# ‘Lessons Harvesting’ for monitoring, evaluation and learning from peer-to-peer engagements

Discussion paper for Effective Institutions Platform (EIP) – Drawing on lessons from Advisory Group members

Charlotte Ørnemark, charlotteornemark@gmail.com

July 2020

# List of Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ABC-F | Actor-Based Change Framework (ABC-F) |
| AG | Advisory Group (for EIP) |
| ACSH | Astana Civil Service Hub |
| BNEW | Bhutan Network for Empowering Women |
| CABRI | Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative |
| CEG | Centre for Economic Governance |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee |
| DFID | Department for International Development (UK) |
| ECDPM | European Centre for Development Policy Management |
| EIP | Effective Institutions Platform |
| GPI | Government Partnerships International |
| LOGIN | Local Governance Initiative & Network |
| KILA | Kerala Institute of Local Administration |
| M&E | Monitoring & Evaluation |
| MEL | Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning |
| MuB | Municipality of Ulaanbataar (MuB) |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OSR | Own Source Revenue |
| P2P | Peer-to-peer |
| P4D | Partnerships for Development |
| PFM | Public Financial Management |
| THP | The Hunger Project |
| ToA | Theory of Action |
| ToC | Theory of Change |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UToC | Useful Theory of Change |

# Table of Contents

List of Acronyms ..... 1

Introduction ..... 3

Summary of key lessons ..... 4

Lessons for discussion and further exploration ..... 6

Lesson 1: Monitor core capabilities at different levels operation and how the interlink (applying a 'systems filter' to monitoring, evaluation and learning) ..... 6

Lesson 2: Decide on who tracks what and who compiles the information for collective learning ..... 8

Lesson 3: Partner roles and constellations differ and may shift along the way – reassessing roles and functions continuously could be part of the MEL framework. ..... 11

Lesson 4: Capture the added value of combining cognitive and affective learning ..... 15

Lesson 5: Pin-point mechanisms for institutionalization of new skills and practices and continuously assess assumptions around institutionalized patterns of behaviour. ..... 17

Lesson 6: Monitor the health of the partnership as well as what it produces ..... 19

Lesson 7: Regularly assess and redraw the navigational map of how to achieve change together ..... 22

Conclusions ..... 24

ANNEXES ..... 25

Annex 1: List of contributing Advisory Group members & literature reviewed ..... 25

1. LOGIN Asia (India) ..... 25
2. CABRI (South Africa) ..... 25
3. Center for Economic Governance (Kenya) ..... 26
4. Astana Civil Service Hub (Kazakhstan) ..... 26
5. Government Partnerships International - GPI (UK) ..... 26

Annex 2: Example of capabilities tracking sheet for self-assessment ..... 28

# Introduction

This discussion note outlines some initial observations and lessons for identifying good approaches and practices towards monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) on peer-to-peer learning for institutional change to be further refined and tested by the Effective Institutions Platform (EIP), in collaboration with interested EIP members.

It draws on consultations with, and documentation submitted by EIP Advisory Group (AG) members with direct experience of facilitating and supporting peer-to-peer (P2P) learning in practice. The initial plan was to conduct a number of Outcome Harvesting[1] workshops jointly with EIP members in-country and in-person during the first half of 2020 to inquire into what ideal 'results' from peer-to-peer learning look like in practice in different contexts and with different types of set-up and support. However, given travel restrictions in the context of COVID-19, focus was instead shifted to 'harvesting' already documented lessons and experiences from AG members through a series of online interactions and a more extensive document review.

The purpose was to get a better sense of *the way in which institutional change and learning is currently being understood and recorded as an outcome of P2P approaches* and where there are blind spots. These observations can inform how to approach the development of MEL frameworks for institutional learning, drawing on existing practices (with a clear emphasis on the "L" for learning). To this end, Advisory Group members were asked both to share their good practices and successful cases (many of which were already written up or in other ways documented), but also to engage in critical reflection on the challenges in demonstrating impacts, particularly at the *institutional* level.

Contributing organizations were: Astana Civil Service Hub (ACSH), Kazakhstan; Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative (CABRI), South Africa, Local Governance Initiative & Network (LOGIN) – a regional network with its Secretariat located in India, the Centre for Economic Governance (CEG), Kenya, and Government Partnerships International (GPI) based in the UK.

A full list of contributors and the documentation shared by each organization can be found in Annex 1.

[1] For more on this methodology and approach to documenting results, see: https://outcomeharvesting.net/

## Summary of key lessons

1. Monitor **core capabilities** at different levels of operation and how they interlink - applying a 'systems filter' to monitoring, evaluation and learning.

   Applying a systems lens to monitoring and learning means not just looking for the end results of a P2P engagement but tracking how learning continuously gets used and tested against organizational core capabilities (tracing any contributions to changed behaviours or work practices). That means going beyond the individual learner to how learning is being applied in his/her operating environment (at organizational and/or sector levels) and documenting how actors at different levels positively reinforce or prevent learning from being used. Diffusion of learning is multi-levelled and multi-directional, and a systems perspective tries to capture this. All inter-related actors have a role to play. How they interact and how relationships evolve over time determine the effectiveness of the P2P approach for institutional strengthening.

2. Decide on **who tracks what** and **who periodically compiles** information for collective learning across different actors.

   One partner (typically the facilitator) can play a central role in gathering and synthesizing monitoring information from across the partnership. However, involving others in the actual information gathering is important to fully understand the effects of P2P exchanges on different core capabilities, and to reinforce a sense of joint purpose. Distributing the MEL function and making it part of the ongoing facilitation can move it from being a bureaucratic 'add-on', or primarily donor-driven, to being a central methodology as part of navigating the ongoing P2P learning exchange.

3. Partner **roles and constellations** differ depending on the type and purpose of the P2P engagement and may shift along the way – periodically reassessing roles and functions could be part of the MEL framework.

   P2P learning builds on the central idea that not just one party has knowledge to share, but that external expertise can both infuse new ideas, act as a catalyst for new ways of working and/or help unleash existing local expertise so that it is more fully utilized. Monitoring and learning of P2P initiatives therefore needs to capture how learning happens and how it is being used depending on how partners interact. That means (i) monitoring the full engagement, from matching and creating the foundations for collaboration, through to results, and (ii) regularly taking stock of roles and partner constellations as they may shift and take on new meaning along the way. The MEL function needs to be explicitly invested in by all contributing partners.

4. **Trust** between peers who share experiences regularly, over time, complements cognitive learning with **affective (emotional) learning** – potentially leading to a higher degree of internalization and ownership.

   One of the advantages of P2P learning as a complement to ongoing reform or institutional change, is that it taps into both cognitive and affective learning. The need

to adapt to the local context is also more implicit when comparing and contrasting to how others solved a similar problem elsewhere, over just 'rolling out best practice'. The process of comparing, contrasting and testing new ideas, if documented, can contribute to the overall process of learning and contextualization. If such insights are regularly shared among participating peers, MEL processes can help solidify the trust and sense of mutuality in their joint problem-solving. Moreover, several examples show how the emotional bond and emerging sense of solidarity between participating peers made new information more easily acceptable.

5. Pinpoint **mechanisms for institutionalization** of new skills and practices and continuously assess assumptions around institutionalized patterns of behaviour.

Facilitated learning self-assessments can look at how P2P engagements have contributed to changed organizational practice. For instance, have old habits or 'ways of doing' been (i) *replaced* after a process of 'unlearning', (ii) *adapted* and merged with new skills or insights, or have new ideas been (iii) *adopted* to fill a previously perceived void or gap? And to what extent have these changes collectively driven the overall change process forward? Another consideration is whether changed institutional practice relate only to one discrete problem and the key individuals involved in addressing it, or if changed practices strengthen core capabilities of the institution at a more systemic level (beyond the bounded problem being addressed). Assumptions regarding organizational/systemic resilience need to be continuously tested, particularly whether new patterns of knowing and doing are being maintained or whether there is a relapse into previous working habits.

6. Monitor the **health of the peer-to-peer** partnership as well as what it produces.

The dual tracking of (i) the health and effectiveness of the partnership, and (ii) the effectiveness of P2P learning as a modality to fuel change, gives a more nuanced picture than to use final impacts as a proxy for the partnership's success or failure. It can also more carefully assess level of mutuality of learning between partners and draw attention to any perceived power inequalities that may impede learning. Even if a specific peer engagement is seemingly 'healthy', it cannot be assumed to produce relevant outcomes. Conversely, P2P engagements that are very transactional and unidirectional may fall into the category of expert-driven Technical Assistance (TA), but with little effect on core capabilities in the institution's way of operating.

7. Regularly **assess and redraw** the navigational map of how to achieve change together.

Theories of Change (how change happens) and Theory of Action (who does what to make it happen) are just theories. Combined with observed realities on the ground through MEL processes, however, they can serve as a shared navigation tool for partners, keeping long-term aspirations in mind, but monitoring what seems most relevant along the winding path of getting there. Examples illustrate how regularly assessing and jointly redrawing ToCs and ToAs have helped level expectations among partners (and their funders) while aligning the strategic vision for the partnership.

