Changing the public domain: learning as prerequisite

Developing governance capacity in lengthy policy change trajectories

Track: Learning and knowledge transfer in public services and higher education

Arwin van Buuren, Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Jean-Marie Buijs, Erasmus University Rotterdam / TNO Delft.

Adriaan Slob, Innovation and Environment, TNO Delft.

Contact address:

Arwin van Buuren

Centre for Public Management

P.O. Box 1738, Room M8-05

3000 DR Rotterdam

The Netherlands

Tel. +31 10 4082635

E-mail: vanbuuren@fsw.eur.nl; buijs@fsw.eur.nl; adriaan.slob@tno.nl

1. Introduction

Changing public sector organizations seems a difficult job. Important reform programs have been launched, but the structural impacts and improvements that result from these programs (as NPM, Total Quality Management and Business Process Reengineering), are limited (Pollitt & Bouckaert 2000). Despite the hope of often over-optimistic advocates of change programs, a "guarantee for success" doesn't exist (Ferlie et al, 2003). Continuous changing political ambitions, strong mechanisms of path-dependency, cultural barriers within governmental organizations, interdependencies between societal, public and private actors and many other factors are just as much as barriers against fundamental change. Rapidly changing political, administrative and societal values, urge for many attempts to realize these changes.

In the past few decades two types of change in public sector organizations can be distinguished: public management reform and governance approaches of reform. The former NPM- reforms are directed at securing greater productivity and value for money, while in the more recent governance approach there is a new emphasis on partnerships and networks (Ferlie et al. 2003; Klijn & Teisman 2000). It should be recognized that this governance approach is multilevel as well as multi-actor. Multilevel governance has emerged due to increasing interrelations between different governmental organizations and various levels of government (Heffen et al 2000). This vertical interrelatedness leads to a rising interaction between institutions. Also horizontal differentiation, multi-actor governance (Heffen et al 2000) has become more important in the policymaking processes. This can be ascribed to the fragmented network society where complex mutual dependencies exist between government and other actors (e.g. citizens, NGO's, private companies) interested in policy matters (Castells 1996).

Nowadays changes in interorganizational governance structures and networks seem more important then reforming organizational structures and institutions (Hall & O'Toole 2000; Klijn & Teisman 2002; Hajer & Wagenaar 2003). In this paper we analyze two such change trajectories. The first case is a bilateral trajectory between Flanders and the Netherlands in which both countries develop a new way of cooperation in managing the Scheldt estuary. The second case is a program at the Dutch ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, intended to get more interaction between policy-makers

and citizens. The goals of both trajectories fit in the trend towards governance, in which governmental organizations recognize their mutual interdependence with different stakeholders (Klijn & Teisman 2000; Teisman & Klijn 2002; Edelenbos 2005). Both trajectories aim at improving policymaking by revising involvement of stakeholders in the policy processes. Besides similarities, there are also differences. The case of the Scheldt Estuary is about a long-term policy trajectory to realize a more integral, cooperative and sustainable way of policy-making. In the case of the Ministry of VROM a programmatic approach is used to improve citizen participation in policymaking processes as well as to improve citizen orientation in the organization. Both trajectories had to develop their ambitions during the change process. Clear-cut goals were not given at the start but emerge during the change trajectory.

Literature about organizational change trajectories shows diverse arrangements for reforms. Boonstra (2004) distinguishes three orders of change: planning; organization development; and interactive learning. These change arrangements differ in the degree of attention for planned and emergent processes. Planning is seen as useful to maintain an organization in equilibrium with its environment. It assumes the organization for which the reform program is developed is in stable condition and it is possible to design the preferred direction of change. An interactive learning approach, however, is designed as an ongoing process of interaction, sense-making and self-organization (Boonstra 2004). This is in line with Mintzberg's (1985) approach of strategic management, in which he shows that emergent processes intervene with planned deliberate strategies and together create realized strategies. Osborne and Browne (2005:43) make clear that it is impossible to separate planned and emergent approaches for change in public services and pose that learning mechanisms seem unavoidable for the creation of adaptive capacity in a change trajectory.

