

Capacity Development – when international development studies meets human resource management

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Abstract – in this paper we try to combine the recent changes in international development studies with the human resource management and development perspective, though looking at Capacity Development (CD) as the common meeting ground. CD has been pursued by political institutions and practitioners, and more recently we have seen theoretical contributions trying to combine the two disciplines (see Analoui and Danquah, 2017 and Danquah, 2017). However, exploring CD is a story about very diverse concept - which is understood, and used, in a variety of ways over the last two decades. Likewise HRM, is by no means characterized by a shared definition and a common understanding among practitioners as well as the research community. It is based on many different approaches and success criteria, and different actors attach various meanings to the concept – from highly normative to a severe critique. But does it solve anything to combine two very diverse disciplines and try to apply them on practice? In the paper we juxtapose international development literature with human resource management and introduce Garavan et al. (2018) model of multilevel analysis, as a potential solution to sort the many questions. We try to entangle, reflect and debate on these various understandings and potential challenges – using examples from Denmark-Ghana relations among other things the development of the new Tema port terminal (MPS), the largest in West Africa. Though this illustrative example, which is part of a longer, on-going, project, it is our hope to qualify the CD conceptual approaches within the two domains and to further develop the knowledge on cross-national public private partnerships in international development.

Introduction

“There is now emerging agreement in the development community that capacity development is the engine of human development. In the face of the current economic, climate and food crises, developing state and societal capacities to design and implement strategies that minimize the impact posed by these crises will remain critical for sustaining progress towards achieving development objectives including the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals)” (UNDP, 2009).

Capacity Development (CD) has for quite a while been the one of the most important concepts in the continuous work with developing new and emerging economies. Over the last three decades capacity building, and development, has among the majority of international development people been seen as the potential solution to the various poverty related socio-economic problems, characterizing many sub-Saharan countries. Before capacity building and development was in focus, many studies used institutional building, strengthening and development, and thereby emphasizing the state and public sector as the primary units, from where improvements in third world countries should depart. With the introduction of CD in the 1980s and 1990s, and the further development of the concept in the 00s, the number of studies emphasizing partnerships in particular between public and private (PPP) has increased dramatically. The broad PPP-approach has in recent years been introduced as a way to obtain the benefits from both public and private sector, often based on the idea that public sector investments can act as a helping mechanism, in early stages where the market is perhaps reluctant to enter because alternative costs are much lower (eg. in skills, knowledge, support etc.). Many of the PPP-studies tend to emphasize a higher degree of (local) ownership, continuous learning and the transformation and change. This way the international development work has in many respects similarities with the human resource development, and human resource management, literature in particular with the shift in focus towards “the resource based view” (see eg. Wright; Dunford and Snell, 2001). Here the continuous and systematised development of employees is presented as basis for gaining competitive advantages on the various markets for private sector companies, and attracting high performing knowledge workers in public sector organisations. The human side of the enterprise received a lot of attention in the early 00’s, and it is by many seen as one of the contributions initiating the more people-driven and strategic human resources management (SHRM) (see eg. Wright and MacMahan, 1992; Boxall and Purcell 2000 and Lengnick-Hall and Lengnick-Hall , 2009). Looking at the empirical HRM- literature over the last 2-3 decades, it is possible to see a pull towards a more strategic role, combined with basic assumption among the participating HR-people, that it is the investment in human capital, which makes the difference on market success or failure (Boudreau and Ramstad 2007 and Cranet 2017). To how large a degree this is mirrored in the de factor behaviour in

organizations and companies, and at all time shared by the CEO's deciding on these matters, is another story. Still, the human development imperative has characterized much of the management literature, and obviously seen in the emergence of the human resource development literature in the early 00's (see eg. Simms 2006; Werner and DeSimone, 2014 and Noe, 2016). Human development is considered a basis for increasing capacities at more aggregate levels, and human development is seen as an obligation held by both the individual employee and the management in modern, legitimate organizations. Finally, capacity has been mentioned by Cohen and Levinthal (1990) in relation to organization's learning and innovation, where prior related knowledge seems to confer an ability to recognize the value of new information, assimilate it and apply it to commercial ends. In other words, organizations should pursue "absorptive capacity", ie. building up capacity can be a good investment for increasing attention for opportunities for further learning. Still, the focus on capacity development within this domain is a bit more indirect, and implicit, compared to the international development literature, where CD by some of the main actors (see eg. the quote above) perceived as a end goal in itself. However, within the international development literature the status of CD varies quite a lot, depending on where one looks, an It could therefore be interesting to see how CD is defined and articulated within the various disciplines, if it has to be used together with human resource management.