# Lessons for discussion and further exploration

## Lesson 1: Monitor core capabilities at different levels operation and how the interlink (applying a 'systems filter' to monitoring, evaluation and learning)

The 5 Core Capabilities framework[2] outlined in the EIP MEL Inception Report[3] was being used as a backdrop to reviewing documentation from EIP Advisory Group members. A checklist was developed, seeking to link MEL practice to different levels of learning (individual, institutional, system/sector) and capabilities. (Figure 1)

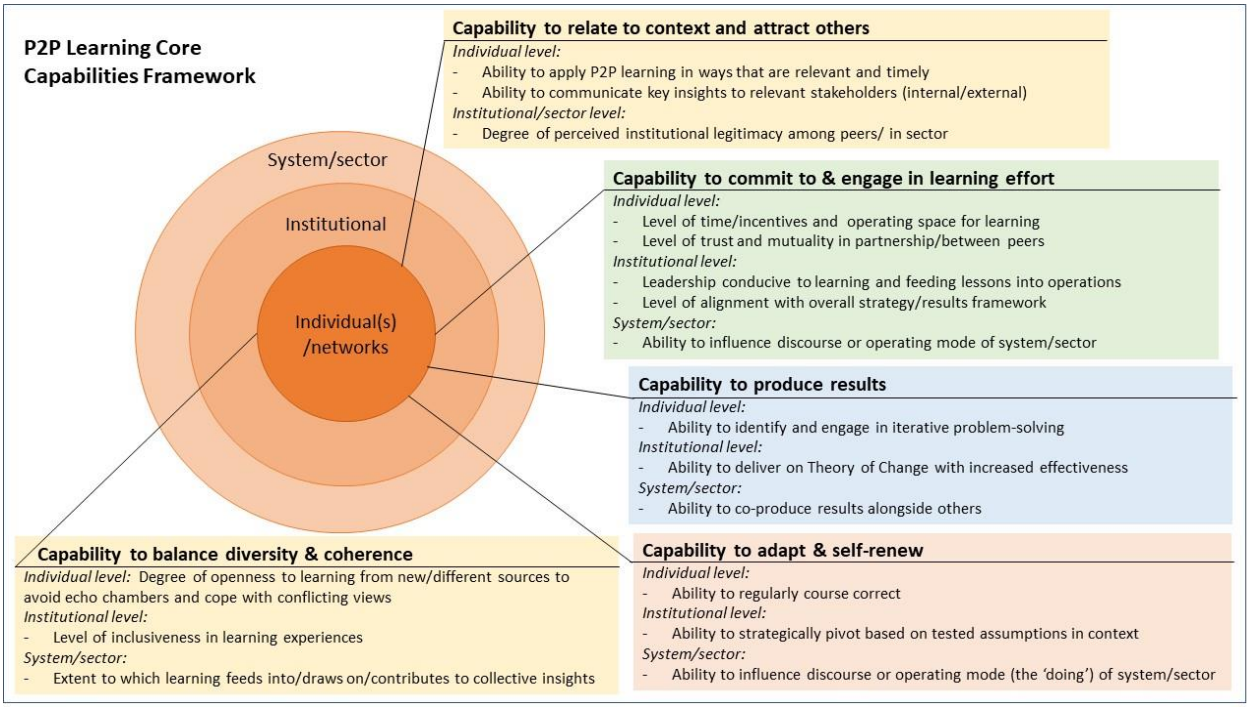



*Figure 1: A 'systems filter' checklist for capturing core capabilities at different levels*

The *EIP Guide to Peer-to-Peer Learning*[4] suggests that the human networks and skills created by P2P learning engagements need to be *"shared forward"* into their own organizations and operational networks in order for change to happen at scale. At the same time, the guide points out that "*there is limited evidence that this kind of diffusion happens very often".* Investment in MEL of P2P learning could try to fill this evidence gap by unpacking how learning transfers from the individual learner through to the organization and possibly sector levels (from micro, via meso levels to the macro level as per Figure 2), and how it is multi-directional rather than linear. In other words, tracking how changed behaviours (in terms of *ways of doing* or *relating*) at different levels reinforce sustained change.

[2] Tailored from Baser, H., Morgan, P., (et al), 'Capacity, Change and Performance: Study Report', ECDPM Discussion Paper No. 59B for OECD-DAC, April 2008, Maastricht, Netherlands

[3] Ørnemark, C., 'Monitoring & Evaluating Peer-to-Peer Learning for Institutional Change', Inception Report for the Effective Institutions Platform (EIP), Nov. 2019

[4] Andrews M., Manning, N., 'A Guide to Peer-to-Peer Learning', EIP, 2016

In terms of *what* to monitor, systemic approaches to MEL would mean a shift from focusing primarily on outputs (products or services produced) to capabilities strengthened or built. This, in turn, may require a new understanding among both donors and recipients of P2P funds on how results and activities will be accounted for, as well as having a more distributed approach to how evidence is collected.

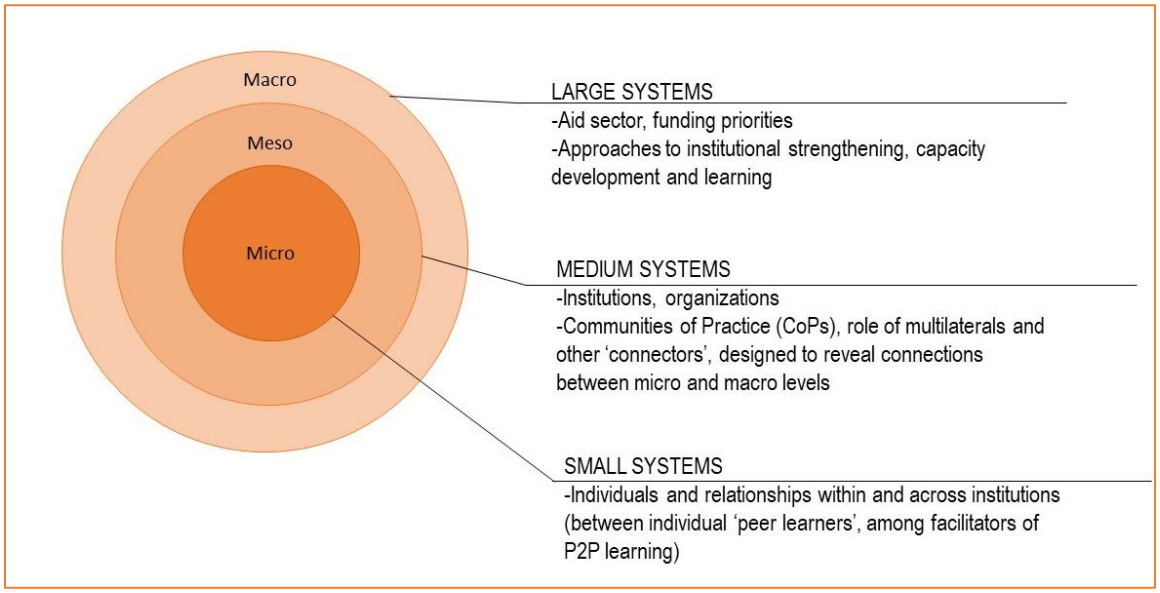



*Figure 2: Diffusion models – from small (micro) to large (macro) and the role for intermediaries to link the two for multi-directional and institutional (meso level) change.*

A challenge, observed by several of the contributing organizations, is that there are different actors involved at different levels of change, making more systemic outcomes difficult to track. Typically, each peer organization (along with the facilitator) have its own planned activities to carry out, with its own lines of accountability for delivering and reporting on activities undertaken. This may include a small budget for M&E and sometimes reflection and learning. Yet, based on several AG members' experience, value that is collectively created at a more systemic level are harder to document (including changed and internalized practice within organizations).

**What is currently being reported on the effects of P2P learning?**

Discussions with AG members during the validation process for this note led to some interesting reflections around how to balance the accountability function of MEL (typically what donors require in terms of reporting) and how to use MEL meaningfully to guide operations. Often, 'accounting for how money was spent' (activities undertaken, services produced) became a proxy for reporting on more complex and unpredictable process of change at the institutional level. Reporting often included:

- ***Outputs (i.e. services delivered, activities undertaken – trainings, workshops, study visits) over outcomes:*** This included number of workshops, number of trainings, number of people trained and other outputs-level accounting. While logging this information clearly is necessary to establish causal pathways towards longer-term effects (and illustrate scope of activities/how funds were spent), they do not provide sufficient information on their own. The effects of P2P learning from these activities, unless monitored, were being assumed.

