Chapter 8 New Lessons on Mainstreaming Gender, Disability and Sexual Diversity

Inclusion of persons with disabilities is not the only issue suggested as a cross cutting theme in development cooperation. Also the issues of other minority groups are mainstreamed in international development programmes. From the nineties, development actors have embraced the principle of inclusion to address the needs of discriminated or marginalised groups in society. Mainstreaming is the overall adopted strategy to build an inclusive society for women (Howard, 2002; Mukhopadhyay, 1997; Waal, 2006), disability (Albert et al., 2005; Coe & Wapling, 2010a), HIV/ AIDS (Elsey, Tolhurst, & Theobald, 2005) and sexual diversity (Jolly, 2011; Squires, 2005). All these initiatives together are referred to as inclusive development. Despite the differences in needs among different distinct groups, they are experiencing a similar process of change, and therefore they form an interesting comparison. Therefore, in this chapter we want to learn about the process towards disability inclusive development from mainstreaming initiatives in the fields of gender and sexual diversity.

In this chapter we will explain the history of how various mainstreaming issues have caught the attention of development organisations that shows their commitment to initiate inclusive development practice. However, we also found that influencing societal change by inclusive practices is difficult. This chapter considers knowledge and experiences from existing literature and from three cases on mainstreaming, namely from gender, disability and sexual diversity. We show how capacity development of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can be a lever for the inclusion of marginalised groups in society. These experiences may help development practitioners to reinforce and strengthen their emancipating work.

8.1 Introduction

Over the last decades, the concept of mainstreaming has been applied by scholars and practitioners to counteract the exclusion of marginalised groups in society. Mainstreaming can be applied as a strategy for organisations to include the needs of marginalised groups in policies and programmes (Moser & Moser, 2005; Squires, 2005; Waal, 2006). For instance, disability mainstreaming has been defined as a process which includes ‘concerns
and experiences of persons with disabilities as an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes’ in order to create an inclusive society (Albert et al., 2005). Although mainstreaming has been translated into policies in some areas and is an important issue on the development agenda, its implementation remains problematic (Moser & Moser, 2005). To translate mainstreaming policy into practice, capacity development is required to enable new practices in development cooperation (Waal, 2006).

This chapter harvests experiences on mainstreaming marginalised issues in development. It starts by introducing the experience with mainstreaming in development practice over time, based on an overview of the literature. It then shows how international development organisations can be supported in promoting the interests of marginalised groups and including them in their programmes, based on three cases of mainstreaming gender, disability and sexual diversity. These cases are then considered at four levels of capacity development: individual capacities, organisational capacities, building networks and alliances, and influencing the environment.

### 8.2 Mainstreaming in international development

Since the 1990s, development actors have embraced the principle of inclusion and the need for an inclusive society. Mainstreaming is a strategy to build a more inclusive society for women (Mukhopadhyay, 1997; Waal, 2006), for people living with disabilities (Albert et al., 2005; Coe & Wapling, 2010a), HIV/AIDS (Elsey et al., 2005) and for those excluded because of their sexual preference (Squires, 2005). Mainstreaming of gender and HIV/AIDS has been quite successful, e.g. by their incorporation into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Other mainstreaming issues have since this success received greater recognition on the international development agenda (Elsey et al., 2005).

The process of mainstreaming in development practice has evolved over time. In 2005, a review of gender mainstreaming practice in development was undertaken (Moser & Moser, 2005). First, it identified a dispute between the concepts of inclusion and integration, both of which are concerned with building an inclusive society. Inclusion of marginalised groups in society was criticised because it focuses on the greater good for all and not on affirmative action to address the special needs of the most disadvantaged people, necessary for real integration (Moser & Moser, 2005; Nussbaum, 2003). Second, they found that most major development institutions translated the principle of gender equality into policies rather
than practice. Despite the commitment for the process of mainstreaming, evidence of successful implementation of inclusion of marginalised groups into practice remains inconsistent and most gender initiatives involve only a few activities, rather than a coherent and integrated process (Moser & Moser, 2005; Mukhopadhyay, 1997).

