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**HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING
FOR CONFLICT MITIGATION**



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Foreword

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) developed this booklet in response to the identified need to review and improve existing human and institutional capacity-building programmes implemented in countries experiencing conflict and instability in the ESCWA region. The selection of topics and development of the training methodology and techniques were based on successful experiences in, and methodologies developed by ESCWA for building and enhancing the potential of public sector institutions, in particular experiences acquired by the Section for Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues (ECRI). Indeed, ECRI has implemented a number of projects and initiatives aimed at strengthening the capacities of public sector institutions and enabling the staff needed to actively participate in the development process in conflict and post-conflict settings, with a view to achieving sustainable development based on the principles of transparency, accountability and good governance.

The booklet presents a comprehensive training programme which includes a number of basic training topics for human and institutional development in conflict and post-conflict settings. The programme constitutes a capacity-building proposal that can serve as a basis for, and be tailored to the needs of building the capacities of State institutions.

The training curriculum was developed by Dr. Kamal Beghdash, an expert in human resources development, in cooperation with Ms. Rana el Houjeiri and Mr. Christopher Politis at ECRI. Dr. Victor Khouri, an expert in institutional development, helped to set the overall structure and identify the training topics. The development and review of the booklet was supervised by Mr. Tarik Alami, Chief of ECRI.

Summary

This booklet comprises two chapters: the first chapter focuses on development and conflict mitigation and presents the strategy adopted by ESCWA in promoting development objectives in crisis settings, mitigating conflict and identifying potential sources of conflict, in addition to the guidelines followed by ESCWA in designing that strategy. The second chapter encompasses a capacity-building programme for conflict mitigation which targets human resources in public sector institutions and consists of: (a) a proposed curriculum for institutional development; and (b) a methodology for developing the training material.

ECRI developed the institutional development curriculum and the integrated methodology for developing the training material in a manner that ensures its applicability within public sector institutions in concerned ESCWA member countries. The proposed programme is based on the accumulated experience acquired by ECRI in the implementation of various capacity-building projects in member countries falling within the scope of its mandate, namely Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, the Sudan and Yemen.

I. DEVELOPMENT AND CONFLICT MITIGATION

A. BACKGROUND

The Western Asian region has witnessed multiple conflicts in recent decades, at the rate of at least one major war every ten years, each of which has had long-term repercussions at the local and regional levels. Those conflicts have led in turn to a lapse in development as traditionally understood. It has become clear that a new approach to development in conflict and post-conflict settings is needed.

ESCWA has engaged into addressing that situation, seeking to alleviate the burden of conflict in Palestine, Iraq and southern Lebanon. In January 2006, it established the Section for Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues (ECRI) with a view to expanding its efforts and developing a new approach to mitigating conflict and achieving development in crisis settings.

B. APPROACH ADOPTED BY ESCWA FOR CONFLICT MITIGATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The strategy of ESCWA rests on a primary understanding of the relationship between situations of conflict and instability and the social, economic and political factors prevailing in the region, then on capacity-building in order to address challenges resulting from those situations. It focuses on the following three main interlinked pillars:

1. *Development in crisis settings*

ESCWA focuses its efforts in this regard on the following:

- (a) Mitigating the strain that conflict places on living conditions;
- (b) Meeting the long-term development needs of countries affected by conflict;
- (c) Building local capacities to mitigate the consequences of conflict;
- (d) Evaluating the development needs of countries affected by conflict;
- (e) Devising local initiatives that meet the specific aspirations of local communities;
- (f) Instilling the principles of good governance, transparency and accountability.

2. *Mitigating conflict and the potential sources of conflict*

ESCWA focuses its efforts in this regard on the following:

- (a) Addressing the socio-economic sources of instability;
- (b) Enhancing local capacities to alleviate crises;
- (c) Developing local capabilities to identify potential sources of conflict;
- (d) Fostering cross-cutting partnerships that cement peace and stability.

3. *Identifying sources of conflict*

ESCWA focuses its efforts in this regard on the following:

- (a) Monitoring social, political and economic trends;
- (b) Analysing the dynamics of social, political and economic tensions;
- (c) Providing early warning on emerging trends and their potential impact;
- (d) Carrying out research and soliciting insights by experts.

