Capacity Development Theory and Practice

Lessons learnt from CORD and KITWOBEE in Northern Uganda

“Get Out of Poverty : Honey is Money”
(KITWOBEE slogan)

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[front cover picture source: CORD]
Abstract

Capacity Development (CD) is a concept that has emerged over the years in response to the shortfalls of top-down, supply-driven interventions such as Technical Cooperation. This paper explores this concept both in theory and practice through the case study of one International Non Governmental Organisation (INGO) and their partnership with a local Community Based Organisation (CBO) in Northern Uganda. It first looks at what has been learnt about the CD already and the main principles that are applicable to making it successful in practice. These principles have then been used as terms of reference to evaluate how they relate to practice for the case study.

What emerged from the study is that despite a lack of clarity in terminology, the principle of CD is a good one; it aims to shift the power and ownership of development back to those whose capacity is being developed. Its focus is to enable individuals, organisations and societies to solve their own problems, and allow them to make decisions that define their futures. The case study demonstrated that concept has also worked well in practice; helping one INGO to develop their local partner’s capacity to significantly increase the impact they are having on people’s lives in Northern Uganda. The concept however is not without its limitations and these were also experienced in the case study.

This study concluded that CD is not going solve all the issues with international development, however its principles and practice are striving to make initiatives better. It also concluded that when evaluating any CD approach it is important to understand whose capacity is being built and for what reason.
Preface

Driving past camp after camp, as the children rush out to smile and wave at us in the car, it is hard to picture the devastation that not long ago ravaged through these places. The town is humming with activity; it appears civilisation has returned as people pick up from where they left off before the LRA tore their worlds apart.

One of KITWOBEE’s office staff takes me to meet a member of the board who is going to show me some of the organisation’s apiaries. We walk through one of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps where I am warmly welcomed by the lady’s husband and friends. She shows me her home and everyone is smiling and laughing- I almost forget where I am and what horrors must have taken place right where I am standing.

We walk on towards the fields; the place seems very peaceful as people go about their lives. But the reality soon creeps in as the girl from the KITWOBEE office casts my eyes down to the small ketchup-like sachets that litter the ground. It’s alcohol, she tells me, and it is killing a lot of the people here. It begins to dawn on me that under the smiles and disguise of peace there is a dark side that is still pressing heavily on these people. She tells me that although lots of the people are still very traumatised and although they want to go home they can’t because of arguments over the land. We pass through the field and she points around to areas where she tells me people’s houses once were. It is very surreal. I have read about what has happened but I cannot actually comprehend what nightmares must have occurred in this beautiful place.

The lady from the board proudly shows me her apiaries and even as a novice I can still see the effort and care that she has put into the area surrounding the hives. In fact she has just won a prize this year for the best apiaries - a new bicycle funded by CORD. A member of KITWOBEE is also here and she tells how beekeeping has helped her earn money for her and her family. It starts to show how seemingly small projects
like beekeeping are making a real difference to people’s lives, giving them an income to feed their families and pay for their children to go to school.

Driving back we go over a bridge, which I am told was a famous target of the LRA. We also pass a memorial to remember the many that lost their lives in the massacres. I feel strangely numb because I am still in utter disbelief that mankind could conduct such atrocities. However I am also extremely encouraged by local organisations like KITWOBEE who are still fighting to bring back life to a seemingly hopeless situation.

Praise God for inspiring organisations like CORD to support small CBOs, such as KITWOBEE, to achieve their visions despite the circumstances. Growing from just 7 members in 1995 to now over 380 members, the impact is amazing what two organisations together are achieving; bringing hundreds of families in Northern Uganda a source of livelihood and a hope for a better future.

Author at a KITWOBEE apiary provided by CORD

[picture source: author’s own]
Acknowledgements

Through my internship with CORD I was inspired to conduct this research, and I would therefore like to thank everyone at CORD who has helped to make this dissertation possible.

I am particularly grateful to Brian Wakley for giving me his time and allowing me access to CORD information, as well the real privilege to visit CORD Uganda and KITWOBEE.

I would like to express my thanks to Jasmine O'Connor for supporting my research, as well as giving me lots of guidance and encouragement throughout my internship.

I am extremely grateful to CORD Uganda and KITWOBEE staff for giving up their time for interviews and to show me around Kitgum and Gulu. In particular a big thank you to Dennis Bailey for his time and hospitality as well as sharing his knowledge, experience and insights, which have been very valuable in understanding the context of this research.

My thanks also go to my supervisor David Sanderson for his advice, guidance and encouragement throughout this dissertation as well as the master’s programme.

Last but not least I would like to acknowledge the ongoing support from my family and friends.

My visit to Uganda has been a truly humbling experience for which this dissertation does not do justice to the fantastic work CORD and KITWOBEE are doing together. My thanks are to God who, even during mankind’s darkest moments still sends people to bring light and hope to others.
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<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CB</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>Capacity Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORD</td>
<td>Christian Outreach Relief and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department For International Development (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FONU</td>
<td>Friends Of Northern Uganda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICG</td>
<td>International Crisis Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDMC</td>
<td>International Displacement Monitoring Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JICA</td>
<td>New Japan International Cooperation Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KITWOBEE</td>
<td>Kitgum Women Beekeepers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LENPA</td>
<td>Learning Network on Program-Based Approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRA</td>
<td>The Lord's Resistance Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEPAD</td>
<td>The New Partnership for Africa's Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRA</td>
<td>Participatory Rural Appraisal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TC</td>
<td>Technical Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations for Democracy and Progress</td>
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</table>
Chapter 1: Introduction

Research Background

Over the years various pledges and commitments have been put forward to tackle world poverty. There has been significant advances made in improving areas such as education, healthcare and the standard of living for many people around the world, however there is a substantial amount still to do (Lusthaus et al, 1999). Despite many successes, progress has been slow and the true effectiveness of aid in creating long-term solutions has been critically questioned.

“The past four decade’s practices of delivering foreign aid are being called into question for poor achievements in sustainable impact, national ownership and appropriate technologies” (The World Bank, 1999, in Lusthaus, 1999 p.1).

It has been the growing consensus that countries should drive their own development and capacity should be built from within to reduce the dependence on international aid. As highlighted in the Paris Declaration 2005, donors should align their strategies with those of developing countries, help strengthen local systems and allow them ownership of their own development (DFID, 2009). Capacity Development (CD) is a recent concept that has emerged in order to reflect these views in practice. Its focus is to enable individuals, organisations and societies to solve their own problems, and allow them to make decisions that define their futures.

“The international development community spent much of 2005 reflecting on the volume and effectiveness of aid and its role in poverty reduction. One conclusion of the major events and reviews of the last year, such as the Commission for Africa, the Millennium Review, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the G8 Gleneagles summit, is clear: capacity development is one of the most critical issues for both donors and partner countries” Richard Manning, Chair of the Development Assistance Committee. (Manning, 2006 In DAC, 2006 p.3).

One INGO that uses CD, as an approach for its international development programmes is CORD (Christian Outreach Relief and Development). CORD works in areas affected by conflict and has many years of experience of providing Capacity Building (CB) and CD support to NGOs in Uzbekistan, Cambodia, India, The Philippines, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda, and Burundi. They work in partnership with local organisations providing capacity
support, in order to “build and strengthen civil society so that it can actively engage in the development processes and decisions” (CORD, 2007a). This they see as central to achieving their vision of building sustainable peace, and therefore CD has become an approach they are prioritising into their organisational strategy (CORD, 2007).

At present CORD are working in Northern Uganda where the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) has devastated the lives of the Acholi people. They have partnered with local community based organisations (CBOs) that are working to tackle the problems that have been brought about as a result of the conflict. Their aim is to develop the capacity of these organisations to address the issues that affect the Acholi people, with the longer-term goal of building sustainable peace in the area (CORD, 2008a).

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this dissertation is to explore the concept of CD through theory and practice. This will be done by looking at the case study of CORD and in particular its work in developing the capacity of one its partners, KITWOBEE, in Northern Uganda to see how the theory relates to practice.

Objective 1 is to understand the theory of Capacity Development:

a. To identify what it is, where it has come from and why it is used.

b. To evaluate the benefits as well as the criticisms of this type of approach.

c. To explore what successful CD looks like and what has been learnt about it so far.

Objective 2 is to analyse how the theory works in practice for CORD in Uganda:

a. To understand why and how they adopted this approach.

b. To evaluate the practical issues of CD; the successes, challenges and limitations.

c. To discuss how it fits into the bigger picture of what CORD is trying to achieve.
Methodology

Research approach

This research undertook a deductive approach to explore how CD theory relates in practice through application it to the case study of CORD in Uganda. It also had some inductive influences as the case study revealed insights that were specific to a particular context, therefore a combination of the two approaches were used.

Methods for research

This dissertation is divided into two stages; the theory of CD and then the practice.

➢ **Theory (objective 1)**

It was important to research the theory and literature that was already available on CD to understand what exactly it is and why an NGO like CORD would adopt this approach. Using theories and examples of what had already been learnt in this area then helped frame a structure for analysing how CORD have put this into practice. This stage was conducted as a desktop study using secondary data to compile a literature review to answer the questions to achieve objective 1.

➢ **Practice (objective 2)**

The main principles or theories that emerged from the literature review were used as terms of reference to evaluate the case study and answer the questions to achieve objective 2. This stage was conducted using mainly using primary data collected through emails, semi-structured interviews and observations with CORD and KITWOBEE staff. Secondary data such as company documents and online information were also used to provide background and context to the case study.

Field visit

A brief field visit was conducted to the CORD office in Gulu, Uganda to gain a richer understanding of the context in which this case study is set. Here interviews were undertaken with the CORD Uganda Country Director and KITWOBEE staff. Visits were also made to the KITWOBEE office, apiaries and Kitgum IDP camps.
Validity and Reliability

Primary and secondary data were collected from a range of sources including academic journals and textbooks, papers and reports from expert organisations and practitioners in the international development field, company documents and interviews with NGO staff. Where possible data was crosschecked with other sources, and only themes that emerged across several sources were used. Sources were selected based on their credibility, such as well known names (i.e. UNDP or DAC) or those that were acknowledged by other sources to be experts within the CD field.

Study Limitations

This dissertation has focused on one case study, for which most of the learning is unique to that particular country, context and time period. Therefore it was not the intention to draw conclusions that can be generalised, but rather to illustrate and discuss CD. As the case study is still part way through development it wasn’t possible to predict how it will end, therefore it portrays only a snapshot in time. Also due to time and money constraints the field trip was limited to a few days.
Chapter 2: Theory - Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to explore what CD is and why it is an important strategy for an organisation like CORD. It will also help to understand how it should be approached and what experts have learnt so far in good practice (objective 1). Due to this being a partnership case study, CD theory that is relevant to partnerships will be looked at.

