

“GIVE A MAN A FISH:  
FEED HIM FOR A DAY

TEACH HIM HOW TO FISH:  
FEED HIM FOR A LIFETIME”

TEACH A WOMAN TO FISH:  
FEED THE WHOLE FAMILY!

Owen Good.

Reform of technical assistance – May 2009



TEACH A WOMAN TO FISH



DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A  
WATER BASED FOOD SECURITY  
LIVELIHOODS CAPACITY  
BUILDING PROGRAMME



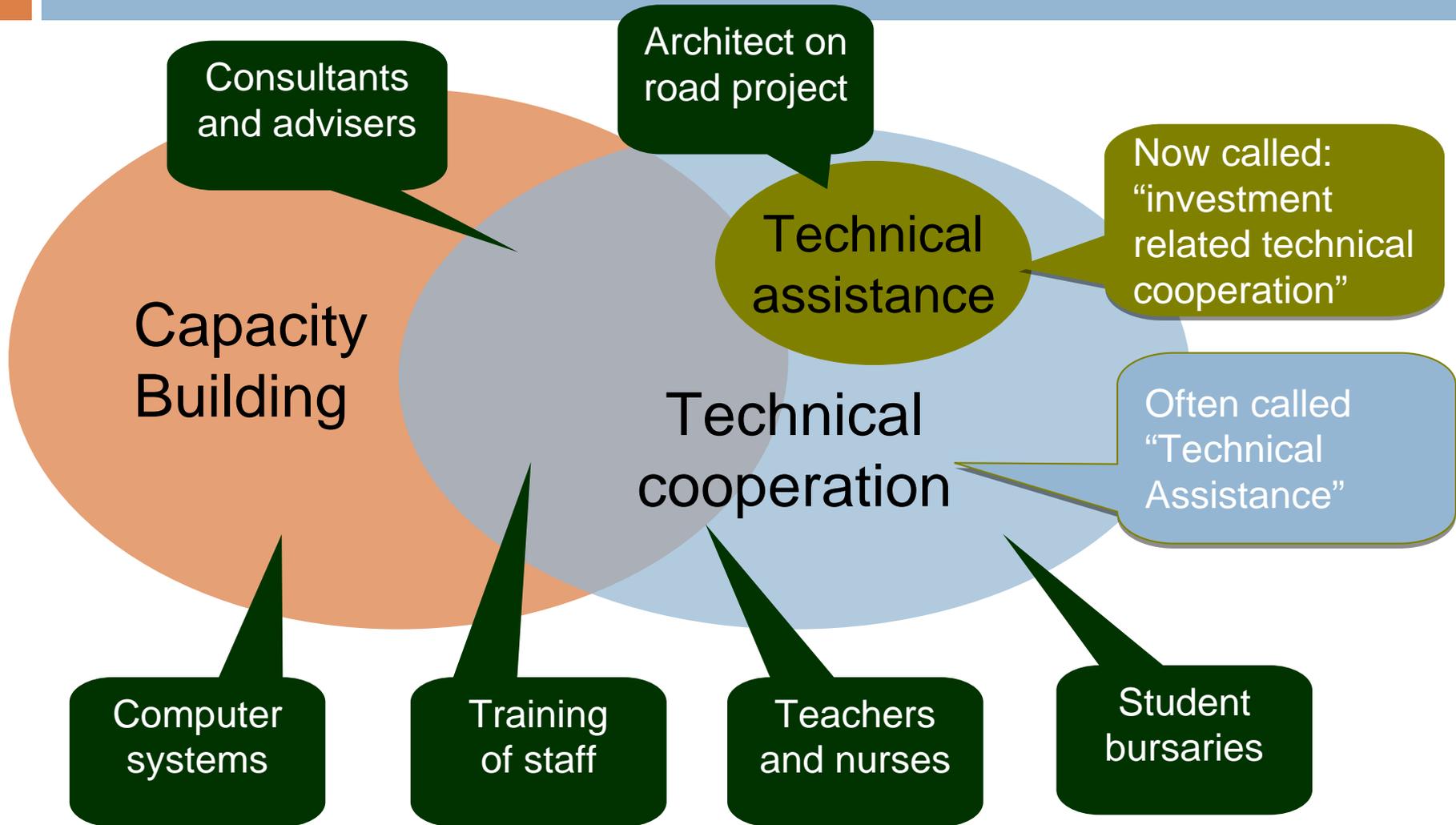
# When will we ever learn?

