

Mapinduzi Journal 1

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**Context analysis:
an important step towards a strategy
for social change**

Editors: Flaubert Djateng and Christiane Kayser

Texts by: Cosmas Cheka, Flaubert Djateng, Christiane Kayser,
Martha Mamozai, Marie José Mavinga, Jeanot Minla Mfou'ou,
Maty Ndiaye Sy, Michel Séguier



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Bafoussam

The cover design is based on a Cameroonian traditional fabric worn mainly by the Bamiléké of West Cameroon. It is known as “Ndop” or “Ze-ndouop”. It is hand woven and dyed with natural pigments. The drawings echo the décor of Fons’ palaces and represent power, life, male and female, the sun and the moon. The cover also incorporates a painting by Saadio, the Dakar-based Senegalese painter, which captures his idea of tradition and modernity in Senegal.

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Contact :

Flaubert Djabateng : fdjabateng9@gmail.com

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How it all started

The Mapinduzi Unit adventure started in 2008. Mapinduzi is a Swahili word that means *profound change* or, *revolution*...

We are a group of men and women, Africans and Europeans, who have been working for many years with initiatives, organisations and movements in Africa. For a long time, we have wanted to set up an innovative think tank to discuss and work on change in Africa. Such a forum is meant to be a mix of different origins, beliefs and experiences, open-minded, productive, courageous and receptive to new ideas. The forum also aspires to develop lessons learned and to make them accessible to others.

The group is not an organisation or consultancy firm but a free association of people willing to usefully share their experiences and, especially, contribute to meaningful change.

So far, the following persons are involved and have made contributions:

Cosmas Cheka, <i>Cameroon</i>	Jean-Pierre Lindiro Kabirigi, <i>DR Congo</i>
Flaubert Djateng, <i>Cameroon</i>	Christiane Kayser, <i>Luxembourg</i>
Maty Ndiaye Sy, <i>Senegal</i>	Michel Séguier, <i>France</i>
Martha Mamozai, <i>Germany</i>	Mamadou Lamine Sonko, <i>Senegal</i>
Marie José Mavinga, <i>DR Congo</i>	Ousmane Sy, <i>Mali</i>
Jeanot Minla Mfou'ou, <i>Cameroon</i>	

Each person uses their varied experience to contribute in different ways to the work. The authors of the articles in “Mapinduzi Journal”, written in English and French, assume full responsibility for their writings.

However, without the organisations and initiatives with whom we work at the grassroots in various African countries, we would have little to say. Accordingly, it is these organisations and initiatives that should be regarded as the subject of and the source of inspiration behind the texts.

In all modesty, we wish to make our contribution so that—in a world

that is changing at breathtaking speed. African peoples may actually inspire change and put it into practice, so that they no longer passively accept its effects. Instead of continuing to project existing myths, prejudices and clichés on Africa, we wish to identify, strengthen and highlight its strengths, creativity and potential, especially its human potential. Decompartmentalisation and working with a diversity of people and points of view are the very active foundations and principles of our work. Geographical distances, cultural diversity and schedule clashes make our work difficult, but at the same time the diversity opens doors and inspires.

In this first Mapinduzi Journal, we present our objectives. The main focus of this edition is “Context analysis as a tool for social change”. Also included are the first elements of strategy coaching as we see it.

We are very grateful to the Zenü Network in Cameroon and the EED in Germany for their material and logistical support.

Happy reading and may the adventure continue...

*Christiane Kayser
Flaubert Djateng
June 2010*

Mapinduzi – an introduction

Maty Ndiaye Sy

Mapinduzi, a group of male and female consultants in Africa who work in challenging and very often complex environments, met in August 2009, in Kribi, Cameroon, and agreed to pool their approaches to development work.

They agreed to concentrate on devising new ways of reporting on current efforts regarding strategic support to systems and teams working on the continent's development dynamics.

The time for procrastination is over

These systems and teams, often with neither direction nor guidance and devoid of appropriate resources, succeed, despite insecurity, corruption and misrule and against a backdrop of ineffective and often counterproductive «development and aid systems», in supporting all kinds of initiatives to achieve positive and effective impacts.

They deserve much more recognition, as they prove that small initiatives and anonymous leaders can sustain, within countless communities and among millions of Africans, the momentum of hope for a better future and the dignity of taking responsibility for it.

The winds of change are blowing

The bodies that currently manage international assistance, such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and various national organisations such as USAID, cannot deliver solutions to problems. Exchanges with some of the people working in these organi-

sations leave one with the impression that one is dealing with medical personnel in a geriatric service. All their actions are geared towards relieving pain and providing palliative treatment. They have stopped believing in the possibility of real change in Africa. The further they progress in their careers, the higher their real property loans as well as university fees for their children rise and the less willing they are to set the cats among the pigeons. Initially, activists augured hope; sadly, the generation of idealists that founded non-governmental organisations in the 1960s and the 1970s has been replaced by bureaucrats who joined NGOs as part of a career plan, most often because they were not good enough to be recruited in the international organisations cited above.

Fixing Africa: once and for all. From 53 struggling countries to 4 super States by 2030, Tidjani 'Jef' Tall, 2009, www.FixingAfrica.com/fr

Drawing from lessons learnt to develop a new type of dialogue about change between Africa and the rest of the world...

This group of independent professionals wants to move away from existing development models, and look for new and effective ones outside the accepted norms. By regularly producing written accounts of their experiences, they initiate a dialogue with academic researchers as well as policy decision-makers.

Experiences and reflections on change in respect of civil society's contribution are discussed in academic fora, among political decision-makers as well as practitioners, but these three categories of stakeholders rarely exchange their views. Mapinduzi Unit - unassumingly and in collaboration with researchers and universities we have worked with for

some time and whose commitment we appreciate—wishes to create a forum for dialogue where field experiences shall be enriched by researchers and academic researches challenged by realities on the ground. The objective would be to generate elements of reflection and advocacy useful to all. All of this shall serve as instruments of advocacy with decision-makers.

Christiane Kayser, Flaubert Djateng / Bafoussam, 4/2/09

The Mapinduzi group—as a forum for learning and a reservoir of ideas—wishes to demonstrate that there is clearly an ethic and a practice developed in the field that can be used to overcome the prevailing cynicism (i.e. the movement close to Sarkozy’s Dakar speech and ideologists like Steven Smith...) and thus sustain faith in an Africa weaned from dependence, violence and misrule.

This “politically” honest strategy coaching shall be recorded and explained in Mapinduzi Journals and enhanced through developing change-generating practices into concepts and principles aimed at radical, lasting and productive change in and for Africa and all those who live with and in it.

Supported by the EED and with the assistance of the Zenü Network, the project, seeks to link the challenges of strategy coaching with capacity building as well as systematisation. It is initiated and coordinated by two specialists supporting civil peace efforts in African crisis and war zones, particularly the Great Lakes as well as the Mano River region.

Field intervention practices in strategy coaching shall be articulated with theoretical reflections in order to maximise contributions to the positive transformation of political, economic, social and cultural realities that are often the source of inertia or even violent crises, destabilisation and loss of lives.

Mapinduzi Unit’s lessons learned shall be drawn from strategy coaching experiences in different countries and regions (DR Congo, Cameroon as well as anglophone and francophone West Africa) and also from other professional intervention spheres (regional public governance institutions, United Nations agencies, development banks, the private sector...).

Mapinduzi means profound change. Its identity comes from this meaning, and from working with people of many different origins all over Africa as well as with people from the Northern hemisphere having lived and worked in Africa. It aspires to an atmosphere of independence and openness in order to draw lessons, develop supports, coach stakeholders...

The Swahili word, Mapinduzi is that change (rejection of the status quo, evolution, the quest for a better situation, revolution...), which defines the plural identity of the group (English-, French- and German-speaking Africans; dual African and European culture; men and women with dominant professional experiences in West and Central Africa), a group that works in a different way by refusing change imposed from outside, by aiming to be precipitators of change themselves and thus to do the following:

Over and above the actions carried out together, directly through co-intervention and indirectly through learning from experiences (knowledge management) gear development work resolutely towards improving strategies and methods and challenging existing development assistance systems,

Proclaim loud and clear the change/awareness of change by developing, in think tanks ideas and issues drawn from real life bringing together practitioners and university researchers;

Supply stakeholders and key players with alternative strategies on change processes whilst building trust and creating synergies between organisers and initiators, thus developing advocacy;

Provide feedback to the EED, the BMZ and other interested institutions of the North ;

Document and disseminate through best practices and lessons learned, the successes of Mapinduzi as a forum and a group of colleagues as well as the progress achieved by partners organisations in the field who are the true stakeholders of change;

Publish documents that highlight organisational, social and cultural changes and craft new ways of working together. In so doing, develop innovative methods and tools that impact on or measure change;

Share the emotions, fears and anxieties of the Wapinduzi that might prevent them from delivering confident, effective and efficient coaching.

Pitfalls are to be avoided to pre-empt the risk of losing direction, cohesion and understanding as well as avoid decline in momentum and creativity. Such pitfalls include the following:

- Operating as a consultation forum;
- Not devoting sufficient attention to the systematising of tools, processes and methods and to the sharing of coaching results (in terms of effect and impact) for want of resources (time, financial resources for workshops and exchange trips...);
- Not taking sufficient time to reflect on and harmonise the wide range of experiences;
- Failing to maintain regular links and exchanges beyond occasional meetings;
- Not taking account of the group's cross-cultural character when putting together intervention teams as well as omitting to highlight and cross conflicting points of view;
- Restricting the Wapinduzi from contributing to or participating in co-intervention on the field within the framework of strategy coaching;
- Not providing feedback to the Wapinduzi on the results of planned co-interventions;
- Preferring to settle for consensus at all cost instead of encouraging different viewpoints and highlighting different kinds of experience, in groups or as individuals;
- Keeping the group closed and stagnant;
- Opening the group to new members before having instituted decision making principles and criteria agreed on by all members of the group;
- Functioning without norms and regulations beyond the coordination's role.

