

# **PAPER 21**

An innovative approach to training and capacity building;  
the Water for African Cities 1 experience

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## **An innovative approach to training and capacity building; the Water for African Cities 1 experience**

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### ***Abstract***

This paper describes approaches, experiences, impacts and lessons learned with building and sustaining capacity in the Training and Capacity Building (TCB) Component of the UN-Habitat Water for African Cities (WAC) Programme Phase 1. The WAC programme sought to build capacity in the participating cities in the water sector through (1) making information available on best practices in urban water management, and (2) linking sector professionals with each other and with other networks, institutions, governments, municipalities, NGOs and the private sector. The TCB component specifically focused on the three inter-linked thematic priorities of the WAC Programme, which were (1) improving efficiency of water use through water demand management, (2) preventing of the negative environmental impact of urbanization on freshwater resources, and (3) enhancing the Public Awareness in African cities. The TCB component has been unique and innovative in its approach and implementing methodology, and brought together participants from 6 cities in West, East and Southern Africa. Strengthening the capacity of local training centres and regional resource centres was an important element of the TCB component.

### ***Keywords***

Capacity building, impacts, innovative approach, training, urban water management, Water for African Cities Programme

### ***List of Abbreviations***

CEFOC	Centre de Formation Continue
MLM	Middle Level Managers
NETWAS	Network for Water and Sanitation
PA	Public Awareness
PPC	Pollution Prevention Control
PPP	Public Private Partnership
SLM	Senior Level Managers
TCB	Training and Capacity Building
TLM	Top Level Managers
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
WAC	Water for African Cities
WDM	Water Demand Management

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## ***Introduction<sup>2</sup>***

The managing Water for African Cities (WAC) programme was an initiative of UN-HABITAT within the framework of the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. The programme supports African countries to manage the urban water crisis and to protect the water resources. The programme consisted of 3 main components: pilot studies in the field of urban water management, water education, and training and capacity building of sector professionals, local training centres, and regional resource centres. The programme was a direct follow-up of the Cape Town declaration (1997) adopted by African ministers, which addressed the urgent need for managing water in African cities and it was funded by the United Nations Foundation for International Partnerships (Turner Foundation) and other agencies<sup>3</sup>. Matching counterpart supports are also obtained from the participating cities/countries.

The WAC programme involved 3 cities from West Africa, and 4 cities from Eastern and Southern Africa. The cities from West African were Accra (Ghana), Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire) and Dakar (Senegal). The corresponding cities from Eastern and Southern Africa were Addis Ababa, (Ethiopia), Nairobi (Kenya), Lusaka (Zambia) and Johannesburg (South Africa).

UN-HABITAT contracted UNESCO-IHE Water Institute in The Netherlands to advise UN-HABITAT in the supervision of the Training and Capacity Building (TCB) component of the WAC programme. UN-HABITAT contracted two regional resource centres to carry out the training and capacity building activities, namely; Centre de Formation Continue (CEFOC) for the West Africa region and Network for Water and Sanitation (NETWAS) in the Eastern and Southern Africa region.

The overall objective of the TCB component was to improve the efficiency of water use and management and to increase public awareness in the communities of the selected African cities. The TCB component specifically focused on the inter-linked priorities of the WAC programme:

- Developing realistic and effective Water Demand Management (WDM) strategy for efficient water use in seven demonstration cities;
- Building capacity at city level to monitor and assess sources of pollution loads to freshwater bodies, and to set up early warning mechanisms for timely detection of emerging hotspots of urban pollution;
- Enhancing region-wide information dissemination and water conservation awareness-raising in African cities.

The TCB component was designed for (1) training of African professionals in water demand management and pollution control, and (2) to serve as a tool for capacity building of local and regional institutions to independently lead training of similar scope and scale in the future. In addition, it aimed at building the capacity of local training institutions to promote the process of urban water management. The TCB programme was conducted between May 2002 and August 2005.