-***Emphasis on TA combined with a problem-solving approach:*** Strong focus in Technical Assistance (TA) style interventions where on problems defined and problems solved. This was done in different forms of twinning models (matching a primary 'learner' with another clearly defined 'capacity support provider'). The problem-orientation is also at the core in Problem-Driven Iterative Analysis (PDIA) interventions where there is investment up front in problem identification and definition. However, unlike TA interventions, PDIA also puts emphasis on the institutional capabilities of engaging in problem-solving (unlike expert-driven TA).
- ***Solutions shared:*** For P2P initiatives with a stronger focus on networking, knowledge brokering and matching of peers in a Community of Practice, the documentation and sharing of successful cases or lessons is typically emphasized in the M&E over tracking longer-term institutional change. On its own, 'solutions sharing' does not necessarily illustrate how these lessons are put into practice or how they are adopted by others.
-***Behaviours changed:*** This can be at the individual level from those directly involved in P2P exchange, or at team or institutional level where new work processes or practices have been introduced (linking behaviour change to institutional capabilities). Attitude change, if tracked and reported, can be indicative of a preparatory stage for engaging in behavioural change (increased understanding of or acceptance for a new way of working), or as a way to maintain the use of new skills or habits.
-***A mix of the above:*** Most reporting contained different elements of all of these categories (all which may be needed to differing degrees), but getting that mix and balance right, while creating causal pathways to illustrate longer-term institutional strengthening was a shared challenge.

For some AG members, what was documented and reported on was more heavily influenced by donor reporting requirements than for others. It was seen as important to bring your funders along on the learning journey for that very reason, and to continuously assess and re-assess expected outcomes. This was noted to be of particular importance for contributing AG members who are intermediary organizations for P2P processes doing the matching, coordination, MEL and brokering of P2P processes. These organizations are typically tasked with linking a variety of actors, enabling diffusion from the micro to meso (institutional) levels.

## Lesson 2: Decide on who tracks what and who compiles the information for collective learning

A clear role division on *who tracks what* and who compiles such tracking to see the *combined effects of the partnership* was deemed important to get beyond activity-based outputs-oriented reporting.[5] This means involving both resource organizations and learning organizations (and individuals) in self-assessments and tracking of their own use of learning as part of the P2P engagement. Tools like simple journal entries or habit trackers can be used (see one example in Annex 2), with someone in charge of systematically gathering and synthesizing stories of change to feed back into the partnership. While the main M&E (and reporting) function typically fell on the facilitator role, distributing the function of data gathering and making it part of the learning journey proved to be effective.

[5] Examples of activity-based and inputs-oriented is typically e.g. number of workshops held, number of participants satisfied with training. Though this says something about how money was spent, it says little about outcomes.

UK-based Government Partnerships International (GPI)[6] works this way, taking on the overall M&E function as a complement to their matching and facilitation role, while providing partners with easy tools and support to do real-time monitoring. One such simple tool is a one-page Results Evidence Sheet, where partners are asked to write down observations on changes in attitudes and behaviours resulting from engagements in the P2P learning on a continuous basis, with a brief explanation of why this may be significant. These tracking tools also use a systemic lens, going from individual level changes to those at meso- (organizational) and macro-levels, and also distinguish between the internal and external context. (See extract from a guidance note below).

| | Small (e.g. access/individual) | Medium (e.g. organisational) | Large (e.g. system) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Internal** | Getting a meeting with an influential player | Minister instigates new procedures or processes | Senior leaders state commitment to reform |
| | Individual's language changes positively | New Minister block process change | Ministers block policy reform ideas |
| | Individual's behaviour changes negatively | Problem solving techniques are observed | Senior leaders implement new process for Government reforms |
| | Regular meetings with minister start | Emails demonstrating resistence to new procedures | Ministers state approval of UK support/invite us for more support |
| **External** | Respected journalist writes article against NSGI objectives | Protests against reform processes break out | Natural disaster casues damage/slows progress |
| | Aid blogger supports reform ideas | Demonstrators in favour of GPI propositions | Government collapse |

*Figure 3: Source: Wood, N., GPI. Extract with hypothetical example from instructions for partners for filling out Results Evidence Sheet (submitted regularly to GPI)*

Since partners usually have low internal capacity to track the effects of P2P engagements themselves, GPI then synthesizes inputs from partners and redistributes findings as a means for continued relationship building and dialogue. In other words, in addition to fulfilling accountability requirements, *the MEL function becomes part of the ongoing facilitation of the partnership, rather than an add-on.*

The whole partnership is being assessed, with requirements both on UK government counterparts and the recipient to engage in monitoring and learning, facilitated by GPI. However, institutional-level impact and results are only being tracked for the recipient of capacity support from a UK peer institution. A more bidirectional (mutual) learning was not foreseen in the DfID-funded Partnerships for Development

[6] Based on documentation developed by and interviews conducted with Niki Wood, GPI (Nov. 2019, May 2020), for a more general introduction to GPI, see: https://www.effectiveinstitutions.org/media/P2P_learning_and_partnerships_in_civil_service_reform_.pdf

program design, where these tools have been applied.[7] Yet, unanticipated learning (anecdotal examples and some recent qualitative evidence) were noted to have occurred also among the UK partners.[8]

Others, such as the Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative (CABRI), have – according to a recent evaluation[9] – acted more as a catalyst between similarly mandated institutions (Ministries of Finance in Africa), while largely leaving it up to partners to conduct their own monitoring of how new insights were used and implemented after attending CABRI events and P2P trainings. Anecdotal evidence gathered as part of the evaluation process clearly illustrates the value added for individual participants yet found it more difficult to demonstrate effects on institutional strengthening. This is not to say that it did not occur, but simply that the institutionalization of lessons was not systematically tracked and documented.

Lessons were also noted around the difficulties of diffusing technical skills and reform lessons in an environment governed by political and policy priorities. These lessons pointed to the need to work at both a political level through CABRI-facilitated policy dialogues, and, in parallel, with more technical problem-solving around clearly defined reform objectives, creating incentives for institutional change both from 'above', and from peers at a technical level. A more systemic way of mapping and tracking results may give a more nuanced picture of the interplay between policy and technical efforts to pursue reform – something which CABRI is now implementing by following groups of peers over a longer period of time while applying Problem-Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA).[10]

As a regional knowledge broker, the Astana Civil Service Hub (ACSH), based in Kazakhstan, plays a facilitating role across three main pillars of P2P activity (i) capacity building and peer-to-peer learning, (ii) partnerships and networking, as well as (iii) research and knowledge management, and has launched P2P learning alliances of practitioners on specific themes of broad interest for government civil servants (public service delivery, e-government and innovations in governance). Its facilitating role includes regular follow-up and interaction with participants, including carrying out feedback surveys on trainings and workshops. The ACSH is also involved in the preparation and compilation of reports and case studies of 'good practice' with lessons that can be shared and inspire other Hub participants (e.g. on the public service delivery models of Georgia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan as well as 'Smart' government: Case of Azerbaijan – for a more extensive list, see Annex 1).

ACSH regularly tracks performance against its mandate and its members' expectations, using surveys to establish the most popular themes for participating country governments, the most popular training modalities, and the types of activities that are in demand for civil servants' own personal professional development. At this point, ACSH does not, however, systematically track how facilitated knowledge

---

[7] A brief program description is: "Partnerships for Development (formerly known as GREAT for Partnership) will multiply the UK's development impact by boosting partnerships between UK's institutions and their counterparts in the developing world. It will leverage the skills and expertise from a range of UK institutions and supply them initially to DFID partner countries, based on tailored demand. It will initially prioritize the Extractives, Financial Accountability and Anti-Corruption sectors." Source: https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-205191

[8] Based on interview with Niki Wood, GPI, May 2020.

[9] Khulisa Management Service, Independent Evaluation Report of CABRI, Feb. 2018

[10] Harvard University, Centre for International Development, *Building State Capability,* A Toolkit for PDIA: https://bsc.cid.harvard.edu/PDIAtoolkit#:~:text=Problem%20Driven%20Iterative%20Adaptation%20(PDIA,adapt%20and%20then%20act%20again.

exchange is being used by participants in their own institutions. It was also pointed out that given the hierarchical operating context for many civil servants in the region, the notion of "monitoring" can be seen as something negative that adds red tape to learning processes, and ACSH is careful not make this a disincentive for civil servants. Though this could be context-specific to the region, making monitoring more 'learning-oriented' (rather than control-oriented) may be a way to overcome this, as illustrated also by examples from the same region by GPI.

The picture below, which is an extract from ACSH's introductory brochure, says as much about what has been achieved (i.e. output results) as it does about the opportunities that might exist to enhance outcome-level reporting that is focused on institutional learning, by identifying how institutional changes take root within the participating country governments.

**P2P Learning Alliances**

**P2P Alliance on One-Stop-Shop Public Service Delivery**

**Launched** in May 2016

**Countries involved:** Azerbaijan, Georgia and Kazakhstan

**Outcomes:** The Astana hub has been twice elected as a member of the EIP Advisory Group (2017 and 2019) to provide advice to the EIP Co-Chairs and the Secretariat on strategic direction.

**P2P Alliance on e-Government development**

**Launched** in June 2018

**Countries involved:** Azerbaijan, Armenia, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan

**Outcomes:** Three workshops were conducted and one case study was published. It is also planned to issue two case studies and conduct activities on the P2P principle.