Important outcomes with effects and impacts to be monitored...

- The Wapinduzi learn to assess their approaches to strategy coaching and are thus able to share the lessons they have learnt regarding change, applying them to improve development policies;
- Mapinduzi changes people's perceptions regarding change and resistance to dependence as well as to the power of development assistance;
- The coaches change their relations with the systems and the people they coach and learn more from their experiences and capacity building efforts;
- The partner organisations, their teams and leaders draw new lessons from the coaching and find efficient solutions to challenges regarding dependence and change.

Dakar, November 2009

Mapinduzi Unit:

A blend of experience and creativity...

1. Mapinduzi Unit as a think tank and learning forum

As part of a common learning process, members coach themselves mutually and, together, develop a new method of doing the following:

1. draw lessons from their experiences;
2. document and make available the lessons learned;
3. develop methodologies based on existing tools, and
4. pinpoint issues and themes around social change and nourish international debate by facilitating dialogue between practitioners and academic researchers.

Mapinduzi is a think tank for reflection and creation.

2. Mapinduzi as a "mid-wife" for organisations open to assisted learning

We wish to draw lessons from our coaching and make them available to the greatest possible number of partner organisations. Our four major coaching focuses are the following:

1. Context analysis;
2. Strategy development according to context and to the organisation's potential;
3. Development of effect and impact monitoring tools regarding social change and the partner organisation's contribution
4. Systematising lessons learned and giving feedback on experiences and successes.

CK/FD, Bafoussam/Berlin 2009

Martha Mamozai's credo

Martha Mamozai

Martha Mamozai has worked for over thirty years in several countries of the South within the framework of German development cooperation. Today, she lives in Germany and has done a critical write up of her broad experience in a newly published book, alas only in German (Martha Mamozai, Zwischen Welten, Berlin 2010).

We present a short extract of what she calls her “credo” a basis for her work for German technical cooperation in Cameroon as the advisor i.e. de facto manager of a rural development project. As she later reveals, her credo was confronted right from the outset with major obstacles due to the prevailing “development system” and donors’ guidelines. The text we are sharing is the fruit of rich experience and great intellectual honesty, and thus very useful for our strategy coaching for change.

I work within the framework of technical development cooperation—the emphasis is on “cooperation” = working with—; that is to say we as partners and I as an adviser develop, plan, analyse and act, in short: *we work and learn together*. Based on my training and professional experiences, I can *offer*—and not impose—methods, concepts, techniques, etc. I am *only* an adviser—I work *with* and not *for* partners.

There are no two countries or problems that are alike: There is no *standardised* solution. The so-called models serve as sources of inspiration and not prototypes or mechanisms to be copied. The rub lies in the details whose knowledge is a sine qua non. **Without a careful analysis of the context of action, of the problems of those concerned, of existing potentials and without taking into account the social, political and economic context**, there can be no realistic planning. Even if I know the situation well, as an external adviser, my knowledge will always have shortcomings—sometimes in very vital areas, and this may be fatal. Accordingly, I must continue

to learn and to base my work on the knowledge and experiences of others: colleagues working on the project, partners, the so-called target groups, colleagues working in our area of activity, the GTZ, external resource persons, etc. To this end, questioning, curiosity, frankness and vigilance remain important ingredients.

In general, projects do not fail because of technical problems, but because *they are not accepted socially*. Social and economic transformations almost always mean a *re-balancing of individual and group interests*. Now, the loss, decrease or displacement of some authority, influence or privilege generally provokes strong resistance from those concerned. If we wish to work against such situations, we need: diplomatic skill, persistent lobbying and innovative alternative proposals and — where humanely possible — integration instead of exclusion.

Sustainable development is based especially on dialogue, participation and cooperation, frankness and transparency as well as on enhancement of the capacity to achieve success by one's own resources. Participation pre-supposes the involvement of all persons concerned with special emphasis on the mobilisation and empowerment of women. Participation also implies accountability. Successful self-empowerment results in growing self-confidence and has a political and social dimension that strengthens democratic structures in the long-term and that may only be developed fully within a system of decentralised governance. In authoritarian systems, there are inevitably acute conflicts as individual and groups in power try to sabotage and thwart democracy at the grassroots.

In such a process, a development project cannot but be a *passing prop*. The development stakeholders are the concerned people in the field who participate actively. Sustainable development finds expression in a *change of mentality* by participants and stakeholders thus engendering *attitudes and actions* that reflect such change. Such a process requires *time and patience*. Now, the *rush and pressures generated* by organisations from the North and by donors (including the pressures in the “developer's” mind) to attain the maximum of measurable changes within a given timeframe is a flagrant contradiction of this requirement.

Therefore, development cooperation is not to be focused on a central *problem* but rather on *human beings* that wish to reverse a situation.

It is one thing to *Wish* and another to *Be Able* to do what one wishes: no stone is to be left unturned so that project stakeholders may *be able* to implement their conception of development.

As a representative of those that provide the bulk of the funds for a development project (or as a coordinator for various donors), I have *decisive influence* on the orientation and progress of work. I therefore have a great responsibility regarding not only the use of financial and material resources, but also in terms of directing the project policy, that is, its design, strategies, methods and techniques.

We must regularly monitor and analyse the conduct and effects and impacts of our activities. Future planning and activities must be constantly readapted accordingly. To this end, common tasks must be directed and managed flexibly.

Sight must not be lost of the fact that a cooperation project is always subject to divergent and even contradictory expectations: the expectations of the government agencies that sign the project contract, those of co-donors that have their specific objectives, those of intermediary groups and those of the “*target groups*”. As adviser, I must take a stand. *For my part, I must unmistakably be on the side of the “target groups”* and, where need be, strengthen their capacity to dialogue and facilitate their access to stakeholders whom they normally cannot reach, defend their interests, become their advocate and facilitate dialogue between the various interests groups (or actors).

My overall objective is and should remain capacity enhancement of those concerned so that they do not need my services any longer.

Garmisch-Partenkirchen, May 2010

The principles of multicultural and multidimensional strategy coaching

Flaubert Djateng and Christiane Kayser

Each member of Mapinduzi Unit practises what they call “strategy coaching” in their own way, in their own areas of work. It is a new concept we are developing, aware that it can be and is used and understood by others in different ways. Based on our many and varied experiences, we have already been able to identify some principles and challenges.

The Federation of Christian Churches and Councils in West Africa (FECCIWA/ACCEAO) brings together the protestant churches of 13 Anglophone and Francophone West African countries. The coordinator of this organisation requested Mapinduzi Unit to provide strategy coaching to strengthen a regional and international campaign for food security.

Against an international economic and political backdrop that endangers food production and makes the poorest extremely vulnerable, it is urgent to work towards protecting and highlighting the value of agricultural production and animal farming to make food accessible to all. Problems arise, especially from land-grabbing, i.e. the use of large areas of agricultural land by multinationals, for instance for the production of bio-fuels, from the importation of foods that compete with and depress the price of local goods, and cause local agricultural methods to be considered less valuable, and thus abandoned by governments and international cooperation, etc.

In association with many international bodies, particularly the EED, FECCIWA decided to bring to the forefront the viewpoints of the populations concerned and to plead their case strongly in order to change this.

Over and above the economic aspect, the food crisis concerns human rights and human dignity.

In March 2010 in Accra, Mapinduzi Unit facilitated a workshop on capacity building during which action points were identified and arranged in order of importance. Our coaching had to deal with several specific issues:

- We were dealing with English and French speakers;
- There were political decision-makers as well as technicians from the Churches ;
- There were representatives of 14 African countries, and resource persons from Germany and Switzerland;
- German farmers and representatives of specialised African and European networks presented their experiences to participants;
- The role and legitimacy of the Churches with respect to this social problem affecting the poorest had to be clarified;
- Using advocacy as a tool and a process was a new concept for many of those involved.

Context analysis as a starting point

We started the workshop by asking each participant to analyse with a very simple tool we gave them what their context is in relation to the food crisis and where they fit in. In this way we could examine different situations in the various countries.

This allowed us to identify together key political, economic and cultural factors. It could then be used as a basis for the identification of the most important strategies for action. Working groups from countries with similar priorities looked then together at strategies and action points. It became obvious that the problem is extremely complex and that oversimplification and the labelling of issues as Good and Bad should be avoided at all costs. A regularly reviewed analysis of the context and of stakeholders is vital. We were, however, already able to identify some levers for change and some common ground on which to build promising alliances. Through all this, participants became aware of the role and legitimacy of the Churches as

well as their limits. Churches are not specialists in food security, but they have a duty towards the poor, over whom they have a great deal of influence.

It became clear that networking and the pooling of efforts are very important and that FECCIWA/ACCEAO and other federations and alliances play a vital role.

The role of Mapinduzi Unit

Mapinduzi Unit has developed certain principles and made certain choices that we put on the table when supporting an organisation or a process:

- Mapinduzi provides coaching for social change, and change in general, to encourage stakeholders to take their future into their own hands;
- Mapinduzi is not neutral and asserts what it believes in;
- Mapinduzi shares the aims of social change of those it works with and accepts contracts on this basis;
- Mapinduzi is aware that any social change is achieved by strengthening the capacity of the concerned people, of their organisations and of those who work with them;
- There are issues linked to the balance of power that require political solutions and where a mere technical approach will be inefficient and may even worsen the situation.
- Mapinduzi is a cross-cultural think tank for Africans and those who work with them in Africa united by a commitment to change.
- Mapinduzi undertakes to create opportunities and arenas for discussion between stakeholders from the South and the North;
- Mapinduzi communicates the lessons it learns from its work in different areas in various publications.

