

**Stakeholders Images of Capacity Development in the NGO Sector of Pakistan:
A Grounded Theory Study****Amer Afaq***Deputy Commissioner, Abbottabad Pakistan***Ralph Brower***Askew School of Public Policy, Florida State University***Shakir Ullah***University of Maryland Global Campus, USA**Institute of Management Sciences, Peshawar-Pakistan***Abstract**

This paper aims to explore various perceptions about capacity development, and its implementation in Pakistani Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Owing to the dearth of literature regarding how capacity development and its operationalization is understood by the various stakeholders in the development aid system, this study at hand is an attempt to address these gaps by embracing an inductive and exploratory research method. We chose to employ grounded theory which is an inductive approach to exploring relatively new areas and building theories by obtaining non-quantitative data. This inductive approach was necessary to explore the stakeholders own interpretations of the term capacity development and operationalization of capacity development in Pakistani NGOs. The data has been collected from the various stakeholders working in different nonprofit organizations located across Pakistan. Data was gathered in the form of in-depth interviews and field observations. The data gathered through interviews was analyzed using three stages of coding activities. For obtaining further assistance in qualitative data analysis, we also used NVivo (Version 10). The latter half of the paper examines the implementation techniques that are practiced by Pakistani NGOs for carrying out capacity development. The data revealed five images of stakeholders' perception of which training is the most widely used method for implementing capacity development activities at the individual level. Other concepts of capacity development implementation include knowledge exchange; partnership, networking and awareness, these models are mostly practiced at the organizational level.

Keywords: Capacity Development, Operationalization, NGO sector, Grounded Theory.

The term capacity development is understood differently by the stakeholders in the development aid system. Their understanding is shaped by the situational conditions in which they are embedded and by the way they define those situations. They balance their perspectives in light of their backgrounds and their organizational objectives. An inquiry of how the stakeholders define capacity development not only reveals how they view it, but also highlights the multiple meanings and attributes associated with this concept. Although, capacity development is considered as a value addition to existing NGO activities, yet stakeholders find it difficult to define the concept comprehensively.

In Pakistan, the NGO sector is comparatively less developed and is currently expanding with a slow pace as compared to other countries in South Asia. There are two types of NGOs currently operating in Pakistan, ranging from small voluntary organizations executed by fewer, less-skilled people to a large organizations run by skillful and professional people. In the context of NGOs in Pakistan, they are currently becoming more prominent at the start of the century due to the availability of foreign funding from international donors (SPDC, 2002). In Pakistan, there is a dearth of literature related to the NGO sector (Smillie, 1988 Khan, 2002; Pasha & Iqbal, 2003; Bano, 2008) and the causation of limited literature is due to currently increasing trend at the national level in the NGO sector and limited attention from previous researchers in this emerging area in Pakistan. The studies which have been conducted related to this subject primarily focused on the role, importance of NGOs and the influence of this sector on government and social services. However, operationalization of capacity development and employees' perception about

capacity development in the NGOs has been ignored by previous researchers. Hence, this study is an attempt to address this research gap in the context of the NGO sector in Pakistan.

Since Pakistan is called as one of the populated countries with a population figure of over 180 million at a growth rate of 1.6 as per the United Nation Report (2014). To cover different fundamental needs of the population growth in Pakistan, the government is struggling enormously. Currently, Pakistan is facing numerous pressures and challenges at the national and global forums. The government administrators and practitioners are bewildered, consistently, with the practical bitter reality to address the basic and social needs of the masses. They are not in a position to bestow the resources and hold themselves accountable. The state-sponsored assistance is progressively worsened in health, education and social sectors.

On the contrary, the NGO sector is relatively new and currently flourishing. It is attaining a steady position in our country due to the dynamism and the provision of resources and support from foreign donors (SPDC, 2002). The national NGOs with the efforts and financial support of international donors i.e. the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) are channeling their funds directly to the NGOs (Bano, 2008). Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti (1993) accentuated that NGOs provide a decent platform for bringing people on one platform and developing human and social capital. Edwards (2006) and Harriss (2002) highlighted that channeling development and advancement through NGOs is to focus more on creating trust and social capital. However, some researchers have doubted the relationship between NGOs and social capital. They are of the opinion that NGOs, while consuming development aid, do not produce public participation (Bano, 2008). Furthermore, Sperling (1999) and Henderson (2002) argued that within developing countries the involvement of international donors is to create elites in those countries rather than what they claim to do for society.

Based on my (first author) personal knowledge and experience while working with several government departments and working in the capacity of Liaison officer with NGOs and donors compel me most of the time to study and focus on the government's role and institutional strengthening in Pakistani non-government organizations. I (first author) believed that both government and NGOs shall facilitate each other in performing their duties. The government should provide support in bringing and enhancing the public image of the NGO. At the same time, NGOs shall assist the government in upgrading the society with regard to community up gradation. However, nowadays there is a lack of communication and mistrust in Pakistan between government and non-government organizations. Government officials consider NGOs as their competitors and want to minimize their activities and influence. At the same time, NGOs blame the government for being inefficient, bureaucratic structure and slow work process. Each sector has its own strengths and weaknesses; however, for establishing governance and development, both these sectors must develop proper communication and mechanisms in order to improve organizational performance and development.

In Pakistan, the major hurdle associated with the prosperity of our country is the non-availability of development. Development is clearly defined as "a process by which members of society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations" (Korten, 1990: 67). The definition of Korten signifies that capacity development plays an important role in the overall performance of the organization. The organizations, including both public and private (profit-oriented) cannot achieve without considering institutional and organizational capacity. On one hand, government organizations shall look up and focus on development challenges and on the other side, NGOs play an important role in the development of the country. NGOs can contribute to developing human capital, giving fundamental assistance and creating job opportunities. However, for an NGO to achieve such objectives, it must offer opportunities for employees to enhance capacity development in their organization and the NGO's top management must give due importance to capacity development in developing countries like Pakistan.

This study will be focusing on the following two important questions:

1. How is capacity development understood by various actors in the development aid system?
2. How is capacity development operationalized in the NGOs sector of Pakistan?

