

The EIP Peer-to-Peer Learning Guide

How to make peer-to-peer support and learning effective in the public sector?

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What do we mean by peer learning?

Peer learning is a potentially powerful way of sharing knowledge about doing public sector reform.

This learning involves individuals exchanging knowledge and experience with each other, and potentially diffusing this learning back to their organisations to ensure an impact—at scale—on reform initiatives.

While peer learning entails complex organisational logistics, it avoids the risk of focusing on process rather than product. It recognises that ultimately learning takes place between individuals and it facilitates interpersonal interchanges that are well-matched and that are based on trust and commitment.

Peer learning can be evaluated based on whether peer engagements and sustained individual contacts produced the right learning outcomes for the right individuals to achieve changes which matter.

What are the principles of effective peer learning?

Peer learning is most effective when:

- Learning objectives are clear, and peer engagements are structured to maximise these objectives.
- Individual peers are matched appropriately and authorised and empowered to engage effectively.
- The organisations authorising peers to engage give formal authorisation to these peers.
- Peers engage with each other in an honest and committed manner.
- Peers engage with each other over a medium to long run period.
- Peers engage in multiple ways, including through shared work and site visits.
- Peers do things together, and reflect regularly on what they are learning.
- The learning gains of individual peers are communicated back to those authorising the engagement of these peers, to ensure continued support for the learning process.

- The home organisations of each peer commit to allow peers to communicate their learning back into the organisations, and structure a strategy to ensure this is done regularly.
- Facilitators simplify the process of peer engagement, to ensure peers find this process as easy-as-possible (with limited administrative demands and costs).
- Peers are encouraged and empowered to share their learning back into their organisations.
- The many facets of peer learning gains are evaluated—from initial engagement through individual learning, to organisational learning (from the peers) and final reform impact.

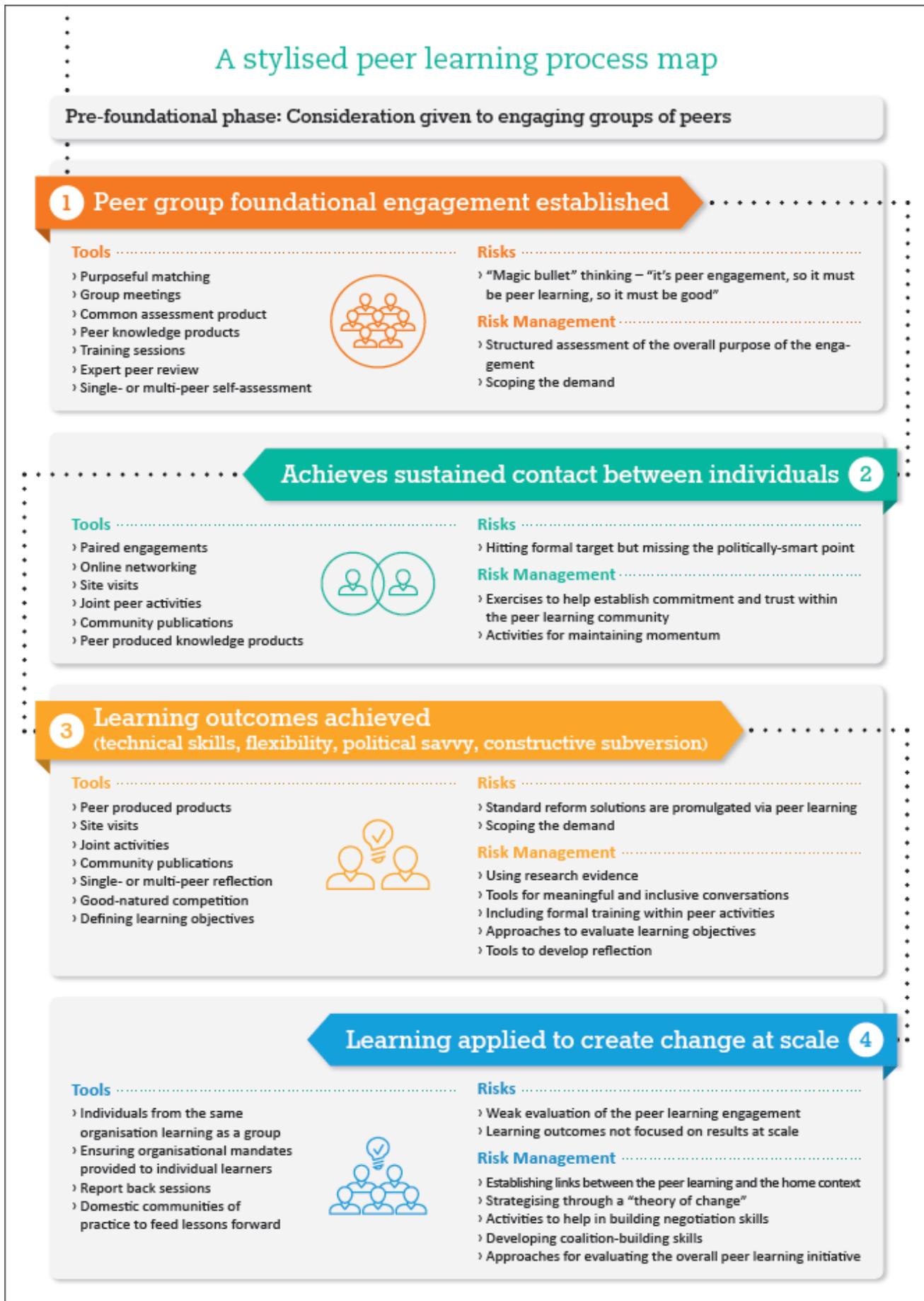
Introduction

- There is strong current interest to shift the focus for achieving improvements in public organisations and in public service delivery from pre-defined solutions to more applied approaches for supporting reforms in contested and complex contexts.
- Peer learning advocates hold that *people embarking on reforms can learn from peers who are also going through (or have experienced) similar reforms.*
- Peer learning is *potentially potent in facilitating the transfer of tacit knowledge about the softer dimensions of change (like managing politics, inspiring teams, or building coalitions) between individuals—and beyond, to organisations, sectors, and nations.*
- *There are many efforts to facilitate and engage in this kind of peer learning and many people involved in reforms now have experience with peer learning.*
- There is little analytical work about how well peer learning initiatives are working, or what works, what does not work (and why). A recent study by Andrews and Manning attempts to (partially) fill this gap and informs the note you are now reading, with references to A&M (hereafter the ‘study’).¹
- The study identified peer learning as a potentially valuable process whereby *individuals working on reforms learn from each other and then transmit this learning back to their own contexts.*
- The study also emphasises that *peer learning is a particular method of learning, which is most valuable in fostering the exchange of tacit knowledge between actual reformers about how they do reform.* Technical knowledge, about the types of reform one can choose, for instance, is more amenable to traditional transfer (like classroom teaching); peer engagement can also add value to this dissemination of technical knowledge exchange.
- The study notes that *there are many ways to do peer learning*, which prohibits identifying a pro forma toolkit or set of guidelines on exactly how to do this kind of work.