The greatest challenge mainstreaming initiatives face is the translation of the principle of inclusion into effective practice. According to Zachariassen (2012), mainstreaming represents change processes that require a long-term perspective, including support for the capacity development of all actors concerned. Herein, systematic agenda setting and comprehensive stakeholder involvement, including the ultimate target group, are needed to support the successful development of an inclusive society. In the sections below, we describe the experiences of three mainstreaming issues that relate to the cases presented in this chapter.

**Gender mainstreaming**

By the early 1990s, development organisations began to understand that, contrary to the then prevailing theories of change, benefits of general development efforts did not tend to trickle down to women. This led to a range of programmes specifically targeting women (Waal, 2006). However, these efforts did not bring the expected benefits of equal opportunities and rights but resulted in further exclusion of women in development. This led to the understanding that gender issues could not be tackled in isolation and that interventions needed to be grounded in a comprehensive analysis of their specific context and in a multi-sector approach (Mukhopadhyay, 1997). In response, a large number of gender mainstreaming initiatives were launched from 1995 onwards.

From 2000, gender mainstreaming has been heavily criticised for being too theoretical and having too much of a top down orientation with little empirical impact (Moser & Moser, 2005). These criticisms disregard the positive experiences with gender mainstreaming, such as empowering women, increasing understanding and respect between men and women, strengthening women’s self-confidence and inclusion of gender issues into organisational policies (Zachariassen, 2012). The ultimate outcomes and impact of gender mainstreaming on gender equality remain largely unknown.

**Disability mainstreaming**

Disability was originally seen as residing in individuals who require special medical attention. However, as in gender mainstreaming, this approach led to unintentional
segregation in which persons with disabilities were seen as objects of pity (Bickenbach et al., 1999). During the 1990s the perspective on disability shifted from the individual to the environment’s role in defining, amplifying, and ameliorating the effects of impairments, ultimately leading to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted by the General Assembly on 13 December 2006 (Stein & Lord, 2010).

Attention for disability mainstreaming in development practice started in 2000, triggered because the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) did not address disability issues. Disability activists started to stress the importance of inclusion of persons with disabilities if the MDGs were to be attained (Mwenda et al., 2009). Since then, many initiatives for disability mainstreaming have been undertaken, focusing on accessibility of education, employment, and aid programmes etcetera. Despite these initiatives, experiences of disability mainstreaming are scattered, and the majority of international development agencies do not recognise disability as a legitimate focus of mainstreaming (Bruijn et al., 2012). The main challenge herein remains in integrating the two seemingly contradictory requirements of inclusion and special needs.

Sexual diversity

Phenomena of sexual diversity are often labelled as ‘unequal’. However, they are not yet seen as a focus of mainstreaming initiatives (Squires, 2005). The initial misinterpretation of HIV/AIDS as a disease of the homosexual community in the late 1980s gave the emancipation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual (LGBT) communities an important boost over the past decades. Given the high impact of HIV/AIDS in low- and middle income countries, mainstreaming this issue was soon added to the development agenda wherein LGBT communities were considered as one of the target groups. However, this process of ‘mainstreaming’ HIV/AIDS was often too narrow and reductionist to be effective for the sexually diverse target group. In response to this ineffectiveness, movements and interest groups organised by LGBT communities started taking responsibility for getting their HIV/AIDS response organised. In this process, they widened their perspective by getting LGBT communities recognised as marginalised groups, and not only as affected health target groups. Given that this development is recent and highly sensitive, not much is known about successes, challenges and impact (Elsey et al., 2005).

From this brief review of three different strands of mainstreaming, we conclude that the impact of mainstreaming topics has not been systematically documented, despite the fact that mainstreaming has been on the development agenda for over 20 years. Fragmentary
case studies suggest that the inclusion of marginalised groups remains extremely difficult in practice. In literature, a number of possible, interlinked explanations are given for the difficulty of inclusion of marginalised groups in development practice: 1) the gap between policies and practice, 2) the lack of a comprehensive capacity development approach to mainstream issues in a sustainable way, and 3) extreme sensitivity and diversity of the issues in their context which do not allow for a blueprint approach (Albert et al., 2005; Elsey et al., 2005; Moser & Moser, 2005; Zachariassen, 2012). The cases presented in this chapter experiment with strengthening and contextualising capacities at different levels. This was done to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

8.3 Methodological considerations and frame of analysis

Before discussing the results of the three cases, we will explain how we compared and analysed their experiences. Furthermore, we will discuss the model of capacity development we used in analysing how the cases strengthened and contextualised the capacities at different levels to bridge the gap between policy and practice.

