

Managing for Development Results

“Joint Learning Event on MfDR”

3rd Progress Report January-June 2010

Submitted by **GTZ and MDF Training & Consultancy**
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Executive Summary

MDF Training & Consultancy was contracted by GTZ to design and deliver ten training courses aimed primarily at senior staff of governments, development partners as well as civil society organisations. The objective of these courses reads: Participants are familiar with the concepts of MfDR and know how to apply these concepts in their personal, institutional and political context.

The first progress report covered the design and preparation phase as well as two JLE-MfDR pilot courses, delivered in the first half of 2009. The previous progress report covered the second half of 2009, during which activities concentrated on adaptations of materials as well as on preparations for courses scheduled for 2010. Unfortunately, no events took place during this half year.

The first half year of 2010 was far more successful from an implementation point of view. Not only the whole training package became available in Spanish and French, but also the following 5 events were carried out:

1. JLP-MfDR Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 27-29 January 2010
2. JLP-MfDR Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 22– 24 February 2010
3. JLP-MfDR Lilongwe, Malawi, 14 – 16 April 2010
4. ECA-GpRD, La Paz, Bolivia, 18-20 May 2010
5. SFC-GRD, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 25-27 May 2010-06-08

In total 240 participants were trained in MfDR till date. The overall average appreciation of all courses is 3.4 (3 being good, 4 being excellent) and therefore quite satisfactory till date.

This third progress report presents the compiled evaluation results of these events as well as the main general findings. It includes lessons learned and recommendations regarding course preparation, course implementation and the follow-up of the Joint Learning events. For more detailed course information, reference is made to the course documentation (one specific report per course) as well as the training packages (in English, French and Spanish) at Train4dev.net.

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

This Progress Report on JLE-MfDR is prepared in compliance with the requirements of the contract between GTZ and MDF Training & Consultancy. The report is structured as follows:

Chapter 1: the objectives for this training programme are presented as well as a summary of progress against the work plan for 2010. An overview of the status of the different upcoming training events is also included in this section.

Chapter 2: the participation in the different events till date is presented and analysed.

Chapter 3: the compiled scores of the course evaluations are presented and analysed.

Chapter 4: the financial status of the contract is presented.

During this reporting period, 5 Joint Learning Events were conducted:

1. JLP-MfDR Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 27-29 January 2010, English
2. JLP-MfDR Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 22– 24 February 2010, English
3. JLP-MfDR Lilongwe, Malawi, 14 – 16 April 2010, English
4. ECA-GpRD, La Paz, Bolivia, 18-20 May 2010, Spanish
5. SFC-GRD, Yaoundé, Cameroon, 25-27 May 2010-06-08, French

This report includes an overview of all course evaluations and information on participants, in comparison with the two pilot courses in Zambia and Uganda (conducted in January – July 2009).

1.2 Objectives of the Joint Learning Events on MfDR

The objective of the JLE reads: "Participants are familiar with the concepts of MfDR and know how to apply these concepts in their personal, institutional and political context."

By achieving this objective a contribution will be made to further strengthen the MfDR approach within governments and development agencies and to thereby enhance the poverty outcomes and impacts of development initiatives.

The programme for 2010 included 4 scheduled courses and 4 courses still to be scheduled. Moreover, development of training packages in Spanish and French were foreseen. Achievements (against the work plan) are presented below.

1.3 Progress against the work plan

Progress against the work plan is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Work plan and progress for the reporting period – January to July 2010

