Workshop on Public Sector Innovation Conference on Meeting the Challenge of Innovation in Government Ottawa, Canada, February 9th to 12th 2002

Strategic Innovations in Post-Conflict Situations: Comparative Use of Large-Group Stakeholder Interaction Methods: New Definitions, New Alliances and the Triumph of Optimism

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February 1st 2002

Workshop on Public Sector Innovation

Conference on Meeting the Challenge of Innovation in Government

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Abstract

Post-conflict situations are an important and sensitive example of crisis situations, in which managing change processes is a key element. Innovation plays an important role in managing change in evolving and specific situations of conflict. Although all change processes require participatory approaches in order to promote sustainability, processes in post-conflict situations especially benefit from participatory processes. Participation of a large number of stakeholders helps to promote more comprehensive situation analysis, more effective implementation and improvement programmes, and more sustainable results. Thus, the design and implementation of participatory innovations can strategically increase the possibility of success in improving governance and public administration in post-conflict situations. Indeed, participation emphasizes action-learning as well as the linking of implementation constraints to opportunities. This paper compares programmes in Cambodia in 1994, Liberia in 1997 and Sierra Leone in 2001. The comparison highlights the opportunities and constraints in post-conflict situations, as well as providing a perspective on the role of motivating widespread optimism in moving from conflict to peace, stability and development.

Introduction

Strategic innovation following complex emergencies requires change processes that can stimulate society-wide action through invention of new definitions, creation of new alliances and the triumph of optimism. Large group interaction methods increase the amount of relevant information brought to bear on a problem, build commitment to problem definitions and solutions, fuse planning and implementation, and shorten the amount of time needed to conceive and execute major policies, programmes, services or projects.[1]

This paper compares application of the large-group interaction method in three post-conflict situations: Cambodia, Liberia and Sierra Leone. While it is logical that society-wide change processes would likely benefit from large-group intervention methods, officials often opt for safer modalities; such as, a few consultants, a few papers, and a top-down road map to serve as a guideline for social re-engineering. Large-group methods can be cumbersome and risky. On the other hand, large-group methods can lead to solutions that are sustainable and inspiring.

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[1] John M. Bryson and Sharon R. Anderson, "Applying Large-Group Interaction Methods", Public Administration Review, March/April 2000, Vol. 60, No. 2.

In complex emergency situations, people of virtually all circumstances and at all levels can come together for meaningful dialogue that can lead to optimistic strategic planning and feasible implementation. As well, the large-scale dialogue process can lead to the invention of various organizations, both governmental and non-government, that can monitor and measure progress. Complex emergency situations need not get bogged down in "what might have been"; people need not get "stuck" in negative definitions of issues and relationships. The recent past can appear very gruesome, and individuals, often isolated, cannot contribute in small, truncated processes. Progress demands thinking and action that is dramatic, often risky, and "out of the box". Complex emergency situations literally beg for innovation.

Background

All post-conflict situations are different. They require unique programmes that address the specific situational opportunities and constraints; it is most appropriate to utilize SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) to devise appropriate solutions. Likewise, it is important to carry out this SWOT analysis and other strategic planning exercises at the national and/or appropriate levels in order to engage the minds and actions available to participate in the proposed strategies and solutions. Furthermore, the process of strategic planning and operations needs to be iterative, due to the nature of evolving post-conflict situations. These situations change in unique ways, at changing speeds, and with "go-stop-go" capacity enhancement. The emerging situations are dynamic and require constant monitoring and review.

In Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge conflict resulted in a massive reduction in educated and trained capacity, and the electoral process in 1993 initially resulted in a bi-cephalous government that could not move forward in a strong direction. There were few capacities in place to deal with the aftermath of the conflict. After 1997, a clearer division of power and energetic education efforts increased the possibility for the government and the society to move forward. Through out the process, considerable foreign aid and foreign direct investment stimulated the economy.

In Liberia, while there was considerable destruction of infrastructure and massive killings, there remained a high level of education in the capital city and some secondary towns. Many educated and experienced people were available to participate in strategic planning. A decisive election with the elected President winning 75% of the vote resulted in considerable stability, although few donors or investors launched substantial assistance or investment programmes.