Background to Capacity Development

The concept of CD is not new, going back as early as the 1950s and 1960s where donors and academics focused on public sector institution building through human resource development (DAC, 2006). A traditional approach of building capacity has been the transfer of knowledge from North to South using Technical Cooperation (TC), however it became increasingly criticized due to poor results in many countries and very low returns (DAC, 2006; MIWA, 2008; ODI, 2009). Many felt that it failed to enable developing countries to create their own sustainable capacities (Nair, 2003). In the early 1990s UNDP and Berg (1993) led an in-depth review of TC and found that despite some successes, the sustainability of efforts has been questioned:

"While technical cooperation (TC) has undoubtedly contributed to very significant development successes around the world, it also continues to perpetuate many counter-productive practices" (UNDP, 2009b).

Berg (1993) concluded that the supply-driven nature of TC led to poor local ownership and therefore lack of commitment. It was argued that there was a lack of consideration to the broader political and social context or the ‘enabling environment’ within which initiatives take place (ODI, 2009; Bolger, 2000; Morgan and Baser, 1993). Instead of adapting to the country and understanding the culture and current circumstances, approaches were externally designed and implemented without real country commitment (DAC, 2006; Lusthaus et al 1999; Bolger, 2000).

In the late 90s a new term, CD became popular. It moved away from the donor-led, knowledge transfer approach into one of development co-operation, focusing on ownership and strengthening capacities (Kühl, 2009; La Fontaine, 2000). Relationships shifted away from being donor-driven to a more collaborative partnership model where
benefits are mutually shared (Horton et al, 2003). Instead of donors imposing their vision of development on poor countries, the focus became that of strengthening the capacity of local partner NGOs to then drive their own development.

These principles were echoed in the 2005 Paris Declaration and the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, and there are now many advocates of CD, for example UNDP, the World Bank, JICA and the DAC. They acknowledge that sustainability of development assistance is connected to local capacity, and that CD is ‘an endogenous process of change’ that strengthens these capacities. With ownership seen to be key to sustainable development, the focus is to support initiatives which are led from the within the country.

“If human development is the ‘what’ of UNDP’s mandate, then capacity development is essentially the ‘how’” (UNDP, 2009).
Below shows how the focus of development has progressed to CD over the decades:

**Table 1: The Development of Concepts towards CD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Emergence within the Development Discourse</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Emphasis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institution building</td>
<td>1950s and 1960s</td>
<td>Buildup of a basic stock of functional institutions in the developing countries as in the West European model</td>
<td>Management of Programmes of Public Investment; efficient use of existing funds</td>
<td>Individual institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Strengthening/ Development</td>
<td>1960s and 1970s</td>
<td>Strengthening and restructuring of existing local institutions</td>
<td>Management of Programmes of Public Investment; efficient use of existing funds</td>
<td>Individual institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Development</td>
<td>1960s and 1980s</td>
<td>Concentration on education, health and population development</td>
<td>Development through competent citizens</td>
<td>Individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Institutionalism</td>
<td>1980s and 1990s</td>
<td>Strengthening of institutions in the government, NGO and private sector, including relations to each other as well as their external situations</td>
<td>Sustainable development through comprehensive approach, with institutions as starting point</td>
<td>Networks of institutions, including general economic, social and political conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building and later Capacity Development</td>
<td>1990s to present</td>
<td>General concept for linking the other approaches; support for the capacities on the individual, institutional and systemic level</td>
<td>Sustainable development though a comprehensive endogenous approach</td>
<td>Individuals, institutions, and systemic context, including general economic, social and political conditions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[source: Kühl (2009, p 561)]
Definitions

So what is CD? There are many definitions, below are a few from well-known sources:

**UNDP:** “The process through which individuals, organisations, and societies obtain, strengthen, and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time” (UNDP, 2008)

**OECD DAC:** “The process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time” (DAC, 2006)

**The World Bank, Africa Region:** “The proven ability of key actors in a society to achieve socio-economic goals on their own. This is demonstrated through the functional presence of a combination of most of the following factors: viable institutions and respective organizations; commitment and vision of leadership; financial and material resources; skilled human resources” (World Bank, 2006).

**Tearfund:** "A tailor-made process which seeks to strengthen the effectiveness and impact of an organisation and its programmes for addressing poverty, in relation to their mission, context and resources" (Tearfund, 2009).

From reading many definitions there are several notable common themes that occur, these include:

- It is a process
- It invokes change
- It is not a quick fix solution, but requires investment of time
- It involves people, organisations and society as a whole
- It is driven from the inside and requires ownership
- It strengthens existing capacities to ensure sustainability

Capacity Building or Capacity Development?

CB and CD are two phrases that are often used interchangeably, and understandably assumed to mean the same thing. Literature however argues that there is in fact a clear distinction between the two (JICA, 2006; UNDP, 2009; Lusthaus, 1999). Experts suggest
CB is a more traditional phrase that implies there is no capacity to begin with, and so must it be introduced or ‘built’ (DAC, 2006). This sits with the more traditional top-down approaches of knowledge transfer and technical co-operations. The word development however acknowledges existing capacities and the focus is on strengthening what is there already rather than starting something new. It is a phrase that has been referenced to mean a more holistic, collaborative approach that encourages ownership (Lopes and Theisohn, 2003).

“The phrase capacity development is used advisedly in preference to the traditional capacity building. The “building” metaphor suggests a process starting with a plain surface and involving the step-by-step erection of a new structure, based on a preconceived design. Experience suggests that capacity is not successfully enhanced in this way” (DAC, 2006, p.12).

Figure 1: Organic Capacity Development

![Organic Capacity Development Diagram](source: Lopes and Theisohn, 2005)

The assumption that capacity must be built because there is none in existence is a failure of northern NGOs to truly understand the context within which they are working. For example, as summed up in a quote from a person in response to a particular CB project with Aboriginal Koori people in Australia:

“To restore capacity in our people is to be responsible for our own future. Notice that I talk of restoring rather than building capacity in our people. After all, we had 40 to 60,000 years of survival and capacity. The problem is that our capacity has been eroded and diminished [by white colonialists] – our people do have skills, knowledge and experience
... we are quite capable of looking after our own children and fighting for their future” (Tedmanson, 2003 In Craig, 2005 p.18).

CB has also been criticized for being a ‘spray-on additive’ to development activities (Craig, 2005). Some argue that organisations claim to use the term, yet what they are actually doing are still top-down interventions where goals have already been set and local communities are expected to play along (Craig, 2005). It is essentially a new language for what are essentially old practices:

“Some argue that not only is capacity building a Northern-inspired agenda, but is also a Northern defined agenda” (James, 1994 p.43).

This is not to say that CB is not without its place because how can you develop capacity in an area where any existing capacity has been totally destroyed? For example in an area seriously affected by conflict government, systems and structures may have completely broken down, and therefore it may be impossible to develop capacity without rebuilding it first. However in areas where capacity does exist yet appears to be lacking, it is often viewed by outside agencies that it is a ‘problem to solve’ or a ‘gap to fill’. They diagnose a ‘deficit of capacity’ at a community level for which they believe they have solution (Tedmanson, 2003). What they neglect to consider are the unseen barriers or hidden powers that prevent people to participate in their own society (Craig, 2005). Often it is not a lack of will that stops people, but more the lack of an enabling environment around them (see also levels of capacity under good practice of CD).

CD is said to overcome many of the issues surrounding the term ‘building’ such as being less top-top and addressing capacity on many levels. However it too is not without its critics, some argue that it still lacks a clear definition that means it is in danger of simply becoming another ‘buzzword’ (Langthaler, 2003). The fact that the term is used interchangeably suggests that there isn’t a clear consensus on what it actually means; therefore it is likely that what different NGOs view CD as may be very different. Many

ADVANTAGES OF CD:

- **Sustainability** from greater ownership
- **Addresses all levels of capacity** (individual, organisation & societal)
- **Addresses deeper issues for real change**
- **Holistic** - tailored to specific country/context
- **Collaborative** approach – more empowering
theorists argue that the terminology is still very vague and confusing (Binkerhoff, 2007; DFID, 2008).

Kühl (2009) states that as CD emerged after CB and it now regarded as the ‘politically more correct term’ but implies that the change in terms is not well reflected in practice. Moore (1995) believes that because it is a vague term, aid agencies use it to reposition themselves by using more modern vocabulary. Some believe it goes even further than that, with organisations using it as a way to improve their access to funding or by donors to allow them to impose their ideas on organisations in the South (Lund-Thomsen, 2003 In Langthaler, 2003). It is therefore important to question the reasons behind why organisations are engaging in CD to see who it is really benefiting.

“This new capacity building jargon signifies an entrenchment of notions of what constitutes capacity, who defines capacity and what constitutes their relationships between the dominant culture capacity builders and those identified as capacity deficient” (Tedmanson, 2003 p.2)

Table 2: Key distinctions between CB and CD:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity Building (CB)</th>
<th>Capacity Development (CD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creation of capacity</td>
<td>Strengthen existing capacities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply-led</td>
<td>Demand-led</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top down approach</td>
<td>Collaborative approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge ‘transfer’</td>
<td>Knowledge ‘creation’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHALLENGES/CRITICISMS OF CD:
- Lack of clarity of definition
- Another ‘buzzword’
- Modern term for old practices
- Used to access funding
- Requires substantial investment (time & money)
- Results not always instant
- Difficult to measure/evaluate successes
- Partnership challenges (conflicts of interest, power & equality balance, corruption etc)
Capacity Development Partnerships

With the focus on a more collaborative development model, more partnerships have developed between Northern and Southern NGOs. Brehm (2001) notes Northern NGOs have the advantage to influence policy and carry out advocacy on certain issues. Southern NGOs on the other hand are well placed because they have the local knowledge and presence and can influence things on the ground. The two together as a partnership can combine their strengths. They are often favoured over classic development projects because they go beyond time-bound and discrete interventions (Brehm, 2001).

Challenges

It sounds like the ideal solution for the development conundrum; an equal partnership where the control is handed over to the recipient country and the process is more efficient and sustainable as the partner takes ownership. However it is not as simple in practice as it sounds. Achieving such balances is complicated when power comes into play, and this is one of the main challenges that partners battle to control. A relationship built on equality and mutual respect is not something that will come easily given the fact that money is involved. As Abrahamson (2004) so crudely puts it; “in a context where one party is in possession of the purse and the other the begging bowl” (p.1456).

Other problems are that the goals and strategies of partners often do not coincide; roles, purposes and expectations are rarely defined, negotiated or clarified. Frequently efforts are focused on individual CD projects when ideally they should be strengthening the organisation as a whole.

