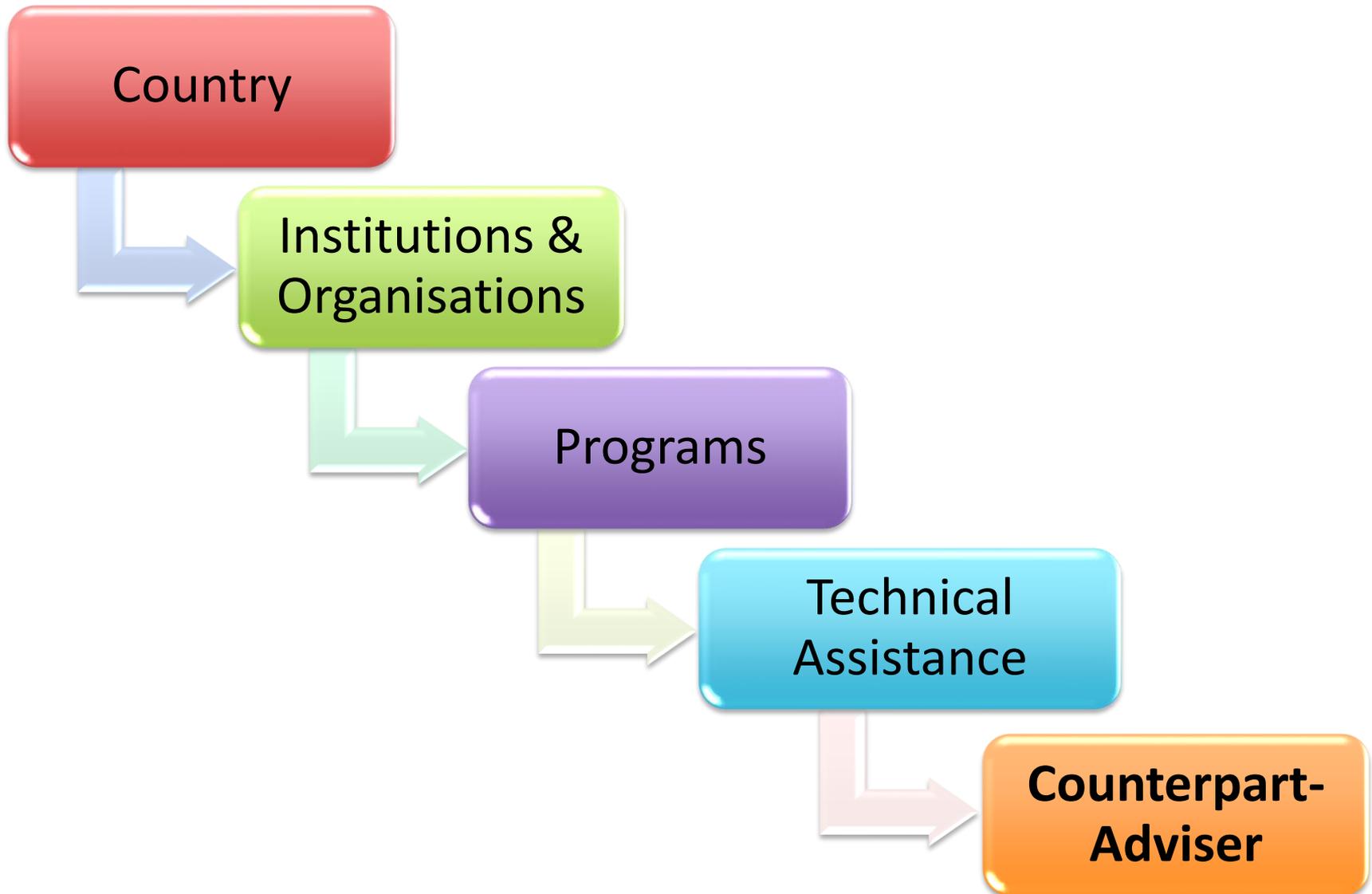


Advising: The Counterpart Perspective

Bridi Rice

MA (Research) Candidate
Institute for Human Security and Social Change
La Trobe University

Situating the research



Scale of expenditure

OECD Free-Standing Technical Co-operation 2014

Worldwide

US\$17,072,860,000

(9.58% of ODA from all donors)

Australia

US\$1,149,170,000

(26.22% of Australian ODA)

Counterpart-Adviser Working Relationships

1. **Why** and to **what** extent do counterpart-adviser working relationships matter?
2. **How** do counterparts and advisers collaborate?
3. **What** are the implications?

