

From Train4Dev to learn4dev

Ten Years of Learning for Development

A short history of the network

By Gérard van Bilzen



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A first donor meeting was organised by the British Department for International Development (DfID) in East Kilbride, near Glasgow in Scotland, in September 2003. At that time the name “Train4Dev” was not used yet. The title of the meeting was “Like-Minded Donors Training Conference”.

» Improve cooperation between donors in the areas of training and development. «

The aim of this conference was to improve cooperation between donors in the area of training and development. It built on the results of the 2002 Monterrey “UN Conference on Financing of Development”, which defined quite clearly the goals: priorities for low-income countries, building local capacities and supporting local policy reform strategies. It built also on the Rome Declaration on Harmonisation, as agreed during the 1st High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Rome, February 2003. Delegations to the Glasgow meeting came from the UK, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Germany, plus individual representatives from Finland, Canada, Australia, Ireland, Greece and Belgium.

The meeting showed a keen interest in cooperating in the development of training programmes and sharing these programmes, at home and overseas. One of the key-examples discussed in that context was the case of Joint Donor Staff Training in the area of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, as developed by the World Bank and the Netherlands (as reported by DANIDA). A first pilot training programme took place early 2002, where representatives from eight different donors were present. That pilot was successful and it was decided to continue the programme, but with a more systematic approach.

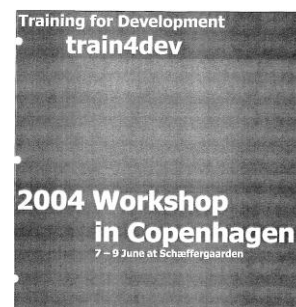
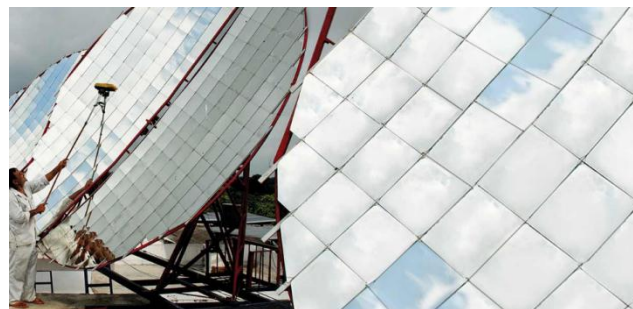
» First overseas training sessions for local staff were organised in Maputo and Hanoi. «

Based on financial guarantees by the Dutch government a first series of 10 ses-

sions could be organised; first overseas training sessions for local staff were organised in Maputo and Hanoi. The meeting also reviewed a joint e-learning programme on HIV/AIDS developed by Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland. The Conference identified other areas for possible other joint

training: Sector Wide Approaches (SWAp), Private Sector Development, Alignment of Procedures for Budget Support, implementation of Joint Governance Programmes, Peace Building and Conflict Prevention. Also the possibility of jointly developing e-learning courses was mentioned. Differences in administrative and contracting procedures were identified as possible barriers. Already during that first meeting it was suggested to have a joint website,

permitting to exchange experiences. The German InWent volunteered to develop such a website. Different participants also exchanged experiences with respect to evaluating the results and impact of training programmes. The conference suggested involving the World Bank, USAID, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the European Commission in future joint activities.



The second meeting was labelled “2nd Donor Workshop on Competence Development and Staff Training” and was jointly organised by the Danish DANIDA and Norwegian NORAD in Copenhagen. The Workshop made not only reference to the Monterrey and Rome Declarations but also to the Millennium Development Goals and the DAC “Good Practice Paper on Harmonising Donor Practices for Effective Aid Delivery”. For a first time, there were delegations from the

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European Commission, the Netherlands, Switzerland and one representative from the World Bank.

The main objectives of this second donor workshop were to strengthen the network, to create an environment of mutual support for better competence development and to identify useful ways of cooperation. The joint PRSP training, the HIV/AIDS e-learning, the development of a joint donor website and the staff exchange between donor agencies were re-

viewed. For the first time the name “Train4Dev” was used for the network.