Methodological considerations

In 2010, the Dutch membership organisation for development organisations, PSO, developed an approach, the Thematic Learning Programme (TLP) that brings together different organisations to systematically and collectively learn from their practices around a central theme. A TLP is a focused and collective capacity development support programme that explores practical solutions, embedded in their context, to thematic challenges in development practices (Hiemstra et al., 2012). The three case studies that constitute the material for the present analysis were all based on the TLP concept as described above. They focused respectively on mainstreaming gender, disability, and sexual diversity into development practice. The programmes were developed independently without the purpose of drawing generic lessons. However, in the process, interesting similarities in the mainstreaming of the three thematic areas became apparent.

At the PSO conference in November 2012, the three TLP representatives were invited to take a bird’s eye view of their own TLP from a mainstreaming perspective, resulting in a cross-case comparison through inter-subjective analysis. This information, together with output and evaluation reports of the TLPs, was analysed and compared by the authors. The
generic insights developed during the workshop and the analyses were merged into the present chapter, which has also been reviewed by programme coordinators of the three concerned TLPs.

**Frame of analysis**

In order to move towards an inclusive society, development organisations can lead change by developing their capacities to include marginalised groups (Waal, 2006). There are numerous definitions of capacity development, ranging from defining capacity development as an approach or process to defining it as a development objective (Bolger, 2000; Kaplan, 2000). Despite the differences in defining capacity development, all definitions stress the importance of understanding the context in which development programmes occur and agree on the notion that there are different inter-related levels of capacity development (Bolger, 2000).

![Figure 8.1 Frame of analysis for capacity development, adapted from UNDP 1997 and Borger 2000](image)

**Figure 8.1 Frame of analysis for capacity development, adapted from UNDP 1997 and Borger 2000**

Inspired by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1997) and Bolger (2000), figure 8.1 above shows the framework of capacity development used to analyse the three cases presented here. The triangle in figure 8.1 shows that capacity exists when individuals can perform within a functioning organisation that is well-linked to alliances and networks, which together operate within a sufficiently enabling institutional context. The arrows depict the possible points of entry to support capacity development at these four levels.

In the context of this chapter, we assume that the creation of a society with the capacity to include and empower marginalised groups has to work on the identities, attitudes and
behaviours of individuals; the structures, cultures and processes within organisations; the quality of partnerships and alliances; and the institutional context.

8.4 Harvesting experiences with capacity development in mainstreaming development issues

In this section, we first consider the advantages and disadvantages of mainstreaming as a concept. Then we describe how the TLPs designed their capacity development programme through multi-level mainstreaming interventions in order to bridge the gap between policies and practice. Finally, we will explain per level the strategies applied to build capacity and the results of these efforts on mainstreaming marginalised groups.

Mainstreaming versus inclusion

In our overview of mainstreaming experiences, we revealed the gap between policies on mainstreaming and the implementation of these policies into practice. If successful implementations of mainstreaming have been achieved; the lessons of these initiatives have generally not been documented to make them accessible to practitioners. It is this gap that the TLPs on gender, disability and sexual diversity aim to address.

To understand the differences between the TLPs, we compared their initial learning questions and sub-goals (see table 8.1). Interestingly, none of the programmes made explicit reference to mainstreaming, although the TLPs on disability and sexual diversity refer to inclusion in practice. The gender TLP specifically addresses context specific conceptualization and interpretation of gender equality, demonstrating the difficulty of defining mainstreaming. The coordinators of the TLPs were concerned that use of the term mainstreaming would make their planned outcomes less tangible, also described as ‘away streaming.’ For this reason, they chose to focus on inclusion to build an equal society, and used mainstreaming only as a means to an end.
Designing a capacity development programme to enhance mainstreaming of development issues

When we consider the main learning questions of the three TLPs (see table 8.1), we observe that, initially, the emphasis of capacity development differed. For the Gender Learning in Action Community, the participating organisations already included gender in their policies before the programme started, to a greater or lesser extent. Therefore, the TLP focussed on the organisational change that is needed to translate attention for gender into practice.