C. STRATEGY FORMULATION GUIDELINES

1. *Treatments/solutions/approaches that stem from the region*

- (a) Adopting an interactive approach with the relevant parties and with well-informed people in the region;
- (b) Designing programmes and projects that meet the needs of the people;
- (c) Innovating tools for enhancing peace and development, which take into account the characteristics (values, culture and diversity) of the region;
- (d) Acknowledging the sensitivities and dynamics of the region;
- (e) Promoting local initiatives for enhancing peace and mitigating the impact of instability.

2. *A cumulative approach*

- (a) Taking advantage of current and past experiences and their outcomes;
- (b) Taking advantage of similar experiences in other regions of the world;
- (c) Giving relevant local parties the opportunity to benefit from resources;
- (d) Combining the expertise of ESCWA with that of other development agencies.

3. *Mobilizing support*

- (a) Mobilizing the regional and international parties concerned;
- (b) Interacting and consulting with influential and concerned groups;
- (c) Forging a link between the region and the rest of the international community;
- (d) Securing technical and material support from all over the world;
- (e) Using the media as a platform for the widest possible dissemination of knowledge.

II. PROGRAMME FOR HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING FOR CONFLICT MITIGATION

A. INTRODUCTION

The Arab region has witnessed situations of unrest as a result of several political, economic and social factors. Five countries, in particular, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, the Sudan and Yemen, are experiencing various situations of crisis, instability and conflict leading to long-term social, economic and political consequences, which make it difficult to establish the foundations of good governance in public institutions.

B. THE ROLE OF CAPACITY-BUILDING IN INSTILLING THE PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

A strategy of good governance rests on certain fundamental principles, including:

1. Ensuring clarity and transparency in implementing financial regulations;
2. Systemizing checks and controls;
3. Adopting a merit system in public service;
4. Applying decentralization in order to facilitate public services;
5. Promoting civil society participation and dialogue between public and private sectors;
6. Rationalizing the provision of Government services;
7. Respecting the principles of human rights;
8. Supporting human development initiatives at the national level.

However, major challenges stand in the way of applying the principles of good governance in the public institutions of countries affected by conflict, crisis and instability. Despite the fact that crises and their aftermath vary from one country to another, there are shared challenges that can be identified, in any preliminary approach, as follows:

(a) The diminishing ability of central authorities to oversee and control the performance of institutions and the growing influence of de facto authorities in regions and areas, which hamper efforts to ensure transparency and accountability in applying laws and regulations, and encourage administrative and financial corruption;

(b) The weak culture of negotiation and dialogue and the difficulty of reaching consensus, under political and sectarian differences, on unified and applicable strategies for equipping institutions with modern organizational structures, administrative and financial regulations and working and service delivery procedures;

(c) The prevalence of a crisis management culture in Government departments and institutions under the pressure of volatile events requiring an urgent response, instead of a project-planning culture in the framework of long-term goals;

(d) The predominance of frustration and hopelessness about the future, which produces indifference towards the importance of updating management technology, and towards the values of good performance, service, and human resources development.

The strategy of institutional and individual capacity-building is one that could contribute to strengthening sustainable good governance in public institutions. It would take into consideration instability and its repercussions on the performance of those institutions. Given the above-mentioned challenges, it is important that the strategy focuses on key issues, including:

(a) Improving the access of public administration to information and communications technology (ITC) which would facilitate the process of checks, controls and monitoring, thus providing the conditions for ensuring transparency and accountability in applying regulations, especially financial regulations;

(b) Building local capacities, especially at the level of municipal and governorate councils, school districts and water, electricity and sanitation departments, for rapid response preparedness to provide services under conditions of instability;

(c) Enhancing management skills and systems, including the ability to assess the needs of the people and develop performance and quality control systems, as well as the ability to negotiate differences and foster a culture of dialogue with a view to gaining consensus on development strategies;

(d) Creating and strengthening participatory institutions, decentralizing decision-making and building sustainable partnerships with the private sector and civil organizations in order to facilitate the provision of Government services to the public;

(e) Instilling the concepts and principles of financial management and internal auditing, in order to develop the ability of the public sector to exercise internal oversight of public financial policies and to enhance transparency and accountability;

(f) Developing basic skills in organization, coordination and strategic planning, with the aim of improving the institutional and individual capabilities of those concerned with administration and leadership in crisis settings.

