Building High Performing MSD Teams

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This presentation summarizes part of the findings from the BEAM study on ‘Building High Performing Teams for Market Systems Development’ by Md. Rubaiyath Sarwar and Luis E. Osorio-Cortes
Do we need to invest on people and teams to deliver results?

Are we investing enough on people?
Building high-performing teams for market systems development

For details...

https://beamexchange.org/resources/1036/
Methodology...

Online and face to face consultation with

RESPONDENTS
5 Donors, 6 Team Leaders, 7 Advisors from contractors

CONTEXTS
Conflict regions, remote locations, stable economies

SECTORS
Agriculture, Health, TVET, Finance +

COVERAGE
South Asia, South East Asia, Asia Pacific, East Africa, West Africa, Balkans
HIGH PERFORMANCE DELIVERED!

BUT HOW?
What is High Performance?

It is about **consistently** producing **superior results**

In context of MSD

**Superior Results = Market players taking lead …**

in innovating, sustaining and scaling solutions to achieve mandated impact (income, employment, inclusion etc.) of the project*

* Just one way of defining it. In principle, the project team would collectively decide what high performance means to them.
Attributes of High Performing Teams

- Shared Goal
- Shared Leadership
- Open Communication
- High Performance
Not only about ‘What’ to achieve but ‘How’

Not only amongst ‘Project Team’ but also with ‘Stakeholders’ (Donors, Partners)

Shared Goal

Decentralized Management
- Initiatives and Innovations from All Team Members
- Fast response to market opportunities and challenges

Shared Leadership

Top-Down
- (from management to task teams)

Open Communication

Bottom-Up
- (From task teams to management)
- Horizontal
- (Between task teams)
Building High Performing Teams

Barriers to High Performance

ASSEMBLING

Country Context
Sectoral Context
Bidding conditions
Competition to win tenders

BUILDING

Reduced commitment from the Donors
Reliance on short term external training
Limited investment on soft skills
Team leaders are not being capacitated

NURTURING

Pressure to deliver from day 1; no room to form, storm, norm and perform
Teams working in silos
Inability to retain the high performers
High Performance

Drivers of High Performance

ASSEMBLING
- Structuring and right sizing the team
- Getting the right mix of expertise: Generalists Vs Specialists
- Hiring the right experts

BUILDING
- Investing in coaching and mentoring (on the job and off the job)
- Focus on both hard skills and soft skills

NURTURING
- Allowing the team to form, storm, norm and perform
- Instilling, incentivizing and rewarding self-learning aptitude as the key stone habit
There are evidence and lessons on building high performing teams; but the lessons learned remain isolated and are not translating into a structural transformation of policy and practice within the MSD field.

To build on the existing evidence and lessons we need actions from donors, implementers, team leaders and capacity building service providers.
Moving forward
Our recommendations

- **Recognize**
  - Understand that the availability of expertise is dependent on country, location, culture, sector, and political conditions.

- **Incentivize**
  - Encourage investment in staff capacity development and learning at both bidding and implementation stages.

- **Contextualize**
  - Encourage dialogue with implementing agencies on team structure, competency mix, and capacity building budget.

- **Encourage**
  - Invest in staff capacity development and learning at both bidding and implementation stages.
Moving forward

Our recommendations

- **Design**: recruitment policy that filters self learners
- **Invest**: in training of team leaders on leadership, talent management and organizational structure
- **Empower**: team leaders to make recruitment decisions; global templates might not work
- **Harness**: talents and cross fertilize learning and capacity development across projects in different countries and regions
Engage in dialogues with implementing agency advisor and donors to ensure context specific team structure and competency mix and recruitment policy.

Collaborate with trainers and mentors; look beyond MSD for professional development experts.

Reward self learners.

Invest in self capacity development.

Promote a culture of open dialogue and debate, curiosity, learning from mistakes and constructive self-criticism.

Our recommendations

Moving forward

Team Leaders
Moving forward
Our recommendations

Capacity-building service providers

- **Diversify**
  - training portfolio; incorporate training/courses on soft skills development

- **Partner**
  - with local and international capacity development service providers to adapt curriculum to local and sectoral contexts

- **Collaborate**
  - with professional development experts
  - engage in building teams (look beyond the field of development)

- **Develop**
  - training and mentoring offers for team leaders and senior staff in implementing agencies, and donor staff (not just for entry- and middle-level staff)
Thank You