**P2P Alliance on Transformation and Innovations in Governance**

**Launched** in June 2019

**Countries involved:** Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Ukraine, as well as international experts from AAPA and Oslo Governance Centre, UNDP

**Expected outcomes:** Study tours, workshop are going to be organized.

*Figure 4: Source: ACSH Brochure: Astana Civil Service Hub – Partnership for Civil Service Excellence outlines the Hub's P2P leaning alliances as one of the services it provides alongside knowledge sharing and networking among civil servants.*

## Lesson 3: Partner roles and constellations differ and may shift along the way – reassessing roles and functions continuously could be part of the MEL framework.

In a documented case by LOGIN Asia, geared to encouraging participation of women in politics and electoral processes in Bhutan, LOGIN brokered a partnership between the Bhutan Network for Empowering Women (BNEW) and The Hunger Project (THP), India. LOGIN played a facilitation role and supported ongoing knowledge brokering, coordination and reporting.

The relationship between partners was defined by having one *'primary learning institution'* (BNEW) and one organization who was the primary *'experience sharing institution'* (THP), with one '*brokering institution'* (LOGIN). The funder also played an active role in this example (Figure 4).[11]

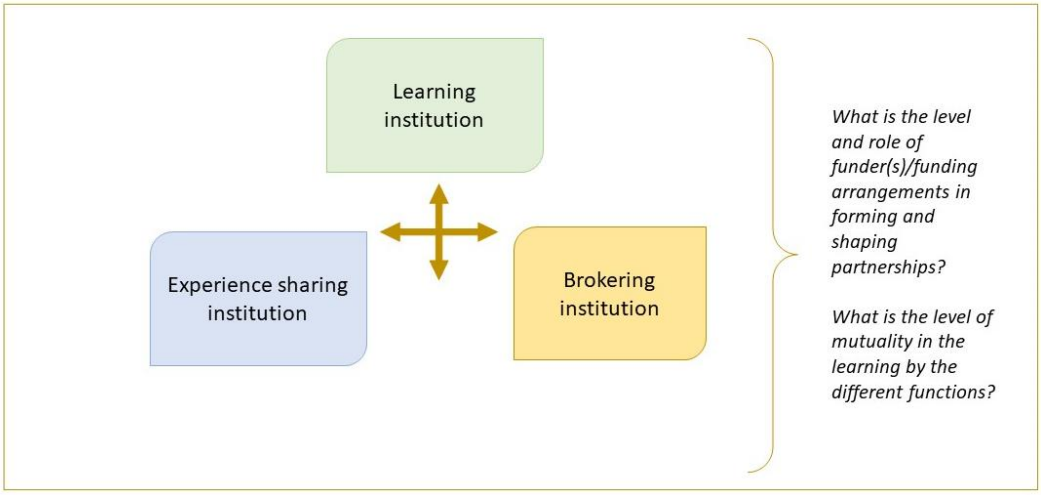



*Figure 4. A common P2P partnership constellation is often having one primary learning institution, one (or several) experience sharing/resource institution(s) and one brokering institution. Mutuality in learning is not being tracked but seen as 'extra benefits' if they happen to occur spontaneously.*

This seems to be a quite common set-up across the partnerships reviewed. However, LOGIN noted that working in this type of smaller and targeted partnerships for peer learning between two organizations addressing or seeking to address similar challenges (though operating in different contexts) differs from facilitating multi-stakeholder learning in more diverse networks, e.g. between civil society and local government around commonly defined social accountability issues. For one, it is easier to follow the institutional changes taking place in more depth in a carefully matched one-on-one partnership where parties are both committed (and funded) to invest in a process of learning. Conversely, a networked approach relies more on the catalytic effects of bringing people together who usually do not have a chance to exchange.

Having a common understanding up front about what type of P2P engagement is being initiated will determine what types of results can be expected, and how to invest in capturing and using these results as part of the evolving learning process.

Defining up front how different actors are expected to contribute to the peer-learning process, articulating their stakes (incentives/risks) in engaging in the initiative, can help define clearer expectations and also help mitigate power imbalances in the partnership (e.g. how much is truly demand-driven/ how secure and unconditional the funding is). However, it is important to take stock and reassess these functions along the way as functions may shift. GPI noted, for instance, that in some partnerships, what started out as a largely transactional collaboration (between a 'learning/recipient of support' and one 'capacity developing' institution) opened up for more mutuality in the learning once trust had been built

[11] Swiss Development Cooperation representatives participated in some of the early study visits between India and Bhutan.

between partners. The following example from LOGIN also exemplifies how problem identification and role division between partners may change once engagement is initiated:

> *"LOGIN has facilitated a peer partnership between Municipality of Ulaanbataar (MuB), Mongolia and Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), a local government training institution in Kerala state of India. The limited demand of MuB was to receive support from KILA to develop a training strategy/framework. A team from MUB visited KILA and had prolonged exchanges with KILA faculty and state officials to understand the what, how and why of the work. The MUB team gradually gained the realization that just a training strategy would not be enough with the accompanying preparedness on many other fronts for it to be implementable, scalable and sustained – a fact that they had been advised upon many times before. LOGIN's assessment is that the emotional connect during the learning enabled these takeaways."*[12]

In the BNEW-THP case from LOGIN, focus was almost exclusively on BNEW's learning journey and what they wanted to achieve as the primary learning institution or 'recipient' of support. However, a lesson is that an initial partnership baseline assessment should include the role of the facilitating/brokering institution and funders, both whom are very much part of the ecosystem (funders often participate in a more passive role, but sustained funding and funding priorities matter). That would make it clearer how actors evolve and influence each other over time.

Moreover, LOGIN noted that often their initial efforts of matching and brokering relationships, though it is a substantial time and resource investment, to find the 'right fit' of peers often largely go undocumented/unnoticed in the results reporting since monitoring tends to start once those preparations have already been taken care of. This comes with the risk of not capturing important lessons for how to set up and facilitate effective P2P engagements. For instance, LOGIN noted that in the Bhutanese case, three different scenarios were explored in terms of possible peer institutions before they settled on matching BNEW's request for support with The Hunger Project India, noting that: "*This is an important investment that facilitating institutions like LOGIN undertake but the process is often tacit and not captured in MEL frameworks".*[13]

Typically, LOGIN's value creation approach to M&E focuses more on the primary learning partner[14] than on the role and function of resource and/or coordination and brokering organizations. This means that the results produced by the 'primary learning organization' often becomes a proxy for how well the entire P2P partnership worked, and how well the different functions were performed (whether brokering, providing insights, engaging in mutual learning, or being the 'demander'/recipient for inputs).

Similarly, the Centre for Economic Governance (CEG) in Kenya[15] noted that as a non-state actor, their role was perceived to be that of a neutral facilitator and not that of a "big brother or a competing peer" when they brought together government officials from national and sub-national levels, along with

[12] Ibid.
[13] From LOGIN Note as inputs to EIP Framework, April 2020.
[14] Many of the cases reviewed still seems to focus on one primary 'recipient' of support as opposed to more bidirectional partnerships built on mutual learning. However, all agreed that unanticipated learning often also took place within the institution providing technical or peer support. These are usually not systematically tracked.
[15] See: https://cegkenya.org/

representatives of civil society and think tanks, to facilitate learning for enhanced mobilization and administration of counties' own source revenue (OSR). At the time, country governments had a steep learning curve in relation to enhancing their fiscal management, following the rapid devolution that was initiated in Kenya in 2013, and were looking to harmonize county revenue streams while promoting principles of efficiency, accountability, transparency, predictability and equity linked to effective service delivery.[16]

For CEG, keeping their neutrality as a non-state facilitator was key. Being local, knowing the local conditions, what to look for, and how to facilitate such an exchange proved to be important and enhanced the level of mutual trust and openness.

The P2P approach adopted was a networked approach where multiple partners facing similar challenges were brought together with one facilitator (CEG) to move the process along. Those working at a more technical level together with their managers from five county treasuries participated in the peer learning alliance. This multi-level learning and exchange allowed for easier buy-in and quick follow-up as it helped speed up the decision-making process for trying new ideas or approaches that had already been tested and validated elsewhere.

CEG also noted improved working relations of various departments involved in revenue mobilization and administration, who had a chance to discuss across departmental silos and share lessons in the 'safe space' that the P2P facilitation provided.[17] Yet, with limited funding and a project-period spanning only over six months[18], CEG pointed to limitations to having a more systemic approach for capturing results, particularly at the institutional level. Instead, the M&E approach adopted was through sharing (and documenting) stories of change that participants brought up as part of their knowledge sharing. This type of 'story harvesting', they noted, if done systematically each time officials were visited or brought together, could have held the potential for tracking institutionalization over a longer period of time.

For ACSH, monitoring starts with an initial survey among participating countries to determine the main theme and goals of a new learning alliance before its launch. The Hub subsequently takes on a knowledge brokering and coordination role. With learning being largely trust-based among participating civil servants, ACSH's focus is on providing a safe space for learning among participants rather than focusing on how such learning is put into practice in participants' 'home' institutions.