C. HUMAN AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY-BUILDING AS A TOOL FOR ENHANCING GOOD GOVERNANCE

Human and institutional capacity-building is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for instilling good governance in public institutions. Hence, instilling good governance requires a number of synergistic elements, most importantly a democratic political climate, the rule of law, and citizen participation in public accountability. Since those are the elements that become fundamentally compromised in conditions of instability, capacity-building gains greater relevance as a tool for activating those principles of good governance that can be activated in the institutions of countries experiencing instability.

A distinction should be made between two complementary approaches to a capacity-building strategy:

- (a) A preventive approach based on preparing public institutions to act during periods of conflict;
- (b) A reactive approach that enables those institutions to operate during the post-conflict phase.

In that context, ESCWA has endeavoured to mitigate the repercussions of conflict and instability on member countries in conflict zones and their institutions by designing and implementing, in cooperation with United Nations organizations and various regional and international bodies, a number of capacity-building projects and programmes.

In the process of implementing those projects and after reviewing, updating and developing the content of existing training curricula and material, ESCWA devised a method for designing a training curriculum applicable to public sector institutions in the member countries concerned.

The process for designing the training curriculum comprises two main phases:

- **Phase 1:** Consists of systematically updating the content of the existing management development programme and its overall design, principally on the basis of the programme assessment results and suggestions provided by participants;

- **Phase 2:** Consists of proposing the methodology to be followed when finalizing the proposed topics, on the basis of a thorough examination of the development and training needs of beneficiary countries or institutions.

1. *Phase 1: Proposed content of a management development programme*

(a) *Background*

The content of the proposed management development programme was compiled based on a review of the following:

- (i) Literature from ESCWA and United Nations organizations on good governance, institutional and human capacity-building, and development strategies in a crisis setting;
- (ii) Programme assessment results and suggestions for improvement provided by participants;
- (iii) Training material available for the management development programme.

Step (i) helped in matching, to the extent possible, the content of the proposed management development programme with the principles of good governance and institutional development goals of countries experiencing crises.

Steps (ii) and (iii) helped in identifying the proposed priorities, and are expected to help to a larger extent in achieving phase 2 of programme development.

The design and sequence of the proposed workshops will start with generic skills (Workshop 3: Strategic planning), then move to specific skills (Workshop 7: Interpersonal and leadership skills). Workshop 1 covers the management of public institutions in a crisis setting, in order to identify the particularities of managing public institutions and providing public services in conditions of instability. Workshop 2 covers administrative decentralization, one of the most important strategies of adaptation to conditions of instability, which calls for expanding administrative decentralization and fostering the role of municipalities and local councils.

(b) *The management development programme*

(i) *Beneficiaries*

The management development programme targets senior and middle managers in public sector institutions in Arab countries affected by crisis and instability;

(ii) *Overall objective*

Instilling principles of good governance in public institutions and building basic planning, management and leadership skills for the development of institutions and other skills for rapid response preparedness under conditions of instability;

(iii) *Main training topics*

- a. Managing public institutions in a crisis setting;
- b. Administrative decentralization;
- c. Strategic planning in public institutions;
- d. Project planning and performance management;
- e. Human resources management;
- f. Interpersonal and leadership skills;
- g. Financial management and internal auditing.

Those topics constitute complementary training units that aim to familiarize beneficiaries with modern trends in institutional development and inform them about successful experiences in the area of the selected topics. The training package/portfolio is characterized by its flexibility as it allows the choice of all the proposed topics as a complete package or a number of the training units according to the requirements and particularities of the target group.