When change trajectories succeed, they result in changed repertoires and strategies to realize existing ambitions more efficient or to realize more sophisticated ambitions. During a change trajectory an organization slowly gets more grip on the objectives of the intended reform and the way how it can be realized (the way how the world is seen, the things to do, the role other actors play et cetera). Thus, change trajectories can be looked at as learning processes in which new competencies are acquired. The result of this

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process has to be consolidated in order to sustain the 'capacity' to continue its success and to be able to realize the purposes of the change trajectory across a longer time period. In this paper we first theorize about the relation between change programs, capacity development and mechanisms for capacity building. We then analyze the development of the two change processes within the public domain, and how these change processes result in new organizational 'capacity', i.e. competencies and knowledge. The central question is how consolidation of the new 'capacity' has been organized in these trajectories in order to sustain it in future. Therefore we analyze organizational facilities and managerial activities that support processes of knowledge consolidation and capacity development.

The two cases are exponents of new ways of governance in which cooperation, dialogue, and interactive policy-making are central elements. In both cases changing existing structures - as we will show – is difficult. Through comparison of these two cases we learn more about the differences and similarities between organizing knowledge consolidation in a bureaucratic organizational environment and in a political network environment.

2. Learning from change programs

Change trajectories do not only result in new or changed organizational structures, arrangements, strategies or ambitions. They do also result in new experiences, changed beliefs about the environment and own position, new competences et cetera. These new abilities are crucial for realizing the change objectives in future.

Developing and retaining new competencies out of a change trajectory seems to be a crucial condition for its long-term success (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998; Healey 1998; Hennestad 1998). Knowledge plays a central role in this. We see knowledge as the ability to fulfill a task (Kessels, 2001). Change trajectories are aimed at doing an existing task more effectively or efficiently (doing things right), or finding new tasks that meet the organizational goals better than the current ones (doing the right things). Doing things right involves first order learning and doing the right things second order learning. So, in principle, change trajectories do result in new knowledge about the way in which tasks can be carried out or new tasks can be done.

Change within governmental organizations or networks deals with the way in which public tasks are organized. Ideally, this results in an increased capacity to realize public goals, through new procedures, organizational arrangements, increased collaboration, new visions and strategies. So, knowledge becomes embedded, embrained, encultured and embodied (Blackler 1995) in governmental organizations, in interorganizational networks and in the way in which they try to deal with their objectives.

In literature about knowledge management and organizational resources, the development of knowledge is embedded in organizational processes and structures. This type of 'embedded' knowledge is conceptualized with the notion of organizational competencies or capabilities, dynamic capabilities and so on (Van den Bosch et al. 1999; Spanos & Prastacos 2004; Grant 1996; Teece et al. 1997). These capabilities are of crucial importance for an organization to survive in its dynamic environment. In policy sciences this notion comes down to the concept of 'governance capacity'. The most extensive description of this notion is given by Innes & Booher (1999), see box 1.

"A governance system has more capacity when it is characterized less by paralyzing conflict and stalemate and more by collective action. A governance system with capacity is one that encourages diverse voices and interests, making sure they are informed and empowered to play roles in governance. It has a rich array of nonprofits, interest groups, and others who represent the full range of interests in the society and who develop specialized knowledge and expertise which they contribute to the governance process. Such a system is characterized by well-networked working relationships among jurisdictions; agencies representing different sectors; business, education, social equity, and ethnic interests; the nonprofit sector; and advocacy organizations. These diverse players can trust one another and recognize their reciprocal interests. Such a governance system makes use of the knowledge and expertise of these and is able to pull together appropriate groups to solve problems or address opportunities on short notice. It depends on a distributed intelligence system, where many players are able to act independently on the basis of their own local knowledge in ways that will be beneficial not only to themselves, but also to the system as a whole. Participants and constituencies are neither passive nor confrontive, but play active and engaged roles in shaping public action. Agencies, legislative bodies, and formal governance arrangements cannot co-opt the citizens and stakeholders into activities or agreements which are against their interests because they are well informed and reflective. That is, such a governance system incorporates a well-developed civil society, with citizens able to have dialogues among themselves, to become informed observers and commentators on what the public sector is doing, and to influence the public sector as appropriate to their concerns. These concerns are not simply narrowly self-interested, but reflect concern for the collective welfare as a result of the dialogues. A governance system with capacity is resilient—that is, it responds quickly to new conditions, events, opportunities and problems, and adapts and changes its procedures, heuristics and relationships as needed. It constantly improves its economic, environmental and equity performance, or slows down or

reverses negative change. It is in a constant state of institutional evolution as it adjusts to maintain a sustainable system".