This study is an attempt to explore stakeholders' perceptions and operationalization of capacity development. It includes how different actors involved in the development aid system, such as donors, NGOs, government, communities, etc., view and define capacity development. It provides a good starting platform to understand the concept of capacity development and its characteristics as viewed by diverse actors associated with this phenomenon. It identifies the

tools, techniques, methods, and processes that NGOs use to operationalize this concept. It also examines how capacity building activities are planned and implemented by different NGOs.

Literature Review

Capacity Development is a prominent area in the field of contemporary international development, as it highlights social, economic and environmental aspects needed at every level i.e. individual, groups, organizational and institutional level in the society (Ubels, Acquaye, Baddoo, Fowler, 2010). However, there are varying definitions of the term capacity development. Literature has imprecisely defined the term capacity and sometimes has interpreted it wrongly. Some researchers have defined capacity enhancement as a fundamental activity of development, while for other scholars the term capacity is development only. A number of scholars refer it to skills and training and or organizational development. In addition to these, a few refer it to improving empowerment and participation and internal systems and operations. To conclude, capacity development is an intangible and a relative phenomenon influenced by enabling environment and the structures of power and the institutions in which NGOs are embedded. Fowler et al. (1992) consider organizational development different than institutional development by defining organizations as structures that bring people together to work for a common purpose, such as NGOs or private businesses; this further implies that organization development of NGOs includes actions like resource mobilization, training, workshops, seminars and exposure of the staff. Institutions, on the other hand, are stable sets of well-established rules, both formal and informal, such as laws, markets or customs, etc. Institutional development refers to improvements in the wider environment in which NGOs operates and efforts to influence the policy in favor of NGOs. Another dominant view held by stakeholders terms capacity development as “subtle paternalism” and the concept is associated with the growing instrumentalist view of NGOs as a delivery system for donor funds (Fisher 1994). However, despite these concerns, Fowler (1997) argues that the capacity development debate can provide an opportunity for reflection on NGOs and their development approaches.

Capacity development can lead individuals to understand the root cause of their underdevelopment and can guide them to adopt social behaviors facilitating self-sufficiency and empowerment. Central to development are key concepts of participation and empowerment. In fact, capacity development is about increasing voice, participation and empowerment (Ubels et al., 2010).

Kaplan (2000) highlighted that capacity development cannot be viewed simplistically; there are stages and phases of capacity development which often overlap and there is a sequence, hierarchy and an order in the growth of organizational capacity development. Unless the organizational capacity has been developed sufficiently to harness training and acquisition of new skills, training courses do not “take”, and skills do not “adhere”. The NGOs that do not improve their skills and have a weak sense of responsibility and are inadequately structured cannot make use of training courses and skills (Ubels et al, 2010).

However, Morgan (2006) refers to competencies and capabilities as two important components of capacity development. According to him, competencies are specific abilities of individuals and capabilities are specific abilities of organizations. Moreover, he also commented that training aims at improving competencies in individuals and capabilities in organizations (ibid). Literature about organizational training and human resource development, emphasizes- that the training process should start with proper analysis of organizational mission and objectives. The next step is to identify what skills and competencies individuals in the organization should possess. Such analysis leads to training needs assessments and it is the proper assessment of needs that lead to effective training (Wilson 1996).

To get the right people with the right skills in place is more than a managerial or logistical problem. It requires a constant review of the skills needed to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Every organization, including NGOs, needs to have a proper training and development plan aiming at imparting the specific kind of skills and knowledge to their employees (DFID 2010).

According to DFID (2010), four things are important for any kind of training in NGOs:

1. What knowledge and skills are needed?
2. How many individuals or teams need to have these skills and knowledge?
3. At what level are these skills and knowledge required?
4. What other mechanisms, in addition to training, can be adapted to address the gaps in skills and enhance knowledge?

Training in Pakistani NGOs is predominantly focused on skills in social analysis and community development. The second important theme around which the NGO training revolves is to promote participatory development and collective action practices and to establish linkages between local and national NGOs. The third area of training for NGOs is to understand and be part of the development process in Pakistan. This includes training of a technical nature, for instance, proposal writing, project planning, and management and working with donors, etc. (Carlan, 1996). The fourth area of NGO training is related to organizational performance and management like human resource management, financial management, leadership development, etc. It is important to mention here that with the passage of time NGOs have developed a better understanding of effective training practices. However, mostly the larger NGOs, support organizations, are planning, designing and implementing these training for their partnering smaller NGOs or local community organizations.

Methodology

This study adopts Grounded Analysis as a strategy to explore the opinions of various stakeholders regarding Capacity Development involved in the nonprofit sector of Pakistan. The research method involved in this study is GT (Corbin and Strauss 2008; Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990, 1998) which divulges the underlying processes of what is going on in a substantive area of study' (Lowe 1998, p. 106). The methodology was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), which discovers theory from data. The method is primarily based on qualitative techniques and a series of systematic ethnographic procedures, which, along with the simultaneous processes of data collection and analysis, lead to the development of an inductive derived grounded theory of the stakeholder perceptions of capacity development and its implementation in the NGOs sector of Pakistan. Theory derived from data is likely to resemble reality more closely than theory derived from contemplation or speculation. Hence, grounded theories, as they are drawn from the data through iterative loops of inductive and deductive thinking, are likely to offer insight, increase understanding and provide a meaningful guide to action (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It is a research method used for the investigation of spoken and written data to generate codes to give birth to a new theory using qualitative data (Glaser 2001, 2003).

This study adopts Grounded theory of analysis due to the following reasons:

- The general aim of grounded theory is to construct theories that explain complex social phenomena such as stakeholder perceptions;
- Grounded theory needs the researcher's entire occupation of the mind in the field, and in the data, with a view to gaining insight and in depth understanding about the subjectivity and the multiplicity of stakeholder perceptions;
- Grounded theory is established in the actuality of the experience (Charmaz, 2000);
- The researcher attempts to interpret holistically the active role of stakeholders in designing the worlds they occupy and the experiences in which they are involved (Charmaz, 2000); and
- The approach permits the scholars to obtain a richness of data from a range of perspectives (multiple realities) and a focus on meaning and interpretive understanding.

This study was mainly conducted in the cities of Islamabad, Peshawar, Mardan, Nowshera and Charsadda. Most of the donor representatives were located in the capital city of Islamabad, and the NGO offices were located in the provincial capital city of Peshawar. For field observations and community meetings the authors had to visit the smaller cities like Mardan, Nowshera and Charsadda. NGOs were selected keeping in view the following concerns for this study;

- (1) NGOs that are directly or indirectly involved in capacity development activities and
- (2) NGOs that are receiving their funds and assistance from international donors and/or international NGOs.

