Assignment One

NATURE OF THE ASSIGNMENT
You are required to do some advance reading and complete the assignment below as your first assignment under the Fellowship Project Architecture.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENT ONE
Each Fellow will undertake, and report the findings of, a Needs Assessment in her/his workplace examining one of the following options (further outlined below):

OPTION A:
• Needs Assessment of a Customer Group served by your organization or the department that you currently working in.
  o Please see Annex 1 for report specifications and requirements.

OPTION B:
• Needs Assessment of your organization's capacities and priority needs required to effectively support your organization's mission.
  o Please see Annex 2 for report specifications and requirements.

OPTION C:
• Training Needs Assessment to determine the capacities and priority development needs of a particular group of employees within the organization (e.g., supervisors, engineers, scientists, teachers, secretaries, etc.)
  o Please see Annex 3 for report specifications and requirements.

FORMAT FOR SUBMISSION
• The Needs Assessment Report (4 pages maximum plus annexes, typed in MS Word), should be prepared and submitted by each Fellow by email to shamsul.shams@unitar.org; berin.mckenzie@unitar.org; and francis.scopas@unitar.org.
• As it is the first step in developing your project, it is important that this report be clear, concise and informative.
  o This report forms the basis of your project, and will be referred back to multiple times during the Fellowship.
  o You must ensure that it is logical, robust, and well analysed.

In the attached Annexes you will be provided guidelines on the specific requirements for the Needs Assessment Option that you choose to pursue.

DEADLINE
To be submitted to UNITAR by Friday 8 January 2015.
REPORT OUTPUT REQUIREMENTS
The assignment results should be divided into the four main sections listed below in the sequence given:

I. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS
   For your organization

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT
   Your Organization’s/immediate work group’s needs assessment

III. IDENTIFICATION OF SIMILAR CASES
   Assessment of other similar entities for what might be some needs and challenges sectorwide that are similar to what you discovered with your own organizational assessment

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION
   Should include a brief summary of your key points
ANNEX 1 -- OPTION A:
Needs Assessment of Customer Group served by your organization or immediate work group

GUIDELINES AND REPORT REQUIREMENTS

I: ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS
Begin with no more than one brief paragraph of general information about your organization and attach an organogram as an annex.

1. What is your organization’s mission?
2. What are the key environmental factors that may affect your organization’s mission and effectiveness over the next 2 – 3 years? (Note: Refer to the handout, Conducting an Environmental Analysis for key factors)
3. Who are the users of your organization’s services or products?
4. What target populations does your assessment focus on? – What are the demographics of the population(s)?

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT
1. What were the objectives of your Needs Assessment? For example:
   • To identify the three new services most needed by this population;
   • To determine the extent of public understanding about the services available through this office;
   • To understand the service strategies that would be most effective with this population;
   • To know what the target group thinks we’re doing well and what services we need to improve on.
2. What data did you review related to the objectives of your Needs Assessment? (Can be listed in an attachment)
3. What questions did you ask in your assessment? (Can be listed in an attachment)
4. What method(s) did you use to get answers to your questions?
5. What were your key findings in answer to your objectives?
6. What changes would you recommend to your organization’s policies, operations, products or services in response to your key findings?

III: IDENTIFICATION OF SIMILAR CASES
1. Which issues, concerns or needs that you identified in your Needs Assessments do you think might be common throughout your sector?
2. Were you able to identify standards or benchmarks in your area of focus that are accepted sector-wide, and how did your needs assessment results compare to those standards?
3. What ideas do you have about a project that would address one of these issues, concerns or needs?

IV: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
1. What were your main findings about the issues, concerns or needs of the target population(s) you were focused on?
2. What are the key recommendations you have for your organization in response to these findings?
ANNEX 2 – OPTION B:
Needs Assessment of your organization’s capacities and priority needs required to effectively support your organization’s mission

GUIDELINES AND REPORT REQUIREMENTS

I: ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS
Begin with no more than one brief paragraph of general information about your organization and attach an organogram as an annex

1. What is your organization’s mission?
2. What are the key environmental factors that may affect your organization’s mission and effectiveness over the next 2 – 3 years?

Note: Here is a framework you can use if your objective is to assess the general effectiveness of your organization’s operations in accomplishing its mission:

a. What external/environmental factors help your organization to be successful? (See Conducting an Environmental Analysis for key ideas). Consider:
   • Physical/geographic issues (e.g., Being located in easily accessible and safe areas; good buildings and facilities to work with; improved road systems; more power generating facilities)
   • Economic conditions (e.g., Availability of government or donor agency funds; skilled labour; minimal corruption; availability of banking facilities)
   • Technological developments (e.g., Increased availability of the internet; mobile communications and increased TV exposure throughout the country; people in your organization who are knowledgeable about the use of electronic technology)
   • Political conditions (e.g., Government plans and social development projects for specific states, privatization efforts, new regulatory policies)
   • Demographic/cultural factors (e.g., More women becoming educated, increased communications and knowledge about what is going on in the country due to mobile communications, opportunities to use TV stations for distance learning)
   • Your sector (e.g., New markets for your services or products, the development of partnerships with other organizations, improved ways to deliver services to customers)

