WRUAs fostering transparency, accountability & participation

THE APPROACH AND STORIES OF CHANGE IN THE LAKE NAIVASHA BASIN

The capacity development programme, Strengthening transparency, accountability and participation in and through WRUAs, aimed at leveraging the potential of the WRUAs in the Lake Naivasha Basin (Kenya) as reliable, transparent, and credible local water institutions. The WRUA Good Governance Partnership implemented the programme, and included seven government institutions, NGOs, a water users’ association, and international organisations.

A Water Resource Users Association (WRUA) is a group of water users – individuals, farmers, the private sector, and other stakeholders – established under the Kenya 2016 Water Act for the collaborative management of water resources, and the resolution of water-related conflicts at a sub-catchment level.

THE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

- **Tailoring to local needs:** The programme started with a capacity assessment of 12 WRUAs, using the WRUA Capacity Assessment Tool. Based on the identified capacity gaps, the programme then developed and conducted tailor-made training modules.

- **Participatory:** The training methodologies included practical examples for the WRUAs to relate to. This aided adoption and understanding of concepts. Youth participation, and gender balance was emphasised.

- **Constant follow-up, coaching, and mentorship:** The WRUAs developed realistic and practical action plans, allowing them to prioritise and to take ownership of the implementation process. The approach included a long-term monitoring process with frequent phone calls, field visits, and evaluations and revisions of the action plans.

- **Empowerment, anchorage and sustainability:** Along with the WRUA members, Water Resources Authority (WRA) Community Development Officers were also trained. Based on the positive feedback and outcomes from the pilot programme, WRA headquarters adopted the approach as part of their WRUA capacity development tools under the WRUA Development Cycle.
LAKE NAIVASHA BASIN WRUAs CASE STUDY

A capacity assessment was conducted in 12 WRUAs in the basin, across nine specific areas including internal capacities, management procedures and external relations. Three main capacity gaps were identified and translated into the development of corresponding training modules.

Four pilot WRUAs in Mkungi Kitiri, upper Gilgil, Kianjogu, and Mariba, and the Lake Naivasha Basin Umbrella WRUA (LANABWRUA) were selected to take part in the programme.

OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

A follow up capacity assessment conducted in September 2017 showed that all pilot WRUAs ranked higher overall compared to a similar assessment from 2015. Some WRUAs slightly dropped in one or two areas of assessment – namely legislation and financial administration, and process and program management. However, this was further addressed in a subsequent financial management training. All other seven areas saw mainly improvements.

THE THREE TRAINING MODULES AND THEIR KEY OUTCOMES

1) INTERNAL GOVERNANCE AND INTEGRITY

The module worked to enhance capacity of the WRUAs to take part in the management of water resources by strengthening transparency, accountability, and participation, and having a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Key outcomes:

- WRUA officials and members further understand their roles, and increasingly comply with governance standards and good management practices. Example: all four WRUAs have revised their constitution.

- The WRUAs are now positioned as trusted forums for water-related conflict resolution in the basin.

- More youth and women have been recruited and are involved in WRUA decision-making processes and activities. Example: 30 youth were mobilised in Mkungi Kitiri WRUA.

"Because of the governance training, there is youth inclusivity in our WRUA. We have a tree nursery that we are tasked to manage, and it has attracted more youth to join" – Mary Waihiga Gitumbi, Mkungi Kitiri WRUA youth member.
2) ADVOCACY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The module worked to enhance capacity of the WRUAs to strengthen their stakeholder networks, and effectively demand accountability on decision-making and regulatory processes.

LANABWRUA played a key role in getting messages out to a wider audience and obtaining a stronger response across all levels. Key outcomes:

- WRUA members are actively participating in county government processes. **Example:** public meetings on county integrated development plans.

- Members are writing proposals and mobilising funds. **Example:** all four WRUAs have secured financial support from the county governments.

- WRUAs collaborated on creating an inter-county WRUA forum to address issues on trans-boundary aquifers and rivers that cut across several counties.

3) COMMUNICATIONS

The module aimed at increasing the visibility of the WRUAs, creating awareness on conservation of water resources, and inspiring community members to join the associations. Key outcomes:

- Email, Facebook, posters, WhatsApp, SMS, phone calls and billboards are successfully used as communication tools. **Example:** all four WRUAs use these platforms to convey messages, including the importance of environmental conservation, and pollution control, to their members and other users.

- The members of the WRUAs are willing to share their increased knowledge and experiences with the broader community. **Example:** exchange visits with other WRUAs – peer-to-peer learning – have successfully taken place.

ACHIEVEMENTS WITHIN LANABWRUA

LANABWRUA is the umbrella WRUA organisation in Lake Naivasha. The achievements within this organisation are of particular importance for the wider catchment area. Key outcomes:

- Increased visibility and recognition of the role of WRUAs by the county governments. A WRUA representative has been included in the County Environmental Committees of Nyandarua and Nakuru.

- Community members and authorities are more aware of the increased level of compliance by the WRUAs.

‘We are extremely happy that we have been able to get the County governments on board. Nyandarua County Government has promised to implement projects worth Ksh. 3 million in seven WRUAs’ – Enock Kiminta, LANABWRUA Chair
• Increased participation of the WRUAs in county government processes. **Example:** LANABWRUA was engaged in the designing of the county finance bill and the annual development plans by providing comments and budget estimates on activities related to water resources management. Moreover, LANABWRUA was able to lobby for concrete conservation activities to be factored in in the five-year County Integrated Development Plans (CIDP) to guarantee funding from the county government.

• The county governments recognise the WRUAs as their reliable partners on the ground, and as effective water stewards through the implementation and monitoring of conservation projects.

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**THE KEY LESSONS**

• Basic **internal governance structures** – such as a stable group of core members – in a WRUA should be established before a specific capacity strengthening approach, such as this one, can achieve worthwhile results.

• Continuous **engagement and coaching** after the training was crucial to achieve sustainable changes in the WRUAs. Given that this was realized through just ½ day visits per WRUA each quarter and a few phone calls in between, it also proved to be good value for money.

• In order to increase sustainability and adoption of approach, the **work should seek to complement** – or fill gaps within – existing strategies or programmes, such as government initiatives like the WRUA Development Cycle.

• A multi-stakeholder partnership approach in planning and implementation greatly benefitted and positively influenced the success of the project.

**ADOPTION & SCALING-UP**

The programme results have reached far beyond the Lake Naivasha Basin, and the partners have expressed interest in using the approach and training modules in other basins, and within other sectors. **Example:** the advocacy module is being used as training material in the Watershed project with 15 WRUAs in the Athi Basin, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) is adapting the tools for use with community forest associations (CFAs), and WRA is applying the tools in other basins throughout Kenya.

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**OTHER RESOURCES**


• Training modules: www.wra.go.ke/wrua-training-modules

• Accompanying case study: Cooperating for Greater Success in WRUAs

**INTERESTED IN MORE INFORMATION ON CREATING A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIP? CONTACT US!**

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