



Models of Workforce Development

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1: Introduction

This paper provides a selection of models and approaches to workforce development that are of relevance to NSW non government community sector (the sector). The intention is to provide a brief summary of existing options to assist us in developing a preferred model for the development of a workforce development strategy for our sector.

In this respect this paper aims to provide a descriptive summary (rather than an analysis) of current models, as well as stimulate thinking and discussion.

The information detailed in the paper has been adapted for this purpose and each source is referenced throughout the text. Readers are encouraged to access the web links included for more detailed information about the models. An essential bibliography on workforce development research and initiatives is also included in this paper.

2. Workforce Development- Defined

Until fairly recently workforce development was often equated with professional development and focused on the needs and development of the individual worker. Increasingly, contemporary research and policies also recognise the need to focus at the organisational and strategic systems levels as well.

Workforce Development has emerged to describe a relatively wide range of activities, policies and programs. The term often becomes a proxy for career and technical education but the spread of the term to replace the previous conceptualisation of 'skills shortage' signals a growing awareness that previous approaches in this area are inadequate to address emerging challenges in the face of demand surges and changing demographics.¹

¹ Jacobs, R.L (2002). *Understanding Workforce Development: Definition, Conceptual Boundaries and Future Perspectives*. International conference on Technical and Vocational Training and Education, Winnipeg.

Workforce Development can be seen as a combination of managing the size and composition of the workforce, retaining and managing that workforce and skilling that workforce.²

One of the important conceptual leaps involved in a workforce development approach is the shift to 'systems thinking'. This is fundamental to grasping what workforce development is about. While education and training can be part of a workforce development perspective, they essentially focus on the individual learners or workers. The deficit requiring rectification (through training) is seen to lie with that individual. No further consideration is given to the organisational context in which that person operates or the wider system at large which may ultimately determine whether specific policies or practices can be put in place.³

Workforce Development, when conceptualised from a systems perspective, includes the following factors:

- Legislation;
- Policy;
- Funding;
- Recruitment and retention;
- Resources;
- Support mechanisms; and
- Incentives

Some of the key questions to consider when assessing models and their potential application to our sector include;

- What do we mean by 'workforce development'- what should it encompass, include and exclude?
- What is the relationship between a workforce development strategy and an overall industry or sector plan?
- Given the characteristics of the sector in NSW, what are the specific requirements of a strategy that will make sense for us?
- What are the most important points of intervention (where do we start) and how can we all meaningfully and practically contribute and benefit?
- Who are the key partners implied and required; which stakeholders outside the sector also have a role and invested interest in the development of a highly skilled and valued sector workforce (e.g. service users and communities)?
- What is the role of Government (state and federal) on the scope and nature of a workforce development strategy?

² Carson, E et al(2007). *Careers At the Coal-Face? Community Services in South Australia: Workforce Development*. University of South Australia and SACOSS

³ Roche, A.M (2001). *What is this thing called workforce development?* NCETA.

3. Models of Workforce Development

Model 1: A 'Three Levels' Approach.

This model, developed by the National Research Centre of Alcohol and Other Drugs, clusters inter-related strategies at three levels of activity (1) systems, (2) organisational, and (3) team/individual. These levels of strategies include the following:

1. Systems Strategies:

- Ensuring adequate funding arrangements and resources
- Development and revision of policy and legislation to ensure effective and efficient functioning of organisations
- Development and review of award structures to ensure fair and adequate pay
- Provision of workforce development grants and scholarships
- Support for specific research on workforce development
- Development and support for related curriculum in human services tertiary education.
- Development and support for sector specialist qualifications in tertiary institutions
- Building organisational and individual capacity

2. Organisational Strategies

- Develop and implement workforce development policies
- Provision of supervision and mentoring programs
- Provision of professional development opportunities
- Ensuring adequate rewards and recognition
- Negotiation of job redesign and job enrichment with workers
- Provision of a healthy, safe and pleasant working environment
- Participation and support for workforce development programs and research
- Ensuring opportunities for input into organisational decision-making for all staff