¹ Andrews, M. & N. Manning (2015). *Peer learning in public sector reforms*. Paris: Effective Institutions Platform (EIP).

- Emerging evidence suggests peer learning is effective but there is a need to carefully design peer learning initiatives, especially when focused on tacit knowledge transfer. The evidence that initiatives claiming to facilitate peer learning successfully foster the transfer of deep, relevant tacit knowledge between peer individuals and ensure that this knowledge diffuses back to organisations to achieve impact at scale is still limited.
- Whereas *there is no magic recipe for peer learning*, and indeed all peer learning initiatives will look different (given the many tools available to do this work and the need to match tools to the peer learning context), *the study suggests common stages involved in the peer learning process*.
- These stages combine into a peer learning process map (shown in Figure 1) and involve: i) a pre-foundational engagement where consideration is given to basic questions about peer engagement; ii) peers are engaged in a foundational event; peer engagement is sustained over time (to build trust and sharing); iii) engagements are structured to actually foster relevant learning outcomes in individuals; and iv) learning is diffused from individuals to organisations to foster impact at scale.

Figure 1. A stylised peer learning process map



Achieving deep individual peer learning that also diffuses and leads to impact requires addressing challenges in all four stages; initiatives that do not pass through these stages can still add value (facilitating peer engagement, for instance, or adding to the learning of individuals) but *the real potential of peer learning involves covering the full territory shown in this process map.*

- There are risks to effective engagement at every stage, which can be mitigated with specific tools (as shown in Figure 1).
- This peer learning guide identifies questions (and ideas) to guide potential facilitators of peer learning—and peer learners—through the stages in this process map. *The questions are relevant to most or all peer learning initiatives, even if the answers will differ across these initiatives.*
- It is a simple guide, that just requires your thought and reflection about questions raised in five sections: A. Is this territory for you? B. Fostering peer engagement; C. Sustaining peer engagement; D. Fostering actual peer learning; E. Diffusing learning from peers. (A & M Annex 9 provides additional ideas to stimulate thinking).
- *It is also a living guide, meaning that the questions and ideas always require improvement and adjustment; you are invited to contribute to these by contacting the EIP Joint Secretariat (effectiveinstitutions@oecd.org).*

Who should use this guide, and how should it be used?

This guide builds on research about the peer learning process, which reflected on the experience of organisations facilitating peer learning engagement and peer learners themselves. This guide has been written for use by both groups—facilitators and peer learners—although it is assumed that users of the guide will be individuals or organisations who have a facilitative role (either promoting large scale peer learning or acting as a facilitator of a personal peer learning initiative). The various sections raise questions relevant for both types of users in progressing through the various peer learning stages, with ideas that learners and facilitators might find useful as they pass through this process. It is not a prescriptive guide (giving specific ideas about what to do) but allows directed decision making by users (trying to ensure they choose the right peer learning opportunity) and facilitators (trying to structure engagements to maximise the learning of potential peers).

A. Pre-foundational stage: Do the groundwork! What is the scope and added-value that you are targeting for peer learning engagement?

Questions for your reflection

Peer learning is a demanding process; and it may not always be the right process to foster when trying to strengthen the effectiveness of the public sector, its policies and institutions (by potential facilitators of peer learning or peer learners). These questions are meant to guide you in deciding if it is the right process, given your purposes and context.

- **What public sector reform types are you focusing on?**
 - Do you have a clear focal sector in mind?
 - Is there any kind of existing peer network or community in the sector?
- **What is your theory of change about this reform?**
 - What are the goals of reform?
 - What are the means by which you think these goals will be reached?
 - What are the assumptions underpinning your view of how means lead to goals?
- **What knowledge gaps are you trying to fill in this reform area?**
 - What other learning approaches could you try to fill these gaps?
- **Why do you want to bring peers together? Why do you want to engage with peers?**
 - Is it for learning or other reasons?
- **Are you clear about who the peers are that you plan to engage with?**
 - Do you know how you will attract these peers?
- **What are the hoped-for benefits of fostering peer learning in this context?**
 - Who will learn what, and from whom?
 - How will the peer learning impact reform?
 - How will you measure the success of the learning process, and when?
 - What are the hoped-for benefits of engaging with other peers in this context? What kinds of information will they need to share?
 - How long will they need to engage?
 - What kinds of activities will they need to participate in?
- **What are the challenges to engaging peers for the full peer learning process? As a peer, what are the challenges for you to engage in the full peer learning process?**
 - What are the political challenges?
 - What are the logistical challenges?
- **What costs/challenges do you expect in fostering peer learning in this context? As a peer, what costs/challenges do you expect in participating in peer learning in this context?**

- How tough will it be to get this done politically?
- What resources and capacity do you need?
- Do you have enough support?

