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## DAC Network on Poverty Reduction

### PROGRESS REPORT ON THE LEARNING EVENTS WITH THE TRAIN-4-DEV NETWORK ON PROMOTING PRO-POOR GROWTH

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## **PROGRESS REPORT ON THE LEARNING EVENTS WITH THE TRAIN-4-DEV NETWORK ON PROMOTING PRO-POOR GROWTH**

### **I. Background**

1. POVNET is collaborating with the Train4Dev Network<sup>1</sup> to organise a series of eight developing country-based learning events during 2009-10. The aim of these events is to disseminate the POVNET messages on promoting pro-poor growth and provide donors' field-level practitioners with knowledge and skills that will help them in their policy dialogue with partner countries and their programming of pro-poor growth interventions.

2. An Executive Committee has been formed to oversee preparation and monitor implementation of these learning events (as well as a series of learning events on Managing for Development Results). The Executive Committee brings together POVNET participants as well as members of the Train4Dev Network willing to contribute to and jointly finance the learning events on promoting pro-poor growth (namely Austria, Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland). Earnan O'Cleirigh, POVNET Vice-Chair, is Co-Chair of the Executive Committee with specific responsibility for the learning events on promoting pro-poor growth. GTZ acts as lead agency on behalf of the funding agencies and, amongst other things, is responsible for contracting issues.

3. The Executive Committee has agreed to hire a consortium of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and ITAD to prepare and deliver the series of learning events, in close collaboration with the host agency in each developing country where an event takes place and specially hired resource persons.

### **II. Recent developments**

4. Immediately prior to the last POVNET meeting in October 2009, a pilot learning event took place in Tanzania (from 19 to 21 October 2009). This was an important opportunity to test the programme and material that had been developed by that time. Given the pilot nature of the event, participants were asked to provide feedback through a more intensive evaluation process than would normally be adopted. In addition, representatives from the Executive Committee (Earnan O'Cleirigh from Irish Aid and Melanie Wiskow from GTZ) participated in this pilot event.

5. As hoped, the pilot in Tanzania helped to identify what was working well and where further improvements still needed to be made in the course design and content. These issues were explored further in an After Action Review that took place on 26 November 2009.

6. In general, there was agreement that the pilot learning event had been successful in deepening participants' knowledge and understanding of the POVNET messages on promoting pro-poor growth. At the same time, the learning events should provide more guidance on practical policy measures that support the engagement of poor women and men in economic growth. Moving more from the theoretical to the

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1. Further information on the Train4Dev Network is available on the Internet at: [www.train4dev.net](http://www.train4dev.net)

practical (“What do I do differently on Monday?”) could imply revising the draft briefing notes and PowerPoint presentations and possibly turning the programme “on its head”, starting with an examination of a limited number of possible policy measures. Another useful change could be to limit the number of modules covered or the sectoral focus. On the organisational side, it appears that a preparatory mission to the country where a learning event will take place would be helpful to discuss plans with the lead donor in the country, the organising group, the partner government and, if they have already been identified, the resource persons. This will help ensure that, earlier on in the process, there is common understanding about the objectives of the learning events and more clarity on respective roles and responsibilities.

7. Subsequent discussions between the Executive Committee and consultants have led to agreement on a revised approach for the learning events. The consultants will determine with the in-country lead donor the key 2 or 3 sectors which are important for promoting pro-poor growth (these are likely to be drawn from agriculture, private sector development, infrastructure and trade) and, within those, the 2 or 3 key issues and the 2 or 3 policy instruments which should influence each of these. There will be a “menu” of globally-relevant issues from which local stakeholders can prioritise the most important issues. These issues should be more detailed than sectors, but more general than specific policy instruments. A series of Policy Instrument Notes with case studies will be developed to support each item on the “menu” of issues. If necessary, there will be scope to add issues to the “menu” if these are not available and are of clear relevance to the country. The intention during the learning events is to move from a discussion of possible policy instruments to more systemic issues around promoting growth and increasing its impact on reducing poverty, i.e. on promoting pro-poor growth.

8. Thus, the approach in the future will be to offer a course designed around a set of core policy issues and instruments from which the in-country organising group can select on the basis of the country context and current priorities. At the moment, the “menu” consists of six issues on which Policy Instrument Notes are being prepared. These are:

- i) Agricultural input subsidies.
- ii) Using political economy analysis to implement effective pro-poor policies.
- iii) Policies for marginalised small farmers with few, if any, assets: social protection, appropriate technology for food staples, price stability and efficient prices.
- iv) Increasing revenue collection while avoiding penalising or disincentivising the economies and livelihoods of poor people and supporting the principle of progression.
- v) Realising opportunities for labour-intensive construction and maintenance, including employment generation programmes.
- vi) How should governments and donors encourage the private entrepreneurial activity of poor people and private sector development that is critical for pro-poor growth.

9. The idea is that a given country can pick a number of these and suggest up to two more issues on which additional course material will be prepared. The course structure will then be adjusted according to the issues that have been chosen. As the programme progresses, the menu of Policy Instrument Notes will grow as countries request content on issues of specific importance to their contexts – by the end of the programme, there should be 12 Policy Instruments Notes.

### **III. Next steps**

10. The consultant and Executive Committee are currently finalising the “menu” of globally-relevant issues and reviewing the associated Policy Instrument Notes and case studies.

11. In parallel, there is a need to identify the locations for the remaining seven learning events. Ideally, another learning event piloting the revised approach should take place before August 2010. The remaining events can then be rolled out but, realistically, are unlikely to all be completed by the end of 2010 (and so some carry over into 2011 may occur).

12. As an adjunct to this process, the objective remains to organise a consultation with the consultants to aggregate findings and distil lessons based on the experience from conducting several learning events. This may possibly be done in association with the POVNET meeting in late 2010.