whether and how the project or intervention contributed to the change.

In the case of the MTLR, the stories were aggregated, synthesized, and analyzed to look for patterns. Categories emerging from the workshop processes, loosely based on Oxfam Canada’s capacity building domains of change helped to structure the analysis.

Through the use of the adapted MSC technique, the evaluation team was continually alerted to the complexity of the *Engendering Change* program and its partner organizations — a story, or change, that is significant for one organization (at a particular time and place in its organizational development journey), may not hold the same meaning or significance for another organization due to differences in context, thematic focus, and its relationship with its own local partners.

Reflections on the process

The MTLR helped Oxfam Canada and its partners understand the breadth of the most significant changes, as well as the factors and actors that partners identified as the most critical enablers supporting them to become more effective and gender-just organizations. The methodology was flexible enough to help capture different partners’ diverse change pathways. The learning-oriented participatory process helped uncover the complex nature of gender-just organizational change, while honouring partners’ own conceptualizations and articulations of what strong gender-just organizations look like.

We are also convinced that using *Outcome Mapping*, *Outcome Harvesting* and *Most Significant Change* as evaluative tools helps deepen conversations and document them in an innovative way, as well as create a ‘learning-by-doing’ approach at the workshop, which can contribute to the development of partners’ own evaluation capacity.



Annie Bungeoth/Oxfam

²¹ See Rick Davies and Jess Dart, *The ‘Most Significant Change’ (MSC) Technique*, Version 1, April 2005 available at <http://www.mande.co.uk/docs/MSCGuide.pdf>

Case Studies: What Is The Impact Of Capacity Building?²²

The MTLR succeeded in generating rich data on the impact of our program on partner organizations' gender justice capacity, and this across the full and diverse range of participating partner organizations. Our multi-objective program MEL plan also foresaw, as mentioned previously, separate initiatives to assess the impact of partner programs on women's lives and rights. Oxfam Canada has elected to initiate information-rich case study²³ methodology, which will surface these impacts, as well as yield greater depth about how organizational capacity building influences our partners' programming with their beneficiaries/constituencies. The use of information-rich case studies provide more careful attention to detail, context and nuance, generating insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations.

Theoretical approach:

Oxfam Canada is interested in exploring how the capacity building domains influence the "transformative gender justice programming and advocacy" of our partners. To Oxfam, transformative programming and advocacy seeks to challenge and change the structural causes of gender equality as well as the imbalances in power relations that create injustices and gender based repression. Oxfam Canada believes that there is no "blueprint" to transformative programming and advocacy. Instead, changes at the individual and systematic level are required in four main areas: women's and men's consciousness; women's access to resources; informal cultural norms, values, and practices; and formal institutions, laws, and policies (see *Integral Framework* in Annex 3).

Like our capacity building initiatives, Oxfam Canada recognizes that partners have their own specific priorities and pathways to advancing women's rights and gender equality. Accordingly, partners' programming may target certain specific areas of the *Integral Framework*. Oxfam provides targeted yet flexible support to our partners' programming and advocacy work that may emphasize some or all of the quadrants of the *Integral Framework*.

Through the case studies, Oxfam Canada is hoping to deepen its understanding of the nature of transformative programming and advocacy, what this type of programming looks like in practice in a few key contexts for the *Engendering Change* program, and the specific kinds of changes experienced by women and girls as a result of these transformative programs.

Guiding questions for the case studies:

1. What does transformative programming and advocacy look like within a specific partner organization?
2. How does the organizational capacity building provided by the *Engendering Change* program support partners to do better transformative programming and advocacy in order to advance women's rights and gender equality?
3. What role does women's leadership play within this transformative programming and advocacy?
4. How does partners' transformative programming contribute to longer-term impacts within their partners' constituencies/beneficiary base, particularly in the lives of girls and women?

²² See Michael Quinn Patton, *Developmental Evaluation, Applying Complexity Concepts to Enhance Innovation and Use*, Michael Quinn Patton, 2011.

²³ At the time of this publication, the case studies were at an inception stage. They will be made available at <http://www.oxfam.ca/who-we-are/accountability-and-transparency>.