Table 3 Benefits and limitations of CD partnerships:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved local ownership</td>
<td>Balance of power &amp; equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared comparative advantages</td>
<td>Organisational capacity limits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthened legitimacy</td>
<td>Distorted accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved sustainability &amp; poverty reach</td>
<td>Complex relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared resources and ideas</td>
<td>Time consuming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Critiques

There are challenges to overcome yet it seems that partnerships are more and more a key developmental approach adopted by many major NGOs. Critics however argue that it is “little more than conditionality by another name” (Abrahamson, 2004 p.1453). In a similar vein to the critique of CD, partnerships are challenged for being old practices ‘re-branded’ and used to disguise or conceal what are essentially traditional policies.

Although it has never been disputed that true equality in a partnership is very difficult to achieve when the power is heavily weighted to the party holding the purse strings, sceptics still hold to the conclusion that partnerships simply cover up what continues to be a donor dominated playing field (Abrahamson, 2004). Again the re-branding argument is highlighted as a way or agencies to carry on imposing power without the criticism for doing so. For example, The New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) was launched in 2001 as Africa’s own development plan, however the extent to which it is truly owned by Africans has been questioned. It is heavily dependent on foreign aid and “adamantly endorse the neo-liberal values and policies of donors” suggesting that the power balance is very skewed:

“For critics NEPAD represents at best a few elite Africans who have internalised western values and dressed them up in an African garb; a ‘western wolf in African sheepskin’. At worst it is a ‘neo-colonial project’” (Abrahamson, 2004 p.1457).
Good Practice of Capacity Development

So what makes for successful CD? From literature, good practice can be summed into three main overarching themes: capacity development is an endogenous process of change that occurs at different levels and requires ownership from those whose capacity is being developed.

1. **Endogenous Process of Change**

CD is a process of change, often referred to as ‘dynamic’ because it requires constant adaptation to cope with rapidly changing environments (James, 1994; Morgan and Baser, 1993). In order to promote sustainability, people and organisations should have the abilities to be able to react to external pressures and identify their own solutions to problems that arise (Baser, 2007). The World Bank (2009) states that there is evidence to show that capacity is built faster when the process is endogenous. It is however complex, requiring a multi-level approach and embraces much more than TC. It is a gradual process that must come from within, and so requires time and investment to strengthen existing capacities. As DAC (2005) identify it is:

“...the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time” (p.9).

UNDP (2009) illustrates the processes in the following diagram. They note that if capacity is defined as the ability of people/organisations/societies to solve their own problems, then CD is the process by which these abilities are acquired, strengthened and so on.
Investment of Time

The experience of experts has found that there are no quick fixes or set solutions in CD that fit all circumstances (DAC, 2006; ODI, 2009; La fontaine, 2000). Relationships take time and particularly partnerships need to be built on trust, which cannot happen overnight. As each approach must be tailored to the specific needs and the context in which the partner is, it should not be rushed. CD is therefore not an ‘add on’ solution or as UNDP (2009) put it: an ineffective ‘after-thought’. It requires combining different activities (more than training alone) developed with a long-term vision (JICA, 2006). Some Northern NGOs resort to it as a convenient exit strategy when they want to take away support from a partner but cannot leave it to fall apart. Instead they use it while looking for alternative sources of funding for the partner, which is not what CD is about (James, 1994).
Holistic approach of learning

CD is also an ongoing process of learning (Bolger, 2000; JICA, 2006; Lopes and Theisohn, 2003). A traditional approach to strengthening the capacity of NGOs has been training. According to James (1998) the main feeling among many European NGOs is summarised in the following statement by Fowler and Waithaka (1995):

“some 10 years of a training dominated approach to capacity-building has shown severe limitations in improving organisational effectiveness” (In James, 1998 p.3).

James (1998) states that although training is tangible, and brings in new ideas; it is less effective at getting people out of old ways and avoids taking responsibility of deeper issues that need to be addressed to bring real organisational change. Using a process-orientated approach facilitate organisations to diagnose their own problems and create solutions through sharing of knowledge (Kühl, 2009). Below demonstrates how the process has moved from just the transfer of knowledge associated with TC techniques, to the creation of knowledge.

Figure 3: CD Knowledge Creation

![Figure 3: CD Knowledge Creation](source: JICA, 2006)
2. **Levels of capacity development**

CD is now recognised as involving much more than training and knowledge transfers. It involves people as well as the organisation as a whole. It is also dependent on the surrounding environment that influences the extent to which individuals or organisations have the ability to acquire new skills and adapt to new ways. Literature (CHF, 2008, DAC, 2006, World Bank, 2009; UNDP, 2009) agrees that CD occurs at three levels.

a. **Individual**

This is the first layer of capacity. The individuals that make up organisations and societies need the skills, knowledge and experiences to grow and transform that around them (JICA, 2006). Individual capacity is the ability of these people to learn skills and acquire knowledge that will empower and equip them to drive things forward. The approach steps away from a supply-driven process, such as traditional technical training, and moves towards a demand-driven process of active learning and participation (Blagescu and Young, 2006).

b. **Organisational**

The second layer is organisational or institutional capacity. As people acquire knowledge and skills and work together over time this builds organisational capacity (DAC, 2006). Developing capacity of organisations or instructions requires instigating change, a process that must be endogenous and fully owned by those undertaking it (Bolger, 2000; Baser, 2007).

c. **Societal**

The third layer of capacity according to DAC (2006) has often been neglected in development theory and perceived exclusive of the CD process. Societal capacity encompasses the overall environment that affects the ability of individuals and organisations to change (Lusthaus et al, 1999). It is the laws and policies, the system of governance as well as the broader political and cultural environment, and the civil society (CHF, 2006). This level of capacity is a long process and difficult to control, however it should be factored in the process.
Country and context specific

As the process is endogenous there are no set rules (Baser, 2007; UNDP, 2009; ODI, 2009). Capacity must be addressed at all levels therefore it will require adapting and tailoring to the particular people, organisation and society in which they are placed (Morgan and Baser, 1993). People learn in different ways and culture will be an important aspect to understand. As most CD projects are sponsored by international agencies, often foreign consultants are brought in to facilitate the process. It is therefore particularly important that they have an appropriate level of awareness and understanding of the local culture (James, 1998).

3. Ownership

CD literature agrees the key to success is ownership (Bolger, 2000; Lopes and Theisohn, 2003; La fontaine, 2000). As summed up in the Commission for Africa (2005), developing countries must be the ones to lead the initiatives. If CD is to be an endogenous process it must be owned and managed by those whose capacity is being developed, i.e. the ‘recipients’.

“Our starting point was the recognition that Africa must drive its own development. Rich nations should support that, because it is in our common interest to make the world a more prosperous and secure place – though the international community will contribute to the achievement of these objectives in different ways. But what is clear is that if Africa does not create the right conditions for development, then any amount of outside support will fail”.

(Commission for Africa (2005 p. 1)
It is important that donors therefore play a supportive role allowing their partner countries to take the lead (Nair, 2003). There needs to be a strong sense of ownership, even before projects are undertaken, as experience has shown many have failed because there wasn't much to begin with yet donors had wrongly presumed it would develop over time (UNDP, 2009).

**Partnerships**

CD is usually done by INGOs through partnerships with local organisations, impacting on the three levels of capacity. Successful partnerships can enhance ownership, however it largely depends on the extent to which ownership, power and commitment are shared. Success is also shaped and influenced by ethics and principles of a partnership (Horton et al, 2003). Evaluation studies conducted by Horton et al (2003) have highlighted a number of elements that are identified to contribute to successful partnerships for CD. These are summarised in appendix 1 table and are applicable to any partnership type.

**Leadership**

Leadership is closely linked with ownership (ODI, 2009; DAC, 2006). CD is a process of change which unless the leadership of that particular organisation where it is taking place supports the initiative then is destined to fail (James, 1998). Leaders are therefore vital in the process and will need to understand and be on board to drive it. They are also key to helping others to understand and recognise the benefits of this change. This in turn will encourage wider ownership.

“The relationship between capacity development and leadership is a fundamental one: fostering leadership protects individual, institutional and societal investments” (UNDP, 2009 p.35)

Leadership within a partnership is an important factor and Tennyson (2003) points out it is a mistake to assume that it is not necessary, particularly as it can have impact on power balances.
Limitations

These principles may seem great in theory but in practice it is not always as straightforward. Time and money constraints will ultimately hinder the ability of NGOs to put all of these into practice (DFID, 2008). As the approach is one that must be organically produced, it will demand a substantial investment in time and money. The benefits may not be instantly visible which adds further pressure from donors who constantly require NGOs to report back on what they have achieved. Measuring capacity and demonstrating visible change is also much harder because results tend to be intangible and not easily represented through statistics.

Local ownership doesn’t mean that outside partners do not intervene, however getting the balance right is a huge challenge, in particular when trying to ensure relationships remain equal when power and money come into play. Ownership is also a dynamic concept that can change over time and can be shared across a number of parties (UNDP, 2009). This means there are many interests and agendas to consider and factor into the equation. It is therefore important to examine any potential vested interests that may undermine a project and prevent it from achieving its intended objectives. Accountability is also important to prevent corruption when resources are being transferred (Stott, 2005). It also improves legitimacy of interventions, as there is greater transparency between partners and their constituencies (LENPA, 2005).

Some might criticize the use of expatriates as CD consultants, claiming it is nothing more than another neo-colonial process disguised in modern terms, or that they lack the cultural awareness and understanding that a local national would have. However studies have revealed that nationality makes no difference because a local consultant may be just
as out of touch as a foreigner (James, 1998). It is therefore the time spent to develop the appropriate level of understanding that is important, however time pressures can hinder this.

**Summary**

- CD is the concept that individuals, organisations and societies have the ability to solve their own problems and make the decisions that define their own futures.
- It is not a new concept but the focus has shifted from a top down, supply-led ‘building’ approach where knowledge is transferable, to a locally owned, holistic process of ‘development’ where knowledge is created.
- CD can be looked at under three areas: as an *endogenous process*; where capacity occurs at *different levels*; and requires *ownership* from those whose capacity is being developed.
- Although it has many favourable principles, CD is not without its critics or its practical limitations particularly when partnerships are involved.

**Conclusion: Capacity for what and for whom?**

There are many elements that make successful CD, however going back to the criticisms of the approach it seems the bigger question that needs to be asked is whose capacity is being developed and for what reasons?