It was agreed that the objective of the network should be to improve “aid effectiveness for poverty reduction through enhanced donor cooperation in

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the field of competence development and training”, and the network should maintain good links to DAC. A “core planning group” was proposed, which was supposed to be in charge of concentrating on feasible propositions, financial aspects, the running of the next workshop and holding meetings as required. Furthermore, the core planning group should be responsible for providing guidance to the other network subgroups. The core planning group would consist of the previous, present and future hosts of the network’s workshops, on the assumption that every participating donor would host such workshop in the future. The core planning group would speak on behalf of the network. Network activities for the period 2004/05 concentrated on a joint SWAp training, harmonising evaluation of competence development within the network, and on technology based learning. In addition to the existing subgroup on Poverty Reduction Strategies, new subgroups to implement these activities were formed. The SWAp sub-

group agreed to formulate a Memorandum of Understanding, mobilising formal and financial support. Several donors had experiences with running training programmes in this area, and it was agreed that the European Commission would lead the subgroup called “Core Group”. The evaluation subgroup aimed at sharing and developing best practices in

» Concentrate on a joint SWAp training, harmonising evaluation of competence development within the network, and on technology based learning. «

on the overarching aims of the MDGs. The long term plan should include developing a toolkit and practical guidelines. The technology based learning subgroup aimed at cooperation on knowledge management. It was suggested that the Train4Dev website should be used as the training platform for web-based professional networks, and that the need for practical information on good practices could be met by developing a toolbox for best practices. In addition it was recommended that all available resources and materials on e-learning should be shared, using Train4Dev as a host and as a clearing house to gain access.



2005

» Enhanced and efficient cooperation in the field of e-learning and IT-based knowledge sharing. «

The third meeting took place at the GTZ in Berlin. It was labelled “Building Bridges in Berlin – United by Learning” and was jointly organized by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ) and the Swedish SIDA. Participation slowly increased. At this occasion there were delegations from the World Bank and the World Bank Institute, the UN Staff College, there was a representative from Hungary and for the first time also a delegation from France. This was remarkable as the network had agreed that its lingua franca would be only English, in order to exclude interpreters and translation costs. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, as decided at the second High Level Forum, was added as a baseline document for the network. The different organisational topics discussed in Copenhagen were reviewed and laid down in a “charter”. This charter defined also the objectives of the network, Membership, and Structure and Organisation. Objectives included: Efficient networking in the field of competence development and train-

ing for all staff categories, including local staff,

- Enhanced and efficient joint training of donor staff at headquarters and country level and information on and access to the training programmes of participating donors,
- Enhanced and efficient cooperation in the field of e-learning and IT-based knowledge sharing.

With respect to membership it was agreed that the network was open to donor agencies committed to the objectives of the network and its working

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principles. Also a more formal “observer status” was defined. The Berlin meeting decided that the network would operate by means of an annual workshop and subgroups working on priority areas. At the same time different financing methods were reviewed to finance joint donor training activities.

There were reports on the progress of four subgroups: Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), SWAp, Evaluation and Technology-based Learning. The PRSP working group reported on

the organisation of 12 courses. The SWAp subgroup reported on two pilot workshops held, tailored to the needs of the respective country situations. They reported also on a new element in the joint training: the participation of other key-stakeholders in their training sessions. The technology-based learning subgroup presented their “Guidelines for e-learning in the Joint Donors Competence Development Network”.

The website was overhauled completely and for the first time the website address “train4dev.net” was used as the logo of the network. Based on a survey of all donors, the subgroup was developing a working paper on how to improve knowledge sharing. The evaluation subgroup conducted a survey on how the different donors assessed their training needs and how they evaluated their training courses.

The participants at the annual meeting decided to form two new subgroups: one on Public Finance Management, and one on Crisis Prevention and Peace Building. At the two previous workshops the possibility to participate in courses organised by other members was mentioned, but at this occasion a first report showed that 12 people made use of this possibility.



The 2006 Annual Meeting took place in Oegstgeest, the Netherlands (near Leyden), and had as central theme “Crossroads”. It was jointly organised by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Commission. The Paris Declaration offered a new stimulus, as it called on DAC members

to “promote joint training to share lessons learnt and build a community of practice”, a clear support for the network as such. New participants came from the UN Staff College in Turin, (Italy), the UNDP and the French AFD. Although the network had agreed on a charter in Berlin, some discussions

touched on organisational issues again. The question whether the network should formalise and give itself a per-

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manent secretariat was discussed and rejected: the network should stay an informal network. It was concluded that formalisation and flexibility would not be mutually exclusive: without a clear format ideas could not survive, but too much structure could stifle information flows and innovation. The network should offer the clear format plus the necessary flexibility. An addendum to the Berlin Charter was concluded, giving a stronger role to the Core Group (no longer called core planning group) and defined the roles of a chair and a coordinator of the different subgroups. The new Core Group summarised its objectives for the coming year. And after some informal discussions, a “chairman” was elected for the first time: Chris Pontin from DfID.