How is Capacity Development understood?

In order to understand the development of capacity development as a phenomenon, Luthans et al (1999) have been mapping the origin and provided a thorough overview of definitions presented during the 00's. They have selected the most profound (and different) approaches and understandings (see Luthans et al 1999), see below:

- "Capacity building is the ability of individuals, groups, institutions and organizations to identify and solve development problems over time"(Morgan, 1996).
- CD is a concept which is broader than the organizational development since it includes an emphasis on the overall system, environment or context within which individuals, organizations and societies operate and interact (and not simply a single organization) (UNDP, 1998).
- CD is "... any system, effort or process... which includes among its major objectives strengthening the capability of elected chief executive officers, chief administrative officers, department and agency heads and programme managers in general purpose government to plan, implement,

manage or evaluate policies, strategies or programs designed to impact on social conditions in the community." (Cohen, 1993).

- "...capacity is the combination of people, institutions and practices that permits countries to reach their development goals ... Capacity building is... investment in human capital, institutions and practices" (World Bank, 1998).
- Capacity building is any support that strengthens an institution's ability to effectively and efficiently design, implement and evaluate development activities according to its mission (UNICEF-Namibia, 1996).
- "Capacity building is a process by which individuals, groups, institutions, organizations and societies enhance their abilities to identify and meet development challenges in a sustainable manner, (CIDA, 1996).
- CD: "The process by which individuals groups, organizations, institutions and societies increase their abilities: to perform functions solve problems and achieve objectives; to understand and deal with their development need in a broader context and in a sustainable manner" (UNDP, 1997).
- Capacity strengthening is an ongoing process by which people and systems, operating within dynamic contexts, enhance their abilities to develop and implement strategies in pursuit of their objectives for increased performance in a sustainable way" (Lusthaus et al. for IDRC, 1995).

Looking at the definitions above, it is possible to identify very diverse understandings of CD (and related, earlier concepts like capacity building, capacity strengthening etc.). Many of the definitions are (partially) overlapping, and relatively broad in their scope, opening for many different interpretations. Obviously this result in many, and more profound, questions. First of all, what is the level of analysis, and thereby followed by the question of potential level of aggregation? Where is CD studied, and what are the links to lower and/or higher analytical levels? Secondly, what is the character the various definitions and understandings of CD? Is it to be considered a descriptive-analytical or a more normative concept dependent on the intended audiences and beneficiaries, ie. is CD a goal in itself and an end or just a preferred mean for accomplishing something larger? Thirdly, who and how are the different understandings used, capacity to what, and defined by whom? This is of course relevant seen from a donor

versus a receiver country, public versus private organizations, large multinational corporations (MNC) versus small and medium sized local companies, employer versus employee perspective.

Our claim is in other words, that the international development research and the HRM discipline – which to a large extent have been living separate lives – are showing signs of convergence, in the way that the former is borrowing concepts and tools to the applied side of the international development whereas HRM in recent two decades have relied on the thoughts of capacity development on individual levels as a basis for collective performance. There has been a large degree of borrowing within each disciplines. This link between two domains, which have emerged, developed over time and reproduced themselves, very differently is interesting. Seen in a dynamic perspective, HRM seems to have developed into a more strategic concept, where the human factor and continuous development of this supposedly creates business development and increases competitive advantages, whereas international development literature has followed the route, like many public sector studies have mapped, of increasing privatization and import of management ideas from the companies, as a potential solution to challenges of implementation and effectiveness in operations. In order to bring our analysis further we have tried to construct and illustrate the supposed differences between the two domain in table 1 below:

Table 1: Juxtaposing international development studies and human resource management

	<i>International Development Studies</i>	<i>Human Resource Management</i>
Level of analysis	Society	Organisation/company
Main challenge	Implementation in local context	Elevation to strategic level, alignment with business goals
Direction	Outside-in (mainly external experts)	Inside-out (internal experts helping other insiders to perform better on the market)
Transfer	Developed => developing countries or institutions	Support function => line organization within a company or corporation
End goal	Increased ability to participate on the (labour)market (self-managing)	Increased economic performance by organization/company through individuals
Focus group	Low potential, low performance people needing most	Mainly high potential employees, best possible use of training and development resources
Dominant logic	Help to self-help	Persuasion to participate