b. What external/environmental factors are keeping your organization from accomplishing its mission in terms of any of the following factors? (See Conducting an Environmental Analysis for key ideas). Consider:
   • Physical/geographic issues (e.g., Being located in areas that are less safe and difficult to access; having to work or teach in dilapidated buildings with poor equipment; serving rural areas where the road systems are still unimproved; a lack of power generating facilities)
   • Economic conditions (e.g., Decreasing availability of government or donor agency funds; lack of skilled labour; unavailability of banking facilities)
   • Technological developments (e.g., Not having access to the internet; not having people trained to use available electronic technology; lack of mobile communications and increased TV exposure in some rural areas that your organization serves)
   • Political conditions (e.g., Unclear government policies, rules and
• regulations; regulations that are nearly impossible to implement
• Demographic/cultural factors (e.g., inability of people from different tribal backgrounds or geographic areas to work well together; high unemployment rates; increased fears about safety and security)
• Your sector (e.g., New businesses that are competing with you for your markets; other organizations having access to new technology that your organization doesn’t have access to; other organizations having more influence with the donor agencies that help fund your services)

c. What **internal factors** help your organization to be successful? (See list of items below for ideas that you may want to inquire about as you conduct your organization assessment):
   • Appropriateness of the organization’s strategy;
   • Clarity of organization roles and responsibilities;
   • Effectiveness and efficiency of work processes;
   • Access to information and information sharing systems;
   • Appropriateness of the organization’s structure to support its mission;
   • Effectiveness of planning and coordination processes;
   • Effectiveness of communication processes;
   • Leadership and supervisory skills of organization leadership;
   • Appropriateness of recognition and reward systems to support performance;
   • Effectiveness and fairness of recruiting, hiring and promotion processes;
   • Effectiveness of training and development processes;
   • Physical lay-out; equipment and facilities;
   • Appropriate technology;
   • Cultural norms (the written and unwritten rules of behaviour);

d. What **internal barriers** are keeping your organization from accomplishing its mission, in terms of any of the factors listed above?

e. What changes would you recommend to your organization’s policies, operations, products or services in response to your key findings?

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT
1. What were the specific objectives of your Needs Assessment? (e.g.,
   - To assess the general effectiveness of your organization’s operations in accomplishing its mission
   - To assess the effectiveness of your work processes and information management technology
   - To determine how to improve your organization communication processes to ensure timely information and collaborative planning/problems solving
   - To assess the effectiveness of your performance management system
2. What data did you review related to the objectives of your Needs Assessment? (Can be listed in an attachment)
3. What questions did you ask in your assessment? (Can be listed in an attachment)
4. What method(s) did you use to get answers to your questions?
What were your key findings in answer to your objectives?

III: IDENTIFICATION OF SIMILAR CASES
1. Which issues, concerns or needs that you identified in your Needs Assessments do you think might be common throughout your sector?
2. Were you able to identify standards or benchmarks in your area of focus that are accepted sector-wide, and how did your needs assessment results compare to those standards?

3. What ideas do you have about a project that would address one of these issues, concerns or needs?

IV: CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

1. What were your main findings about the organization issues, concerns, needs, etc. in response to your objectives for the assessment?

2. What are the key recommendations you have for your organization in response to these findings?

3. What ideas do you have for a project that will address a need in your sector?
ANNEX 3 – OPTION C:
Training Needs Assessment to determine the priority development needs of a particular group of employees within the organization (e.g., supervisors, engineers, scientists, teachers, secretaries, etc.)

GUIDELINES AND REPORT REQUIREMENTS

I: ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS
Begin with no more than one brief paragraph of general information about your organization and attach an organogram as an annex.

1. What is your organization’s mission?
2. What are the key environmental factors that may affect your organization’s mission and effectiveness over the next 2 – 3 years? (Note: Refer to the handout, Conducting an Environmental Analysis for key factors)

II: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

3. What were the objectives of your Needs Assessment? (e.g., To assess the effectiveness of your organization’s orientation program; To assess the strengths and priority development areas of your first-line supervisors; To determine the needs for cross-training in the organization)
4. What data did you review related to the objectives of your Needs Assessment? (Can be listed in an attachment)
5. What questions did you ask in your assessment? (Can be listed in an attachment)
6. What method(s) did you use to get answers to your questions?
7. What were your key findings in answer to your objectives?
8. What training and development opportunities/programs would you recommend as priorities for your organization to offer?

III: IDENTIFICATION OF SIMILAR CASES

1. Which training and development needs that you identified in your Needs Assessments do you think might be common throughout your sector?
2. What ideas do you have about a project that would address one of these issues?

IV: YOUR CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

1. What were your main findings about employee learning and development needs in response to your objectives for the assessment?
2. What are the key recommendations you have for your organization in response to these findings?
3. What ideas do you have for a project that will address a need in your sector?