The collective challenge across each of these experiences has been to track institutional gains and practices, while still being sensitive to the organizational culture and context among learning participants.

---

[16] Wanjiru, R., "Peer to Peer learning for Enhancing Own Source Revenue Mobilization and Administration", Center for Economic Governance, Kenya

[17] The officials that were targeted and participated in the P2P learning were County Executive Committee Members for Finance (equivalent to Ministers of Finance for Counties); Chief Officers for Finance and Economic Planning (equivalent to Principal Secretaries for Counties); and Directors Revenue and other county officials responsible for Performance Contracting.

[18] The process was supported by a small grant via EIP of USD 20,000 over six months to the facilitating agent (only), but it benefited from the political goodwill and collaboration with relevant government agencies who co-financed their own participation. Yet with funding only being provided to the facilitator, it was difficult (and time was too short) to come up with a more comprehensive MEL framework tracking institutionalization.

Emergent and unanticipated learning, such as observed by CEG when putting participating country treasuries in the same room to share ideas, can be harvested and reported back on as part of the ongoing learning journey rather than being seen as a 'control' function.

### Lesson 4: Capture the added value of combining cognitive and affective learning

All EIP advisory group members consulted talked about the centrality of *trust and trust-building over time* in their P2P engagements, alluding to the affective aspects of engaging in P2P learning. CEG and CABRI both referred to the fact that there was quicker adoption of new ways of doing things or a willingness to try new ways of working given that the piece of advice came from a peer in a similar situation (e.g. from another African Ministry of Finance, or another county treasury in Kenya). In other words, the *emotional bond or sense of solidarity made new information more easily acceptable.*

Other examples showed how MEL – when done in a participatory way through a combination of self-assessments, partnership health check-ins and mediated dialogue between peers – was used as a way to help build or consolidate trust between different institutions from different operating contexts (with examples from GPI, working with UK institutions' engaged in capacity-building overseas). Others (such as the Astana Civil Service Hub, based in Kazakhstan) feared that the wrong MEL approach could undermine trust and sharing among peers if it was perceived to be too controlling or rigid.

As illustrated in the above example from LOGIN, P2P learning has the potential to effectively combine cognitive and affective (emotional) learning through relationship-building and trust among partnering peers. This effect is strengthened if partnerships are supported over a longer time-period, accompanied by several iterations of learning-by-doing followed by reflection and (mutual) learning, and if partners develop a sense of solidarity between them. The latter came across strongly also in the CABRI evaluation where the identity of it being an African-led and owned initiative, where peers struggled with similar sets of problems was important for a sense of community-building among CABRI partners.

The impact story from South Africa captured in the evaluation noted in the participant feedback that: "*CABRI's approach of capacity building in African countries is not a lecture, but a diagnostic and a participatory process."* As such, there seems to have been a higher degree of mutuality in the learning and exchange. However, this is not something which was systematically tracked. The catalytic effect was also captured in the Ghana case study of the evaluation where partners expressed surprise that *"learning came from places I wasn't thinking of, like Burkina Faso",* and that a validation process could identify areas where neighbors could learn from each other.

A critique – which points to the capability of balancing coherence with diversity – was that while P2P learning was facilitated among like-minded officials in different Ministries of Finance, less emphasis was put on relationship building within their own governments, e.g. with relevant line ministries and other domestic actors which may have had a different stake in the PFM issue at hand. A lesson here is that while emotional connection and trust-building can nurture learning when 'being among like-minded', this 'emotional bubble' can easily burst when it hits the reality of its own operating environment. GPI has tried to address this by regularly assessing both the health of the P2P partnership (where one of five indictors is on trust-building between partners) *as well as* how it manages to advance against joint objectives.

In looking at the actualization and transfer of learning from the individual to the institutional levels, it would be interesting to look more closely at both the *cognitive system* through recall (of new skills or ideas) as well as the *emotional system* of learning ('affective learning'), i.e. how learners feel while they are learning, which may affect the level of internalization.[19]

Given that P2P learning depends largely on positive reinforcement or a sense of support from peers, examples from EIP members illustrated how the *emotional system of learning* may be important for shaping attitudes and for internalizing new behavior. In terms of the cognitive aspects of learning, a working hypothesis is also that learning within one's own context (rather than relying on a recall of things taught during an off-site training course) make *recall and retrieval* of new information easier. (See Figure 4).

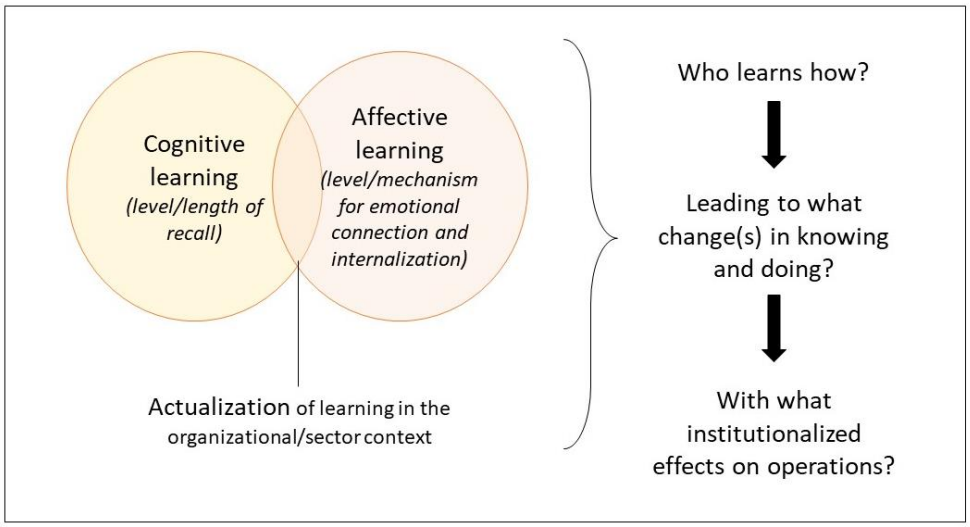



*Figure 5: Types of learning and internalization*

ASCH particularly underscored the need to build up a relationship of trust between the facilitating hub and peers in the network, and that these relationships pay off over time. One of the mechanisms that ASCH uses is regularly seeking feedback among participating countries via needs assessment surveys which are synthesized in baseline reports on priority areas for knowledge exchange and learning. While case studies are then compiled and typically discussed in face-to-face workshops, the launch of a Virtual Alliance in connection with COVID-19 showed a high degree of reciprocity of peers also online. More than 15 cases on how to combat the pandemic were being shared via the alliance within the first few months. Also, given that trustful relationships had already been established in the network, Azerbaijan shared *pro bono* a case about their digital system to minimize the spread of the virus with the Kazakhstan government.

[19] Miller, M. 'Teaching & Learning in Affective Domain: From Emerging Perspectives on Learning, Teaching and Technology', University of Georgia, 2015.

## Lesson 5: Pin-point mechanisms for institutionalization of new skills and practices and continuously assess assumptions around institutionalized patterns of behaviour.

Another aspect related to how learning translates into changed institutional practices (adding to institutional resilience beyond solving a discrete problem) would be to try to map out the concrete mechanisms for such institutionalization.

This could be done as part of regular learning self-assessments by participating organizations with facilitation that is being tailored to the institution's operating context, taking into account the internal organizational culture of engaging in self-reflection and critique. For instance, GPI noted that based on their experience, participants in institutions and government cultures that are highly compliance-driven may be more afraid of penalization if they raise weaknesses in the current system than those that are more encouraging of diverse and critical views being expressed.

In the EIP context of seeking to illustrate what different organizational capabilities are being strengthened through P2P engagements, a (preferably facilitated) self-assessment could identify key lessons under the relevant categories of capabilities and inquire whether organizational practice has changed in the following ways:

- *Replace:* Old habits of doing or framing an issue are replaced with new ones (requiring also explicitly identifying and addressing the 'unlearning' of old ways or attitudes),
- *Adapt:* Old habits or framing of an issue are merged with new ones leading to adapted ways of doing or approaching an issue (pinpointing what is different about it),
- *Adopt:* New skills, tools or ideas are brought in with an underlying assumption that they will fill a previous void and will be adopted by staff. This may, however, underestimate resistance to change, lack of incentives to adopt new skills or practices, or existing biases in ways of framing or thinking about an issue is based on existing culture/social norms or experience from other working environments[20],
- *Address:* A specific problem is being addressed by bringing in new knowledge and expertise from outside via an 'expert' source, but does not necessarily change internal knowing and doing (some forms of traditional TA using outside experts could fall into this category).

The categories outlined above would in reality most likely be overlapping. However, trying to be more specific about how the P2P engagement aims to institutionalize change into established patterns of behaviour may help in identifying and regularly testing underlying assumptions regarding diffusion and institutionalization. Internal monitoring and learning efforts can then seek to inquire whether new patterns of knowing and doing are being maintained, or whether there is a relapse into previous working methods.

[20] Examples can be drawn from various efforts to introduce gender mainstreaming and institutionalize ways of working with gender equality across organizations, where previous gender expertise or gender bias may influence the organizational culture and level of internalization of concepts among staff.