Box 1

An example of a study on the development of governance capacity is a study of Connick & Innes (2001). They studied the outcomes of, what they called collaborative policy dialogues. These outcomes "can be seen in terms of first-, second- and third-order effects. The first-order effects, which occur during a dialogue itself, include the building of social, political and intellectual capital, agreements, and innovative ideas and strategies. The second-order effects (…) , include new partnerships and collaborative activities, coordinated and joint action, learning that extends into the larger community, changes in perceptions of problems and of other stakeholders, changes in practices, and implementation of agreements or strategies. Third-order effects (…) include the development of institutions that are compatible with, or even built on, collaboration, along with the norms and heuristics that support the institutions; a pattern of stakeholders coevolving rather than fighting or polarizing as a way of dealing with difference; new discourses that are shared across competing players; and ultimately adaptations of cities, regions, resources and services" (Connick & Innes 2001: 11, 12).

The second- and third-level effects as depicted by Connick and Innes can be seen as the development of governance capacity. More governance capacity makes a governmental system, an inter organizational policy network more capable to realize collective goals, fitting in the dynamic context in which such a system has to operate and in which it has to (co)operate to realize broadly supported and legitimate actions.

The notion of governance capacity is a multi-faceted and multi-leveled concept. We conceptualize this notion on three key levels. First of all, we see the development of governance capacity in the mental frames of persons, their perceptions and opinions about their goals and how they can be realized, their perceptions of other actors, the usefulness of some strategies compared to others et cetera. Actors develop intellectual capital (Klein 1998) or human capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998).

Secondly, we see governance capacity at the level of relations and interactions. People change the way in which they cooperate or compete. On a basis of mutual trust, and increased understanding of the added value of the other actors, agents are willing to do

things together. With the words of Cross & Baird (2000: 74): "Important relationships build up from experience as a result of working with members of a project team or functional department liaison. Two important features of these relationships make them useful in future organizational initiatives and thus a component of organizational memory. First, time spent interacting on work tasks helps establish a sense of reciprocity and trust with certain colleagues. This social capital is what allows employees to turn to colleagues for help on future initiatives and actually get useful assistance or advice. Second, by working closely together, colleagues build up an understanding of each member's unique knowledge and skills. It is this understanding that allows one to tap other organizational members at appropriate times in future efforts".

The third level is the organizational or structural level. On this level the development of competencies becomes visible in new organizational structures, new procedures, new or changed organizational arrangements and so on.

We thus distinguish between three forms of knowledge consolidation or competence development: cognitive or mental, social or relational and procedural or institutional. See table 1.

	Perceptions	*Relations*	*Institutions or arrangements*
Empirical reference	Changed or new frames of reference, interpretations, beliefs and values	Changed interactions, improved relationships, new forms of cooperation or competition	New organizational structures, procedures, interaction arrangements. New institutional means to facilitate interaction and joint action.
Theoretical background	Literature about intellectual capital; human resources, personal competences	Literature about social capital, relational capacities,	Strategic competences, dynamic capabilities, institutional capacity

Table 1.   Governance capacity: levels and background (source: Van Buuren 2006)

In what way can organizations in the public domain stimulate, facilitate or organize learning processes that result in increased governance capacity? In change trajectories realizing the intended changes is already a tremendous job that absorbs most energy and attention. But the implementation of the change is not enough as old habits enforced by "old attitudes", "old interactions", and "old organizational structures and routines" can easily obstruct the change process and 'new' barriers will also emerge So the real

question about change in the public domain is how organizations can learn from changes as to consolidate these changes in the governance capacity for the future. For each level of governance capacity we have found some (formal, procedural) mechanisms that can be helpful to facilitate (knowledge) consolidation in change trajectories.

Perceptions

Human resource management of the organization can, first of all, be focused on reframing and change of perceptions and attitudes of employees, for instance by short trainings, policy games, reflection sessions, after action reviews (Baird, Deacon & Holland 2000), etc. Especially when these trainings and games are closely attached to the employee's work - so the things that have been learned can constantly be practiced - these can be powerful instruments.