GT, as in most qualitative approaches, proceeds with a similar pattern including data reduction, data grouping and data display techniques (Ullah, Harwood, Jamali 2018). During the first stage, in open coding, data is fragmented into concepts which shows connection with some events, objects, or actions/interactions (Strauss and Corbin 1998); each of the concept is attributed as an open code. Here codes are taken to the letter from the respondents and termed as 'in vivo'; or else the researchers have to render a vast range of vocabulary for providing relevant labels (Ullah, Harwood, Jamali 2018). Data reduction and categorization process is proceeded with assembling concepts into subsequent categories, each of the concept with its dimensional range (Ullah, Harwood, Jamali 2018). During the coding process, the researcher does a continual comparison of the pre identified codes and the newly discovered themes and concepts, in doing so, ensuring theoretical sensitivity and informing further theoretical sampling and data collection activities (Strauss and Corbin 1998).

A summary of the open codes identified in this research is given in Table 2. Open coding in this research started with the first interview conducted with a representative of a donor organization. The emanating open codes were then detected by the analyst in the interview with the representative of the donor organization. We conducted three interviews in the first round. The open coding of all the three interviews were finalized thereby producing around 25 open codes. However, around 300 open codes were discovered at the end of the 3rd round of the interview. At this point the number of total interview had reached 40 which also included interviews with a number of key stakeholders like the CEOs of the NGOs, government officials, Mid and top level managers of NGOs, social workers and donor organizations.

Open coding uncovered a very complicated picture of relationships among different codes. Additionally, in order to record the results of analysis, the researchers prepared memos, diary analysis and diagrams for synthesis of ideas that were generated from the data on a regular basis. As we opened up more and more data, we were able to link certain codes which ultimately led us towards axial coding.

Axial coding is defined as “the process of relating categories to their subcategories, and this process received its name as "axial `` because"coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions” (Strauss and Corbin 1998: 123).

Images of Capacity Development in Pakistani NGOs

Presently there are three kinds of NGOs in Pakistan: (1) International NGOs; (2) National NGOs and (3) local NGOs and community/village based organizations (CBOs/VBOs). International NGOs are professional, stable and their understanding of developmental and humanitarian issues is very clear. They are primarily involved in outsourcing and subcontracting their work. The second category includes larger domestic NGOs that maintain reasonable operational setups and structures and they, in fact, serve as *support organizations or infrastructure organizations*. They have professional staff and experts and linkages within international donors. The third group of NGOs is smaller in size and scope having limited setups and localized activities. All the three categories of NGOs are involved in a host of activities including service delivery, advocacy, capacity development, relief, rehabilitation and so on. Since this study pertains to Pakistani NGOs, it will be focusing only on two categories of NGOs i.e. national and local level NGOs. Both these categories of NGOs are heavily dependent on funds from local as well as external sources for their operational and programming activities and interventions.

The development practitioners in this study described capacity development in a variety of ways, and these representations mirror a similar diversity of perspective found in the extant literature. We offer five images here as implicit representations from our informants’ accounts of their everyday concerns for building these capabilities. These images presented in subsequent sections, include resources for survival and sustainability, development and empowerment, vision and strategy, skills and change.

Stakeholder perception of capacity development

This section explains the open, axial and selective codes and grounds them with data. Table 1, above, shows that a total of 48 respondents were interviewed in addition to studying the internal documents of NGOs and donors available in the Planning and Development Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government.

Table 1. *Details about Interviewing Sample*

Individual Type	Number	Affiliation	Form of Interview
NGO Leader	12	12 different development NGOs	Face to Face
NGO Staff (Mid to Senior Level)	16	12 Development NGOs whose leaders were interviewed	Face to Face
Government Functionaries	9	6 different agencies	Face to Face
Donor Representatives	8	6 different donor organizations	Face to Face

Community/ Grass root organizations	3	3 different organizations	Face to Face
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Table 2. Stakeholders' Images of Capacity Development in Pakistani NGOs

Image	Level	Type	Stakeholders
Resources	Organizational	Tangible	NGOs
Development and Empowerment	Individual, Organizational	Intangible	NGOs Government Donor
Vision & Strategy Resources Development and Empowerment Skills Change	Organizational	Intangible	Donors, Government NGOs
Skills	Individual, Organizational	Tangible	Government Donors NGOs, Communities
Change	Individual, Organizational Institutional	Intangible	NGOs Donors

Resources for Survival and Sustainability

"First of all, I think you need to understand that the greatest capacity problem for all the Pakistani NGOs is the capacity which nobody talks about. It is the capacity for survival and sustainability. People come in and start training you, put up manuals for you, conduct workshops and seminars etc. They do all sorts of things. For instance, USAID wants to develop systems and manuals for NGOs, UN want to improve transparency in NGOs, DFID is interested in empowerment so on and so forth. But without addressing the core capacity issue; can an organization survive? If you have all the trained people and in a year's time they leave you; if you build up all these manuals, but you can't survive after the project is over, then what is the point in it? So we need to focus on the basic capacity issue which is survival and sustainability" (A CEO of a national level NGO).

All organizations, including NGOs, need resources for survival and sustainability. According to resource dependence theory organizations are unable to produce all the resources internally, they require to operate; therefore they must engage in exchanges with their external environment for obtaining the resources they need to survive. The resource dependence theory also stresses the importance of looking at the environment in which an organization operates when trying to explain the behavior and activities of that organization. Therefore, the environment is considered as a central source of uncertainty and constraint (Pfeffer & Salanik 1978).

Survival and sustainability are important dimensions of capacity development in NGOs. It refers to the continuation and persistence in project activities and actions after funding ends (Bossert 1991). In the case of Pakistani NGOs survival and sustainability is linked to their capacity to attract resources and support. Ubels et al (2010) observed that without an appropriate level of resources: finances, manpower, equipment, office space, etc., NGOs will always remain incapacitated. Hence, resources are an essential and critical component of the capacity development initiative in Pakistani NGOs. It can affect the NGO's ability to carry out its mission and objectives and extend its work and message out to the communities (De Vita and Fleming 2001).

