Developing the Capacity of Innovators to Change Systems

Introducing the Global Knowledge Initiative

Since 2009 The Global Knowledge Initiative (GKI) has been one of the leading voices on Collaborative Innovation and systems thinking for global development. GKI's approach to capacity development is simple: support individuals, organizations, and networks to achieve their development objectives over time. We do this with a customized range of resources, tools, and methods designed to cultivate the knowledge, skills, and mindset needed to tackle some of the world's greatest challenges.

GKI believes that the skills needed to innovate collaboratively are learnable, yet often not addressed in typical strategy development and training settings. Through our Collaborative Innovation Capacity Development program, GKI addresses this gap.

Who and How We Train

GKI develops capacity through customized group trainings and mentorship

GKI supports capacity development through in-person, on-line and hybrid training approaches, as well as with post-training mentorship. Working on challenges in fields as diverse as post harvest food loss and global health, our partners experience customized modules that incorporate challenge- and sector-specific examples. GKI trains individuals, teams, organizations, and networks. Whether you work within an aid organization, scientific research unit, or government agency, we've trained individuals facing similar challenges and opportunities.
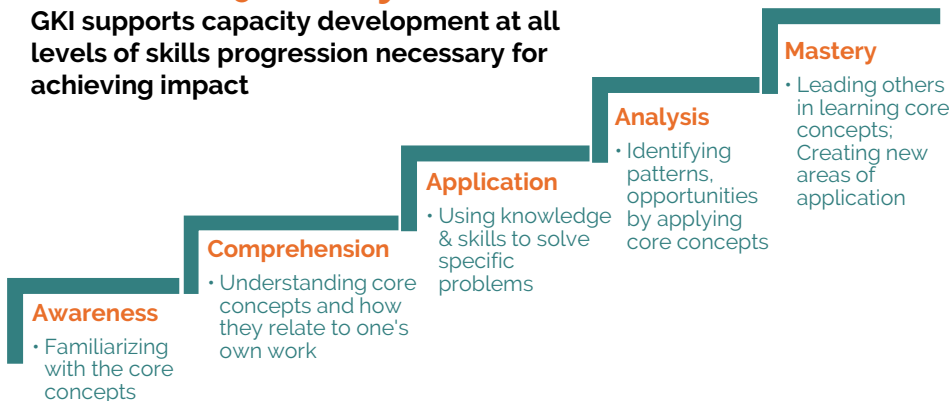
Individuals   **Teams**   **Organizations**   **Networks**

Capacity Development Skills Trajectory

GKI supports capacity development at all levels of skills progression necessary for achieving impact

Mastery
• Leading others in learning core concepts; Creating new areas of application

Analysis
• Identifying patterns, opportunities by applying core concepts

Application
• Using knowledge & skills to solve specific problems

Comprehension
• Understanding core concepts and how they relate to one's own work

Awareness
• Familiarizing with the core concepts

Why does capacity development matter?

Traditional approaches to innovation emphasize the "lone innovator" model in which insulated teams work to deliver a new product or process. But individuals and groups working to tackle complex challenges and transform systems need an entirely new approach to innovation, one that leverages diverse resources, ideas, and opportunities. For GKI, the answer lies in "Collaborative Innovation." We understand that changemakers must work with partners across organizations, sectors, and cultures to journey effectively from idea to impact.

Empowered with the strategies, skills, and tools to engage in Collaborative Innovation, people can succeed in tackling challenges that dwarf individual capacities. Increasingly, organizations and governments serious about problem solving and growth recognize fostering this capacity as an imperative.

GKI's Content Expertise

Human-Centered Design: Equipping innovators to clarify the desirability, feasibility, and viability of potential solutions

Systems Thinking + Assessment: Clarifying and assessing systems to optimize decision making amidst complexity

Innovation: Teaching processes to unlock improvements in efficiency and effectiveness and to assess the potential of future innovation

Entrepreneurship: Building the skills to promote an entrepreneurial mindset, refine your pitch, and develop a value proposition

Facilitation: Training prospective facilitators and trainers on how to guide and inspire groups and networks in Collaborative Innovation

Strategy: Helping organizations promote the enabling environments in which creativity, collaboration, and innovation thrive

Building Networks: Working with teams and organizations to forge, strengthen, and manage networks

Examples of GKI's Training Modules

- **Strategies for an Innovation Mindset:** Spur innovative thinking through interactives immediately applicable to the workplace.

- **Developing an Action Plan:** Develop a time-bound action plan that outlines the specific steps needed to address a given challenge.

- **Refining your Pitch:** Frame the challenge, position solutions, and connect with the audience to make the "ask."

- **Shared Visioning:** Clarify specific goals to be achieved for collective action, making explicit which activities motivate team members and which do not.

- **Systems Mapping:** Visually map the actors, interactions, and resources within complex systems to highlight dependencies, feedback loops, and opportunities for improved efficiency.

- **Human-Centered Design:** Embed empathy, beginner's mindset, rapid iteration, and other core design concepts into operations and problem solving.

- **Qualitative Research: Conducting Field Interviews:** Design interview processes, from developing questions and choosing interviewees, to analyzing results.

- **Introduction to Systems Thinking:** Understand the components of a system, and why Systems Thinking matters for solving complex development challenges.

- **Facilitation Training:** Understand the tools and skills needed to guide Collaborative Innovation within a group or network.

- **Taking Innovations to Scale:** Determine the actors and resources necessary to bring innovations from startup to scale.

- **Collaborative Innovation:** Harness the shared knowledge, resources, and capacity of partners in seeking to solve complex challenges.

- **Network Formation and Management:** Identify potential partners for collaboration, create a plan for Network Management, and maintain connections.

- **Systems Approach to M&E:** Track and report information on a project or program to determine the program's likely impact and allow for adaptation and improvement.

- **Challenge Mapping:** Jointly define and dissect a problem into smaller sub-challenges using this visual and interactive mapping tool.

Capacity Development in Action

EXAMPLE TRAINING:
IMPROVED INNOVATION DECISION MAKING

Working with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and its implementing partners, GKI's training provided specific tools for individuals and teams to adopt an innovative mindset and turn innovative practices into habits. Charged with slashing rates of post harvest loss by 50% in 7 years, AGRA is working with GKI to ensure innovative decision making is embedded throughout the agriculture sector.

EXAMPLE TRAINING:
SYSTEMS 101

GKI's Systems 101 course guides participants through the theory and method of systems approaches. Participants practice applying systems tools to areas of their own work so that they can experience how systems insights can improve design, implementation, and evaluation. Trainings are case-based, customized for length and intensity.

> "There is now emerging agreement in the global development community that capacity development is the engine of human development."
> United Nations Development Programme
> Capacity Development: A UNDP Primer

ENGAGE GKI TO HELP SUPPORT YOUR TEAM'S CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

GKI supports capacity development through interactive workshops, trainings, and coaching. We serve a multi-sectoral audience spanning entrepreneurs, nonprofits, private sector companies, researchers, and policymakers. If you're interested in accelerated impact, GKI enthusiastically embraces opportunities to share our models and methods with others who are interested in Collaborative Innovation and global development.

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