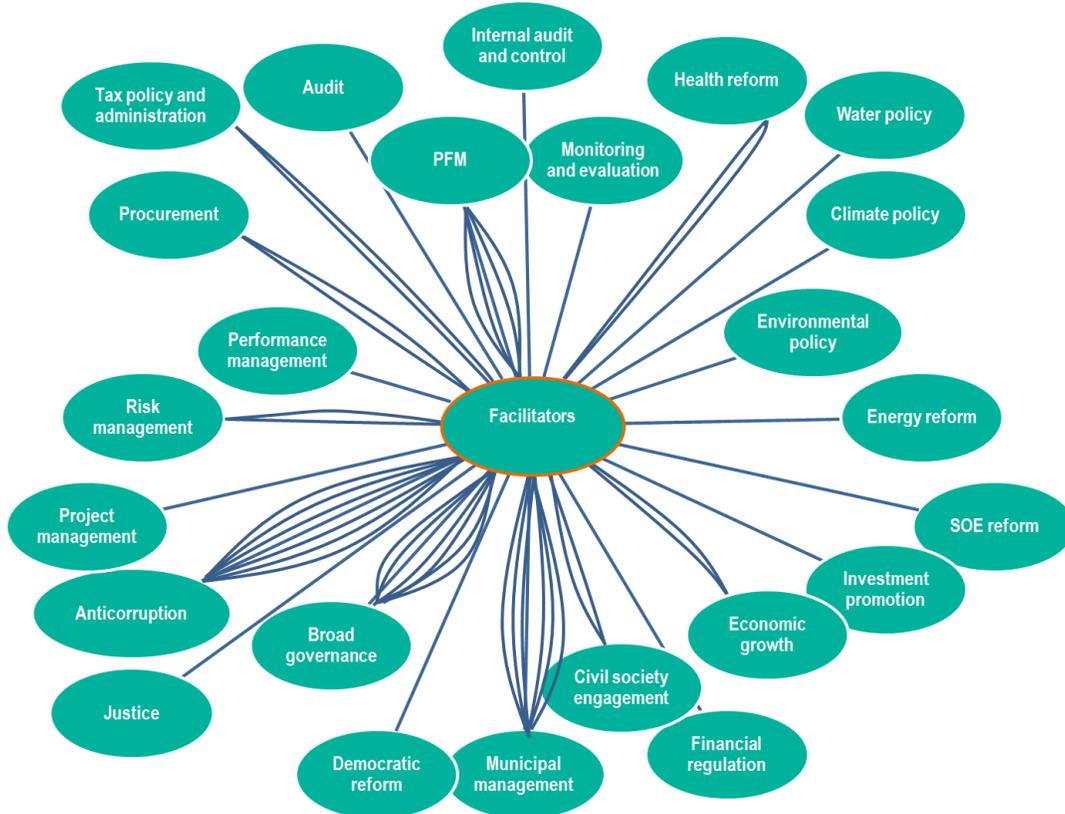
Figure 2. Fields in which peer learning is undertaken

Ideas for reflection

The mapping exercise helped to identify important underlying lessons about peer learning. Some of these spoke to the importance of remembering that peer learning is a specific tool and needs to be adopted when appropriate and possible. Clarity about the goals of the peer learning exercise is thus vital.

- *Peer learning can be a valuable approach to generate and disseminate and even a motivational tool in many public sector reform areas—from civil service to public financial management (PFM) and more (see figure 2).*

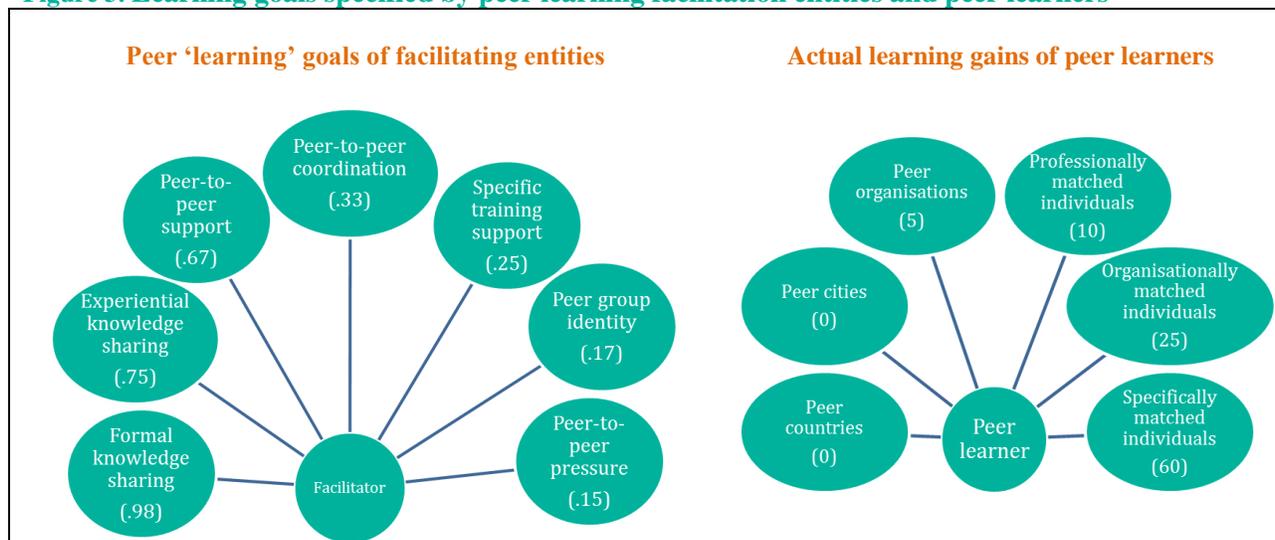
Figure 2. The many areas of peer engagement in public sector reform



- Peer learning is also valuable in fostering learning about many dimensions of reform (technical, political, managerial) but *the most value is in facilitating sharing of tacit knowledge among peers (about political, managerial and process issues in reform) (see figure 3 below).*

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Figure 3. Learning goals specified by peer learning facilitation entities and peer learners



- *Peer learning tends to work best when targeted at a specific sector or area*, like civil service reform or anti-corruption or public financial management; especially when a community of practice already exists to mobilise peers to participate in the learning process.
- Given that peer learning is a means and not an end, *one must have a theory of change about how peer learning is expected to contribute to reform results*. This guides peer review process design and is important in maintaining interest and motivation in the process.
- *There are many ways to fill knowledge gaps in reform*. Peer learning should be used for the learning it is best suited to (transfer of tacit knowledge between practitioners).
- Peer engagement is valuable to foster more than learning (like professional networking or support).
- If you want to bring peers together, make sure you are clear about who you are targeting. *Peers are individuals, not organisations, so target real people—and make sure you can describe them before you start your work*.
- The more effective peer learning initiatives are clear about what the peers are expected to learn from each other. *This does not mean they are prescriptive, but they can describe whether the initiative is about disseminating technical, process or other knowledge*. This clarity helps in attracting peers and in designing the peer learning process.
- The more effective initiatives are also clear about the modalities they will adopt—from a wide range of tools at their disposal—and how peers will engage with each other in the learning process. This again helps in attracting peers and designing process.

- It is vital to be real about how hard peer learning can be. *Peers need political freedom to learn and engage, and logistical challenges can undermine the entire process.* Make sure you are paying attention to the political and logistical challenges at all times.

