SEED White Paper #2

From imposing solutions to building resilient organisations

Using the four shifts of Toolification towards next-generation business development support

Contents

Imprint

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This White Paper shares our lessons learned from 15 years of experience in providing non-financial support to eco-inclusive enterprises. It offers inspiration as well as guidance to critically reassess the way we do non-financial support and how we can improve impacts. The findings and conclusions expressed in this paper are based on research and expert discussions at the SEED Africa Symposium 2016, a survey of BDS providers in the SEED network and interviews and discussions with BDS providers and SEED Winners. It is part of the SEED White Paper Series.

Getting ready for the next level – why do we need a shift?

As a practitioner in the area of business development support, working in an incubator, accelerator or start-up or as a consultant in this realm, you might be familiar with the feeling that you have provided training to entrepreneurs, offered them well-thought-out solutions for their most pressing problems and generally done your best to make their enterprises thrive. But during the impact assessment two, three or five years later, you find that only a fraction of the enterprises have survived, many entrepreneurs have moved on to other jobs or are still struggling with exactly the same issues as they were from the start. You proposed the 'perfect' solution years ago only to find that it is no longer relevant or that even when some enterprises are thriving, in the back of your head you think they might have been thriving anyway.

In case this sounds familiar, you are not alone, but the good news is the whole sector is in motion. Within recent years, there has already been a mind shift away from classroom-style training for enterprise leaders and toward more hands-on approaches that generate concrete outputs for the enterprises. Newer approaches, such as Human Centred Design or Design Thinking, are reworking the ways we conceptualise support programmes and support enterprises in developing business models, enhance products and perceive their customers.

The shifts are already moving us away from imposing solutions onto enterprises to empowering their teams to develop their own solutions for current and future challenges. This is where the approach of 'toolification' is rooted – an approach SEED has developed over the last 15 years working with eco-inclusive enterprises in developing countries. We do not believe it stops there: We have constantly prototyped, tested and refined our approach and will continue to do so. In 2015, during the '10 years of SEED Awards', we conducted a survey of the then 175 SEED Winners and were positively surprised that 88% of the enterprises overall and 77% of enterprises supported by SEED more than five years before were still operating.

We at SEED believe that to achieve our overall objective of building financially sustainable and resilient enterprises, we need the right mix of tools and individualised support from locally based advisors. Customised support using toolification is best suited to build the necessary skills and develop the organisational structure of an enterprise. Implemented by a trained and trusted pool of local experts, this approach can substantiate the resilience of entrepreneurial solutions.

New approaches are reworking how we can best deliver enterprise support

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With this white paper, we invite you to join the journey and shift the way we do business development support (BDS) and non-financial capacity building. We first revisit the development of business development support and enterprise support methods by reflecting on how we do enterprise support. This directly leads to the next question of why we provide enterprise support the way we do. Based on this, we introduce the shifts embodied in toolification that hint at where we want to go. Excited to join the journey? The last part includes recommendations to evaluate and rethink your own business and non-financial support.

This paper itself has been a joint journey and has benefitted from lessons taken from a 'toolification' workshop at the SEED Africa Symposium 2016 in Nairobi, a survey and interviews of actors within our existing network of partners and more than 200 business development support providers, as well as from interviews with enterprises. All quotes are from the contributors involved in the process. We would like to thank everyone for their contributions laying the groundwork for the paper and the journey of shifting the way we do business development support.

PART I: Business support in changing times

Yesterday, today and tomorrow – the evolution of business support approaches

Future heroes are back in school - Looking back, the key to helping enterprises thrive was typically seen in providing knowledge through lectures. In this classroom setting using a one-size-fits-all approach, an expert shared her knowledge with current or future entrepreneurs. The participant's role was to listen, take notes and at times ask questions during question-and-answer sessions. Once back in their enterprises or while setting up their own enterprises, participants were expected to recall what they had been told in theory and apply it themselves to their own realities.

From lectures to participatory action - Over time, it was realised that participants in such types of training need more than just listening and taking notes to be able to recall and apply what they had heard. Frameworks summarising key aspects in a visual manner, like SWOT and Porter's Five Forces analyses, were developed and applied by the participants to case studies. The main focus remained on training entrepreneurs and providing knowledge, but skill development to allow participants to use the knowledge did get more prominent as a part of the business support.

While this approach we call **'Hero Education'** has been tested and refined with time and has its value in supporting enterprises, two gaps emerged. One was that participants still faced challenges in applying their knowledge, in particular choosing the right concepts for their situations and modifying them. This partly pre-empted the development of unique business models and innovative solutions adapted to specific business environments. The second point was that, especially for SMEs and start-ups, the focus on individuals at the management level fell short of the reality in which each team member needs to work towards the same mission for enterprise success.

