7xchange

Learning and reflecting with
development organizations
on change management

7x**change**

Preface

Partner Consultation Organizational Change Management

Tear is a Dutch development organization that connects people in the fight against poverty. Tear supports programmes run by professional local churches and Christian organizations in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and offers people in the Netherlands opportunities to become involved in this.

PSO is an association that consists of fifty Dutch development organizations. Tear is one of them. The association focuses on capacity development at social organizations in developing nations. PSO contributes to the quality of the cooperation between Dutch development organizations and their partners, and reinforces the contribution of an independent social civil society to community development and poverty.

Since 2007 Tear and PSO work together in a tailor made agreement to improve the quality of the capacity development interventions in the South focussing on the strengthening of the partnership relations. It is in this light that Tear and PSO facilitated the partner consultation on organizational change management in December 2008. The partners involved, the lessons learned and the organizational case studies are found to be of such significance that we jointly would like to make these lessons available to the interested public. Everything in this publication may be reproduced and used in learning processes, with a clear reference to the authors. The ideas and values in the cases are from the individual organizations and may not necessarily depict the views of other organizations involved.

This publication is recommended to assist development partners in the South and North to learn from each other. How change processes can be supported by theories of organizational change. How these learning experiences in the cases from the involved organizations can inform and inspire others in similar processes. The last section of the publication shares various insights in factors that seem crucial in organizational change processes such as leadership, staff and communication. Secondly, this section shares the experiences on how the learning environment and the shared learning can be effectively facilitated to enable organizations to apply the learned lessons.

Marnix Niemeijer
Director Tear Netherlands

Margo Kooijman
Director PSO capacity building
in developing countries

7x**change**

Change: Are we victims or are we in control?

It is a known fact that change is constantly present in any organization, internally as well as externally and that we have to deal with these changes. Furthermore, it is important to realize that we can influence change and that we, in turn, are influenced by it. We can therefore conclude that the identification of change and an awareness of the need to respond in an appropriate way can help us to better manage the change process. Our organizations can benefit from a proactive approach to change, so the positive effects can be maximized and the negative effects minimized.

In the course of 2008, Tear came up with the idea to organize a workshop in order to explore existing knowledge regarding change management. In its role as a charity organization, Tear has many partnerships with other charities that also deal with causing and undergoing change. Tear believes that studying the process of change with some of its partners could be beneficial for everyone involved. It could further improve the response capacity of the aid programmes for the poor and marginalised in the world.

All invited partners as well as the Tear staff responded enthusiastically when asked to participate. The importance of change management was recognized by everyone.

This publication provides an overview of the struggles experienced in the process. It also offers practical case studies in which successes and failures are explored, thereby providing useful lessons. It shows that we are not victims of change, but that change is something that can be managed. The collective lessons learned are presented as a reflection on our learning process from which the reader could benefit when managing change.

Tear had the privilege of having the presence of six partners at the workshop:

1 ACAT, South Africa: Mr. Gerald Dedekind and Ms. Philippe Dedekind
2 ACET, Uganda: Mr. David Talima
3 Mosoj Yan, Bolivia: Ms. Felina Albornoz Ricalde and
   Ms. Maria Renee Maldonado Sauter
4 MKC, Ethiopia: Mr. Amare Teklu
5 Saahasee, India: Mr. Eddy Mall and Mr. Saurabh Pillay
6 TASK, Cambodia: Mr. Prom Pauv and Mr. Doeun Vuthea

Change #1

Communities take charge of their own development

From Delivery to Empowerment

By changing our approach from delivery of service to the empowerment of communities so they can control their own development, ACAT is now able to influence more people, and to apply this model to other churches and organizations.

ACAT / South-Africa / Mr. Gerald Dedekind and
Ms. Philippe Dedekind
(Africa Co-operative Action Trust)

Facts about ACAT

Geography: rural area of KwaZulu-Natal.
Vision: ACAT is an instrument in God's Hand in the liberation of the poor people of Africa from their spiritual, mental and physical poverty, providing a sustainable lifestyle that is God-centred and people-oriented.
Mission: Designing and implementing training and mentoring programmes aimed at equipping people to be sustainable in every aspect of their lives and to influence, motivate and assist others to achieve the same.
Programmes: Sustainable Agriculture Programme (SAP), Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDP) and Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET).
Staff: 35
Annual Budget: € 600.000

For 30 years, ACAT provided services aimed at improving the livelihoods of poor rural families in 19 'poverty pockets' in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. In the past, an ACAT staff member would provide ACAT's development services in terms of food production, income-generation initiatives, health, HIV and spiritual issues. In addition, he would organize discussions on the causes of poverty. The staff member worked in a specific area aided by groups of five people. However, ACAT's vision is to facilitate sustainable development in such a way that people claim ownership and take responsibility for their own destiny. In evaluating ACAT in terms of this ethos, the level of community dependence on ACAT turned out to be too high. In addition, the demand for ACAT's services increased as local governments failed to provide effective services in rural areas.

These factors necessitated a shift in ACAT's approach from delivery via extension staff only, to mentoring selected community volunteers from the groups of five. These volunteers formed zone and central committees responsible for implementing, managing and governing development interventions themselves.