This is summarised well by Chambers (1995) who questions when tackling poverty, whose reality really counts? He argues that what most professionals perceive as reality for the poor differs greatly to what the poor perceive it to be themselves:

“If poor people’s realities are to come first, development professionals have to be sensitive, have to decentralize and empower, to enable poor people to conduct their own analysis and express their own multiple priorities”. (p.191)

He argues that too often the neo-liberalism view has been that the poor are the problem and we are the solution. It is then through this lens that development professionals have looked at the lives of the poor and devised strategies of what they assume to be their need, without considering the reality from their perspective. The challenge he puts to us is to flip this idea on its head; by throwing away our assumptions and handing over the
power to the people whose lives it really impacts. To have their say, make their choices and lead their own initiatives:

“It combines reversals and altruism: reversals to stand the norm on its head, to see things the other way round, to enable the poor and weak to express their reality, and to put that reality first; and then altruism, to act in the interest of the poor and powerless”. (p.200)

Above all the practical issues, the real challenge with CD appears to be around who sets the agenda? If it is going to be country driven with the organisation owning the process then they need to be the ones that define what capacity is. This will be something that will be explored during this research; CD for what and for whom?

Figure 6: 10 Default Principles for CD

10 DEFAULT PRINCIPLES FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

01 Don’t rush
Capacity development is a long-term process. It eludes delivery pressures, quick fixes and the search for short-term results.

02 Respect the value system and foster self-esteem
The imposition of alien values can undermine confidence. Capacity development builds upon respect and self-esteem.

03 Scan locally and globally, reinvent locally
There are no blueprints. Capacity development draws upon voluntary learning, with genuine commitment and interest. Knowledge cannot be transferred; it needs to be acquired.

04 Challenge mindsets and power differentials
Capacity development is not power neutral, and challenging mindsets and vested interests is difficult. Frank dialogue and a collective culture of transparency are essential steps.

05 Think and act in terms of sustainable capacity outcomes
Capacity is at the core of development; any course of action needs to promote this end. Responsible leaders will inspire their institutions and societies to work accordingly.

06 Establish positive incentives
Motives and incentives need to be aligned with the objective of capacity development, including through governance systems that respect fundamental rights. Public sector employment is one particular area where distortions throw up major obstacles.

07 Integrate external inputs into national priorities, processes and systems
External inputs need to correspond to real demand and be flexible enough to respond to national needs and agendas. Where national systems are not strong enough, they should be reformed and strengthened, not bypassed.

08 Build on existing capacities rather than creating new ones
This implies the primary use of national expertise, reactivation and strengthening of national institutions, as well as protection of social and cultural capital.

09 Stay engaged under difficult circumstances
The weaker the capacity, the greater the need. Low capacities are not an argument for withdrawal but for driving national agendas. People should not be held hostage to irresponsible governance.

10 Remain accountable to ultimate beneficiaries
Any responsible government is answerable to the people, and should foster transparency as the foremost instrument of public accountability. Where governance is unsatisfactory it is even more important to anchor development firmly in stakeholder participation and to maintain pressure points for an inclusive accountability system.

[source: Lopes and Theilson, 2003 p.13]
Chapter 3: Terms of Reference

The three main themes that emerged from the literature review will be used as points of reference to analyse the case study of CORD in Uganda (see below). Firstly as highlighted in Chapter 1 it will be important to ask the question; whose capacity is being built and what for?

Figure 7: Terms of reference

Scope

Looking at how these relate in practice will help to achieve part b of objective 2, which evaluates the successes, challenges, and limitations of CD in the context of this case study. More importantly though it will look at what their local partners are trying to achieve and whether CORD fits into what their vision is for their country. As the potential area for discussion under each theme is so wide, not all points have been covered but only the ones that were felt to have had more emphasis to the case.
Chapter 4: Case Study Background

Northern Uganda

For the last two decades Northern Uganda has been ravaged by rebel group the LRA, led by Joseph Kony. The conflict forced 2 million people from their homes, and tens of thousands were killed or mutilated. It is estimated that:

- Over 20,000 children abducted
- Over 620,000 people still living in camps
- 1,000 a week killed by violence and disease at the height of conflict

[source: AlertNet, 2009]

The LRA kidnapped thousands of children as soldiers and sex slaves, they also carried out a multitude of atrocities on the Acholi people including rape and torture (IDMC, 2008). The government moved around 90% of the population into ‘protective’ camps however overcrowding in the squalid conditions meant more people died from disease like malaria and diarrhoea than from the violence (ICG, 2007).

Since the signing of peace agreement in Juba in 2006, of 1.8 million internally displaced people (IDPs) living in the camps, around two thirds have returned home (IDMC, 2009). However areas still lack basic infrastructure such as access to clean water, and low rainfall means food security is unstable (IDMC, 2009). For those still living in the camps it is not by choice but because they are prevented by land disputes, or they are unable to support themselves back home.

Addressing Poverty in Uganda

CORD was approached in 2005 by Friends of Northern Uganda (FONU), a Diaspora association of Ugandan nationals now resident in the UK, to carry out an assessment in Kitgum district in northern Uganda to investigate the possibilities of implementing a programme. At the time there was still conflict in the country, however Northern Uganda seemed to be entering into a rehabilitation phase as peace talks
continued in Southern Sudan between the LRA and Ugandan Government. Following a country assessment, CORD concluded that a CD approach would be appropriate as although capacity levels were low, they were in existence. They saw opportunities to work with established local civil society groups. They decided that they could develop the capacity of local NGOs and CBOs in the rehabilitation phase.

CORD and Beekeeping

CORD identified several potential partners as well as six areas where they could provide support. Following many discussions, it became clear that CORD and one particular CBO’s goals aligned well with each other, and they agreed that together they could tackle the huge issue of poverty caused by the conflict. This would be done through livelihoods; which in this case was through beekeeping. The practice of Beekeeping had already been established in the area for many years so it was something that could be used to provide income generation for the people living in IDP camps. A partnership commenced in 2008 and it was agreed that CORD would support the CD of the local beekeepers organisation.

An IDP Camp near Kitgum

[picture source: author's own]
About CORD

Christian Outreach Relief and Development (CORD) is an international relief and development organisation working to transform lives and conflict. They currently work in Chad, Uganda, Burundi and Cambodia. Their focus is in the sectors of livelihoods and education, where all their work covers issues of HIV, gender equality, and the environment.

Background

CORD was established in 1967 in response to the Vietnamese War and over the years has worked in numerous countries throughout Africa and Asia assisting people that have been affected or displaced by conflict. Their purpose is “to transform lives and conflict through working with people and communities affected by violent conflict” (CORD, 2007, p.4).

CORD’s Vision: For a world where people live in peace and have access to the resources needed for sustainable development.

CORD’s Mission: To build peace by working in partnership with both civil society and governments in development contexts across the conflict spectrum, resulting in the increased capacity of individuals, organisations and societies to further their economic, political and social development. [source: CORD, 2007]

CORD’s work focuses specifically on conflict prevention, conflict management, and peacebuilding. They are committed to working across the conflict spectrum and are seeking to grow and develop its strategic alliances with organisations working on conflict settlement and resolution. In the next five years they plan to expand their portfolio of work through a strategy focused on conflict transformation processes.

Their 3 Strategic Aims 2007-2011 are to:

- transform lives and conflict
- be an agent of peace
- be a recognised conflict and development NGO

[source: CORD, 2008]

CORD works in partnership with local organisations in post-conflict contexts and provides capacity support to them, in order to build and strengthen civil society so that it can actively engage in the development processes and decisions.
About KITWOBEE

The Kitgum Women Beekeeper’s Association (KITWOBEE) was established in February 1995. It was formed by, a local widow and grandmother, in an attempt to help salvage a future for families and for children who have lost their childhood.

Background

The war had meant the country plunged into a deep state of poverty and left an overwhelming number of orphans to care for. Farming was the only means of creating a livelihood however the war had destroyed the land, a group of nine women put their resources together set up the Bee Cooperative as an alternative means to generate income in order to support the families and orphans living in crowded camps.

Mission: To reduce poverty amongst rural women through the production, sale and consumption of hive products while conserving the environment for sustainable living.

Vision: Improved livelihoods, sustainable environmental conservation and empowerment of women, through modern beekeeping.

KITWOBEE operates a membership scheme of honey producers and related apiary activities. As well as producing honey, the members use the beeswax for candles and soap, and the propolis extract to sell for medical purposes. They also contribute to the environmental recovery of the area through the planting of nectar-producing trees.

KITWOBEE’s Main Activities:

- **Apiary Management & development** both with groups & individuals to increase the production of high quality hive products.
- **Processing and packaging honey** to generate income.
- **Sales & Marketing** of hive products for their members.
- **Training** community members in modern beekeeping.
- **Lobbying & advocacy** on Land Rights and Human Rights & Women’s Rights.
- **Environmental Conservation** using sustainable methods and increasing biodiversity.
Table 4 KITWOBEE Successes:

- Registered CBO with current membership of **386 members**
- Expanded coverage to **17 sub counties**
- Processed ½ **ton of honey** in first quarter of 2009 - the same amount as processed in the whole year of 2008
- Won **silver award** in ApiTrade Africa for quality of honey in Sept 2008
- Won **first prize** for Jinja National Agricultural Show 2009
- **Sponsored** to present at APIMONDIA 2009 in France under the commission of beekeeping for Rural Development.

[source: CORD,2006]

**KITWOBEE products**

[Picture source: CORD]
Chapter 5: Theory in Practice

The following chapter explores objective 2. Firstly why CORD chose a CD approach and how it fits into the bigger picture of what they are trying to achieve as an organisation. It then goes onto look at how the theory works in practice under the three areas: CD an endogenous process of change (1) that occurs at different levels (2) and requires ownership (3) from those whose capacity is being developed.

Capacity for What and for Whom?

Capacity for Peace

CORD accepts the definition of capacity as “the ability of individuals, institutions and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner” (CORD, 2009a).

The reason for embracing CD as their strategic focus is summed up in the overarching mission of the organisation, which is to build peace; CORD’s aim through CD is to “creatively respond to and shape the changing development context and build peace” (CORD, 2007). However how exactly does capacity connect with peace? For CORD a CD approach has a key part to play in the conflict transformation process; they view conflict transformation as a process that requires collaboration between partners and creating changes across different levels (individuals, institutions, governments and society). In order for them to create a meaningful change in the countries they work, they must address the social, economic and political issues as well as create an environment that facilitates peace. They work through partnerships bringing together the different levels and developing their capacity through which positive changes can happen that lead to sustainable peace (CORD, 2008).

Working across the conflict spectrum, they have incorporated their understanding of how real sustainable change is brought about into their mission and aims. As theory suggests it needs to be driven from within a country with a strong emphasis on ownership; CORD therefore focus their role as a ‘catalyst’ to the process (CORD, 2007). The following quote demonstrates how their strategy to peacebuilding requires a holistic approach where CD is the obvious choice. Words highlighted in bold reflect they key CD principles identified in
theory in chapter 1, therefore it is clear to understand why they have adopted this approach as a means to tackling the issues faced in countries such as Uganda:

“We believe that conflict transformation is essential to ensure that communities co-exist with one another and it requires a co-operative approach. CORD understands conflict transformation to be an ongoing process of changing relationships, behaviours, attitudes and structures from the negative to the positive” (CORD, 2007 p.2).

