



Movement for Community-led Development

We are gathering!
July 31, 2019



Moving Beyond Fear: Facilitating a Culture of Learning from Failure

Sia Nowrojee
MCLD Learning Working Group
July 2019

The Winning Imperative

Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing

– Vince Lombardi

- Fear
- Shame
- Risks

Moving Beyond Fear of Failure

Freedom is not worth having if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes

– Mahatma Gandhi

- Curiosity
- Wisdom
- Opportunity

Recovering Losers



J.K. Rowling *was close to homelessness as an unemployed single mother*



Michael Jordan *missed more than 9,000 shots in his basketball career*



Steven Spielberg *was rejected from the college of his choice three times*



Vincent Van Gogh *sold only one painting in his lifetime*



Soap opera actress Susan Lucci *was nominated 18 times for a Daytime Emmy and lost each time. Then, she won on her 19th nomination*



Any among us?

Developing a Culture of Learning from Failure

Embrace failure

Admit it

Talk about it

Put your ego aside

Build competencies

Practice new skills

Routinely question your assumptions – Ask 'why'?

Listen to the answers

Build an organizational culture

Build failure into your work – examine, discuss, report, document failure and lessons learned

Test new ideas and take risks

Be accountable - do not repeat mistakes



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What's next?

- Learning from each other
- Practice
- Resources and tools



Talking About Failure & Sharing Lessons Learned

Matt Lineal
MCLD Learning Working Group
July 2019



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Learning from Failure

Presenter - 31/July/2019

Your subtitle here...

Assumption

- *Briefly describe the original assumption you/your organization had that was ultimately proven incorrect or flawed...*



Failure

- *Provide the details on what went wrong, or not as originally planned...*



What You Learned

- *Describe what lessons were learned and why the original assumption was incorrect or flawed...*



How You Applied What You Learned

- *Highlight changes, adaptations, or iterations made after acknowledging the failure and learning the lesson...*





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Learning from Failure

Dr. Manisha Gupte - 31/July/2019

*From Community Participation to Community Leadership and
Ownership of a Rural Women's Organization in Western India:
The Case Study of MASUM in Maharashtra State*



MASUM

Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal (MASUM)



Assumption

Urban, educated and sensitive professionals can coordinate a rural organisation that encourages community participation and leadership to manage work at the local level



Failure

- **The inherent inequality between urban and rural staff** in terms of education, technological skills, exposure to English, computers and contemporary debates and discourses, as well as in acceptance by government officials (and even the local community to some extent) **became clear**. The vision of MASUM in transferring ownership of the work to the rural community was being adversely impacted upon.
- **Urban educated people possessed the above formal skills in varying measure, but they didn't have an understanding of the lived realities of the rural community**; on the other hand, our rural colleagues not only had negotiated power relations based on gender, caste and poverty at an individual and group level, but they had learnt necessary skills on the job (para-legal, detection of cervical and breast cancers, managing the savings and credit groups, as examples), being cognisant of social and cultural reality. Clearly, individual urban professionals were the inadequate ones, not the collective rural group which formed 90% of staff
- **Some urban individuals whom we invested in either left midway or assumed that the leadership transition would be of a vertical (and hierarchal) nature.**
The rural team went along with this assumption, even if uneasily. They were sometimes baffled with changes when an urban colleague left, or when the due process of participatory decision-making was (or perceived to be) inadequate or whimsical



What You Learned

- **The contradiction in our programmatic and organisational planning became clear to us:** we trusted our rural staff that consisted of women from the most marginalised and excluded communities to become leaders in their villages in spite of fear of backlash; yet we were concentrating on an urban group to develop skills of fund-raising, monitoring and evaluation, representing the organisation at the state and national levels and dealing with government functionaries at the district and state levels
- **Local people, with enhanced capacity to lead programmes in terms of content, skills and knowledge can collectively sustain an organisation, with participation from enlightened and committed ‘outsiders’**
- While outsiders may be committed to the values and work of the organisation, their knowledge and wisdom don’t stay with the community once they leave. On the other hand, **local staff remain in the same geographical area even if they change jobs and continue to support the community** as concerned and available resource persons. Almost all our ex-staff in the villages actively volunteers with MASUM
- It is easier to transfer the organisation from local staff to the rural community, rather than from urban staff, however well-meaning they may be. The only way to go ahead, even if it is risk-laden is **to trust local people who have the highest stakes in the functioning and sustainability of the organisation**