The ACAT board adjusted its vision and mission statement to emphasize this new approach. The details of the ACAT programmes were also adjusted to correspond with the intended shift from delivery to empowerment, for example by organizing participatory workshops with the community and staff of ACAT. New training material was developed and additional training was given to the staff, community volunteers and committees. These trainings were aimed at increasing their capacity in the specialized areas of food production, basic business, health and life skills. The new skills consisted of programme implementation, administrative work, fundraising, management, systematic planning and monitoring progress, and the authority required to direct and supervise development in their communities.

Community volunteers and committee members are regularly invited to a central venue in order to discuss the progress made in the change process and to report back on the development in their own communities. Management information systems in the communities as well as the ACAT levels were adjusted to accommodate this change. This included a rewards-based system rather than a

direct remuneration structure so as to provide limited incentives to community volunteers in their self-sacrificing commitment to their communities.

Benefits of this change

140 Community volunteers and committee members are trained each year to serve in 77 decentralized zones and 13 centralized management committees in 19 areas.
Staff, community volunteers and committees have acquired new skills linked to the new training material described above.
Community ownership of / responsibility for their own development increased, as evidenced by committees registering as legal entities. These entities are entitled to raise funds, to start new groups, to administrate small loans, to manage and evaluate their community volunteers, to provide training and to network with other stakeholders in their areas, and to make their own decisions for the welfare of the communities they represent.
Instead of communities depending on local government to provide development services, they are now able to offer the services themselves and to lobby local government for support.
ACAT staff members are encouraged to replicate these services in new areas, thereby influencing more people.

ACAT now has an adaptable sustainable, community-driven development model with supporting training modules and documentation. It has the potential to be exported to other areas, organizations and churches whose purpose is to address and overcome poverty.

ACET / Uganda / Mr. David Talima

Facts about ACET

- # Geography: East Africa, Kampala (Central Uganda), Mbale (East Uganda), Kitgum (North Uganda, 21 years of war).
- # Vision: A continent where HIV/Aids has been eradicated and the impact mitigated at all levels.
- # Mission: ACET acts as a catalyst to the development of HIV/Aids responses at all levels of society (local and regional) and strives to build the capacity of the church and civil society organizations to sustain responses to HIV/Aids and Aids (local and international) and to provide psychosocial education and support to young people.
- # Programmes: Life skills education programme, Capacity building, Sustainable livelihood, Working with men, Church mobilization, Material development, Programme development, Knowledge management.
- # Staff: 25
- # Annual Budget: € 550.000

Change #2

A HIV/Aids ngo turns focus to boy child

Uganda culture emphasises the need to keep the girl child morally upright, while the boy child is expected to take care of himself. As a result, the boys cannot meet the marriage requirements of the young ladies. They have often been described as 'not serious with life' and 'not marriage material', and their decisions are described as not thought-through. It was evident from a baseline carried out in our target communities by ACET Uganda, that there is a need to build the psychosocial competence of the boy child.

Research carried out over the last three years in Uganda clearly indicates a decrease in the HIV infection rates among young people. Research and experience also demonstrate that the focus was often on girls and women, both in the HIV/Aids interventions from the many HIV organizations and in those from the Ugandan government. Girls and women are generally considered more vulnerable than boys and men.

Being aware of this, ACET Uganda decided early in 2008 to add a boy-focussed component to their HIV and Aids programme. An important issue was to maintain the national decrease in HIV infection rates among young people. It was considered equally important to devise appropriate support systems surrounding the boy child to sustain the interventions initiatives and to influence cultural values.

The response

ACET was inspired by Donald Trump's management theory in which people from different backgrounds are employed to accomplish different tasks in order to enhance organizational effectiveness. ACET applied some of these principles in their boy-focused HIV programme. Changes were therefore required in ACET's internal systems and its processes. Its 30 staff members worked in small teams to develop a new life skills education package for boys. The package addresses the boy child as well as all the necessary support structures and stakeholders around the boy child. The teams with their respective leaders were allocated a budget to support their designing process. The new internal system also included a team appraisal system which differed from the earlier individual appraisal system. To bring about this externally driven change, ACET had to deal with altered internal processes and systems.

Figure 1:
Conceptual framework
for the change process
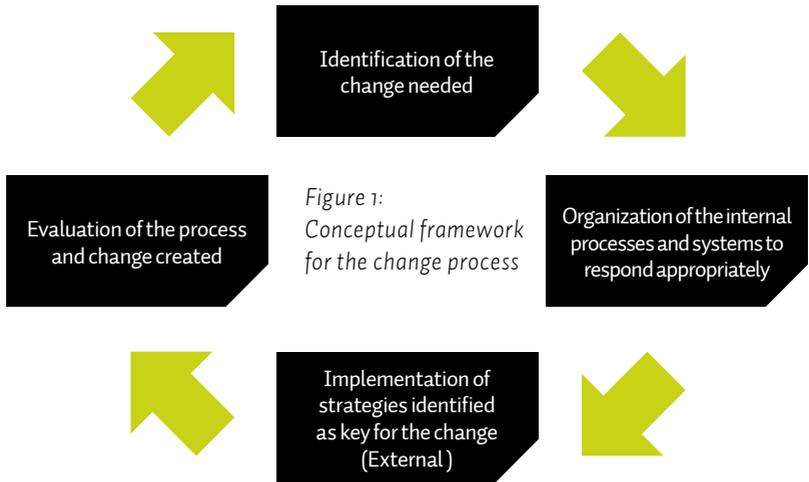
After almost one year, ACET has achieved a new HIV approach but still has to manage the distinct internal and external changes. The staff has acquired new skills in project coordination, management, financial management and designing education materials. In addition, they were encouraged to fully exploit their creativeness. Through the joint work and assessment, the sense of ownership and appreciation of the programme was enhanced among the team members. The teams tackled restrictive forces, both internal and external, in creative ways. Initially, cultural resistance to external changes was strong, but it can be dealt with through motivational dialogue strategies.