Implementation 2010: Activities	
Planned activities	Status
1. Completion 2 nd progress report	Second progress report submitted (February 2010) and made available on-line.
<p>Follow-up on the following suggestions received from the executive committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ More attention for the case study/relevant hands-on country specific examples. ✚ Enhance input/involvement of resource person (not as facilitator). ✚ More and better use of country specific documents, e.g. PRSP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ The resource persons, particularly in Malawi and Cameroon, did manage to provide good case material and country specific examples. This did considerably contribute to the learning experience. ✚ Tailoring to country circumstances and use of country specific examples has become part and parcel of the preparation process.
<p>2. Earlier introduction of personal logbook and personal action plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Ensure that (part of) the personal action plans include realistic, individual goals that can be reached in the next months (and are suitable for a follow up). ✚ Course documentation should include relevant pin boards/flipcharts prepared during the JLE as well as group exercises. ✚ Better reference given to Communities of Practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Clear and early reference is made to the personal logbook and action planning and serious attempts are made to make action plans as realistic as possible. Nevertheless, realistic action after the course is more depending on the “embedding” of the event in existing processes (like an existing road map towards a new National Development Plan). ✚ All course documentation is comprehensive now and does include the main results of group exercises etc. These reports are all distributed to participants as well as made available on line. ✚ CoP’s are clearly mentioned (including websites) in all JLP-MfDR events and CoP brochures are distributed to the participants.
3. Planning was to upload the complete training package to the website after the JLE in Tanzania, scheduled end of January 2010.	Training package was made available on-line in March 2010, including course guidance to facilitate easy use of materials.
4. A power point presentation on risk management as part of an optional module on risk management should be made. The briefing note on risk management could/should be made more attractive (some visuals to be included).	An optional module on risk management is now available, but the materials (briefing note and presentation) are not finalised completely. Materials should be finalised as soon as possible, since participants regularly do ask for more information (Malawi, Cameroon, and Bolivia) regarding risk management.
5. Make the whole training package available in Spanish before the first JLP-MfDR in Spanish	Spanish training package was made available before the JLP-MfDR in Bolivia. After a final check, all materials will also become available on-line.
6. Make the whole training package available in French before the first JLP-MfDR in French	French training package was made available before the JLP-MfDR in Cameroon. After a final check, all materials will also become available on-line.
7. Prepare the third progress report	Completed June 2010

Implementation 2010: Events (two pilots carried out in 2009)	
3. Tanzania	Was foreseen 27-29 January and implemented according to plan. Course documentation available on-line.
4. Mongolia	Was foreseen 23-25 February and implemented according to plan. Course documentation available on-line.
5. Malawi	Was foreseen second half of April and implemented 14 – 16 April. Course documentation available on-line.
6. Bolivia	Was not yet scheduled, implemented 18-20 May. Draft course documentation (Spanish) available. Final comments awaited, final report ready early July to be made available on-line.
7. Cameroon	Was foreseen second half of May, implemented 25-27 May. Final course documentation in English available. Final report also being prepared in French, ready early July to be made available on-line.

Overview scheduled events second half 2010

Tentative implementation schedule 2010: Events	
Tentatively under discussion are events in Palestine, Mozambique, Lesotho.	
Malawi formulated a request for a follow-up event in August 2010.	This request is presently being discussed. The EC is discussing and considering Train-4-Dev involvement.
Cameroon also formulated a request for a follow-up event. Initial discussions about specific content and set-up so far.	This request is presently being discussed. The EC is discussing and considering Train-4-Dev involvement.

2 Participation

2.1 Participation in the five courses

Ideally, the three stakeholder groups (donors, government representatives and representatives from civil society/private sector) will be represented equally at the course to really enable a joint learning atmosphere. The ideal participant from a donor agency will be a field-based senior specialist, involved in or having experience with designing and implementing pro-poor growth related projects/programmes. The ideal developing country participant will be a counterpart with whom such donor staff members are working on a regular basis or a relevant high level representative of the civil society/private sector.

Table 2. Participation in the JLP-MfDR

JLP-MfDR	Government		Development partners		Civil Society Organisations		Private sector		Total		Total
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
1											
1. Pilot, Zambia, 19-21 May 2009	4	13	9	10	3	2	1		17	25	42
2. Pilot, Uganda, 30 June-02 July 2009	4	12	5	7	1	3			10	22	32
3. Tanzania, 27-29 January 2010	4	6	4	3	1	3			9	12	21
4. Mongolia, 22-42 February 2010	5	2	8	11	11	9	1		25	22	47
5. Malawi, 14-16 April 2010	6	20	2	6		3			8	29	37
6. Bolivia, 18-20 May 2010	7	6	6	4		2			13	12	25
7. Cameroon 24-27 May 2010	3	11	5	4	3	10			11	25	36
Total	33	70	39	45	19	32	2		93	147	240

2.2 Brief analysis of participation

Altogether, a total of 240 staff have been trained with 103 (43%) from government, 84 (35%) from donor agencies, 54 (23%) from civil society organisations/private sector. The average of 34.3 participants per course is close to the target of 35. Participation of staff of civil society organisations and private sector was below target (23% in stead of, roughly, 30%). This was partly due to a deliberate choice of the in-country team in Malawi and Bolivia not to invite the same number of participants from CSOs/private sector. For context specific reasons (for example: weak Civil Society), this choice may very well be justified. Nevertheless, the joint character of the event is one of the better appreciated components of the training.