The described mainstream assumptions about the two approaches, ignores variation and differences existing within each. However our purpose is to describe from where the approaches are seeing capacity development as a solution, and what the underlying rationale is. In addition we are not taking any stands on what creates success, and what works for the various actors in the two approaches in developing and implementing capacities. It probably varies a lot how successful international development projects are, and how much success HR-people have in implementing excessive capacity in their line organisation. Besides the differences we have claimed in the table above, we see overlap when it comes to capacity development: The two disciplines tend to share a long-term orientation, human capital investment oriented approach to employees; key elements are training and development of knowledge, skill and abilities; competence, and capability development at organizational level is used as a competitive advantage on emerging (and World) markets. These concepts have over the last couple of decades been used in the various understanding and definitions of capacity development (we will return to this below).

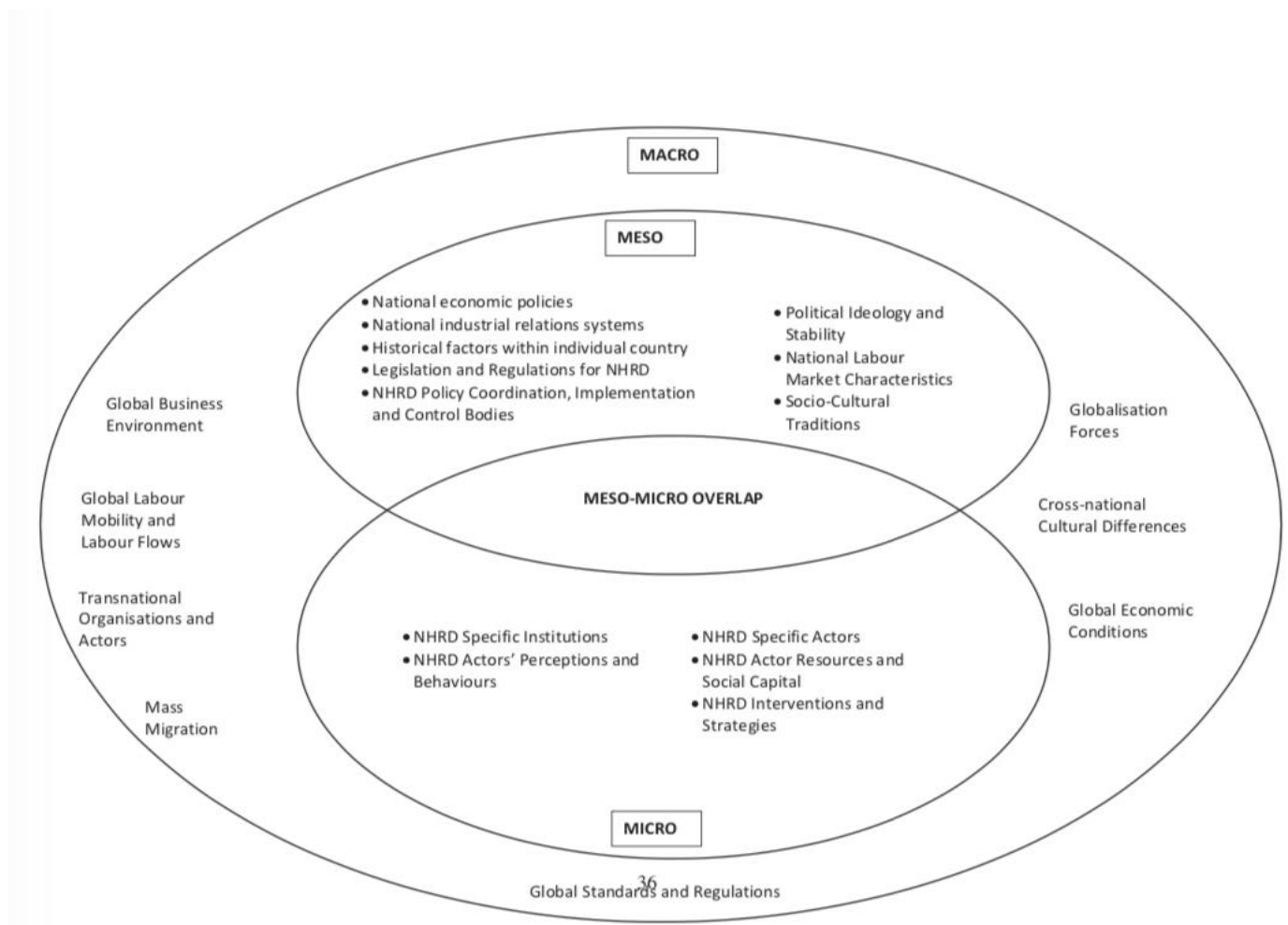
The overlap between international development literature and human resource management literature touches upon the challenge of studying micro and macro level phenomena at the same time. Explaining capacity development at micro level - caused by macro level policy initiatives - or explaining macro level structural developments as composed by micro level behaviours, has for some years been discussed and problematised (see eg. Hedström & Swedberg 1998; Abell 2000; Udéhn 2001; Manzo 2007; Abell, Felin & Foss 2008; Hagan & Raymond-Richmond 2009; Sampson 2012; Thornton, Ocasio & Loundsbury 2012; Beach & Pedersen 2013; Erikson 2014; Ylikoski 2016). What is in other words, the level of analysis, and explanation, as well and the properties of the agents at the levels, and it tend to vary between the two theoretical approaches, when we look at them in greater detail. One of the main difficulties of international development literature has been differences in level of success with implementation or anchoring new practices (within) organisations and/or companies in developing countries. More recent reactions to this has been the import of management approaches to , and one of the “solutions” has been to try and apply more private sector derived human resource management. The difficulties of practicing human resource management in itself are not taken seriously into consideration here. Many studies of more strategic capacity development, through HRM, finds that companies have difficulties in this and there is a somewhat undecidedness whether and how (and which) HR-practices contribute to company performance. Many of the the HR studies are also (as a maximum) cross company level studies, which cannot be said to be representative for large units, like regions, nations etc. This way the variation in analytical level, and “jumps” in analytical level, in order to explain capacity development can be problematic. We are by no means claiming the international development literature is explaining the emergence of HRM capacity development or vice versa – that HRM is a solutions to all the implementation challenges in international development. Without entering the debate on causal inferences, we will instead try to juxtapose the two approaches and try to describe the overlap through the introduction of Garavan et al’s multi-level framework for analyzing capacity development.

