

# Capacity Enhancement briefs

SHARING BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

## WHY PROCESS IS IMPORTANT FOR CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT: THE CASE OF CEARA

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*Attention to process is key to capacity enhancement. The Brazilian state of Ceará, with the assistance of the World Bank, applied the “accelerating results together” (ART) methodology to develop and implement poverty reduction plans using cross-functional and cross-organizational teams. In this case, three teams jointly led by state secretaries and Bank leaders focused on reducing infant mortality rates, improving primary education, and maximizing income opportunities for the poor. Participants credited results to the focus on process, which merged learning with work. Other important elements were stakeholder involvement, government ownership, high-level leadership, and locally supported Bank participation.*

Development assistance requires a focus on *substance*—the content provided—as well as the *process of engagement*—how groups work together to achieve results over time. Capacity enhancement has typically involved provision of loans, consultative advice, skills training and sharing of expertise. Although important, these aspects are usually not sufficient to produce enduring improvements.

Design and selection of the right process tools should ideally be considered at the outset of engagement. Process tools enable stakeholders to explore areas of need, agree on priorities, develop solutions, and collaborate on implementation. When applied successfully, these tools build trust, “ownership” of solutions, learning, and partnerships among diverse groups. They also help increase capacity building and results achieved and establish the foundation for transferring capability to others.

Many process tools exist for use in large and small group environments. This brief reviews an example of work the Bank conducted with the State of Ceará in Brazil, in which the process “*accelerating results together*” (ART) was applied to a situation requiring integration across government institutions. Success in the short and long term depended greatly on the lead-

ership and involvement of people throughout relevant government service departments.

### Using ART in Ceará, Brazil

The state of Ceará is one of the poorest in Brazil (see Figure 1). For the past two decades, Ceará and the World Bank have worked together to find ways to reduce poverty and foster sustainable development. Cooperation began in the late 1970s with the Northeast Rural Development Program (NRDP, see end note 1); today it consists of an array of investment projects, studies, technical assistance, and capacity-building activities. The Bank also supports Brazilian federal government projects with activities in Ceará, such as the Federal Water Resources Management Project, School Improvement Project II, AIDS II, and National Environment Program II.

In this time, Ceará has significantly improved the quality of life of its population and made impressive progress on its poverty indicators. Poverty, however, remains deep and severe by any standard. Concerned that public policies were not achieving better results and responding to the conclusions of the state economic memorandum<sup>2</sup> published by the Bank in 2000, the Government of Ceará and the World Bank agreed to





promote a joint effort to answer two questions: “how can we better coordinate our work to improve strategic indicators and accelerate results?” and “how can the Government of Ceará implement a more effective strategy to combat poverty?”

The state and the Bank agreed to use the ART methodology (see Figure 2) to answer these questions. This brief describes the process, which focused on integration of services to make improvements in three critical areas: infant mortality, education, and income generation. The Bank sponsored two interventions—the ART process, which began in January 2002, and WBI’s rural poverty distance learning event in April 2003.

### How does ART work?

The ART methodology is one of the World Bank’s key processes for helping cross-functional and cross-organizational teams tackle complex problems. ART is based on the premise that careful definition of the challenges, bringing together the right people—in terms of knowledge, experience, and passion for change—and providing them with the right information will produce optimal solutions to problems.

ART has three phases, each involving discrete actions:

- *Scope and prepare.* Assess client needs using ART criteria. Confirm sponsorship and conduct scoping meetings to organize the work. Select the right resources, gather the right data, and prepare for the next phase.
- *The business meeting.* Conduct a three- to four-day session in which three to five teams work on major components of the challenge. Present recommendations to senior leaders for immediate decisions. Commit to take action and implement decisions within ninety days.
- *Implementation.* Create an integrated project plan for deliverables, accountability, and scheduled actions. Track and measure implementation after twenty, thirty, and ninety days. Capture learning and knowledge to sustain changes.