The themes of disability inclusion and sexual diversity are not yet embedded in development practice which means that organisational policies were not in place. For this reason, these TLPs focused on getting the issue on the agenda. For example, the TLP on...
disability inclusion focused on organisational change in development programmes to get
the issue of disability inclusion on the agenda and implemented in practice. As a
consequence, the TLP on disability inclusion also intervenes at the level of organisational
development, aiming to create an inclusive organisation. In the TLP on mainstreaming
sexual diversity, there was more attention for acceptance of sexual diversity as a pre-
condition for mainstreaming. Individual capacity development is thereby central to the
interventions of the TLP on sexual diversity, as a pre-condition for organisational
development. The two other TLPs also pay attention to capacity development at the
individual level, although this is not their main point of entry for capacity development.

Attention for individual- and network aspects of capacity building were addressed in all
TLPs. Capacity development at the individual level was acknowledged as important, since
individuals need to become aware, emotionally affected and inspired to gain new
knowledge, and change their beliefs, behaviour and attitudes. When the TLPs aimed to
bring about organisational changes, such as the gender and disability inclusion TLPs,
individuals also need to be involved to start the change process. The network aspect of
capacity development was visible in the alliances that were built among the organisations
that participated in the TLPs. They felt a shared responsibility to realise their dream of an
equal society for all. Furthermore, the sub-goals show that all TLPs consider multiple
stakeholders and their roles in inclusion of marginalised groups, emphasising interventions
at the level of networks.

Capacity development to address mainstreaming in the wider environment was not directly
included in the TLP goals. The participants realised that they could only try to stimulate
others by demonstrating their ideals of an inclusive society for all. They organised several
activities for anyone interested in celebrating diversity. Hereby they contributed to the
debate on inclusion of marginalised groups in development practice.

An analysis of publications and discussions in the TLPs demonstrate that they use a mixture
of strategies that affect outcomes at the four levels of capacity development, as shown in
table 8.2. The TLP sub-goals (table 8.1) and the real practice of capacity development (table
8.2) shows that capacity development at organisational level is the most important entry
point, followed by the individual level. According to the TLP coordinators, interventions at
the organisational level start a process in which individuals are reached, networks are
established, bonds are forged and joint advocacy is planned. In this process, the personal,
intangible changes on awareness-raising are considered to represent the greatest change
in bringing about inclusion in development practice. In the end, the process of change to
which these TLPs contribute reveals how transformation of culture and deep structures takes place in small, varying steps, undertaken by individuals and parts of organisations. These steps may seem small, although for the people involved they may represent huge leaps towards inclusion.

*Table 8.2: Capacity development on mainstreaming in the TLPs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity development</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking down prejudices</td>
<td>Attitude change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stressing the right for inclusion</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving target group</td>
<td>Sense of urgency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving ‘non-affected’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using personal stories</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Touching peoples’ heart</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextualising the issue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advocacy at managers’ level</td>
<td>Cross cutting issues established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointing change agents</td>
<td>Baseline surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disseminating lessons</td>
<td>Adapted monitoring and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning by doing</td>
<td>Adapted policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focusing on solutions</td>
<td>Development of tools and guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracting generic lessons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network and alliances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relate to relevant stakeholders</td>
<td>Co-creation of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangulation of co-created knowledge</td>
<td>External publications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross country staff exchange</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enabling environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging dialogue</td>
<td>Sensitizing mainstreaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smart use of external events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Strategies and results of capacity development in the TLPs**

In this section, we explore in more depth the interventions of capacity development that were developed in the three TLPs to mainstream marginalised groups in development practice, as depicted in table 8.2. This allows us to understand the knowledge and experiences from the different contexts in which mainstreaming takes place.
Human Resource development
Capacity development at the individual level relates to development of the human resources in an organisation. In the context of mainstreaming, development workers need to be aware of the rights of the marginalised in society and trained to practice the inclusion of marginalised people in their programmes. In all three TLPs, the images that development workers had of marginalised groups in their contexts were challenged. For instance, gender issues deal with culturally entrenched relations between men and women. Disability issues require approaching persons with disabilities as capable individuals instead of objects of pity. Sexual diversity issues touch the taboo area of sexuality. In the light of this, mainstreaming must start with looking within individual capacities to explore personal perceptions, myths and attitudes (Elsey et al., 2005). Only when attitudes and prejudices of staff are changing and stereotypes are challenged is fruitful inclusion of marginalised groups possible (as illustrated in box 8.1). The right of marginalised groups to take part and contribute to society, according to their full potential, was stressed in all three TLPs.