Multi-level models for CD

The historical differences between international development literature and human resource management , with their different point of departure calls for a way to relate the different analytical levels. And to investigate how they might relate to each other. In a relatively recent study, Garavan et al (2018) present an overall encapsulating model for doing multi-level analysis on CD. The authors argue, based on a literature review of 192 articles from 1958-2017, that there has been a bias towards studies of particular issues at various levels of analysis: In particular the macro level analysis has been under-researched (Garavan et al.

2018, p. 290ff), with significant less attention to the investigation of formal and informal institutional factors, culture, environmental, and global influence on national HRD. The meso or intermediate level has according to the authors received considerably more attention, with detailed consideration of national policymakers, legislative bodies, and NHRD policies. Garavan et al. also claim a significant number of studies, which have investigated the micro level and focused on researching NHRD implementation actors, the implementation of specific NHRD strategies, and the investigation of micro-level NHRD outcomes. What is still to be carried out are studies, that focus on all three levels of analysis, simultaneously. In other words, a multi-level approach with the cross-national and cross-sector macro level of analysis. The models is illustarted below:

Figure 1: Analytical framework and levels of analysis



Source: Garavan et al. (2018 p. 294).

Also Alagaraja and Githens (2016) have proposed an integrative framework, which considers capacity building in a more holistic sense - at national, organizational, and individual levels and focuses on financial, industrial, and workforce capacities (see Garavan et al. 2018). According to these authors Anikin (2017) carried out a multilevel analysis of the role of occupational structures and its impact on access to HRD and found, that the incidence of HRD was highly contextualized within the structure of occupations and the inequalities within them. In other words, are we to expect old inequalities in port to continue, or further developed (deepened) in the new Tema port? Who is being re-trained, who received the new jobs, ie. there mechanisms operating between the levels and are there any methodological difficulties in aggregating upwards and/or diffused downwards? The overall systems approach to CD is based on a multi-level ideal, and in this type of analysis organizations are social and economic systems in themselves, as well as societies and sectors are. However, the systems approach refers to a global concept that is multilevel, holistic and interrelated, in which each system and part is linked to another. It is tempting to opt for the large overarching synthesis, in order to better to understand and be able to explain CD challenges and successes.