In Sierra Leone, (similar to the situation in Liberia), many educated and experienced people, often with MA's and PhD's, populated the capital city and were eager to participate in strategic planning. Unfortunately, the political/military situation was chaotic. Elections were held in February (first round) and March (run-off) of 1996, despite the lack of a peace agreement. Within a few months the viability of the government was threatened by violence. The elected government went into exile in Guinea, while various militaries controlled different parts of the country. In 2000-2001, temporary peace agreements brought in a UN Peace-Keeping Mission (UNAMSIL), along with a considerable British military presence, although chaos reigned in several regions. Repairs in the capital city and extending to some secondary towns were launched along with some re-establishment of social services and some disarmament and

demobilization in limited areas. Initial efforts to launch governance programming have been stalled. In early 2002, a new peace agreement presents an opportunity to make further progress.

Review of post-conflict restoration targets in selected countries

This review of restoration targets is taken from nine case studies written by nationals of those countries: Azerbaijan, Cambodia, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Namibia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Somalia.[2] Although Liberia is included in this paper, Liberia did not make a presentation in the interregional study/technical meeting on "Restoring Government Administrative Machinery in Situations of Conflict", held in Rome, 13-15 March 1996. An observer from Liberia was present at the meeting but did not prepare a case study for the meeting. The meeting included over 50 participants and prepared recommendations for both the national level and the international level.

The papers identified issues faced by various countries as they seek to rebuild administrative structures destroyed or neglected during the period(s) of conflict. Re-establishment of government administrative machinery is an important part of any post conflict development process. This is usually the starting point in the process of redevelopment for several reasons. One reason is that, in order to be able to carry out the functions that are the hallmark of a society there must be some clearly defined authority in charge of administrative functions. This authority or authorities will form the basis upon which the most basic goods and services will be delivered to the citizens of a country. Another reason that an administrative structure is important is because many of these countries need help from the international community to resolve the conflict and start the rebuilding process. There has to be a recognized mechanism through which international help can be channeled. The issue of administrative structure in a conflicted country is also important because when conflict erupts between a national government and other parties, the administrative structure is usually targeted and destroyed in the struggle for power.

Some of the papers included detailed analysis of the conflict, the resolution process and the rebuilding efforts. Others looked specifically at rebuilding or restructuring the public service. The papers that dealt with the issues that caused the conflict and the resolution process were more informative about the issues being faced in the redevelopment process. This conceptual relationship results from the extent to which the damage to existing administrative structure and the amount of rebuilding needed are directly related to how the conflict unfolded.

The administrative structure is important in the development of a conflict for several reasons. The institutions are symbols of the government they represent, they execute the rules of those in charge and they are useful sources of power to the parties involved in the conflict. Analysis of the papers includes the following issues: political structure, cause of conflict, human rights and justice, civil administration, elections, participation, civil society and local government. Each of these issues, though related, is considered as a separate topic. A comparison of the countries that dealt with each issue is carried out in an effort to identify similarities and differences that are associated with specific conditions.

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[2] The analysis of these nine case studies was assisted by Ms. Grace.1

Civil Administration

Those countries in which the civil administration was directly targeted during the conflict share the experience of needing to rebuild the administrative structure from scratch. Cambodia, Rwanda and El Salvador experienced total destruction of their ability to function administratively as the conflict evolved. Many government workers were killed, exiled or participated in atrocities during the war. The looting and destruction of government property may have stopped with the resolution of the conflict but the issue of restoring functions lost during the conflict created challenges for the peace process in many of these countries.

In Rwanda, the justice system was totally destroyed as magistrates were killed or exiled. Other magistrates were implicated in the genocide and could not be included in the rebuilding process. The justice system in Rwanda had to be rebuilt from scratch with the help of the United Nations and other donors. In El Salvador, members of the security forces were blamed for inflicting abuse on the civilian population. Again, as was seen in Rwanda, the public security system and the justice system needed to be rebuilt. A new Supreme Court was created to deal with the issue of misconduct by judges, while the security forces were disbanded and totally rebuilt with members from both sides of the conflict and civilians. The new recruits were trained at a newly established National Academy of Public Security (ANSP). These examples show how the nature of the conflict dictated the level of rebuilding that was necessary to provide these countries with a working justice system.