From the individual to teams - Seeing those gaps, a new generation of enterprise support developed that we call **'Empowered Teams Support'**. Empowered Teams Support is the currently prevailing way of providing enterprise support. It addresses the two gaps existing within Hero Education to different degrees. Rather than focusing on management and hero entrepreneurs, the focus of Empowered Teams Support moves towards the enterprise or the partnership as a unit functioning due to the different team members and partners taking on different roles and

Enterprise support has to be cover conveying knowledge but also sharpening skills

An enterprise has to work as a unit, thus enterprise support should treat it as a unit

responsibilities. When solving a current problem or developing the strategy for an enterprise, they bring experience and knowledge to the table that can be used to find solutions.

To ensure the translation of the support into concrete actions, the classroom setting is replaced by participatory formats such as workshops, action learning or working groups. The approach is characterised by user-centred peer-learning, where the users or participants are key drivers of creating and developing contents and outputs. Different methods applied by Empowered Teams Support include Human Centred Design, Design Thinking or Co-creation. While using concepts or frameworks such as the Business Model Canvas, every enterprise is challenged to critically assess its business model and find areas of improvement and innovation. Besides training skills and providing knowledge in the process, Empowered Teams Support aspires to change the attitude of the enterprise teams.

…To a joint development of the whole enterprise team - Toolification falls within the category leading to the next stage called **'Shared organisational development'**. Shared organisational development changes our attitude towards what makes a successful enterprise: Teams become change drivers within enterprises; each team member is fully involved and shares responsibilities. Traditional hierarchies are replaced by decentralised methods of making decisions and distributing tasks according to strengths and interests rather than positions. This mode of organisational development relies on the new forms of collective creativity, dynamic self-organisation, agile processes and purpose-driven organisational set-ups.

According to this new vision of what makes an enterprise, enterprise support also needs to adapt. This includes both in terms of content, e.g. including new organisational set-up and leadership questions, as well as in terms of form, e.g. experimenting with new methods that go beyond eye-level workshops and accounting for increased responsibilities and capacities of team members.

Enterprise support should be open-minded towards new formats of organisational leadership

How is business support delivered?

While there are some overall trends in providing business support, different forms of support not only co-exist, but also have the merit to co-exist: Different enterprises have different needs, and more often than not the same enterprise might benefit from different support methods tackling different challenges they face. To dive deeper into the various support methods, we divided them into five types: Training, Consulting, Mentoring, Coaching and Facilitation. They are not mutually exclusive and enterprise support programmes often combine different support methods.

Training is about the transfer of knowledge and skills to perform better at certain tasks. Examples of topics for training are writing a proposal, setting up a budget, managing projects or learning how to use new methods or tools. Training mostly happens in a group setting, often bringing together participants from different organisations. The trainer is considered an expert in her field and works with training methods to ensure the transfer of knowledge and skills. Training methods include presentations by both the trainer and participants, group work, discussions and case studies.

Examples: African Management Institute, Acumen

Consulting is the provision of external advice to solve a current problem or improve performance. Depending on the issue at hand, consulting can focus on managerial aspects, such as strategy or organisational structure, or on technical aspects, such as technical specifications of a machine. The consultant is an external expert who analyses the situation and recommends a course of action based on his expertise and experience. The consultant communicates mostly with those at the management level; other team members can be interviewed to harvest insights. Sometimes consultants are involved in the implementation of their suggested solutions.

Examples: BiDnetwork, Business Innovation Facility

Mentoring is the process of walking alongside someone to learn from them. It builds on a caring and supportive interpersonal relationship between an experienced, more knowledgeable practitioner (mentor) and a less experienced, less knowledgeable individual (mentee). The mentor is often an inspiring role model who has experienced what the mentee is currently undergoing, e.g. setting up an enterprise. The relationship is nurtured by a mutual understanding of the goals and desired outcomes of the relationship. The match on a personal and professional level between the mentor and the mentee is indispensable for success.

Examples: Ashoka, Challenges Worldwide, Unreasonable Institute

Coaching is a personal learning and development process focusing on individuals or groups of people from the same organisation. Rather than focusing on the transfer of knowledge, coaching focuses on understanding participants' strengths and weaknesses and changing behaviours and attitudes. An individual pathway for each participant is developed to improve performance. As a consequence, coaching is highly dependent on the coach and group dynamics and often happens over a longer period of time. It can be compared to an athletic coach who has a repertoire of methods, but adapts methods, pace and focus to each athlete.

Examples: The Intrapreneur Lab

Facilitation is a method of guiding the discussions and deliberations of a group of people. The facilitator does not need to be an expert in the field; her role is to facilitate discussions rather than provide solutions. This way, she broadens perspectives and brings the experiences, opinions and ideas of all participants to the table. At the end of a successful facilitation, the open discussions have led to identifying concrete solutions and next steps to follow. Facilitators use different techniques, such as group work, roleplay or brainstorming sessions.