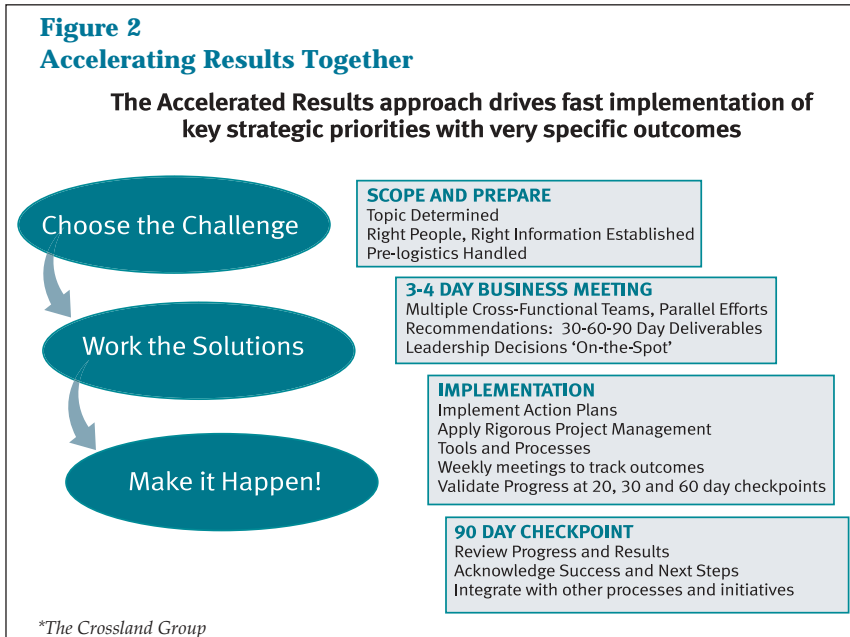
### The Scoping Meeting

The scoping meeting in Fortaleza convened a range of Ceará state officials and Bank staff, including two executive sponsors—the Governor and the Bank’s Country Director in Brazil—and two ART coordinators—the Secretary of Planning and the Bank’s Principal Country Officer for Brazil. Team leaders included heads of Ceará secretariats of education, health, and economic development and Bank staff. Also participating were fourteen other state secretaries, state government technical staff, the ART lead consultant, and team consultants.

At the meeting, three teams considered one of three topics—quality of life, quality and quantity of education, and economic growth and employment—and defined specific challenges in each:

- *Quality of life.* How can we work together more to reduce the rate of infant mortality further?
- *Quality and quantity of education.* How can we improve the quality of primary education in the state and the quantity (i.e. inclusion of rural children living in distant places; hours per day of education in selected rural areas)?
- *Economic growth and employment.* How can we work together to maximize income opportunities for young people living in small and medium cities and rural areas?

Institutional integration was an overarching issue that was identified in preliminary discussions and that



arose in all group discussions and the plenary session. The teams diagnosed poor coordination in implementing public policies among and within a range of institutions: among different state secretariats; between the state and municipalities; between the state and federal governments; between the state and the World Bank/Inter-American Development Bank; within the Bank; within municipalities; and, in some cases, between the state and civil society.

### The Business Meeting

The teams reconvened three weeks later in Fortaleza at a business meeting. Each team had two team champions (one each from Ceará's government and the Bank), several sector experts, others strongly interested in the topics, and an ART team consultant to lead the process. The two executive sponsors provided overall leadership for the workshop with support from the technical team and ART lead consultant.

At the final session, the three teams presented their recommendations, which the executive sponsors endorsed, and agreed on a time frame. Team findings and proposals included the following:

- *Infant mortality.* Insufficient integration of policies and programs was the general problem. The workgroup recommended creating a task force. With participation of local health agencies, it would intensify and integrate programs and actions, giving priority to 34 municipalities with an infant mortality rate (IMR) above 35 deaths per 1,000 births, focusing on the poorest families.
- *Primary education.* Unsatisfactory learning levels among children, inadequate education management, and little community involvement in schools hamper improvement in the quality and quantity of basic education. Solutions include, respectively, (a) a primary-level literacy program emphasizing training of teachers as literacy agents, (b) universalized training of education managers in the public school network, (c) a broad education campaign for communities on the importance of their following up on school processes and results, and (d) an increased number of full-time primary schools.
- *Income opportunities for the poor.* The main issues adversely affecting income and job generation are (a) lack of cross-sector integration among state secretariats, civil society, and municipalities, (b) excessive red tape for opening new businesses, and (c) low education levels associated with insufficient technical assistance for productive activities. The team recommended establishing a task force for cross-sector integration among secretariats, facilitating small business creation, carrying out a literacy

program for low-income rural populations, and strengthening technical assistance on income and employment generation.

### Implementation and Results

Teams started implementing the action plans and assessed progress at meetings 20, 30, 60, and 90 days thereafter. Results also were measured at a 120 days check point and reconfirmed after one year.