Within the framework of FECCIWA/ACCEAO, we have agreed to facilitate the launching of their advocacy work by highlighting the challenges, stages, roles and responsibilities, the prerequisites and levers of change.

Obviously, organisational and institutional issues play an important role

in such a process. It is up to whoever solicits the services of Mapinduzi Unit to decide whether and how they also wish to build capacity in this area (also see article by Jeanot Minla Mfou'ou, page 67). It is up to the partner organisation to decide on the follow-up of the process as far as content and organisation is concerned.

A lot more is involved in the moderation, animation or facilitation Mapinduzi provides than simply managing speech during a plenary. It implies:

- Managing the process in light of the objective the partner has defined;
- Bringing discussions back to the point where necessary;
- Summarising discussions and presenting them to the participants;
- Managing intercultural aspects without stifling diversity (languages, rural/urban, religion, leaders/practitioners, men/women, young/old, etc);
- Linking the inputs of resource-persons with the capacity building objectives;
- Ensuring that open questions or disagreements are not side-stepped;
- Flagging up to officials and representatives of participants any difficult issues and key points (debriefing/feedback, evening summaries).

The risks and challenges of strategy coaching

Given the complexity of any process of social change, there is a real danger of coaches being presented as “experts” who have solutions for every problem. Coaches themselves may be tempted to look for quick solutions without in-depth consideration of the issues at stake.

Often, such an attitude makes them apply technical solutions to everything and rifle through their toolbox to extract tools that will fix all problems as if by magic.

This has a serious drawback in that beneficiaries are encouraged not to take responsibility, and although they are the ones best equipped to understand and address a difficult problem, it makes them turn to their coaches for magical solutions.

The coach's dilemma is to refuse the role of wise guru, or expert who knows all the answers, and to remember in all humility that he does not

have the answer to every problem, and that it is his responsibility to build the capacity of the stakeholders to find the answers for themselves.

Strategy Coaching is thus an exercise that raises awareness of both beneficiaries and their leaders; the coach must know when to take a back seat.

On another level, putting a strategy in place requires a minimum of organisational inputs or changes which senior people in charge do not always notice or accept. On the other hand donors should by no means take over, usurping the place of local officials., It is important not to ignore this issue, but to discuss it with persons and organisations the people in charge trust.

A political issue, such as arguing for food security, is a big challenge, especially as experiences in various African countries have shown that those who tackle politics have put themselves in serious danger. Even where there are powerful traditions and usages in community management, most countries are still far from developing a “civic” or “citizenship“ culture that recognises every person as bearing political responsibilities within the State system. However, promising initiatives and the commitment of FECCIWA/ACCEAO and officials of the Churches have taken positive steps in this direction. Awareness and capacity building in this area are therefore more important than ever.

Goma, June 2010





Context analysis as a key element of social change

Christiane Kayser

If we start from the premise that like sustainable development, social change is not handed from above or created by external experts and other specialists, we realise that the bulk of the factors, vectors and actors of such transformation are the people directly concerned. Now, very often, these persons see themselves as helpless victims crushed by atrocious living conditions imposed from above, without any hope of taking their fate into their own hands.

Within the framework of many projects in various African countries (DR Congo, Cameroon, Senegal, Mali, Sierra Leone, Liberia, etc.), we have been able to observe that working with these stakeholders to make them better understand and analyse the context in which they live is an essential lever for strengthening them and opening avenues for them to play an active role in bringing about change.

Contrary to the context analyses conducted by consultants for various donors and international organisations that aim to prepare a project or programme within a certain setting (see article by Cosmas Cheka, page 38), the point here is not to come up with a publishable or neutral analysis, but to empower stakeholders to shed the role of helpless victims by taking as a first step a closer look at their environment and analyse it. Instead of stagnating in helplessness, people gradually start to take over their own lives...

Categorisation

In order to make things easy, it is important to categorise and thus render the context analysis manageable. Initially, as facilitators of the Pole Institute's (www.pole-institute.org) Garden of Change (*Bustani ya mabadiliko*), together with Michel Séguier and Lindiro Kabigiri, we based our work on three dimensions:

- Political: issues pertaining to governance;
- Economic: issues pertaining to production and distribution of wealth;
- Cultural: issues pertaining to ways and customs, beliefs, and attitudes of the population.

While explanations are rarely demanded from us for the first two dimensions, the third dimension is sometimes the subject of controversy.

Why do we not use the “social” dimension? The cultural dimension is sometimes restricted to “culture” in the western and commercial sense of the term.

We consider that the three dimensions are “social”: socio-political, socio-economic, socio-cultural, because all of them refer to community life, life within a society. We also think that the concept “social” has taken on an aftertaste that links it to charity, to working with the “poor”, “beneficiaries” and “victims” and within the context of Africa, this appears to us particularly inappropriate in light of what we are trying to do.

Within the framework of the “Civil Peace Service” (CPS-ZFD) in collaboration with Flaubert Djateng, we sometimes added three levels to the three dimensions:

- The individual;
- The group or the organisation;
- The community or the society.

In general, we ask the participants involved in the context analysis exercise to express themselves (individually and on cards) on the following in respect of each dimension:

- The positive (+);
- The negative (-);
- The challenges (?)

The three dimensions are interlinked and there are equally crosscutting factors (for instance “insecurity” in DR Congo) that facilitators help to identify. A discussion on the links between the three dimensions in relation to such a crosscutting factor is useful if it is based on concrete events.

It is amazing to note that in presenting and posting the results on a wall, we generally have a telling picture of a situation as perceived by those primarily concerned. Generally, the group is positively surprised to have produced something eminently readable and analysable.

Accordingly, it is essential for facilitators to help distinguish rumour from reality, perceptions from facts, without at the same time neglecting perceptions and rumours that often play a vital role in shaping attitudes and reactions.

Thereafter, points of consensus, contradictions and open-ended questions, which may be given further consideration should be determined.

It is also important to orientate participants not to seek consensus on all points, but rather to learn first to listen, understand, analyse and respect the perceptions of others. Where success is achieved in such respect, it is surprising to see how the atmosphere changes and becomes open and productive. It is an opportunity to see and analyse one’s own perception from a more mature standpoint.

A second exercise—the fish bowl—allows for deepening of such breakthroughs, particularly if participants meet regularly and learn to trust each other. A small group from the same region or working in a similar context sits in a small circle at the centre of a bigger one. They are given limited time (15 or 20 minutes) to discuss context analysis among themselves. Their legitimacy derives from the fact that they are talking about their lives and experiences. The categorisation they have learned helps them to structure their discussions without the intervention of the facilitators.

The other participants sitting in the bigger circle are not entitled to take the floor, but they are instructed to follow the discussion and to note one aspect that for instance amazes or shocks them in the discussion.

After the discussion in the small circle, we do not proceed to pass “judgement” on what was said. The other participants content themselves with simply sharing what amazed or shocked them. This feedback again is not judged or “finalised”.

At most, facilitators may make general observations on the method of analysis that characterised the discussion (“you discussed more about political and cultural issues and little about the economy which was somehow implied”. “You spoke more about the ‘invisible hand’ and about rumours and seemed to have difficulties bringing out facts”, etc.).

Where there are regular workshops as is the case with Garden of Change and the CPS network, it is useful and possible to review the changes that have occurred since the last meeting.

Wherever we have worked on context following this approach, we have noticed that the participants themselves use the same method with other groups and in other contexts. It is spreading like a bush fire...

The essential thing is not to achieve a perfect context analysis, but to make progress in the ownership of what surrounds and influences us and thus empower ourselves to act.

Obstacles

In situations where school education, a remnant of colonialism and often currently most inefficient as a system, divides the world into two diametrically opposed poles of “true” and “false”, where everything pushes the individual to seek unanimity and where those who do not share our point of view are necessarily treated as enemies, where ancestral cultures as well as the survival instinct in dangerous environments require that we merge totally within a community or group, it is not easy to cultivate a culture of adversarial and fruitful debate with due respect for the other person. Let us cherish our opinion or position and defend it without drifting into personalised conflicts and rivalry, continuously seek to identify what unites people and define common objectives and interests without neglecting divergent perceptions, opinions and interests: an exacting endeavour!

Cross-culturalism as a requirement

We think that this kind of work must not push participants from diverse cultures to throw their specificities overboard and to jump on the bandwagon of “western democracy”. This means that facilitators that should hail from different origins and cultures and are consequently living cross-culturalism themselves, are also ready to learn, to demolish and to reconstruct together in different ways with others what they bring as methodologies, but also to talk openly about their very own values and principles.

There are serious risks involved

Sight must not be lost of the fact that empowerment, including political capacity building of people by means of context analysis involves risks too. Someone who is best at resolving conflicts of interest and clearing obstacles to equitable and sustainable development becomes, in certain cases, dangerous for those who cling to autocratic power, be it at the micro, meso or macro levels.

Accordingly, it is also necessary to undertake an analysis of risks as well as of protective strategies against such dangers without falling into paralysing anguish. The creation of multiple links and alliances transcending all frontiers appears to be a good means of achieving such a goal.

The development of an atmosphere of trust and the maintenance between participants of ties based on trust and frankness is a necessary working foundation.

Thereafter, the next step would consist of establishing a link between context analysis and the development of strategies for the work of stakeholders.

Les Barthes, May 2010

Context analysis: source and resource

(Why and how to practise it)

Michel Séguier

A necessary critical analysis of society

One of the most important factors of oppression and social inequality is that many of us do not know how to analyse the socio-political context (neither the texts nor the contexts) wherein we live. Often, we know neither our rights to which we may lay claim, the systems that control us, nor the areas of power likely to be influenced by protest action. Even when we are aware of injustice and oppression, we often have difficulties “describing” them or stating the “problem”. In this sense, we are all more or less politically illiterate.

The acquisition of such political literacy requires and develops at once critical, legal and civic awareness as well as social and cultural consciousness.