With a five year strategy in place to ‘actively engage in conflict transformation processes’, CD has become a key focus, particularly around developing the capacity of partner organisations to support this process through their development interventions.

CORD’S APPROACH: CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

- Learning and capacity development is a continuous process and therefore CORD:
- Develops mutually committed long-term partnerships
- Uses participatory, reflective and experiential tools and processes including coaching, mentoring, knowledge networks and communities of practice
- Models and manages approaches to learning
- Inspires curiosity and cultivates a learning culture

[CORD,2008]

Capacity through Partnerships

CORD saw opportunities for them to help address poverty through livelihoods, but in line with CD theory they decided rather than build new capacity, to develop what already existed. They felt that working with a local partner would position them well to understand what was happening at grassroots level, as well as create real ownership of the projects (CORD, 2009). Taking a holistic approach that addressed different levels also meant they could address the other issues needed to bring about sustainable peace.

“CORD believes that working collectively and co-operatively in partnership is central to effective peace-building and development. CORD invests in long term partnerships that immerse out of a two way consultative process, working respectfully and accountably, to most effectively address the needs of the beneficiaries” (CORD, 2007 p.4)

Using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques they conducted an assessment in Northern Uganda to understand people’s visions and aspirations. Through involvement
and sharing of strategies to find a common ground for which a partnership could be developed, CORD met the founder of KITWOBEE. They both agreed that their visions and strategies met together and saw that a partnership could bring them mutual benefits.

“CORD works with local communities and organisations as it believes that meaningful involvement of civil society and people affected by conflict is central to any effort at conflict transformation toward peaceful and sustainable development” (CORD, 2007 p.5).

Below shows the initial strategies of both partners at the beginning of the partnership, demonstrating poverty reduction as the common goal. The visions and specific objectives have slightly different focuses, for example CORD has a wider strategy, which includes other partners and peacebuilding as a main theme, and KITWOBEE have specific business objectives. These have also changed slightly over time; however the same simple overriding passion of poverty reduction is what has stayed constant throughout.

Ultimately the capacity is for the people of Northern Uganda whose lives have been torn apart from the conflict, to help them out of poverty through sustainable livelihoods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORD’s initial strategy</th>
<th>KITWOBEE’s initial strategy</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aim:</strong> To break the cycles of chronic poverty and to encourage the growth of civil society amongst people affected by the LRA conflict of northern Uganda, through the building and strengthening of capacity of local NGOs and CBOs.</td>
<td><strong>Mission:</strong> To reduce poverty amongst rural women through the production, sale and consumption of hive products while conserving the environment for sustainable living.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[source: CORD, 2008a]</td>
<td>[source: KITWOBEE, 2009]</td>
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</table>

Summary

- CORD recognised existing capacities in Northern Uganda and chose to build on them through a CD partnership.
- CORD and KITWOBEE came together with the common mission to address poverty through livelihoods in Northern Uganda.
- CORD’s bigger picture: CD through partnerships to create positive changes across the different levels of society that will lead to building sustainable peace.
Conclusion

The initial impression is that CORD reasons for adopting a CD approach are not as critics would argue simply to reposition themselves or a modern buzzword for old practices. The fact that they have embodied CD into their overall organisational strategy for the next five years suggests they are serious about it, therefore it is not likely to be an ‘add on’ to help market themselves. They have sought to understand the realities of people living there through a participatory approach, and by working through a local partner who understand the context. However there are limitations to these approaches and the next sections will look more in at these issues more depth.

**KITWOBEE awards**

[picture source: author’s own]
1. **Endogenous Process of Change**

As the relationship has only been developing for a couple of years it is too early to fully evaluate the process of change. Therefore this section will explore the idea of change; how it has been introduced in a way that encourages ownership and cultivates an environment of learning.

**A Holistic Approach to Learning through Coaching and Mentoring**

A key distinction made by literature between CD and CB is that knowledge is acquired or created rather than transferred. It is a process of learning in order to strengthen existing capacities within so that people can adapt to the changes around them (James, 1994). Rather than just training, CORD adopts coaching and mentoring as techniques to create this ‘culture of learning’. They believe it allows their partners be active participants in changing and shaping their selves, their organisations and societies (CORD, 2009a). Coaching and mentoring fits well with literature that suggests you should take a process-orientated approach that facilitates organisations to diagnose its own problems and create solutions (Baser, 2007).

**CORD Coaching and Mentoring**

Coaching usually consists of a series of meetings between the coach and the participant for reflection and discussion with the aim of understanding and learning around a particular issue or challenge, whereas mentoring is more medium-term, a professional development relationship aimed at developing understanding and in some cases wider competencies. In this sense, coaching can be viewed as a key tool for the developing the broader mentoring relationship. [CORD, 2009a]

The main advantages of this method are:

- **Learning is facilitated** – instead of simply teaching and giving answers, it focuses on asking the questions and discovering the solutions.

- **Ongoing** – whereas training is usually a one-off, coaching and mentoring is an ongoing process where there is greater follow up, support and encouragement.

- **Partnership approach** – it is a collaborative approach to problem solving, with goals set by the partner.
Is it revolutionary? Well it is definitely not a new technique. It is used widely in the business world and it is likely that many of NGOs are also using this style. The way development has progressed is to take a step back and allow people to find their own solutions, however as literature suggests not all are living up to what they say they do (Craig, 2005; Moore, 1995). It does overcome many of the criticisms of traditional approaches like TC, and the intention is it eventually allows the partner to become independent (CORD, 2009a). It teaches people to apply the techniques in different situations so that they continually adapt to the changing environment, even when they are no longer receiving external support. This is particularly important in a fragile context such as Northern Uganda, where political stability is uncertain especially with the 2011 elections just around the corner.

Like CB, training may also be misconceived from literature on CD as a bad development, however is still an important part of the process. Literature suggests training is one tool of many in the CD process, and so should not be overlooked but equally not have all the emphasis placed on. The argument here is more about how it is delivered rather than whether it is right or wrong, and for CORD the important aspect is that people are empowered to think outside the box and not just told what to do.

Building or Development?

Coaching and mentoring are arguably more CD than CB, however from reading CORD literature there is still some confusion over terminology. Some of their literature uses the two phrases interchangeably and particularly the older versions use ‘building’ more. Those involved in the CORD’s strategy are now very clear to make the distinction between the two, and in practice it does appear that they are more in line with CD theory. Clarity is certainly important, particularly from a business point of view, for example when communicating to donors. However, there is the danger that the CB is seen as the ‘wrong way’ of doing things, when in fact it is just as necessary in certain contexts. In the case of KITWOBEE, they have received a lot of CB support from another NGO working with them, and CORD has also done training with KITWOBEE board members. The problem is not whether or not CD is better than CB, but as the Country Director sated “capacity building is too often done in a vacuum”. This means that often things like training are done without any follow through or product in mind and therefore people fail to connect how they put the training into practice.
Instigating Change

Bringing change is difficult to do in a way that isn’t seen to be another ‘imported idea’ or as critics would argue still a northern agenda disguised in a modern sounding approach. In reality the CORD Country Director stated that there is a fine line between mentoring and managing, and recognises the importance of maintaining that distinction. From discussions and observations, this style is arguably influenced a lot by the person delivering it. Literature talks frequently about the importance of leadership on ownership and therefore the success of CD effort (La Fontain, 2000; DAC, 2006; Bolger, 2000). It is clear from this research that the leadership of KITWOBEE has a played a very influential role in changing and shaping the organisation. Theory is weighted more to the leadership of the partner (i.e. KITWOBEE); however this research would argue that the characteristics’ of those doing the CD (i.e. CORD Uganda) also have an understated impact.

As a result of visiting CORD Uganda and meeting the Country Director who is the CD advisor to KITWOBEE, it was possible to understand and observe a little how he applied these techniques with colleagues and partners. Arguably just as KITWOBEE has a strong leader, CORD Uganda also has a strong leader, someone who is able to encourage and advise, but also not afraid to challenge. Observations that he is a strong character were affirmed by conversations with CORD and KITWOBEE staff, as well as by the Country Director himself. Some of the initial partnership development successes he attributed to what he defined as his ‘pushy’ nature; “never accepting the status quo”, always asking “why not” when told it can’t be done, and “not taking admin hurdles as standard”.

As described by himself, his ‘confrontational and direct’ style is evidently something that has helped KITWOBEE instigate the changes that are vital for any CD effort. Much of the work he feels has been around “helping people to manage the inadequacy of their own systems”. Even small changes have helped KITWOBEE tighten their operations and become a more efficient organisation, demonstrated by their growth and award winning products.
He has also challenged assumptions, highlighted vested interests, and questioned motivations of decisions. These will have required a strong character as they may not be well received, and requires telling people what they often don’t want to hear. It is particularly difficult as the KITWOBEE leader is a dominant personality; and the two have clashed. As discussed under the challenges of partnerships (see Ownership), his ‘constructive criticisms’ have often been mistaken for personal attacks. It can therefore be argued that the approach of CORD has been exactly what is needed to kick-start much needed changes and expose conflicts, as a softly-softly approach would not have had the same impact. Conversely this approach could also be argued as too dominant and shifting the power balance away from the process being locally owned and driven.

One interesting comment made by the Country Director was his role of ‘fathering’ and ‘big brothering’ with younger colleagues. This was something that was observed during the visit. Despite the subtle nature of it, it is arguably an extremely important attribute of Country Director; his ability to recognise and nurture the potential of people while providing valuable support and guidance. This style sits well in the coaching and mentoring approach and is a more empowering way of helping people realise their own potential.

Summary

- CORD use coaching and mentoring to cultivate a culture of learning. Their partners are encouraged to apply knowledge to situations and develop their own solutions.
- CORD’s style has often been direct and confrontational to bring about change, which has its advantages and disadvantages.
- Leadership within a partner organisation like KITWOBEE is important to deliver change, however leadership from the ‘advisor’ organisation is just as important to facilitate the change in a way that still encouraged ownership.

Conclusion

In hindsight of this research, it appears the CORD/KITWOBEE relationship has only recently moved from a purely grant making approach to one of CD as the country director was only put in place late 2008. If as theory states, CD is a gradual process requiring investment of time, and then for this case study the partnership is still very new. It is
therefore been hard to truly understand the process of change, and would require a longer time frame with more in depth research.

“Reality is if KITWOBEE was applying to become a CORD partners today, we would probably not select them until they were further along the road to being a membership organisation” (CORD Uganda Country Director).

What the case study did uncover was how CORD was trying to facilitate change in a non-controlling manner. Coaching and mentoring, is nothing new, but used in this context does promote the critical factors that theory suggests for successful CD partnerships (i.e. ownership, knowledge creation, collaboration). More importantly it works towards a more sustainable goal; the partner becomes independent of support, able to continually react and adapt to the different situations that face them. It is important to note that CD does not mean there is no CB, and in this case KITWOBEE have received a lot of CB support from another NGO working with them as well as training from CORD.