The iterative nature of such reflections (e.g. GPI facilitates partnership health self-assessments on a yearly basis) is in itself an important part of advancing the learning as it may trigger or reinforce new ways of doing or thinking from the previous cycle (see also box below).

**Feedback loops in behavioral economics, epidemiology and psychology etc.:** The concept is used to refer to the response mechanisms by an individual, group or larger societal system based on four distinct steps of:
(i) information input or *'trigger'* (data, a specific experience, story, learning from someone else etc.),
(ii) *relevance* and *emotional connection* to that information input (merging and filtering new information with previous knowledge and experiences),
(iii) understanding of *consequences* with *concrete options for behavioral response*, and
(iv) action.
This links the use of informational triggers to a behavioral change or adaptation. Assessing and reflecting over such behavioral responses (at individual or system levels) can lead to repeat behavior if successful – either maintaining the adapted behavior or relapsing into the earlier patterns and habits. The 'information trigger' at the beginning of every new feedback loop is different from the actual feedback loop itself, which refers to the full response mechanism and how that information was processed and responded to (by the individual, the collective, or the system). Source: *'Learning Journeys for Adaptive Management – Where does it take us?' (Ørnemark, C. GPSA Briefing Note, 2016)*

Once partnerships have established a joint and shared purpose, GPI's monitoring system focuses on how capabilities, motivation and opportunities among partners lead to behavioural change (Figure 6), and how this affects the overall Theory of Change (ToC) for what the partnership seeks to achieve (in terms of actual outcomes).

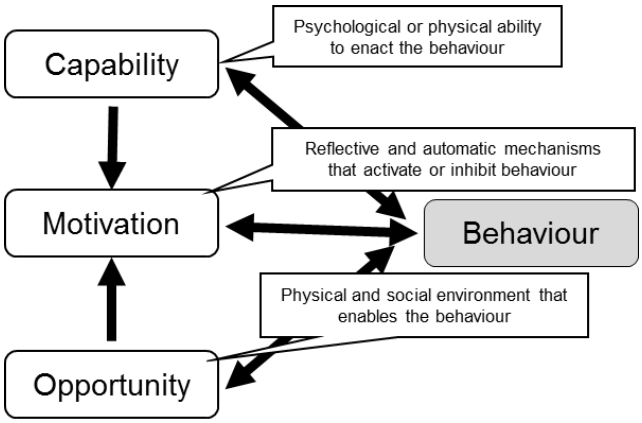



*Figure 6: Origins of model from "Michie S, Atkins L, West R. (2014) The Behaviour Change Wheel: A Guide to Designing Interventions. London: Silverback Publishing. www.behaviourchangewheel.com, with adaptations and further elaborations by Wood, N., GPI in PPT "Useful Theories of Change: How to articulate the how and the what of your program"*

An actor-based change framework (ABC-F) [21] is designed with the partners, mapping the system of actor groups associated with the agreed problem to solve.[22] This is used to determine whether the right/

[21] Koleros, A., Wood, N., (forthcoming) How to Design and use Actor-Based Change Frameworks: a practitioner's manual.
[22] Koleros, A., Mayne, J., (2019) *Using Actor-Based Theories of Change to Conduct Robust Evaluation in Complex Settings,* Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation,

sufficient actors are involved to make that desired change happen, as well as whether the partnership will be able to bring about the changes required. Clear but iteratively reviewed Useful ToCs (UToC) are then drawn up based on these with partner inputs.[23] The UToC and ABC-F then have a symbiotic relationship, so that change in one flows into the other. As the partnership evolves, the ToC and ABC-F are periodically tested and re-drawn, using an adapted version of strategy testing.[24] Strategy testing sessions are facilitated separately, as a complement to the more introspective partnership health assessments (for more details, see below).

ACSH also works closely with partners in coming up with a joint action plan which is then regularly updated based on reflective discussions. A joint online storage of documentation, provided by ACSH as knowledge management support, also helps to monitor how alliance members interact and contribute to creating a common knowledge base for learning.

### Lesson 6: Monitor the health of the partnership as well as what it produces

The LOGIN Bhutan-India case (between THP and BNEW), which was studied and discussed more in-depth with LOGIN, revealed a healthy partnership where two like-minded organizations managed to share and adapt lessons from one context to another. What started as a technical transfer of skills and tools based on The Hunger Projects' longer experience and established mechanisms to reach out to women for their political participation in rural India, turned into a more long-term relationship which transitioned into a more strategic engagement around the BNEW's long-term establishment as a legitimate change agent in the country. Though captured to some extent in LOGIN's more detailed write-up of the case, the monitoring data still focused almost exclusively on what the partnership *produced* (which is only one of five core capabilities for institutional strengthening in the proposed framework), and to a much lesser degree on the evolving nature of the partnership, institutionalization of learning and its management over time.

As mentioned, GPI does on the other hand regularly engage partners in facilitated self-assessment on the health of the partnership as part of their MEL service provision. Interviews with GPI's Lead MEL Adviser discussed the different categories of partnerships, e.g. those that are: a) both healthy and produced relevant outcomes, b) were healthy and trusting but did not produce expected outcomes, c) were not necessarily healthy (having e.g. low levels of mutuality and trust) but which were more instrumental in nature, and still produced set outcomes, and d) were unhealthy in nature and also did not produce expected results (possibly from having been 'forced' from above, or being mis-matched from the outset).[25] Regularly engaging partners in self-assessing how the partnership evolves and in turn is able to fulfill the

---

https://journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/index.php/cjpe/article/view/52946, and Koleros, A., (2018) *The Actor-Based Change Framework: A Pragmatic Approach to Developing Program Theory for Interventions in Complex Systems*, American Journal of Evaluation (1-20)

[23] Mayne, John. (2018). Developing Useful Theories of Change for Complex Settings.

[24] The approach was initially developed and spearheaded by the Asia Foundation: https://asiafoundation.org/publication/strategy-testing-an-innovative-approach-to-monitoring-highly-flexible-aid-programs/

[25] With Niki Wood, Nov. 2019, May 2020, supported by documentation.

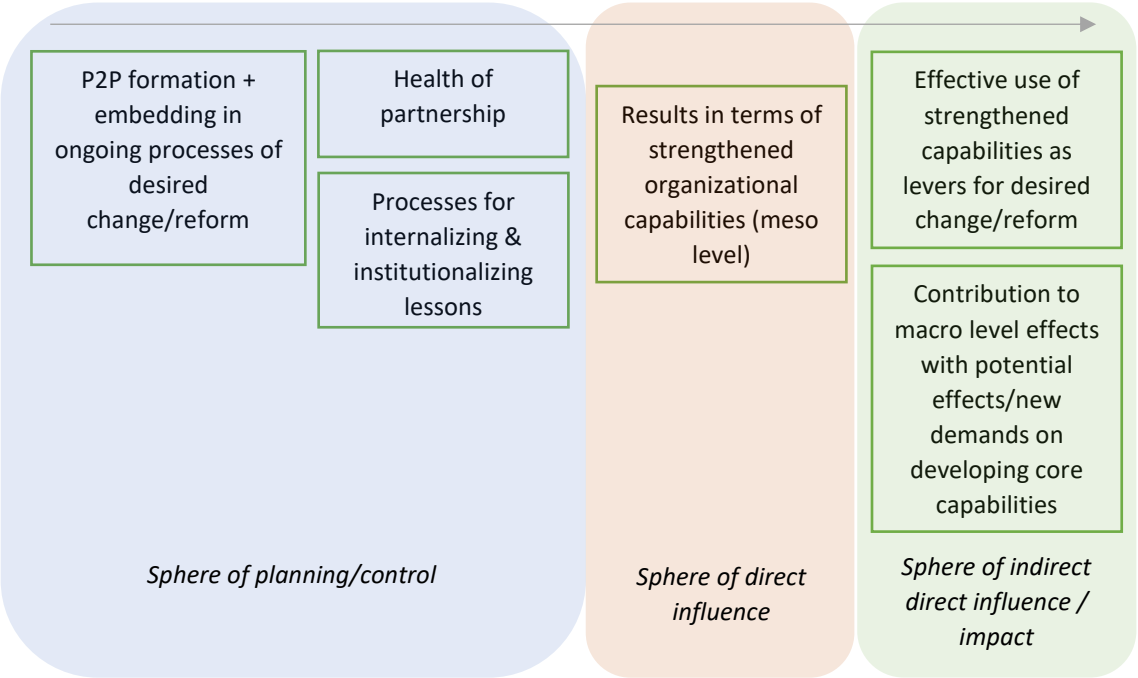
learning objectives was one way of supporting partnership management with an evidence base, giving a foundation for breaking off or course correcting a P2P engagement if deemed necessary.

In one particular example, the GPI-supported UK government partner, after engaging in a repeat self-assessment 1.5 years into the partnership, indicated that the partnership had a clear goal and felt confident of progress. The African government counterpart, on the other hand, rated the clarity of the purpose for the P2P engagement as medium-low – something the UK partner was surprised to learn. GPI, being the facilitator, helped partners unpick why there was a divergence, which resulted in a new shared vision for the partnership moving forward.

