



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT NOW | FAO'S APPROACH TO SUSTAINABILITY

A DRIVER OF CHANGE

Real and lasting change is driven by stronger – and sustained – capacities for agricultural development and food security. These must be enhanced across every level of government, in all agricultural sectors, in civil society, and in the private sector. FAO and its Members have always known this and together have made important progress.

Now, capacity development (CD) is being given even greater focus by FAO and the international development community. The Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action have heightened expectations for countries to lead and own the development process, and for donor resources to be more closely tied to results. National and regional actors need greater capacities to plan, prioritize and implement programmes themselves.

FAO's Strategic Framework elevates CD to the level of a Core Function, one of eight primary means by which FAO achieves results. As such, CD is to be articulated in the strategies, programmes and work plans of technical departments, other organizational units and the decentralized offices. Two thirds of FAO's Organizational Results address CD.

FAO'S VISION

Strengthened knowledge and capacities of individuals are central to fortifying national capacities, but this cannot happen in a vacuum. CD is constrained when the organizations and overall environment to which individuals belong lack the ability to absorb and maintain the enhanced resources, or fail to anticipate emerging needs.

Effective CD recognizes and addresses these three dimensions, which are interlinked. CD improves the knowledge, skills, behaviour and attitudes of individuals; modifies the mandates, priorities, processes and structures of public, private and civil society organizations; and strengthens the political will, policy framework and other elements to provide an overall environment that enables capacities to be enhanced and sustained. Meaningful change is achieved when all three dimensions are targeted in an integrated way, with interventions that are sustained over time, for as much as five to ten years.

FAO's approach to CD embraces an important principle: it is country-driven and consistent with the Members' priorities. FAO does not "infuse" capacity from the outside, but facilitates a process of change through which countries enhance abilities from within. CD is done in partnership: FAO, Member Countries, and other key players work together in ways that harness the comparative advantages of each.

All this is reflected in FAO's *Corporate Strategy for Capacity Development*, which was developed through consultation with Members and all FAO units worldwide, and incorporates the major findings of the *Evaluation of FAO's Activities on Capacity Development in Africa*. Taking a corporate approach to CD is a significant advance which allows FAO to learn from its collective efforts and provides Members with CD support that is consistent across the whole Organization.

THREE DIMENSIONS OF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT



A fundamental condition for a country to reach its development goals lies in its capacities at individual and organizational levels and in the enabling environment.

The individual dimension refers to a wide range of actors, such as producers, policy makers and staff of organizations.

The organizational dimension includes public and private organizations, civil society organizations and networks of organizations.

The enabling environment is the context in which individuals and organizations work and includes a country's institutional set-up, power structures and policy and legal frameworks.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT FAO'S NEW CD APPROACH?

Training events dominated CD efforts in the past. Too often – in the words of the team leader of the Africa evaluation – these were like shooting stars. They lit up the sky for a short time, but quickly faded away. While training will always be among FAO's valued tools, current efforts need to be more comprehensive in helping countries adopt more sustainable approaches to CD. The following factors need to be considered:

PROCESS – CD objectives are not expressed only in terms of outputs. Equal consideration is given to the way in which FAO engages with local, national and regional actors, and to the quality of those relationships. FAO strives for CD that is collaborative and participatory.

FOCUS – In addition to our support for the development of technical capacities, emphasis must be placed on developing four functional capacities: policy support, knowledge sharing, partnering and programme implementation.

MODALITIES – FAO's portfolio of CD modalities is broad and diverse. In addition to training, it includes coaching and mentoring, organizational development, support to network creation, sector-wide prioritization, and South-South cooperation agreements. These support learning and change at all three dimensions.

TRACKING – As part of FAO's results-based programming, a comprehensive set of CD-focused indicators is being defined to allow CD efforts to be better designed and monitored, and for outcomes to be analysed to inform future efforts. FAO's programming and project guidelines are incorporating verification measures to ensure that the new approaches to CD are applied.

LOOKING AHEAD

New horizons are opening in the field of CD at FAO. In one way or another, almost every part of the Organization is involved in implementing the Corporate Strategy for Capacity Development. This illustrates the concept of FAO 'working as one': vertical and horizontal synergies regardless of geographic location. The Knowledge and Capacity for Development Branch (OEKC) and an Inter-Departmental Working Group lead and guide the implementation of the strategy, including development of a support package to improve FAO competencies and know-how. This package consists of a four-part learning programme, tools, guidelines and good practices which are accessible on the FAO CD Portal and the Intranet. The Organization is also ensuring that its CD approach is in line with UN entities and others in the international development community.

For more information, visit the CD portal:

www.fao.org/capacitydevelopment.org

or e-mail:

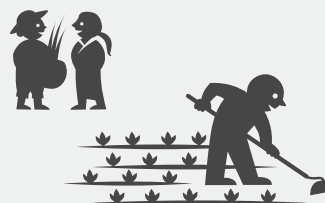
capacity-development@FAO.org



SUCCESSFUL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN ACTION

INDIA

India sought a sustainable approach to grow cotton with a minimal use of pesticides. FAO teamed up with national partners to create Farmer Field Schools (FFS), training nearly 50,000 farmers in four Indian states. Working together, trainers and farmers used innovation and local knowledge sharing to identify and implement best practices. This led to the participation of another 100,000 farmers. Several Indian states adopted FFS as the official approach to sustainable field management practices. Agricultural extension services and policies in the country were reoriented and partnerships between scientific and research institutions, universities and policy-makers were formed. Seven years after the FAO programme concluded, its legacy and core principles still thrive in sustainable national programmes.



GAMBIA

In Gambia, 78 percent of the forest area is severely degraded. The government recognized that improved forest management required greater community involvement. FAO worked with the Gambia Forestry Department to introduce community-based enterprise development at local level. This methodology has since been incorporated into the curriculum of many of the technical schools that prepare students for forestry management. As a result of these efforts, many villages now successfully engage in community-based enterprise development, earning additional cash income and thus giving economic incentives for communities to sustainably manage their allocated forests.



FAO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Without robust capacity — strong institutions, systems and local expertise — developing countries cannot fully own and manage their development processes. We agreed in the Paris Declaration that capacity development is the responsibility of developing countries, with donors playing a supportive role...

Accra Agenda for Action 2008

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