Emancipation and social change are necessary

The social change we aim for is a profoundly political act wherein the persons concerned by change are the main stakeholders. Awareness, thought, decision and action for change are intimately linked. Social change begins once we decide to emerge from naive awareness, to question the world as a given and instituted body decided elsewhere, once we are convinced that the world can be otherwise, that alternatives exist. We decide to reject

ideology and its attendant political garbing according to which things have to remain the same as there is no alternative solution.

Perhaps social change begins with recognition and valorisation of alternative knowledge systems, the knowledge systems of oppressed peoples? Like Bernard Charot used to say, “social change involves the learner who defines himself henceforth as a human being open to the world and connected to other human beings who are also subjects; a social being, born and nurtured within a family, [occupying] social space that forms part of social relations; a singular, unique and exemplary being of the human species, who has a history, who interprets the world, assigns a meaning to that world, to the position he holds, to the relations he has with others, to his own history and to his own uniqueness.”

Active collective ownership of reality

In many cases, achieving social change requires that we tackle economic oppression and deliver concrete impacts on the ground. In communities experiencing abject poverty, this means real and sustainable improvement of living conditions thanks to concrete actions directed by the people themselves.

How can we work in association with people living under precarious conditions to create a context wherein they can regain their dignity, carefully plan their future and be able to transform their reality?

How can we undertake cooperative projects, how do we carry out collective mobilisation, how do we contribute to individual, collective and societal development that is at once autonomous and reciprocal, innovative and durable?

In such an emancipatory development enterprise, change is not the result of superimposition of something from outside; it results from transformation decided by people directly concerned by the change.

A melting pot of novel lines of action

Can we set for ourselves as aim or concrete utopia:

- political emancipation from nepotism, populism, clientelism and dependence that is based on social control through bureaucracy, propaganda and the blame game?
- the establishment of full-fledged citizenship and of participatory democracy wherein everyone, having due regard for mutual respect, has a place and can assert themselves as a responsible person and a full-fledged citizen?
- an alliance between the various components of organised civil society that constitutes a social movement capable of linking popular mobilisation with social change processes.

Action-research as a means

Action-research consists in producing knowledge that can be used to direct practice and that implies transformation of a given reality.

As a conscientisation endeavour, action-research seeks to answer simple questions:

- What is the problem that confronts us?
- Why undertake this action?
- How and with whom are we executing it?
- How do we give it meaning and significance?

Social change is fundamental in action-research that has a two-pronged objective: transform reality and produce knowledge pertaining to such change. The concern here is developing collective action whereby people concerned may become actors and authors of research and of their own learning. It is a question of developing what is sometimes referred to as “the collective researcher”.

Action-research is always at the interstices of three relatively autonomous phenomena that influence social change dynamics: political programmes, the expectations of the civil society and the claims of oppressed groups.

Based on conflict and contradiction analysis considering them as factors of change, we seek to engage the population in an action-analysis approach, that is, moving from *how* to *why* and to awareness of the stakes.

As the population becomes conscientised, they grow less and less sensitive to slogans of populist discourses and to the immoderate ambitions of programmes. They feel directly concerned by concrete and significant acts and effective achievements with strong material and symbolic impacts for them. Mobilising a population with a view to their conscientisation means transforming the reality experienced on a day-to-day basis to change-inducing events. Action-research is a choice tool for conscientisation/organisation/mobilisation.

We may try to identify the basic components of this approach and to organise them in the form of generating-concepts according to Paulo Freire.

Liberating expression:

Action-research liberates speech and expression; it allows for risk taking, it compels facing peril ... while expressing one's ambiguities, contradictions, doubts and fears.

Indignation – revolt:

The departure point for action-research is an unbearable, intolerable, unacceptable and revolting situation wherein we are trapped or stuck: such is the threshold situation described by Paulo Freire. What we are doing, what we are tolerating is unworthy of us, that is to say, unacceptable living conditions for human beings and it is such indignation and revolt that motivate and energise us.

Problem-situation:

Action-research always starts from a problem, from a real and lived crisis situation, a contradiction in which one finds oneself; it is an abyss, a blind alley, a dead end, a problem with no apparent solutions and which one does not know how to tackle.

Involvement – commitment

Action-research is a context that gives the possibility to talk and speak to oneself; to “commit oneself”; the researcher-actor does not set aside his values and judgement; it is a method of reading and writing the world: each person becomes the author of his words and the actor of his world.

Each individual has the duty of asking himself the following question before making a commitment: am I ready to engage in the journey with fellow travellers with whom we share a fraction of our paths and jointly take risks together with those who are directly confronted by a problem?

Trust – reciprocity

It is developed through listening and dialogue, it permits us to tell ourselves “some bitter truths”, to face our true problems and sometimes conflicting situations, confident that each person endeavours to allow the common interest to prevail over individual interest. It depends on the strengths and potentialities of each stakeholder who is also ready to admit his or her weaknesses and limitations.

Change – taking over

Every action-research seeks to achieve change, be it of the institutional environment, of the living conditions or of real-life situations. This presupposes significant changes related to people taking over the control of their own lives.

Conducting a conscientising inquiry

Representative groups of the concerned social strata, committed militants that have made some strides in the slow conscientisation process find therein an opportunity to make additional strides and, especially, to extend the initiative to a wider population. Based on a conflict and contradiction analysis, which are to be considered within the context of the inquiry as change factors, we engage the population in an **action-analysis initiative**, that is to say, moving from *how* (in terms of description of emotional

experience) to *why* and to awareness of the stakes. The approach happens in three stages:

- The inquiry team or the driver-group “conscientises itself” by delimiting generating themes and the “problem-subject” to be analysed and acted upon;
- Investigators and population groups “conscientise themselves” during discussions, meetings and confrontations;
- The driver-group and the population “conscientise themselves” by discussing the results of the inquiry and defining the attendant action to be taken.

Commitment cannot be fragmented given that the inquiry has to lead to action. The concerned, at all levels, must feel sufficiently involved and take ownership of the initiative.

Population groups wishing to be full-fledged actors of their development want to find solutions to their difficulties as rapidly as possible. Also, they demand that research findings be translated into action directly.

Awareness of the common good and of a shared destiny — of collective identity — is not possible if populations are not sensitised and made aware of what they share as living conditions among themselves and with others.

The gathering of objective information likely to strengthen collective identity becomes much easier when the preliminary exploratory work identifies the interests, values, common needs and problems of the population as well as of the actors that may be considered real or potential allies, but also adversaries (actor landscape, list of partners).

Political maturity develops simultaneously with better understanding of situations and of their context (cultural, economic and political), with groups striving to determine on their own the conditions surrounding their collective existence and the exploitation, domination and alienation they are subjected to and from which they may free themselves only by working collectively and in solidarity.

One group described this method as “inquiry into the knowledge and power for acting on our territories”.

Paris, May 2010

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Pluralistic and subjective context analysis

Cosmas Cheka

1. Mapinduzi; a think tank that connects peoples and countries to knowledge, experience and resources, strives towards the building of better lives in peace and development by working in advocacy for social change. With this goal come secondary objectives that include helping in the breaking of barriers, empowerment and the opening of doors; all of which underlie the approach of Mapinduzi to the analysis of context which is pluralistic and subjective.

2. Unlike the context analysis undertaken by other actors and organisations (for instance by the Evaluation Office of the UNDP see box), it is said to be pluralistic and subjective because of the difference in norms and methodology used to attain key elements relating to the context in question. By a pluralistic analysis, a multiplicity of stakeholders or actors from diverse backgrounds and of different age, cultural, education and economic standings express open and subjective perceptions and experiences regarding the context they live in.

3. The subjectivity of analysis is owed to the fact that the context is viewed from the unadulterated perspective of those concerned and not the so-called «neutrality» of supposedly independent outsiders. No attempt is made to influence the stakeholder with an orientation of perception. In other words, Mapinduzi respects the perceptions of all. The sum total of the subjective perceptions of several stakeholders restituted by the facilitators and debated by all as to its key points provides a picture of what constitutes the analysis of context that is pluralistic and subjective.

4. Four norms are cardinal to all pluralistic and subjective analysis of context undertaken by Mapinduzi:

- (a) Take people's subjective perceptions seriously by basing the construction of development on their analysis;
- (b) Identify, highlight and concretise interests that are common to all stakeholders;
- (c) Concretise contradicting and divergent interests of peoples;
- (d) Distinguish promises and rumours from actual realities lived.

5. Four finalities or ends underly the analysis of context undertaken by Mapinduzi:

- (i) empower the stakeholder with the energy to act;
- (ii) strengthen the stakeholder not to lose their sense of direction;
- (iii) enable the start of inter-stakeholder dialogue;
- (iv) empower the citizen or subject with ownership of reading of the context in which they live.

Context analysis undertaken for International Organisations, for instance the Evaluation Office of the UN Development Programme for example is done in the framework of the **planning and implementation of development "projects" and "programmes"** by triangulation (exchanges with stakeholders, relevant UN resident Mission, and the State—if different from stakeholder—), follow norms that include inter alia:

(a) *Independence*. Context analysis is seen as **part of planning or evaluation**. Thus it has to be structurally independent and separated strictly from the operational management and decision-making functions in the organization in order to be free from undue influence, more objective, and has full authority to submit reports directly to appropriate levels of decision-making.

(b) *Intentionality*. The rationale for an evaluation and the decisions to be based on it should be clear from the outset.

(c) *Transparency.* Meaningful consultation with stakeholders is essential for the credibility and utility of the evaluation. Full information on evaluation design and methodology should be shared throughout the process to build confidence in the findings and understanding of their limitations in decision-making. Context analysis is **done by external consultants** asking questions and drawing their own analysis and conclusions.

(d) *Ethics.* Context analysis should not reflect personal or sectoral interests. Consultants must have professional integrity and respect the rights of institutions and individuals who provide information in confidence and to verify statements attributed to them. They must be sensitive to the beliefs and customs of local cultural environments and address issues of discrimination and gender inequality.