THE POWER OF GENDER-JUST ORGANIZATIONS

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ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING



Humberto Mayou/Oxfam

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: Sample CAT workshop agenda

Activities

Approximate Time required

Introductions

Purpose of workshop	30 minutes
Overview of principles underlying CAT workshop	

(Optional) Warm Up: Assessing our Organizational Capacities

Exercise 1: Do we have the capacities to support the work we want to do? or	40 minutes
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Exercise 2: Women roles and leadership in our organization?	40 minutes
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Presentation: Brief Overview of Oxfam Canada Capacity Building domains	20 minutes
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CAT Process

Step 1: Identification of existing capacities	(5-8 hours)
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<i>Group Work and Plenary</i>	2 hours
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Step 2: Scoring Current Capacity levels

<i>Group Work and Plenary</i>	2 hours
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<i>Towards a Capacity Building Strategy</i>	1 hour
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Next Steps, evaluation and Close	30 minutes
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ANNEX 2: This is what gender-just organizations look like

A strong, effective organization with capacity to advance gender equality and women's rights:

1. There is gender equality in staffing at all organizational levels.
2. All aspects of organizational structure and procedures are fully gendered. There is overall organizational reflection around performance and the inclusion of gender.
3. There is an official organizational policy on gender equity, which is reflected in actions, with an accountability mechanism and equity grievance processes.
4. There is an ongoing staff development program for building female confidence, assertiveness and capacity.
5. There is a system for identifying and responding to needs for gender training.
6. Gender equality is a strong central element in programming which is gender-sensitive and empowering of partners, communities and individuals.
7. Leadership is decentralized.
8. Programming is attentive and flexible in listening to and working with communities.
9. The organization is seen as a credible partner/player by other gender-engaged international and national agencies.
10. The organization is able to influence and provide leadership to government and community agencies, to stakeholders and beneficiaries through political positioning, effective communication, policy influence, networking and knowledge sharing.

ANNEX 3: Using the integral framework as a tool for organizational capacity assessment²⁴

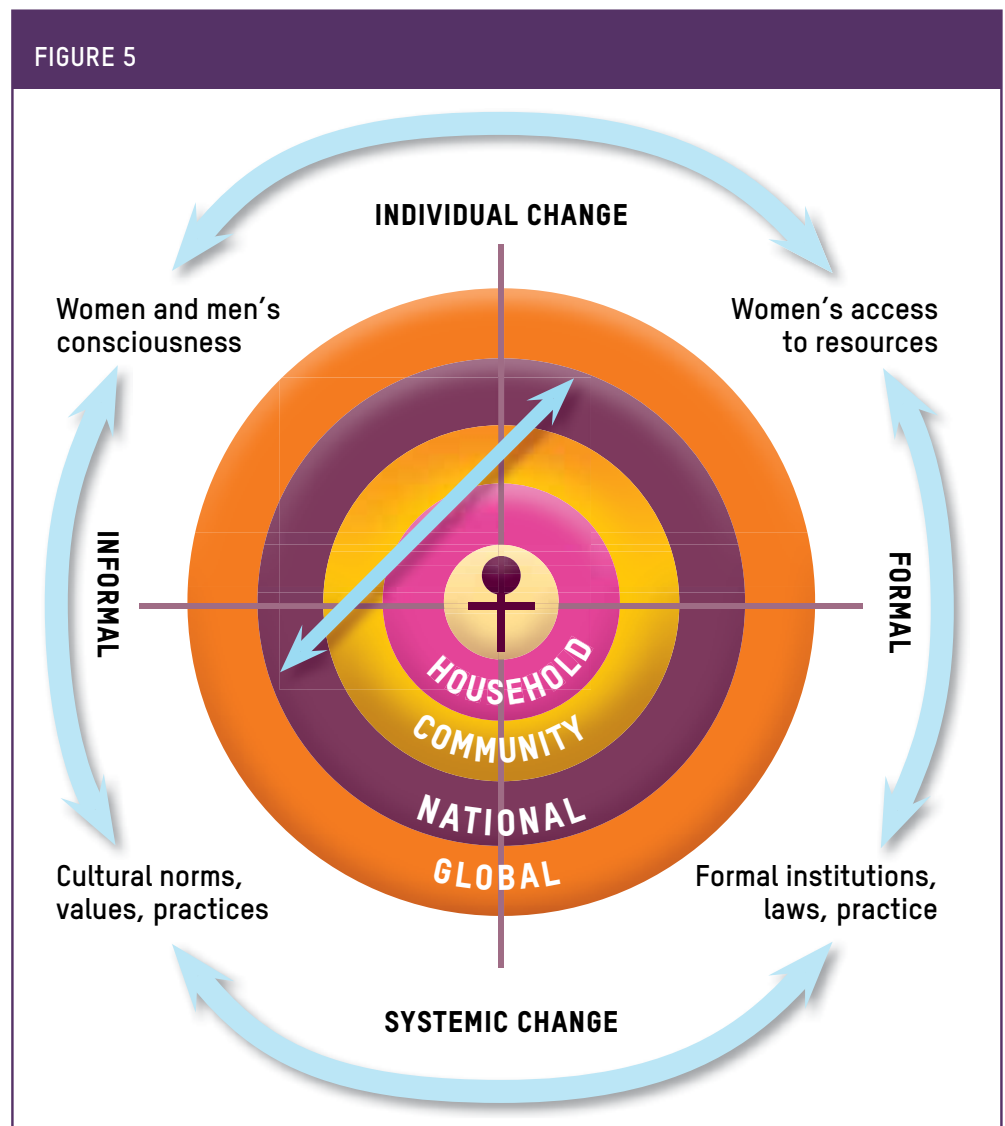
We understand that there is no one pathway to change towards Gender Justice. We know also that the process is complex and that context matters. But at all levels — individual, organizational, community, national and global — shifts in four main areas are needed. These are in **women’s and men’s consciousness; women’s access to resources; informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices; and formal institutions, laws, policies.**