3. Team/Individual Strategies

- Identification of professional development needs/priorities
- Proactive development of mentoring relationships
- Provision of support, guidance and encouragement to colleagues
- Openness to change and innovation in work practices
- Implementation of shared care arrangements
- Development of professional/collegial networks
- Innovative rewards

This model also integrates three overriding principles, defined as follows;

Best Practice is the commitment by workers, organisations, policy makers and funding organisations to the achievement of high quality practice that reflects the best available evidence. This involves ensuring support for and maintenance of existing systems and structures that facilitate best practice and encouraging flexibility to embrace new and improved techniques and work practices.

Effectiveness refers to the availability of high quality accessible services of established efficacy that are based on the best available evidence and meet the needs of the diverse range of client groups and populations.

Sustainability is the establishment of enduring mechanisms to secure the human, financial and other resources required for the delivery of high quality and effective services. The integration of these principles into the three tiered model is expressed in Table 1.

Level	Best Practice	Sustainability	Effectiveness
Systems	<p>Creation of effective channels for information dissemination on evidence based best practice and strategies for practice improvement.</p> <p>Support and recognition of cutting edge research to further improve work practice.</p>	<p>Provision of sufficient funding to ensure high quality services (for research, service delivery, infrastructure).</p> <p>Availability of skilled and qualified workers.</p> <p>Availability of structured career paths.</p>	<p>Availability and accessibility of opportunities for professional development.</p> <p>Very wide dissemination of information on best practice.</p>
Organisations	<p>Development of organisational policies, procedures, culture and norms that support and encourage evidence-based best practice, innovation and work practice change.</p>	<p>Capacity to recruit new staff and retain existing staff.</p> <p>Capacity to access sufficient funding to ensure high quality service delivery.</p>	<p>Provision of high quality services that meet clients' needs.</p> <p>Provision of policies, procedures and resources to support and improve work skills and abilities.</p>
Teams/ Individuals	<p>Willingness and capacity to access the best available and to implement and sustain work practice change and improvement based on this evidence.</p>	<p>Capacity to access sufficient resources (human, infrastructure, supervisory) to work effectively and maintain well being.</p>	<p>Capacity to effectively apply existing skills and knowledge to work practice.</p> <p>Ability to engage in effective team work to achieve best practice.</p> <p>Awareness of, and capacity to implement, best practice.</p>

Table 1. Three Levels Approach
(The National Research Centre on AOD Workforce Development (NCETA), 2005)

References:

The *Resource Kit for the Alcohol and Other Drugs Field*, Natalie Skinner, Ann M. Roche, John O'Connor, Yvette Pollard and Chelsea Todd (editors) Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation Ltd (AER) 2005 The National Research Centre on AOD Workforce Development (NCETA) <http://www.nceta.flinders.edu.au/pdf/TIPS/01-Introduction.pdf>

NCETA Workforce Development '*TIPS*' (*Theory Into Practice Strategies*): A Resource Kit for the Alcohol and Other Drugs Field document from which the above structure has been adapted is available online at

http://www.nceta.flinders.edu.au/projects/workforce_development/resources.html#wdt

Model 2: Workforce Development as a Component of Capacity Building.

The term 'capacity building' is sometimes used interchangeably with 'workforce development' but can be distinguished by the emphasis of capacity building on the structural levels of development. In other words, workforce development *is a component* of organisational capacity building. The interchangeable use of the terms nevertheless reflects the interdependence of all systems within organisations.

The organisational capacity building components of workforce development often include two broad categories a) workforce sustainability and b) management and supervision.

a) Workforce sustainability

- Recruitment
- Motivation
- Stress and Burnout
- Job satisfaction
- Career Paths
- Turnover
- Job Design

b) Management and Supervision

- Supervision
- Mentoring
- Management Development and Support

Reference: The National Research Centre on AOD Workforce Development (NCETA) (2003) *Key Workforce Development Issues for the Alcohol and other Drugs Non-Government Sector: A Literature Review* Natalie Skinner, Toby Freeman, Jodie Shoobridge, Ann Roche The National Research Centre on AOD Workforce Development (NCETA) <http://www.nceta.flinders.edu.au/pdf/TIPS/01-Introduction.pdf>

The NSW Health Departments capacity building framework⁴ takes a similar approach by locating workforce development as one of five major components of capacity building. This framework acknowledges the contribution of partnerships, resource allocation, organisational development, and leadership, as well as workforce development to determine the capacity of services and networks of service.