Example – the new MPS terminal in Tema port, Ghana

One of the important sub-Saharan recent investments is the building of the new Meridien Port Services (MPS) terminal in Tema port, Ghana. MPS is a private consortium operating the new port terminal – 1/3 is owned by Bolloré Africa Logistics (a French company); 1/3 APM Terminals (a Danish company) and 1/3 the State of Ghana. The France group Effiage and the Chinese (state owned) Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) has been building the port expansion - at about 1.5 billion USD (per stage, there are three), inauguration of second stage July 1. 2019. Further works is supposed to be adding a total value of over 100 mio. USD and yet another 100 mio. USD in operating equipment, when throughput volume increases in near future. In total, a substantial investment seen in a European, Chinese as well as a regional West-African perspective. The new MPS terminal is a modern semi-automated self-service port (entry, control, direction and exit), with advanced IT technology (biometric scanning, routing tickets etc. - truckers having to read now). Media and MPS estimate, that 90 % of the people running the port are locals in better paid jobs (modern crane operators, scanner and gate officers, help desk, etc.). Jobs obviously placed higher, when it comes to human capital development, but the number of jobs characterizing the total Tema port is still uncertain. What are the employment net effects of a port like MPS, and how does this influence the employment and human capital composition of employees in the old Tema port (stevedore employees, pilots, supervisory authorities etc.)? These are some of the long-term questions one can address on the basis of the French/Chinese construction, and the two European companies running of the new terminal.

How does it change the employment structure, and where are Ghanaian people, who used to occupy the old jobs, and where do people moving into the new jobs come from? Capacity development is in other words not necessarily and automatically happening at all levels, when new major constructions take place.

The MPS terminal can – when it comes to CD - be studied in a variety of ways, and the outcome of the analysis similarly could be very nuanced depending on the analytical level(s). In particular assessing to how large a degree the terminal is a success or failure, is indeed highly dependent on from which point of view it is seen. The the terminal is in itself a very large increase of the total capacity of the port, and the French and the Chinese construction companies delivering the port seem to be labelled a success in as much as it was delivered on time, in agreed quality (see Porttechnology.com 2019). Concerning indirect effects MPS tells, that 95 % of the materials come from local suppliers, that more several thousand Ghanaian jobs were created. On the other hand, news of strikes and unrest among stevedore employees, pilots and various support groups tell a story of local actors having difficult in tackling the increased uncertainty, when it comes to the distribution of CD. The difficulties in mapping the success and/or failure of capacity development is in other words highly dependent on the level of analysis.

Looking at level of analysis our claim is that the global maritime sector is a system in itself. CD is therefore a very complex intervention, which encompasses multiple levels and actors, power relationships and linkages. We have already seen this in our first and second interview round, February 2019 and 2020, where the Regional Maritime University in Tema (financed by by a group of West African countries), emerged as a highly important institution for the development and maintenance of a large network of people operating in the port and the maritime organizations and companies in Ghana. The systems approach here suggests, that CD takes place through certain networks, and that spotting and mapping these is important for understanding and explaining the potential outcome of the restructuring of Tema Port. In addition, the high influence Tema port has on the Ghanaian economy, obviously placed a lot of political attention on the development in the port, either directly from the Government, or indirectly through the Ghana Port and Harbour Authorities (GPHA), and in particular concerning changes in economic flows between the central actors. Systems extend beyond the individual and organizational levels to systems of organizations, their interfaces, and the institutions guiding them. The multi-level approach requires according to Garavan et al (2018) consideration of all contextual elements as well as the linkages between them. This of course opens the questions as to when one can know that all linkages have been mapped? Here, the answer seems to be that CD is an all-inclusive strategy involving national, regional and local levels, organizations and institutions, as well as people organized by the state, by private or public organizations, and in their civil roles (see also Morgan, 1996; UNDP, 1999 and Garavan et al. 2018). From

this perspective CD is seen as a dynamic process, whereby networks of actors (individuals, communities/groups and organizations) seek to enhance their abilities to perform what they do, both by their own initiatives and through the support of outsiders. There was a move in the maritime sector in Tema, and Accra, towards positions oneself (the Ghanaian Government, the various ministries and public authorities, multinational corporations present there and the ecosystem of small and medium sized companies in the maritime and supply chain area, in a potentially favourable position with the arrival of the new Tema port.

