

Knowledge Building for the Coral Triangle Initiative

*Potential role of a central education, training and knowledge building
hub within Australia – needs and opportunities*

NOTES

13 March 2009

9:00 am – 5:00 pm

Attendees:

NGOs - Dr Jamie Oliver; Ms Jackie Thomas; Dr Scott Atkinson; Mr Kevin Hiew; Mr Richard Leck; Mr Abdul Halim; Dr Jane Mogina; Dr Stuart Campbell; Mr Paul Lokani; Mr Frank Tirendi; Mr Taholo Kami; Dr Peter Mous; Ms Deb Bass; Mr Augustine Mobiha

JCU - Professor Sandra Harding (Vice Chancellor & President); Professor Chris Cocklin (Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research & Innovation); Professor Terry Hughes; Professor Michael Kingsford; Professor Garry Russ; Professor Colin Ryan; Professor Gianna Moscardo; Professor Helene Marsh; Associate Professor Peter Valentine; Dr Margaret Gooch; Dr Glenn Almany

Facilitator & Consultant Mr John Tanzer; Dr Leanne Fernandes

Venue: Raintree Room, University Halls, James Cook University

Because this meeting was intended by JCU to inform them regarding their idea to contribute to capacity building in the CT6, the notes pertain only to the “conversation” part of the agenda and, as such, reflect mainly the points raised by the NGO participants. The notes are key points only and not comprehensive. Corrections will be welcome.

KEY POINTS – SUMMARY (in no order of priority)

Types of capacity building needs that were discussed¹

Bringing pertinent, cutting-edge, external science to bear on on-the-ground problems at the community level

Build capacity to conduct best science in the CT6 – perhaps through regional institutions.

Primary and high school curriculum

Technical training (e.g. project management, budgeting, communications)

Tertiary training at all levels including research training.

Mentoring

Learning-by-doing

Institutional capacity building

¹ Not all these types of capacity building were necessarily supported by all participants; the notes indicate those that were discussed.

Potential recipients of training could include government officials, fishers, community-based organizations, other professionals)
Providing the role of a clearing-house/coordination mechanisms for existing training/education in the CT6 would be very useful
Requirement for the role of continual assessment and evaluation of capacity building efforts to identify and communicate to the broader CTI the success factors and the lessons learned.

Success factors in capacity building efforts

Focus on the goal of making a tangible difference that is discernable in 10, 20 or 30 years time.
Short-term, isolated project-based efforts won't deliver the changes that are needed.
CTI efforts, including capacity building efforts need to be country-driven, owned and supported. (Here, "country" refers not only to levels of government but also community.)
Ensure governance arrangements are such as to engender ownership and responsibility on the part of the CT6.
By locating the capacity building entity in a non-CT country like Australia it can help to depoliticize the endeavour which would be a good thing.
There was support expressed for the 'principles' suggested by Prof Cocklin: needs oriented, collaborative, facilitative, coordinating, value-adding
Be clear on what aspects of capacity building you will finally take on and which not (don't try and do everything).
Ensure there is a value-add for partner (or any CT6 collaborating) institutions.
Personal relationships which are derived from long-lived programs are important for trust, mentoring, engendering of passion and excitement.
Distribute required information/knowledge/training to communities through regional institutions not directly to individual communities as this isn't feasible.
Have a widely distributed network through which to operate (this doesn't mean a governance structure with 60 institutions however)
Conduct training in partnership with in-country institutions.
Conduct training, as much as possible, in-country (to promote retention of trained individuals).
Not too extended a period(s) away from country (home/work) (to promote feasibility of people fitting the training into their current commitments)
Where appropriate ensure training delivered is accredited to some level to ensure quality but also so that modules of training can contribute to completion of certificates, Diplomas, Bachelor's degrees, higher degrees etc.
Local champions to support the program(s) offered.
Tailoring to local needs in content, mode of delivery of training/education and language/cultural appropriateness
Include mechanisms to assess effect and effectiveness of the training and education products.
Examples to learn from: Dutch Government-funded School of Environmental Management and Conservation in Indonesia; BIOTROP in Bogor, Indonesia; community conservation course at USP; RARE; UK University's 7 month course; TNC CTI Centre; ASEAN training program from 1980s (AIMS involved); NGO internship approach; FSPI Train-the-trainer program

Other key issues discussed

Governance of institutions collaboratively involved will be a critical issue.
Consistency in who delivers the training and knowledge is very important. This also ties in with the issue of institutions being present for the long term and not perceiving capacity building as a short term exercise.
The 'political' vulnerability of delivery mechanisms/institutions needs to be assessed.
The value of internships particularly for trainees from government institutions but also the major NGOs.