The change in HIV targeting was externally enforced and involved massive internal changes. ACET tackled the issues in an integrated way and managed to make the changes effective.

Change #3

From separation to integration

A change that has saved lives

In Bolivia, many girls leave their dysfunctional families because of violence and abuse. They suffer from low self-esteem, they end up living on the streets, they prostitute themselves and get addicted to drugs and alcohol. In this light, it is important to set up an integrated and multifaceted treatment programme in order to help the girls to abandon this life and reintegrate into society. For many years, separate centres attended only to a part of the girls´ problems. Consequently, girls often fell back after having received only part of the required treatment.

Bolivia / Mosoj Yan / Ms. Felima Albornoz Ricalde (l) and
Ms. Maria Renee Maldonado Sauter (r)

Facts about Mosoj Yan
- # Geography: Cochabamba (central region Bolivia).
- # Vision: Every girl, young woman and young mother in Bolivia should live her life with health and dignity.
- # Mission: Based on the principles and values of God's kingdom, we aim to develop and enhance the abilities of young girls and working women who live on the streets through programmes that focus on education and health.
- # Programme: For at-risk girls and women to develop their abilities: educational, psychological social, etc., and to educate them about their rights and value as women on a case by case basis, so they may be reintegrated into their families and society.
- # Staff: 32
- # Annual Budget: € 275.000

Mosoj Yan, a Christian organization working with street girls in Cochabamba, has now established an interconnected treatment system, which has proved very successful. It involves a step-by-step treatment with three different phases: firstly, motivating the girls to leave the streets and give up their drug habits, secondly, detoxification, and, finally, teaching the girls specific skills to live a healthy life. As a result, the risk of falling back into their former habits decrease and their chances of reintegrating into society improve.

How it all started

Mosoj Yan, which means 'New Path' in Quechua, is a Christian Institution that has been involved in helping young girls, mothers and women who live and work on the streets of Cochabamba, Bolivia since 1991. In carrying out its work, Mosoj Yan draws on the principles and values of God's kingdom to develop and enhance the abilities of young girls and working women through programmes focusing on education and health.

Over the years, Mosoj Yan designed a model for effective intervention initiatives for girls that live on the streets and are addicted to drugs. Initially, the programme consisted of separate centres offering different kinds of treatment and support to the different target groups. Due to this dispersed approach, some of the girls did not finish their treatment and fell back into their former habits and ended up on the streets once again. Mosoj Yan saw the urgent need for an integrated approach to this problem. This involved changing the structure of their programme. Instead of separate centres, an integrated cycle of support would be created in which the different centres complemented each other. Such an approach would lead to a more sustainable change in the lives of the girls.

Setbacks in the change process

During this process of change, Mosoj Yan faced various problems at different levels of the organization. Firstly, several staff members were not ready for this change because they lacked the required skills to treat drug and alcohol abuse. Moreover, several board members, as well as the director, were afraid of implementing this change due to limited financial resources, lack of knowledge and lack of faith. The first attempt to bring about change took place in 1997,

but it failed as a result of this sistance. In 2005, the staff of one of the centres submitted a proposal for change to the board. This proposal showed that the problems had increased and that need for change had become even more urgent. Many girls had fallen back into their former lives because they had not been fully prepared to face the problems in the real world. This was concluded by a participative evaluation of the needs of the target group. The initiative of this group has been an important success factor in the implementation of the change. The staff recognized the existing needs of the target group and they had the capacities to devise the type of change that was needed. Moreover, they had the courage to make it known to the decision makers.

Strategies used to bring about change

Different strategies were used to change the programme. Firstly, it was necessary to open a new centre that focused on the treatment of drug abuse in particular. Additional funding had to be acquired to finance the construction of the new centre. Secondly, several personnel changes were needed. Staff members who already possessed the skills needed to treat drug abuse were divided over the different centres in order to train others. Another very important factor was that the staff prayed for many years, asking God to show them how they could work more effectively and save more lives. With the support of Tear, one of their donors, Mosoj Yan was able to start the process of change by connecting the different centres of the programme and to develop a full cycle treatment for drug addicts.

Lessons learned

The process of change might have been completed sooner if the staff had had the necessary skills to treat drug abuse. Lack of these skills caused feelings of insecurity and fear of change. The capacity building of the staff could have taken place at an earlier stage as well. The programme would then have had a greater impact on the harsh reality of life of girls living on the street.

Mosoj Yan is currently turning their programme into an integrated model to support street girls. They intend to train other organizations to bring about similar effects on this target group.

