The World Bank Institute

Focus on South-South Knowledge Exchange
The challenge

“One great catalyst of change is when practitioners get inspired by other practitioners. Our ability to connect practitioners to each other on the practical ‘how-to’ of reform is an agenda of rapidly increasing importance.”

– Sanjay Pradhan, Vice President, World Bank Institute.

More than ever before, the term South-South cooperation—which can be defined as an exchange of expertise and resources between governments, organizations, and individuals in developing nations—has been gaining importance and momentum in the development arena. Along with Triangular Cooperation, it was highlighted in the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) on development aid effectiveness as an important means of arriving at solutions to shared development challenges.

Through the AAA, Southern perspectives have become more relevant in the evolving global governance of development cooperation. All development actors, including Middle-Income Countries as both providers and recipients, are invited to play a central role in contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and addressing global development challenges such as poverty reduction. It is in this context that South-South cooperation is recognized as a tool for capacity development.

Our audience
Practitioners, policy makers, development practitioners from bilateral and multilateral organizations, think tanks, private entities, foundations, civil society, and academia involved in the South-South agenda.
Our approach
Recognizing the potential of South-South cooperation and knowledge exchange, the World Bank Institute (WBI) is responding with the following integrated set of initiatives:

Managing the South-South Experience Exchange Trust Fund (SEETF)
The SEETF aims to further the World Bank’s knowledge-sharing agenda by drawing on the accumulated expertise of partner countries. This nimble, demand driven funding mechanism is designed to respond quickly and efficiently to the needs of reformers in low-income countries. In recognition of the innovative nature of SEETF, the United Nations presented the World Bank Group with an Innovation Award during the 6th UN Day for South-South Cooperation in 2009.

Contributing to the Aid Effectiveness Debate
WBI supports the Task Team for South-South Cooperation (TTSSC) with knowledge, advice, and financing. Formed in Accra under the auspices of the Working Party on Aid Effectiveness, the TTSSC’s mandate is to assess the various approaches to developing capacity that will yield better results and increase country ownership.

Capturing and Facilitating South-South Practice in Bank Operations
WBI has established a one-stop shop to help World Bank staff design, develop, and deliver learning and knowledge exchange events, strategies, and programs. We also contribute to the South-South debate through an active community of practitioners (www.southsouth.info), documenting cases and capturing lessons learned.

Our partners
- African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Organization of American States (OAS), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC)
- United Nations organizations
- Task Team on South-South Cooperation
- The Governments of China, Colombia, Denmark, India, Mexico, the Netherlands, Russia, Spain, and the United Kingdom
Examples of South-South knowledge exchange

South-South learning for practitioners: Global Dialogues on the Economic Crisis. During and after the global economic crisis, WBI organized a number of just-in-time global dialogues through videoconference, connecting countries from different regions that were struggling with comparable problems to discuss their policy responses and to exchange their first-hand experiences. Topics included subnational financing, subnational government programs, the macroeconomic sector, the financial sector, and the effects of the crisis on the poorest.

Africa-East Asia Experience Exchange Program. Designed by WBI and its regional counterparts in Africa and East Asia, this program is a catalyst for long-term technical cooperation between ten African countries, China, Malaysia, and Singapore to enhance foreign direct investment and develop globally competitive industrial clusters in Africa. While still in its infancy, the program has led to significant results and has contributed to the development of several Special Economic Zones throughout Africa.

Mobilizing youth against corruption—the Global Youth Anti-Corruption Network. WBI helped mobilize youth groups from around the world through innovative approaches to fighting corruption in the long term. In doing so, it helped facilitate and strengthen their network so that they can exchange their experiences, learn from each other, and assess what works well and what doesn’t in their anti-corruption projects. A number of these were designed and implemented by youth groups, including scouts in the Philippines who monitor procurement; a rap band in Burundi that raises awareness of the damaging effects of corruption; and a cartoon series in Bangladesh that educates children from an early age.
The World Bank Institute (WBI) is a global connector of knowledge, learning, and innovation for poverty reduction. We connect practitioners, networks, and institutions to help them find solutions to their development challenges. With a focus on the ‘how’ of reform, we link knowledge from around the world and scale up innovations. We work with and through global, regional, and country-based institutions and practitioner networks, to develop customized programs that respond to specific needs. WBI connects globally and delivers locally.

For more information, please contact

Han Fraeters
Practice Manager
+1.202.458.2941
hfraeters@worldbank.org

www.worldbank.org/wbi

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