Another way of stimulating change of frames, attitudes, etc. is increased interaction with the "outside world", for instance, via special sessions in which certain (societal) problems that are relevant to the public domain organization are being discussed or by producing case descriptions by direct involved actors (Turner et al. 2000). Open discussion with groups that have a different view on the problems, can help to understand better how those problems should be tackled and can stimulate reframing of the problems.

Relations

Shaping of and interaction with a network of involved actors and especially the continuation of involvement of key knowledgeable people is one of the options to consolidate the changes in relations. A construction of a "panel" that is continuous involved in the progress of the policy process is an instrument to enforce this.

Another option for consolidation of the changes on the relational level is to form a "community of practice" (Wenger, 1998), to organize assessments or visitations of stakeholders and citizens to judge the efficiency and effectiveness of the policies or to organize citizen's juries.

Institutional arrangements

The first way by which the organization can structure and consolidate the changes on the institutional level is to record all experiences and gained knowledge by making case descriptions, reports, interviews, etc. and put them in a commonly accessible database. In this way an "organizational memory for the changes" is being constructed.

Another way to consolidate the changes on the institutional level is the formalization of agreements, procedural appointments and institutionalization of effective patterns of organizing. The 'other side of the coin' is that these arrangements can become hurdles that can obstruct change in the future, because they cannot follow the dynamics of the system. One of the challenges, therefore, is to make these arrangements as flexible as possible –while still being effective – and to make them 'future proof' and easily moving with the dynamics.

The notions in this paragraph are rather tentative and focused on tools that can be used by advisors; consultants et cetera to improve learning processes. Our empirical material will give more insight in the everyday practice of the development of governance capacity. In the next two sections we analyze the way in which knowledge consolidation and learning (in this paper seen as the process that leads to knowledge consolidation) is organized in two long-term policy change trajectories, and how these arrangements for knowledge consolidation differ in their effectiveness. Both trajectories take several years and we have studied them over a period of several years.

3. Western Scheldt Estuary: towards joint management and policy-making

The first trajectory we analyze is a long-term policy trajectory around the Scheldt Estuary, a Flemish Dutch river basin that forms the access to the Port of Antwerp. In this trajectory the specific aim was to realize a more integral, cooperative and sustainable way of policy making. The history of bilateral policy-making was for decades aggressive, non-cooperative and very politicized (Meijerink, 1998).

The former deepening of the Scheldt (1997) was approved by both national governments in a big package deal about some transnational dossiers, despite fierce resistance from the regional governments of Zeeland and nature organizations. The relationships between the

two countries and the various interest groups concerned to the estuary deteriorated dramatically.

The interests of the various parties are very different. The Flemish government supports the economic interests of the Port of Antwerp. The Dutch and the Flemish nature organizations are very suspicious about these economic interests because they are afraid about the declining of the estuary. Farmer organizations are not happy with a possible further deepening because when this causes loss of nature, this has to be compensated by developing nature on their pastures. The regional authorities of Zeeland have less interest in the economic growth of Antwerp and thus are they not enthusiastic about a further deepening.

Long Term Vision

However, in 1999 both national governments decide to develop a joint Long Term Vision for the estuary, to improve their mutual relations and to develop a better and integral policy and management strategy for the estuary. Most parties involved broadly support the accomplishment of the Long Term Vision. An intensive process of deliberation and negotiation develops. From this process a document arise with rather broad ambitions for the future of the estuary. Future policy proposals has to offer solutions that give equal attention to the economic potential of the estuary, its safety and its quality of nature. Interventions in the system have to safeguard the dynamic behavior of the estuary. Future policy and management has to be realized in good cooperation between the two national governments, the involved regional and local authorities and the diverse stakeholders.

Development Plan

In 2001 both governments approve this Vision and the ministers decide to work out a set of concrete proposals based on this Vision in a Development Plan. A further deepening of the fairway to Antwerp has to be worked out, as well as substantial investments in nature development and a proposal to improve the safety of the estuary especially at the side of Flanders. A temporal project organization was set up and officials from the Flemish and Dutch government were posted at this organization.