B. Establishing a foundational engagement: How can you get things started?

Questions for your reflection

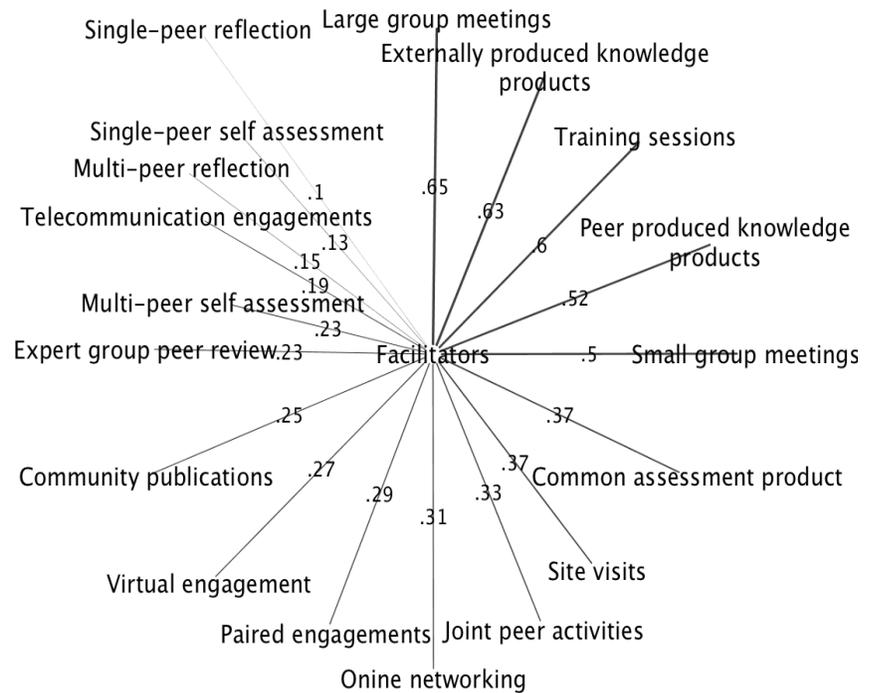
Peer learning processes usually begin by assembling potential peers together. There are many ways to do this, and it matters how it is done. Effective foundational engagement can build commitment and trust and interest in future engagement and sharing. Less effective engagement can undermine future learning potential. Here are a set of questions to consider in designing foundational engagements.

- **How do you plan to bring peers together for the first time? How do you plan to engage with other peers for the first time?**
 - What kind of convening or connecting tool or event will you use?
 - Why do you think this is the appropriate tool or event?
- **Do you have a strategy to select ‘the right’ peers to engage with/involve in process?**
 - According to your theory of change, do you have an idea of what ‘the right’ kind of peer will be to benefit from your facilitation?
 - Can you write out the characteristics of that peer?
 - Are you engaging with individual peers ‘as people’ instead of substitutable representatives of their agencies?
 - Do you have a strategy to ‘match’ peers in and through initial events (so that peers are working most closely with those with whom they stand the best chance of learning)?
- **Do you have a strategy to ensure peers are fully engaged and invested in foundational events? Do you have the means to be fully engaged and invested in foundational events?**
 - Do the peers have some role in defining the focal topics of the peer learning?
 - Do peers’ organisations have a role in defining the topics as well?
 - Do you have a strategy to ensure the buy-in of individuals involved in initial events?
 - Do you have a strategy to manage differences among peers when they start to communicate and interact in foundational events (personalities, cultures, etc.)?
 - Do you have a strategy to establish commonalities between and among peers?
 - Do you have a strategy to build trust between peers in the foundational engagements?
 - Have you designed continued and deeper engagement opportunities after the foundational event? Do you have ways of identifying peers who are willing to stay connected?
 - Do you have easy-to-access, easy-logistic options that peers can use to stay connected?
 - Do you inform peers of the options you offer for continued engagement?

Ideas for reflection

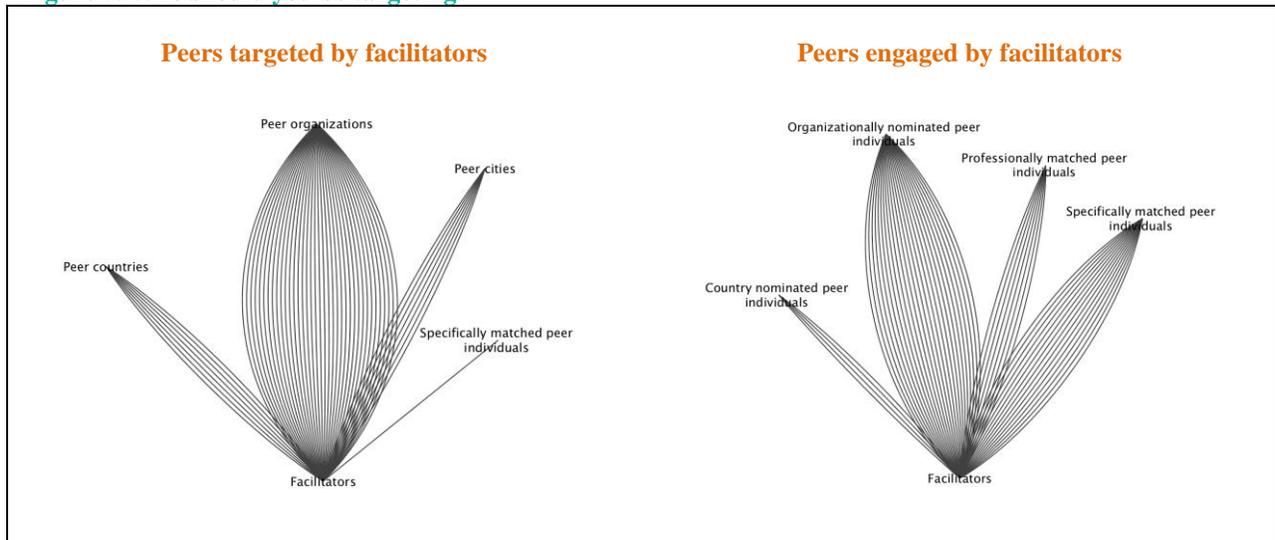
If one wants to foster learning among peers, it is vital to bring the right group together and facilitate an effective communication and sharing environment. Here are some ideas to do this.