Training Programme Proposal

Training Unit 1 Managing public institutions in a crisis setting
Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding modern trends in managing public institutions and the local and global conditions surrounding them; • Learning about some experiences in and cases of public institution management in a crisis setting, with a focus on experiences in providing services in conditions of instability.
Main topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern trends in public administration; • Strategies and principles of good governance; • Globalization and the global transitions/shifts; • Local crises and their implications on public institutions; • Managing institutions in a crisis setting (experiences and case studies); • Providing services in unstable conditions (experiences and case studies).
Training Unit 2 Administrative decentralization
Objectives <p>Building the capacities of ministries and other relevant bodies in the area of decentralization and local governance in order to develop strong institutional frameworks in the public sector.</p>
Main topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of local governance in conflict settings; • Developing the general framework for a national strategy on local governance; • Methods for: local authority budgeting, setting standards for the oversight system and improving revenue collection; • Methods for improving and raising the level of municipal and public services; • Improving conditions for receiving service claimants in public administrations and institutions, and raising the level of guidance; • Raising the level of basic services provided by municipalities and local councils.
Training Unit 3 Strategic planning in public institutions
Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the steps involved in strategic planning in public institutions and applying them to particular institutions or administrations; • Learning about experiences of a strategic nature in modernizing public administration, especially restructuring and quality management experiences.

Main topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic management in public institutions; • Analysis of stakeholders and their role; • Assessment of the internal and external environments; • Strategic planning (building a vision and formulating the mission and goals); • Strategic planning (choosing strategic directions, identifying goals and formulating action plans); • Coordination between public institutions; • Strategic initiatives for modernizing public administration: restructuring the institutions; • Strategic initiatives for modernizing public administration: quality management.

Training Unit 4 Project planning and performance management
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Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning about the stages involved in identifying priorities and needs, project planning and follow-up, and studying the feasibility and practicability of a project; • Reorganizing the importance of institutional performance measurement in planning and in project planning specifically, and learning about examples of building institutional performance indicators.

Main topics

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample project and its main stages; • Planning the project; • Studying the feasibility of the project; • Following up on the project and monitoring its implementation; • Managing institutional performance; • Steps in applying performance management; • The importance of measurement in improving institutional performance; • Mechanism for building performance indicators.

Training Unit 5 Modern human resources management
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Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning about human resources planning in conditions of instability; • Enabling the use of methods for evaluating the performance of individuals and developing their skills and job motivation.
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Main topics

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human resources planning in conditions of instability; • Individual performance evaluation; • Identifying capacity development needs; • Human resources development techniques; • Career planning; • Dealing with frustration and developing motivation.

Training Unit 6 Interpersonal and leadership skills
Objectives Instilling basic skills in self-management and workflow and staff management, especially time management, team-building, communication, problem-solving, conflict management and leading change in conditions of instability.
Main Topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time management and self-management; • Team-building and delegation; • Communication skills; • Problem-solving and decision-making; • Leadership skills and methods; • Management leadership and gender issues; • Conflict management; • Leading change in conditions of instability.
Training Unit 7 Financial management and internal auditing
Objectives Building the capacities of ministries and relevant bodies in public financial management, specifically public budgeting and accounting, in order to develop strong institutional frameworks in the public sector.
Main topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges in the way of policies for reforming public finances; • Modern trends in Government budgeting: introduction to improving public spending management; • Modern trends in Government budgeting: programme budget performance; • Modern trends in International Public Sector Accounting Standards (ITSASs); • Introduction to internal auditing and oversight: applications in the public sector.

2. Phase 2: Systematic development of training material

This phase consists of elaborating a comprehensive management development programme (objectives, content, material and evaluation methods) in light of a thorough examination of the development and training requirements of beneficiary countries and institutions. It is based on the expertise acquired by ESCWA in this sphere, with a view to matching the proposed topics and material with local aspirations, requirements and realities, that elaboration shall be country-specific according to the following detailed methodology:

- (a) Situating the training programme in the local context;
- (b) Determining the objectives of the training programme;
- (c) Redesigning the training programme;
- (d) Developing the training material;
- (e) Redesigning the assessment tools;
- (f) Creating a comprehensive training package.

(a) *Situating the training programme in the local context*

Differences and particularities in the nature of the crises, conflicts and conditions of instability among the five countries concerned (Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, the Sudan and Yemen) call for the creation of a development approach appropriate to the realities and characteristics of each country.

Human resources development covers the building and development of such general skills as planning and communicating with others. However, local characteristics may impose priorities that require attention in the design or redesign of any training programme.