An intensive research process following the principles of joint fact-finding was set up. A Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment was made as well as an Integral Costs-Benefits Analysis. In consultation with experts from interest groups the researchers did their work. From this process a broadly supported research report resulted. Compared to the history of intensive debates about research and data – best characterized by 'fact-fighting' in stead of 'fact-finding' - this was a great leap forwards.

An intensive deliberation process was also set up. Two independent chairs directed this process and a neutral secretary facilitated it. The stakeholders had the competence to give a weightily advice to both ministers. They felt they were taken serious and did a good job to realize a unanimous advice about the Development Plan.

Implementation Development Plan

At the end of 2004 both ministers approved the Development Plan and took decisions about the continuation of the trajectory. A new project organization is set up and gets the mandate to work out the Development Plan into concrete plans to deepen the fairway, realize 600 ha new nature area, and implement the proposed measures to enlarge the safety of the estuary. The research process is continued into more detailed plan studies. The deliberation process is also continued and focuses on the concrete shape and implementation of the proposals that arise from the Development Plan.

Most persons involved in realizing the Development Plan are also detached to the new project organization and its different forums. Their tasks are laid down in a new international treaty between Flanders and the Netherlands.

Learning experiences

Compared to the realization of the Long Term Vision the accomplishment of the Development Plan was still more characterized by stakeholder involvement and joint action. Especially the process of joint fact finding was intensified in order to prevent for a battle of analysis.

These intensive processes of deliberation change the frames of actors. As a reaction on the research findings environmental interest groups and the regional authorities of Zeeland begins to think more moderately about the negative impact of a deepening on the

environmental value of the estuary. That opens the way to a joint search for solutions for the accessibility of Antwerp and the improvement of the quality of the estuary.

Other perceptions that change during the process deal with the way in which actors see each other. Strong 'enemy pictures' are abandoned and nuanced perceptions develop. Actors begin to acknowledge the fairness of the wishes of other actors and try to find mutual attractive solutions (improving the economic potential of the Port of Antwerp and at the same time the ecological quality of the estuary).

These changes in frames were reflected in better relations between the actors involved in the management of the estuary. During the process we see how working relations between research institutes at both sides of the Scheldt were intensified because actors see the added value of a better cooperation. The same holds true for the relation between the Port of Antwerp and the nature organizations. Both actors recognize that they are strongly dependent upon each other for realizing their own goals. So they both choose a less competitive and more cooperative strategy in their interactions. Both national governments did the same. Their strong rival attitude was replaced by a much more collaborative attitude: within the framework of 'good neighbors' both governments try to find mutual attractive package deals and they intensify their interactions. The ministers met each other at least two times a year and regular contacts between Flemish and Dutch regional authorities emerge.

On the institutional level learning processes also occurred. A search towards a regional organization of the very centralistic organized "Technical Commission on the Scheldt" (the official management body for the daily governance of the Scheldt) was started. The stakeholder platform developed for the guidance of the Development Plan was continued.

Mechanisms for knowledge consolidation

Perceptions

A rather good mechanism for knowledge consolidation is the continuing involvement of the same persons during the process. Therefore, changed frames and changed relations are transferred from previous phases towards new phases. The Consultation Group (with

stakeholders) is set up at the start of the process and is continued to accompany the implementation process.

Changed frames are reflected in the Development Plan and the advice of the Consultation Group. These documents are formally approved and thus get an official status. In latter negotiations these changed mindsets forms the starting point and the point of reference for other actors. So the development in frames is consolidated through documents and the way in which they get an official status.

Relations

The continuation of fruitful forums or the creation of new ones in which actors can meet each other are important mechanisms for the consolidation of changed interaction patterns. The continuation of the many Working Groups, consultations forums and the project organizations are all important mechanisms for the consolidation of relations in the implementation round of the Development Plan. The involved organizations develop new relations through new working patterns and the development of joint programs. An important example of this is the Long Term Research and Monitor Program on the Scheldt Estuary, a research program in which public authorities and research institutes closely work together in order to get a better insight in the complex dynamics of the estuary. Their improved mutual relations are consolidated through this program in which they have to show these new relations.

Institutional arrangements

A strong mechanism for knowledge consolidation was the juridical structure laid down in a series of international Treaties between the Flemish and Dutch government. In these Treaties the next step in the process is approved. The ministers follow a funnel structure: from an abstract Vision, to a more concrete Development Plan, to very concrete implementation proposals.

