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| Project number | 39911023 |
| Title | Tillbakablickande: Balkan |

Countries

Summary

The review affirmed that organisations which begin in response to a humanitarian crisis can ultimately develop into a transformatory phase beyond their initial welfare focus. The transitions they tend to go through to reach a transformatory identity are: from welfare to reconstruction; from reconstruction to development; from development to transformation.

The humanitarian/welfare phase is characterised primarily by the provision of material and physical relief as well as temporary shelter.

The reconstruction phase is characterised by the restoration of infrastructure and the return of people to their original homes or resettlement in new shelters as well as the re-starting of institutions that may have been disrupted during the humanitarian crisis, such as schools and hospitals. Much of the rebuilding and new building is done either with external support to local efforts or by external implementation because it is usually large scale and therefore outside of the existing resources available in the country.

The development phase is characterised by those affected by the humanitarian crisis beginning to play a more active role in determining their own wellbeing. Interventions by support organisations tend to be focussed on capacity building those affected in order for them to engage in self-help. Where material resources are provided it is usually to match what those affected are able to mobilise for themselves. The self-help initiatives are generally focussed on building the confidence of those individuals and groups affected as well as their material assets so to reduce dependency on the external agencies which may have provided support until then.

The transformation phase is therefore characterised by speaking out against the structural or deep attitudes institutionalised in social mores as well as the laws and regulations and actions by the State that may be inhibiting the fulfilment of citizens human rights.

It is not inevitable that an organisation will move through all four phases.

It is noteworthy that all three organisations studied have in some or other way attempted to engage in transformatory work in their different contexts, at some point.

Leadership

Effective transitions require the presence of conscious leadership able to work with organisational change in the midst of the delivery demands that have been the habit of the previous phase. This appears dependent on the quality of support for leadership in the form of encouragement from the organisation's board or from external mentors, as well as how leadership is structured.

The review showed that when leadership rests on the shoulders of one person this causes unsustainable stress, limiting the ability of the organisation to make successful transitions.

A shared leadership enhances the organisations ability to transition through different stressful periods. Faith based organisations which are able to share leadership either with the help of a management tier or more than one Director responsible for different roles, will be more resourceful during transitions.

Shared leadership, whether via a management layer or directorial structure that allows for a team of directors, or some other form, allows for power sharing and collaborative decision making. This decreases the pressure on one person to carry the full burden of leadership. In times of transition, when there is a need to continue with operations

while making the changes necessary for effective transition, this shared or 'pooled' leadership gives an advantage over those organisations where the leader is unsupported and alone at this difficult time.

The oldest organisation of the three has evolved a shared three-way core leadership team.

Internal Organisational Resilience

The following were identified as the organisational elements which provide strength for coping with transitions

- **A Cohesive Identity**
Vocational fulfilment and a sense of common purpose across the organisation provide the teamwork necessary to cope with the transitional change demands. These demands include maintaining a high standard of ongoing performance while dealing with the extra challenges such as the learning of new skills necessitated by transition.
- **A Learning Culture**
The beliefs, attitudes and practices that have developed in the organisation during its humanitarian phase will affect its ability transition into the next phases. An existing organisational practice of pausing to reflect and learn provides a consistent rhythm for the organisation to return to in the hurly burly of transition. It also provides a place where leaders can check in with staff. Paradoxically, regular reflection is also the place where new contextual trends can be monitored, thereby avoiding the organisation becoming too internally focussed on the operational demands of the transition. Setting up such a practice from the outset of the humanitarian crisis phase (even if it is just 30 minutes each morning for prayer or silence together to gather strength for the day ahead) increases organisational resilience for subsequent transitions.