Development and Empowerment

The next common image of capacity development in Pakistani NGOs, as shared by the stakeholders, relates to the development and empowerment of the people. According to this approach capacity development is a process by which NGOs and CBOs can mobilize individuals to

undertake activities for addressing their long term development needs. It is to help people to understand and exercise their potential to identify and solve their own problems. Capacity development can lead individuals to understand the root cause of their underdevelopment and can guide them to adopt social behaviors facilitating self-sufficiency and empowerment. Central to development are key concepts of participation and empowerment. In fact, capacity development is about increasing voice, participation and empowerment (Ubles et al 2010). A section head in a donor agency while responding to my question regarding his stance and their organization's role in capacity development said:

“Capacity building is to guide people to address their development needs, for example, poverty eradication, livelihood development and improving social services, particularly health and education. Another way to look at capacity building can be to empower someone to handle their affairs. Our organization focuses on all these aspects. We focus on enhancing NGO abilities to handle all these issues effectively and better serve the communities in which they are working. We also provide hands on experience by mutually working with NGOs. We sit and work out things together. For instance, we have spot checks which do not mean to monitor NGOs, but to identify gaps of implementations and come up with workable solutions for those implementation gaps. We also prepare mitigation plans with NGOs. These plans are there to devise future strategies and address gaps from the previous plans. We regularly refer to our mitigation plans with NGOs to see whether those issues that have been highlighted previously, were taken care of or still need further attention.”

Vision and Strategy

Another important image of capacity development as understood by development sector stakeholders considers the capacity as a vision and strategy for Pakistani NGOs. Clarity of understanding and sense of responsibility leads to developing an organizational vision. For every organization to be effective it must identify its own abilities and strengths in order to focus on the possibilities of its unique contribution. Interaction between the understanding of the particular context and appreciation of particular responsibility yields to organizational vision (Ubles et al 2010). Kaplan (2000) stated that vision and strategy lead to a sense of purpose by which an organization manages to plan and implement a program of action and is able to adjust this program in a rational and well thought-out manner. Ubles et al (2010) posited that strategic thinking for NGOs involves prioritizing certain activities and approaches over others as well as utilizing scarce resources in the service of chosen priorities. An NGO worker who started his career in the mid 1970s as a grass roots level social organizer and then progressed all the way to become head of the training and development section of a leading national level NGO while answering the question, “What is capacity development?” replied:

“The term capacity building is misrepresented or misunderstood and viewed differently by different actors in the development sector. It's not only imparting training and conducting workshops. It is more than that. To me, it is a visioning and strategic exercise. It is about putting in place systems and procedures. It is about planning, prioritizing, coordinating and evaluating programs and projects in a concerted manner to achieve objectives. In my opinion larger NGOs and donors while investing in the capacity development of smaller NGOs have to keep in mind that capacity building is not only trainings and a one-time activity. Many of the smaller NGOs do not have vision and mission statements and they lack a well defined strategy to go about their activities. They do not know what are their 77 goals? In my opinion a strategic exercise is necessary with these smaller NGOs so that they should know themselves first before they can launch activities for others. What are their mission and objectives? How to develop their structure and systems? What is staffing? How to build the capacity of their staff in planning, monitoring and evaluation etc.? So on and so forth. Hence, these are some of the specific areas where we can develop the capacities of local NGOs by focusing on their vision and strategies”

Skills

A very common and basic image of capacity development present in Pakistani NGOs is to develop and enhance individual as well as organizational skills. Ubel et al (2010) argued that an important ingredient of capacity development is the growth and extension of skills, abilities and competencies-the traditional terrain of training courses. Kaplan (2000) highlighted that capacity development cannot be viewed simplistically; there are stages and phases of capacity development which often overlaps and there is a sequence, a hierarchy and an order in the growth of organizational capacity development. Unless the organizational capacity has been developed sufficiently to harness trainings and acquisition of new skills, training courses do not “take”, and skills do not “adhere”. The NGOs that do not improve their skills and have a weak sense of responsibility and are inadequately structured cannot make use of training courses and skills (Ubel

et al 2010). Many of my respondents referred to the acquisition of skills and knowledge as a basic concept of capacity development. A government functionary while commenting on what he terms capacity development of NGOs in Pakistan said:

“As the NGO sector in Pakistan is still growing, they need more support and facilitation. In my personal opinion, NGOs need to acquire skills and expertise in many areas, for example, financial management, project management, human resource development, proposal writing etc. In short, I would say that NGOs need continuous support for their capacity development”

Change

Another image of capacity development, according to the stakeholder’s insight and prevalent in Pakistani NGOs, considers changes in attitudes and values at individual, organizational and institutional level as key features of capacity building. Many actors involved in the development sector had to adopt new ideas and approaches to confront dramatic shocks, emergencies, unforeseen government or donor decisions, changing needs of the clients and beneficiaries, sudden economic changes and so on (Ubels et al 2010). A regional head of a national NGO while responding to my question that how he looks at capacity development said:

“Capacity development is about changing attitudes and behaviors at the individual level. At the organizational level it is about innovation, collaboration and adaptation. At the institutional level, it is about nurturing an enabling environment and setting policies and statutes to facilitate and strengthen the NGOs”.

Converting Metaphor to Action: Images of Capacity Development Implementation

After discussing stakeholders’ understanding of capacity development and its characteristics, next, we will examine how these images are operationalized. In other words, we will be looking at the methods, tools, and techniques that are used for the implementation of capacity development by NGOs in Pakistan. Since we are looking at national and local NGOs in this study, it is important to mention that mostly the larger NGOs or support organizations are involved in the implementation of capacity development. The smaller NGOs are mostly at the receiving end and they are the ones for whom the capacity development activities are designed. A senior NGO staff member elaborated this point in his words as:

“There are two types of Pakistani NGOs. The first one is the larger NGOs who have good operational setups and structures and they are in fact support organizations who have professional staff and linkages with international donors. The other group of NGOs is the smaller NGOs they have limited setups and they lack capacities in many different sectors. They need the support of the larger NGOs for their capacity development activities and sustainability. The larger NGOs should support the smaller NGOs and help them in developing their capacity”

Training

The most common and widely used method for implementing capacity development activities is training. Training is a process by which individuals or organizations can acquire and improve their skills, knowledge, and competencies. Training aims at improving competencies in individuals and capabilities in organizations (Morgan 2006). Literature about organizational training and human resource development, emphasize that the training process should start with proper analysis of organizational mission and objectives. The next step is to identify what skills and competencies individuals in the organization should possess. Such analysis leads to training needs assessments and it is the proper assessment of needs that lead to effective training (Wilson 1996). To get the right people with the right skills in place is more than a managerial or logistical problem. It requires a constant review of the skills needed to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Every organization, including NGOs, needs to have a proper training and development plan aiming at imparting the specific kind of skills and knowledge to their employees (DFID 2010). According to DFID (2010), four things are important for any kind of training in NGOs:

1. What knowledge and skills are needed?
2. How many individuals or teams need to have these skills and knowledge?
3. At what level are these skills and knowledge required?
4. What other mechanisms, in addition to training, can be adapted to address the gaps in skills and enhance knowledge?