Other countries such as Lebanon, Namibia and Ethiopia did not experience total destruction of their administrative system. Because civil administration remained mostly intact the focus is more towards reorganization, in order to serve the citizens more efficiently. The administrative system in Namibia is especially capable as it is a remnant of the former apartheid regime. The administrative structure was put in place to enforce the rules of an apartheid government. After the conflict there is now a need to refocus in order to serve the people the administrative machinery was created to oppress.

Ethiopia also built an elaborate administrative network through the Peasants Association (PA). This was a system of rural cooperatives that was used to control production and illustrate the effectiveness of communist rule. The Peasants Associations are still in place and are still being used. However, refocusing is necessary to make this system work for the people, not just as a control mechanism but also as a means of encouraging citizen's participation. The paper submitted by Lebanon focused on restructuring the public administration in order to achieve a modern and efficient public service. Lebanon has an administrative structure in place but the government has taken the initiative to create an Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform. The responsibility of this office is to assess the needs of all the ministries and government agencies by defining priorities, estimating financing and designing strategies to fulfill needs. The assessment is called the National Administrative Rehabilitation Program (NARP). The program is a comprehensive approach to make long range plans for personnel, training, technology, equipment and other identified priorities.

One common theme in the majority of the papers is that conflict created wasteful and oversized government structures that must be reformed in order to be effective in a post conflict situation. Those administrations that survived the conflict and are still operational tend to be staffed by inadequately skilled people who are politically motivated. This leads to the lack of

accountability and transparency seen in the cases of Sierra Leone and Somalia. Corruption in government impacts the administration of justice, the enforcement of laws and causes power to be centralized in the office of the executive.

Political Structure

The post conflict political structures in the countries that presented papers varied depending on the cause of the conflict and the parties involved in the resolution. In countries where segregation was the main cause of the conflict, building a coalition government appeared to be the favored solution. Another important similarity among the countries with a coalition government is the fact that the United Nations played a prominent role in the resolution of the conflict and in establishing the foundations upon which the rebuilding would take place. Rwanda, Cambodia and Somalia illustrate power-sharing arrangements. Power sharing forms the basis upon which the parties to the conflict can agree on non- violent solutions to their problems.

Other countries, for example Sierra Leone experienced military control and a one party political structure that led to abuse of power. Somalia had similar circumstances with clans using military power to exclude others. The Somalia paper recommends a presidential form of government with power divided among three branches. According to the author, clan allegiance of the past is not as strong so people are more open to representation based on broader issues.

In El Salvador, the entire political structure was distorted and controlled by the security forces. In Namibia the apartheid regime controlled the political structure. There is a tendency for those countries that experienced centralization of power by either the military or the executive to favor a presidential system with three branches of government. This tendency is an effort to provide some sort of "check and balance" on power among factions within the political structure.

The situation in Palestine is unusual in that their political structure is one that lacks a central government. The Palestinian National Authority and the Palestinian Liberation Organization are recognized as representatives of the people but they do not have autonomy over the territories that are being disputed as these territories are controlled by other nations. There is yet to be a resolution to the conflict so it is likely that the political structure will remain uncertain for the near future. The Azerbaijan paper discussed at length the new constitution that established a presidential system with three branches of government. The paper clearly defines the operation of the government and the establishment of a political structure without any details of what system of government was in place before the conflict.

Justice and Human Rights

Justice and human rights was an issue in the papers from El Salvador, Cambodia and Rwanda for several reasons.

- All three states were involved in conflicts with mass killing of civilians.

- The United Nations played a significant role in the reconciliation process

- There is an issue of resettlement of those displaced by the conflict

These nations focussed on developing a system that would ensure justice for the pain and suffering experienced during the conflict. Also of major importance in these states is the creation

of structures that will build trust between former parties to the conflict. An example of this is in the paper on Rwanda. Resettlement of the refugees is an important part of the rebuilding process but concern is also expressed for the women and children who were displaced by the war, now living in poverty.