MKC-RDA / Ethiopia / Mr. Amare Teklu
(Meserete Kristos Church relief and development association)

Facts about MKC-RDA

Geography: The entire country, specifically in parts facing the most serious problems.
Vision: To establish a peaceful and just Ethiopian society that is free from the bondage of poverty and sin, where each individual in the community is reconciled and at peace with God and with his/her neighbour, showing proper stewardship towards the environment and attaining their God-given potential.
Mission: To promote peace and justice in Ethiopia by addressing the economic, social, cultural and spiritual needs of the poor rural and urban communities in a holistic manner, in such a way that both individuals and communities will glorify God Almighty for the positive and sustainable transformation in their lives.
Programmes: Food Security, Education, HIV.
Staff: about 20 in the head office, 150 in different projects.
Annual Budget: € 3.000.000

Change **#4**

Track change otherwise change tracks you

From top-down to participatory organizational management

MKC-RDA is a church-based development association established in 1998 working in Christ's love in order to establish a peaceful and just Ethiopian society that is free from the bondage of poverty and sin. The association has contributed markedly to securing sustainable livelihoods for thousands of the poorest of the poor. The experience and commitment of its leaders, coupled with the determination of the working force were decisive factors in the changes made so far.

In the development course of the association, however, the general workforce formulated progressive demands for changes to improve the organizational personality (e.g. reward system, organizational structure, and management style), the organizational capacity (e.g. staff quality, professional diversification and training strategy) and accountability (e.g. effectiveness of quality, comprehensiveness and suitability of projects and programmes reports).

Nevertheless, the leaders focused on the success of the association (end result) rather than on the aforementioned contributing factors. Time went by, but the request for change remained unanswered. As a result, the willpower of the employees deteriorated; a considerable number of staff members left the association, and the situation among the remaining staff became unstable. Still, the employees prayed constantly.

After three to four months, God answered their prayers, and brought about a change among the leaders through a win-win solution. The ex-leader of the organization was reassigned to a better position and God brought in a competent new leader to take over.

The board, the management team and the workforce then agreed to address the necessary changes. The changes were subsequently prioritized with full and transparent participation and the involvement of everyone involved; new strategies were developed, some of which were implemented as planned. The association used the initial change as an opportunity for further development.

Some striking results:
a staff salary and benefit amendment proposal has been developed and approved by the board;
the organizational structure has been amended and the proposal submitted to the board for approval;
an effective and efficient project performance reporting framework has been developed and adapted by staff;
organizational reflection and educational framework has been developed and is currently in the pipeline to be implemented;

a number of professional vacancies have been posted; applications are being submitted and the vacancies are expected to be filled shortly.

Whilst these changes have been implemented, the following changes are already visible:
improvement in employees' efficiency;
improvement in staff collaboration, team spirit and communication;
increased interest in sharing and learning from each other;
improvement in participation in common activities;
improvement in transparency of and participation in decision making.

As a result, through a learning process and with the forthcoming interventions, we expect a competent staff, determined to maximize the association's response to the needs of primary stakeholders, donors and target groups.

So far, we have learned that change management can be more effective and efficient if we include all the relevant parties on all levels of the change process; identification, planning, implementation and management. Yet, the resistance to the required changes of powerful people at the apex of the organization might be hard to beat. We should therefore keep praying. God will answer prayers.

Change #5

From service deliverers to investors

We work in urban slum communities in Mumbai and New Delhi, India. The population of the respective cities is approximately 15 million. Our target population is 1 million poor slum dwellers. These people live and survive in small and dingy shanties and resettlement colonies. The slums are characterized by disease, crime, abuse, addiction, prostitution and abject poverty. In addition, migration from the villages to the cities caused by poverty increases pressure on planners, government and development organizations. There is a strong lack of sense of community and solidarity.

SAAHASEE / India / Mr. Saurabh Pillay (l) and Mr. Eddy Mall (r)

Facts about SAAHASEE

\#   Geography : Mumbai Thane, Bhiwandi, Pune and New Delhi.

\#   Vision : We believe we are called to see the poor in our nation empowered
     and celebrating life in a community where dignity, freedom and justice prevail.

\#   Mission : Working in partnership with community-based organizations
     through sustainable development programmes.

\#   Programmes : Community mobilization, Development of Self Help groups and
     their management, Micro finance and Institutional Linkages, Business
     Development Micro, Small and Medium scale, and 8 other programmes.

\#   Staff : about 60

\#   Annual Budget : € 450.000

Our Response

In this environment SAAHASEE's aim is to form relationships and establish trust in the community. We have found that poor slum women are far more receptive to being driving forces behind the community's development. Our main intervention initiative is to organize the fragmented community into small groups of 15-20 women who reside within a small pocket of the slum. These women come together primarily because of the economic needs of their families. They are in desperate need of money for emergencies and family development. We presently have 1800 groups and a total of 25000 members spread over our different pockets of the slums.

Communities - Point of commonality

Under these circumstances, where the poor live either in nuclear families or individually, the choice to subdivide them into smaller groups in order to discuss how to accumulate savings has proved quite successful. In such situations people come together primarily out of the need to borrow money. The so-called loan sharks lending money do so at exorbitant interest rates. Money required for marriages, funerals, hospitalization, or education is always very hard to find. It sounded absurd to address these needs in the context of saving money. But when broken down to one rupee a day, it seemed much more manageable. Women particularly liked the idea as they saved thirty rupees per month. As we added the savings to the collective of the neighbourhood (10-15 women), they realized they had a collective sum of rupees 3000 per month.