Training in Pakistani NGOs has predominantly focused on skills in social analysis and community development. The second important theme around which the NGO training revolves is to promote participatory development and collective action practices and to establish linkages between local and national NGOs. The third area of training for NGOs is to understand and be part of the development process in Pakistan. This includes training of a technical nature, for instance, proposal writing, project planning and working with donors, etc. (Carlan 1996). The fourth area of NGO training is related to organizational performance and management like human

resource management, financial management, leadership development, etc. It is important to mention here that with the passage of time NGOs have developed a better understanding of effective training practices. However, as stated earlier, mostly the larger NGOs, support organizations, are planning, designing and implementing these training for their partnering smaller NGOs or local community organizations. A senior female NGO worker currently working for an intermediary NGO and who had been involved in many NGO training activities remarked:

"The first manual and module that our organization developed on leadership management for communities, I was part of that team. I was also part of the team that designed a very well known training for community i.e. community management and skills training (CMST). Across the country, I have conducted this training. Other than these training activities, I have designed and developed manuals on social mobilization and gender mainstreaming in community development. Presently, I am working with IUCN on a project proposal development, training of trainers (ToTs) and other training like interpersonal skills development, communication skills, and conflict management."

A CEO of an NGO while responding to the question about what activities they have implemented for capacity development of NGOs, said:

"It is our mandate to take along with us smaller NGOs. We have collaborated and conducted training for our partnering NGOs in many areas like finance, planning, monitoring, evaluation, human resource development, proposal writing, etc. Mostly, our staff members conduct these training as they have been exposed to different ToTs (training of trainers) and modules. If we don't have expertise in a specific area, then we invite resource persons from reputable organizations who can deliver lectures to our participants. But in the majority of cases, we encourage our own staff to develop their expertise and then impart training to our participants."

Hence, from the two conversations, we can observe that training is a very popular capacity development implementation tool and is extensively practiced by Pakistani NGOs. In addition to formal training other forms of informal learning like on-site training or action, learning is also present in certain cases. A representative of a donor organization explained how their organization is implementing capacity building activities for Pakistani NGOs:

"We help our partnering NGOs in their capacity development by providing them with formal and informal training and exposures. Formal training is conducted with the help of resource persons on a particular subject matter. Informal training is a sort of hands-on training in technical and managerial matters. We also conduct reviews with them and these reviews also provide them the opportunity to learn from their mistakes or the lessons learned. These reviews are further taken to a second level or the next phase to provide the opportunity for complete learning. We also conduct periodical monitoring which also highlights different program level or managerial issues that need to be actually worked upon so that is also an inbuilt process of capacity building. And finally, we also find certain opportunities to send them to structured courses to develop particular sets of capacities"

A CEO of a national level NGO while expressing his views on how their organization addresses and then implement the capacity development of their own staff:

"We have a committee on local learning and training, the purpose of this committee is to conduct the training needs assessment (TNA) of our employees and to identify any gaps or shortcomings that our staff may have and then this committee also recommends actions that we can take. This committee regularly visits our field offices to assess our staff needs. So far we have conducted different in-house training for our staff based on the TNA that our training committee has conducted. The training included: proposal writing, participatory planning, project management, leadership development, community development. It is our strong belief that without well-equipped staff, i.e. human resources, our organization cannot deliver. Even if we are well equipped with resources; we cannot run and manage our organizations without the support of competent staff. Hence, for the success of our organization, we need trained individuals. We sometimes send our staff members to outside organizations for training, the local learning committee recommends individuals to such training. We even reflect the cost of our staff training in the proposals that we submit to our donors. For instance, the World Food Program (WFP) provides us money for capacity building of our staff. Recently, I have nominated two staff members one male and one female for a training to be held next week by WFP office, Peshawar as this training relates to their duties. In short, we believe in training our staff and we are taking every possible measure to do so. We know that in order to achieve our objectives we must have competent people"

Similarly, a regional program manager of an NGO working in the agricultural sector for the promotion of agribusiness enterprises and enhancing the capacity of farmer enterprise groups shared the following views:

“Our field teams visit the farmer groups and conduct their needs assessment. We discuss with them in detail and in many sessions, what are our organization’s objectives and what kind of support we can extend to them. Based on our teams need assessment, our management committee and Board of Directors decide which organizations are to be consulted so that our farmer groups can get relevant in horticulture development.”

A community activist who received certain training from NGOs shared his views about the training in his words:

“We were provided with training by different NGOs from time to time on different subjects. For instance, one of the training focused on the importance of documentation, especially birth registration, national identity card, licenses, etc. We were also informed that if someone had lost important documents like the ones mentioned above how they can be re-issued by contacting the concerned government offices”

In summary, it can be argued that training is the most common and widely used technique for the implementation of capacity development interventions by Pakistani NGOs. It is also clear that mostly the training is designed and implemented by intermediary NGOs for communities and smaller NGOs. These trainings mainly focus on self-organizing, community development and promotion of participatory development and collective action practices.

Knowledge Exchange

Knowledge exchange, as a tool of capacity development, is used by intermediary NGOs for strengthening community organizations in Pakistan. With the help of large NGOs, communities interact among each other and with other development organizations. Communities are informed about success stories in order to mobilize and inspire them to improve their skills, knowledge, and performance. Knowledge exchange also helps community organizations and smaller NGOs to search for information about donors and government funding programs. In short, knowledge exchange as a method of capacity development for Pakistani NGOs facilitates two important things:

1. Sharing success stories and best practices among donors, government, NGOs and communities for replication; and
2. Bringing together all the development sector stakeholders on issues of common interests and concerns to promote and facilitate partnerships and networks among NGOs, CBO, government and donors.