This case revealed how important the leadership of CORD has been in facilitating the process. His approach or style has been one that has evidently brought a lot of positive changes, such as increasing the efficiency of operations, strengthening accountability and highlighting conflicting interests. It has also however caused a few clashes with relationships, however change is often met with some resistance, particularly when dealing with difficult issues.

This case study revealed that it is a fine balance to keep from being direct enough to evoke change, but also not so influential that the ownership is taken away. Although some might argue whether CORD has the authority to make such challenge, do they have the right to criticize ways of doing things? This dissertation would argue that yes, they have an agreement to provide this support and it does not appear that CORD have ever pushed their agenda onto KITWOBEE. As with any organisation, change often requires an outside perspective to reveal what isn’t obvious to those on the inside. Providing that changes are not imposed, and that the advice given is acting in the best interests of those who really matter (in this case the members) then yes.
2. Levels of CD

This section looks at how capacity has developed at different levels and the impacts it has had. Due to the volume of information that could be analysed here, the areas of focus will be around the levels of capacity at organisation and society levels. Organisation because the main purpose is to develop the capacity of KITWOBEE to deliver its mission, and society to understand the bigger picture of what CORD is trying to achieve.

Organisation

The main issue: KITWOBEE had identified the need to enhance local bee farmers’ capacity to reap the best from beekeeping in Kitgum district (CORD, 2006). The prolonged conflict however had weakened the capacity of KITWOBEE by displacing their members and vandalising their apiaries, which dramatically reduced their production of honey. KITWOBEE needed funding and organisational development to turn them around.

Solutions: CORD has addressed the first level of capacity by equipping the members that make up KITWOBEE with the skills to run the organisation. This has been done through a mix of approaches such as support from funding, training, provision of materials, coaching and mentoring. Some of the changes CORD have helped facilitate KITWOBEE as an organisation has been:

- Legally registering the organisation
- Changing the constitution
- Strengthening board accountability
- Training board members
- Strengthening organisational operations, e.g. financial procedures
- Mentoring & coaching staff
- Future planning.

[Picture source: CORD]
The impacts: Individual capacity alone is not enough; organisations as a whole need the systems, structures and direction to really facilitate the change process required in developing capacity. This is where CORD has come in to act as a catalyst for the changes required to help KITWOBEE move forward with their vision, and grow the organisation’s capacity in order to realise their mission for the Kitgum area. With better materials, equipment and procedure, KITWOBEE have been able to employ better practices improving the quantity and quality of the products they sell and the efficiency of their business. The awards they have won for their honey and their reputation in Uganda have affirmed this. Greater sales have helped them invest more in the organisation; employing staff, setting up an office in the town and expanding their work into 17 sub counties. The impacts on this level are not just confined to the individual board members of KITWOBEE, the CD approach has given KITWOBEE the leverage to go onto enhancing the capacity of other individuals in the Kitgum area. Registering the organisation has been a big step forward for their operations as a business and opened up further opportunities for growth, like marketing internationally.

Analysis: Like theory suggested, as individuals within KITWOBEE have grown in capacity so has the organisation. This is demonstrated visibly through the number of members KITWOBEE has as well as through their reputation and presence in Northern Uganda. At the individual and organisational levels it is clear that CORD’s funding has been a main factor in initially providing valuable opportunities for KITWOBEE to enhance the work they are doing. Funding alone is not CD, but it was certainly an important part of beginning the process. With greater financial capacity they have also been able to open up opportunities for more women in the Kitgum district to join KITWOBEE. More members enables them to widen the impact of their work and really tackle the high levels of poverty experience in Kitgum, key goals of both CORD and KITWOBEE. As KITWOBEE develops, the more women beekeepers they are able to work with, strengthening both their organisational and technical skills in apiary management and colony multiplication to increase production of hive products and so increase their income (CORD, 2006). The more capacity KITWOBEE has, the more opportunities they can have for women to...
participate in a sustainable livelihood to lift themselves and their families out of poverty, and therefore working towards a more peaceful society:

“During violent conflict, people often lose access to their means of livelihood, or their assets are destroyed. Providing livelihood opportunities enables people to have a means to immediate survival and long-term self-sufficiency. It can also contribute to the prevention of violent conflict, by reducing livelihood failure, which itself can be a contributing factor to conflict. Addressing livelihoods also provides a means to engage with the process of restorative justice, the replacing of what was lost, and begin to remove barriers to reconciliation” (CORD, 2007 p.7).

From discussions with the Country Director, it emerged that many of the changes needed were surprisingly basic business processes. For example, financial control mechanisms such as bank reconciliation were not being administered - KITWOBEE hadn’t even had a bank statement in 12 months! Financial management training therefore was an obvious necessity, going to prove that as much as CD isn’t training alone, training is still a vital part of the process. It also goes to show that CB may first be needed in areas before CD can take place. These may not seem very advanced steps, but it should be remembered that CORD and KITWOBEE are at the early stages within the process and these small steps will pave the way for the bigger more influential changes that CD is all about.

Society

Issues: CD of KITWOBEE to address poverty through livelihoods is just a small part of the wider picture that affects the people in Northern Uganda. Some of the other issues:

- Limited access to land, land disputes and controlled space
- High dependency on International aid
- Eroded cultural values, culture of violence particularly among youth
- Poor awareness/practice of human rights
- HIV/AIDS
- Gender inequality
- High illiteracy rates.
CD calls for a wider analysis of the surrounding barriers that hinder people from participating in their own society. For example, whether the relevant structures and systems are in place, as well as the context of the broader political environment; all which play a huge role in the success of development initiatives.

**Solutions:** CORD sees real potential for KITWOBEE to not only realise their objective of poverty reduction, but potentially become leaders and initiator for further change to benefit their community and society. As mentioned previously the bigger picture for CORD is to build peace and they realise that if they are to make a real sustainable impact then they need to address the broader societal issues in Northern Uganda.

"Peacebuilding addresses the social, economic and political sources of conflict to transform negative energies into positive change. These changes include: increasing access to rights, such as the development of social accountability, access to justice as well as economic, social and political development" (CORD, 2008).

Where CD assists is in increasing and growing the platform for which organisations can take leverage to tackle the injustices that their communities face. KITWOBEE has gained a credible reputation and a presence in Northern Uganda that has strengthened their voice and the impact that they have on promoting change. It is this impact which CORD sees as being instrumental to hitting higher levels like government structures to bring about meaningful and lasting change to benefit the people of Uganda.

**Impacts:** KITWOBEE marketing literature suggests that they advocate other outreach activities such as raising awareness to address cross cutting issues such as human rights, HIV/AIDS, land rights and gender (CORD, 2006). One of the major influences they have had is in fact being a women’s organisation as beekeeping has traditionally been a male pursuit. Therefore just them existing as a women’s organisation has not only challenged the cultural norms of their society, but they have also placed themselves well in terms of advocating gender issues. It was CORD that helped them to recognise this potential and understand what this really meant; as the Country Director said “they hadn’t understood the parameters of their own constitution”.
One particular success story has been that of a young man, aged 25, who at the age of
fifteen was abducted into the LRA and forced to do what no human let alone child should
have to do (CORD, 2009e). When he returned he had no family and became a recluse
due to the social stigma of living with people you previously terrorised. He was
discovered by KITWOBEE who were impressed by his beekeeping skills and suggested he
join them, but their constitution didn’t allow male members (CORD, 2009e). As a
consequence KITWOBEE changed their constitution and now this young ex-combatant has
become their first male associate member:

“He has gone on to become one of KITWOBEE’s principle trainers, teaching others to
multiply hive often visiting the very homes of people who once feared him” (CORD,
2009e).

**Analysis:** In terms of peacebuilding in Northern Uganda, CORD has barely scratched the
surface, however it is a process that will take a long time and they are under no illusions. They
are still merely at the beginning but are laying the foundations through addressing the ‘seen
issues’ like poverty, and paving the way to work on the ‘unseen’ issues, the hidden powers
in society that prevent real change. It emerged from discussions that although KITWOBEE raise
important issues, they are yet to address them in a meaningful way. They do however have
great potential to build the capacity of disadvantaged women, through raising awareness
and empowering them to act on their rights.

It is a step in the right direction, and encouraging stories like that of the young abductee
hint at what great possibilities there are when people risk challenging the status quo.
Working at this level CORD and KITWOBEE can potentially create links between others
levels (individuals, organisations, NGOs as well as government). It is here the
opportunities for real changes to be made at societal level are, and the possibility to
address some of the issues that affect peace. This is drawn out in CORD’s next plan; a
youth dialogue and livelihoods programme.
Youth Dialogue and Livelihoods Programme

CORD's plan for the near future is to use KITWOBEE in a larger scale CD programme with the youth. It will involve several CORD partners working together to develop a youth dialogue programme that promotes peacebuilding, leadership and entrepreneurship (CORD, 2009f). Alongside training in conflict resolution, youth will have the opportunity to learn income-generating activities, such as beekeeping and tree nursery management. This training and mentoring would be implemented by KITWOBEE, who CORD also recognises as playing a key role in assisting young women and girls due to their gender empowerment focus. This programme is potentially addressing many levels that CORD recognises as not currently being addressed. The impacts of this project they see will include poverty reduction as well as peacebuilding, addressing the culture of violence and reintegrating some values back into society. As young men and women develop livelihoods they will be lifted from poverty and able to participate more actively in civic life (CORD, 2009f). Increased awareness of rights, particularly among women helps reduce their vulnerability and tackle issues such as access to land.

Summary

- CORD has developed KITWOBEEs organisational capacity to deliver their mission to reduce poverty through the livelihood of beekeeping. As a result KITWOBEEs honey production has increased in quantity and quality, their membership has grown significantly, and opened up to people in various new districts in Northern Uganda.

- Through KITWOBEE, CORD is addressing other issues at the societal level that affect the people of Uganda and the barriers that prevent them from participating in civic life.

- The longer-term plan is to develop further partner’s capacities and through collaborative programmes focus on conflict transformation. By creating positive economic, political and social changes they aim to tackle the root causes of the conflict and build sustainable peace.
Conclusion

Just as theory suggests capacity is addressed at all levels, and CORD’s approach is one that considers this well. CD is well suited to their strategy of conflict transformation and by working through partnerships they are encouraging development driven from within the country. However capacity is difficult to measure because often the results are ‘unseen’ or take a long time for the true impact to be felt. As they are not finished products, like building a school, things like the effects of mentoring someone cannot be easily quantified. As the partnership is still in its infancy this research was unable to see all the impacts, and some of these results make take several years to be seen, particularly at the third level; societal capacity.