Examples: SEED, Inclusive Business Accelerator, Nesta

From giving answers to asking the right questions

Seeing that enterprise support has changed over time and different organisations use different approaches, the obvious question is WHY – why do we provide support the way we do? What are particular rationales behind the different approaches and what do we want to achieve with them? Those rationales can be explicit or implicit and can change over time. We identified five main rationales of business support provision.

Expert knowledge is key for enterprise development. In order to thrive, enterprises need additional knowledge. The aspiration of training is to transfer this knowledge to participants. Consulting, mentoring and, to a lesser degree, coaching rely on the expert knowledge of the mentors and coaches guiding the enterprises.

Outside perspectives discover room for improvement. In order to improve, enterprises need an external person to come in, analyse the situation and suggest solutions. This is one key rationale behind not only consulting, but also mentoring and coaching.

No two enterprises are the same. In order for enterprise support to succeed, it needs to be tailored to each enterprise. While training,
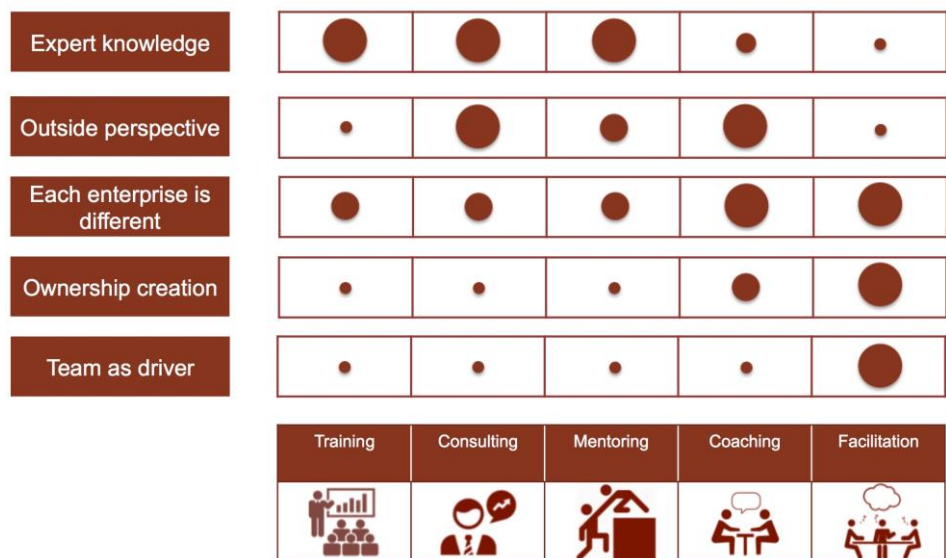
consulting and mentoring believe that the knowledge of the trainer, consultant or mentor is key and quasi-universally relevant, coaching and facilitation instead ask tailored questions relying on modular approaches in order to understand the participant's situation.

Ownership is essential for long-term changes. In order to sustain enterprise development in the long run, enterprises need to be enabled to find their own solutions. In particular, coaching and facilitation focus on generating ownership by involving key actors from the start and building on their knowledge.

Enterprise team is the change driver. In order to have a competitive enterprise, the whole enterprise needs to be involved in enterprise development and work toward the same vision within the different roles they fulfil within the enterprise. This is mainly reflected in facilitation.

All rationales are embedded in all methods, but to a stronger or lesser degree as indicated in the graph below.

|	Training	Consulting	Mentoring	Coaching	Facilitation
Expert knowledge	⬤	⬤	⬤	•	·
Outside perspective	·	⬤	⬤	⬤	•
Each enterprise is different	⬤	⬤	⬤	⬤	⬤
Ownership creation	•	•	•	⬤	⬤
Team as driver	•	•	•	•	⬤

Let's take even one step further back – all sentences above include 'in order to'. This 'in order to' is the **key objective** we aim to achieve with enterprise support. Take a minute to think about what you want to achieve with your enterprise development support offering.

The design of business support depends on each organisation's objectives and the key rationales they believe in. Depending on rationales and objectives, you need to work towards changing the participants' **Knowledge, Skills or Attitude** – a triangle commonly used in the field of capacity building.