A CEO of a large and popular intermediary NGO while emphasizing the importance of knowledge exchange as an important tool of capacity development said:

“We have a long history and tradition of working with communities all across Pakistan. We have a vast outreach to rural communities. Most of our work is directly or indirectly related to knowledge exchange and we strongly believe in its strength and usefulness. The cross-learning and knowledge exchange among NGOs and communities lead to their increasing engagement with government and donors. The valuable lessons that are learned from communities are shared with donors, government and NGOs for incorporation in future strategies, policies, and programs. In some cases, they have been used to influence public policy. In my opinion, perhaps, the most important lesson is, if people are organized and given the skills they have immense potential to fight poverty and improve their lives and their futures”

A future strategy paper from the same organization highlighted that the exchange of knowledge for community development will be a major organizational goal for the future. The report further emphasized that exchange of experiential knowledge generated through many years of work with communities will be utilized for capacity development. A regional head of a national level NGO while highlighting the importance of attitudinal change for capacity development of NGO in Pakistan stated:

“For us capacity development is about attitudinal change. We help and facilitate NGOs and CBOs to adopt new and innovative techniques for improving their knowledge and skills. We use knowledge exchange as a tool or as a means to inculcate new approaches and strategies in our partners. We provide them with books, magazines and material from other development organizations so that they can learn about successful practices of other NGOs and are inspired to develop their own skills and come up with their own proposals and unique solutions. In cases where our communities are not literate to get benefit from the printed material our staff members facilitate them in understanding those books and handouts”

A regional head of an NGO working in the reproductive health sector gave his comments about the knowledge exchange model of capacity development in Pakistani NGOs in the following manner:

"I believe capacity development is an ongoing exercise and I look to it as sharing our knowledge with other organizations and learning from others. We are working in reproductive health and there are other NGOs who are also working in the same areas. We often coordinate and exchange information with other NGOs in areas where we lack skills and expertise. For instance, when we need trainers for voluntary counseling, we hire the services of NGOs who have the requisite expertise in this particular area and then we train our staff before they can go out to the field and work with our communities on awareness issues"

In conclusion, knowledge exchange is used as a tool for the implementation of capacity development activities in Pakistani NGOs. In this case, it is also important to observe that it is the larger NGOs or mostly the national level intermediary NGOs that play a major role in information collection and dissemination. These larger NGOs facilitate their partnering with local NGOs or community-based organizations (CBOs) to establish linkages and learn about the success stories of community development.

Partnership

Like all the development related terms, partnership means different things to different people. For some, participation is predominantly normative (Clark 1990; Korten 1990). From the grassroots perspective the ideal type of participation and partnership is initiated from below; voluntary in nature and empowering in scope (Cohen and Uphoff 1977). The literature recognizes a range of partnership principles, including mutual trust, respect, accountability, and influence, with the mutual determination of ends and means (Fowler 1995). According to Brinkerhoff (2003), partnerships with other actors are practiced because these actors have something unique to offer, and this can be resources, skills, relationships, or legitimacy. Ashman (2001) identifies that partnership ideally involves collaborative accountability where each partner recognizes the contributions of others, as well as their partners' legitimate need to be accountable for their use in the partnership.

In Pakistani NGOs, the partnership is a common phenomenon and is widely practiced. NGOs enter into partnerships for a number of reasons. First, a partnership with other NGOs or the government can improve service delivery; secondly, partnership with government and donors promotes mutual trust among the stakeholders. Additionally, it can also improve NGOs' image and credibility and they can get their legitimate space in the development arena. Finally, NGOs need resources for survival and they are willing to undertake projects and funding from donors and the government. Many local NGOs have partnership agreements with international NGOs and donors' and they work as implementing partners on behalf of their donors.

Within the framework of the partnership, capacity development is widely practiced by NGOs in Pakistan. A CEO of a very famous NGO while emphasizing the importance of capacity development through partnership said:

"Our organization has played an important role as a support organization. It has established successful partnerships and undertaken capacity building of many NGOs and grassroots organizations and helped them in achieving their goals. We conduct training for enhancing management and technical skills of our partners. In addition to an organizational capacity building, we also introduce our partners to new approaches of livelihood development, income generation and rural development. To reinforce these new concepts and address the problems of implementation, we use more action-oriented learning and on-site methods of capacity building of our partners"

A donor representative while highlighting the role of partnership as an important means of capacity development informed:

"We have partnership agreements with many NGOs. These NGOs not only help us in designing and preparing our training modules and curriculums, but they are also involved in implementing our capacity building program. At times, we also hire the services of individual consultants who are experts in the field to train our implementing partners (NGOs) as training of trainers (ToTs). These ToTs further conducts the training at the community level"

A leader of a government-sponsored project described his experience regarding the partnership role of NGOs in the following words:

"We outsourced some of our project activities to our partnering NGOs and they were working directly with the communities in training them and developing their capacities in participatory development practices, community organization skills, resource mobilization skills,

and advocacy skills, etc. I think the cases that I am familiar with NGOs performed well on their assignments”

A donor representative while highlighting the role of NGO partnership in capacity development shared the following example.

“Activities we had to train the parent-teacher management committees at the school level. The purpose of these committees is to ensure quality education. These committees were notified by the government, but were not operational due to lack of interest or lack of resources. In some cases, members of the committee were deceased and the positions were vacant for a long time. So with the help of our implementing partners, i.e. NGOs, we worked with the education department to re-notify the committees, train them and made them functional. So that these parent-teacher management committees can overlook the affairs of the school and children and take appropriate measures for ensuring quality education and transparency in the utilization of funds. Now, this was an achievement of NGOs to make the parent-teacher management committee functional, and enhance service delivery, but then there were instances where we encountered problems with our partnering NGOs. Some NGOs were working well and others were not and my assignment was to check them and enhance their performance by adopting capacity building measures”

A CEO of a local NGO executing a number of donor-funded projects as implementing partner shared his organization’s role in capacity development in the following words:

“We work as implementing partner on behalf of our donors. We sign field level agreements with our donors and then we are responsible for implementation. Different donors have their own names for such agreements. For instance, UNICEF calls it to project cooperation agreement; WFP calls it field level agreement; FAO calls it a letter of agreement. As per our agreements, we are not allowed to further outsource the activity. We have been involved in capacity building of various communities from time to time depending on the scope of our project. Recently we have been working in internally displaced people (IDP) camps to provide food to the internally displaced people. We have formed food management committees and we are engaged in capacity building and training of these committees. Two years ago, we were involved in water supply projects with UNHCR in Afghan refugee camps. In the Afghan refugee project, we established water management committees in the refugee camps and installed hand pumps in the refugee camps. We then imparted training to hand pump technicians for taking care of minor repairs arising from routine usage of these hand pumps.”