Change in community - From dependence to interdependence

This project formed the basis of organizing the community into a structured system. Similar groups were formed by SAAHASEE in adjoining slum pockets. The increase of women self help groups (SHG) over the last fifteen years has resulted in 1500 SHGs with a membership base of 25,000 women divided over different pockets of the slums we work in. The total accumulation of savings over a period of time has grown to more than one million pounds.

Community self-confidence and power grows - Savings and loans

These women and their groups are trained and appointed as community representatives and community developers. The accumulated savings of this army of trained women amounts to approximately one million pounds over the last fifteen years. This collection of small savings has enabled the women to bring development into their own families and communities.

Over 40,000 loans have been issued from this amount, all of which have been used by families in the slums. Each group has elected office bearers and abides by the rules and regulations formed by laws. SAAHASEE perceives these women as focal points of capacity building towards the development of the slums. These groups and their apex bodies (federations) discuss and solve community issues ranging from family problems to health, sanitation, access to basic services, education facilities, employment and economic issues.

Community-based structured mechanism for development

Over the years, these groups and federations have been capable of taking the role of furthering the self-help group movement and training the community towards dealing with community issues in poverty reduction programmes. Both the individual members and the groups are linked to their respective federations. The money is deposited at the local bank. The signatories of these bank accounts, who are the elected representatives of the federations (apex body of the slum pocket) no longer need hand holding in dealing with local community issues from a service delivery perspective. Having mapped and worked with SAAHASEE in the area, they are now fully aware of where to find these services and how to come into contact with other suppliers.

A structured mechanism of management and money lending is now well established. The driving force of these reforms in terms of numbers, range of influence, financial base and community development can be evaluated based on the fact that local government, banking institutions, health and education institutions are interested in negotiating directly with the communities regarding development projects.

From Service delivery to Investors- SAAHASEE

The service delivery mode of SAAHASEE has therefore also undergone a transformation. In our view, the development of the community resembles the growth of a child to adulthood. The needs of the community-based organizations have changed and now demand upscaling and sustainability. In order to achieve this goal, it is essential to establish close linkages between the groups and their federations on the one hand, and the Local Government, Banking Institutions, Health and Education Institutions, Business Houses and Establishments on the other. The role of SAAHASEE now is to develop and formalize such linkages. We have different instruments to provide consultancy services to the CBOs in which costs will be shared or paid by the community (particularly the financially and managerially mature CBOs).

Defining the change: The role of SAAHASEE

Over the last twelve years, we have worked on building trust and training the community. We have reached a point where the community is now capable of managing the services that we used to deliver.

We wish to continue to further empower the community, which requires the development of new skills. Firstly, building and formalizing linkages with external institutions and development stakeholders, and secondly, developing micro businesses and S/MEs. *In short, the community moved from 'dependence to interdependence', and from 'users to managers' while SAAHASEE moved from 'service delivery to investors'.*

Change effect within SAAHASEE

The change process has not been easy. We had to change our role and our approach; we had to review our structure, our systems and shared values. In addition, it required changing mindsets and the development of new skills within the staff. Moreover, we had to review and change our mission statement.

Driving forces

The initial starting point was to be sensitive to the needs and requirements of the community. The community (and their leaders) and the need for finance formed the driving forces. The Board and leaders were also crucial proponents in the process. In addition, staff members were very keen to bring it into practice. The majority of our donors supported the rationale of the change we wished to implement.

Resisting forces

Some of our donors, staff members and board members resisted the change process. Local politicians and moneylenders, too, were very much opposed to it, as were some of the community members.

Lessons learned

Done well

We are aware of the importance of being sensitive to the reality of women and of letting change run its course. We also learned that we had to equally share ownership between SAAHASEE and the community. We had to deal with the insecurities of the staff and the community. We learned the importance of a strong relationship based on trust and mutual respect. The role of consultants in implementing the changes in terms of structure, systems, mission etc. proved very helpful. We also learned that open communication was key to processing and accepting the changes. Furthermore, we learned that a core team should manage and systematically structure the changes, setting time bound goals.

Not Done well

We were too participatory involved and informal with some of the staff members. The process could have been more efficient and less time-consuming. We could have done more research on types of change in practice.

TASK / Cambodia / Mr. Doeun Vuthea (l) and Mr. Prom Pauv (r)

Facts about TASK

Geography: Mean Chey District, Phnom Penh.
Vision: To see the lives of the poor transformed through the love and salvation of Christ, to improve health and living conditions, and to strengthen community relationships.
Mission: To be good and honest role models in the community, to partner with poor people as well as other stakeholders in an empowering way, so as to provide quality training, education, health and other development programmes that demonstrate God's love and can help improve the lives of poor people and their communities.
Programmes: Aids Home Care, Community Sanitation and Development (CSD), HIV/Aids education, Hope Assistance and Love for Orphans (HALO), Nutrition, Teenage Drug Users Rehabilitation (TDUR), The Little Conquerors (TLC, with disabled children), Women's Health.
Staff: 37
Annual Budget: € 450.000

From international to national

From Servants to Asia's Urban Poor to TASK

Pol Pot came to power in Cambodia in 1975. By 1978, two million people had died, most of whom were well educated. The result was not only a devastated country, but also a lack of proficient Cambodians to rebuild the country. In the following years, expatriate NGO's entered the country in order to rebuild it. Servants to Asia's Urban Poor arrived in 1993, focusing on the slums of Phnom Penh and tackling health issues in particular. By 2001, the organization consisted of ten expatriates and nineteen local staff members. At that time, the idea arose to hand over the leadership of the organization to the local staff.