This framework is presented graphically in Figure 1.

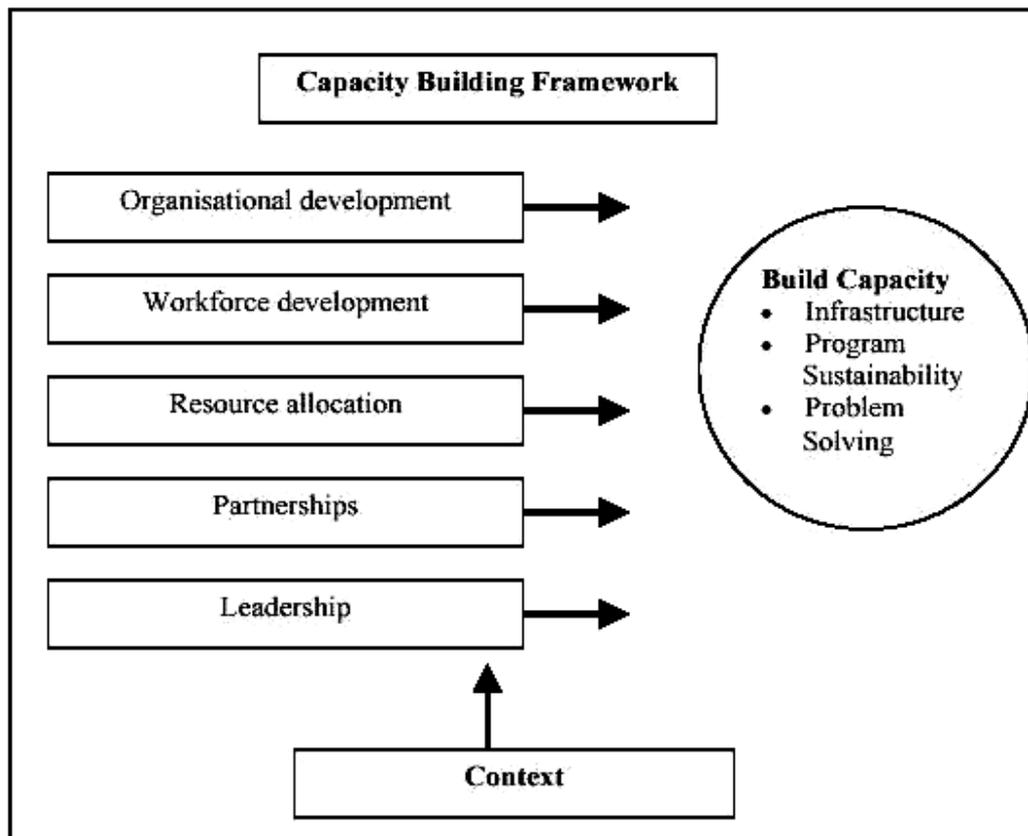


Figure 1: NSW Health Capacity Building Framework

At the peaks level, the Network of Drug and Alcohol Agencies (NADA) has adopted a framework for workforce development that emphasises the capacity building aspects of organisation and systems in workforce development frameworks.

The NADA approach has identified five key areas of activity.

1. Skills Enhancement - Enhancing workers' skills and knowledge by increasing opportunities for participation in workforce development activities.
2. Flexibility and Innovation - Creating opportunities for the design and implementation of flexible, innovative and multi-disciplinary workforce and management development strategies and projects.