Similarly, a female staff member of a bilateral aid agency commenting on the significance of the partnership in capacity development said:

“We have working agreements with many local NGOs who are working as our implementing partners. We look at all their capacities. We look at their human resources; we look at their financial management etc. Before we enter into agreements with them, we have this understanding that they have to improve in certain areas and we can provide them support. In 2010 floods when Southern Punjab and Sindh was heavily affected by floods and the government was also paralyzed, there were several local NGOs on the ground whom we had engaged in our work as partners. We helped them with resources and facilitated them in developing capacities of their organizations”

From the above discussion, it is clear that partnership with NGOs is a useful technique to implement capacity development activities and is widely practiced in Pakistan. There are numerous attractions and usefulness of this approach for all the stakeholders i.e. donors, government and NGOs. In areas where the government and donors have accessibility problems partnerships with credible NGOs can yield fruitful results.

Networking

Networks are structures of interdependence involving multiple organizations or parts of different organizations where one unit is not a completely formal subordinate of the others in some larger hierarchical arrangement (O’Toole 1997). Networking helps an organization to come together and capitalize on mutual strengths and produce better outcomes. Connecting organizations lead to economy of scales and expanding the knowledge base of the organizations joining the network. Networking is a mechanism that links people and organizations sharing common goals and values (Holmen & Jirstrom 2000).

For NGOs, networking is a recommended practice. It helps NGOs to improve their performance and impact. As NGOs lack in many areas, for instance, resources, skills, information, etc.; networking can bring them closer where they can exchange their knowledge, information and resources for improved results. Networking can also strengthen NGOs to influence policy and

negotiate for changes in public policy. Hence, networking, if properly utilized, can greatly improve the capacity and performance of NGOs.

In Pakistani NGOs, networking is a commonly used method to implement capacity development activities. As different development organizations come together to share their resources, information, and concerns, it boosts the process of capacity development. Networking activities are mostly informal in nature as compared to partnership agreements. It is practiced by NGOs in the form of meetings, seminars, and workshops to encourage discussion on the needs and issues related to capacity development. Also, capacity development is facilitated by establishing linkages and networks among different NGOs and CBOs. A senior staff member of a leading NGO explained the networking and capacity development practices of his organization in the following words:

“In the initial work by our organization, we formed informal community organizations and we provided them community management training. In these trainings, the mental horizon of the office bearers and activist of the community organizations were broadened and they themselves realized that there is a need do more and they let different community organizations come together to be more effective at the village level and from village to Union council level and so on. Hence, with this, they came up with the idea of networking at different levels. So, I think this was a good initiative from the people and by the people. Keeping in view this initiative our organization decided that now it’s time for three-tiers social mobilization. The informal community groups should be combined at the village level to take care of household problems and all the village level organizations are to be combined at the Union Council level to address issues at the level of the village. The third level, i.e. the union council level will take care of the first two tiers and link them with donors and larger NGOs to address their capacity needs. When it was decided that our organization will develop these three-tier organizations we studied the capacity needs at all the three levels i.e. at the community level, at the village level, and at the union council level. This was done through proper assessments by holding assessment workshops. The networking of these organizations in three levels facilitated our work and helped us in identifying their common needs and skills required for capacity development”

This discussion demonstrates that networking of community organizations facilitates the capacity development process, both in terms of outreach and effectiveness. A CEO of one of the largest NGOs in Pakistan, while highlighting the importance of networking in capacity development interventions, said:

“We have the largest network of local NGOs in Pakistan. Our mission is to help people to build the capacity of their own grassroots organizations. We have done a lot of capacity building work by piloting new ideas and skills in our communities. Our work focuses on how different organizations will become a member of our network. How will they learn from each other and how will they implement our work. For example, our organization has worked in different regions of the country with community groups for addressing their capacity needs and then federating them in a three-tier model at community, village and union council level. We work with our communities on many things; how can they register their community group, what are their capacity needs, how can their leadership be trained, how can they maintain their books and so on. Networking of these organizations plays a major role in their capacity development; they get the skills speedily and start implementing their own projects at once. In addition to effective capacity development, they get into contact with other development organizations and come to know about many donor and government-funded projects”

Hence, networking helps the process of capacity development to be expedited and different organizations and people come together to further explore the available and future opportunities in their networks. A staff member of an NGO while explaining his version of capacity building through networking said:

“Our work is related to capacity building of community and village organizations. Once we are able to develop the basic capacity of the community level organizations like self-organizing, leadership skills, record keeping, etc. we engage them in small projects. These projects cover diverse sectors like health, education, agriculture, water, and sanitation, etc. With the passage of time we have changed our approach and rather than focusing on service delivery and municipal projects we have switched to advocacy projects. As our community organizations were already mature it was easy for us to work with them on advocacy issues. We were also successful in establishing civil society networks (CSN) to connect our community organizations at the district level. This networking was helpful in building the capacities of our community organizations. It was easier for us to gather local facts and figures and based on that data our civil society networks

were involved in capacity development projects in advocacy; research and information dissemination”

We can conclude that networking is used as a technique by Pakistani NGOs to strengthen their capacity development efforts. As the NGOs form these networks they share resources, skills, and information to improve outreach to their communities and provide them better training programs.