What was clear from the study was that KITWOBEE already has the expertise, skills and knowledge in the area of beekeeping. They had also been operating in the area for 14 years prior to CORD’s involvement so they did not need anyone telling them what to do. They were however in a position where their external environment was hindering them; the conflict around them was diminishing their capacity, and so CORD were in a position to help. The founder probably saw a business opportunity to work with CORD because she recognised they needed funding. This is not necessarily a wrong motive but the underlying reality is that she sought to benefit those who needed it most; to give people in Northern Uganda a sustainable livelihood to bring them out of poverty, and with CORD’s help this is what she is achieving. Despite only being partnered a small length of time, what they have actually achieved together is very impressive (see also table 4; KITWOBEE successes).

As discussed the motivation for a CD approach builds into the bigger picture of conflict transformation and peace building, which CORD are ultimately aiming for. Is CD of a small beekeeping organisation peacebuilding? Not in its entirety, however you cannot address the root causes of conflict without tackling the immediate issues. For example, is a
mother really going to want to know what are her rights when she struggling to feed her family on a day to day basis? CORD are building the foundations and working on the immediate barriers to then tackle the bigger hurdles. Although at the third level the impacts seem like small waves in the ocean, they are gradually getting bigger. Even one story of the former child solider re-integrating back into society is a really important step in the right direction. Sometimes you have to start small, but there is great potential particularly if they work in collaboration with other community based organisations.

CORD's longer-term goal is that KITWOBEE will transition into to a partner that has the capacity to become, what CORD describes as an ‘agent for change’. This means that they will become leaders and thinkers to challenge the barriers around them that hinder them from participating in their own societies. As the Country Director noted most CB efforts are simply a mechanism for building people’s capacity to administer grants. Instead this goes further to address the enabling environment that helps people define their own changes in their own lives. Is this however where KITWOBEE see them going, or is this a grand idea for a small organisation who seems to be moving faster than its leadership can keep up with? As the country director stated:

“…there is not yet sufficient evidence that KITWOBEE can transition from being dependent on CORD grants to being an OD partner. Neither is there sufficient evidence to suggest KITWOBEE intends nor has capacity for this…” (CORD, 2009g).
3. Ownership

If literature argues ownership is key to the success of CD, then how has CORD ensured that the process has been driven and owned by their partner? It was interesting to explore the dynamics of the relationship and the challenges for CORD in maintaining the power balance when essentially holding the purse strings.

Playing a Supporting Role

One of the main criticisms of CD is that it is too supply-driven and literature is calling out to practitioners to allow developing countries to take the lead in their own development (Lusthaus et al, 1999; Baser, 2007). NGOs are tackling this issue through greater involvement of people in the decisions that affect them. By promoting relationships that encourage participation and collaboration, the ‘beneficiaries’ are able to have a say in what they want to happen in their lives. As Chambers (1995) puts it:

“If poor people’s realities are to come first, development professionals have to be sensitive, have to decentralize and empower, to enable poor people to conduct their own analysis and express their own multiple priorities”. (p.191)

According to most of CORD’s literature, participation and empowerment are methods that CORD very much advocates. In this case study, participatory techniques were used to conduct a country assessment, as well as with potential partners to understand their visions and ensure the partnership was mutually beneficial. It is clear from all CORD documents and discussions with staff that they recognise ownership is integral to what they are trying to achieve, and so they strive to engage and involve society in all their work. A key component for CORD’s strategy is adopting a style of coaching and mentoring (see process section), which they believe encourages their partners to develop their own solutions.

It is the assumption that CORD applies all this theory in practice throughout the relationship; however it is difficult to truly evaluate without further research. From reading
minutes of meetings and correspondence between KITWOBEE and CORD, the feeling is however that on the whole the power and control has fallen ultimately to the partners. For example, the following exert from a letter to the board dated 27th March 2009, highlights the Country Director’s concerns not to push their own agenda onto their partner:

“...I am concerned that with all these opportunities arising so fast that CORD and the honey cluster are pushing Kitwobee in a direction for which it is not yet ready and prepared. I would therefore welcome the soonest possible opportunity to meet with the board to ascertain whether you are comfortable with these developments” [CORD, 2009b].

Challenges: Power, Conflicts and Vested Interests

It sounds very straightforward, empowering people to make their own decisions, however people are people and relationships are never simple.

The relationship between the KITWOBEE board members and the County Director has had its share of challenges, grappling with issues such as conflicts, vested interests and personal issues (CORD, 2009c). The Country Director has acted as a coach and mentor to KITWOBEE, encouraging and advising them but allowing the final decisions to be their own. Providing advice and recommendations to a partner organisation is not always easy, particularly when the advice is not acted upon or well received as CORD has experienced. Recently the partnership hit troubled waters when the Country Director gave the board some challenging advice. Unfortunately the founder misinterpreted the intentions as a personal attack.

This incident could have seriously affected the future of the partnership had the issues not been addressed quickly and carefully (CORD, 2009c). The matter was dealt with and cleared up, however taking more time than anticipated (CORD, 2009d). Although this was
a setback in terms of progress in other areas, it was probably a valuable investment of time in the long run to re-instigate trust back into the relationship. This reinforces theory that states CD efforts cannot be an after-thought, but require lots of time and effort (UNDP, 2009).

Most issues are addressed through regular communication, identifying where conflicts occur and put plans in place to resolve them. It has been a process of learning for both parties. From discussions with the Country Director, it seems that cultural differences have often influenced these clashes. He feels this is due to his confrontational and direct ‘style’ or ‘approach’, which goes against a culture that views criticism as negative and even rude. This is potentially amplified when dealing with vested interests, as he has had to do with KITWOBEE. The Country Director deals with such conflicts by backing down, or in his words “apologising and eating humble pie”, but he makes no apologies however for being confrontational when he feels it is something that needs addressing, like accountability:

“She feels threatened by having to be accountable. She questions why she should need to be, and she is right, except for when she is using public funds to achieve benevolence” (CORD Uganda Country Director).

Accountability is vital in CD, and especially in order to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of those whose lives it impacts the most. In this case it is the members, and just like Chambers (1995) notes, it is those whose reality counts therefore it is them whom we need to be accountable to.

Leadership

Theory also shows that leadership is closely related to ownership and plays an essential role within a successful partnership and therefore successful CD (ODI, 2009; UNDP, 2009 Tennyson, 2003). This would also appear the case within KITWOBEE, as the chairperson has been a very influential figure in leading the process. Her strong vision and passion is what began the women’s group in the first place and then what brought her to work with CORD. She also has certain characteristics and leadership qualities that will have been needed to steer the organisation:

“She stood out because she had something about her and we saw her going somewhere. It’s hard to place what exactly it was about her, but there was something different about
her passion and understanding of the context. The way she debated issues and her way of thinking really challenged others. Her leadership potential suggested she had the capacity needed to deliver a step change in the organisation” (CORD UK CEO).

As an individual her own personal mission and vision was one that is close to her heart and therefore has created a strong sense of ownership for driving the organisation forward:

“My husband went missing presumed murdered in the atrocities; like everyone, the war has taken its toll on me and my family. This is a region of chronic poverty; women are supporting anything from seven to twenty people, their own family plus orphans of the war. So I determined to salvage a future for families left destitute and youngsters who have lost their childhood” KITWOBEE Founder (CORD, 2009).

Both with a common vision and mission to tackle the same problems, it is easy to see why the partnership has had many successes because there is a mutual goal that both parties are working towards. The partnership has also had a balance of contributions to bring, see table below. However to what extent both their visions still align are uncertain and would probably be worth revisiting.

Table 5: Contributions brought to the partnership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KITWOBEE</th>
<th>CORD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Experts in Beekeeping (over 14 years experience)</td>
<td>• Over 40 years experience working in countries affected by conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local knowledge</td>
<td>• Access to institutional donor funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Founder with strong leadership qualities</td>
<td>• Substantial previous experience in CD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Great ownership (personal meaning)</td>
<td>• Well placed for UK support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Already established in the community - well connected to key individuals and groups (e.g. suppliers, businesses etc)</td>
<td>• Advisor with lots of CD experience, cultural awareness and strong personal qualities to be an advisor to KITWOBEE.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Founder Syndrome

Although evidently one of the main driving factors which has driven the organisation forward, the leadership of KITWOBEE has also proved to be its Achilles heel. Theory suggests greater ownership leads to greater sustainability; however it doesn't discuss the issue when the sense of ownership is so great that it becomes almost overpowering. For KITWOBEE, the founder having nurtured the organisation for nine years prior to CORD arriving on the scene had begun to create what the CORD CEO described as a
‘matriarchal culture’. Research shows that recently KITWOBEE has been suffering with what is commonly diagnosed in many small, fast growing organisations as ‘Founder Syndrome’. The founder’s entrepreneurial, strong personality has helped the organisation to grow and flourish; however it has come to a point where her paternalism towards the organisation is potentially holding it back. As a small organisation she would have had to make most of the big decisions and be involved in much of the detail, however with it growing the decisions should be shared. From speaking to various people including KITWOBEE staff, this is not the case there is a sense that the board are afraid to speak out.

What are the symptoms of Founder Syndrome?

- The founder feels overwhelmed and exhausted making all decisions, drained by the energy and time expended resolving internal disputes, frustrated that no time is spent on the tough strategic choices, and unhappy that coming to work in the morning is no longer fun. Employee morale is sagging. Instead of teamwork and cooperation, there is turf protection, sniping, and competition for the founder's attention.

- The founder dominates meetings and overwhelms others. Key staff fear offering their own ideas, especially if they might be contrary to those of the founder, but hang in there because they have learned how to survive, and an unknown future may not be any better than a dysfunctional present that is putting food on their table.

- The company is having difficulty sustaining its growth. [Linsky, 2006]

Literature warns about the fatalistic concerns of Founder Syndrome, and recommends that founders need to transition to a less hands-on approach, allowing staff to take up leadership and over-seeing the bigger picture rather than being involved in every decision (Tennyson, 2003; Linsky, 2006). The problem however is the KITWOBEE founder doesn’t want to be disempowered; she has a very strong power base and feels threatened by losing it. As she states in her letter she “birthed KITWOBEE”, therefore it has been her baby for many years (KITWOBEE, 2009a). It was her vision and she has invested a significant amount of time and energy into seeing it grow, therefore it is only natural that she finds it hard not to be involved so deeply.

At the time of visiting the Country Director had received a letter from the founder stating her intentions to resign from the board; therefore it will be a critical time to manage the relationship. It will be important for KITWOBEE and CORD to ensure that she leaves on a positive note. From discussions with KITWOBEE staff there is no concern that the founder wants to see the organisation fail, however it isn’t wise to let her leave feeling unappreciated. A solution could be making her an honorary KITWOBEE member to
acknowledge what she has done for the organisation. It will be a symbol of gratitude for her efforts so she feels valued and appreciated, whilst helping her stay connected and feel involved, but at a less direct level.