- “Assessments already made invariably stress the need for better co-ordination of technical assistance at country level in order to use available resources effectively”.
- “technical assistance often develops a life of its own, little related in either donor or recipient countries to national or global development objectives”

DAC  
1968

Pearson  
Commission  
1969

# Definitions



# A very small selection of reports

- “Partners in Development”, Pearson Commission (1969)
- “Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action” World Bank (1981)
- “Does Aid Work?”, Robert Cassen (1986).
- “Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Technical Assistance Personnel”, Nordics (1988).
- “Technical Assistance Review Task Force”, World Bank (1991).
- “Rethinking Technical Cooperation” UNDP / Elliot Berg (1993)
- “Developing Capacity through TC”, UNDP (2002)
- Technical Assistance in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Conference (2003)
- “A Vision for the Future of Technical Assistance in the International Development System”, Oxford Policy Management (2003)
- IMF Evaluation (2005)
- World Bank Evaluation (2005)
- DFID Evaluation of TA in Africa (2006)
- DFID Stocktake (2006)

**These reports have remarkably consistent findings and recommendations.**

# Problems of technical cooperation

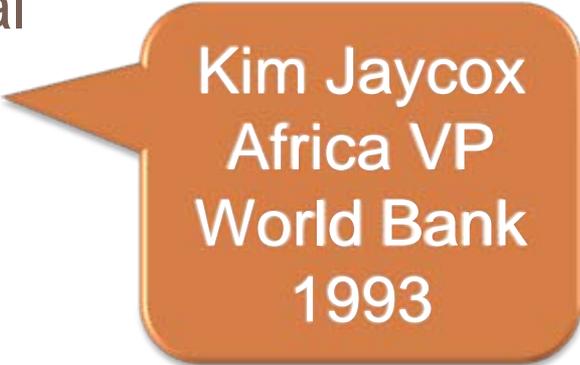
- Use of expert-counterpart model
  - Not effective at capacity building
  - Not used in any other industry
- Use of long term expats
  - Tied to donor nationals
  - Not experts in skills transfer
  - Often little knowledge of context
  - Expensive (e.g. as much as public paybill)
  - Tensions with local staff
- Does not use other expertise
  - Local experts or diaspora
  - South-south
  - Private sector
- Lack of institutional development strategy
  - Donor choice of TA
  - Supply driven TOR
  - Little impact on capacity development

# Yet more problems ...

- Pursues other objectives
  - Gap filling
  - Eyes and ears
  - Donor admin
- Poorly coordinated
  - Fragmented, poorly prioritized
  - Duplicated & contradictory
- Costs to recipient
  - Counterparts
  - Facilities and administration
- Badly designed and evaluated
  - Unweighted multiple objectives
  - No output measures
- No lesson learning
  - Sharing of documents & analysis
  - Sharing of lessons learned

# Widely held view

- “the use of expatriate resident technical assistance by aid donors is a systematic destructive force that is undermining the development of capacity ”

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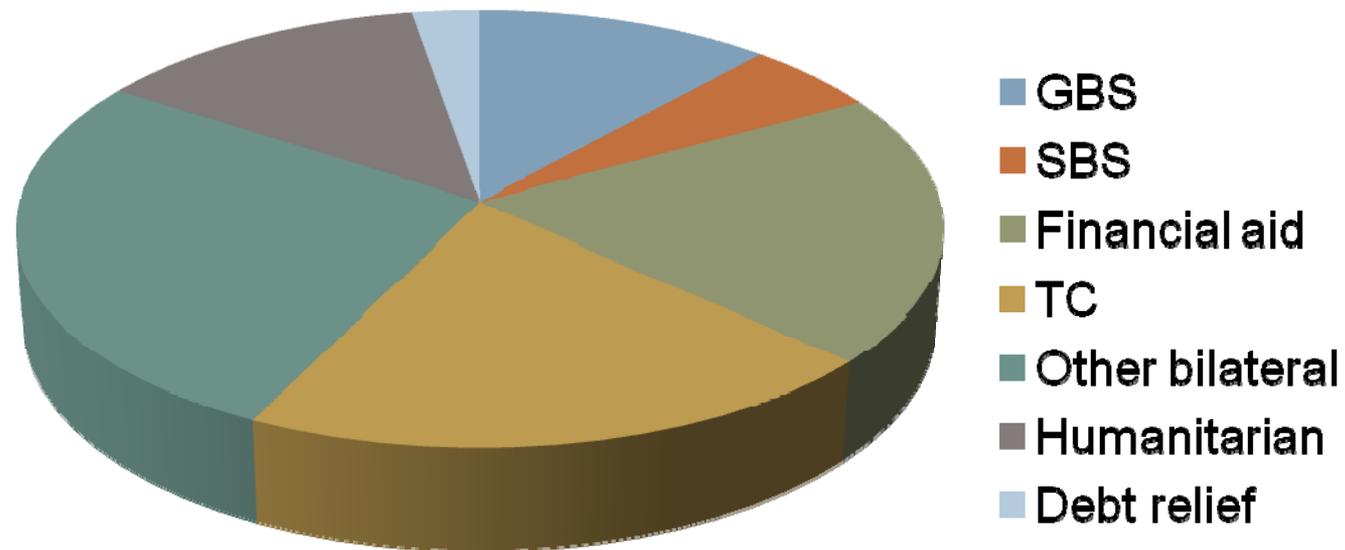
Kim Jaycox  
Africa VP  
World Bank  
1993

# How much does DFID spend on TC?

DFID spends more on TC than on GBS and SBS put together.