In El Salvador the creation of the National Council for the Defense of Human Rights by the Chapultepec Peace Accord was an important outcome of the conflict resolution process. A Truth Commission was also mandated to record atrocities committed by the former security forces during the conflict. In Cambodia, the National Program to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia was launched in an effort to promote social justice and equity. The development of nations emerging from conflict resolution is based upon people believing that they will be treated fairly, and that they will be afforded basic rights as human beings. The Palestinian paper expressed concern for the development of " rule of law and equality". There is also a call for the Palestinian National Authority to observe and adopt Conventions that secure human rights. Attention to concerns about human rights should enable improvement in the government's ability to adopt Conventions that secure basic human rights for it's citizens once the conflict is resolved.

Citizen Participation

Participation was discussed in the papers from Ethiopia, Namibia, Rwanda and Somalia. The most comprehensive discussion of this issue was presented in the Ethiopian paper. Ethiopia looked at how the involvement of local citizens in the Peasants Associations became the foundation for local government. However the exclusion of women from these associations reduced their effectiveness as a participatory mechanism. Women were not involved in the planning and development process. Also, because the government of Ethiopia had used participation as a way to control the citizens, there is a negative attitude towards the process. There has been an attempt to redistribute decision making to lower levels of the society to encourage "more effective grassroots participation".

Historically Ethiopians waited for the government to take action or give directives to be followed. Now they are seeking ways to renew the old Peasants Associations and make them work for the people. The World Bank Economic Recovery and Reconstruction Program encouraged participation in a pilot project that was proposed for implementation throughout the country. The government has pledged its support for participatory programs that will improve basic social and economic infrastructure.

Somalia looked at the issue of participation as a way of avoiding future conflict. The author believes that if community leaders are involved in the decision-making and administrative management process then conflict can be avoided. Regional participation in the central administration is also seen as an important link between central and local governments. This is also an important way to keep in touch with the needs of those for which government was created. Rwanda considered how the inclusion of women in the management level of administration would be important in the redevelopment process.

Namibia highlighted the importance of decentralization of problem solving to the regional and local levels. These nations share the common trait of being African nations with a deep history of clan and ethnic divisions. In order to achieve the cooperation necessary to rebuild

the administrative structure that was destroyed during the conflict there must be involvement of the citizens at all levels of the process. If there is no citizen involvement, it will be difficult to develop a common ground upon which the different groups can agree. Ownership of redevelopment programs is important for widespread support of the process. When people contribute to the process it is unlikely they will resort to conflict that will destroyed what they have worked towards. On the other hand, it is far too easy to destroy those things that are perceived to belong to others, especially "outsiders".

Infrastructure

The destruction of infrastructure such as roads, airports, communication systems and the disruption of basic services like water and electricity have been experienced by most of the countries that presented papers. Infrastructure in many of the countries that presented papers was either destroyed or is minimal because of the conflict. The infrastructure is usually targeted during conflict because they provide the government with the ability to function. In El Salvador, Somalia, Rwanda there was major damage to the infrastructure. In places like Sierra Leone and Palestine infrastructure is minimal and development is further slowed by the conflict. Rebuilding infrastructure is important for stability and economic development in every country. Infrastructure is also important for the improvement of standard of living of the citizens in post conflict nations.

Elections

Several of the papers identified the goal of free and fair elections as a condition for stability in the future. These authors recognized that an atmosphere of inclusion where citizens are able to participate through the electoral process is important. Many of the countries that experienced ethnic segregation and centralization of power in the executive have included the issue of creating a fair electoral process in the discussion. Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Namibia are all seeking to include the citizens in an electoral process. This is an effort to build on democratic principles that were established during the resolution process. The recommendations for Somalia included recognition of the need for a nation wide census. The census should be used to identify population distribution so a link can be made to resource allocation. The author believes free and fair elections should also be conducted with international supervision, even as he recognizes the difficulties posed by the nomadic culture of the country. In Sierra Leone an Election Commission was set up to organize a electoral system that would allow multiple parties to participate in free and fair elections.

El Salvador and Cambodia have established electoral processes with the help of the United Nations. The situation in El Salvador is especially interesting because there were regular elections even during the period of conflict. While many of the other countries did not allow participation through an electoral process, El Salvador was using this process in a way that excluded the opposition. Opposition forces were either excluded from the process or results that favored them were ignored. The return of exiled mayors who were denied their offices during the conflict became a major issue in the agreement to resolve the conflict. As part of the agreement that brought the conflict to an end election codes have been revised.

