

Approach to Inclusive Capacity-Building



*Developed by the Inclusivity
Community of Practice*

Capacity-Building

Capacity-building is the process by which individuals and organizations obtain, improve, and retain the skills, knowledge, tools, and other resources needed to do their jobs with greater capacity in obtaining better results. These results can be measured at three levels: [\(1\) individual;](#) [\(2\) institutional;](#) and [\(3\) systemic.](#)¹ Capacity-building allows for context-sensitive and needs-based training of policymakers, practitioners, and peacemakers. Members of the [Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers](#) have identified capacity-building and training as one of the four approaches for effective collaboration. Network Members use the methods of offering strategic learning exchanges, peer learning, and targeted training and capacity-building and sharing for policymakers and religious and traditional peacemakers to build the capacity of these groups and each other.

What is Inclusive Capacity-Building?

Capacity-building is the process of developing and strengthening the skills, abilities, processes, and resources of individuals or institutions. This could be conducted through in-person workshops, webinars, online courses, conferences, university courses, and training of trainers. There are many barriers associated with capacity-building, including access due to limited availability, language barriers, and costs. Capacity-building can also be limiting because it can start from the premise of preconceived ideas and views on the training topic. Inclusive capacity-building recognizes the power that both the trainer and trainee have in sharing each other's experiences and expertise, also called capacity-sharing.

¹ <https://www.peacemakersnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/theory-of-change-strengthening-leadership.pdf>

Why is Inclusive Capacity-Building Important?

Inclusive capacity-building recognizes that training and development more broadly is a process where people, organizations, and society need to be consistently strengthened, adapted, and maintained over time. Every individual in society has something they can contribute through lived experiences, and this should be recognized by all. For example, a trainer might be conducting a capacity-building training on how to be more inclusive of marginalized communities, such as LGBTQ++ communities. However, a trainee who identifies as LGBTQ++ will have their own views and experiences that he or she can share that will only enrich the fuller training itself. Recognizing the power of all members within society will lead to more sustainable and equitable peace.

Additional Resources

BBC Media Action. "Women's Rights and Gender Equality Checklist for Capacity-Building Partners." <https://genderandmedia.bbcmediaaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/BBC-Media-Action-Gender-Checklist-for-Capacity-Building-partners.pdf>.

DDI. "How to Facilitate Inclusive Leadership Training. 2021." <https://www.ddiworld.com/blog/inclusive-leadership-training>.

UNDP. Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer. https://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/capacity-development/capacity-development-a-undp-primer/CDG_PrimerReport_final_web.pdf.

UNOY. "Checklist for Meaningful Youth Engagement." <https://unoy.org/downloads/mye-checklist/>.

Checklist To Do's – Recommendations For Practicing Inclusive Capacity-Building



- Commit to gender parity within your training team, within the design of the training, and amongst your trainees.** Have diverse representation from all segments of the community and give equal speaking time to all genders. Examine and mitigate your own assumptions and bias when approaching the training.
- Be clear about the purpose of the training.** Explain in advance what the training will cover and address and what it will not. Have a 'parking lot' for ideas that you will circle back to or follow-up on following the training.
- Consider the logistics of your training, including the time and locations to be more inclusive of all proposed participants.** Women may be more at risk to travel at certain points of the day or night or may have childcare needs and people with disabilities may need additional support and accommodation. Offer travel stipends to ensure equal participation for those traveling from rural communities or long distances.
- Set ground rules for respectful interactions and be aware of cultural sensitivities.** Be careful not to create friction in the community or put your participants at risk. Preemptively acknowledge differences of opinion and experience and affirm it is okay. Be aware of people's perspective of outsiders. Take the time to be genuine, engage sincerely, and communicate to locals that what they are saying is important.
- Minimize distress or risks for participants within your training.** If re-traumatization occurs, ensure there are support mechanisms, such as counseling services, to which an interviewee can be referred or offered. Put [duty of care](#)¹ for the participants at the heart of what you do and make sure there are clear ethical and accountability standards in place. These should be shared and understood by the trainers and participants.
- Be aware of group power dynamics.** Give space for others to lean in and have their voices heard. Consider the dynamics of the facilitator and the makeup of the broader consultation group. Women or minority groups may only feel comfortable speaking amongst each other and with a female and/or local facilitator. Integrate marginalized communities, such as people with disabilities, within the broader consultation groups, to ensure you are not reinforcing perceptions of inferiority.
- Design flexible learning experiences.** Be conscious of different learning types and accommodate them, including: PowerPoint presentations for visual learners; recordings for auditory learners; and hands-on activities for tactile learners.
- Provide accessible and usable learning resources and environments.** Different modalities of training can include: in-person workshops and training; webinars; online courses; conference sessions; communities of practice; and training of trainers. Consider the limitations of online spaces for women, youth, and marginalized groups.
- Empower others to train.** The training of trainers (ToT) model empowers others and promotes inclusivity. One way to ensure you are giving back and rippling your impact is to train those who have the capacity, resources, and outreach with the communities you are targeting.
- Ask for feedback.** Ask for feedback from participants to improve the training for future use, such as through a survey directly after the completion of the training.
- Continuously connect and follow-up.** Continue looking for opportunities of engagement with participants instead of 'one-stop-shop' types of training. Stay up-to-date and informed of how participants are utilizing your training to continue to assess and improve its quality.

¹ <https://www.traumainformedcare.chcs.org/what-is-trauma-informed-care/>