In total six subgroups reported on the progress of their work: the PRSP subgroup, the SWAp subgroup, the Peace Building and Crisis Prevention group, the Evaluation group, the Technology-based Learning group and the Public Financial Management (PFM) subgroup.

The PRSP subgroup reported that a second round of courses was being organised after a first series taking place from 2003 to 2004. Now the PRSP courses also invited representatives from partner countries. Overall the meeting concluded that this participation was “critical”, helping to design effective training. Instead of a “Core Group”, the subgroup introduced a “Steering Committee” and an “Executive Committee”.

The SWAp subgroup reported that two training events were organised and two further ones planned for the rest of the year. The Peace Building subgroup mentioned that a needs analysis was carried out and that, after comparing the different existing

training modules, a new pilot session was planned for the second part of the year. The Evaluation subgroup reported that it had completed a toolkit, which was piloted by the SWAp subgroup.

The Technology-based Learning group indicated that it had completed several recommendations and suggested that in future it should support other sub-

» Addendum to the Berlin Charter was concluded, giving a stronger role to the Core Group defining the roles of a chair and a Coordinator for the different Subgroups. «

groups on information sharing and knowledge management. The PFM subgroup informed the network that it had a good start, that a flexible model based on the partner country level was developed and that introductory courses were delivered. Several subgroups mentioned the necessity to have a better functioning and up-to-date website,

which could offer good communication between the different subgroups, and between the members of the different subgroups. EuropeAid, through its Director General, Koos Richelle, volunteered to improve the website.



The 2007 Annual Meeting was organized by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, AFD and DfID, and took place in Sèvres near Paris. Again there were new members present: the ITC-ILO and ADA from Austria. Building on the Paris

» The meeting elected Kenneth King as chairperson from the World Bank Institute. «

Declaration the central theme of this meeting was “Harmonise Actions to Create Competences”. One of the goals was to clarify the role of the network in respect of the Paris Declaration. With a view to strengthen the links to the DAC and to have a direct exchange of views on the Declaration, the meeting met with the DAC Chairman, Richard Man-

ning. The different subgroups reported on the progress. The SWAp group introduced inspiring comparisons between programme based approaches for the social and the agricultural sector. Experiences showed once more that for an effective knowledge transfer

» Experiences showed once more that for an effective knowledge transfer a close interaction with participants from partner-countries was essential. «

a close interaction with participants from the different developing countries was essential. General questions discussed covered: which competences to

strengthen in the future, how to improve these by training (and which methods are the most efficient ones), what is the value added of joint training (and which are the necessary conditions) and how to measure the impact of training on aid effectiveness. The joint work of EuropeAid and UNDP on Electoral Assistance was briefly presented. Representatives from the two sides reported on two big training events already organised, and they agreed to enlarge to a Train4Dev subgroup. EuropeAid presented the new Train4Dev website. Based on a first assessment of training

needs in the network, the meeting agreed to create yet another subgroup: one on Pro-poor Growth.

Again there were some discussions on organizational issues, and it was agreed that the network should have a Chairperson, based on a formal election process. The meeting elected Kenneth King, from the World Bank Institute for the year 2007-2008.



The 2008 Annual Meeting was jointly organised by the World Bank Institute and the Canadian CIDA (supported financially by Austria) and took place at

» Side event on Capacity Development, organised by LenCD, the DAC learning network on Capacity Development. «

the premises of the World Bank. Its title was: “The Road to Accra: Harmonising Staff Training and Aligning with Country Needs and Priorities”. The participants discussed possible contributions by Train4Dev to the 3rd High Level Forum

on Aid Effectiveness, to be held in Accra in September 2008. As the World Bank was responsible for the “market-place” during the HLF, it was suggested

to contribute to this market-place. For the first time there were representatives from New Zealand and there was an observer from the Millennium

Challenge Corporation.

Apart from the possible contributions to Accra, the meeting concentrated on the exchange of experiences between the different working groups. Very positive in this respect were multi-media

presentations prepared by the World Bank Institute on three joint training initiatives (Poverty Reduction Strategies, SWAp and PFM). The working group on

Poverty Reduction Strategy programmes informed the meeting that their

» All agreed that joint training events contributed to donor harmonisation and alignment with country needs. «

work was completed and that the working group would stop. The training programmes developed remained available on the website. The working group on SWAp reported that 20 workshops attended by more than 800 participants were organised, but that there was still a strong demand expressed both by partner countries and donor agencies. It was agreed to continue with the existing format while elaborating alternatives with a stronger relation to national processes. Partners involved in the area, agreed to create a new working group on Management for Development Results (MfDR). As a follow-up to the discussions with the DAC chair Richard Manning in Paris, the Pro-Poor Growth subgroup had established a close working relation with the DAC counterpart PovNet. All agreed that Joint Training Events contributed to donor harmonisation and alignment with country needs.