Focus on solutions/outputs

Knowledge

Attitude

Skills

Focus on capacities
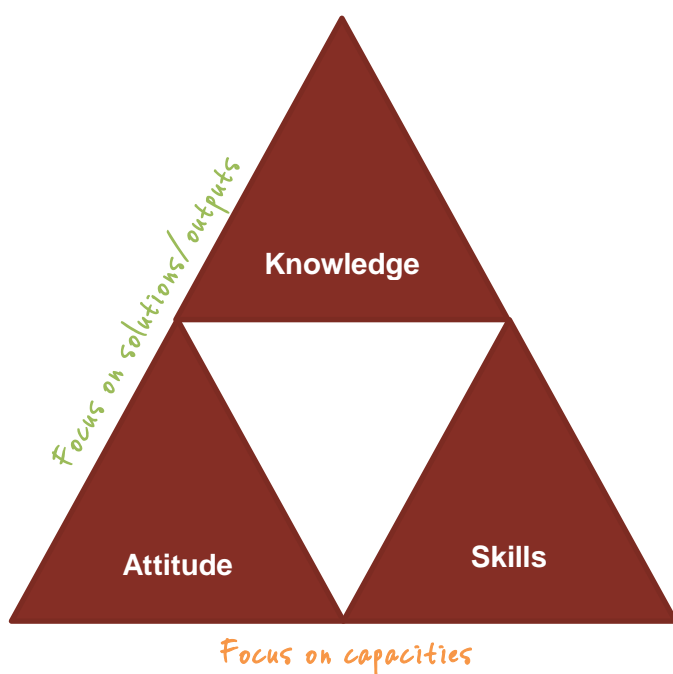
Knowledge is defined as the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject. It is based on information acquired by a person through experience or education. When solving a problem or setting up a new business model, knowledge, e.g. of the market, technical possibilities or competitors, proves useful. A certain level of knowledge is also needed for an enterprise to have the capacities to react to a changing environment. However, knowledge alone won't do the job.

Skills are the second key pillar to building capacity. It's not only about what we know, but also how we apply our conscious and subconscious knowledge. Skills are typically closely related to knowledge because in order to complete any task, there is a required amount of knowledge that needs to be acquired, even if it is simply the understanding of the steps to complete the task.

Enterprise support is not just about conveying knowledge, but should take into account skills and attitude elements

Attitude is the last pillar. It's the inner drive that directs a person's actions especially when the challenges are new, the contexts are unknown and there is no routine to fall back on. It describes a person's way of perceiving issues and is reflected in a person's behaviour. The 'can-do attitude' is an often-cited requirement for successful enterprises in the entrepreneurship landscape.

We at SEED believe that to achieve our overall objective of building financially sustainable and resilient enterprises, we need to not only work on solving current issues, but also build the capacities of enterprises to find their own answers now and in the future. For this, we need to transfer knowledge, build the skills to use the knowledge and convey the attitude needed to survive the VUCA (volatile-uncertain-complex-ambiguous) environment enterprises face. What this means for the way we do business support comes in the next chapter.

PART 2: The four shifts of toolification

In order to enable a shift in approaches, fundamental changes on four levels are necessary – a mind shift in the support methods, a role shift concerning the participants, an organisational shift in the process and a content shift in the materials.
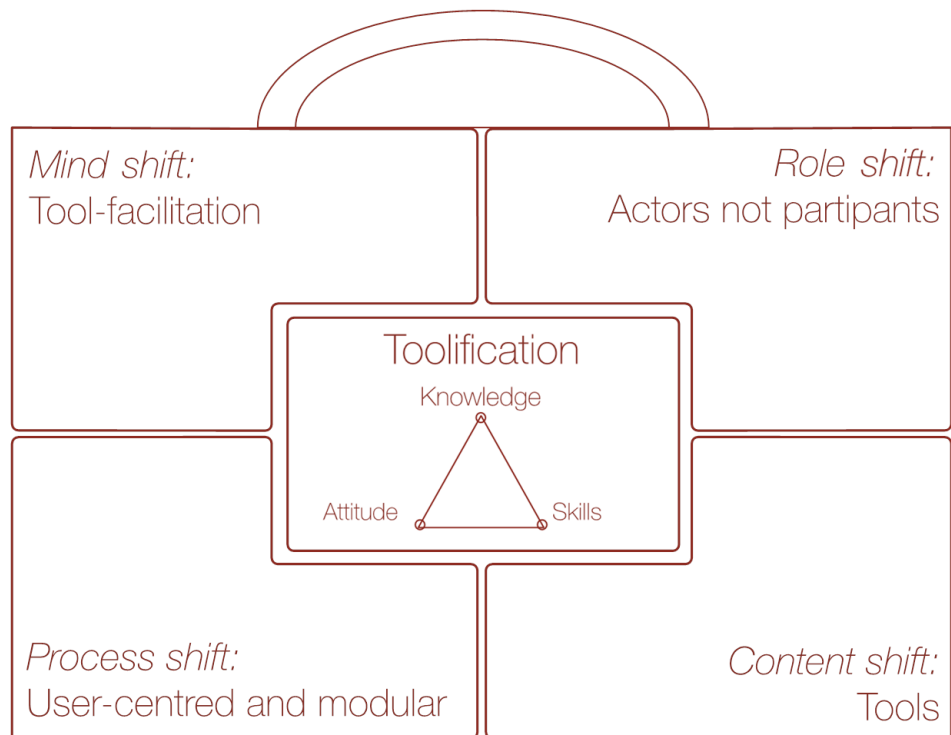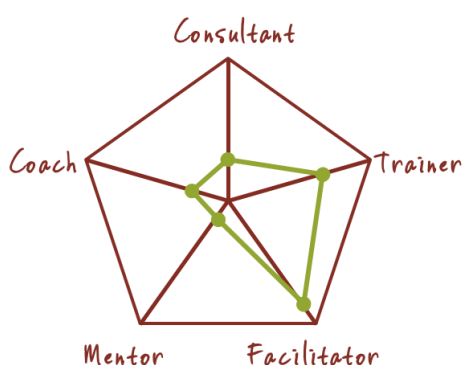
Mind shift in the support method – Tool Facilitation