“Founders deserve special recognition because they have demonstrated a remarkable capacity to translate their visionary ideas into organizational realities for the good of a community” (Block and Rosenberg, 2002 p.353).

It will interesting to see how the organisation moves forward and whether or not the existing board will now step up to the mark. One of the key challenges CORD had already identified was the capacity of the board. The Country Director’s observations are that the rate at which the organisation has grown and developed has now surpassed the capacity of the leadership (June, 2009). Therefore do they have now the ability to sustain the demands of an organisation that has taken on a life of its own?

**Summary**

- CORD has encouraged ownership through participatory methods; involving and empowering people throughout the process.
- As with many partnerships CORD has been tested with power, vested interests, conflicts and misunderstood intentions.
- There is a high sense of ownership brought about by strong leadership, however has also led to other issues related to ‘Founder Syndrome’.

**Conclusion**

The case study clearly showed strong ownership to begin with as KITWOBEE had been established for many years prior to CORD’s involvement. Along with a shared vision to tackle poverty in Uganda, there were also clearly incentives for both parties to partner.

As expected with change, the organisation is growing in capacity and able to move into further areas, however there are concerns that the organisation has surpassed the vision of the board. CORD also have bigger plans (explained in the ‘levels’ section) therefore it will be important for both partners to go back and re-evaluate were they meet together to ensure they are not pulling in different directions:
“...can you/ should you build capacity of an organisation that is barely more than a fraternity of family members with public funding and especially without an MOU that is designed to take you there eventually?” (Country Director, 2009)

CORD has encouraged ownership through participatory methods, however PRA also has its limitations and criticisms similar to those of CD (see chapter 2). Chambers (1995) also argues that participation is only sustainable providing both partners are participatory and that true ownership and empowerment from one side equals non-ownership and disempowerment from the other. Practically this is an enormous challenge and the answer for which would require much further research.

“The new paradigm is people centred, participatory, empowering and sustainable. These nice words are more deeply embedded in the flexes of paper and speech-writers than in the mental frames and personal behaviour of those who write the papers and read out the speeches”. (Chambers, 1995 p.200)

The case study ties in well with theory around leadership and also suggests that leadership of the CD advisor is also very important. In theory leadership in the enabling environment is also important, such as government units that bring about changes at the societal level which will impact organisations like KITWOBEE. This was not something explored in depth in this study, but could be something for further research. Although research shows that CORD has an MOU with the prime minister in the region, speaking to the Country Director he did not see this as having any real significant impacts.

The intended resignation of KITWOBEE’s founder is something that needs careful management to ensure good relationships are sustained. It was refreshing to see how frank and honest CORD has been about the challenges along the way. Often people try to play down the bad parts, particularly in the interests of sounding successful to win donor funding. Potentially this ‘issue’ could be looked at as a negative or failure; however given the complex nature of partnerships it is not surprising that such problems occurred. CORD should be encouraged because every hurdle they have faced is almost textbook theory for any partnership! The real challenge is how it is dealt with and what is learnt from it as a result. Money and power always complicate and distort relationships, and this case study is no exception. It is something that CORD have had to address and probably will have to in the future if they continue to provide a grant.
Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

This dissertation has looked at the concept of CD, both in theory and in practice, through the case study of CORD’s partnership with KITWOBEE, a local CBO in Northern Uganda. Theory has been reviewed to understand more about why CD is used (objective 1a), the advantages and disadvantages of it as an approach (objective 2a) and what factors make it successful (objective 1c). Theory has then been applied to the case study to understand how it has worked in practice. The reasons why CORD used the approach were looked at (objective 2a), as well as the practical successes and challenges (objective 2b), and also how CD relates to the wider goal of what CORD are trying to achieve. Various conclusions have been made throughout, however these are the summarised main findings:

Terminology often lacks clarity - was evident both in theory and in practice. Although there are key distinctions, CB and CD are still used interchangeably. Clarity is evidently important, however the focus should be more on the practice of techniques and not the theory on paper.

CB is still important - There is a danger that terminology is over analysed and CB is viewed as ‘bad development’. Although tools like training in isolation are not sustainable, CB is still an important part of the process.

CD practice reinforces theory - the case study demonstrated that key factors such as strong ownership and leadership make for successful CD. However the study also revealed that they might also contribute to further challenges.

CD is not easy - Many of the difficulties that come with CD were experienced in the case study such as balancing power and dealing with vested of interests. As theory suggests the principles of CD require time, resources, effort and commitment. However in practice external pressures often restrict NGOs, particularly in this case time and money have proven big obstacles.

As an approach CD is not going solve all the issues with international development, however its principles and practice are striving to make initiatives better. Although in reality it has its limitations, as seen in this case study, in a short amount of time it has helped to make big differences to many people’s lives in Northern Uganda. Ultimately it is not really about what it is in theory, but about who it benefits in practice and in the end whose capacity is being built and for what reason?
## Recommendations

It is difficult to evaluate how ‘successful’ the partnership has been, not only because capacity is hard to measure and quantify, but also because in reality after only a year or so of CD the relationship is still in its infancy. Below is an analysis of the CORD/KITWOBEE partnership based on the elements set out by Horton et al (2003) for a successful CD partnership. Included are some reflections and suggestions as to potential areas, which could be improved:

### Table 6: Evaluation of the CORD and KITWOBEE partnership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of Successful Partnerships for CD (Horton et al, 2003)</th>
<th>Reflections CORD/ KITWOBEE partnership</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Link to organisations’ mission, strategy, and values</strong></td>
<td>Clear link to common goal of poverty reduction. Both parties contribute to each other’s missions; however visions appear to have changed over time.</td>
<td>Both organisations to re-evaluate whether their missions, strategy &amp; values still align.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clear purpose and intent</strong></td>
<td>Misunderstandings and incorrect assumptions have led to conflicts and disagreements.</td>
<td>Annual Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be agreed for greater clarity of purpose and intentions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clear division of roles and responsibilities</strong></td>
<td>Roles and responsibilities potentially distorted by grant.</td>
<td>Separating grant from CD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principled negotiation and joint decision-making</strong></td>
<td>Decision-making very much owned and led by KITWOBEE.</td>
<td>Could be improved with agreed MOU prior to action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Openness to learning and change</strong></td>
<td>Many lessons learnt by both parties. Difficult to evaluate KITWOBEE’s ‘openness’. Big changes occurring at present; will be interesting to see how they develop.</td>
<td>Monitor changes and progress carefully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuity and persistence</strong></td>
<td>Commitment evident, however process heavily dependent on resources.</td>
<td>Providing funding is obtained, CORD should continue to support KITWOBEE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Flexibility</strong></td>
<td>Relationship has changed over time and is dramatically changing at present, the future of which is hard to predict as dependant on a variety of factors.</td>
<td>Maintain flexibility and prepare to adjust to changes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further recommendations to CORD:

- To re-visit the motivations and incentives for both parties in the partnership. Particularly with regards to the changes in leadership to discuss relationships moving forward.

- To produce a CD Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to ensure both parties are clear of their expectations going forward, and to avoid further misunderstood intentions.

- CORD to recommend to KITWOBEE that they propose an honorary member’ status to the founder as recognition of her contributions and to demonstrate their appreciation and value towards her.

Improvements

The Country Director was asked to reflect back on the past year or so and to describe what might have been done differently:

- **Starting six months further down the line** – At the time the Country Director joined all the funding decisions had already been made. His suggestion would have been to recruit someone in the Easter, allowing them significant lead time on funding. He also felt CORD could have benefited from having spent more time getting to know the partners better.

- **Being resourced up front** – The Country Director felt that not having reliable transport for the initial three months significantly set back progress. One of the biggest challenges was also that the partner was not yet registered therefore they lacked the official paperwork necessary to get the work started.

- **Separating Funding and Capacity Development** – CORD’s Memorandum of Understanding is based on a contract for money; there is not a separate agreement for CD. The Country Director felt that contracts for grants complicated the relationships with partners and that the funding would be best managed separately. Although the two do overlap a suggestion would be to have two different people manage each.
Chapter 7: Areas for Improvement

Field research - The field visit was extremely valuable in understanding the context for which the case study is set, to meet the CORD Country Director, KITWOBEE staff and members, and get a feel of the reality in Northern Uganda. Ideally it would have been longer; however this was restricted by time and money constraints. With more time and resources, the researcher would have valued opportunities to conduct further interviews the KITWOBEE founder, board members and KITWOBEE members.

Scope - due to the nature of the research some areas were not covered in depth as they could have been. Some areas which could be expanded however would require further research were ownership and levels:

- Ownership: to understand from KITWOBEE’s perspective on their experience of the partnership with CORD.
- Leadership: to understand the impact of leadership in the ‘enabling environment’; i.e. higher levels which impact on KITWOBEE, such as government.
- Levels: to explore the concept of CD and peace building, how they connect and the issues.

Time frame - In hindsight, this case study was still in the early stages of partnership and CD. Although there were many lessons learnt, it would be very interesting to explore the case study further down the line to see if there were more significant changes.

Other areas for further research:

- Other CD efforts, particularly in other countries and contexts to understand different perspectives, learning’s and experiences.
- To explore in depth CD in the context of peacebuilding.
- To research from the partner’s perspective - this research mainly understood the lessons learnt from CORD’s perspective; however it would be interesting to do a study from the point of view of KITWOBEE and their members, to really understand whose reality counts in all this.
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KITWOBEE (2009a) Letter to CORD November


Bibliography


## Appendix

### Elements of Successful Partnerships for Capacity Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Link to organisations’ mission, strategy, and values</th>
<th>A partnership should contribute to each organisation’s mission and be consistent with its strategies and values.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear purpose and intent</td>
<td>Each organisation should determine why the partnership is useful to the achievement of its goals. Discussing the purpose up front is important as incorrect assumptions may lead to later disagreements and conflicts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear division of roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>Each organisation needs to take responsibility for its own development. In capacity development the partners need to play different roles and perform different tasks. Power imbalances in international partnerships make it especially important to negotiate and define roles and responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principled negotiation and joint decision-making</td>
<td>Principles should be established for the relationship prior to action. Ownership is promoted when all parties are actively involved in decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to learning and change</td>
<td>Learning is at the heart of capacity development and it needs to take place in all participating organisations not just in the ‘beneficiary’ organisation. In an environment of mutual trust monitoring and evaluation can promote learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity and persistence</td>
<td>Capacity development is a process that requires time, resources and persistence. While persistence does not guarantee progress it has a high payoff in most capacity development efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Relationships need to change over time as conditions and issues evolve. All partnerships end at some point and plans for phasing out should be anticipated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Source: Horton et al, 2003 p.8]