Sufficient Resources

- **Human**
Transitions require new skill sets as the complexity of the work increases. The ability to develop the staffing competence profile to suit the more complex operational and development process requirements presented by each phase, is important for effective transition. Being able to develop the staffing profile required at each phase is dependent on the pool of professionals available and the finances to pay the increased staffing costs.
An existing pool of staff within the organisation able to take on the extra professional demands of the next phase greatly enhances the chances of a successful transition.
Where it is possible to develop the skills of existing staff for the more complicated and complex work of each successive phase, extra time and capacity building resources are required. Failing this, the presence of a pool of potential professional recruits from outside the organisation with existing capacity to move into the roles required of the next phase is necessary. This is a challenge in a war torn context.
- **Capacity building to facilitate transition**
The most intensive capacity building spurt appears to come towards the end of the reconstruction phase into development. The capacity building required to position the organisation to undertake its new development tasks, is a combination of programmatic skills training, organisational development processes such as strategic planning and evaluations and leadership coaching or mentoring. Access to consistent mentoring support for leadership, to complement training processes appears to have significantly contributed to the current level of sustainability of the three organisations. This ongoing mentoring support can be in the form of leadership peers. The experience of the leaders in the three organisations strongly suggests that ongoing coaching and mentoring from peers who accompany organisations in longer term supportive relationships helps in organisational

transitions.

Mentoring and peer relationships of ongoing accompaniment where the OD support can be customised to suit the particular phase, character and needs of the organisation, are likely to be more cost effective in the long term than applying standard OD-tools.

Standard OD-tools are not sufficient in making organisations able to cope with complex situations and contexts, since these are characterised by high unknowability in which it is impossible to predict the outcome of each step taken. Standardised OD tools are very context specific and assume similar, knowable variables across contexts. This is not the case in complex situations and the study showed that although all three organisations had been initiated and affected by the same Balkan War, each organisation had a very unique identity as well as distinct local context of complexity.

- **Complexity of the context**

Complex situations are characterised by high degrees of unknowability and uncertainty for which predetermined methodologies are unsuited. In these situations it is principles and values which steer what will be an appropriate intervention response for that context. Organisations with a cohesive set of principles and values – and who can support younger existing initiatives, are most valuable in complex contexts.

Complex contexts call for organisations with the maturity, flexibility and depth of ethical development practice necessary to bring the values of human dignity into the complex situations.

Organisations are not born mature and flexible. Their ethics are also developed through practice and reflection on choices made. To cultivate maturity, flexibility and ethical backbone requires all the aforementioned elements associated with effective transition. Contexts of high uncertainty and high unknowability will be the most inhibiting for transitioning from one phase to the other, particularly from reconstruction to development.

- **The degree of intervention complexity**

Social change interventions increase in complexity from the relief, to reconstruction, to development, to transformation phase. The increase in complexity makes new demands on the organisation. From the reconstruction phase onward, increasing levels and engagements of the system (such as advocacy with government tiers) will be part of the organisations intervention. Therefore fieldwork and supervision practice requires adjusting, as the interventions themselves widen to take into account a broader view of the system. This also necessitates more time for monitoring the impact of the interventions.

Preparing for the transition into increased complexity requires regular pausing to review the intention of the organisations work, reviewing the design of programmes and assessing the trends emerging as well as the progress being made. The conscious development of fieldwork practice is also crucial in enabling successful transition. It is the fieldworkers who are facilitating increasingly complex change processes as the work begins to touch not only on building self esteem but also on facilitating self organisation of those affected, and engaging government powers on citizen rights.

The extent to which the organisation is linked into local networks of civil society and has established relationships with government departments in previous phases will provide a resourceful foundation for effecting transition.

- **The extent of trauma in the context**

Contextual trauma such as humanitarian crisis in times of war, seeps into the coping mechanisms of the organisation. A high level of shared, unprocessed trauma can limit the possibilities of an organisation to move into new developmental roles in society. The grief, anger and depression weighs heavily on the organisational spirit, squashing the energy for responding positively to new development challenges.

Although each context was affected by the Balkan War, the extent of trauma was

experienced to different degrees in each country and organisation. The degree of trauma experienced affected the resilience of the different organisations in making effective transitions.

The presence of trauma should be factored into expectations of successful transitions since unprocessed trauma will inhibit the organisations ability to move through the phases.

The existence of a supportive network locally and externally can facilitate the healing necessary for the organisations life energy to be released to accomplish the changes each transition requires.

Financial

Financial resources are required for staff and organisational capacity development processes. Where staff development may not have been seen as a need during the emergency days of meeting the basic needs of people, and the organisation could not stop to see its future beyond the next day, funds were not required for staff and organisation development. However, in the successive phases more expertise is asked of staff – and the organisation has to begin thinking of its sustainability beyond the end of the crisis. Capacity building and organisation development processes require additional financial resources.