⁴ NSWHealth (2001). *A Framework for Building Capacity to Improve Health*. NSW Health Department

3. Leadership and Support -Providing leadership and support for the development and implementation of workforce development policies and practices at system and organisational levels.
4. Evaluation and Evidence - Building evidence and promoting innovation in workforce development practice.
5. Timeline Planning – NADA’s three year program commenced in June 2004 and has a state-wide brief, focussing on their member agencies.

Further details of NADA’s approach can be accessed through their website at <http://www.nada.org.au/>

Model 3: A ‘Strategic Imperatives’ Model

This model was developed by the New Zealand Ministry of Health and addresses systems and organisational strategies to produce five ‘strategic imperatives’ for workforce development. The five ‘strategic imperatives’ are

1. Infrastructure Development - Creating a nationally relevant infrastructure by clustering national workforce development implementation initiatives within an organisational framework that has a solution focus independent of defined structures. Indigenous organisations like Te Rau Matatini for example, has responsibility for initiatives in relation to its goal of strengthening and developing the Māori mental health workforce with initiatives including training for Māori without mental health qualifications, developing student placements in Māori service provider settings, and developing career pathways for Māori nurses.
2. Training and development - Co-ordinating disparate elements of the sector into a framework that is relevant for all parties and with a qualifications framework that meets service provider requirements and takes into account existing competencies.
3. Retention and recruitment – Developing a national and regional response to issues of retention and recruitment. This objective seeks to assist in the production of medium to long-term solutions to national and regional recruitment problems across all services with the aim of reducing the present reactive, crisis-driven approach and creating efficiency and effectiveness gains through regional and national collaboration.
4. Organisational development - To assist the sector to develop the organisational culture and systems necessary to sustain their workforce. Training is not regarded as the sole solution to capacity and capability concerns when organisations do not provide a supportive environment for workers.
5. Research and evaluation - To ensure information is available to the sector to inform workforce development and to seek better understanding of the effectiveness of workforce development expenditure. This objective defines research and evaluation as they relate to the capacity and capability of the workforce, the work produced and the environment or context in which work is carried out.

This model is expressed in Figure 2 below



Figure 2. The Strategic Imperatives Model

This information was drawn from the paper produced by the New Zealand Ministry for Health at [http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/49ba80c00757b8804c256673001d47d0/a9394a53038a5061cc256c4c007187ce/\\$FILE/MentalHealthWorkforceDevelopmentFramework.pdf](http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/49ba80c00757b8804c256673001d47d0/a9394a53038a5061cc256c4c007187ce/$FILE/MentalHealthWorkforceDevelopmentFramework.pdf)

Model 4. A 'Systems, Current and Future' Approach

Developed by the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction, the 'Systems, Current and Future' approach includes the following key areas:

- Workforce planning and development;
- Quality of evidence-based practice at all levels linked to governance and credentialing
- Broad trends – globalisation, technology, changing knowledge and expectations, labour costs
- Education and training
- Service delivery developments
- Recruitment and retention - workplace environment (“good employer issues”)
- Workforce capacity
- Indigenous workforce development.

These areas are then located in a framework of three levels,

1. Systems
2. Current Workers
3. Future Workforce

Level	Descriptor	Example
Level I <i>Systems</i>	Workforce development aims to improve the functioning of the entire workforce by addressing the systems and structures that shape it. While it includes activities that impact on individuals, its focus is much broader. It involves creating environments and systems that support the full range of workforce development strategies.	Systems and structural factors include: legislation, policy funding, recruitment and retention, resources, support mechanisms and incentives
Level II <i>Current Workers</i>	At the individual level, workforce development encompasses methods of improving individual professional functioning. It means ensuring that opportunities to develop individual skills, knowledge and attitudes are of high quality, effective and well utilised. A key aspect of workforce development is the initial identification of “the workforce”. As self evident as this may seem this is a largely overlooked area.	Current Workforce factors include formal education and training, workplace training, mentoring, on-the-job learning, on-line learning, and best practice guidelines
Level III <i>Future Workforce</i>	Development of the workforce also involves ensuring a sufficient pool of skilled workers for the future. Workforce development has been largely neglected with assumptions made that market forces or other factors would adequately resolve workforce needs and issues. It is clear that concerted and conscious efforts to address workforce development issues are relatively recent phenomena.	Strategies might include specific recruitment strategies, offers of education and training, affordable and accessible education and training ensuring adequate service funding to employ staff, supportive and facilitative policies