In line with the 4-party agreement, the nomination and selection process remains the responsibility of a small coordinating group of development partners in the country. Invitations are preferably channelled through the government, but this was not always the case.

In general course participation was well in line with the desired level. It is clear that the in-country team is in the best position to steer this selection process.

Participants generally have the positions to bring about change and still have enough connection with operations to enable fruitful debates on MfDR and productive hands-on practical exercises.

However, comments were made in the different courses about the absence of certain key, often political, leaders. Beyond any doubt, reaching those key potential change agents is critical for successful in-country MfDR strengthening. However, with the present set-up of a 3 day joint learning event, we will not be able to attract this specific group. Organising a short but intensive high level MfDR session, combined with either a (high level) opening ceremony or a dynamic closure/reception could be considered to involve these leaders more.

3 Evaluation of the events




3.1 General

For all evaluations see table 3.

Courses are well appreciated. Appreciation compared to the two pilots courses (which already showed satisfactory ratings), still shows slight improvements.

3.2 Lessons learned and trainer recommendations

In this section we subsequently discuss the critical course aspects related to:

-  Course preparation, including selection of participants
-  Course content, success factors and future challenges
-  Achievement of Objectives and what happens after the event

Course preparation

We strongly support having the Government in the lead during the preparatory phase, realising that this may sometimes complicate planning of events for the in-country teams. This very much contributes to the adequate level of participation and to the embedding of the event in a bigger trajectory (see also below).

The position of the resource person during the event is very important (see also below) and therefore due attention is needed for the selection of the right resource person. The in-country teams are in the best position to propose resource persons with the required competencies.

Selection of the case study (high preference for a national level country case) is equally critical. The core trainer team is in the best position to ensure that the resource person selects the right case study and positions the examples well in the overall JLP programme.

Pre-course information systematically receives the lowest appreciation of participants. Although the trainers strongly doubt this can be significantly improved (this is generally a less appreciated training aspect), we might consider pre-announcements and we should strongly emphasize early invitations, including basic course information (programme, venue, working hours, arrangements regarding (the absence of) allowances).

Course content

The course design and organisational set-up does work and is appreciated accordingly. Balance of theory and practise, quality of materials, trainers as well as methodological diversity often rate among the highest course characteristics.

Moreover, during the present reporting period, one general key trainer lesson was clearly reconfirmed:

The closer we can bring MfDR to participants' daily working realities, the more successful the event!

This underlines the importance of proper preparation of the trainers (preparation based on country specific materials) and reconfirms the course design (discussions and exercises based on country realities, materials, sectors, case study, etc.).

However, absolutely critical is the role of the resource person. A well-informed resource person with the adequate training/facilitation skills contributes enormously to the linking of the theory with participants' realities. Moreover, this part of the team work is quite inspiring for trainer team as a whole, also leading to additional quality.

Another aspect of this "close to daily working realities", is that the "how to?" question is becoming more and more prominent. Increasingly, participants are aware of the general introduction and aid effectiveness considerations and require and demand for more in depth theory, tools and practical examples. Staying up to date and remain sufficiently practical will remain a challenge for the team in the near future. Experiences with inviting experts from national bureaux of statistics (Mongolia, Cameroon), while discussing evidence-based learning and decision-making are another, generally well-appreciated, initiative to bring in hands-on country realities.

Achievement of objectives

The objective of the JLP reads: "Participants are familiar with the concepts of MfDR and know how to apply these concepts in their personal, institutional and political context."

At the beginning of the course this objective is further specified as:

At the end of the JLE on MfDR, participants:

- ✓ *Have a clear understanding of MfDR*
- ✓ *Are able and motivated to translate this into day to day management practices*

Based on the course evaluations and general reactions of participants, there is little doubt about an increase in understanding of MfDR as well as about the motivation to translate this into daily management practices. At the end of the course, motivation to apply is reflected in the, generally enthusiastic action plans, made by the participants and presented to the plenary.