Over 85% of our trained BDS providers support clients in developing their own solutions rather than offering them solutions.[1]

With the objective of building capacities in mind, our most fundamental rationale is *'Ownership is essential for long-term changes'*. Expert knowledge or an outside perspective just won't be enough to ensure knowledge is being applied and recommendations implemented. In addition, even if a great solution is developed and implemented driven by external support, it is unlikely that next time a new challenge emerges the enterprise will be able to react to it, if it even has the capacities to see the challenge.

A related rationale of importance to us is *'Enterprise team is the change driver'* – a resilient enterprise can't be a one-man show. Even successful enterprises driven by one person at some point realise that it's is just not enough. The enterprise grows and it becomes impossible to handle everything – new tasks come up such as sourcing of raw materials, or accounting becomes more important and one person just does not have all the knowledge and skills needed.

Ultimate aim of enterprise support should be to create or strengthen ownership to increase resilience

So what does this mean for our support method? Should the person implementing be:

A Trainer? – yes; we need to transfer knowledge, but also want to make sure it gets applied.

A Coach? – partly; we'd want the attitude shift, but not as much hand-holding so as to prevent future reliance on such high-cost interventions.

A Mentor? – not so much; as again we do not want to build reliance and we believe enterprises are quite individual, so finding the right match is challenging.

A Consultant? – again not so much; offering solutions works very well in tackling current challenges, but not as much when it comes to building capacities within the enterprise.

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[1] Based on a survey conducted by SEED in 2016 on SEED trained BDS providers and participants in the Toolification Pre-workshop at the SEED Africa Symposium in September 2016. Reply rate 40%, total answers for this question n=74.

A Facilitator? – yes, very much so; a facilitator can uncover hidden potential and ideas that already exist within the enterprise while letting the enterprise develop its own solutions.

The spider web shows what's needed to run a toolified workshop according to our understanding that we co-developed in different BDS Training of Trainers settings with BDS providers from across Africa.

"All these views are considered by the facilitator who guides the team to work with best or fine tune some of them."
BDS provider working with SEED

The spider web also represents our mixture of support methods that we call **Tool Facilitation**. Similar to a trainer, the tool facilitator has a repertoire of materials he can choose from, explained in the section 0. Content shift – Tools. Different from a trainer, the main focus is not on transferring knowledge but on developing skills. Concepts are not taught to be applied later, but applied directly and learned by applying them. This leads to knowledge and skill creation.

Like the SEED-trained BDS providers, the tool facilitator guides the teams by asking questions, teasing ideas, knowledge and experience from the participants. The difficulty lies in leaving enough room for open discussions and wild ideas and still, in the end, arriving at concrete outputs developed by participants. For this, they need to bring certain knowledge about the enterprise's environment, be able to relate to the challenges and bring in outside information or broker relationships where needed. This is why toolification works best with locally based tool facilitators, who can also visit the enterprise while understanding the local context, culture and settings.

"You're not imposing anything on us, but accompanying us."
2016 SAG-SEED Winner Belle Verte

All opinions should be given space to strengthen ownership for the final outcome

There is also an attitude shift within the enterprise. It happens by working collaboratively and maintaining the feeling that the opinion of each and every person counts. This is possible if the tool facilitator, like a mentor or coach, believes in what he does and radiates this attitude. By working on all three corners of the triangle – knowledge, skills, and attitude – "Toolification" not only supports enterprises in finding solutions, but also empowers them to work on their own ideas and developed solutions and to take action.

Role shift – Actors not participants

"We believe that the entrepreneurs have the knowledge and required skills to succeed. All they need is some guidance and strategy support"
BDS provider working with SEED

Toolification is all about the participants; they are no longer just participants, they become the key actors driving the agenda, discussions and outcomes. This shift in participants to taking a more active role is also mirrored in the development of business support over time; toolification takes it one step further and aspires to find new ways to increase ownership further. In order to build capacities, this is the only logical step that can affect knowledge, skills and attitude. Even when focusing on one-time solutions to current challenges, this is key to creating ownership and ensuring implementation. We all prefer to do tasks we designed and understand why they need to be done, rather than tasks someone tells us to do where we might not even understand the goals.