Staff Reaction

When the idea was first shared with us, we were surprised. We felt that we did not have the necessary skills to run the organization, and were especially anxious about how to relate to the donors. Would we be able to raise enough money to run the organization? Would we lose our jobs? Would we be able to serve the beneficiaries? We were worried that an autocratic leader might be installed whose priority would not be in training the staff. We were also concerned about a possible lack of transparency. Moreover, we had heard of other organizations that had nationalized their leadership and had failed as a result.

Consultation

After the idea had been formally announced, we were given five months of staff consultation. First, we went on a retreat together in order to discuss our concerns. However, this would work only if we presented possible solutions to the problems. The leaders, both expatriates and Cambodian, discussed these matters over three retreat sessions. They reported back to the staff on each occasion and asked for further reflection and comments. The main concerns centred on how to expand the capacity of the staff to run the organization. Other issues, such as an appropriate leadership structure, implications for the constitution, and staff policy, were reviewed in the light of this change. At the same time, the other major stakeholders, like donors and beneficiaries, were informed and consulted for ideas. At the end of the consultation period, the organization signed an agreement with a consultancy agency to carry out comprehensive staff trainings in proposal and report writing, leadership, management, financial management and in problem solving skills. These sessions took place during two years, with trainings lasting one week while the office was closed. After each session we returned to work for three months to implement what we had learned.

Lessons learned

Including everyone in the discussions about the type of organization we should be, ensured that, after the initial shock, little resistance remained to the idea of national leadership. We became enthusiastic about and excited by the project. We were convinced that it was the right long-term direction to take and we were encouraged by the training we received. Staff concerns about leadership were solved by a decision to appoint two directors with equal powers instead of one. As no-one left the organization during this period, it is clear that people were convinced by this participative approach.

On reflection, however, a number of things could have been done better. The consultative approach to the change process was in some ways confusing as well. Had we been clearer from the start about how certain key elements functioned within the change process, the project might have been executed more smoothly.

We should have had (1) a clear time table at the beginning of the change process to have a clearer picture of the schedule and the focal points for each stage of the process. (2) A monitoring process could have helped us to follow that timetable. (3) Everyone should have had a clearer idea of their individual roles within the change process and of what was expected of them during various stages. (4) The team of leaders should have delegated more tasks to others in the organization. (5) Lines of communication should have been explained more clearly in advance. (6) Trainings should have been targeted on the specific needs of the staff members and on their work within the new organization. (7) We should have had a more formal process of informing the donors about the changes and asking them for their insights and advice.

Change #7

Networking: striking the balance

Increasing your influence through networking requires effective choices

Working with other organizations in networks is an important strategy for Tear. It increases our mission's influence, it enhances opportunities for linking and learning, and it helps us to find new funding schemes. But these benefits come at a price. The influence of the network on Tear might threaten our own organization, its values and its existing relationships. We found that it is important to have a strong internal structure to support the external network. Good management of networks is important so that decisions concerning the role of Tear within these networks can be based on calculated costs and benefits.

Tear / The Netherlands / Ms. Jolien Glashouwer (l),
Mr. Caspar Waalewijn and Ms. Michaëla Lorier (r)

Facts about Tear
Geography: Africa, Asia and Latin America.
Vision: Tear operates in a world where for many people, daily life and future possibilities are determined by poverty, natural and man-made disasters, and their consequences. Considering this reality, Tear works within a worldwide network of Christians who are committed to combating the causes and consequences of poverty and the injustice associated with this, and working on the restoration of relationships and just relations.
Mission: Tear connects people in the fight against poverty by supporting local partner organizations elsewhere in the world, calling upon Christians in the Netherlands to be aware of the need for and to play an active role in poverty alleviation and creating opportunities for South and North to meet for the purpose of mutual learning and encouragement.
Focus area: Livelihood, Health, Water, HIV/Aids, Education, Food security, Emergency Relief, Reconstruction and Disaster Management.
Staff: 25
Annual Budget: € 7.000.000

The Tear situation

Tear is a development organization working with forty partner organizations in about twenty countries. We help these organizations to be effective in supporting the poor in their country. As the root causes for poverty are often complex, Tear is aware that our work is most effective when it takes place in cooperation with other organizations. When it comes to our work in the Netherlands, Tear wants to encourage more people to contribute to poverty reduction and adherence to human rights. The Micah campaign, for which many organizations and churches joined together, showed how public awareness can be raised by cooperating organizations. Tear is committed to contributing to similar joint work in the future.

Some of our networks

Tear is involved in different networks. Some of them are devoted to a specific issue, like *Capacity Strengthening* in the PSO network. Others are based on common core values, like the *Prisma* network in the Netherlands. Some offer opportunities to coordinate support to partner organizations, like *Integral*. The Micah campaign in the Netherlands was meant to raise awareness. New opportunities for funding have been accessed, like MFS funding from the Dutch government via *Prisma*. In addition, we constantly learn from joint evaluations.