How You Applied What You Learned

- We considerably **strengthened the exposure of our rural staff to state and national level issues** through field visits and cross-learning, so that they could become resource persons for the entire block (of 110 villages), become effective at the district level (which has 13 blocks) and be recognised as effective trainers of government functionaries and other NGOs. This increased the credibility and self-confidence of our rural staff to work as enlightened insiders. This further vindicated our efforts to create positive role models of marginalised women who fearlessly raised issues of gender equality within and outside the home
- The **local community (beyond our staff members) was encouraged to take on monitoring of government schemes and become active in village functioning as ‘owners’ of the entitlements due to them, and not as passive beneficiaries.** They were empowered to demand transparency and accountability from elected representatives through collective leadership and decision-making
- A **strong team consisting of rural and urban staff was put in place for effective management** of the organisation, writing project proposals and advocacy for rights and entitlements at the state level
- We were able to **consolidate the strengths of the rural and urban staff** in the best possible way





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Learning from Failure

David Yamron - 31/July/2019

*Learning from Failure through Developmental Evaluation:
FCF Cambodia*



Assumption

- Search was leading the developmental evaluation of FCF, a family care project implemented by a USAID-funded consortium of international and Cambodian organization with the goal of increasing the number of children living in safe, nurturing family-based care.
- The assumption was that this diverse, multistakeholder consortium using a Collective Impact framework would be able to overcome biases and cultural distance to effectively work together across dividing lines



Failure

- The FCF consortium had difficulty sharing knowledge and collaborating with non-Western, non-English speaking partners and voices
 - Learning meetings held in English
 - FCF materials not available in Khmer
 - Regular learning meetings did not prioritize participation from partners
 - Monthly coordination meetings held only in Phnom Penh



What You Learned

- Local partners felt alienated from the project
- Project implementation suffered because stakeholders had few avenues to consult local partners
- Project seen as top-down, non-inclusive



How You Applied What You Learned

- The DE recommended a number of changes to FCF to address these issues
 - Prioritize use of Khmer in administrative and learning meetings
 - Select a Khmer master of ceremonies for the closeout event
 - Restructure FCF feedback mechanisms and meetings in line with partner requests: to be partner-driven, emphasizing knowledge sharing, collaborative learning, and group decision making
 - Quarterly provincial meetings outside of Phnom Penh
- DE provided an avenue for a formerly top-down project to make significant adaptations to prioritize partner voices
- You cannot be sure what is assumed until you see it: steps that may seem obvious to outside observers are often lost in implementation
 - Doubly true when organizations operate with Western blinders





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Learning from Failure

Brett Weisel - 31/July/2019

From Policy Change to Policy Institutionalization

**Global Health
Advocacy Incubator**



Assumption

- *Policy change yields population-wide outcomes, and passing the policy is the culmination of the advocacy process.*



Failure

- *Strong policies were not implemented effectively, negating the policy win*



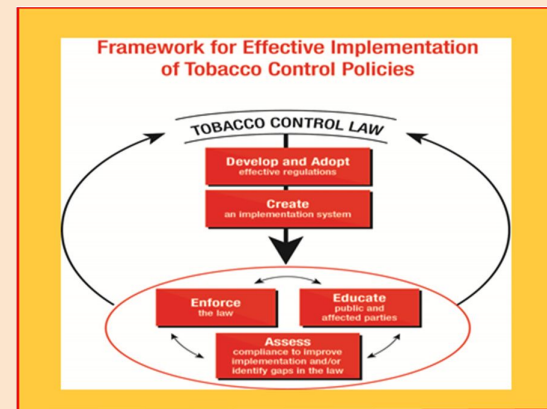
What You Learned

- *Policy implementation required an advocacy campaign of its own*
- *We needed a framework to crystallize our thinking and strategy*
- *Building capacity for both civil society and government to engage in policy implementation was necessary*
- *Policy implementation works best when civil society and government forge a partnership...*
- *...But advocates need to weave in and out of their partnership/advocate roles*
- *Fundamentals of implementation are consistent across countries and policies*
- *The tobacco industry will never give up*



How You Applied What You Learned

- *We developed Implementation Framework and training modules to build internal and external capacity*
- *We incorporated planning for policy implementation into campaign strategies early in the process*
- *We expanded our work combating industry interference*
- *We developed new frameworks to articulate roles, needs, and strategy after the implementation stage (policy institutionalization)*



2019 Coming Events

Sep 23 - UN Climate Summit

Sep 24 - UN General Assembly

Oct 4-6 - CLD Zambia Launch

Nov 14 - AEA CLD Meta Study

ICPD+25 Summit in Nairobi

Beijing+25