Source: Table 13 of SID 2002/3 to 2006/7

## DFID Spending 2006/07



# Aid effectiveness agenda

10

- Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005)
  - Focus on Capacity Development and alignment of TC and PIUs
  - Regular monitoring of progress
  
- Accra Agenda for Action (2008)
  - Capacity development is the responsibility of developing countries
  - Donors playing a supportive role.
  - Demand-driven & country owned support
  - Developing countries & donors will :
    - jointly select and manage technical cooperation,
    - promote the provision by local / regional resources, South-South Cooperation.

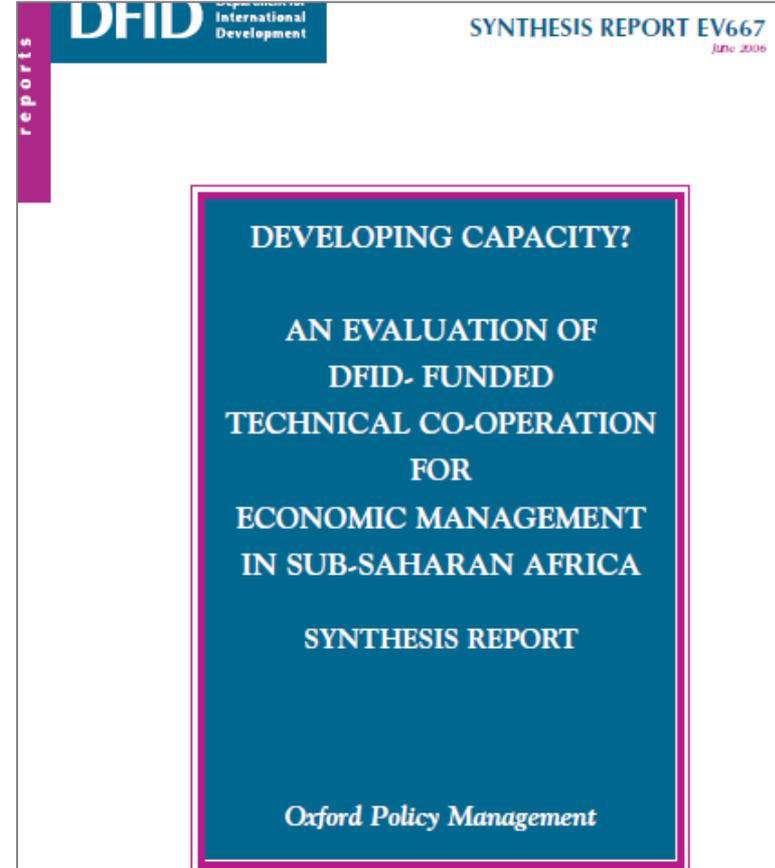
# DFID White Paper 2006



- “The UK will improve the effectiveness of our TC, pool our funding with other donors, increase use of local providers and ensure value for money”  
(p.28)
- “TC works well when the institutions themselves want change and are ready to lead reform”  
(para 2.17)

# Evaluation of DFID TC in Africa

- Ghana, Kenya, SA, Zambia (1999-2004)
- TC produced intended outputs
- But not capacity development (!)
- Low sustainability where ownership & capacity weak
- Should in future:
  - Set in wider context of reform
  - Joint design and contracting
  - Monitor outcomes



# Market failures in technical assistance



- Little regard to costs and prices in supply and demand
- No recognition of opportunity costs by donors and partners
- Demand choices constrained by “bundling”
- Principal-agent failures on the demand side
- Supply artificially constrained by rules and incentives
- No measures of what is being delivered.
- No opportunities to build good reputations.

# Pooled technical assistance



- Commitments in Paris (2005) and Accra (2008)
- Not explained why it should work – possibly:
  - Dilutes donor special interests
  - More transparent and explicit
  - More coordinated
  - May be set in context of strategy
- But ECDPM case studies (2005-6) – indifferent results

# Questions to ask



- What is the capacity needed? (“teach a woman to fish”)
- Why is the capacity missing?  
(People in developing countries are not stupid.)
- What is the capacity gap today? (How do you know?)
- What is the institutional strategy?
- What is the right instrument? (Hint: not an expat?)
- What can't money buy?
- How will I measure the capacity afterwards?
- What skills are needed to build capacity?
- What are the incentives for the people doing it?
- Is this gap filling or capacity building (or something else)?
- Is gap filling crowding out capacity building?