Elections in Cambodia was organized and supervised by the United Nations, however, the Khmer Rouge (a party to the conflict) did not participate. The conflict between the elected coalition government and this group continues on a lesser scale.

Local Government

Of the papers presented, El Salvador, Palestine and Ethiopia had the most functional local government structures. Palestinian local government provides many public services in the absence of a functioning national government. El Salvador is similar to Palestine in that both local governments are autonomous and resources are derived from sources other than the national government. El Salvador's municipalities received money from donors such as USAID to rebuild infrastructure and administrative structures during the rebuilding process. The Palestinian local government does not have a clearly defined relationship with the national government. Local government in Palestine became an important provider of public service because there was no functioning national government. In El Salvador the local government is strong historically. The municipal system in El Salvador gives the mayors and other elected City Council leaders autonomy over taxes and service provision. Unlike the Palestinians the national government is functioning. Like Palestine, El Salvador is also concerned about the relationship between local authorities and the national government. Leaders of both governments have been given increased responsibilities without adequate resources.

Ethiopia also has an organized and functioning local government system through the use of the Peasants Associations that were developed under communist rule. Leadership for these associations is decided through general assembly elections. These associations are also organized down to the level of households. This means that the level of participation includes those at lower levels of the society. The Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) encourages local government development by establishing administrative units and maintaining a policy of moving power to lower levels of the society. The Peasants Associations provide many public service functions such as tax collection and policing.

Namibia also discussed the local government in post conflict administration rebuilding. The creation of a legal and institutional framework to provide services at the local level has been encouraged through the holding of regional and local council elections. Namibia is seeking to decentralize government functions in an effort to increase efficiency and encourage problem solving at lower levels of the society.

Causes of Conflict

The papers mostly identified one of two causes for conflict in all ten countries. Either there was segregation based on ethnicity, race and clan or there was unfair distribution of power in the political system. Segregation and the unequal distribution of power led to social injustices and unequal distribution of resources in many of the countries. Conflict in many of the countries escalated into full civil wars with rebel forces fighting against the national government that usually uses force to stay in power. Palestine is unique in that the conflict in that nation is a dispute over territory that involves another nation.

Unresolved conflict

Several of the countries are still involved in conflict even though they are seeking to rebuild the administrative structures that were destroyed in the past. Some issues faced by those countries still involved in situations of conflict are identified below:

The paper on Cambodia identified the cost of security as an impediment to the rebuilding process. Security was also of concern in the paper on Rwanda. The author looked at how the

issue of inclusion in the political process can lead to resolution for all parties to the conflict and therefore reduce the cost of security for the new administration. If those who lose power are not a part of the solution it is likely they will become a threat to security in the future. Security costs are significant enough to impact the government's ability to finance administrative building projects.

The Palestinian paper recognizes that the conflict is unresolved and therefore impacts negatively on administrative building by consuming time and resources of the PNA. Leaders use most of their time negotiating a solution or dealing with various crises as they come up. Much time is spent dealing with these issues creating pressure on leaders who have little resource or time left to concentrate on administrative building initiatives. It is likely that Lebanon and Sierra Leone are also facing the same issues, as conflict in these two countries is still unresolved.

Summary

The issues discussed in the papers presented are of great importance in the development of an administrative structure in post conflict situations. Other issues such as economic development and resource availability will also impact on the ability of a nation to create an efficient administrative structure. One important theme in the rebuilding process is the inclusion of all members to the conflict in the resolution and implementation process. Another important theme appears to be the creation of a fair justice system. These activities will increase trust among the parties to a conflict and create an environment of openness that lays a solid foundation upon which changes can be made in an effort to avoid the mistakes of the past.