Networks come with a cost

Some costs of networks are hidden, as a lot of networking with partners abroad is done by staff members on top of their own work. This may cause neglect of regular tasks and could result in unclear management of the investments and benefits of the networks. Lack of management of network involvement within Tear reduces the results of some of our networks. Individual staff members might learn important lessons, but these do not flow back into the organization without internal evaluation of the network results. As such, it is possible that we know more about other organizations than we do about our own colleagues.

To join or not to join

Reflection on the benefits and costs is imperative when networking. Decisions to join or not to join can then be made consciously, based on given costs and benefits. Tear does not have the resources to invest in a large number of networks in a meaningful

way. Although it is possible to 'float' with a network, such minimal involvement may not be satisfying to either the network or Tear. Networks need members who can take on tasks, develop new plans, prepare for events and deepen understanding. If a member is consistently unable to contribute in such a way, participation can be frustrating to all parties. If Tear takes a conscious decision to join it means resources should be allocated to contribute to those networks and to achieve the desired results.

Room for emotions in major decisions

Decisions to leave a network can be painful to the other network members, as well as to the Tear staff members linked with the network. Clear communication and a well designed process of joining or leaving a network is therefore important. The common vision within Tear provides a strong basis for accepting difficult decisions. Accepting decisions is easier when there is room for feelings about leaving the network even when all staff members share the vision and realize that it is not practically realistic to continue participating in the network.

Management lessons for change in networks

- \# Networks need time to develop, so benefits and costs are not always clear in the beginning.
- \# Do not be too careful in exploring new networks, but make a deliberate choice before becoming a full member.
- \# Develop an instrument to assess a possible new network to help make a considered choice.
- \# Develop a review tool for regular assessment of the added value of existing networks.
- \# Develop an internal mechanism for contributing to and sharing lessons from the network for all staff members, otherwise the results will not meet expectations.
- \# Make sure to involve the relevant staff members before joining or leaving a network, so that their point of view is taken into account when reaching a decision.

The network continues

Networks have much to offer to development organizations and are a requirement for effective work. They may be of great importance to the work of the staff, and may increase the influence of the organization. Decisions concerning joining or leaving a network have to be made very carefully. Effective management of networks can then take place.

What we learned about change management

For this workshop, we drew on the learning cycle according to Kolb. It involves moving from concrete experience (the cases from the own organizations) to reflecting on the cases. We made use of a theoretical framework and applied models for abstract conceptualization. The cycle was completed by distinguishing the lessons learned. As such, the insights gained can be used in new, concrete experimentation and make us better equipped for future changes.

Our outline of lessons learned can be useful for similar cases where change processes are involved. Below, we have formulated do's and don'ts drawn from our own experience. They are subdivided into several categories: the board, the leadership, and the staff. In addition, we discuss the need for change, issues of communication and the process of implementing change.

Leadership

A motivated director is often a strong driving force in the change process. A strong basis of spiritual values can strengthen this motivation. It generates energy, joy, flow and perseverance. As a leader, be aware of the power you enjoy due to your position. Remember you can help improve the process and help the people involved by being a missionary for your vision, transparent in your expectations, wise in speaking and upright in behaviour. In complex processes, you will not be able to see everything that happens. Having a strong vision and a clear idea of the direction you want to go, will help you to trust in the process. Having a strong foundation in spiritual values can be helpful in this respect as well.

Board

Especially in the case of a change in strategy and missions statement, the director needs to invest in acquiring a loyal and unified board. You will need

support for the goals set for the change process. It is important to know the opponents and supporters of the intended change. The board takes important decisions, so the members must be well-equipped and be given the time to get actively involved in the process.

Needs

Most change processes are not fully planned in advance, but rather develop naturally. In order to prevent finding yourself in the midst of a change process, make sure you develop your organizational sensitivity in order to recognize signals from the community and the needs of the beneficiaries. Such a proactive approach keeps you in the driving seat during the change process. You have to know the driving forces, why this change is necessary and who will benefit from the change. A key element in the change process is that all main stakeholders are aware of the needs and problems. Everyone will then be motivated to work on a solution. However, the chosen direction or the kind of solution can cause resistance, resulting in new discussions and negotiations.

Staff

Make sure to involve the staff early on in the process, as a committed staff can be helpful. You will need their cooperation, so keep talking to them, both collectively and individually. But also make sure to plan when to end the discussions. Be clear about what you expect from the staff at different points in time: at the beginning, during, and at the end of the process, as well as at specific moments of action. External changes have implications for internal processes and systems within the organization. For that reason, be sure to treat your staff with the attention they deserve, since they are responsible for bringing about the changes in behaviour that in turn lead to new deliveries and results.

Communication

Clear and open communication helps to identify common problems and needs. That same communication then also helps to increase people's acceptance of change and their acceptance of the direction of change. It is important to get everyone on board, to listen to your opponents, to try to understand their points of view and use the comments and arguments to improve the change process.