(e) *Impartiality.* Removing bias and maximizing objectivity are critical for the credibility of the consultants. Prerequisites for impartiality are: independence from management; objective design; valid measurement and analysis; and the rigorous use of appropriate benchmarks agreed upon beforehand by key stakeholders. In addition to being impartial, consultancy teams should include relevant expertise and be balanced in their gender and regional composition.

(f) *Quality.* All evaluations and thus all context analysis should meet minimum quality standards defined by the Evaluation Office.

*Yaoundé/Tunis
November 2009*

When context takes over...

Christiane Kayser

In September/October 2009, during a strategy coaching operation by two members of Mapinduzi at CRAFOD (Regional Centre for Development Support and Training) in Bas Congo in D.R. Congo, we were able to get a living experience of how context imposes a radical change in our work.

Following massive expulsion of Congolese refugees from Angola, the Kinshasa Government decided to respond energetically by massively expelling in turn a huge number of persons considered to be Angolan refugees. This was happening in a region where many of the persons concerned had been living for 30 to 40 years. CRAFOD, the Development Service of Protestant churches, had itself been set up in 1966 as a centre for Angolan refugees.

Authorities and their security services arrived on CRAFOD's premises in a small bus equipped with loud speakers and summoned Angolan refugees to come forth immediately, or else... For the Europeans among us, such action are strongly reminiscent of the hunt for Jews by the Nazis...

We all saw how the action scared some concerned people as well as colleagues to death, but also the expressions of vengeance that were beginning to spread among others ("they chased our compatriots, now is their turn..." "it is justice that's being done...").

One female support worker returned in tears from a meeting with farmers' organisations: "70 percent of members are no longer there ... a husband was forced to leave behind his wife and children ... what can we do?"

We therefore had to modify our rigorously planned programme, analyse the situation and see what CRAFOD could and was compelled to do in such a situation.

First, we saw how good it felt for everyone to have the opportunity to express themselves. Two concrete things emerged from such self-expression:

- The Congolese protestant churches (ECC) of the region spoke out against human rights violations being perpetrated and called for calm and negotiation. The declaration elicited a complement from Pole Institute at the other end of the country in Goma that posted the declaration of the ECC Bas-Congo on its website, adding another text expressing its point of view (see the two texts at www.pole-institute.org on relations between the Congolese State and its citizens across the world).
- CRAFOD started a cross-border dialogue process with the churches and civil societies of neighbouring countries (Angola and Congo Brazzaville).

Since 2008, the mobile team of the Civil Peace Service (CPS) had already conducted many context analysis sessions with the CRAFOD team and some of their partners. The CRAFOD team used its skills to henceforth work with various groups, including representatives of neighbouring countries, youth and farmers to enable them conduct their own context analyses.

In addition, CRAFOD set up a surveillance and networking system based on regular common context analysis.

Here is how they themselves describe the experience:

The NAPOs

In Matadi, headquarters of the Bas-Congo Province, the setting up of 7 Popular Action Clusters (NAPOs) working within poor neighbourhoods in the NZANZA and M'VUZI council areas made it possible to extend the use of context analysis tools to the population. In fact, NAPOs are groups of leaders responsible for identifying the problems and expectations of the population and acting as the link with local authorities. They must, in time, become an instrument of day-to-day advocacy for these neighbourhoods often sidelined in development policies and by State services.

The youths of Kimpese take on their problems...

Within the framework of the information day on "Let the Youths Speak", the youths of Kimpese, mobilised by CRAFOD in March 2010, were able to develop their own analysis of the prevailing context in their city by discovering identification and analysis tools such as brainstorming and conflict mapping.

The exercise permitted the youths to express themselves better on the profound causes of their ailments namely, intercommunity tensions between Angolans and Congolese, clan or generational conflicts. They also discussed their living environment in relation to the rest of the country and the sub-region because war and peace are not the business of the eastern provinces alone.

Surveillance and networking system: CRAFOD's new undertakings

The analyses produced by CRAFOD's partners and the people themselves, be they Kimpese youths or the inhabitants of the popular Matadi neighbourhoods, enabled these groups not only to consolidate their projects and the actions they wished to implement, but also to have discussions among themselves and within choice forums such as meetings and workshops. Such an exercise affords greater objectivity and hindsight in respect of difficult and sometimes tense situations that these persons experience on a day-to-day basis.

The points of view and reflections of the population enrich the analysis that CRAFOD is trying to produce in the Bas-Congo Province. This work has lately been consolidated by a system of surveillance of the local socio-political context set up at the level of the five CRAFOD decentralised stations in the Province. Station leaders are henceforth charged with drafting monthly context notes describing the key events occurring in their zones of intervention, the aim being to anticipate conflicts.

In the same vein, a cross-border network christened "MBONGI YA NSOBOLO" is being set up. It brings together actors of the civil society in Angola, the Republic of Congo and D.R. Congo working within the Kongo cultural space. Such an exchange forum initiated by CRAFOD fol-

lowing the massive expulsions by both Angola and the D.R. Congo in 2009, aims to, among other objectives, promote a culture of peace among peoples through the development of cross-border exchanges.

Also on these last points, CRAFOD drew inspiration from the experiences gained within the network of the Civil Peace Service in the Great Lakes Region, particularly during visits by the members of the team to the East of the country.

Willy Bongolo, Pierre Fichter, CRAFOD, April 2010

Based on the simple fact that we, in unanimous agreement with the CRAFOD team, permitted that the prevailing reality should take our carefully planned workshop by storm, we were able to stick to authentic problems albeit without being able to find immediate solutions. Courageously accepting this later enabled CRAFOD it to base its work more on reality than on the “development theatre”.

It is a difficult and perilous road. We will always find donors and developers that have difficulties accepting this kind of approach though such is the only authentic path to becoming and remaining useful.

May 2010

Beware of overlooking essential actors

What about african youth?

Until lions learn to write,
hunters will tell their story for them.

Kenyan Proverb

At some point the masses will decide that they don't want to be the last in line on the planet, so that a few elites in their countries can be first financially. When this critical mass of discontent is reached, solutions will be sought by thinking outside the box and beyond the current socio-economic-political entities and groupings.

The modest contribution of this initiative (Fixing Africa) is to encourage the elites and youth in Africa to start the bold thinking today without waiting for a full scale social explosion. The youth of Africa need a vision that can channel their enthusiasm. The current options available to them all lead to doom and destruction.

The most desperate embark on a journey across deserts, oceans and mountains in the hope of reaching Europe where a better life awaits. Few make it and those who do risk sexual and labor exploitation when they reach their destination.

Another current option for African youth is to join an armed movement to gain control over a territory or overthrow the government. The modern day warlord is a role model many impoverished youth who have suffered humiliation and disappointment at the hands of the few wealthy families in their country. With a Kalashnikov you overcome lack of education or being born in the wrong ethnic group and put an end to years of frustration. It is the high speed track from being pushed around to making the rules. Clearly

this “career path” is not sustainable and does not benefit the greater good.

A subset of the above is the rise in militant Islamic groups. Religion can be used to create a strong sense of identity and offer a compelling vision, even for those living under the most dire circumstances. In Algeria, Somalia and elsewhere, disaffected youth are being lured to a violent form of Islam under the pretext of restoring their dignity and a romanticized former glory. You can't compete with that by offering these young people the advice of “play by the rules, work hard and maybe you'll get a job someday.” Particularly in countries where those at the top of the pyramid broke all the rules of human decency to get there.

African youth need bold vision and ideas for the future. Something that can inspire them. Something they can believe in. Something that gives them a chance of joining the ranks of developed nations in their lifetime without leaving their country of origin.

www.FixingAfrica.com

“Fixing Africa – Once and for all.

From 53 struggling countries to 4 Super States by 2030”

Tidjani ‘Jeff’ Tall, 2009.

Putting justification to donors aside and working towards achieving social change

Marie José Mavinga

Strategy Coaching is a concept that the Wapinduzi introduced in their work in a bid to contribute to social change. This challenge is also the concern of many other actors given the realisation that development programmes do not necessarily mean relevant impacts in terms of societal change. It is an approach rooted in the analysis of the political, economic and cultural context. It also deals with *modus operandi*, methods and practices. It consists in planning for the future based on present experiences and drawing lessons from the past. Strategy Coaching seeks to achieve qualitative change that impacts on society.

Most of the interventions of support organisations depend on external financing that is not necessarily oriented towards sustainable economic and social development of the community, that is to say, based on mastery of key variables. The interventions are dependent on what is available and on external policy, donor policy. Accordingly, the intervention approaches of these organisations are centred on the visible or expressed needs of the population instead of their interests. Interventions remain occasional and are not necessarily appropriate responses to the problems at issue and cannot lead to qualitative change. Owing to the absence of strategy, these organisations—in spite of an often heavy planning and monitoring/evaluation arsenal, logframes, project cycles, etc.—carry out numerous activities without producing any real positive change in the day-to-day lives of the persons concerned.

It is in light of the foregoing that Emmanuel Ndione of ENDA in Senegal, during an interview (Traversées, 2004, www.traversée.org), focused his

reflection on how to research, act and build capacity towards social change: “When I asked those with whom I was working what their needs were, there was an underlying debt in me that told me: I followed you for your own sake and in return I felt I owed these persons a debt. Such phenomenon inhibits truth between people: people respond what would please you! I have heard people lay emphasis on relations and have understood better how social poverty works. I observed the economic life in neighbourhoods and I realised that it was rooted in the *social* and functioned a little like a savings institution. While studying family budgets in 1978, I noted that income was largely constituted through social relations (ton-tines, a contribution system whereby members of a group act together...). I shifted from a logic of need, which is “restrictive” to one of interest that appeals to the good sense of all and sundry.