Awareness

Awareness is another important technique that is used by Pakistani NGOs to implement their capacity development programs. For the last two decades, NGOs are advocating for a more active and vibrant role for themselves in the development sector of Pakistan. It is also encouraging to see that NGOs with the support of media have stimulated discussion on many social, political and human rights issues. As the public sector is overburdened to address all development issues, NGOs are successful in creating the impression that they can better address the development issues of Pakistan. In order to influence public policy and public opinion in their favor, NGOs are constantly campaigning to make the people aware of their roles and responsibilities in the Pakistani society. To this end, awareness is used as an important capacity development implementation tool. Nonetheless, there are very few NGOs in Pakistan that engage in policy research to educate and influence public opinion. A donor representative while differentiating between the roles and responsibilities of the government and NGOs stressed the need for awareness as an implementing tool for capacity development interventions:

“Government is directly responsible to the citizens and it should take care of the citizens' needs. NGOs, on the other hand, have a kind of civic responsibility where they can promote awareness, encourage, support and connect people to speak for themselves and to come together for collective benefits. Hence, for NGOs all the capacity development activities should focus on awareness and building public opinion in favor of NGOs. In Pakistan, the government is always burdened to reach out everywhere and to everyone because of insufficient outreach and resources. In such a situation NGOs are considered flexible organizations that can quickly fill this vacuum by reaching out everywhere speedily and with minimum resources. During the last decade, we have seen huge emergencies where the government agencies came under severe pressure to deliver. Such a scenario led to an atmosphere in favor of the NGOs and I think NGOs performed well, keeping in view their limited experience and limited resources. However, I would emphasize that in addition to investing in human and organizational capacity development; NGOs also need to focus on the capacity issues related to awareness about the sector. NGOs need to focus on awareness campaigns for the general public as well as for other NGOs so that all the stakeholders can be informed about the important role that NGOs can play in the development and prosperity of the Pakistani society”

A CEO of advocacy and NGO highlighted the role of awareness in capacity development activities in the following words:

“For us, awareness is an important tool for implementing capacity development activities. Awareness is at the core of the whole exercise of capacity development. Unless people are aware of the importance and usefulness of NGOs in our society, they (NGOs) cannot get the requisite support. All the ideas related to development like collective action, trust, social awareness, participation, empowerment, etc. are connected to and dependent on awareness. Hence, awareness has a central role in the implementation of capacity development interventions. Our organization makes an effort to understand the root causes of underdevelopment in Pakistan and then creates awareness among our participants and partnering organizations about those causes. We also help in creating awareness about individual as well as organizational requirements like basic skills, systems, and structures required for solving development problems. Finally, we also promote awareness in favor of changing attitudes from individual action to collective action; from status quo to adopting new and innovative approaches; and highlighting the rights of the marginalized segments of the society”

The above discussion signifies that awareness plays an important role in the implementation of capacity building interventions of many Pakistani NGOs. It is important to observe that awareness is the first step to understand the root causes of many problems that our society is currently facing. Proper awareness of the problems can lead to appropriate solutions. Interestingly, awareness can be practiced both at an individual as well as at an organizational level.

Bringing together the Open Codes into Higher Level Abstract Categories

The next level of analysis/discovery is to combine the open codes into axial codes using constant comparison, theoretical sensitivity, flip-flop technique and other GT tools (Strauss and Corbin 1990, 1998). The axial codes developed during the method are; (1)

stakeholder perception of capacity development, (2) Implementation of capacity development. A summary of the axial codes is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. *Towards the Core Category*

Open Codes	Axial Codes	Core Category
Vision & Strategy		
Resources		
Development and Empowerment	Stakeholders Images of Capacity Development	
Skills'		
Change		Stakeholders images of capacity development and its operationalization in the NGOs sector Pakistan
Training		
Knowledge Exchange		
Partnership	Concepts of Operationalizing Capacity Development	
Networking		
Awareness		

Stakeholders Images of Capacity Development

Six open codes, namely Vision & Strategy, Resources, 'Development and Empowerment', Skills' and Change were identified to have similarities with each other based on their properties and dimensions. The combination of these open codes gave birth to an axial code: Stakeholders Images of Capacity Development.

Concepts of Operationalizing Capacity Development

Five such open codes i.e. Training, Knowledge Exchange, Partnership, Networking, Awareness were grouped together which combined to form another axial code. The newly emerged axial code was named Concepts of Operationalizing Capacity Development. These open codes were actually derived from the respondents' interviews based on the similarity amongst their properties and dimensions.

Table 4. *Images of Capacity Development Implementation in Pakistani NGOs*

Image	Level	Type	Stakeholders
Training, Knowledge Exchange, Partnership,	Individual Organizational	Tangible	NGOs Donors Government

Networking, Awareness			
Knowledge Exchange	Individual Organizational	Intangible	Communities NGOs Donors
Partnership	Organizational	Intangible	NGOs Donors Government
Networking	Individual Organizational	Intangible	Communities NGOs Donors
Awareness	Individual Organizational	Intangible	NGOs Donors

Conclusion

This paper provides a good understanding of capacity development and explains how different actors in the developmental aid system view and perceive this concept. Based on empirical data, five different images of capacity development have been determined and explained which further elaborated the different characteristics associated with this concept. To some actors capacity development is about skills; for others, it refers to development and empowerment. Similarly, some link it with change while others link it to resources and so on. The bottom line is that the image and understanding of each stakeholder are dependent upon their embedded behaviors and contextual situations. The study furthers to examine techniques that are practiced by Pakistani NGOs for carrying out capacity development. Again, the data revealed five images of stakeholders' perception of which training is the most widely used method for implementing capacity development activities at the individual level. Other concepts of capacity development implementation include knowledge exchange; partnership, networking and awareness, these models are mostly practiced at the organizational level. Moreover, Capacity development is a multifaceted concept and there is no single accurate way to define and implement it. It was conceptualized and implemented by stakeholders according to their contextual situations and preferences.

We Have discussed five techniques that are commonly pursued by NGOs for implementing capacity development activities. These techniques were identified in light of the stakeholders' perceptions and the images that they carry about capacity development implementation in Pakistani NGOs. These images are training; knowledge exchange; partnership; networking and awareness. They give us a reasonable understanding of how capacity building is operationalized on the ground. Of these concepts, training is the most commonly used method for implementing capacity development activities for individuals. Training is a tangible activity and can be measured in terms of a number of sessions conducted, a number of participants trained, etc. Other concepts predominantly focus at the organizational level and are largely intangible in nature. It is also interesting to observe that all these techniques complement each other and are operational simultaneously at different levels. As discussed and explained earlier, capacity development is a complex subject and is conceptualized and practiced differently by different stakeholders according to their own respective conditions. Similarly, its implementation images also vary depending upon the contextual background of the stakeholders.

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