Figure 4. Peer learning tools



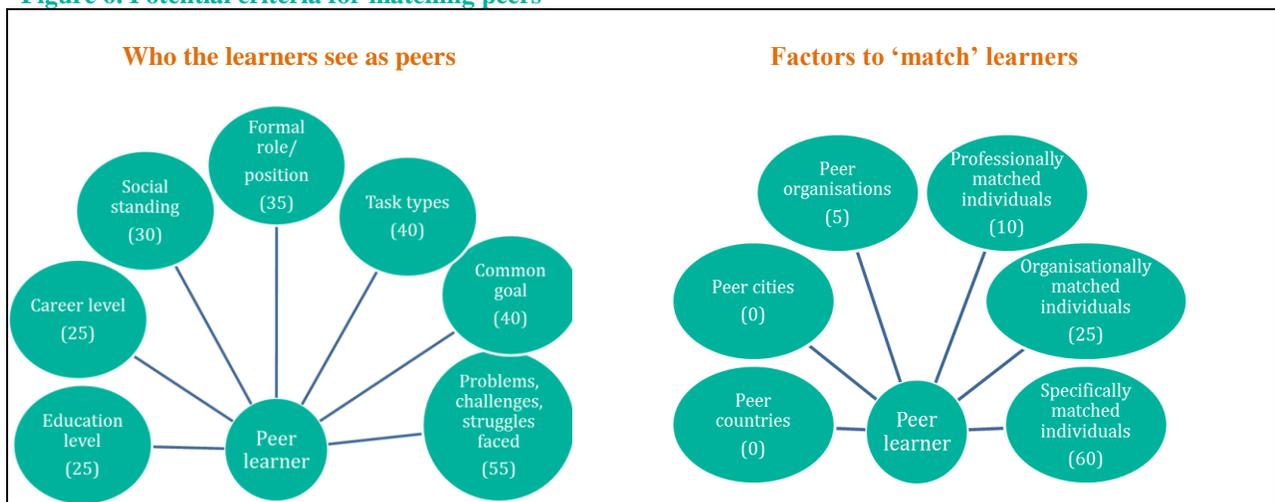
- There are many different approaches and tools to use to bring peers together (see figure 4). *You need to choose a tool that fits what you are trying to do and fosters the best environment for the peers you are bringing together (where they can build trust and share).*
- When selecting an engagement method, *think about your own limitations, the traveling and time constraints of peers, their different backgrounds, and the goals of your initiative.* All of these variables will need to be considered when deciding how to initiate contact.
- *Make sure you plan and engage with peers before any foundational meeting; so peers feel comfortable, have had a say on the structure of engagement, and know what to expect.*
- *Peers need to be matched, specifically, for effective peer learning to occur.* The most effective learning seems to occur when peers are matched according to the common problems or challenges they face. Professional matching also opens opportunities for learning.
- *Peers who learn from each other are individuals, not organisations (see figure 5 below which shows that even when facilitators target organisations the actual learners are individuals).* This means that you cannot match an organisation with another organisation. You must match people in the organisations, who have ideas to share and brains to receive.

Figure 5. Who should you be targeting?



- It is not easy to match individuals, especially when their organisations choose who engages in peer learning events. *You need to create space for individual selection within organisations, and even devise some matching criteria (based on professional background, years of service).* It is often effective to involve peers in the matching process, asking them to complete surveys before the peers are assembled (where they note the challenges they are facing, for instance). This pre-foundational engagement often helps build motivation and interest in peers. One can match peers based on a variety of factors, but some stand out as more effective than others (see figure 6 below, which shows that peers learn most effectively when matched according to shared challenges and problems; learning also happens when matched according to position and task or policy initiative).

Figure 6. Potential criteria for matching peers



- Peers find each other in foundational engagements when those attending engage fully, which is *motivated by ensuring that peers are motivated to attend. Make communication easy between peers, ensure the engagement space and agenda allow easy interaction, make peers confident to engage, and foster commitment among peers by using contracts.*
- *Trust is the cornerstone of all peer learning.* If you plan on taking peer learning beyond an initial engagement you must incorporate some trust building exercises in this engagement.
- Peers seldom continue engaging after meeting, even if they want to. They often do not know how. *Make it easy by having opportunities on offer, that are easy to sign up to and attractive.*
- The table below summarises the key dimensions to ensuring that the foundational engagement is successful.

<p><u>‘Who’ the peers are</u></p> <p>Identifying ‘the right’ peers to engage with/ Involve in process Ensuring peers are effectively matched through initial events Managing differences among peers (personalities, cultures, etc.)</p> <p><u>Getting peers to engage fully in the process</u></p> <p>Building trust among peers Ensuring all peers have the same willingness to learn Ensuring peers are fully engaged from the start Ensuring peers have authority to engage fully in the peer learning process</p> <p><u>Logistics of peer interaction</u></p> <p>Ensuring peers have the time to engage with peers (at face-to-face events) Ensuring peers have means, time to engage with peers (after face-to-face events) Finding the appropriate venues for face-to-face peer engagement Finding the appropriate media for non-face-to-face peer engagement Ensuring logistics are effectively and continuously addressed (so as not to get in the way of peers wanting to engage)</p>
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C. Achieving sustained contact between individuals: How can you keep peer engagement going?

Questions for your reflection

This is the stage in the peer learning process map, after the foundational engagement, where peers keep connected and engaged. It is the stage where they build trust and learn from each other in a potentially deep and experiential way. This sustained engagement requires attention to various questions.

- **How will you keep peer connections after the foundational engagement?**
 - Do you have specific proposals in mind to offer peers interested in follow-up interaction after the foundational event?
 - Can you facilitate and support ongoing active engagements between selected peers after the foundational event, if they choose to engage?
 - Do you have the resources in place to respond to the ideas that peers might have for ongoing interaction after foundational events?
- **How will you ensure individual peers stay engaged and committed? How can you make sure that you and other peers stay engaged and committed?**
 - Do you have a strategy to keep building trust among peers, after the foundational event?
 - Do you have a strategy in place to ensure that peers who engage in follow-up events stay interested and motivated in the initiative?
 - Do you have a strategy in place to ensure that peers who engage in follow-up events have the same willingness to learn?
 - Do you have a strategy to ensure that peers who engage in follow-up events have ongoing authority from their home organisations to engage fully in the peer learning process?
- **How will you stay connected with other peer connections?**
 - Do you have a strategy to ensure that peers who engage in follow-up events have the time to engage with peers (at face-to-face events)?
 - Do you have a strategy to ensure that peers who engage in follow-up events have the means to engage with peers (after face-to-face events)?
 - Do you have a strategy in place to locate the appropriate venues for ongoing face-to-face peer engagement?
 - Do you have a strategy in place to identify the appropriate media for ongoing non face-to-face peer engagement?
 - Do you have a strategy in place to ensure that logistics are effectively and continuously addressed (so as not to get in the way of peers wanting to engage)?