Elements

The three situations highlighted in the current paper on innovations—Cambodia, Liberia and Sierra Leone—are similar and different. Each evolved out of a brutal conflict in which neighbors killed each other and/or informed on each other. The situations are characterized not only by loss of life and damaged infrastructure but also by a severe lack of trust among people, and a condition of confusion and rumors concerning causes of conflict, needed restoration strategies and emerging "new and old" leadership. In both Liberia and Sierra Leone, the existence of child soldiers, related drug abuse and invasion of the capital city added to the chaos of restoration. On the other hand, in Cambodia, the capital city was spared, the conflict was fought on "more traditional" guerrilla warfare, and the nature of the conflict targeted the more educated citizens for death, starvation and/or ruralization in work camps. In all three cases, the process of rebuilding involved physical infrastructure, social capital and psychological variables. Thus, the process of "sorting out" an agenda for action involved not only a list of goals and tasks, but also building trust and rapid "learning-by-doing". As well, the process of capacity building for planning and implementation involved an iterative process, in which the stakeholders would, periodically, review progress and adjust priorities. Indeed, the process of restoration is slow, tedious and still moving forward in all three countries.

Although all three countries were intended to have participatory processes of redevelopment, the procedures depended upon the specific conditions and constraints. For instance, in Cambodia, one international adviser, working with a few national counterparts and

some other international staff, decided upon the 15 categories of work. This international adviser recruited a team of 15 international consultants to serve as resource persons for the 15 teams. Some donors sent consultants directly; likewise, the United Nations recruited consultants. Each team was made up of government officials interested in the specific subject. Some consultant "resource persons" used a participatory approach; others lectured to the teams. In some teams, nationals chaired the meeting(s); in others, the resource persons chaired the meeting(s). Some team meetings were held in Khmer, with resource persons benefiting from "whispered translation"; some team meetings were held in English or French. Some resource persons formulated the team report based on ideas gathered from the team members; other resource persons imposed their pre-conceived concepts. In at least one team, the analysis and recommendations were prepared in English with the assistance of Cambodian consultants and translated into Khmer, reviewed and adjusted for accuracy in a Khmer-speaking working group made up of key members of the team, then finalized in English. The final document was the object of a two-day Cabinet seminar during which the government leaders set priorities for the final submission to the scheduled Donor Meeting.

This Cambodian experience attempted to bring together the disparate factions of the government. After several decades of devisiveness, separation between exiles and "stayees", and divisions between various political parties, the working environment was designed to focus attention on the future and the channel comments along productive lines. The effort was massive. For a period of two weeks, government leaders were hustling from meeting to meeting, as the working groups were all meeting at more or less the same time. Given the difficulties of transportation and communications, as well as the relative lack of expertise and participatory experience, the workshops were designed to generate ideas, create consensus and prepare the government for a big donor meeting.

The Liberia scenario was facilitated with the technical assistance of DESA. The the Government of Liberia, in close cooperation with a wide variety of local civil society organizations, created a programme of activities to embed democratic practices in the government and civil society operations in post-conflict Liberia, leading to sustainable future development.

This project is participatory and involves action-learning training. National professionals wrote analytic papers for the eleven areas of Liberian governance agenda agreed upon by representatives of government, private sector and civil society. These 11 areas were identified during a one-day brainstorming and priority-setting workshop attended by government officials—including Ministers, Directors, and professional staff, representatives of the private sector, civil society and students from universities and high schools. The eleven areas of the governance agenda are (1) bureaucratic transparency and accountability; (2) communications and dialogue [mega-logue], (3) culture and civic responsibilities, (4) education and human resources development, (5) human rights, (6) justice system and rule of law, (7) physical security, (8) public decision-making and participation, (9) public service, (10) restructuring government and capacity building [including decentralization], and (11) social and economic security.

The location of the governance office was essential to the success of the programme. The office was located in town, in rented space, and fully open and available to all society. On 10 April 1998 in Monrovia, Liberia, His Excellency Enoch M. Dogolea, Vice-President of Liberia,

officially opened the Government of Liberia's Project Office on Promotion of Good Governance. His Excellency Jimmy Carter, former President of the United States, as special guest of the Government, dedicated the project office, and declared its importance in assisting the Government of Liberia to more effectively and efficiently serve the people of Liberia. The Project Coordination Mechanism (PCM) was chaired by the Hon. Blamoh Nelson, Director-General of the Cabinet and participated in by representatives of key government institutions, private sector companies, local professionals and civil society organizations. Also formed was the Media Network on Governance (MNG) in order to promote wide sharing of information.