The advantages of the overall systems approach are, that it is comprehensive, flexible, and emphasizes linkages between elements (Garavan et al 2018), and in addition we would like to supplement it is central to combine this with a temporal dimension. In the Ghana case, much of the CD activities have over the years been carried out in various aid programmes, and earlier experiences – positive as well as negative – with infrastructure investments from developed countries various regions and sectors in Ghana, do indeed have an influence on the outcomes for the present CD initiative in Tema Port. It also offers a broad conceptual and theoretical framework, within which development theory can place itself, and is a concept useful to those interested in national and sectoral change.

The complexities of multi-level empirical analysis are well known. The many actors and factors under consideration sometimes makes this approach unwieldy, the high level of abstraction can result in so broad concepts, and the precision in the interviews with the participating actors is decreasing. In addition, is it possible simultaneously to place emphasis on local, regional and national institutions – ie. the maritime sector is basically global, at the same time as all institutions are placed in a local context? Another difficulty with the systems approach to CD is, that it is sometimes unclear whether CD is occurring any time someone engages in any aspect of a systems intervention, or whether it is necessary for CD specifically to be seen and planned from a national, sector or regional perspective (holistic). Some individual actors occupy very central roles in system development. However, at what time does an intervention that builds the capacity of individuals become a CD intervention? For example, is a training program for individuals within the local maritime university a CD program for the whole sector? Does it become one when linkages to other systems are explicit? Our first initial findings seems to indicate that, the community of maritime trained people from RMU play a very important role, but it is somewhat a problem to identifying precisely what and how it influences CD. And to put it critically, are all activities carried out at different at eg. RMU influencing all the different analytical levels in relation to Tema and are they necessarily CD?

Summarizing

Capacity Development is a relatively well investigated phenomenon over the last couple of decades, in theory as well as in practice, and the exercise in our paper is not to map the white spots on the map, where CD has not taken place, with or without success, but rather to discuss the challenges of doing CD research in itself. The aim has not been to decide whether CD is a mean or an overall goal, what is true or not true, which definition is correct, but rather to map which arguments are presented, how and by whom, when it comes to CD. In this paper we have mainly focused on two national and one, maritime, sectoral system, which deals with understanding the kinds of policies and practices within a given country and a specific industry or sector. This aggregate macro level approach has been described by Garavan et al. (2018), and their focus is on the adoption and implementation of HRD to address community issues and target specific population challenges. So-called NHRD strategies are concerned with the implementation of large-scale systemic policymaking initiatives that benefit multiple stakeholders (see also Rana, Ardichirlli, and Zaing 2017; Oh et al. 2017; Oh, Ryu, and Choi 2013). NHRD contributes to both economic and social development (Cho and McLean 2004; Alagaraja and Githens 2016), and has as an explicit assumption, that NHRD plays a major role in the alleviation of poverty in emerging economies, like Ghana. However, a challenge of the multi-level studies is, that they adopt a multiple beneficiaries approach, where NHRD is supposed to be contextual and embedded within complex institutional and social structures, but also with the emphasis of a high level of complexity, where successful implementation is difficult. Looking at meso level, here understood as the organizations and companies in and around Tema port, and the new MPS terminal, expectations are to a high degree of capacity development as an economic and managerial exercise in a large variety of ways. To how large an extent do we find the elements of strategic human resource management and development in companies and public sector organizations, and (how) do these strategies, policies and programmes, develop into practices and processes? To how large a degree do the different actors pursue efficiency and effectiveness in a classical economic sense, so capacity development creates value for end users, customers, or other companies, and if so does this reinforce or challenge the overall systems performance? In other words, capacity to relate, to balance and to commit on a systems perspective? Finally, much of the capacity development thinking in development studies as well as in human resource management relates to the individual level, ie. how does capacity build up or further development benefit individuals, and change individual ability to perform, how are these so called “throughputs” transformed into collective performance like better service, faster delivery etc. in the maritime (and further on national) system, we are investigating? In this light knowledgeable, skilled and

able individuals are serving as the basis, the capacity assets, on which the larger system capacities are build.
CD success criteria has to be seen in relation to who formulates, measures and concludes.

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