Walking the Talk: Thinking and Working Politically in Practice

Washington, D.C.,
December 11-12, 2019
World Bank (J Building)

Overview:

Chemonics International in partnership with the Global Delivery Initiative (GDI), a partnership of over 50 development organizations co-chaired by the World Bank and JICA, will host a learning event around the opportunities and challenges that the development industry is facing in how best to ensure politically aware delivery within programs and projects. The event will focus on operationalizing Thinking and Working Politically (TWP), a mindset that frames the way we see and do development guided by three core principles:

1. Strong and continuous political analysis, insight, and understanding informs programmatic decision making;
2. A detailed and ongoing appreciation of, and response to, the local context; and
3. Flexibility and adaptability in program design and implementation.

The imperatives of Doing Development Differently, together with the review process of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and implementation of the SDGs, calls for practitioners to catch up with the increased complexity of developmental challenges in a more intertwined and globalized world where context, shifting political dynamics, and coalition building play ever more pivotal roles. With general policy guidelines in place, commitment from donors, and experimentation underway within implementers, we are still struggling in finding the right balance between understanding complexity and responding to it in efficient, realistic and operationally grounded manners.

While many interesting cases exist, our main goal is to understand more deeply and practically as a development community how to operationalize TWP principles on the ground so they are embedded into a project’s decision making processes, responses to contextual dynamics, ongoing implementation, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and daily operations. Particularly, how can we achieve these results in a participatory way, and how can we successfully measure their impact?

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1 While we do not equate any one tool or set of tools to TWP, we acknowledge that a range of tools such as applied political economy analysis, gender analysis, stakeholder analysis, strategic foresight, horizon scanning, etc., can provide very useful TWP insights on how to ground the three core TWP principles above within the reality, limitations, and possibilities of a project.
PRELIMINARY PROGRAM
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11

09:00 am  Participant Registration

09:30 am  Welcome and Opening

10:00 am  High-level Panel Discussion 1: Problem-solving and Complexity – Experiences from Other Disciplines

Panelists:
◊ Patricia Seed, Professor at University of California, Irvine
◊ Nancy Searby, Capacity Building Program Manager, NASA Applied Sciences Program
◊ Emilio Méndez, Entrepreneur and Creative Director of Saúl E. Méndez
◊ Moderator: Santiago Villaveces, Chemonics Senior Advisor on TWP

11:00 am  Coffee Break

11:30 am  High-level Panel Discussion 2: Operationalizing TWP in International Development

Panelists:
◊ James Anderson, Lead Governance Specialist, Governance Global Practice, World Bank
◊ Don Chisholm, Deputy Office Director, Bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, Center for Democracy, Rights, and Governance, USAID
◊ Sharon Van Pelt, Director, Democracy and Governance Practice, Chemonics
◊ Moderator: Panthea Lee, Executive Director, Reboot

01:00 pm  Lunch

02:00 pm  Breakout sessions. Knowledge Café: Co-creating actionable ways to operationalize TWP during program design and implementation.

03:30 pm  Coffee break

04:00 pm  TWP and The Changing Dimensions of the Development Landscape

Panelists:
◊ Video remarks by Jean-Claude Tchatchouang, Executive Director, Africa Group II, World Bank
◊ Maria Gonzalez de Asis, Co-chair, GDI Steering Committee & Manager, Strategy & Operations, Global Operations Knowledge Management Unit, World Bank Group
◊ Anselm Schneider, Program Director, GIZ
◊ Michael Woolcock, Lead Social Scientist, Development Research Group, World Bank
◊ Moderator: Dr. Horst Fischer, Adjunct Professor of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University

05:00p Book launch and reception

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12**

09:30 am Welcome back

09:35 am Breakout Sessions
Three planned breakout groups (facilitated by Pact, DAI, and CARE):

◊ TWP and MEL/adaptive management
◊ Building Project Teams for TWP
◊ Inclusive TWP

10:35 am Report Back

11:00 am Coffee Break

11:30 pm Bringing Private Sector Tools and Approaches to TWP
Jamie Pett, LearnAdapt program, Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

12:15 pm Introduction to the GDI Delivery Labs

12:35 pm Lunch

01:30 pm Workshop Session: Delivery Labs
Three delivery labs will be held as simultaneous sessions with challenge holders from Chemonics International, RTI International, and the World Bank.

03:00 pm Report Back

03:30 pm Final Session and Closing Remarks

04:15 pm EVENT CONCLUDES