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Capacity development

KEY FACTS

- Approximately 60 percent of the organizational results in FAO's Strategic Framework involve capacity development activities.
- FAO e-learning materials have reached over 170 000 users worldwide. Over 700 hours of self-paced learning is now available.
- Since 1995, FAO has trained over 4 500 people in development and emergency contexts in more than 120 countries to assess and target the specific needs of men, women, boys and girls through socio-economic and gender analysis.
- In 2010, more than 20 FAO headquarter units assisted producers' organizations and cooperatives through sectoral programmes and projects. These programmes involved 127 countries with a total of 173 projects.
- From 2005 to 2010, 100 students from eligible member countries benefited from the Master's-level fellowship programme established with the Hungarian Ministry of Rural Development.
- Over 2 400 member country institutions have registered with the Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture (AGORA) programme, which stores 2 800 high quality international publications and databases on agriculture, fisheries, food and the environment.
- The e-Agriculture Community has 7 000 registered members from over 150 countries. Since 2007, more than 14 000 visitors have participated in online forums and found information on ICTs for sustainable development in agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

Nurturing people's potential to help themselves

Capacity development – defined as the process of unleashing, strengthening and maintaining the ability of individuals, organizations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully – has been at the heart of FAO's mandate since the Organization's foundation. Now a new approach has been given significant emphasis in the context of the recently approved Corporate Strategy on Capacity Development.

Rethinking capacity development: a new approach

Real and lasting change in agricultural development and food security requires strengthened capacities. It is recognized that national and regional actors need greater capacities to plan, prioritize and implement programmes and member countries now expect FAO to enhance delivery in this area.

Individuals must acquire greater knowledge, competence and skill if national capacities are to be strengthened. A fundamental condition for any country seeking to reach its development goals is thus to provide a suitable environment in which to target all three dimensions in an integrated way with activities that are sustained over time.



Tanzanian scientists conduct research.

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How FAO supports capacity development

Traditionally, training events dominated capacity development efforts but results often proved ephemeral. While training remains one of FAO's valued tools, current efforts need to be more comprehensive with the following factors emphasized:

Process: equal consideration must be given to outputs, to the way FAO engages with local, national and regional actors, and to the quality of those relationships, which must be collaborative and participatory.

Focus: along with heightened technical capacities, four functional capacities – policy support, knowledge sharing, partnering and programme implementation – should be highlighted.

Modalities: in addition to training, includes coaching and mentoring, organizational development, support to network creation,

sector-wide prioritization, and South-South cooperation agreements.

Tracking: as part of FAO's results-based programming, a comprehensive set of capacity development indicators is being developed to design better programmes, enable more effective monitoring and provide outcome analysis that can inform future efforts.

To enable policy, FAO helps key stakeholders in member countries collect and analyse information, improve collaborative decision-making and keep policy formulation processes in line with public, private sector and civil society objectives. A new FAO Multidonor Mechanism (FMM) promotes capacity development in policy formulation and uses funds to finance on-the-job training.

On the organizational level, FAO works to help commercial producer organizations,

enterprises, cooperatives, public and private service providers and rural organizations become more profitable. FAO encourages them to consult with and fairly represent all stakeholders; efficient institutions are more likely to enable rural communities to influence policy and to benefit from emergency, rehabilitation, development and investment programmes.

FAO collaborates with education ministries and other national learning institutions to encourage and support educational and training policies and programmes geared to the development of individuals' capacities. In more isolated, rural areas, FAO now encourages the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) – radio, cellular phones and computer-based learning programmes – to complement or replace formal learning systems.

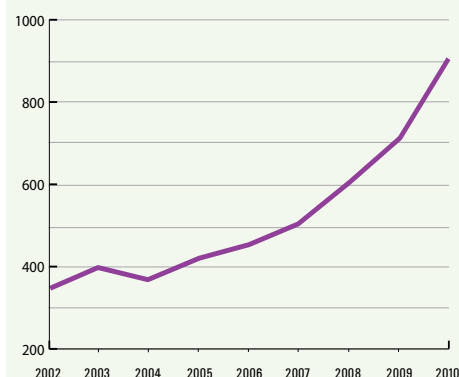
FAO develops e-learning materials for member countries in various technical areas within its core mandate. By bypassing

the constraints of conventional training mechanisms, e-learning contributes to improved capacities. External FAO partners such as member country universities are encouraged to include e-learning courses in their curricula.

FAO is collaborating with member governments and partner institutions to facilitate fellowship and scholarship programmes such as the agricultural Master's-level fellowship programme established with the Hungarian Ministry of Rural Development. FAO is also working closely with the Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) through a research fellowships programme for mid-career agricultural scientists.

FAO is continuing to develop and expand its South-South Cooperation (SSC) programme so that the skills and competencies of South-South experts and technicians will increasingly include those relevant to capacity development.

FAO field programme expenditure (US\$ millions)



Every year, FAO has been able to draw on its growing extrabudgetary resources for many of the Organization's capacity development activities.

Source: FAO

Capacity Development Portal

The FAO Capacity Development Portal (<http://www.fao.org/capacitydevelopment/en/>) is key to FAO's goal of strengthening the national capacities of its members. Currently, the portal contains more than 700 Learning Resources and over 40 Learning Services.

Two additional websites are also important resources for capacity development. The

Education for Rural People Website (<http://www.fao.org/erp/erp-toolkit-en/en/>) provides virtual learning material to approximately 140 000 people including policy makers, professors, students, and extension staff, while the Easypol portal (<http://www.fao.org/easypol/output/>) offers essential support to all actors in the policy process.

Internal support for capacity development

To facilitate the implementation of the Corporate Strategy for Capacity Development, FAO has created an Organization-wide plan for mainstreaming capacity development into all FAO systems and processes. An internal support package has been designed to provide FAO staff and collaborators with the tools, skills and competencies to apply the new integrated approach. It includes a learning

programme, tools, guidelines and illustrative case studies and consists of four modules:

- better practices for supporting capacity development in member countries;
- capacity development approaches in member countries;
- good training practices for effective capacity development; and
- organizational development.



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FAO project in Nicaragua helps small farmers to increase productivity.



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy

Telephone: (+39) 06 57051
Fax: (+39) 06 57053152
E-mail: FAO-HQ@fao.org

Media enquiries:
Telephone: (+39) 06 57053625
Fax: (+39) 06 57053729