Table 2: Levels of Workforce Development (NCEDA, 2002)

Reference: ‘Workforce Development: Our National Dilemma’ Ann M Roche (Director, National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) National Research Centre on AOD Workforce Development (NCETA) website;
<http://www.nceta.flinders.edu.au/pdf/proceedings2002/roche.pdf> .

Model 5: A ‘Team/Individual Strategic’ Approach

A five year plan developed by the Government of Scotland (The National Strategy for the Development of the Social Service Workforce in Scotland, 2005) for their social services

workforce emphasises support and attention to individual workers and teams, and the relationship of workforce development to the needs of clients and unpaid carers.

This approach places an unusual degree of responsibility on individual workers and participation by service users.

This approach is based on the premise that excellent services will be delivered by a workforce which:

- Is flexible, responsive and prioritises service users needs and those of unpaid carers;
- Is competent and confident with the knowledge and expertise required to meet the needs of the changing environment;
- Takes responsibility for their own learning by seeking out opportunities that meet their personal and professional aspirations and responsibilities;
- Is supported by organisations that prioritise employee development and have workforce plans in place;
- Is supported to maximise its potential and has clear career pathways;
- Maintains and develops positive working and learning partnerships with a range of other professions and across local authority and independent sectors; and
- Values itself and is valued by others.

The plan also details nine implementation strategies to achieve the above outcomes:

1. Develop opportunities and choices for staff to choose how to progress in their careers.
2. Users and carers participate in workforce development to ensure that services suit their needs.
3. Even with agreed policies and systems in place and an organisational commitment to actively supporting learning and development, it is important to acknowledge the challenging agenda presented by the full spectrum of learning and development needs that range from induction to core training and continuing development for all staff.
4. The establishment of effective ways for people to gain recognition for the skills they already have.
5. The explicit provision of material opportunities for learning and development that allow flexible learning.
6. Strategies to inform clients that those delivering social services have the necessary skills and knowledge to meet their needs.
7. The development of evidence demonstrating that investment in the training of the social services workforce is vital for the future.
8. The effective use of existing and under-used resources to support workforce development.
9. Emphasis on the fact that social services have a key role to play in building the kinds of communities that people will want to live in is not just about providing high quality services for the most disadvantaged groups and individuals in our communities but about improved quality of life and enhanced opportunities for all in society.

Reference: Scottish Executive Publications (2005) - The National Strategy for the Development of the Social Service Workforce in Scotland: A Plan for Action 2005-2010'

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Conclusion

The need for an informed and strategic approach to the development of the sectors workforce is now well acknowledged. What is often less clear is the best approach or approaches to this critical issue. It is hoped the proceeding summary of models may assist in informing future discussion on a preferred approach.

The five models reflect the range in emphasis and scope of workforce development approaches. They extend from broad 'systems thinking' to personal responsibility of individual workers, as well as suites of strategies across several points of intervention including systems, organisations, teams, regions and the current and future workforce.

The development of a state wide sector development strategy, that includes a comprehensive workforce development strategy, is a key priority of NCOSS over the next couple of years. This strategy will need to be broad enough to encompass the many sub-sectors (e.g. health, out of home care, SAAP) and specific enough to address the common critical factors that impact across the NGO sector in NSW. Our relationships with Government, as a significant funder, regulator and partner, will be one of these critical factors.

A state-wide workforce development strategy for our sector clearly needs to prioritise the broader 'systems strategies'; actions that generate a positive and attractive employment environment, as well as actively enabling training, regulatory and funding frameworks. However there are equally significant contributions and actions at the organisational, peak, program and regional levels. Consequently any future workforce development strategy will also need to prioritise relationships, both within and beyond the sector.

For further information or comment please contact

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