ACDIC

(Civic Association for the defence of collective interests)

An example of social change strategies is offered to us by Bernard NJONGA, the President of ACDIC in Cameroon. The study carried out by this organisation on massive importation of frozen chicken demonstrated how these imported products flooded the Cameroonian market; how the WTO (World Trade Organisation) is more at the service of rich countries protected by international financial institutions that are ready to sanction any countries of the South attempting to limit food imports to protect local production. The study also revealed that due to their venality, customs officials allow these products into the country in spite of their poor quality, and veterinary officers refuse to carry out inspection of the products. Once the products get to the local market, the marketing and preservation conditions leave much to be desired, thus engendering quite a high health risk: food poisoning, typhoid...

The study made it possible to determine the scope of the problem and enabled ACDIC to develop a strategy whose fundamental elements consisted in the mobilisation of consumers and the formation of alliances.

ACDIC carried out actions that culminated in unprecedented mobilisation with the outcome being awareness by the population of the situation and their refusal to be passive consumers. ACDIC developed convincing arguments that enabled Cameroonians to gain awareness of the reality. Questioning by means of reflection and self-reflection engendered a revolt among the population so that they became authors and actors in the mechanism put in place to boycott imported chicken. This explains the origin of the expression "citizen chicken", meaning chicken produced locally.

In Cameroon and throughout Africa, pressure groups and associations were set up. Today, we see that Cameroonians' craze for imported chicken has declined significantly.

CIPCRE (the International Forum for the Promotion of Creativity) is a support organisation based in Bafoussam, Cameroon. Over the years, it has carried out activities to help the population improve their livelihoods. Today, it is realising that its noble goal is not yet attained. The people have still not taken ownership of their development and their living conditions remain deplorable. The intervention methods used consisted in identifying and satisfying needs. The support organisation is considered by the people as a saviour and a donor. However, like other similar organisations, CIPCRE is today in the process of looking critically at its work and of developing strategies towards achieving social change.

CIPCRE is managing a programme financed by donors. It is bound to produce results according to the agreements signed not always established on the basis of realities on the ground, alas it often has difficulties modifying or changing the content of its programme. It has for a long time been trapped in the logic of justifying itself to donors and not of creating a dynamic of social change.

During the 20 years of its existence, CIPCRE has sought to address the issue of "how to effect change" and not why effect change. The "how" led to the implementation of activities that satisfied some expressed fundamental needs of grassroots communities. However, as long as the question

of “why” is not addressed, it means a critical review has not taken place and societal change has not begun.

Today, the organisation is addressing the question of *why* effect change. Here, the objective is to enable the groups coached to become authors and actors of their own destiny as well as of history.

CIPCRE solicited coaching by the Mapinduzi Unit. Our work thus consisted in developing together with CIPCRE, a strategy coaching which, based on context analysis, would build the capacity for self-reflection and permanent self-evaluation that should lead to self-transformation.

There can be no change if there is—according to the terminology of the Bustani ya Mabadiliko of Pole Institute—no “constructive revolt” by those most concerned. (see www.pole-institute.org)

How should we bring about this kind of revolt?

- By raising awareness of the context;
- By assisting in the development of active strategies for constructive revolt that lift those concerned out of their passivity.

CIPCRE’s challenge is to develop mechanisms for supporting conscientisation and revolt among the people. Such revolt already exists though it is often destructive or self-destructive. For our part, constructive revolt does not mean dismantling everything that already exists. Instead, it means an awareness that awakens self-esteem and the potentialities of freeing oneself from servitude and moving forward resolved to take one’s destiny into one’s hands.

CIPCRE wields authority over its local partners and the power balance is unequal. CIPCRE receives funds from outside and is seen as a donor. It is therefore important for CIPCRE to regularly define the interests in play, change its attitude and reflect on how it can use its authority to guide the persons coached towards real change. CIPCRE has to work on itself to reverse the perception that local partners have of it and thus change its relations with them.

On the strength of these realities and of its new vision, CIPCRE employs seven key ideas developed by Michel Séguier to channel its work. The ideas include the following:

1. A population in development: people become capable of achieving their own development based on their potential, capacities, resources, solidarity and know-how, etc.;
2. Global process taking into account three dimensions:
 - a. revitalisation of economic space
 - b. emergence of a culture of citizenship
 - c. cultural dynamisation
3. Collective advancement: raising the level of awareness, of self-organisation capacity, of citizenship and solidarity;
4. Initiatives to improve life or geared towards the struggle for survival, generated by communities of interest capable of engaging in negotiations;
5. Solidarity territories: territories where partners work in an interdependent manner, where they all have access to information and have the power to influence decisions;
6. Project/initiative implementing a social improvement strategy involving all social categories with all of them entitled to evaluate what is being done.
7. Mobilisation actions integrating facilitation, organisation and education for the development of each individual, each family and each social group.

Developed by Michel Séguier (see page 37)

CIPCRE works with schools, decision-makers, traditional rulers and farmers. The strategies adopted aim to achieve the following:

- awareness raising and the emergence of a culture of citizenship;
- self-empowerment and income raising;
- Capacity building and networking for lobbying and development of synergies between actors for social change.

To achieve this goal, the intervention approach must be geared towards:

- sharing the programme's vision and mobilising a multi-actor group capable of constituting a cluster that can champion social change dynamics;
- building the technical capacity of CIPCRE staff and its allies;
- promoting and enhancing concertation and initiative mechanisms: provision of support for the emergence and promotion of local and provincial dynamics for reflection and elaboration of alternative governance proposals;
- actor opinion sampling: facilitating and sampling the expression of the various categories of stakeholders on their problems and on the possible solutions (life stories, significant acts...);
- carrying out regular analysis of the information gathered and detecting viewpoints: helping to interpret the viewpoints of each category of stakeholders; highlighting the points of convergence and divergence, suggesting ways of and/or actions for achieving change;
- supporting multi-actor concertation processes: tabling for discussion at local and provincial levels the analyses conducted and the proposals made; providing assistance for the elaboration of consensual proposals; supporting concrete change advocacy and lobbying initiatives (alliance strategies);
- supporting capacity building for grassroots stakeholders: improving access to information;
- drawing lessons learnt from experiences;
- leaving behind the logic of charity and assistance whilst moving towards a logic of action and production (green space tourism, trading in compost).

Here, we see that the objective of strategy coaching is to empower actors to become masters of their destiny, to develop their self-empowerment capacities. They take the centre-stage in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of change. They are responsible for both their successes and failures. They thus champion the process, own it and develop their own ability to generate change. They shed the logic of victimisation and step into the shoes of true actors and vectors of change. They become orchestrators of the new.

CIPCRE's role is to provide the skills for moving forward this approach and ensuring its ownership by those concerned. In the words of Emmanuel Ndione, CIPCRE has to steer the process towards achieving societal change that is "rooted in an ethic and values, approaches and modes of governance." Accordingly, it must have good knowledge of its potential and weaknesses to better channel the change strategy and choose its allies. Critical review and analysis of context should enable the organisation to design its strategy and define its role. It is important to note that context change could be rapid or slow.

Conclusion

Understanding one's context is a sure means of developing strategies that are responsive to the needs of the population. Once actors incorporate such a dynamic into their culture, it becomes a natural approach that they will use to better channel their own actions. It means that henceforth, actors have to take ownership of the process and accept the attendant internal challenges. They will no longer wait for other people to come and deliver the solutions to their problems for them.

Kinshasa, December 2009

Strategy coaching leads to unpredictable outcomes

Jeanot Minla Mfou'ou

The strategy coaching process is not one that permits us to predict the outcomes that would sanction it at the end. Strategy Coaching outcomes depend on context analysis, on the capacity of members of the organisation to question themselves and to “*give birth to ideas*” (the facilitator being the birth-attendant or the midwife) and on the commitment to work towards social change, to achieve real improvement.

Within the purview of some strategy coaching work we did for three organisations based in Chad, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo, the outcomes were recurrently a change in intervention method in the field, in organisational architecture and internal functioning and in the management of their various partnerships.

Strategy coaching may lead to a rethinking of the intervention strategy of the organisation being coached.

After carrying out its context analysis and defining its strategic vision for the years ahead, the Congolese organisation solicited coaching to self-reflect on its organisation in order to better mainstream the results of the analysis. In our role of birth-attendant and midwife, we proposed a mirror to members of the organisation (technical and administrative team plus a member of the Board of Directors) to carry out self-examination and say *how they saw themselves, what they were, what they found was good enough to be upheld and what they thought needed to be changed in light of the results of the context analysis* carried out previously with other members of the Mapinduzi Unit. The exercise led to four major conclusions:

- *“our organisation wishes to change the situation in its zone of intervention, but does not know how to achieve such a goal in a more efficient manner”*;
- *“in our organisation, the right men and women are not always in the right place and do not always get what they deserve”*;
- *“our organisation is committing to work on governance in its zone of intervention meanwhile its own internal governance needs improvement”*;
- *“our organisation claims it communicates but does not communicate”*.

In other words, the organisation arrived at the conclusion that it had to review its intervention strategy to better mainstream elements of context, improve its internal organisation, including improvement of human resource management and, lastly, elaborate a communication strategy better suited to current stakes and challenges.

Thanks to strategy coaching, each of the three organisations improved its intervention strategy.

In the specific case of the Congolese organisation, it reviewed its intervention strategy while retaining its main intervention sectors that remained pertinent. The change consisted in improving its field intervention method to better contribute to social change in its intervention zone.

In the case of the Cameroonian organisation, the still ongoing process made it possible, at the end of the first reflections on change, to define new areas of intervention in order to take into account the context that had evolved hugely more than thirty years after the setting up of the organisation. In the case of the Chadian organisation, the areas of intervention were retained, but the organisation's modus operandi was reviewed.