"We're not here just to listen; you really make us pick our brains to develop solutions."
2016 SAG-SEED Winner City Waste Recycling

It is the key responsibility of the tool facilitator to enable this shift; working with individuals, individuals from different enterprises or team members of one enterprise. Working with enterprise teams, the role shift enables the enterprise to unlock the experience and perspectives of different team members, from the sales team who personally speaks with customers to the sourcing team who knows about the concerns of suppliers. For example, in our Catalyser workshops, we have 5-10 participants from the same enterprise and often advise them to even invite their external partners to become involved. In these instances, the tool facilitator needs to bring everybody up to speed, making sure that all participants are on the same page. As group dynamics develop in any organisational form based on hierarchies, education levels or sometimes even mastery of a common language, the key challenge for the tool facilitator is to move beyond titles and positions towards open discussions valuing the inputs of each team member equally.

"The advantage of working with the team is that there is a complete buy in and a sense of belonging."
BDS provider working with SEED

Silent participants that consume have to become active participants to achieve real impact with enterprise support

"In most instances, it becomes the first time that different individuals from different levels in the organisation get to talk together about strategic business matter(s). Other than varied insights into issues, collaboration in the enterprise is greatly enhanced!"
BDS provider working with SEED

When working with individuals from different enterprises, the objective changes from exchanging different perspectives within an enterprise to peer-learning and getting an outside perspective – an incredible valuable experience, once initial concern related to competition and 'private' knowledge acquired in hard work are overcome.

"The group dynamics brings out the best in them and it also offer(s) some excitements to the teams we work with as compare(d) to training individual entrepreneurs."
BDS provider working with SEED

Working with enterprise teams from different enterprises in one workshop is also possible. This requires one or more experienced tool facilitators, depending on group size. If done well, it enables teams to develop their solutions jointly while providing them immediate outside feedback and peer-learning.

"The benefits … (are) cross sharing of information/learning from each other and … diversity of ideas. Also, it is cost and time effective as you can train many people in cohorts"
BDS provider working with SEED

The key takeaway: With toolification, participants are the actors running the show, rather than the audience enjoying it. Facilitation methods, processes and tools need to be adapted to their needs, and not vice versa.

Enterprise(s) + Tool facilitator

Tool facilitator: Unlocks the enterprise knowledge by asking the right questions

Enterprise team: Transformation on a personal & professional level

Process shift – User-centred and modular

'No two enterprises are the same' – we believe in this rationale, but in the last 15 years working with enterprises we realised that many different key questions and needs came up for different enterprises. To account for this reality, our process follows a modular approach: We developed materials (tools) for different aspects of an enterprise and then each enterprise, jointly with the tool facilitator, can pick and choose what to work on.

Our menu to choose from is a visual framework like the Enterprise Blueprint that we created for the SEED Catalyser Support. It has a focus on the business model including a strong focus on relationships and

the triple bottom line – the balance of social, environmental and economic impacts at the heart of eco-inclusive enterprises.

Under each topic, you can find one or more tools, e.g. under 'Operations' we have the tools 'Value Chain Analysis' and 'Operations Strategy'. Each tool can be used independently of the others, making the Enterprise Blueprint truly a menu from which you can choose like in a restaurant; an Ethiopian restaurant where you choose multiple items as a group and share them in the group.

"The tool and techniques ... enabled me to add new dimension to the thinking process. Often, I used to conduct training only from a perspective of the customer, forgetting about the community ... and the partners point of view."
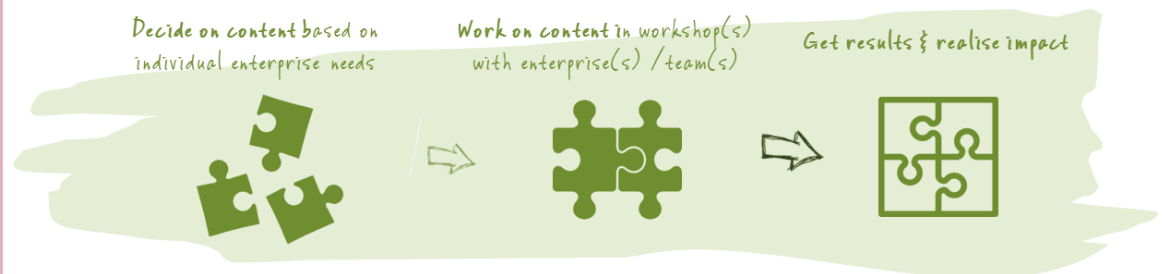BDS provider working with SEED

Driven by the role shift from participants to actors, actors are involved in all stages of the process. The topics are chosen jointly depending on enterprise needs, expectations and capacities. When not working with individual enterprise teams, but as individuals or teams from different enterprises, the choice is made by the tool facilitator based on his discussions with the different actors or the enterprise stage they are in.

For example, in our Starter workshops, 10-15 enterprise teams come together who work in different sectors, but are in a similar stage: they have an idea and just started exploring feasibility and speaking with a few potential customers. Here, we have developed a toolkit that covers the questions relevant for each start-up from developing the business model and testing it with customers, to refining the business model and working on financials. Teams can choose additional tools as needed.