Another strong mechanism is the continuation of the project organization. The Long Term Vision is prepared by an ad hoc project group, composed of officials that work part-time for this group. The Development Plan and its implementation is prepared by a standing project organization with a body of assisting and administrative personnel.

During the last months of the preparation of the Development Plan a "quartermaster" is active to safeguard a smooth transition to the implementation phase. His involvement is very crucial for the organization of the 'memory' of the temporal project organization, because an important shortcoming of temporal project organizations is its 'amnesia' after the termination.

Another institutional facility to consolidate knowledge is the Technical Commission on the Scheldt. This governmental body is responsible for the daily management of the Scheldt and is continuously involved in the subsequent policy processes. A discussion is started about the organization of this Commission. The regional authorities want to be involved in this Commission. Through their involvement in the policy process around the Development Plan they become known with the TCS and they realize that participation in the TCS enlarge their possibilities to influence the management of the Scheldt in a much more direct manner. Therefore they try to change the structure of the TCS. When they can realize their point, the institutional structure of the management of the Scheldt will change and will fit into the new relations between the actors.

4. Policy with Citizens

The start

The second trajectory that we analyze is the policy program "Policy with Citizens" (PwC) of the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment. This program started originally as the Stimulation Program Citizen and Environment (SPCE) in 2002 and was a direct consequence of a motion in the Second Chamber (the House of Commons) (Second Chamber, year 2001-2002, 28 000 XI, no.21). According to the Second Chamber, environmental policy had to become more embedded in citizens way of life and this should be realized by participative and more interactive processes in policymaking. The minister of VROM adopted this amendment. At the administrative level of the ministry two main objectives were set (Edelenbos and Van Buuren 2005). The first objective was to involve citizens in policymaking and implementation processes by applying a wide variety of participative and co production instruments. The second objective concerned the aim to strengthen the 'citizen orientation' among policy makers

in the field of environmental policy, which meant that they had to take the effects of their policies on the daily lives of people into account. To execute the SPCE, a program team was formed consisting of four employees of the Department of Environment and three employees from the Institute for Public and Politics (IPP), an external body specialized in organizing citizen involvement. In the opening steps of the program their main activities focused on initiating and participating in many different projects with respect to citizen involvement in environmental policy and at subsidizing associated projects of NGO's.

The program team was required to provide information to the Second Chamber about the preliminary results and the development of the program. Hence in 2003, a learning evaluation approach was executed by a compound group of researchers (a.o. two authors of this paper) associated with the Pytheas Network. This approach focused on frequently providing feedback to the program team by reflections on the various projects. Secondly, recommendations during the process are giving and the evaluators reflected on the manner the program team took these up (Edelenbos and Van Buuren 2005: 598). Edelenbos and Van Buuren (2005) describe this latter as the learning capability of the program team. One of the outcomes of the evaluation was that the 'then' direction of the program would not eventuate in goal achievement. The evaluators explained that the program was too fragmented and paid not enough attention to the agenda of citizens in operating the projects. The program team adopted these recommendations and made necessary adaptations in their program to obtain more influence of citizens in the agenda-setting phase and more attention for citizen initiatives. At the final stage of the evaluation the evaluators were able to report that the program develops properly and continuation of a programmatic approach is necessary in order to improve citizen orientation in the ministry.

The program: Policy with Citizens

Inspired by the advices of the learning evaluation the ministry decided to broaden the program from the Department of Environment to the whole organization: housing, spatial planning and the environment. The program's name was changed into "Policy with Citizens" and the program team was solely composed of civil servants from the three departments (Housing, Planning and Environment). Another adaptation of the program in

which the evaluation played a major role is a focus on two highly visible projects with large impact instead of a wide range of diverse and small projects.

The first project is the "Citizen Platform". In this project citizens and the experts of the ministry collaborate in several meetings on a problematic policy issue with the aim to work out concrete advices for the Minister. An evaluation (Boogers et al. 2005) showed that this instrument is useful to accomplish a shared understanding between citizens and policy makers of a certain issue. Nevertheless it is notified that this approach is not appropriate to become part of daily capabilities in policymaking.