## ***Methodology***

### ***Conceptual point of departure for the TCB component***

Water sector capacity building in the TCB component of WAC phase 1 has been defined as the process to provide individuals, organisations and other relevant institutions with the capacities that allow them to run the water sector with optimal performance, now and in the

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<sup>2</sup> General descriptions within this report are based on the final report of the TCB component (UNESCO-IHE, 2005)

<sup>3</sup> World Bank, UNDP/UNV, the Governments of the Netherlands and Finland and the European Union.

future. In the context of water sector that often performs poorly under severe resource constraints, capacity building provides a holistic approach that takes into account the environment, managerial system and institutional as well as human resources development. Capacity building is a process that is characterised by:

- being supportive of local capacity builders and water sector institutions,
- integrating the relevant technical, economic, behavioural and management disciplines,
- being both issue-centred and output focused, and
- aiming at the creation of effective and learning-oriented organisations.

### *Strategy*

The broad concept, content and approach of the intended TCB were developed and agreed upon during a meeting, in which all WAC city managers participated in Nairobi, 2000. It was decided that this TCB programme was implemented along two parallel tracks.

As its **first** objective, the project sought to enhance the capacity of managers and decision-makers in water utilities, other service providers and regulatory bodies, in integrated urban water resources management with particular emphasis on water demand management and water quality management. This led to three specified target groups:

- Middle Level Managers (MLM) – Included heads of distribution districts, plant managers, etc. It was decided by the city managers that the training should address project preparation and implementation in the areas of water demand management and pollution control and for each city this group should consist of about 15 persons.
- Senior Level Managers (SLM) – This category included heads of technical and financial departments. It was decided by the city managers that the training should address project planning, resource allocation and co-ordination and for each city this group should consist of 3 persons.
- Top Level Managers (TLM) – This category included policy and decision-makers, managing directors and administrators, as well as political figures. It was decided by the city managers that the training should address policy, strategy and programme development and for each city this group should consist of 3 persons.

The city managers stressed that a holistic approach towards the urban water management should be taken and therefore the target groups should include participants from multi disciplinary backgrounds.

The TCB was planned in a sequential manner and involved a cascading concept (see figure 1). The training programme was planned to first train MLM, then SLM and finally TLM. This sequence was consciously selected with the following rationale: During the implementation of the training programmes for the MLM, participants worked on their action plan and identified limitations beyond their control in terms of resources at their disposal to undertake the work. During the training of the SLM, the resource constraints at the MLM were introduced as an input to be discussed and addressed at that level. The SLM training identified shortcomings in policy, regulations and instructions that were in turn an input to the training for TLM.

It was also decided that the TCB should be carried out in 2 cycles ('sandwich construction'), with a period of 6 months in between to implement the action plans developed in the first cycle and to revisit these plans and identify bottlenecks in implementation.

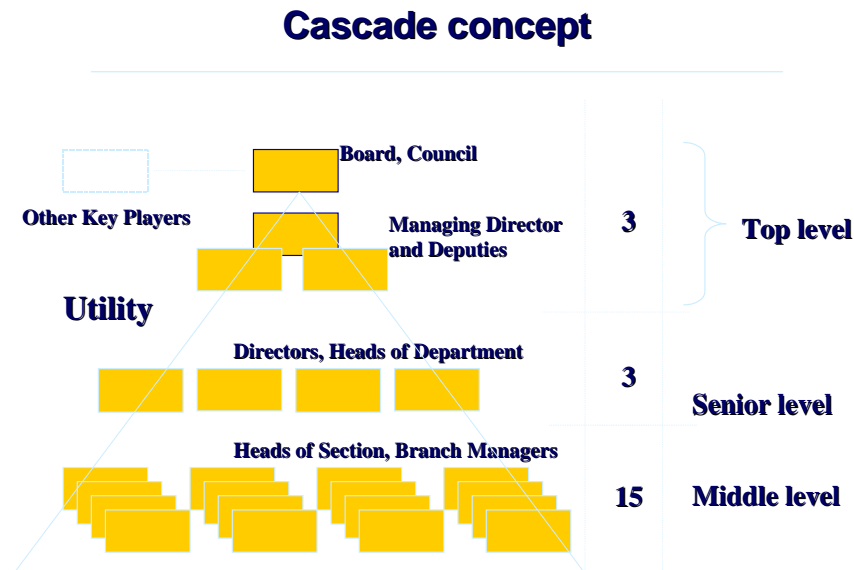


Fig 1. Relationship between the target groups - the cascade concept.