Ideas for reflection

- The peer learning mapping exercise showed that peers learn from each other most effectively when they engage over long periods of time. Mapping of peer learning activities also showed that few facilitators have explicit strategies in place to foster sustained peer engagement, however. If you want to foster deep and experiential sharing between peers, you must try to ensure they have sustained engagement.
- There are many tools one can use to keep peers engaged after the foundational event and you need to choose the one(s) that best fit your context. (The tools most commonly used to sustain individual contacts include paired engagements, online networking, peer produced knowledge products, site visits, joint peer activities, and a variety of tools to foster sharing and exchange (see bolded entries in figure 8 below).

Figure 7. Different tools promote different parts of the peer learning process

Parts of the peer learning process	Interaction facilitation	Knowledge generation	Sharing and exchange	Reflection, application and diffusion
Creating the foundational engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposeful matching • Large group meetings • Small group meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common assessment product • Externally produced knowledge products • Peer produced knowledge products • Training sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert group peer review • Single peer self-assessment • Multi-peer self-assessment 	
Sustaining individual contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paired engagements • Online networking, virtual and telecom engagements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer produced knowledge products • Site visits • Joint peer activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community publications • Site visits • Joint peer activities • Defining learning objectives • Good natured competition between peer groups 	
Achieving learning outcomes				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single-peer reflection • Multi-peer reflection

- *It is vital to be prepared and intentional about helping peers meet after the foundational event.* Have your funders set up in advance and know what you plan to do.
- Sustained engagement is not just about having the right opportunities, peers need to be committed and motivated to continue engaging. This requires ensuring that they have a personal commitment

to the process, are interested in continued engagement, and have the support of their home organisation to continue engaging.

- There are many tools you can use to ensure peers remain motivated and committed to engaging, with the most effective involving face time connections where peers get to be with each other (and build trust) and even work together or experience each other's' work environment first hand.
- Peers will keep connected to each other if they have an explicit incentive to do so. This need not be financial, and is probably most effective if it ties to their career progress or effectiveness at work. Peer learning initiatives that connect activities to actual work tend to be more sustained than others.
- Peers are likely to get support for continued engagement from their home organisations if the political authorisers perceive that the engagement is yielding positive results. *Ensure that you have a specific reporting process for all authorisers, and that this process emphasises the value of continued peer engagement for them and their organisations.*
- Continued peer engagement takes time. Try and minimise the time it will require for individual peers (and which will need to be given by authorisers) by planning efficiently.
- Continued peer engagement requires technological solutions for communication. Do not take for granted that peer learners will master the technology themselves. Plan to provide the technological communications solutions and to train peers in using the technology.
- Peers who want to engage with each other will be put off if they have to organise all the engagements. Sustained engagement is more likely if a facilitating agency provides logistical support to peers who want to continue engaging.

D. Achieving learning outcomes: How can you foster actual peer learning?

Questions for your reflection

The peer learning process map shows that actual peer learning (at the individual level) follows from the stages of initial engagement and sustained engagement. The questions here centre on ensuring that the engagements actually foster learning between peers.

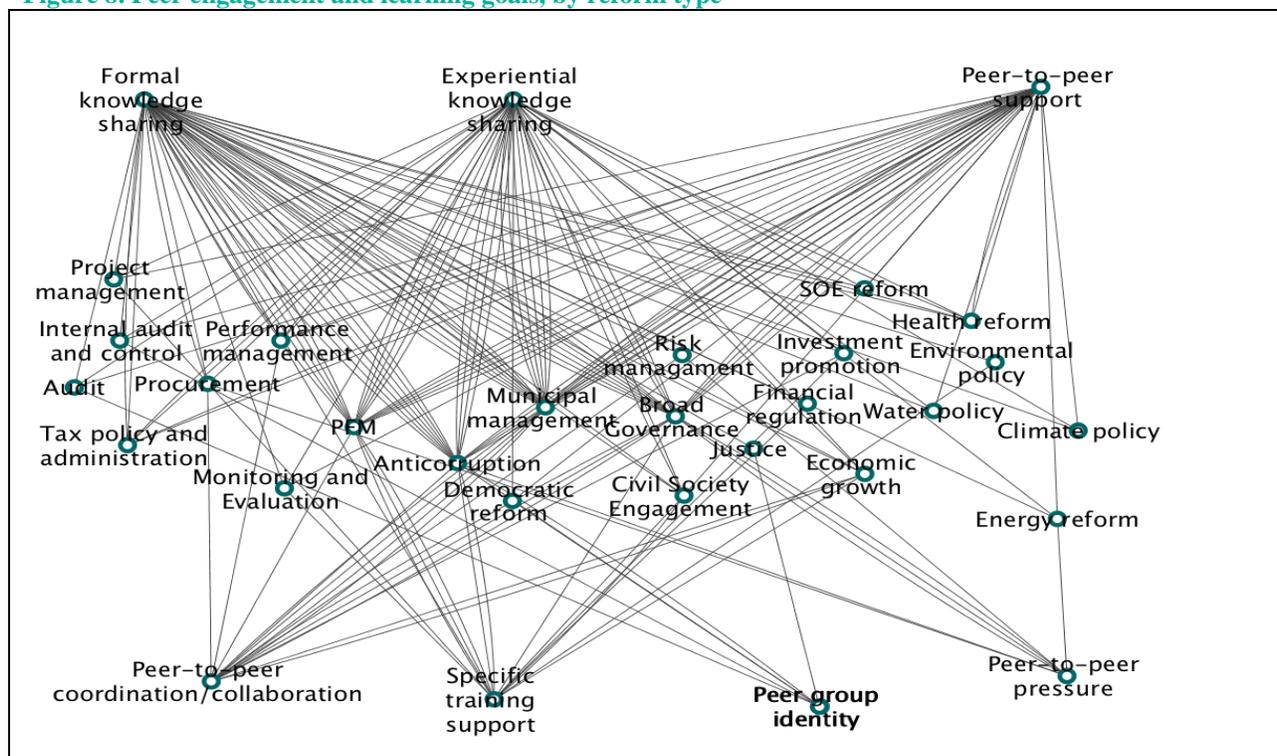
- **Are you clear about what learning gains you expect between peers?**
 - Do you have a clear idea of the focal issues peers will be learning about?
 - Do you focus on technical aspects of change that you expect peers to learn about, and, if so, what aspects are you most focused on (country systems, reform sequencing, or avoiding collateral damage in reforms)?
 - Do you focus on learning about flexibility and humility in change management?
 - Do you focus on learning about “politically savvy” perspectives on change?
 - Do you focus on “constructive subversion” and resistance to promotion of poorly fitted reform packages?
- **Do you have a communications, evaluating and reporting mechanism to capture and build support for (and around) the peer learning gains?**
 - How will you assess expectations about peer learning gains, about how and when these learning gains are assessed and reported back to organisations?
 - How will you assess whether peers are learning, and if the learning is a result of peer-to-peer interaction?
 - How will you communicate learning gains to organisations, individuals involved?
 - Do you have a proposed timeline in place for evaluations, monitoring and feedback about the peer learning process?
 - Do you have a strategy to ensure that your own funders/authorisers accept the plan to assess peer learning gains?
- **Are you employing the appropriate tools to evaluate peer learning gains?**
 - Can you assess success in facilitating interaction between peers?
 - Can you assess success in generating knowledge through peer learning?
 - Can you assess success in knowledge sharing through peer learning?
 - Can you assess success in facilitating peer reflection of new lessons?
 - Can you assess success in application of new lessons by peers?
 - Can you assess success in diffusing lessons by peers into their organisations?