For that reason, and in order to situate the training programme in the local context, an assessment of the training and development needs of each of the five countries concerned should be carried out. This action comprises the following two steps:

- (i) Addressing a questionnaire to the ministries and relevant bodies, conducting interviews, evaluating capacity-building projects, and assessing successful experiences in capacity-building in the countries concerned, both in building public institutions and in developing human resources capabilities;
- (ii) Holding a workshop for a selected group of managers and officials of ministries and Government institutions (20-25 participants) from each country, with a view to identifying the knowledge, skills and directions (competencies) that should be given priority in institutional development in order to achieve the principles and objectives of good governance.

(b) *Determining the objectives of the training programme*

Based on the results of the first action in the methodology, the specific objectives of the training programme can be drawn and the priority training topics identified. In determining those priorities, attention should be paid to the recurrence of those topics during the development and training needs assessment workshop, on the one hand, and the suitability of those topics to the institutional capacity-building objectives for achieving the principles of good governance, on the other hand.

(c) *Redesigning the training programme*

Based on the outcomes of the first two actions, the training programme should be redesigned according to training units and topics that match the needs of the beneficiary group from the five Arab countries concerned.

(d) *Developing the training material*

This action involves adopting, eliminating or improving the content of the existing training material and preparing new training material.

(e) *Redesigning the assessment tools*

The present training programme includes assessment tools for participants to measure the achievements against programme objectives and evaluate the overall programme itself. It would also be appropriate to develop a self-assessment tool which can be used by the participant and reviewed with comments by the trainer in order to measure progress in acquiring the skills provided by the programme.

(f) *Devising a comprehensive training package: trainer and participant guides*

Based on the previous actions, the training package is created and the training topics are selected according to the local context and its characteristics. The training package includes a comprehensive programme for training and capacity-building in which the training material and methodologies adopted are detailed in a trainer guide and a participant guide.

The trainer guide includes the workflow for each training session, namely the topics, activities, timing and training material available. The participant guide is divided into training units and the training units into topics, provided that each training topic includes targeted learning outcomes, reading material, practice worksheets and assessment tools.

في أثناء ورشة تقييم احتياجات التطوير والتدريب من جهة، ومدى ملاءمة هذه المواضيع لغايات بناء القدرات المؤسسية ذات الصلة بتحقيق مبادئ الحكم الصالح من جهة ثانية.

(ج) إعادة تصميم البرنامج التدريبي

بناءً على ما تقدم، يُعاد تصميم البرنامج التدريبي على أساس وحدات تدريبية ومواضيع تتوافق مع احتياجات الفئة المستهدفة من البلدان العربية الخمسة المعنية.

(د) تطوير المواد التدريبية

تشمل هذه الخطوة إمكان اعتماد أو استبعاد أو تحسين محتوى المواد التدريبية المتوافرة وإعداد مواد تدريبية جديدة.

(هـ) تطوير أدوات التقييم

تتوافر للبرنامج الحالي أدوات لتقييم مدى تحقيق أهداف البرنامج ولتقييم البرنامج نفسه من جانب المشاركين. ومن المناسب تطوير أداة تقييم ذاتي (يجريه المشارك لنفسه ويراجعه المدرب ويعلق عليه) لقياس مدى التقدم في اكتساب القدرات المدرجة في البرنامج.

(و) وضع حقيبة تدريبية متكاملة: دليل المدرب ودليل المشارك

استناداً إلى الخطوات السابقة، يتم وضع الحقيبة التدريبية واختيار المواضيع التدريبية وفق السياق المحلي وخصوصيته. وتتضمن الحقيبة التدريبية برنامجاً متكاملًا للتدريب وبناء القدرات يفصل المواد والمنهجيات التدريبية المعتمدة في دليل للمدرب ودليل للمشارك.

ويتضمن دليل المدرب سير عمل كل جلسة تدريبية من حيث المواضيع، والأنشطة، والتوقيت، والموارد التدريبية المتاحة. أما دليل المشارك، فيقسم إلى وحدات تدريبية والوحدات التدريبية إلى مواضيع، على أن يتضمن كل موضوع تدريبي نتائج التعلم المستهدفة، ومواد القراءة، وأوراق العمل التطبيقي، وأدوات التقييم.