Mixed Method: Exploratory research involving interviews, case studies, observation, survey, comparative analysis.

First Question

Q: **Why** and to **what** extent do counterpart-adviser working relationships matter?

A: Possibly even **more** than we originally realised.

Example:

- Small-scale scoping exercise
- 26 Papua New Guinean lawyers from four different Central Government Legal Offices
- *Please list what you think are the top ten attributes of an effective adviser.*

Counterparts' Top Ten Attributes of an Effective Adviser

Four categories of responses

1. Technical and experience attributes
2. Contextual understanding
3. Personal attributes
4. Advising modalities / 'the how' you advise / the advisor/counterpart interface

Breakdown of responses

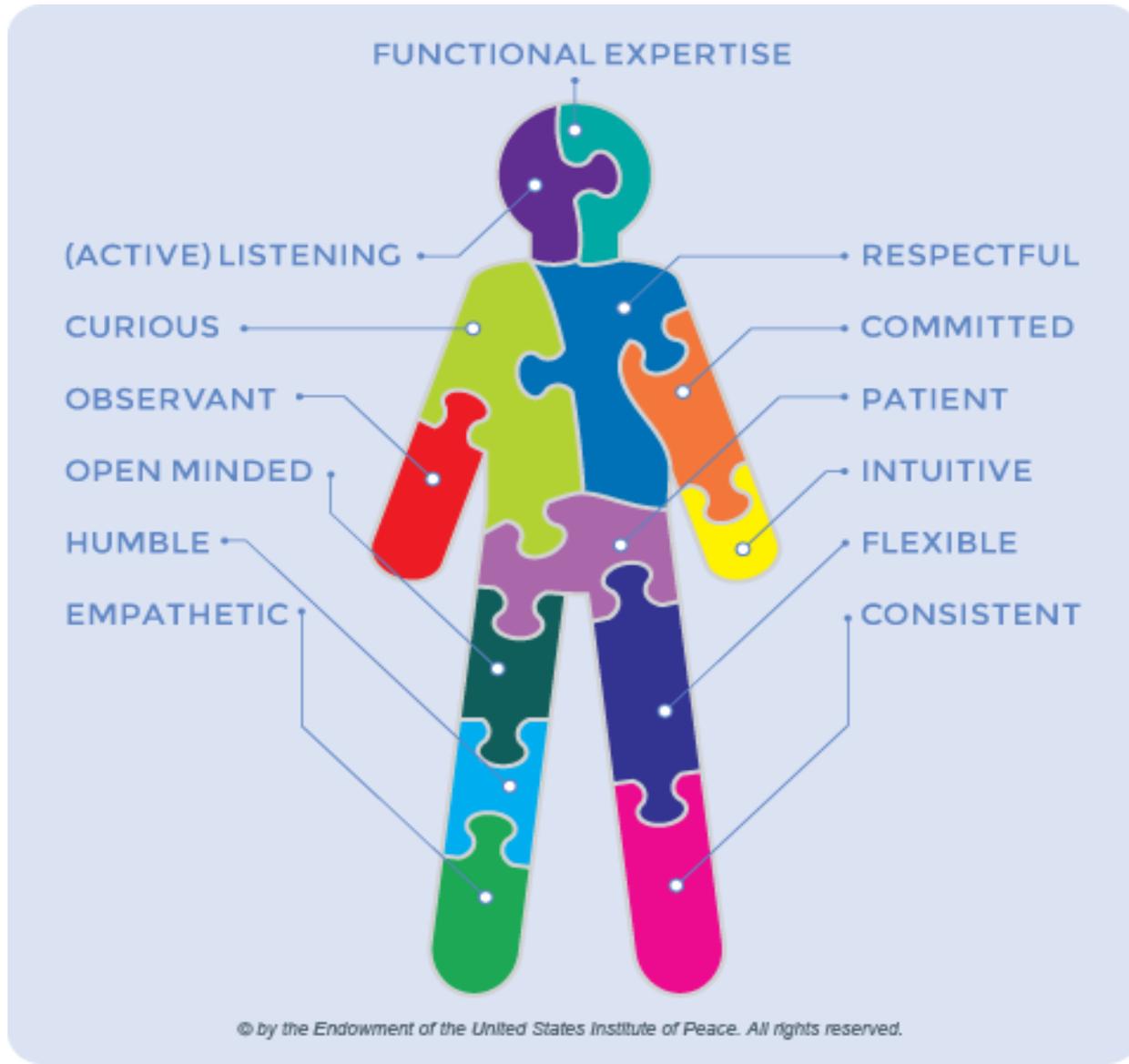
9% of top ten attributes fall into the technical and experience category