After the brainstorming, priority setting and office opening, work began to prepare for workshops on the 11 key governance topics. The workshops were attended by more than 300 participants from government, private sector and civil society. Significantly, some participants were drawn from rural areas and were involved in reviving local governance. Results of the workshops were tabulated in matrix form for full integration into a wide-ranging programme of governance renewal. Responsibility for carrying out the workshops rested largely on the national people. One international adviser assisted during the brainstorming and formulation; one international consultant assisted during the workshops; and one technical adviser assisted with the first three months of activities, including the planning of the workshops. The National Project Director led the workshops and members of the PCM facilitated the sessions.

In Sierra Leone, the action-learning process, begun in 1996, was interrupted by additional civil conflict. When a Peace Accord was further established in 2001, a process of local generation of topics and priorities began. One international adviser, working with the Ministry of Planning, organized a brainstorming meeting that developed 24 topics. Although a large workshop of more than 500 people is anticipated, the process has been stalled by continuing insecurity and by discussion about inclusiveness of the process. One argument suggests a more modest workshop with preparation carried out by five national consultants. This first argument includes interest in employing external consultants to prepare papers for discussion. On the other hand, the argument in favor of a large-scale workshop with 24 national consultants to prepare the topics for discussion is likely to lead to long-term sustainability, more national ownership and greater commitment among the population. In addition, in a conflict-ridden society with little means to meet needs, the division of the consultant budget among 24, rather than only 5, consultants also favors wider poverty alleviation. This debate continues.

In all three cases, the use of nationally based, large-scale processes resulted in definitions of recovery that emanated from on-the-ground experience. The process of holding workshops with large participation led to the formation of alliances among institutions, sectors and individuals that are useful for implementation. Likewise, a larger the degree of participation leads to a higher the level of optimism about the future. With large-scale interaction, participants see that a critical mass can evolve to move away from negative past to positive future. Although large-scale interactions are not a guarantee of sustainable development in post-conflict situations, these participatory processes are a necessary condition for mobilizing expertise, experience and commitment.

Figure 1: Action-Learning Process for Governance Programmes in Post-Conflict Situations

	Cambodia 1994	Liberia 1997	Sierra Leone 1996-2002 +
Government	Bi-cephalous; two Prime-Ministers replicated in key ministries	President wins 75% of the vote	President elected in 1996 in run-off; civil strife intervenes; Elections due in 2002
Civil Society	Top-down authority; central control system; little experience with NGO's, etc.	Several authoritarian and democratic models available; much bottom-up participation; many NGO's	Several authoritarian and democratic models available; people participated in 1996 election at risk of mutilation and bombing; some NGO's
Education level	Low (Khmer Rouge killed most educated people; others fled)	High level of education in capital and secondary towns	High level of education in (PhD's) in capital; education level declining in rural areas
Conflict	1975-1991; Resolution in 1997; widespread destruction; capital in-tact	1993-1997 (??); widespread destruction, including capital city	On-going ??; widespread destruction, including capital city
Global view	Isolation during Khmer Rouge and recent periods	Much global contact by elites; connection to USA	Much global contact by elites; connection to UK
Initial conceptualization	One international adviser and team	One international adviser and local brainstorming meeting and document written with Secretary-General of Cabinet	One international adviser and local brainstorming meeting, facilitated by staff of Ministry of Planning
Working group format	15 working groups	11 working groups	24 working groups
Preparations	15 international consultants serve as resource persons	11 national consultants prepare papers on topics identified in brainstorming	24 national consultants to prepare papers on topics identified in brainstorming
Reports	75-100 government officials and donors	300 participants from government, private sector and civil society	500 + participants from government, private sector and civil society planned
Coordination	Full-time international consultant	National project director assisted by international consultant (first 3 months)	Not implemented yet
Office	Free-standing near UNDP office; then moved to Council of Ministers building	Free-standing in town, with open-door policy, library and internet connection	Not implemented yet
Results	Document for donor meeting	Documents for national planning	Not implemented yet
Comments	Donor-driven	Nationally-organized process	Stalled by political situation and discussion about extent of participation

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