*Infant mortality reduction.* The infant mortality reduction action plan was largely put into practice. The task force carried out several actions to boost cross-sector and cross-institutional cooperation to enhance primary health care quality and increase access to quality water supply. These included awareness raising of key stakeholders in targeted municipalities, assistance to municipalities with high IMRs in organizing primary and secondary health services, assistance to medical caregivers on quality of pre-birth and mother care, hiring 118 health agents to work in high IMR areas, and distance learning for doctors and nurses on reducing child mortality and morbidity. According to the state of Ceará, results of ART included integration, faster and greater coverage of services in priority infant health areas, and acceleration of new data gathering.

*Quality of education.* The recommendations of this working group were fully implemented, boosting the primary-level literacy program. Meetings with municipal education secretaries led to 173 municipalities adopting the "Pact for Literacy," increasing the number of full-time primary schools from 38 to 48. Municipalities agreed to make mothers a priority in literacy efforts. An incentive scheme to improve education awarded prizes to schools and students for top scores in Portuguese and math examinations.

*Economic growth and employment.* The recommended task force on cross-sector integration among secretariats was created. Discussion by key stakeholders on facilitating creation of small businesses resulted in a new, simplified, tax law which the government approved for sending to the State Assembly. Secretariats cooperated in that work and in promotion of fairs and conferences. Small-scale ART seminars integrating state and municipal governments defined action plans, and implementation by several government agencies resulted in (a) a large local producers' fair, in which 120 businesses competed for opportunities to supply school meals, (b) a large tourism fair and conference promoting tourism and information exchange among small and medium hotel owners, and (c) small business "incubators" in each of three municipalities.

## Lessons Learned

In September 2002 the work groups met to assess outcomes and develop presentations of results, which they then gave to the executive sponsors. Participants considered the ART process overall to be a very positive experience, citing the following factors as critical to success:

*Focus on process.* ART produced a deep reorganization of ongoing efforts in an accelerated, integrated, and efficient manner; thus, important steps were taken to increase integration among stakeholders in public policy planning and implementation.

*Merging learning with work.* Although the Bank has long provided technical expertise in learning environments, it has less often invested in processes that enable clients and the Bank to work together to solve complex issues using a consistent, reliable methodology. Processes, such as ART, increase participation and keep the focus on tangible results to be achieved. It is not learning separated from problems to be solved, but rather learning and capacity building through work in a cross-organizational team environment.

*Stakeholder involvement.* Implementation successes were largely due to local stakeholder involvement. Although the Bank participated in the process, government officials held leadership and expert roles. Secretaries led cross-functional teams during the entire process, including implementation.

*Ownership by government.* The state government showed ownership over the ART process, from scoping through implementation, and afterwards, as they applied ART to other initiatives to reinforce the benefits of integration achieved, sustain the impetus of the process, enhance the quality of public expenditures, and improve public management.

*High-level leadership.* Senior-level sponsorship is essential in planning, decisionmaking, and checkpoints throughout implementation. Many participants noted how crucial the decisions made by high-level administration (the executive sponsors) were to secretaries working together in a concerted manner. The ART process also achieved better coordination and a cross-sector approach among Ceará's state secretariats and municipal governments.

*Bank as knowledge broker.* Through the ART process, the Bank fulfilled its role as "knowledge broker" for development impact: catalyzing funding and convening the stakeholders. Processes such as ART are highly visible and tackle big problems; as such, they demand careful planning and the involvement of the Bank's country teams.

*Local support for the Bank.* The state government's trust in the Bank's country manager enabled the group to address big challenges with confidence. Future cooperation of the Bank with Ceará in the ART process may include local capacity building for mainstreaming the ART methodology into the state's administration.

*Peer Reviewers: Antonio Rocha Magalhães, Principal Country Officer, Brasilia, Brazil, and Monica Clark Nunes Cavalcante, State of Ceará Controller Secretary.*

1. The first project in Ceará, the Rural Development Project, was approved on September 13, 1977. It consisted of a series of coordinated actions to improve the living standards and incomes of the low-income population of the Serra da Ibiapaba region in Ceará. This approach, known at the time as "Integrated Rural Development Strategy", was named in Brazil as the Polonordeste Program.

2. The World Bank. 2000. "Brazil Poverty Reduction: Growth and Stability in the State of Ceará. A State Economic Memorandum." Report No. 19217. Washington, D.C.

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