6% of top ten attributes fall into the contextual understanding category

34% of top ten attributes fall into the personal category

51% of top ten attributes fall into the 'how you advise' category

Personal Attributes



Advising modalities 'the how'

Respondee excerpts:

- *Provides guidance and not to make decision for advisee, not commanding but being diplomatic and strong, not over-supervising, lets advisee choose for themselves*
- *Uses a good network, helps PNG develop networks*
- *Seeks views from others before giving advice*
- *Builds capacity through discussions, is able to teach not just show*
- *Helps us develop options and then we choose option together*
- *Does group discussions, guides officers to look at solution to challenges*
- *Is innovative, not afraid to challenge conventional thought*

Importance of working relationship to counterparts

- Counterparts focus on how counterparts and advisers learn and collaborate.
- Advisers consistently identify relationships as key to their roles.
- **85%** of 'attributes' identified by counterparts as those that make an effective adviser relate to an adviser's personal characteristics, communication style and their method of advising.

Question Two

Q: **How** do counterparts and advisers collaborate?

A: We don't really know.

For each collaboration, a choice is made about what role the adviser and the counterpart play. We don't really know how this choice is made, what it looks like and what impact it has on the working relationship and program outcome.

But we still call it 'technical assistance', 'capacity strengthening' or 'advising'.

Example:

- Same task, multiple approaches, different motivations, different outcomes.

Different approaches, same product, different outcomes

Task	Adviser 1	Adviser 2
Law Reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Receives brief from counterpart- Drafts legislation- Attends consultation- Finalises legislation- Emails legislation to counterpart	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Discusses and defines scope of the policy and legal problem with counterparts- Conducts comparative legal policy analysis with counterparts- Develops legislative and policy options with counterparts and supports multi-stakeholder consultation- Briefs legislative drafter and collaboratively undertakes drafting process- Helps design and implement a public stakeholder engagement strategy- Supports the passage of legislation through Parliament- Supports implementation activities including budget planning, awareness raising etc.

Literature identifies a range of roles played by advisers

	<p>Coach ‘You do it. I will be your sounding board.’</p>	<p>Mentor ‘You did well; you can add this next time.’</p>	<p>Partner ‘We will do it together and learn from each other.’</p>
	<p>Facilitator ‘You do it; I will attend to the process.’</p>	<p>Trainer ‘Here are some principles you can see to solve problems of this type.’</p>	<p>Modeller ‘I will do it; you watch so you can learn from me.’</p>
	<p>Reflective observer ‘You do it; I will watch and tell you what I see and hear.’</p>	<p>Technical advisor ‘I will answer your questions as you go along.’</p>	<p>Hands-on expert ‘I will do it for you; I will tell you what to do.’</p>

Capacity Strengthening ↑

↓ **Output Delivery**

Source:
Adapted from
*Champion, Kiel,
McLendon,
1990 in
Capacity
Development
in Practice, Jan
Ubels, Naa-Aku
Acquaye-
Baddoo, Alan
Fowler*

Theory vs Practice

Agent	Value	Rhetoric & Theory	Actual Role of Adviser
Counterpart	Working Relationship	<p>“Be a partner, mentor, coach and facilitator”</p> <p>“Relationships are everything”</p> <p>“Build my capacity”</p> <p>“Local ownership”</p> <p>“Empowerment”</p>	Hands on Expert
Adviser	Working Relationship	<p>“Relationships are everything”</p> <p>“I’m Capacity building”</p> <p>“Locally driven”</p>	Hands on Expert

Outcome of a purely technocratic approach to advising.

‘when it was someone else’s brain working, not mine...at the end of the day, there was nothing gained by this partnership arrangement.’

Deputy Secretary, PNG Central Agency

3. What are the implications?

- **If** immediate counterparts and advisers are telling us that an effective working relationship is integral to program results and outcomes
- **And** counterparts are telling us that effective working relationships are not produced when advisers operate technocratically
- **And** donors are designing technical assistance programs with the assumption that an adviser placed in an organisation builds capacity via their working relationship
- **But** advisers are telling us that they are regularly operating as technocrats
- **Then...**

How can we support improvements to technical assistance design, management and recruitment?

- Are donors recruiting for relationship building and collaboration skills in addition to functional expertise?
- Can effective collaboration and advising methods be learned?
- Do we know what effective advising looks like in practice?
- Do counterparts have the skills and mandate to manage technical assistance?
- How is this relevant to in-line adviser programs?
- How do we factor in the importance of the counterpart-adviser working relationship to future programming (particularly where it relates to institutional linkages)?