**Secondarily**, the programme sought to anchor the enhanced capacity within the region and ensure sustainability of this effort by institutionalising the training programme through capacity building in the form of a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme and technical support to existing local training institutes and regional resource centres.

In order to select the best available training and resource centres in the selected cities, consultations were made with WAC program staff and WAC city managers in March 2002. UNESCO IHE conducted surveys in each of the participating cities in the region to identify qualified resource centres and selected trainers from the centres that would conduct the trainings. Meetings and telephone conferences were conducted to help prepare and finalize the course curricula with the WAC city managers and to prepare the Terms of References for the recruitment of the regional centres. The regional resource centres were selected through specific tender procedures. The proposal was based on the assumption that it was possible to find capable trainers in the different countries after attending a specific training.

#### *Implementation approach*

In order to effectively achieve the aims of the WAC Programme, the TCB component focused on the following important themes: Water Demand Management (WDM), Pollution Prevention Control (PPC) and Public Awareness (PA), crucial themes in the understanding and implementation of integrated water management in cities and regional scales.

The TCB started with a survey in the different cities to identify on-going pilot projects and existing materials that could be used as training materials and potential local training institutes/trainers. Following this, a training of (local and regional) trainers took place. During the ToT, the trainers shared expertise and gained additional knowledge in the field of WDM,

PPC, and PA, and planning. Also familiarisation with activities in the different cities took place. The objectives of the ToT course were to prepare future trainers on content and methodology for the MLM (and in some case for the SLM) training course. Moreover, this aimed to equip and update participants with tools, skills and necessary knowledge for the development and implementation of the MLM (and SLM) training course and action plans. This knowledge was needed to train the target groups in 6 cities (Johannesburg was used as a resource city but no training and capacity building took place here). After the ToT, training at MLM, SLM and TLM took place. These trainings had the following objectives:

- The MLM training (3 weeks) was planned to make participants understand the relationship between WDM, PPC and PA and the importance of an integrated approach to water management. The training was also designed to improve co-operation and coordination between the different role-players within the utility, to develop an action plan and monitoring framework and to present and share action plans with senior and top managers.
- The SLM training (1 week) was prepared to give the utility heads to survey the action plans of MLM and evaluate their feasibility as well as to define their own tasks in implementation of the action plans and ensure timely monitoring. It also aimed to discuss and prepare an awareness-raising plan and to suggest change in policies that should be discussed between the TLM.
- The objectives of the TLM (1 week) training were to enhance the capacity of the top WAC city managers and decision makers in integrated urban water management with particular emphasis on key challenges as well as to review achievements in action plans and make necessary adjustments.

The first cycle of training focused on contents such as WDM, PPC, PA, exchange of experiences between the cities and planning tools and it resulted in the formulation of action plans. The second training cycle (after 6 months) provided opportunities to evaluate progress made in realising the action plans, identifying bottlenecks, improving skills related to these bottlenecks and it produced revised action plans. The content of the second cycle of trainings was based on the evaluation of the first cycle and feedback from participants expressed within the 6-month period.

### ***Analysis and discussion***

Analysis of the TCB is based on the author's direct involvement with this programme and from evaluations, discussions and feedback with all parties involved (This includes: UN-HABITAT, the international, regional and local resource centers, course participants and organisations from the WAC cities). However, limited formal quantitative or qualitative tools have been used to evaluate this TCB programme.