However, applying MfDR also to the JLP themselves, we should focus on outcomes and essential is therefore what happens after the event. The follow-up after the event is the responsibility of the in-country team, but too little is known at the moment what happens afterwards. After the submission of the final report (course documentation) 2-6 weeks after the events, regular communications tend to end. This requires additional attention, also from the core trainer team.

Therefore, a questionnaire was being distributed in June 2010 to get more insight in actions and follow-up after the events. Results of this effort will be distributed in due course.

Nevertheless, some important key lessons were already learned:

- ✚ The joint character of the events is highly appreciated by the participants and several speakers at the closure sessions highlighted the importance of this linking and bringing key actors together to discuss country priorities and work together on joint goals and strategies (result chains, key performance indicators, etc.). Although not easy to measure the precise effect of this joint set-up, this aspect should not be underestimated.
- ✚ Action planning is a standard step during the events and is closely connected to the personal logbook participants fill out throughout the event. Action plans are documented in the course report and the report is being distributed to all participants as well as put on-line. Nevertheless, it remains a challenge to formulate those action plans at the desired ambition level (action plans should be challenging, but remain at the same time sufficiently realistic).
- ✚ Requests for follow-up support came from Zambia and more recently, 2 requests for follow-up training (building on the experience during the first event) came from Malawi and Cameroon. Train4Dev needs to formulate a strategy how to deal with these requests. While the requests offer an important opportunity to build on previous experience and obtain more insight in next steps, this should not be at the expense of organising JLPs in 10 different countries.
- ✚ Participants are systematically informed about the existing Communities of Practice on MfDR and CoP members are involved in the JLP events, again strengthening “linking and learning”. In specific cases (like for the JLP in Cameroon), this did lead to substantial CoP contributions shortly before as well as after the JLP event.

To ensure the “use” of what was learned during the course, the quality of the course is a necessary but insufficient precondition. A 3 day training event, whatever the quality is, is not going to make the difference in MfDR in the country. The event therefore needs to be properly embedded in a bigger government-owned and supported plan towards strengthening the in country results orientation.

If relatively isolated, a 3-day event cannot make a big difference and ambition levels should remain relatively low.

However, once the event is part of a clear plan, the training will have much bigger effect. Participants, knowing that they have to contribute in the near future to:

- a new more result oriented national development plan (Malawi)
- a more operational development concept (“Vivir Bien”, Bolivia)
- serious implementation of the thinking behind the Paris Declaration (Cameroon)

are very different participants, eager to learn and make use of the learning after the event!

One more, very interesting, suggestion was discussed with the trainer team during the most recent events. Strengthening of in country MfDR capacities is, of course, a long term process and requires a clear link up with in-country specialised capacity building institutions. Sustainable result-orientation of practitioners can be achieved by embedding MfDR in existing curricula in universities, particularly in curricula related to public administration. The present events can contribute to this by linking with those institutions (selection of resource persons!) as was done for example in Tanzania and Malawi. Both resource persons indicated that they are highly interested in making use of the thinking and materials in their regular courses in their respective universities.

4 Financial status

4.1 Total budget

The total budget for the JLE-MfDR is managed by GTZ International Services. The basket is jointly financed by eight bilateral donors which all signed agreements with GTZ International Services covering their individual contributions. By July 2009, commitments up to the total sum of EUR 481,000 Euro have been made to finance the JLEs-MfDR.

The eight co-financing donors are: Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and Germany.

In accordance with the EC meetings the contributions are used for:

- Tendering process and coverage of travel costs for presentation of proposals.
- Preparation and facilitation of training courses through the sub-contractor MDF Training & Consultancy.
- GTZ administrative expenses and overheads.
- Fee GTZ International Services.

4.2 Sub-contract to MDF Training & Consultancy

According to the contract with GTZ and in close cooperation with the Executive Committee, the sub-contractor MDF Training & Consultancy is responsible for:

- Preparation and subsequent revision of the training design and modules
- Organization and facilitation of a total of 10 courses in 2009/10 (based on demand four more courses in 2010) in close consultation with the respective in-country lead donors
- Evaluation of the workshops
- Documentation of the workshops
- Preparation of half-yearly progress reports

Until to-date MDF Training & Consultancy performed all its contributions in time. The contract of 2009 has been extended in time to December 31, 2010. A third supplement to the contract has been added in April 2010 which also covers the workshops 7 to 10 and hence includes an increase in remuneration.