Reflecting on its current modus operandi, the team from the Congolese organisation noted many limitations and shortcomings. For instance, it

realised that it intervenes to provide assistance to each beneficiary group and community in the field without reviewing, with each of them, their exact initial situation — *what it is— what it has — what it wants —*, and much less its target objective, that is to say — *where it is headed or what it aspires to* — with precise change indicators that make it possible subsequently to determine whether the initial situation changed or not.

Such an approach would allow for better measurement of the impact of the work done by the organisation and the change it facilitates with its partners.

One consequence is that the organisation continues to work for years with the same groups and communities without assessing the impact of its work with each of them and much less, disengaging with some that have made obvious progress and working with others looking forward to the same kind of development. Since then, the team has started elaborating proposals to improve its intervention strategy. The work is still ongoing because the process is not yet completed.

Far from being the preserve of this organisation, it is instead the routine practice by so-called development assistance organisations in Africa and even elsewhere. The same analysis is valid when we scrutinise the relations between a financial partner from the North and a support organisation from the South.

There are many questions that the facilitator must get the organisation being coached to answer:

- *How do we work with, assist or coach the partners in our organisation's work?*
- *How do we evaluate the evolution of this coaching/assistance process and assess significant progress or the effects of the assistance provided?*
- *How do we develop efficient mechanisms that allow for disengagement with some partners to avoid “ad aeternam” coaching?*
- *When is the right moment to disengage and under what conditions?*
- *How do we coach actors in order to fully empower them?*

- *How do we develop mechanisms for carrying out objective evaluation of the coaching process?*
- *How do we plan for disengagement from the very start of the intervention?*

As part of the strategy coaching process for the Congolese and Cameroonian organisations, the quest for the best answers to these questions has begun and is still ongoing.

At what precise moment do we disengage with a group / community or entity benefiting from the support of a coaching organisation?

A few years ago in Cameroon, during a self-reflection exercise forming part of coaching of a farmer organisation by a support NGO itself financed by a German cooperation project, this question arose. The project providing funding had come to the end of the financing and was indicating that it wanted to withdraw from the partnership. Such a situation thus afforded the opportunity to brainstorm on coaching and disengagement. Since the work was in a forest area, the proverb: *"when a friend pays you a visit, you cannot accompany him beyond the watercourse"* was used by the farmers and was given various interpretations that remain topical.

Along the bank of what type of watercourse do we see off our friend or visitor? Is it along the bank of a brook, a stream or a river? Besides, if we leave our friend along the bank of a watercourse that turns out, in the final analysis, to be a big stream or river, would he be able to cross it without our assistance and to continue his journey? Does he know how to swim? Is there a canoe and a paddle? If yes, does he know how to use them? How would we feel if we were to learn later that our friend drowned after we saw him off?

Now, let us come back to coaching and disengagement—in what state and at what level are the actors we are coaching at the time we want to leave them? Are we sure that they would continue to survive at the

end of the partnership? Have they the means and capacity to continue alone or with others, where applicable? Did we take all necessary precautions from the start of the partnership to prepare them to continue alone one day without external assistance? Have we given them what they need most to be able to continue alone without the need for external assistance later?

All of these lead us to ask the following two final questions: How should a support organisation coach actors in the field and plan its disengagement? How should a financial partner from the North assist a support organisation of the South and plan the end of such assistance one day while ensuring that the organisation can continue to survive?

Strategy coaching may lead to organisational change

The Congolese organisation with which we worked is not young. It was set up in the 1990s following the merger of three former development organisations. Upon birth, the NPA (non-profit-making association) was endowed with an institutional and organisational set-up that has now undergone some adjustments in the past.

In 2010, the strategy coaching of this organisation by Mapinduzi Unit was another opportunity for its team to review its organisation and analyse the possibility of changing and adapting it to the new context. Based on the four major conclusions arrived at, we assisted them in defining the change elements, which concerned mainly the method of organisation, administration, functioning and communication. The exercise eventuated, *inter alia*, in a modification of the organisational architecture, improvement of certain administrative and internal management procedures and in other proposals on the management of human resources and the organisation's internal and external structuring.

In the case of the Chadian and Cameroonian organisations, there were also significant organisational changes. In Chad, the changes were of a wider scope because the internal structuring (the organs) changed, whereas in the case of the Cameroonian and Congolese organisations, the concern was to improve the existing mechanism.

Strategy coaching may result in a questioning of the various partnerships of the organisation being coached

Strategy Coaching enables the organisation to work not to satisfy itself, but to be an actor for social change. However, such a goal cannot be achieved if the various partners of the organisation being coached do not follow suit. These partners include partner organisations from the North, bilateral or multilateral cooperation agencies, NGOs and other foundations, in short, all those who provide funding or other forms of assistance to the support organisation, without which it cannot operate and much less implement its activities.

A partner contributes and receives in return what is not always acknowledged

During strategy coaching of the Congolese organisation, the team brainstormed on the meaning of the concept of partnership and revisited its current partners. It emerged from such brainstorming that a “partner” is an organisation or institution that provides their organisation with what it needs, but which in return takes or gains something, a win-win relationship. Sadly, due to the absence of these partners during the brainstorming, it was difficult to determine what they gain. However, pursuant to the principle of law that holds, “*no interest, no action*”, it is not superfluous to ask what the benefit is for all these donors from the NORTH that claim to be providing DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE to those in the SOUTH. Are there things that are left unsaid about these partnerships?

Pursuing the reflection on partnership, we were able to distinguish several types of partners.

Partners that fund the projects of an organisation and not the organisation itself

In the case of the Congolese organisation, members of the team realised that they also had this type of partners and that they should have rejected them because they create a lot of problems for the organisation. These partners do not take into account the institutional expenses of the organisation; they are interested only in activities directly linked to their project. When they provide personnel financing, it is limited to personnel directly executing project activities. For these type of partners, such job positions as guards, mechanics, administrative posts as well as construction of infrastructure (buildings and others...), are not taken into consideration. They behave as though activities could be executed without personnel, buildings, vehicles and the attendant logistics that all have costs, which they sadly do not want to defray.

Partners that fund both activities, recurrent expenditure and much appreciated investments – even if there are problems of a different kind with them

These partners finance not only activities, but also expenses that permit the organisation to continue to survive in the long-term. Such is the case of the main financial partners of the Congolese, Cameroonian and Chadian organisations under study. However, with this category of partners, strategy coaching poses other problems. Since it is a dynamic process whose end we cannot determine in advance, we very often get results that do not correspond to their funding objective, even when they address a reality of the context.

A proper analysis of the context enables us to better define the centre of interest of the concerned population at grassroots level, so as to better channel the actions of the support NGO. Concerning the Congolese organisation we coached, there was a contradiction in their intervention

zone: to improve the revenue of producers, context analysis revealed that it is not possible to assist them economically without taking into account micro credit. Some ideas were floated on the need to negotiate some credit fund that would be lodged in micro finance institutions to facilitate access to micro loans by the producers with whom the organisation was working. Sadly, the idea was waved aside not because it was not good, but because the financial partner on which the organisation counted could never finance that type of action, except the organisation found some other partner to do so, which is not easy.

Such a situation poses the problem of the need for or ability of financial partners from the North to review their assistance strategies in light of strategy coaching outcomes. In other words, can these partners change and adapt to the trends dictated by the results of context analysis, which have to be taken into account if we really wish to achieve social change so heartily desired by all development stakeholders, at least according to their discourse...

Strategy coaching may eventuate in results that entail a financial cost for the organisation being coached

A strategy coaching process is often financially backed by a financial partner because organisations in the South hardly have financial resources of their own to finance such costs. For all three organisations coached, the costs of the process were borne by their financial partners. If, in the final analysis, such a process eventuates in outcomes with a significant financial implication, how would the situation be managed? Who would have to do what?

Our work with the Congolese organisation revealed that its recurrent expenses are very high, especially the personnel emoluments. This is partially due to the fact that there are many persons that have been around for long, separation with whom would not harm the performance of the organisation. In other words, these are persons retained out of sentimentalism because there is a Christian culture requiring that we should not part with persons that are no longer useful. Strategy Coaching allowed for

the definition of profiles for all job positions, which makes it possible today to know who to retain and who to part with. Sadly, putting an end to certain jobs entails costs and, pursuant to the law, severance or layoff benefits have to be paid. How do we find the resources for such payments?

In such a case and in keeping with the logic of empowerment of those concerned, the organisation being coached has to be encouraged to assume its responsibilities and to reflect and find realistic and applicable solutions, banking first on its own resources before soliciting partners' contributions, which must not only be financial but also include advice and ideas.

In light of the foregoing, it emerges that strategy coaching is a dynamic process whose results cannot be predicted from the outset. Its results vary depending on the context of the organisations being coached and the ability of their teams to question themselves and to desire real change. Among the areas where possible changes often occur by the end of the process, we have the intervention strategy of the organisation being coached, the organisational and even institutional architecture as well as the issue of partnerships.

Goma, June 2010

Strategy coaching within a context of change

The quest for tools to manage the decentralisation process in Cameroon

Flaubert Djateng

Decentralisation, what civic contribution?

Embarking on a decentralisation process means transferring authority and resources to the periphery. In order to avoid decentralising the problems, the process has to be supported through the promotion of efficient governance. The term governance often fans passions and engenders more mistrust than interest. Especially given that with the coinage “good governance”, it has been emptied of meaning by the World Bank and international cooperation. The Alliance pour la Refondation de la Gouvernance en Afrique (Alliance for Refunding Governance in Africa, www.afrique-gouvernance.net) defines governance as “*modes of organisation and regulation of ‘living together’ within societies, from the local to the global level, and the enactment of shared rules and regulations. Consequently, the issues it addresses are very diverse: modes of collective management and regulation, legitimacy and responsibility of stakeholders and institutions, participation in power, links between levels of governance...*”.