Ideas for reflection

Peers can engage with each other in sustained ways but not learn from each other; or they can learn only easily observable things (with no transfer of latent knowledge of shared experience). This can undermine the value of a peer learning initiative, where even individual peers fail to learn from each other. There are a number of practical ideas to help ensure learning goals are met.

- The peer learning mapping process showed that most peer learning engagements do not specify the details of what kind of learning is expected or hoped for. *Examples of more successful peer learning are clear about the kinds of hoped-for peer sharing and learning (see figure 9 below).*
- *The most effective peer learning focuses on sharing of tacit knowledge between peers, which includes knowledge about how to do reforms (managing politics, and more). This is only one kind of learning goal, however (others include formal knowledge sharing, peer to peer support and collaboration, specific training support, and more, shown in figure 8 which captures the learning objectives of peer learning engagements in different reform areas).*

Figure 8. Peer engagement and learning goals, by reform type

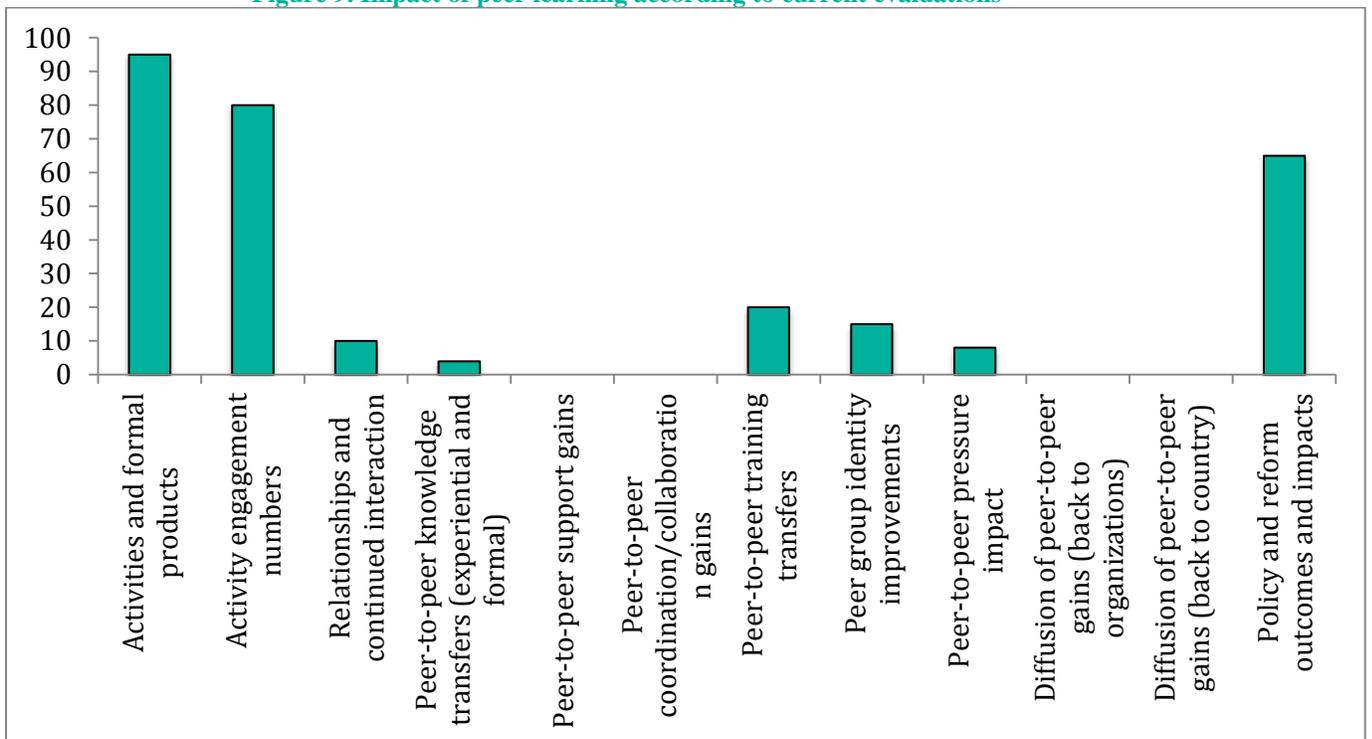


- *Using evidence in the peer learning process helps provoke real learning.*
- *Real and deep peer learning is often effectively produced through meaningful and inclusive conversations between the peers.*
- *Many peer learners note the value of combining more directed and specific training activities (sometimes tied to certification) with other peer learning activities. The training activities have*

stand-alone value for individuals (and their organisations) but could also provide opportunities for peer engagement and relationship building, and offer ways of framing more flexible follow-up peer learning connections.

- Reflection is a key part of improving the effectiveness of individual learning and of providing guidance on the overall impact of the peer learning community so that strategy and direction can be improved for the future. *Research has shown that taking time away from the process of training and reallocating that for reflection on what has been learned significantly enhances peer learning.*
- *It is important to have a mechanism to evaluate the learning gains from peer learners; this is used to guide the learners about what is expected, to promote the kind of tools that will maximise the learning, and to ensure accountability in the process (for peer to peer and facilitator to host organisations).*
- The common factors captured in evaluations of peer learning engagements do not focus on actual learning outcomes of individuals (*see figure 9 below, which shows that evaluations tend to focus on initial engagements and overall outcomes and not the intermediate learning objectives*). There are intermediate learning objectives that should be evaluated (*as shown in the figure*).

Figure 9. Impact of peer learning according to current evaluations



- *It is useful to communicate learning objectives with host organisations before starting a peer learning initiative, and to report on learning gains as the process progresses.*

E. Creating change at scale: How can diffuse learning from peers to their organisations be generated?

Questions for your reflection

The mapping study showed that few peer learning initiatives could claim that peer learning actually impacted results. This is because there is seldom sufficient attention given to the challenge of diffusing lessons from individual peer learners and back to their organisations, where the impact would be felt.