Box 8.1: experience of participant in individual capacity development for mainstreaming sexual diversity

‘I considered it anti-Christian and abusive to my culture to get involved in mainstreaming sexual diversity. As part of the training I was exposed to the personal information and reasons for being Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Questioning from the people themselves. This made me feel able to learn a lot from them... I reformed to come on board to support mainstreaming of sexual diversity in my organisation.’

The TLPs consider that ‘seeing is believing’ when tackling sensitive issues, in order to break down prejudices about marginalised groups. The TLP on disability used persons with disabilities as role models; the TLP on gender involved powerful women and supportive men as role models; and the TLP on sexual diversity used LGBT, Intersex and Questioning people and supportive heterosexuals as role models in their trainings. The TLPs tried to match the role models to the target audience: a blind singer in an X-factor final attracted youth and a physically disabled priest was influential when relating to a faith based NGO. From the TLPs, we identified three interventions in which role models were helpful: they facilitated awareness-raising sessions, they gave testimonies from their experiences of being segregated and how their lives were changed, and they showed small video clips emphasizing their capabilities. An example of the use of role models is given in box 8.2.
Cultural- and religious interpretations of gender, disability and sexual diversity vary depending on the different contexts. The TLPs provided room to adapt awareness-raising strategies to the context of execution (see box 8.3). Furthermore, the TLPs tried to contextualized examples of inclusion in such a way that people became touched by it. Therefore the TLPs worked often with personal testimonies to give individuals of marginalised groups a voice.

In addition to role models, the TLP on sexual diversity used a ‘learning to unlearn’ approach during which participants were confronted with their prejudices and together explore ways to change themselves. ‘Coming out’ sessions, in which participants openly tell about their sexual preferences and others reflect on their feelings about this, were carefully planned after having built rapport with the TLP participants in sessions providing correct knowledge and correcting myths. This approach was unique in the TLP on sexual diversity since it deals with a very sensitive topic in most cultures.
The impact of the interventions on individual capacity development is mainly related to attitude change. Through attitude change, the participants obtain ownership over the issue and urgency for change is created. High staff turnover is described in literature and experienced by the TLPs as a challenge in awareness-raising initiatives. Possible alternative approaches suggested by Elsey et al. (2005) include mentoring systems which provide key staff with continual technical and personal support, or working groups for staff facing similar issues to exchange ideas and experiences. In addition, it may be important to consider how inputs on various mainstreaming strategies could be combined and integrated in regular training programmes.

Organisational learning

Capacity development at the organisational level relates to addressing the organisations’ culture and processes to become inclusive for marginalised groups in society. Capacity development at the organisational level has been initiated in the three TLPs by appointing change agents in the organisations who are supposed to lead the process. This is a reaction to the supposed pervasiveness of gender mainstreaming in its aim to include all staff in implementation. As has been previously expressed, ‘If gender is everybody’s responsibility in general, then it’s nobody’s responsibility in particular’ (Pollack & Hafner-Burton, 2000: pg 452).

In the TLP on inclusion of persons with disabilities, change agents within each organisation acted as change agents mainstreaming disability in programmes or management. The Gender Learning in Action Community and the TLP on sexual diversity involved ‘non-marginalised’ people as change agents. In the case of gender, there are, for example, men advocating gender equality. In the case of sexual diversity, the change agents are programme staff, supported by a LGBT or intersexual buddy. Box 8.4 illustrates the importance of the involvement of ‘non affected’ agents of change in the TLP on gender diversity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 8.4: Involving men as change agents in the TLP on gender diversity</th>
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<tr>
<td>‘Women and girls ask for men’s participation themselves. They feel empowered through projects that target them, but if the men they live and work with do not change, then who are they to live with? Men can, I would say have to, be partners in change. They are important role models for other men and boys.’</td>
</tr>
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The change agents were responsible for disseminating the lessons on mainstreaming from the TLP alliances in their organisations to management and field staff. They were appointed by their management which means that they were supported in their work. However, they still had to do advocate at all levels, including management, to create urgency to work on inclusion. They acted as lobbyists within their own organisations to keep the mainstreaming issue on the agenda. Moreover, they supervised, defined, and divided further activities for experimenting and exploring the change process towards an inclusive organisation. This was not always an easy task as illustrated in box 8.5.