The dual tracking of a) the health and effectiveness of the partnership, and b) the effectiveness of P2P as a learning modality to fuel change gives a more nuanced picture than to use final impacts of the 'recipient organization' as a proxy for the partnership's success or failure.

Similarly, in the featured LOGIN case in Bhutan, the P2P objective was to be helping to establish BNEW as a legitimate, trusted, contextually responsive and effective organization in Bhutan when it comes to promoting women's political participation (using established tools and outreach strategies used by THP). This is different from BNEW's ultimate objective – to see an increase in women actually getting elected. The health of the partnership would either enable the P2P objective to be achieved or fail to do so if the 'fit' is not right. However, just as we cannot attribute 'number of women elected' to the P2P engagement, neither can we say that the P2P engagement failed if not more women ended up being elected (which clearly can have many underlying factors).

The process lessons are schematically outlined below to illustrate the steps that would need to be tracked and mapped out to illustrate credible causal pathways between introduction of a P2P learning engagement and ultimate impact. It would not be right to use ultimate impact as a proxy for how well the P2P engagement performed. However, P2P engagements that have been invested in and carefully designed *should* be able to track and demonstrate results in the sphere of *indirect influence*, backed up by some anecdotal examples of how organizations effectively use such strengthened capabilities to advance their own objectives. This would provide evidence to demonstrate that P2P learning has strengthened the institutions (as its primary objective) as a shared and collectively owned result of the partnership. The result of the organization (in the sphere of indirect impact) belongs to that particular institution and was most likely produced alongside and in collaboration with others.




Lessons, therefore, are to:

a) Clearly distinguish up front what are the objectives of the learning organization(s) in relation to their own strategies, and what objectives are *specific for the P2P engagement*.

b) Engage partners in regularly assessing the *health of the partnership* as a complement to *what the partnership produces.* This can help assess the level of mutuality in the partnership, be used for partnership dialogue, and provide supporting evidence for a more nuanced understanding of links between the nature of the partnership and what it produces in terms of outcomes.

GPI partnership health self-assessments asks the partnership to answer qualitative questions describing how they perceive seven aspects of the relationship. These are: 1) culture of learning, (2) the utilization of learning, (3) strategic direction and clarity of the partnership, (4) level of trust, (5) degree of relationship building, (6) the scalability of lessons, and (7) usage of MEL to inform practice and institutionalization.

The programme manager or broker within the UK government institution (or GPI, depending on the partnership constellation and agreed role division) – who has more of a bird's eye view – then plots how they perceive the relationship on a scale of 1-5 for each of the 7 aspects, which is plotted on a profile.

All in all, the process includes five distinct steps:

1. The UK counterpart as well as the overseas counterpart fill in self-assessment questionnaire.
2. The UK government institution programme manager or broker assesses the overall partnership on the 1-5 scale.

3. The GPI MEL team matches the questionnaire responses to the 1-5 scale descriptions to plot the relationship from the overseas counterpart's points of view, then sees if this matches what the broker/programme manager did.
4. If it matches, it's plotted against on a scale from 1-5 in the seven areas outlined above.
5. If it doesn't match, GPI's MEL team unpicks why and finds a solution ranking, then plot the agreed score after a process of clarification.[26]

### Lesson 7: Regularly assess and redraw the navigational map of how to achieve change together.

In the logic of the core capabilities framework, which is geared to assessing organizational capacity and performance, an organization's ability to effectively deliver and produce results in a timely manner is a clearer indication of institutional strength than e.g. meeting certain pre-defined targets and milestones (especially since these may shift along the way). Moreover, results achievement is seen as only *one* of several interdependent capabilities.[27] Assessing delivery capacity (rather than outputs produced) can nevertheless be hard – especially since different actors in a partnership may be looking for different types of results. Even inside organizations, what constitutes a 'meaningful result' (especially from a learning initiative) can mean different things to different people.

The ability to continuously harvest different kinds of results (outcomes), and to use such outcome harvesting efforts as a way to negotiate and navigate a path forward among multiple actors and interests is in itself a core capability. For external validation, developmental evaluation, can be used. This is an approach where you engage an external evaluator/evaluation team as a 'critical friend' to periodically assess monitoring data from an external perspective so that it can inform implementation real-time (rather than just at the mid- or end-point). The approach has been proven to be most suitable in situations where continuous adaptation and innovation is needed as it can complement and reinforce other efforts to engage partners in evaluative thinking.[28]

In the case of MEL of P2P engagements it could be interesting to further explore how a developmental evaluation approach can help mitigate the risk of 'group think' (i.e. the assumption that learning is meaningful just because it is P2P, as the EIP Learning Guide also says). Given that most P2P engagements are fairly low-cost, or connected to larger programs of reform, the brokering/facilitating organization may also be able to take on this internal evaluation function, as in the case of GPI.

The EIP P2P Guide also warns about "magic bullet thinking" – i.e. assuming that all P2P engagements are good and productive, and that all lessons are applicable from one context to the next. Different AG members used different tools to stay *problem focused* and avoid a 'cookie cutter' approach that focus on bringing in external solutions rather than on strengthening unique problem-solving capabilities based on experiential learning exchange. From a capability perspective, building resilient institutions that are able

[26] Interview and feedback with Niki Wood, GPI.

[27] In the OECD-DAC commissioned study report on *Change, Capacity and Performance* (Baser, Morgan et al, 2008), the authors point to the organizational unit as a living human system that needs a wide range of capabilities to survive, perform and adapt, and where not one capability is sufficient on its own. From a systems perspective, it is not only one such organizational unit that needs to build the necessary capabilities, but a multitude of interlinked actors, and where relations between different organizational units also matter for overall performance.

[28] See: https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/developmental_evaluation

to formulate the problem when it occurs, attract others to help in (joint) problem-solving, and/or fund such exploratory processes is (in the longer term) is more important than having an isolated problem 'fixed' by outside experts in the short term.

This is also where having a Theory of Change to refer to, with a Theory(ies) of Action to accompany it (that describes 'who does what, how') can be a useful navigation tool so that isolated problem-solving feeds into longer-term institutional change.

CABRI, being a genuinely African-led and rooted initiative, incorporates this way of thinking across its operations. CABRi's experience also shows that building improved *problem-solving capability* (the ability to articulate, locally own, and find peers to exchange with on a problem) may be more important for building institutional resilience than simply fixing the problem using TA expertise. However, creating problem-solving capability also means understanding and engaging with existing power dimensions to create space for implementation. This is where the CABRI evaluation pointed to some weaknesses, since coming up with solutions among like-minded may be easier than to 'sell' them in-house, particularly when you work in a more hierarchical setting of public administration. CABRI's efforts to pilot Problem-Driven Iterative Analysis (PDIA) in some Ministries of Finance therefore puts a lot of emphasis on clearly identifying the authorizing environment, and where there are opportunities to shift issues or work practices at a more systemic level. The EIP P2P Learning Guide also refers to this, stressing the importance of not just applying standard solutions to institutionally embedded delivery challenges, or you could be *"hitting the formal target but missing the politically smart point"*. [29]

Like CEG in Kenya, CABRI used the P2P methodology as a means to collect individual change stories and testimonials from those individuals from across African Ministries of Finance who participated in CABRI events (thematic workshops, policy dialogues etc.) and trainings. What could be further tested, however, is how to do such harvesting of change stories in a more systematic manner, linking it to an overarching ToC (like in GPI's case), so that individual change stories get matched to broader institutional processes of reform. That may also allow CABRI to help partners leverage different aspects of the tools available via P2P learning at different times – sometimes demonstrating technical skills while at other times point to ways of doing things differently in neighboring countries to open up space for internal communication and innovation.

LOGIN has developed a detailed Results Framework which at its core seeks to document and assess *value creation.*[30] This spans from assessing the immediate value from participating in learning activities, through to the potential, applied, realized and transformative value that may be experienced following their learning exchanges in their institutional contexts.

As such, it traces assumed transfer of learning from the individual through to institutional outcomes and across the broader system of interaction through a realized and transformative lens. In addition to collecting a lot of baseline and quantitative information for their own planning and to stay accountable to their donors, *'value creation stories'* are being used to continuously harvest outcomes from participants

[29] EIP, A Guide to Peer-to-Peer learning, 2016

[30] The analytical approach draws on the Value Creation Framework introduced by Beverly and Etienne Wenger-Trayner. See: https://wenger-trayner.com/resources/publications/evaluation-framework/

in LOGIN learning activities. These value creation stories explore some of the less quantifiable outputs as well as different stakeholders' perceptions of change.

In the LOGIN-facilitated P2P engagement between THP India and BNEW Bhutan, the main objective was well-defined up front, namely to take THP's campaign *'Strengthening Women's Empowerment through the Electoral Process'* (SWEEP) approach, along with its approach to training of trainers, leadership workshops, and THP's media preparedness module and help BNEW adapt and use it in Bhutan. Emphasis was (importantly) put on local adaptation and joint problem-solving with THP India rather than finding a pre-fixed solution.