4.3 Future prospects

So far, not all agreements have been submitted countersigned and not all of the financial commitments of the co-financing donors have been transferred to the account of GTZ International Services. This has to be followed up.

Table 3. Evaluations of the events during this reporting period, compared to the previous average (2 pilots).

Ref.	Evaluation criteria	Previous Average (pilots)		Tanzania 27-29 Jan.		Mongolia 22-24 Febr.		Malawi 14-16 April		Bolivia 18-20 May		Cameroon 25-27 May		Average 1 st half 2010	
		Average Score		Average Score		Average Score		Average Score		Average Score		Average Score		Average Score	
		3.33		3.31		3.31		3.50		3.38		3.50		3.41	
1. To what extent did the training meet its objectives?															
1.1	Achievement of training objective	3.37	84%	3.36	84%	3.13	78%	3.48	87%	3.29	82%	3.50	88%	3.35	84%
1.2	Value added by being a joint programme	3.48	87%	3.23	81%	3.35	84%	3.59	90%	3.48	87%	3.62	91%	3.45	86%
	<i>Average rating of meeting objectives</i>	3.43	86%	3.29	82%	3.24	81%	3.44	86%	3.37	84%	3.56	89%	3.40	85%
2. Content and Methodology															
2.3	Meeting expectations	3.25	82%	3.29	82%	2.88	72%	3.21	80%	3.29	82%	3.40	85%	3.21	88%
2.4	Relevance for content of work	3.43	86%	3.57	89%	3.42	86%	3.64	91%	3.38	85%	3.31	83%	3.46	87%
2.5	Adequate balance theory and practise	3.22	81%	3.46	87%	3.17	79%	3.38	85%	3.21	80%	3.37	84%	3.32	83%
2.6	Adequate mix of methods	3.11	78%	3.62	91%	3.08	77%	3.38	85%	3.35	84%	3.50	88%	3.39	85%
2.7	Relevance of materials provided	3.43	86%	3.29	82%	3.33	83%	3.39	85%	3.33	83%	3.57	89%	3.38	85%
2.8	Relevance of group exercises	3.56	89%	3.39	84%	3.29	82%	3.72	93%	3.75	94%	3.57	89%	3.54	89%
	<i>Average rating of content and methodology</i>	3.33	84%	3.44	86%	3.20	80%	3.45	86%	3.39	85%	3.45	86%	3.41	85%
3. Training preparations and logistics															
3.1	Relevance of pre-course information	2.72	68%	2.92	73%	2.86	72%	2.86	72%	2.46	62%	3.14	79%	2.85	71%
3.2	Appropriate venue	3.35	84%	3.29	82%	3.50	88%	3.50	88%	3.63	91%	3.70	93%	3.52	88%
3.3	Quality of accommodation	3.32	83%	3.33	83%	3.39	85%	3.14	78%	3.73	93%	3.82	96%	3.48	87%
3.4	Quality of food and refreshment	3.28	82%	2.93	73%	3.33	83%	3.11	78%	3.79	95%	3.40	85%	3.31	83%
	<i>Average training preparations and logistics</i>	3.17	79%	3.12	78%	3.27	82%	3.15	78%	3.40	85%	3.51	88%	3.29	82%

Ref.	Evaluation criteria	Previous Average (pilots)		Tanzania 27-29 Jan.		Mongolia 22-24 Febr.		Malawi 14-16 April		Bolivia 18-20 May		Cameroon 25-27 May		Average 1 st half 2010	
		Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%	Score	%
4. Trainers & resource persons															
	Trainers														
	Dick van Blitterswijk (core team)	3.66	92%	3.40	85%			3.61	90%	3.47	87%			3.49	87%
	Herman Snelder (core team)	3.26	82%			3.46	87%					3.57	89%	3.52	88%
	Various, mostly regional trainers	3.24	81%	3.20	80%	3.31	83%	3.48	87%	3.43	86%	3.38	85%	3.36	84%
	Resource Persons	3.11	78%	3.10	78%	3.42	86%	3.71	93%	3.23	81%	3.70	93%	3.43	86%