Figure 1: Identifies the changes needed to bring about gender equality and the levels at which they happen.

Transformation of the power imbalances between men and women is fundamental for all of these changes to last. This includes visible power as well as the most entrenched forms of power, which we can’t easily see, but are deeply ingrained in our thinking and societies — exclusion of women from decisions that affect their lives and acceptance of their abuse and marginalization as “normal”.²⁵

In its capacity building work, Oxfam Canada has introduced the Integral Framework to many partners as a tool to support them in developing more transformative approaches to their programming and advocacy work. They are encouraged to design and implement programs — some of them funded by Oxfam Canada — that can contribute to shifts in the following four areas:

Women’s and men’s consciousness — programming and advocacy that seeks to change knowledge, skills, political consciousness and commitment towards equality. Such changes can occur through supporting training and capacity building for women; raising the



²⁴ This section is adapted and expanded from Oxfam International Gender Justice Team’s “The Oxfam Narrative on Gender Justice: How change happens and how Oxfam contributes to making it happen”, draft, June 2011, and draws on “Gender at Work’s Approach to Gender Equality and Institutional Change”, available at http://www.genderatwork.org/sites/genderatwork.org/files/resources/Gender_at_Works_Approach.pdf

²⁵ See Just Associates “Making Change Happen: Power” (2006) for more on invisible and hidden power

visibility of the critical importance of women's rights and promoting women's leadership and women's organizing for achieving gender justice as well as other development outcomes. Addressing how to work with men should also be a key feature of program design.

Women's access to and control over resources — programming and advocacy that supports changes in resources for women and girls, increasing their voice and leadership in different fora, enabling them to live free from violence and have access to health and other services. For women to win control over resources and decisions on how to use these resources, shifts in power relations have to happen.

Formal institutions, laws and policies – programming that supports changes in institutions, laws, and practices to provide security and justice for women, as well as pushing for changes in key institutions, including government ministries, to ensure that public policies (social and economic) promote rather than undermine women's rights. This also includes supporting women and men to build networks and movements, and enabling women to assert their individual and collective political voices as active citizens so that they can exercise power.

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices — programming that supports changes in cultural and social practices that exclude women, and supports an enabling environment where women are valued and their leadership can flourish. This involves programs designed to work with informal institutions and groups, for example, engaging traditional leaders who can use their power to shift cultural norms and practices.