Outcome harvesting (within the defined boundaries of the partnership) should not be confused with writing success stories, however, which is geared more towards fundraising, but with a lower level of learning and reflection involved.

GPI has, as mentioned, put in place an elaborate M&E system where concrete outcomes are regularly assessed against nested, commonly agreed Useful Theories of Change (UToC) as well as actor and influence systems maps to indicate *who is responsible for what* in relation to the ToC in order to make change happen (which can also be referred to as Theory of Action). The ABC-Fs designed by GPI, that underpin the theories of change, illustrate the assumed causal pathways for change, and how different partners are expected to contribute to driving such change forward.

Also, a structured process to identify, and continuously track expected behavioural changes – rather than just monitoring the execution of activities – provide a good foundation for tracing contributions to changes at the institutional levels. In doing so, it would be important (as exemplified among AG members) to have the management/leadership 'sign-off' on key expectations of the P2P engagement up front to create space for learning that can feed into work processes and organizational strategies. Agreeing on the key changes in behaviour (outcome challenges) up front is often the result of a facilitated process tailored to the specific objective of the P2P engagement.

## Conclusions

The purpose of this report was to take stock of some of the lessons derived from EIP members who are actively involved in supporting or facilitating P2P learning on the ground from the viewpoint of how to track and link such learning to institutional reform.

These lessons, summarized up-front in this report, can be seen as suggested design principles for MEL of P2P learning engagements, and help support a collective reflection via EIP on how to conduct monitoring, learning and evaluation of peer-to-peer learning initiatives so that this modality of support can be effectively linked and used to institutional reform. So far, it has looked mostly at monitoring and learning (not evaluation), with the aim of strengthening the conceptual understanding of the link between P2P learning and institutional strengthening. Evidence gathered in such monitoring and learning processes can then more meaningfully be validated by external evaluators.

The report will be used for continued discussion and reflection among EIP members on how to document and validate the unique added value of P2P as an approach to institutional capacity strengthening.

# ANNEXES

## Annex 1: List of contributing Advisory Group members & literature reviewed

### 1. LOGIN Asia (India)

*Contributors:*

- Preeta Lall, email: preeta@loginasia.net
- Anusha Lall, email: anusha@loginasia.net
- Yacoub Zachariah, email: yacoub@loginasia.net

*Documentation:*

- Summary Sheet for LOGIN MEL documents, submitted for EIP MEL assignment, Feb. 2020
- 'Seeding Change: Enabling local governments and key influencers across Asia to learn, share & collaborate on strengthening governance.' LOGIN Asia, 2019
- Joining Hands to Empower Women in Politics: Strategic Twinning of Peers (informational poster), LOGIN Asia
- LOGIN Results Document – Working Draft, March 2018
- LOGIN Note on the Results Framework, June 2019
- BNEW-THP Value Creation Story: *Peer Engagement towards Capacitating Women in Politics at the Local Level in Bhutan,* April 2019
- Peer partnership: Political empowerment of women Bhutan-India (poster with summary of partnership and results), 2017
- THP-BNEW Baseline Training Report, 2017
- THP-BNEW 'Women, Elections & Media Workshop for Journalists on Gender-sensitive Reporting', Nov. 2017, Bhutan
- Final presentation at the EIP Annual Meeting, OECD, Paris, April 2019 – LOGIN P2P learning alliances (featuring the India-Bhutan case)
- BNEW-THP: 'Women's Leadership Workshop for Elected Women in Local Government – Process Documentation', June 2017
- Final presentation at the EIP Annual Meeting, OECD, Paris, April 2019 – Tracking Network Results; the LOGIN M&E framework
- 5th LOGIN General Assembly Meeting Report, Dec. 2017, Thailand
- Peer Partnerships incorporated in LOGIN M&E and Reporting – Screenshots of &E Dashboard, April 2020

### 2. CABRI (South Africa)

*Contributor:*

- Neil Cole, email: neil.cole@cabri-sbo.org

*Documentation:*

- Khulisa Management Services, CABRI External Evaluation, Final Evaluation Report, Feb. 2018

### 3. Center for Economic Governance (Kenya)

*Contributor:*

- Rose Wanjiru, CEG, email: rose.wanjiru@gmail.com

*Documentation:*

- Wanjiru, R., "Peer to Peer learning for Enhancing Own Source Revenue Mobilization and Administration", Center for Economic Governance, Kenya
- Enhancing County Own Source Revenue through Performance Contracting. Report from Forum for County Officials, Nairobi, Feb. 2018

### 4. Astana Civil Service Hub (Kazakhstan)

*Contributors:*

- Diana Sharipova, ACSH, email: diana.sharipova@undp.org
- Togzhan Akhmetzhanova, ACSH, email: togzhan.akhmetzhanova@undp.org

*Documentation:*

- Astana Civil Service Hub's Experience in Applying P2P Learning (P2P Alliances), March 2020 –
- Astana Civil Service Hub: Partnership for Civil Service Excellence (brochure)
- First Needs Assessment Results Report (2013)
- Second Needs Assessment Results Report (2015)
- Third Needs Assessment Results Report (2018)
- Case study "Smart Government: Case of Azerbaijan"
- Case study "One-Stop-Shop, Public Service Delivery Model: the case of Azerbaijan"
- Case study "One-Stop-Shop, Public Service Delivery Model: the case of Kazakhstan"
- Case study "One-Stop-Shop, Public Service Delivery Model: the case of Georgia"

### 5. Government Partnerships International - GPI (UK)

*Contributor:*

- Niki Wood, GPI, email: n-wood@dfid.gov.uk

*Documentation:*

- P4D Template for Results Evidence Sheet
- P4D Key Events Tracker (lighter version of Results Evidence Sheet)
- P4D Capacity Ranking Sheet
- P4D Story of Change Assessment Framework
- P4D Mentoring Recording Template
- P4D Workshop Feedback Questionnaire Template
- P4D Capacity Self-Assessment Template/Form – for both 'provider' and 'counterpart' in partnership
- P4D Sentinel Tracking sheets and examples
- 'Problems, causes & consequences: What is your team driving towards?' – Participatory training exercise, GPI

- *Useful Theories of Change: How to meaningfully articulate the how and the what of your programme?* PowerPoint Presentation, Wood, N., GPI
- Story of Change Format & Guidance, Wood N., GPI
- GPI Contribution Courts – Guidance. Wood, N., GPI
- GPI: Being a Programme Theory Socrates – facilitation and inquiry guidance, Wood, N., GPI
- P4D Strategy Testing – Summary Document. Wood, N., GPI, Feb 2020
- P4D Partners Support: Back to Office Report, February 2020 (Dushanbe), Wood, N., GPI

## Annex 2: Example of capabilities tracking sheet for self-assessment

Below is a hypothetical example, created by the EIP MEL Consultant, of what a baseline questionnaire for tracking capabilities and changed organizational behaviour could potentially look like when linked to the different core capabilities (to be tailored to a real-life example). Similar sheets would have to be constructed for other targeted areas of capability strengthening as well, across main stakeholder groups. Filled out at the outset, they could provide a baseline, with subsequently filled out sheets as a way of assessing the level of institutionalization/changed behaviour among different stakeholder groups.

| **Core Capability to Commit & Engage in learning efforts: Management & staff expectations** |
|---|
| **<u>Context</u> guiding question**: What capabilities do you expect to see in relation to **adapting to context** in order to incorporate P2P lessons in your institutional response to Problem X?<br>**Example:**<br>**- I would like to see staff** …<br><br>*Assessment of current level:*<br>High ◯, Quite high ◯ , Medium ◯, Low ◯, Non-existent ◯<br><br>*Justification:*<br><br>**- I would like to see management** …<br><br>*Assessment of current level:*<br>High ◯, Quite high ◯ , Medium ◯, Low ◯, Non-existent ◯<br><br>*Justification:* |
| **<u>Work processes</u> guiding question:** What kind of **work processes** would you need to change or reinforce to create trust and space in the partnership to advance on Problem X ?<br>**Example:**<br>**-I would like to see staff** …<br><br>*Assessment of current level:*<br>High ◯, Quite high ◯ , Medium ◯, Low ◯, Non-existent ◯<br><br>*Justification:*<br><br>**-I would like to see management** …<br><br>*Assessment of current level:*<br>High ◯, Quite high ◯ , Medium ◯, Low ◯, Non-existent ◯<br><br>*Justification:* |
| **<u>Norms & incentives</u> guiding question:** What kinds of shifts in **norms and incentives** do you expect in relation to applying P2P lessons?<br>**Example:** |

**-I would like to see staff** …

*Assessment of current level:*
High ◯, Quite high ◯ , Medium ◯, Low ◯, Non-existent ◯

*Justification:*

**-I would like to see management** …

*Assessment of current level:*
High ◯, Quite high ◯ , Medium ◯, Low ◯, Non-existent ◯

*Justification:*