Building High Performing MSD Teams

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

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

For details...

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

Online and face to face consultation with

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

CONTEXTS
Conflict regions, remote locations, stable economies

COVERAGE
South Asia, South East Asia, Asia Pacific, East Africa, West Africa, Balkans

SECTORS
Agriculture, Health, TVET, Finance +
HIGH PERFORMANCE DELIVERED!

BUT HOW?
What is High Performance?

It is about consistently producing superior results

In context of MSD

Superior Results = Market players taking lead …

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

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

- Shared Goal
- Shared Leadership
- Open Communication
- High Performance
Attributes of High Performing Teams (Contd.)

- **Shared Goal**
  - Not only about ‘What’ to achieve but ‘How’
  - Not only amongst ‘Project Team’ but also with ‘Stakeholders’ (Donors, Partners)

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

- **Open Communication**
  - Top-Down (from management to task teams)
  - Bottom-Up (From task teams to management)
  - Horizontal (Between task teams)
Building High Performing Teams

Barriers to High Performance

ASSEMBLING
- Country Context
- Sectoral Context
- Bidding conditions
- Competition to win tenders

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

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

Drivers of High Performance

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

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

**NURTURING**
- Allowing the team to form, storm, norm and perform
- Instilling, incentivizing and rewarding self-learning aptitude as the key stone habit
Moving Forward....
Our Recommendations

There are evidence and lessons on building high performing teams; but the lessons learned remain isolated and are not translating into a structural transformation of policy and practice within the MSD field.

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

Our recommendations

**Recognize**
that availability of expertise is dependent on country, location, culture, sector, political conditions

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

**Contextualize**
recruitment policy at the bidding stage

**Encourage**
dialogue with implementing agencies on team structure, competency mix, capacity building budget
Moving forward

Our recommendations

**Implementers**

Design
- Recruitment policy that filters self learners

Invest
- In training of team leaders on leadership, talent management and organizational structure

4 Step Gear

Empower
- Team leaders to make recruitment decisions; global templates might not work

Harness
- Talents and cross fertilize learning and capacity development across projects in different countries and regions
Engage in dialogues with implementing agency advisor and donors to ensure context specific team structure and competency mix and recruitment policy.

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

Reward self learners.

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

Invest in self capacity development.

Moving forward

Our recommendations

Team Leaders
Moving forward

Our recommendations

Capacity-building service providers

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

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

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

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