In 2005 another highly visible project started, the Public Agenda and Citizen Participation. By an extensive campaign the ministry asked citizens to express their opinions on issues in the ministries' policy domains. The most significant issues were selected to become a topic for co-production processes between policymakers and citizens. At the end of 2005 citizens and policymakers were able to deliver approximately seventy advices to the Minister in order to improve the ministries' policy.

The Minister showed strong commitment and willingness to both of these projects, which is illustrated by providing feedback in person about the meaning and usefulness of the developed advices for the Ministry.

Organizational learning

Although these major projects led to remarkable results, when looking at attention and advises regarding policy issues, the program team became aware that they were confronted with many barriers in order to accomplish organizational change with regard to citizen orientation. For this reason the program team started a new research project with a focus on the barriers and chances for organizational change and learning. This new study got shape in an action research approach in order to provide feedback for learning and adaptation during the trajectory (Greenwood and Levin 1998; Dickens and Watkins 1999).

In the research trajectory several observations were made. The program is highly supported by the Minister. The high-level management of the organization declares that they attach importance to development of citizen orientation in policymaking processes, although at least they have showed in word and appearance. On the other hand they also

express that a distinctive program for realizing this, should be unnecessary as soon as possible. This contradiction carries a great risk for the program, namely to be defined as a success before change in the organization is accomplished, which seems to have happened to earlier programs directed at external orientation of the ministry. For the development of the program this implicates that at present the program team should demonstrate that stimulating citizen orientation in the ministry is still evident. The still tender knowledge and expertise on citizen orientation will soon be lost when the application of this expertise is neglected, so this is an important task for the program team.

The study showed that many different perspectives on the program exist. From interviews with project managers it appears that most of them only focus on a successful accomplishment of their project and not on how their project can add value to the program and change process of the ministry. However, this is not very surprising, as they are assessed on efficient and effective project management. Hence learning only takes place at individual or project team level, and only rarely knowledge from projects becomes consolidated in the program and organization. The projects are mainly top-down coordinated on coherence and project results, whereas the bottom-up possibilities of projects are most of the time not even considered. Very few initiatives are taken to create possibilities for mutual learning between projects and/or learning between projects and program level. Top down in the organization the program seems to be established as a single project with citizen participation as a single objective. The management of the program has received this objective as a cultural change process within the organization. This need for cultural change is also acknowledged in a meeting of the high-level management, but it seems they do not carry this out with enough priority and importance attached.

Analysis: arrangements for governance capacity

The SPCE and PwC programs with the objective to promote the change towards citizen orientation are to some extent remarkable. For a long time Dutch central government organizations focused on the importance of co production for other levels of government. However, they did not realize the necessity to adapt their own procedures and ways of

acting (Teisman et al. 2004). Constituting a change program, alone, is no guarantee for successful change (Ferlie et al. 2003; Boonstra 2004). Earlier attempts at the Ministry of VROM that tried to strengthen external orientation in its policymaking processes underpin this statement. Interviews with managers of these earlier change trajectories made clear that even when the organization had learned from these processes, this had escaped its memory very expeditious. Very few knowledge from these change trajectories seems to be consolidated. It is the question whether the "Policy with Citizens"-program can escape this pitfall. In the next section we will analyze the knowledge consolidation on the different levels of perceptions, relations, and institutions or arrangements.

Perceptions

The programs (SPCE, PwC) contain a variety of different projects in which some kind of citizen participation is involved. In these projects interaction with citizens took form on different policy issues. The Citizen Platform project and the Public Agenda and Citizen Participation project can both be seen as the institutionalized participation of citizens on a higher (strategic) level of policy making. These interactions with citizens on different levels of policy making, lead to change of frames on some policy issues. Changed frames are especially reflected in the "Policy Agenda" and the official policy documents from the ministry. With the Public Agenda and Citizens Participation project a shift can be perceived towards an increasing openness in the agenda-setting phase.

One of the actions the program undertook in order to change the attitude of the ministries' policymakers on citizen participation, is a two-day training course with the aim to enhance knowledge, skills and competences. Nevertheless, policymakers hadn't expressed much interest for this training. One of the reasons for not attending the training was according to some interviewees, that the training didn't match the questions and needs about citizen participation of the policymakers. It can be concluded that this instrument was not very successful and didn't work well to enforce the reframing.