Once the content is decided, the actors work on the content together with their tool facilitators in workshops. How this works we saw in the section 0. Mind shift in the support method – Tool Facilitation. Each module or tool focuses on generating a tangible output for the team during the workshops. This does not mean all the work is or can be done in the workshops. Action plans are a common outcome, asking actors to clarify numbers, elaborate on outputs and speak with external stakeholders before work on the tool can continue or to put the outcome can be put into practice.

Modules or tools can easily be adapted or worked on anew at different stages of business development. Another advantage of modules or tools is the comparability among different business models and the possibility of extracting modules to facilitate and enhance business model replication. How those modules or tools are built comes next.

Decide on content based on individual enterprise needs

Work on content in workshop(s) with enterprise(s) / team(s)

Get results & realise impact

Content shift – Tools

"Engagement is key and you cannot engage someone for so many hours unless you have tools that enable you to actually focus on just a few parts of your business"
BDS provider working with SEED

It's called toolification, so apparently tools play a key role. But what exactly is a tool?

Tools break complex topics down into a step-by-step logic. In the end, you get tangible outputs like a marketing strategy, a value chain analysis or risk mitigation plan the enterprise can implement. This is the objective of a tool: to yield an output for the enterprise, something that enables them to take their enterprise further or react to a current challenge. Yet, the way of getting there is equally important, as through the discussions everyone is on-boarded and takes ownership of the results.

What's a Tool? The Example of 'Value Proposition Building'

The tool 'Value Proposition Building' allows enterprises to arrive at their Unique Selling Points in three steps. First, the team members identify the values they offer to customers, partners, the community they operate in and relevant institutions in its business environment, as well as the values they receive from those actors in return. In a second step, the group asks itself: Are the values we create environmental, social or rather economic in nature? Finally, the enterprise puts it all together into their value proposition and evaluates it with the "4C-Approach": Is our solution crucial, compelling, concrete and credible? The discussions of getting there can be heated, but eventually the enterprise gets to walk away with a crisp idea of the added value they want to create.

"The value proposition is very important as most business struggle to concisely define the value add of their business to the customers. So most businesses are intrigued if they can uniquely define the value proposition." – BDS provider working with SEED

Make it tangible.

User-centred design is the key word when it comes to developing and working with tools. They are tools: they aid enterprises to achieve a certain objective, like the way a sewing machine helps us to make a shirt. The fabric, yarn and design depend on what we choose, but in the end we have a shirt that suits us individually. To make the content tangible to actors, we start with what they have – the fabric, their knowledge and experience. Picking actors up from a common starting point, we jointly choose the yarn and craft a design to arrive at the results. In the process, they develop the skills needed to use the tools.

"What was most striking about it was the hands-on approach, and the focus on developing the skillset of the entrepreneurs, a clear distinction from most 'talk-shops'."
BDS provider working with SEED

Keep it simple.

You do not need to know all technical details of a sewing machine to use it, but you will gain that knowledge while using it. Similarly, tools do not need long theoretical explanations or definitions; the relevant topics are effectively conveyed in an easy-to-understand form. Breaking topics down into single, easy-to-understand steps and simple language is hard work. Yet it is essential to have actors with different education levels and prior knowledge join the discussion, and to enable actors to use the tool by themselves after the workshops and to come to concrete outputs instead of diverging in discussions on words, definitions or theories. Keeping it simple, toolification achieves maximum impact in a short time.

"I loved the explanations provided, it was so clear."
Starter participant

Think in visuals.

When using a sewing machine, we learn how it works, because we see how it works. This also applies to tools. Visual thinking is a way to organise thoughts and improve the ability to think and communicate. Matrices, relationship maps, Venn diagrams and process charts help us to understand the key points and relations between them. It's a great way to convey complex information and enables actors to express and structure their ideas, improving the quality of discussions. It forces you to be precise and get to the point. For toolification, this means that tools provide visual frameworks that can be replicated in the workshops. And for workshops, it

means that documenting ideas immediately on post-its, brown paper or flip-charts is an essential task of the tool facilitator.

For the tool facilitator, using tools means that they do not have to dive into the literature and search for the right approach every time. Instead of re-inventing the wheel, they use their repertoire of tools. That allows them to use their time effectively and dive right into the specific questions relevant to their client and adapt the tool to their client's needs.

Complex contents are often difficult to grasp

Tools simplify and visualise contents in a step-by-step manner

Tools facilitate tangible outputs connecting the dots

Start, stop, continue – Shifting your approach to business support

"Continue being innovative so that we could be able to resolve issues that we encounter in our daily lives"

BDS provider working with SEED

This is the advice one of our trained BDS providers had for us, and this is what we strive for. In capacity building you're never done; it's a constant learning process not only for enterprises, but for us refining the work we do and developing new support programmes and tools. From 'Empowered teams support' we're still on the jump to foster 'Shared Organisational Development'.