This would be the central lesson to offer to the Accra forum.

Although discussed already during the first workshops, there was a new impetus for opening up courses for participants from partner organisations. All agreed that inputs from different sides enriched the training, and reduced overall costs, as not every organisation had to develop courses in all fields. It was agreed to extend this practice, and to publish open courses on a separate page on the website.

The improved website was shown and discussed. All agreed that to the proposed decentralised approach, where the input and introduction of material should come from the different working groups, including the Core Group. And after a new formal election, Mr Gérard Van Bilzen from EuropeAid was elected as the chair for the period 2008-2009.

Participation at the 3rd High Level Forum in Accra, 2-4 September 2008

Thanks to Australia and Norway, giving up their own places, Train4Dev could indeed participate in the marketplace of

» Train4Dev represented at the HLF in Accra in 2008 «

ideas during the forum. More than 130 countries, multilateral organisations and

NGO's presented big Posters (2x1m) with their key messages. Train4Dev's key message was "We are harmo-

nised”, showing the results of the work of Joint Training Programmes, and details on the work of the joint courses of the SWAp training programmes. Furthermore the Poster showed information on the network itself. Apart from this presentation, the chair, Gérard Van Bilzen, also introduced the network’s

experiences during a side event on Capacity Development, organised by LenCD, the DAC Learning network on Capacity Development. Contacts between LenCD and Train4Dev had been taken up after the meeting with Richard Manning in Paris.



The Annual Meeting in 2009 was jointly organised by DANIDA and NORAD, and took place at the Holmenkollen Park Hotel near Oslo.

» Learning-needs survey stressed the interest in e-learning modules. «

Temperatures were tropical. The central theme of this meeting was “Meeting Learning Needs at Country Level”. Luxembourg (Lux-Dev), Slovenian Centre for Excellence in Finance (CEF), the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), the IOM and the FAO joined for the first time as members, and there were observers from the Czech Republic, LenCD and PovNet.

For the second time a learning-needs survey was organised. The survey suggested high priorities for Public Sector Reform, Climate and Environment, and Programme-based Approaches.

The survey confirmed the interest for mixed groups, with participants from both donors and national partners. It

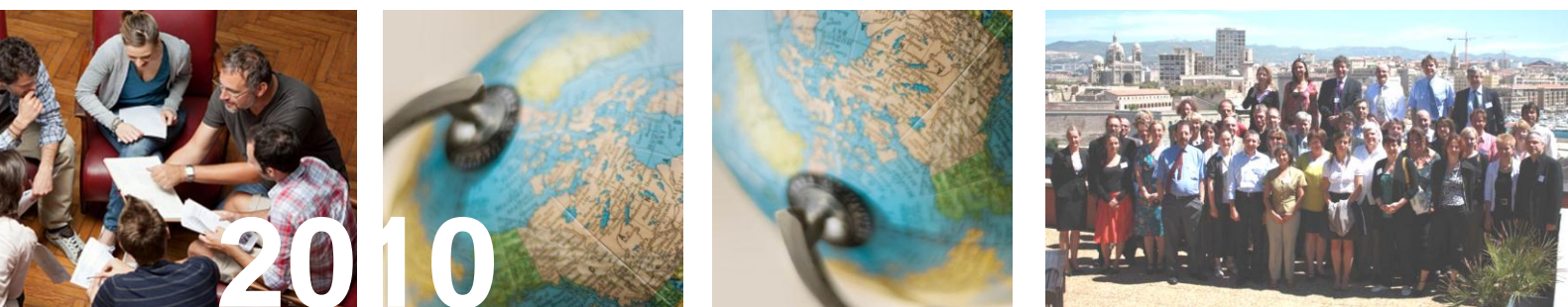
» Design and implement an improved and clear reporting mechanism - a priority for the Core Group. «

also stressed the interest in e-learning modules. It was agreed to organise such survey on an annual basis. The Evaluation subgroup presented a

“Manual and Toolkit” to evaluate Joint Donor Training Programmes.