Questions here focus on the challenges of such diffusion.

- **What reform impacts do you expect from the peer learning initiative?**
 - What results do you expect to see, and when?
 - Can you show, conceptually, how learning by individual peers will lead to these results?
 - What assumptions are you making about how peers will share the lessons they learned?
 - Do you have strategies to ensure these assumptions are met?
- **Are home organisations open to learning?**
 - Are participant organisations clear about the impacts they expect from peer learning?
 - Are the organisational change goals clearly identified, with measurable indicators?
 - How can you ensure that home organisations actively support the diffusion or scaling of peer learning gains into the organisations (with plans to provide time and resources to facilitate such process, in advance of the actual peer learning events)?
 - How can you ensure that home organisations are open to learning from ‘returning peers’ and do not punish the peers (for time taken in peer learning or for new ideas they adopt)?
 - How can you ensure that home organisations invest in learning from returning peers?
 - How can you ensure that home organisations create time, space to bring lessons home?

Will individual peer learners ‘share forward’? Have you ‘shared forward’ as an individual learner?

- - How can you ensure that ‘peers’ reflect effectively on their peer learning gains?
 - How can you help peers capture the lessons they have learned?
 - How can you ensure that ‘peers’ are willing to share learning in their organisations?
 - How can you ensure that ‘peers’ are practically able to share learning in their organisations? (able to communicate lessons in a structured and constructive manner?)
 - How can you help ‘peers’ share in their organisations without fear of recrimination?
 - How can you ensure that ‘peers’ share lessons without appearing superior to others?
 - How can you initiate or support peer learning inside the individual’s home organisation?

How will you get feedback about the utility of the learning? Have you reflected on the utility of the learning?

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- Do you have a strategy to identify how learning outcomes are used in practice and how they contribute to an individual’s personal success and the success of their organisation?

Ideas for reflection

The final stage of the peer learning process map emerging in A&M involves diffusion (or scaling) of lessons learned from peer engagements back to host organisations, sectors, and communities. This is the stage where peer learning at the individual level is ratcheted up to impact actual reform progress—and hence where the practical tacit knowledge gained from peers helps improve the success of reforms. Unfortunately, there is limited evidence that this kind of diffusion happens very often. The following ideas will assist those designing peer learning engagements (or engaging in such) to diffuse more often.

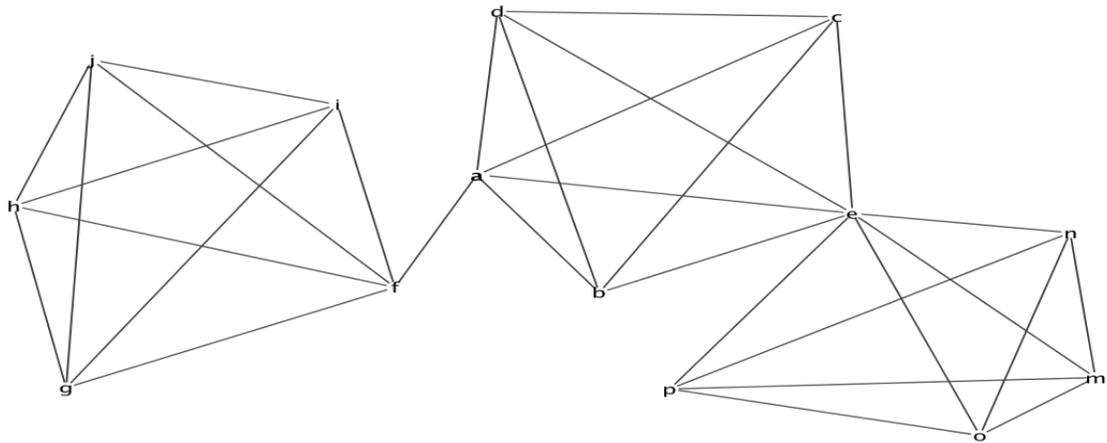
- *Effective diffusion starts with some knowledge of what is being diffused.* Organisations that know what learning they are trying to facilitate tend to have a better chance of structuring an appropriate and effective diffusion process.
- *In order to ensure diffusion and scaling of peer learning, both the peers and the organisations in which they work need to be considered (see figure 10 below).*

Figure 10. Keys to successful diffusion and scaling the peer learning of individual peers

<p><u>Getting peers to ‘share forward’</u></p> <p>Ensuring ‘peers’ reflect effectively on their peer learning gains Ensuring ‘peers’ are willing to share learning back into their organisations Ensuring ‘peers’ are able to share learning back to their organisations</p> <p><u>Ensuring home organisations are open to learning</u></p> <p>Ensuring organisations are open to learning from ‘returning peers’ Ensuring organisations are willing to invest in learning from ‘returning peers’ Creating time and spaces to bring lessons home</p>
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- Not all home organisations are open to learning. The peer learning initiative needs to ensure that home organisations actually want their peers to learn and return home with new ideas. *This can be done by contracting with the home organisation, and requiring the organisation to support the peer learner and provide her with opportunities to share her learning.*
- Individual peers are more likely to share forward into their organisation *if they are aware of this as a requirement up-front, and if methods of sharing are established by the home organisation.*
- Peer learning can diffuse from individuals to organisations through networks; these can be constructed in various ways, including as mimics of the outside peer network where the peer individuals are accessing new lessons. *Building local peer networks is thus an interesting strategy to promote diffusion of learning (see figure 11 below).*

Figure 11. Diffusion of peer learning through horizontal connections



- There are other tools that can be used to create links between the home context and the learning environment; the appropriate tool should be chosen for each situation.
- Learning in groups is an effective way of ensuring diffusion of peer lessons; *group-based learning involves people from the home organisation working alongside colleagues who have benefited from external peer learning*. They work together on the job and this gives opportunities for diffusion to the colleague who has been through external peer learning.
- Coalitions are very effective means for diffusing lessons, especially when these lessons involve tacit knowledge transfer. *Governments should invest in coalition building skills among both those who benefit most directly from peer learning and those who are targeted as secondary beneficiaries*.
- *Diffusion of peer learning gains may be enhanced if it is actually measured*. This is difficult to do, but could be possible and influential if organisations are clear about the kinds of lessons they expect to come from the peer learning and how they expect these to impact home organisations and scale into reform impacts (as will have been identified in any theory of change).