Implementation

There is a tension between the reality of change that 'just happens' and the need to control change. It is therefore important to be sensitive to signals of change at an early stage in order to act proactively rather than reactively. Make a thorough analysis in cooperation with the main actors and stakeholders to create a broad basis for a successful implementation of a systematic change process. This requires identification of all change actors and stakeholders involved. Such an approach results in a carefully defined and clearly articulated problem.

Thorough analysis and a high-quality monitoring and evaluating system increases time efficiency, adequacy and effectiveness. Using these instruments can enable you to reach your goals more rapidly and it might even save lives.

An important part of the analysis is the 'force field analysis', which might improve your understanding of what is happening. Prepare yourself also by studying best practice models. Do not hesitate to call on consultants if necessary; make a clear time table and a plan and, above all: take small steps!

Alone you can learn, together you can learn more

Learning as an organization and learning together with your partners are interesting areas of study. Research has shown that organizational learning is a widely discussed phenomenon. Important related questions deal with how this type of learning can be put into practice, how it should be organized, who the participants are and which conditions are important. Tear's experience with the Partner Consultation 2008, which was evaluated by all the participants, provides suggestions and answers to some of these questions.

Preparation

When inviting partners, make sure they have sufficient time to prepare themselves. Not only because they need to make arrangements for the absence from their daily work and for their journey, but also to prepare on the content of the consultation. When working for example on case studies, make sure to send a format at least three weeks in advance. When stories are shared among partners prior to their arrival, the partners should already have background information about the individual cases. Communicate clearly on the overall goal, the purpose of the workshop and the choice of partners. Improvement can consist in actively involving the partner in the preparation, from the very start, e.g. by using a small preparation (network) group. If a translator is needed, provide the necessary material (workbook, case studies) at least a week prior to the event, so he/she can become familiar with it.

Participants

The partner consultation consisted of a variety of partners from different countries and different types of organizations, each with its own mission. During the consultation, people were able to mingle and this variety was thought to be truly enriching. Each organization was represented by two people from different management levels, so they could bring in different experiences and perspectives on their own case. (Quote: 'I appreciate two people being invited from each organization – it forces each one to think through issues and challenge each other's perspectives – to the benefit of our organization.')

It is crucial for the success of the consultation that the right people are invited. It is important that the participants understand what is being discussed and also that they are in a position to apply what they have learned on their return to their own organization. Therefore, at least one of the representatives of each organization should be in the position to apply the lessons learned. Motivation and knowledge can be increased to a considerable degree if the participating organizations are working on or planning to work on the subject discussed in the workshop, so that lessons learned are directly applicable.

Content

The partner consultation dealt with organizational change and change management. The method of learning together was based on sharing knowledge about their own organizational cases, based on experience. The theory was used only to offer tools to reflect on that experience in a more structured way. It was helpful to rely on simple models and apply them to each case study. As repeating the models made them more understandable and applicable, they were also easier to recollect and be used. The force field analysis model of Kurt Lewin e.g. was used persistently and participants will never forget this model. (Quote: 'The consultation was organized in a very structured way and step-by-step we learned about different models and processes by putting the learning into practice.'). Part of the learning process of the participants was a 'writing workshop'. They were invited to reflect on their case analysis and the lessons they had learned, as well as to reproduce the central issues in a short story that would be understandable for an outsider. This session had the additional advantage of ready-made material that could be used for distribution to a broader audience of the lessons learned. It became clear that the participants from the various countries needed help in producing the English text, particularly when English was not their first language.

Programme and organization

It is important to allocate yourself enough time for a number of reasons. To some extent, estimating the time needed for the different work sessions during the week is more or less a guess. This partner consultation showed that at least half a day was required for each case in order to gain insight into the analyses. The day and a half that was planned for the writing workshop proved too short to include two rounds of feedback meant for improving the final product.

Be sure to plan a long lunch break, as most participants are used to taking a rest in the afternoon. Try to alternate intensive work sessions and other, relaxing activities, like a trip or excursion. For some participants it is the first and only chance to travel around the country they are visiting. This partner consultation took place in The Netherlands, but this should not always be the case. Rather, in order to maintain equality among partners, it should take place in any of the participating countries.

Conditions for learning

Because of obvious differences in roles and responsibilities between the financing NGO and the participating partners in terms of dependency, it is important to be aware of these differences and to pay attention to the quality of relationship throughout the meeting. Words like mutuality and equality are central to our approach. This approach requires us to be open and respectful towards each other, to be curious, and to value the contribution of each participant. In addition, it requires readiness to inspect your own mental models and the courage to be vulnerable. It is important to facilitate equivalent contributions from each participant. If the methodology of your choice is to use case studies, all participating organizations should bring in their own case, and the organizing organization should also fully participate in the programme. The participants of the Tear consultation valued the inclusiveness and participatory way of working. They experienced openness and respect, and they expressed how they felt the distance close between northern and southern organizations. (Quote: 'The use of a highly participatory methodology got all the participants involved and felt valued.')

Follow up

Organizational learning can be initiated by a partner consultation. It is more likely to be continued if a follow-up is arranged after the consultation. This can be done in several ways, e.g. by forming a temporary virtual network (an email group) or by providing reminders from the staff of the donor organization using the material from the workshop. As mentioned above, a sense of urgency in applying the lessons learned back home forms the strongest foundation for a productive follow-up and generation of the desired effect.

Colophon