The network tried to improve its functioning by adopting a business plan approach, with agreed goals, results, related key functions and tasks, plus requirements. The commitment to manage the website was taken over by newcomer Lux-Dev.

As there was only one candidate, Peter Swartling of SIDA was elected by acclamation as the new chair of the network. The meeting agreed to design and implement an improved and clear reporting mechanism as one of the key priorities of the Core Group in 2009-2010. Especially on Joint Learning Events (JLE) activities it was difficult to have precise information concerning numbers and participants.



The 2010 Annual Meeting was jointly organised by AFD and EuropeAid and took place in a warm and windy Marseille. Central theme was looking back and looking forward: “From Accra to Seoul” (as at that time it was assumed that the 4th High Level Forum would take place in Seoul).

A special taskforce was created to prepare a timely contribution from the network to the Forum in 2011. A closer cooperation with the Learning network on Capacity Development (LenCD) and the European Development Practitioners network was promoted in this context. Apart from participating in the marketplace like in Accra, it was also suggested to organise a special ses-

sion on Joint Learning Events. This year there were observers from Slovakia and the Development Practitioners Network.

Overall there were reports from 10 different subgroups on the progress of their work, including on Joint Learning Events. The SWAp group reported on two learning events. The first one organised in 2009, focused on the use of the newly established Sector Working Group (SWG) structures as coordinating frameworks for the development of Sector Programmes. The Management for Development Results group reported even on seven events organised. One great added value of the events was that they were responsive to the

country-specific needs of participants. The Pro-Poor Growth group organised a first pilot event. The Effective Electoral Assistance subgroup reported on the organisation of two major learning events and the start of an e-learning course. The Knowledge Management subgroup presented an e-learning course on Knowledge Sharing. Based on the annual survey on training needs, there were suggestions to create new subgroups in the areas of Gender, Environment and Climate Change. PovNet suggested the creation of a new subgroup on Social Protection. A new subgroup was also formed in the area of Decentralisation and Local Government (DeLoG). Core Group member, Dominika Nowak, from EuropeAid, presented proposals for the network with respect to a possible communication strategy.

This resulted in a Communication Matrix and, apart from having a Chair and

» A taskforce was commissioned to prepare a joint contribution from LenCD, the Practitioner's Network and Train4Dev to the next HLF «

a Coordinator for the subgroups, the Core Group nominated also a member as formal Coordinator responsible for the communication strategy. For the first time a journalist from the ACP-EU Courier

participated and reported on the meeting in the Courier later during the year. Once again organisational issues were discussed leading to a revised charter and the adoption of a specific reporting format, as agreed in 2009. The meeting elected François Bary from Lux-Dev by acclamation as the new chair of the network for the period 2010-2011.



The 2011 meeting was jointly organised by BTC-CTB from Belgium and Lux-Dev, and took place from 30 May to 1 June at the Egmont Palace in Brussels. It had as central slogan: "Weighing up, gaining strength - From Paris to Busan". At this meeting there were ob-

servers from the Council of Europe, UN Habitat, the SNV Netherlands Development Organisation, the Flemish Association for development Cooperation and Technical Assistance and the Flemish Interuniversity Council. The meeting dealt to a large extent with how

to prepare for the 4th High Level Forum in Busan to which the network had been accepted as an official participant. Participation in the marketplace and the organisation of side events were pre-

» Evaluation report on the network: an effective response to the call for enhanced donor harmonisation in the field of competence development and training. «

pared. Gérard Van Bilzen was officially nominated as Ambassador to represent the Train4Dev network in Busan.

During the meeting a first evaluation report on the network, prepared by COWI Consultants, was presented. The overall conclusion was that Train4Dev had provided an effective response to the call for enhanced donor harmonisation in the field of competence development and training. Over the period 2003-2010 Train4Dev delivered 77 Joint Learning Events in more than 30 countries for approximately 3,000 participants from member organisations, partner governments and NGO/civil society/private sector. This was a substantial and very tangible output, especially when one considered that these results have been delivered by a voluntary network of donor organisations. In addition to this, a lot of knowledge sharing had taken place through the work of the subgroups and a large number of

staff from the member organisations took advantage of the open courses that were offered through the network. The evaluation report confirmed the very positive effect of being an informal network, with sufficient financing to allow for the functioning of working groups and the organisation of learning events.