### ***Impact***

In training impact cycle, 4 different levels of training impact can be identified, where it can be noted that a higher level of training impact cannot be attained unless there was an impact at the previous lower level as follows (IHS/UTI, 2003):

- *Level 1: Learning impact:* Did any learning take place during the training? This impact is normally measured during the training, and is addressed during the end-of-course evaluation.
- *Level 2: Job behavior and Performance Improvement impact:* Did the learner succeed to apply his/her learning in his/her job to improve his performance?

- *Level 3: Functional and Organizational performance improvement impact:* Did the improved performance of the person trained had a wider impact on the performance of colleagues, his working unit/department or organization at large?
- *Level 4: Impact on the clients satisfaction:* Did the improved organizational performance have an impact on the clients satisfaction of the services/products received.

Within the TCB component the following observations regarding impact can be made:

- Level 1: learning objectives have been attained and participants at all level evaluated the training component in a very positive way. Participants identified that relevant learning had taken place as the content fitted their situations and focused on real problems, which had a practical orientation. This impact was measured by written and oral evaluations.
- Level 2: in the second cycle of the 'sandwich' construction, participants identified that some impact on individual performance had taken place as some of the actions have been implemented. However, they felt that there was limited incentive to change performance due to various reasons. One of the main reasons is that participants faced difficulty implementing the actions plans they had developed and there was no follow up by the higher levels to support implementation. In some organizations, a higher managerial level (or even boards, with respect to expenditures) did not approve the action plans. Organizations have their own annual plans in which MLM actions plans should have been taken into account and within the proposed 6 months. In addition, some participants identified lack of communication with the higher hierarchical level, and no timely feedback had been provided (on MLM training and plans by the SLM, and on SLM training and plans by the TLM). Moreover, the lower levels indicated that they were not informed by the higher levels on the outcomes of their higher-level trainings, and felt in a vacuum.
- Level 3: in two organisations there have been some clear indicators of organisational improvement. These organisations were both utilities and all participants had come from these utilities. Also further internal sharing sessions with other colleagues had been organised within these utilities. Difficulties in attaining impact at level 2 made that there can be very limited impact at level 3. However, some participants identified that skills gained from MLM1 were used to set targets for, for example, performance contract and divisional work plans that were outside the scope of WAC. Also the multi-disciplinary nature of the course led to more integral definition of problems and planning.
- Level 4 has not been measured. Theory states that this impact level can normally only be attained with a tailor-made institution-wide (performance improvement) training program, with courses addressed to different levels of multiple staff in an organization (IHS/UTI, 2003). Here it can be assumed that the approach to the TCB might be promising but needs to be optimized in one organization instead of trying to tackle a sector as a whole. This contradicts suggestions by participants on the need to train more people from own **and** other organizations, creating a critical mass of people aware and knowledgeable about the WDM, PPC and PA topics.

The observations regarding impact of the TCB as outlined above have been done immediately after the implementation of cycle 2. It should be noted that there might be higher impacts as described above as a result of the second cycle in which many of the problems of implementation were identified.

### *Lessons learned*

#### Target groups and the cascading system.

Based on evaluation by the participants, the training programme was considered as very positive in term of human resources development. The programme increased the motivation of staff members at all levels, and in some cases reinforced the linkage between MLM, SLM and TLM, and certainly improved communication regarding this topic between peers from different professional backgrounds. The SLM and TLM levels created a very trusting environment in the second cycle and informal networks were developed to share experiences.

In some cases the WAC city manager was expected to play a more prominent role and was missing in promoting the WAC programme. This resulted in problems with selecting the participants. The process of selecting the participants was also not always optimal as a result of existing gaps in the MLM, SLM, and TLM chain. For example, in one city, staff from one organization was selected for the TLM and MLM training, but for the SLM training professionals from a different organisation were chosen. The cascading system has been highly valued at all levels to institutionalise the training. However, problems as described above create difficulties for implementing the intended cascading concept of learning and provision of support.

