

# Capacity development and training

## At the core of everything we do

Building capacities of government and other crucial actors is fundamental for the implementation of the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Only when governments at national, regional and local levels are able to develop and enact integrated policies with multiple stakeholders from the public, civil, academic and private sector will results be achieved.

At NIRAS, capacity development involves much more than enhancing the knowledge and skills of individuals. It is complex and intertwined with organisational and societal culture and can never be limited to merely imparting knowledge or improving skills. It requires holistic engagement in a process of “change” and “change management”.

Conventional tools and methods used to approach change, evidence and learning often ignore the interdependent system between multiple (individual, organisational and institutional) levels and the overarching historical, social, cultural and political factors that influence change. Firm beliefs in the virtues of results management continue to permeate development policy and practice.

Our approach to capacity development is centred on context-specific, locally driven and collaborative solutions to complex problems that allow for greater adaptability and are more sustainable. NIRAS has been bringing these principles of adaptive management into the design and practice of our capacity development interventions for many years.

■ My change project was to increase revenue collection for our utility company by bringing back customers on our water network who were disconnected due to non-payment of bills .... We took many customers off the water network hoping they would feel the pinch and come running back to us to settle the bill, but this never worked ... To implement the project I had to fight a number of huddles internally ... to make reconnection affordable ... The SUWAS training changed the way I looked at customers. I saw the need to get down and listen to them. I think it was important to hear their voice.”

**Ackloyd Mubila, Accounts Executive at Kafubu Water and Sewerage Company, Zambia. His SUWAS change project resulted in a more than 50% increase in revenue collection efficiency and greater access to water for more people in Chifubu and Pamodzi peri-urban areas.**



Photo: WaterAid/Chileshe Chanda

## KEY SUCCESSES

- + Currently more than 220 NIRAS projects being implemented with a capacity development element.
- + Leaders in designing and implementing comprehensive capacity development interventions over more than 20 years, with learning and adaptation as cornerstones of our approach.
- + Partnerships with government, civil society organisations, academia/research institutions, and private enterprises in over 60 countries, strengthening institutional and organisational capacity, in a range of natural resource management and social development sectors.
- + Bridging policy and practice of international development cooperation, as contributors to evaluations, analyses and higher level education teaching, and innovators of methods and practices for delivering best learning results.
- + Delivery of Sida-financed international training programmes (ITP), with over two decades of consistently high quality performance and as frontrunners in innovations of the ITP modality.

## SERVICES WE CAN OFFER YOU ...

- + Design of problem-based and adaptive approaches to change management, capacity development and policy advocacy.
- + Tailored pedagogic approaches based on transformative and participative adult learning.
- + Integrated technical and vocational training of individuals with longer-term capacity strengthening of organisations and agencies.
- + Expertise in a range of learning-based approaches to programming and implementation, including theory of change, results-based management, adaptive approaches to planning, monitoring, evaluation and learning, outcome mapping, outcome harvesting, developmental evaluation and other tools and designs for learning.
- + Integration of human rights, gender and equity perspectives into capacity development approaches and methodologies.
- + Technical, managerial and administrative capability to arrange multi-year international/regional capacity development and training interventions.
- + Experience of digital techniques and tools for training, learning and data management.

## Driving change in 60 countries around the world

International training programmes (ITPs), an approach supported and promoted by Sida, are the gem in our capacity development crown. Over the past 20 years – as leading contributors to pedagogical tools, change management, and integrated and rights-based approaches to sustainability – we have driven innovation of the ITP modality.

Our ITPs build technical skills and promote good governance through change management within participants' organisations and collaboration between sectors and agencies. These interventions are catalytic – it is the expertise of our target organisations and participants that are central to setting change processes in motion.

By way of example, some 360 participants from Africa and Asia completed the ITP on strategic environmental assessment (SEA) between 2013 and 2019. Participants' change initiatives contributed

to, amongst others: the inclusion of SEA in national legislation in Cambodia and Bangladesh; the establishment of SEA advisory desks at the Environment Ministry in Kenya and Lao PDR; and adoption of SEA approaches for planning in Uganda's transportation sector, Zambia's mining sector, and Zanzibar's oil & gas sector. University-level SEA education is now delivered in places like Mozambique, Lao PDR, and Bangladesh thanks to the ITP SEA.

Some examples of ongoing or recent ITPs include:

- Media Development in a Democratic Framework
- Sustainable Urban Water and Sanitation – Integrated Processes
- Strategic Environmental Assessment
- UN Security Council Resolution 1325 – Women, Peace and Security
- Education for Sustainable Development
- Integrated Water Resource Management
- Transboundary Water Management



+4000

ITP alumni, with high degree of engagement in professional networks, and leading change within their organisations, sectors and countries



60

Countries in Africa, Asia-Pacific and South America have sent representatives to participate in ITPs



+220

Number of NIRAS projects currently being implemented with a capacity development element



## Building long-term institutional capacity

The sustainability of the Responsible and Innovative Land Administration (REILA) project in Ethiopia is dependent on human capacity to carry on the project's work after it comes to a close. A multi-dimensional approach to capacity development was adopted from the outset, including methods, systems, and human capacity development. Between 2011 and 2019, a low-tech and low-cost "fit-for-purpose" cadastral methodology was taught to over 1500 project participants. In addition, REILA devised the National Rural Land Information System (NRLAIS) and trained 600 government staff in its operation. In parallel, a fully-fledged technical, vocational, education and training (TVET) programme on Rural Cadastre and Land Registration was developed and offered at Assosa TVET College for the first time in the country. Several higher level officials have called this project "an eye-opener for decision-makers in the land administration sector" and emphasised how it has changed local mindset regarding land administration and registration.

## Water for Eastern Equatoria: replication and scaling up

From the outset, the Water for Eastern Equatoria project was established as a national integrated water resource management (IWRM) pilot project with a vision to roll out the learnings gained from successful interventions to other parts of South Sudan. Capacity building efforts within national and local government agencies, as well as among county staff and NGOs have been critical for continued water management activities such as hydrological monitoring, sanitation and hygiene education, water pump repair, and water quality testing. NIRAS worked closely with organisational bodies like the Keneti Watershed Management Committee and the water users' associations and interest groups to ensure sustainable management of the broader catchment ecosystem. Creative approaches to sharing, replicating and scaling-up best practices enabled linkages to be formed between different catchment user groups, such as farmers and vegetable traders, or those providing transport to market.



### For more information contact:

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