The PFM subgroup reported on the organisation of six different courses, plus three e-learning courses, developed by DANIDA and the Global Infrastructure Anti-Corruption Centre. The Management for Development Sugroup reported on four Joint Learning Events. The Pro-Poor Growth reported on one, and the production of briefing notes and policy instrument notes. The Effective Electoral Assistance group organised a

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big thematic workshop, and also the organisation of an advanced diploma, in collaboration with the Institute for International Political Studies in Milan. The Local Governance and Decentralisation subgroup organised a first pilot course.

During the Annual Meeting a methodological guide was presented to help the working groups who want to set up Joint Learning Programmes. The Subgroup on SWAp organised yet another learning event, the Subgroup on Public Sector Reform developed first learning modules, which were not tested yet.

The meeting elected Bart Horemans of BTC-CTB by acclamation as chair for the period 2011-2012.

Train4Dev, its Expert Groups and Joint Learning Programmes. There was some interest for this meeting especially by the South Korean KOICA. Even more important was a three minute contribution to the thematic event on capacity building, which attracted some 200 key players in this field.

Participation at the 4th High Level Forum Busan, November 2011

Train4Dev managed to have a delegation of no less than four people in Busan, led by Bart Horemans, chair, and Gérard Van Bilzen, ambassador. Several events made the existence and experiences of the network known to the world. A four page colourful and very attractive PowerPoint presentation was shown at the Knowledge and Innovation Space.

The presentation was shown for three minutes in the central lobby, in front of a series of meeting rooms. In addition hundreds of flyers were distributed at this space and at another information stand. The representatives of the network, supported by other delegation members of GIZ and the European Union, organised a mini-debate on

» Representatives of the network contribute to the thematic event on Capacity Building at the HLF in Busan , which attracted some 200 key players in this field. «



The Annual Meeting was jointly organised by the International Training Centre of the ILO and the Austrian ADA, and took place at the ITC-ILO Campus

in Turin. Its central theme was “Learning Together for Development – At the Crossroads of Development Cooperation”. An important part of the meeting

concentrated on reviewing the contribution to and the impact of the High Level Forum in Busan. The Delegation, representing Train4Dev in Busan, reported on its results, but the meeting also reviewed the overall outcome of the Forum. What would move, from improving Aid Efficiency to contributing to Development, owned completely by our developing partners, imply for the network? The DAC working party on Aid Efficiency would for example be replaced by a “Partnership for Global Development”.

During 2012-13 several building blocks for this partnership were constructed, and it was concluded that the network

could best contribute to the building block on “Managing Diversity and Reducing Fragmentation”.

The different Expert Groups (formerly called subgroups) reported on the progress of their work. The one on Gender presented an initiative to mainstream gender in all Train4Dev

activities. The Expert Group on Capacity Building designed, based on experiences of LenCD, an innovative “Learning Journey”. They also developed a Capacity Development guide. Other Groups reported on Joint Learning Events and open courses, especially the Electoral Assistance and PFM

» Manage Diversity and Reduce Fragmentation. «

groups attracted many different stakeholders. Replacing the Expert Group on Pro-Poor Growth, a new Group was established on Political Economy.

The first Train4Dev publication, a methodological guide on design, im-

» What would the move, from improving Aid Efficiency to contributing to Development, owned completely by our developing partners, imply for the network? «

plementation and evaluation of Joint Learning Events was presented and licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution.

As Busan opened up the development debate to many heterogeneous actors (“new donors”, the private sector, CSOs, etc.), Train4Dev was challenged to become more inclusive. Members agreed that

the work of the Expert Group on Gender, and the intensive engagement in Capacity Development in the last three years were very much in line with the Busan outcomes. In addition, the decision to establish a new Expert Group on “Political Economy” reflected alignment with emerging global development priorities. Important post-Busan priorities on “knowledge sharing” and “environment,” should also be explored as focus areas for Train4Dev Expert Groups, the first one building on the experiences of the Technology-based Learning/Knowledge Management subgroup. After an intensive discussion the members agreed to the proposal of the Core Group to change the name of the network from

» The decision to establish a new Expert Group on “Political Economy” reflected alignment with emerging global development priorities. «

» Participants at the annual meeting decide to follow the proposal of the Core Group to change the name of the network from “Train4Dev” to “learn4dev” «

“Train4Dev” to “learn4dev” and accepted the newly designed logo. Participants followed the argument that (joint) learning, rather than traditional training,

would be much more in line with the requirements of Capacity Development in the post-Busan era.

At the end of the meeting Miguel-Angel Expósito-Verdejo from EuropeAid was reappointed as coordinator of the Expert Groups

and Michael Schneider of GIZ elected, by acclamation, as the new chair of the network for the period 2012-2013.