ANNEX 4: Background to understanding how organizations grow and develop

Oxfam borrows from a typology of four general phases of organizational development based on work by the organizational practitioners Bernard Lievegood and Fritz Glasl and popularized in the Barefoot Guide to Organizations. We have found the typology helpful for understanding the spectrum of organizations that we work with and the reality that they may not share or even aspire to the same trajectory of organizational 'development'. This is important to us as we strive to practice an approach to capacity building that recognizes 'one size does not fit all'.

The phases in the typology are:

- 1. The Pioneering Phase:** These organizations are usually very flexible and full of energy. They do not yet have systems or processes in place and are often highly dependent on their founder or pioneer. Many women's and feminist organizations find themselves in this phase.
- 2. The Rational Phase:** These organizations start to become better organized, with formalized policies, systems and division of labour.
- 3. The Integrated Phase:** These organizations tend to mix strong systems with flexibility. Planning is usually undertaken through participatory processes, and cross-fertilization occurs between different departments.
- 4. The Associative Phase:** These organizations collaborate successfully with other institutions within their context to minimize competition and maximize impact.

Over the course of its lifespan an organization may move among the phases, perhaps responding to changes in external environments. Organizations do not necessarily need to move 'up' from one phase to another. Some organizations, for example small CBOs, may do well to stay in the Pioneering Phase to maintain their momentum and energy.

The approach resonates with Oxfam Canada in that it does not propose a unilinear pathway of growth that all organizations should follow and it moves away from the notion of increased 'professionalization' or 'bureaucratization' of NGOs as a good or necessary thing (for every NGO).

For further information, please consult <http://www.barefootguide.org/news.htm>

ANNEX 5:

Statement on Oxfam's support to a transformative approach to women's leadership

Women's continual exclusion from institutions and decision making positions, and the resistance in key institutions, structures and their systems (at all levels) to transform to be more inclusive and accountable to women, are crucial barriers to achieving gender justice. Often there is not enough political space for women to set their own agendas for change, to strategize and effectively advocate for the kinds of change that lead to social transformation — even when they are in decision making positions.

Therefore, Oxfam recognizes that support for a transformative approach to women's leadership is a key strategy for achieving gender justice. A transformative approach facilitates and supports stronger individual and collective capacities to make lasting change, women's articulation of a political voice to assert their rights and access resources, and creates an enabling environment for women to practice leadership at all levels (economic, social, political, cultural) and in all domains (family, community, organizations, state and religious institutions, schools and the market).

A transformative approach to women's leadership is rooted in the values of embracing diversity on the basis of age, gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality, religion and ability, of modesty and humility, democracy and participation, transparency and accountability, and recognizes the connections between individuality and the collectivity. A transformative approach recognizes all contributions, no matter how small they seem, as steps in a transformative process and the necessity of women setting their own agendas in all decision making processes.

Through our women's leadership programs, we seek the following outcomes:

- The organizational capacity of women's movements, networks, and organizations are strengthened, where women articulate their own agendas, and exert their rights
- Mixed organizations create environments where the values and practice of transformative leadership are employed
- Both mixed and women's rights organizations that Oxfam supports are cognizant of the ensuring diverse women are able to equally enjoy leadership, decision making and agenda setting positions Oxfam recognizes the need to increase its core support for women's organizing across these outcomes.

The core strategies for achieving these outcomes are:

- Strengthening organizational capacity (including supporting the transformation of leadership practices within affiliates and enhancing organizational sustainability and core support for women's leadership)
- Supporting women's leadership skill building and training
- Supporting transnational, national, and local advocacy efforts
- Strengthening movement building and network facilitation

We acknowledge that Oxfam also needs to review its own impact and effectiveness in Gender Justice through promoting the transformative approach to women's leadership internally. This requires a transformation of the deep culture of the organization, with a focus on structures and systems, to strengthen Oxfam's contributions to effective and lasting change. It also requires increased investment in the monitoring and evaluation of our support to a transformative approach to women's leadership, in order to be clear about the contribution we have made towards the transformation we seek. This means programme procedures should be (re)designed to focus not only focus at end results, but also to measure and value the steps in a process towards transformation. A transformative approach to women's leadership as a strategy should be integrated in all of our work, across all of our rights based change goals, including with mixed organizations.



Paul Weinberg/Oxfam

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