Box 8.5: The task of a change agent in the Gender Learning in Action Community

'We should not assume that all our staff is gender sensitive, or immediately convinced of gender mainstreaming. Engaging project officers and other stakeholders takes much longer than we imagined. I mean, really engaging them to achieve change, not only at the level of paper plans. Anybody can include a result or two on gender. We want to adopt a new way of gender sensitive thinking and acting, not only planning and reporting in this way.'

In the organisational development process, the TLPs stressed the importance of learning by doing with intensive participation of many staff members in the organisation next to the change agents. The organisations in the TLPs experimented with mainstreaming in practice and reflected on their experiences with peers in short reflection loops. To give form to this emerging design, the change agents reflected on their daily practices in logbooks and actively translate these reflections into action plans that focus on solutions. They try to apply new knowledge and experiences from the TLP directly to their own contexts.

From all these experiments, the change agents have extracted generic lessons on mainstreaming their thematic issues in development practices, as illustrated in the example of box 8.6.

Box 8.6: Example on how generic lessons are formulated from the TLP on mainstreaming sexual diversity

'From the TLP I've learned that individual stories can be broadened to become a common story. Previously many of us felt uncomfortable talking about the sexual diversity, but direct encounters with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex colleagues has improved our perspective.'
This resulted in four outcomes of capacity development at the organisational level. First, mainstreaming has been established as a cross cutting theme in most organisations. Second, baseline surveys were conducted to assess the status of inclusive development and the special needs of marginalised groups. Third, the tension between inclusion and integration was addressed by focussing on inclusive development wherein mainstreaming was portrayed as a means to an end. Fourth, the organisations developed policies on mainstreaming and translated these policies directly into monitoring and evaluation formats, tools and guidelines. In this way, the three TLPs addressed the challenge of translating mainstreaming policy into practice.

Learning with others in networks
Capacity development interventions at the level of networks may strengthen new and existing alliances. For mainstreaming issues in development this was acknowledged as important, since building a strong network that is committed to inclusion can be the first step towards an inclusive society. In finding the delicate balance between special attention and complete inclusion, inter-organisational learning, either orchestrated or spontaneous, was experienced to be crucial. The three TLPs, therefore, have paid ample attention to the facilitation of learning and reflection. This was predominantly done in a network setting in which change agents from different organisations shared their experiences.

Strong linkages among change agents and, ultimately, among their organisations led to co-creation of knowledge on mainstreaming. For example, the TLP on inclusion of persons with disabilities shared experiences of dealing with tough issues related to mainstreaming disability in the organisation. Another advantage of linking to other organisations is the possibility to visit each other to see innovative solutions. For instance, the TLP on mainstreaming sexual diversity initiated an internship programme in the network. Co-creation of knowledge requires matching the different expertise from practice, academia and consultancy together. The TLPs tried to do this by bringing external knowledge sources into their networks, like experts in their field of mainstreaming, experiential experts, and capacity development experts. In this way, they used triangulation of different knowledge sources to validate the created knowledge. For the invited experts, this was also inspirational since it gave them insight into practice of capacity development for mainstreaming. PSO staff members were involved in all TLPs, either as a knowledge source, a broker or a process advisor, or as a combination of the three. In all TLPs, academic institutions were involved. In the Gender Learning in Action Community, the Radboud
University Nijmegen and the University of Applied Science Van Hall Larenstein were involved as ‘critical friends’ to bring in external expertise and nurture the learning process. In the TLP on inclusion of persons with disabilities, the Athena Institute of the VU University, Amsterdam, was involved in giving form to the action research and learning process. The Dutch Coalition on Disability in Development and Enablement consultancy was involved as expert sources. The TLP on mainstreaming sexual diversity involved the University of Amsterdam as a research expert, together with the Great Lakes University of Kasumu, Kenya, and the University of Indonesia. The expert centre on sexuality, Rutgers WPF Netherlands, was involved in supporting facilitation and strategy formulation.