In some countries reorganization and staff transfer contributed significantly to the discontinuity between cycles 1 and 2, in particular when people were replaced but there was no transfer of information about the WAC programme and staff at higher levels did often not know who had attended in the previous cycle from the lower levels.

The cascading process would have benefited from prior preparation at individual and at company level as it would then be clear what everyone could have expected. This would also help in measuring impact at level 2 and 3, as outlined above.

#### Communication

The cascade model for training was identified as a good model for training development by the participants. Nevertheless it became obvious during the training that strong communication was needed to give optimal results. As an important lack of communication between hierarchical levels, intra- and internationally was identified between the two cycles and the second cycle of training gave a clear focus on this issue, giving tools for improving communication and dialogue between MLM, SLM, and TLM for organising and developing communication systems.

#### Financial aspects

In most of the cases, the trainees in this programme did not develop plans that fit in the annual plans of their own organisations. Mainstreaming of the planned activities was the major bottleneck for successful implementation. The most successful city is Dakar, where all activities planned were developed in the broader context of a World Bank Project. The financial support of the WAC programme was considered as seed money to develop innovative approaches (pilot projects). These pilot-projects could be developed later to full-scale with financial support of other sources. However the majority of pilot projects had been completed by the time the TCB component was implemented, precluding integration of the action plans within the broader framework of the WAC I programme.

In the other cities the mainstreaming of WAC activities was less successful and the action plans did not have the required funding. In Abidjan positive results were yielded. These were seen to be related to the relative isolation of the country (in that period), allowing staff of different organizations within the city to really carry out the activities with the resources locally available

and to have more time for communication with peers (no external “disturbance” from many visiting donors, consultants, etc).

MLM and some SLM trainees indicated that they had lobbied for increased budgetary and resource support during the entire programme to have their plans developed. The request was to their superiors to allocate the required resources (time, money and materials) for achieving the action plans. But in most case they did not succeed as their activities were not mainstreamed in the planned activities of their departments or not timely indicated (for examples budgets for 2005 plans were already fixed in fall 2004).

#### Regional resource centres

Two staff from each resource centres were involved in the ToT. But the follow-up of the MLM and SLM (in Western Africa) involved much more people, some of them being consultants hired to fill the role of supervisor without appropriate preparation. In some case, the fact that some staff that joined the programme later were not fluent in English created problems as English was the communication language within the programme.

#### Local trainers

Local trainers were hired by the resource centres on a short-term basis to implement the training. Not all local trainers had the same level of quality, as they were more experts in one field than teachers. Local trainers should have represented local institutions in order to institutionalise the training. Due to timing and contracting problems between the regional resource centres and the local resource centres this did not happen.

#### Project Management Matters

Due to various reasons, which will not be outlined in this report, moment got lost during planning. This resulted in many changes and lack of interest at local level and resulted in a rush to implement the TCB component. The delay in implementation also led to limited structures to anchor the training in the different cities as city managers and WAC steering committees were not active or non-existent.

Not clearly defined contractual arrangements led to ‘unrealistic’ expectations among parties, delays and limited commitment.

Lack of interaction with other WAC programme elements resulted in minimal communication between the TCB component and other programme components. The pilot studies developed by the different cities were not used to their full potential as they were not seen as parts of the same programme.

#### *Conclusions*

The TCB component of the WAC programme can be seen as an innovative and unique approach to TCB in the water sector. The process has been bottom up in planning and deciding on concept, content and approach. It contained a real effort to increase impact of training, by training managers at different hierarchical levels and through anchoring the training within wider organizations. In addition, the TCB had a multi-disciplinary approach to content issues and the training took part in two cycles, with a clear objective in between those cycles.

Overall, the participants evaluated the programme as successful and learning objectives have been achieved. However, it shows that after implementation of the training there were limited incentives to change practices that bring about major changes in individual performance and

organisational improvements. Numerous lessons have been learned and suggested to UN-HABITAT for the development of the TCB component in the WAC programme, phase 2.

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