

This tool is published by INTRAC in conjunction with the [Partner Capacity Strengthening toolkit for small charities](http://www.intrac.org/ba-pcs-toolkit)authored by Rick James – part of a collection of [five toolkits](http://www.intrac.org/ba-toolkits) produced as part of the [*Strengthening Small Organisations with Big Ambitions*](https://www.intrac.org/projects/strengthening-small-organisations-with-big-ambitions/)programme (2021-2022). This programme was funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) through a Small Charities Challenge Fund (SCCF) Capacity Development Grant.

# **PCS tool - MENU OF CAPACITY STRENGTHENING ACTIVITIES**

Below is a list of possible capacity strengthening activities, with a brief description of each. We recommend to use this to expand your menu of capacity strengthening activities, to avoid automatically equating capacity strengthening with training.

When deciding on the most appropriate method(s) to use in a certain situation, it is helpful to reflect on pros and cons, what each of these methods can help you achieve (and under what circumstances), what as well as any resource implications (including financial cost, but also infrastructural or technical requirements).

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| **One-off intensive training course** | A structured event designed around a number of learning objectives (often following a training needs assessment). Each session will have predefined objectives and content materials, with a detailed session plan to guide the trainer. Training methods vary - from traditional ‘classroom’ style to the highly participative action-learning approach. Participants may be from one organisation or team (in-house training) or from a variety of organisations (the ‘open training’ event).  |
| **Modular training course** | Based on action-reflection cycle, this is a series of structured events held over a pre-defined period of time. Participants often are asked to complete an exercise on the topic of each module between each time they meet, or put the content of the module into practice in their workplace. |
| **Technical expertise/advice** | The focus is on the technical or professional *content*, or the technical *systems* required for the work to be effectively implemented and managed. Delivery may be as part of on-the-job accompaniment or it may be delivered during a special visit to the organisation. |
| **Mentoring** | Mentoring involves passing on tips from experience, attitudes, knowledge, contacts etc. from more experienced individuals to less experienced staff. The ‘mentor’ will be someone with an established reputation in the specific field. It may take place within an on-going relationship. The participant would normally set the agenda and have control over the timing etc.  |
| **Coaching** | Coaching is similar, but does not usually require that the coach has direct experience of their client’s formal occupational role unless the coaching is particularly skills focused. The expertise of the coach is more in the coaching method itself to support the person to come up with their own solutions. |
| **Management or OD consultancy** | Intervention of an external consultant working to a specific Terms of Reference related to the internal functioning of the organisation, or helping the organisation through a change process.  |
| **Facilitated workshop or exercise** | An event which is designed around specific objectives. These objectives can focus on the development of ideas and knowledge, or on the production of a specific output. |
| **Leadership development** | Usually applied in a medium-term programme targeting existing or potential future leaders. This programme may draw on a mix of methods.  |
| **Shadowing** | Observing someone as they go about their day-to-day job, or undertake a specific task. |
| **Internships** | The placement of an individual within a team or organisation for a pre-determined period of time. Usually it is someone who is recently graduated or embarking upon a career.  |
| **Exposure or exchange visit** | A pre-arranged visit aiming to learn about a specific experience, or gain an exposure to the ways of working of another organisation, institution, team etc. |
| **Community of Practice** | Often ‘virtual’ in nature (i.e. exchanges are held over the internet), this is a group of individuals who share their experiences and build their knowledge together. They are focused on specific themes, technical or professional areas, processes etc.  |
| **Action Learning Set** | A group meets on a regular basis and uses a specific method to support each member in turn to reflect and act upon a work issue. See <http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/5230-action-learning-set-process> and <https://www.intrac.org/resources/action-learning-sets-guide-small-diaspora-ngos/action-learning-sets-an-intrac-guide-2/> |
| **Peer Support groups and Peer Assists** | In general terms, Peer Support groups can be time-bound, and ‘virtual’ gatherings of people working in similar areas who are open to supporting each other. Peer Assists is when one individual has something they want to move forward with, and brings together others with experience in that area to help him/her think about alternatives <http://www.odi.org.uk/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6427.pdf><http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObmQyW3EiiE> |
| **Peer Review** | Peers engage in reviewing the work of another peer. This can take place at individual, team, unit, or organisational levels. It can be part of a formal evaluation, or as an approach to peer learning.  |
| **Partner meetings** | Regular meetings of VVOB partners may include the provision of some specific input with the aim of enhancing capacities. For example, inviting a guest speaker to discuss new developments in the sector. |
| **Joint Monitoring and Evaluation** | Including individuals from partner organisations in the monitoring or evaluation of specific programmes.  |
| **Signposting information and resources** | The provision of information and materials, or the indication of where to gain access to such materials and information.  |
| **Opening doors and facilitating access** | Facilitating partners’ access to new contacts, decision makers and other influential people and institutions as a contribution towards enhancing relational capacity and achievement of objectives. |
| **Harvesting experiences** | Systematization of experience with a view to sharing key points with others. The process of gathering the experiences is often done in a way which can help collective reflection on the advances of the work, lessons learnt etc. |
| **Accompaniment** | The on-going, regular accompaniment of an advisor with a partner organisation. Capacity development takes place through largely informal means – conversations, joint working etc. More structured coaching may be incorporated into this on-going relationship. |