Looking at your rationales and objectives, you've come to the conclusion that your support approach could use some toolification to touch skills – knowledge – attitude? Here are our key steps:

Start

▶ **Start putting your customer – the enterprise – at the centre.** From designing support programmes and running workshops to writing tools, have the user experience and enterprise needs in mind, ask the enterprises for feedback, involve them in the design and co-create not only their individual enterprise support but your whole package with them.

▶ **Start prototyping, testing, refining.** What we tell our enterprises is also true for us. No one solution is perfect and circumstances and needs change. Only if we try things outside our comfort zone can we move ahead.

▶ **Start asking for value for money.** Measuring the impact of enterprise development support is difficult. What we can look at is customer satisfaction and how much it costs us to support individual enterprises. Developing tools that are adaptable for enterprises at different development stages, in different countries and with people of different educational backgrounds decreases costs.

Stop

■ **Stop focusing on expert knowledge.** Which enterprise leader you know has a business degree? You do not need an MBA to run an enterprise. The needed knowledge will come as by-product when focusing on developing skills through a hands-on approach.

■ **Stop undervaluing the knowledge of the enterprise team.** No one knows the enterprise context better than the employees of enterprises themselves. What's often lacking is a structured approach, the time to sit down and think and the openness to value each person's input equally independent of hierarchies.

Continue

▶▶ **Continue believing in enterprises.** Enterprises have the potential to significantly change the lives of people and the environment along their value chain. Believing in them and supporting them helps them to multiply positive impacts.

▶▶ **Continue your great work.** Your work makes the bumpy ride of setting up and running an enterprise a bit less bumpy. Focus on what works and change or drop what doesn't.

▶▶ **Continue engaging with others.** Reading this white paper shows your willingness to engage with others and exchange new ideas. Keep the spirit and reach out to us if you want to learn more or to partner with us.

Lastly, we couldn't have summarised it better than our BDS provider: Continue being innovative and open to new ideas. Revisiting and refining the way we do business support will build the enabling environment enterprises need to realise their full potential for sustainable development. We look forward to many new partners joining us on the road to 'Shared Organisational Development'.

Toolification at a glance

Stop using…	Start using…
Linear outlines	Systemic thinking
Explanations of contents	People empowerment
Descriptive language	Visual elements
Teaching settings	Tools
Theoretical frameworks	Practical guidance
In-put driven methods	Output-driven methods
Complex advice	Simplified contents
Paradigm-centred concepts	User-centred concepts
Standardised solutions	Modular blueprints
Approaches that give answers	Approaches that ask questions

About SEED

SEED is a global partnership for action on sustainable development and the green economy that was founded by the United Nations Environment, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. SEED is based on the understanding that the promotion of eco-inclusive enterprises is pivotal to a world of flourishing communities where entrepreneurship drives sustainable development.

SEED's comprehensive programme triggers the full potential of market-based mechanisms to avert environmental degradation and tackle social problems. From an annual global awards scheme that scouts for and supports the most promising innovative and locally-led eco-inclusive start-up enterprises in developing countries to enhancing the quality and capacities of business development service providers – SEED builds the ecosystem for eco-inclusive entrepreneurship.

SEED is hosted by adelphi research gGmbH, based in Berlin, Germany. Partners in SEED, in addition to the Founding Partners, are the governments of Flanders, Germany, the Netherlands, South Africa, and the United States of America; Conservation International; the European Union; SWITCH-Africa Green; Hogan Lovells; UNIDO; UN Women and SEED's Corporate Partner, Hisense.

SEED and our common journey around "Toolification"

Driven by its approach of 'Toolification', SEED has developed three toolkits that include 50+ tools: the Starter toolkit for incubating new enterprises, the Catalyser toolkit for consolidating and supporting the growth of existing enterprises in the first years of operation and the Go Sustainable toolkit for conventional enterprises aiming to make their business model green and inclusive. In addition, 10+ Replicator workbooks allow aspiring enterprises to jump-start their enterprises by adapting proven business models to their own local context. Over 200 service providers have been trained in SEED's methodology and tools during BDS+ Training of Trainers and have themselves used them with more than 700 enterprises.

Moreover, the 'Toolification' approach has emerged through exchanges as well as the co-development of toolkits and support programmes with other SEED partners. Jointly with the Inclusive Business Accelerator (IBA), SEED co-developed the Inclusive Business and Inclusive Innovation Toolkit. In partnership with the Siemens Stiftung, SEED developed a Market Research and Organisational Development Toolkit for Social Enterprises of the empowering people network. In collaboration with Hivos People, SEED shared the SEED Toolkits with BDS providers from the Middle East and North Africa region. In exchange with the Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship at Santa Clara University, SEED developed a tool-based support approach for enterprise replication.