Embarking on decentralisation is tantamount to recognising that the central State can no longer do everything singlehandedly and that it needs the contribution of other stakeholders. After State paternalism that engendered a relinquishment of responsibility for the population, it is important to organise “re-appropriation” of modes of governance (collective management and regulation, legitimacy and responsibility). Here, management of public property, of “common assets” is at the centre-stage of the process.

Decentralisation offers an opportunity to ensure not only involvement of the population in making decisions that affect their lives, but also taking into account local resources in the design and implementation of development strategies.

In this regard, one may ask what civil society organisations can contribute in order to infuse greater quality to the development process and in the lives of the population? Strategy Coaching offers opportunities for the civil society to contribute to the development of efficient and appropriate decentralisation instruments and tools.

Collaboration with the civil society

In Cameroon current legislation places the council at the centre-stage of the process since it is the beneficiary of all powers and responsibilities transferred. Resources shall follow! In its article 18, the law on orientation of decentralisation (Law No. 2004/017 of 22 July 2004) says that regional and local authorities may work with one or several civil society organisations for the purpose of accomplishing public utility objectives or projects. There are as yet no examples of such collaboration that may inspire decision-makers in finalising the regulatory framework governing decentralisation.

The Zenü Network (www.zenu.org) opted to work towards such a goal, especially given that in order to ensure success in the decentralisation process in our country, we need to entirely overhaul the system of provision of basic services to the population. According to existing law and regulations, the system is to be coordinated by the local councils and this is the source of many major concerns among decision-makers and the population. What are the mechanisms to be put in place? How can we ensure a smooth transition that does not destroy current achievements? What traditional knowledge could we take into account in defining new systems for the provision of health services to the population? How may we ensure involvement of the population in decision-making? What prerequisites are to be considered, in order to guarantee stability within communities? Which stakeholders for which roles? All these questions are at the centre

of current debate on implementation of decentralisation in Cameroon, especially now that the organisational and institutional mechanisms are under design.

The platform as an instrument for collaboration and cooperation

The Zenü Network is proposing the platform concept as an instrument for the promotion of governance. The collaboration platform is a forum for research, learning and decision-making for the various stakeholders. Its functioning is based on the participatory approach recommended by sector strategies and the law on the orientation of decentralisation. The platform is designed as a useful tool for the planning and implementation, at local level, of welfare promotion actions (definition of quality norms and standards and their implementation), taking into account local potentials and resources. The context and permanent analysis thereof constitute key success factors for an optimum functioning of the platform.

The setting up of a consultation framework leads to the emergence of a group of stakeholders with differing principles and sometimes divergent interests. Could the dialogue established between the stakeholders of the same sector lead to the definition of a common strategy to ensure the well-being of the population? For 18 months, the Zenü Network and the Bamendjou council, with the support of the ICRD (International Centre for Development Research, Canada), tested the functioning of a platform as a forum for learning between actors engaged in a participatory endeavour.

Analysis of the context and strategy coaching by the Zenü Network enabled members of the Bamendjou health platform to identify the minimum requirements of participatory governance. (see table) Such minimum requirements are necessary to mobilise the actors of the same council area towards achieving common interests.

*Zenü Network,
Bafoussam, June 2010
zenu.network@gmail.com*

Minimum participatory governance requirements within the context of decentralisation

Nº	Criteria	Description
1	Collective (shared) interest	The platform mainstreams all stakeholders that influence day-to-day life within the council area. Members agree on how to resolve a particular problem recognised by all
2	A defined working zone	Space for the implementation of decisions of the platform. Relevant space recognised by all stakeholders.
3	A joint programme (participation and communication)	Once the need is identified, the activities to be implemented are determined jointly and each stakeholder chooses what they can do. Members communicate regularly on the programme and its implementation.
4	A synergy is developed	Based on the competencies and specificities of each stakeholder of the platform, the means of action, strengths and potentialities are mutualised and valorised (each stakeholder contributes their quota to the execution of the programme)
5	Shared authority	Decision-making within the platform is by consensus. Each stakeholder gives their view point in a spirit of negotiation without trying to impose it on the others.
6	Efficiency-oriented management of the council	The council executive has procedures for making decisions about their personnel, about the management of the council and about the organisation of development activities. Such procedures should guarantee efficiency in council actions.
7	Effective commitment	Participation by members of the platform is made manifest through effective honouring of commitments made, availability and risk-taking to ensure success.
8	Respecting rules and regulations	The competencies, the place and role of each stakeholder in the responsibility chain are recognised by all. Any changes like new roles are the result of negotiations between the various stakeholders of the platform.
9	Transparency	Communication and information exchange affect all sectors (even financial) and involve every stakeholder.
10	Institutionalisation of the platform as a governance tool	The participatory governance mechanism is an instrument recognised by all council staff and council decision-making organs. Such a mechanism should be legitimate and backed by the supervisory authority. Through the platform instrument, the supervisory authority minimises the risks of mayors becoming potentates.

Negotiation on strategy coaching compels us to transcend the usual consultancy negotiation process

Jeanot Minla Mfou'ou

Strategy Coaching is a process that unfolds over time and culminates in social change. For this to happen, a number of prerequisites are important, which explains the importance of proper negotiation. On account of the specificity and stakes of this type of coaching, we need to take time to negotiate properly because implementation of the process depends thereon.

Negotiating an intervention in the form of strategy coaching signifies working on the *request* and not on the *order*, negotiating with the entire system, explaining to all stakeholders from the outset the principles that guarantee the quality of the approach and its success.

To carry out strategy coaching we have to work on the request and not on the order

The departure point of strategy coaching is a “*request*” often made by the official of the organisation by means of a letter, a message by electronic mail sometimes accompanied with the terms of reference (TORs) whose contents vary from place to place. Such pseudo-request is in actual fact an “*order*” for work to be done. The error to avoid is committing to work on the basis of such a request alone.

In the case of the organisation we coached in Cameroon, the process started with an electronic message requesting us to come and moderate a workshop during which the organisation wished to reflect on *"how to find new funding as its two major financial partners withdrew"*.

Obviously, the message was accompanied with terms of reference confirming its content. After receiving the message, we asked to meet the main official of the organisation to get a little more information. During our discussion, he enlightened us about the situation of the organisation because we sought to know from him why such a workshop was necessary. It is only after this discussion, which was supplemented, besides, with a reading of the workshop documents that we were able to understand the true "request", which consisted, beyond the quest for new funding sources, in the organisation's strong desire to adapt to the new context more than thirty years after its creation. The discussion lasted more than two hours and it is only thereafter that we proposed an intervention approach. In our method of approach, we proposed to start working before and after the workshop in the form of a process.

During negotiation therefore, we must avoid working on the initial request, which is usually more of an order for work. Take time to discuss with those concerned or access additional information to understand and discern the unsaid things about the request. It is only thanks to the unsaid things that we can better understand the effective intervention request on the basis of which a method of approach should be made and the strategy coaching implemented.

Negotiation to prepare strategy coaching must be done with the entire system

An organisation that intervenes and carries out development activities is a system comprising several sub-systems. Among the important sub-systems, we may distinguish: *the organisation's policy-makers (Board of Directors, General Assembly...)*—top management—*the rest of the technical and administrative team that may, depending on the size of the organisation, comprise several sub-systems, —or different departments, where applicable— the organisation's partners or targets, groups, communities, populations or others as the case may be, the technical and financial partners of the organisation, to name just these few.*

Since strategy coaching requires that we work as much as possible with all, if not with the majority of these sub-systems each time it is possible—and especially because they may all be affected by the results of the coaching—it would be desirable to inform them that the process is to be conducted and that they need to understand and appropriate its various implications. In actual fact, it is not always possible to negotiate with all these sub-systems. However, when possible, we should do so, even at a distance.

This negotiation phase consists in explaining to each sub-system the strategy coaching process, its motives, its stakes and its approach as well as the various stakeholders involved, the system being coached on the one hand and, the facilitator-birth attendant on the other hand. Similarly, each sub-system should participate to the success of the process by playing the right role expected of them and thus contribute to the end objective sought. It is important in this phase to insist on the availability of all and sundry as well as on collective ownership of the final results.

Strategy coaching is governed by rules that need to be properly explained to all stakeholders during the negotiation phase.

During the negotiation phase and throughout the strategy coaching process, there must be proper clarification of the principles to be respected to eschew an anticlimax. This type of coaching necessitates, inter alia:

1. Proper information of all stakeholders about the stakes of the exercise and about its conduct to ensure their full and effective participation.
2. The need for the organisation being coached to give the time the exercise requires so that it may be conducted under the best conditions possible. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to negotiate the availability of all sub-systems that have to be involved in the process according to the approach defined by the facilitator-birth attendant.
3. Through its sub-systems, the organisation has to fully play its role of giving birth to ideas, while the facilitator-birth attendant considered as an expert in terms of methods, tools and techniques, must deliver the changes for the entire system with or without pain, as the case may be. In other words, each person's role must be clearly defined and they must play it fully.
4. Strategy coaching is a process; it is **work that is accomplished more or less over time and not an occasional intervention**. It is conducted in several phases or stages—context analysis—elaboration of the change/research plan, improvements or changes—implementation—... etc.
5. Strategy coaching requires some flexibility and we must especially avoid being rigid. We must have the capacity to adapt to circum-

stances. This is what happened during an intervention by the Mapinduzi Unit at CRAFOD when an unforeseen crisis arose between Angola and the DRC. We had to adapt. Obviously, this is not without risks given that many partners/donors that fund the services evaluate work in terms of days of intervention.

6. Strategy coaching gives preference to qualitative results not often visible but that make an impact over time.

In the final analysis, before we kick-start a strategy coaching process, it is important to take time to properly negotiate all aspects because the success of the process depends on it.

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Contacts and websites:

www.afrique-gouvernance.net

www.canadel.org

www.ceformad.org

www.cipcre.org

www.crafod.org

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www.peaceworkafrica.org

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