- **Sufficient funding for core organisational costs**

In the words of one respondent but echoed by all, ‘the development phase requires organisational support’. Of all four phases, the organisational costs in the development phase showed the highest jump in core organisational costs, specifically in terms of the increased staffing expertise required for this phase. Entering the development phase and beyond finds the organisation needing to spend more time thinking strategically as well as learning from its interventions and having to synthesise this learning through systematic M and E processes. These are all organisational and not programmatic activities. All three organisations had experienced the stress of coping with delivering on more complex interventions that were not matched by the extra financial resources required to deliver with quality.

The extent to which the initiative is local

Two of the organisations that have survived in their original form were entirely local initiatives, whilst the organisation that has now diffused its development mandate into local churches began elsewhere. Its humanitarian aid was largely implemented by an international partner. Although there were clear capacity reasons for delivering the humanitarian aid in this way (and its context was the most devastated by war), it has had longer term repercussions for the fragility of the local organisation since the relationships and skills of the international organisation went with it when it withdrew at the end of the humanitarian phase.

From this small sample of three it seems that local initiatives have a greater chance of making the transition into subsequent phases.

Transition is continuous and its precise timing cannot be predicted

Each of the three organisations had experienced ongoing transition beyond reaching the development phase. Their process of organisational change did not end with the onset of the ‘development phase’. When organisations and their donor partners do become aware that the context and/or organisation is going through a transition, it should not be assumed that this will be the last transition.

In all three organisations it was possible to see when a new phase had occurred, but not so easy to see exactly when the *transition process* into the change began. This ‘seeing’ often only happened retrospectively. Therefore, one cannot necessarily ‘plan’ for transition since organisational transitions cannot be predetermined – their precise timing cannot be predicted. This makes it very difficult to plan for until they are in motion. However, an ongoing practice of reflection within an organisation will sensitise the leadership and staff to movements and markers that suggest change is coming. The process of transition into a successive phase can take a few years, although the final

threshold from one to another phase may be experienced as intense and short-lived. The transition process can only be loosely enabled. However, once there is recognition that a transition is underway it is possible to plan for the specific changes that a transition process throws up. Examples of this may include the need for staff to be trained in new reporting procedures and/or conflict facilitation between their partners and government officials or the need for an organisational exercise to look at how leadership roles and responsibilities will be taken up across the organisation, away from concentration in the leadership position, for instance.

- Recommendations
- ***Build PMU Project Co-ordinator Capacity***
Strengthen induction process of Project Co-ordinators to include organisation development and monitoring and evaluation training. Find ways to strengthen the PMU PC's knowledge of each context.
 - ***Review Exit Strategies***
Relook at Exit Strategy in consultation with churches and adopt a policy on the amount of time and notice given to partners. This consultation and policy should take into account the realities of effective transition from humanitarian to development partnerships. Within this reality PMU could consider phasing the exit process.
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 - ***Strengthen OD capacity of partners***
Consider the following suggestions to contribute to strengthening OD support to partners
 - Either allocate a budget for OD for each organisation and allow organisations to access their own OD support
 - Offer training courses as part of the global dialogue/ideology think tank, in OD and change management literacy
 - Subcontract an individual or a consultancy to offer such – perhaps establish a group of Swedish church based OD consultants willing to offer subsidised OD accompaniment to partners
 - Encourage and contribute financial support for appropriately experienced mentors from within partner churches to PMU (not necessarily the local church partner in Sweden) to be placed within local organisations to offer ongoing leadership and organisational mentoring. The two organisations which have achieved the most longevity have both benefitted from internal ongoing leadership and organisational mentorship.
 - ***Engage Swedish and local churches in the dialogue with funders regarding the value of civil society involvement in development aid co-operation***
Facilitate regional learning exchanges between churches on the topic of church based development and its relationship to strengthening civil society, in order to build a local evidence-based voice to advocate for the practice of Swedish civil society in development co-operation.
 - ***Increase percentage for funding 'core' costs***
For organisations in a development phase where it can be seen that the work is on the continuum of complicated – complex, consider ways of increasing the percentage for core costs. This exploration could involve consultation with the Swedish church partner as a possible contributor towards core and not only ad hoc programme and equipment costs