Relations

Within both programs the network on many policy issues is extended with the fresh and new perspectives of citizens. As we have argued above, this leads to new framing of

many policy issues. On a strategic level, the Citizen Panel project and the Public Agenda project are both consolidated forms of these new relations. We have the impression that both projects on this strategic level work well. On the other side, we have serious doubts whether the new relations are consolidated in the various projects with respect to the operational side of the policy issues. We see in most cases that "old routines" are gaining advantage after the projects are finished and that new networks are neglected.

Another issue considering relations, is the number of consultants that are hired to carry out projects. Temporal contracted consultants execute a great deal of the interactions with citizens in the projects and report their findings to the ministry. For the objective to change the attitude of policymakers about citizen orientation and the consolidation of knowledge of these projects the lack of 'experience of employees of the ministry' is disastrous.

Institutional arrangements

In the action research trajectory is concluded that currently institutional arrangements of the program are not sufficient enough to consolidate learning experiences and gained knowledge in the projects. Too often the relation between program and projects is mainly based on financial support and project result reports, whereas no arrangements are established to obtain mutual learning and sharing of knowledge among projects or between projects and program.

Another point that is noticed is the limited attention that is paid to embedding citizen orientation in the strategic and financial plans of the departments. Although policymakers assume that embedding of citizens orientation in these institutional arrangements is no guarantee for willingness of middle managers to support projects regarding citizen participation, they do acknowledge that at least deficiency of citizen participation in these plans is often used as excuse to do nothing.

5. **Conclusions: knowledge consolidation to improve governance capacity**

In this section we formulate the conclusions from our analysis. Despite the differences between the change programs discussed in this paper they both demonstrate interesting mechanisms for learning, which contribute to interconnecting emergent processes with

patterns of planning in realizing change. This brings a new light to the governance capacity of the governmental organizations in their attempts to realize change.

In both cases we see a frequent use of informal instruments to consolidate new knowledge and competencies. Formal mechanisms such as human resource management or project learning are much less frequently used. To consolidate new perceptions and relations, intensive interaction patterns are often used mechanisms. By an improved interaction the (inter) organizational network is better equipped to realize collective action. But this consolidation mechanism is very dependent on the willingness of people and lacks an official status.

Institutional capacity building is in the Scheldt case much more an issue compared to the Policy with Citizens (PwC) program. Both cases have attention at the highest political level, so this is probably not the explanation for this phenomenon. In the Scheldt case, the results of each process phase are consolidated and utilized in the next phase, due to the strong legal embedding of the procedures. In international negotiation processes, the use of institutional arrangements is an established way of operating, so this is "standard routine". This is probably a strong reason why institutional arrangements are used in this case. On the contrary, it is not "standard routine" to support an internal change program by institutional arrangements. Therefore, we think that the lack of institutional capacity building in the PwC program can especially be attributed to the dominance of "standard routines". We expect that institutional arrangements are important conditions to realize successful and sustainable change.

Knowledge consolidation in the Scheldt case is organized through the special shape of the policy process: from developing a long-term vision, to a concrete Development Plan, to concrete measures to improve specific aspects of the estuary. In the PwC program knowledge consolidation is organized through a parallel trajectory of external advice and evaluation through which the program team reflects on its experiences and is helped to shape new phases of the change trajectory. However, this can be an important source of

'amnesia' of the organization. When the external advisors leave the program, much knowledge and competencies will leave the organization too.

Although the discussed change trajectories in this paper are rather different in goal, context, setting, structure, and operations, they both demonstrate that perceptions, relations and institutional arrangements should all be taken into account in order to improve governmental change processes. All three concepts show a different perspective on learning and consolidating of knowledge in change processes; at the same time the concepts are interrelated. In the discussed change trajectories, new interactions with involved actors lead to changed frames and perceptions. In their turn, these changed frames are reflected in establishment of new networks and new policy documents. Institutional arrangements are not often used to consolidate knowledge and changes.

To our opinion, too often change programs have a too narrow focus on only one of these concepts, while they are of equal importance for knowledge consolidation. So, we suggest that change programs should develop competences and capabilities to deal with these different aspects in an equal manner. This could create the required knowledge consolidation for successful improvement of governance capacity.

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