The role of external knowledge actors was twofold. On the one hand, thematic experts provided their academic experiences and thereby helped to nurture the creation of generic knowledge and related the new insights to common understanding of mainstreaming. On the other hand, they formed a vehicle for the TLPs to share their co-created knowledge with the world, for example through scientific publications. Combining knowledge sources for capacity development is best illustrated by a quote from a facilitator of the TLP on mainstreaming sexual diversity:

‘Combining evidence from academic research with personal testimonies is a powerful way to demonstrate the need to mainstreaming sexual diversity and for getting entry points for attitude change of staff and for organisational development.’

Institutional environment change

Due to the limited time available for the TLPs, it is unclear whether they contributed to the intended system change of building an inclusive society. Facilitating the wider environment to become inclusive for marginalised groups was not directly addressed by lobby and advocacy interventions of the three TLPs that focussed, instead, on committed organisations in the field of development NGOs. However, they tried to stimulate the system to become more inclusive by engaging stakeholders and beneficiaries in dialogues on inclusion of marginalised groups. Instead of spending much energy on pro-active advocacy in a field that lies beyond their span of control, they increased their success by piggy-backing on emerging trends, issues and events. For instance, in the TLP on sexual diversity, a number of external events boosted capacity development at the individual and organisational level: the death of the Ugandan gay activist, David Kato, in Kenya stressed the urgency for change; a powerful speech by Ban Ki-moon on sexual diversity who called ‘to act now to put an end to violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and
gender identity'; and US President Barack Obama endorsing same-sex marriages. These events occurred highlighted the importance of sexual diversity in international contexts for the TLP participants.

8.5 Conclusions and discussion

This chapter considered knowledge and experiences from existing literature and from three practical cases on mainstreaming gender, disability and sexual diversity in development practice. It has focused on different levels of capacity development at individual, organisational and network level and at the level of the wider environment. Overall we conclude that the focus on organisational- and individual capacity development are useful strategies to overcome the difficulty of translating policies into practice on issues related to mainstreaming of marginalised groups. Our main findings for this conclusion are presented below.

First, the context is a crucial factor in mainstreaming. This applies to all three TLPs, and has also been stressed by different scholars of gender mainstreaming (Moser & Moser, 2005; Waal, 2006), disability mainstreaming (Bruijn et al., 2012; Coe & Wapling, 2010a), and inclusion in general (Squires, 2005). The experiences from the TLPs provide examples of how to appeal to individuals and organisations in specific contexts.

Second, capacity development experiences from the three TLPs show how tangible (such as policy documents) and intangible changes (such as changes in individual attitude) together support the inclusion of marginalised groups in development practices. Activities aimed at intangible changes, like awareness-raising, attitude change and influencing cultural and professional values relate to concrete tangible activities, like formulating organisational change strategies, development of training of trainers’ curricula and adapting planning monitoring and evaluation systems. This is consistent with the findings of Kloosterman et al. (2012) who established that tangible and intangible changes are needed to achieve an equal society, in which both types of changes strengthen each other.

Third, the TLPs show the importance of involving multiple actors in capacity development. Reflections on organisational development in a network setting, where experiences were compared with an existing knowledge base from expert and academic sources, created fertile ground for the development of new knowledge related to real world practices. The advantage of this co-creation of knowledge is that it is solution focused and includes the participation of the marginalised groups themselves. In this context, it is important to avoid
exclusive language, such as the term ‘mainstreaming’, but instead focus on the ideal of an inclusive society for all.

Last, the commitment of the participants, the richness of the results and the relevance of the outcome for the practitioners confirm that the structural provision of space and time for reflection and joint learning is a precondition for addressing complex issues, like the inclusion of marginalised groups, in development. This is a finding that donors should take to heart.

We hope that the experiences of the three TLPs on mainstreaming gender, disability and sexual diversity can help others to set up effective capacity development programmes to include marginalised groups into development practice. We highlighted the experiences of the organisations involved to provide practical examples for other organisations that try to bridge the gap between policies on mainstreaming and practice. However, implementing a capacity development programme will always be affected by interrelationships and unpredictable, unintended events in their contexts. Therefore, it would be beneficial when other organisations embarking on the same process also share their experiences. Together, the development sector can shape a new approach to the inclusion of marginalised minority groups, ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.