Cooperating for greater success in WRUAs

A MULTISTAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

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.

SEVEN ORGANISATIONS JOINING FORCES

Centre for Social Planning and Administrative Development (CESPAD)
A Kenyan NGO that aims at shaping community perception, attitude, and behaviour on environmental matters to realise good governance and best practices in the management of natural resources.

GIZ International Water Stewardship Programme (IWaSP)
A programme that facilitates partnerships between the private sector, community groups, civil society organisations, and government agencies to address shared water risks.

Lake Naivasha Basin Water Resources Users’ Association (LANABWRUA)
A Lake Naivasha Basin umbrella group that coordinates the catchment’s 12 WRUAs.

Imarisha Naivasha
A public-private-people initiative working to coordinate the restoration and sustainable management of the Lake Naivasha Basin.

The Water Integrity Network (WIN)
An international NGO working with partners on promoting water integrity and governance, and supporting institutional change.

Water Resources Authority (WRA)
A Kenyan governmental body responsible for regulating the management and use of water resources. Its mandate includes the establishment and capacity building of WRUAs.

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) – Kenya
An environmental conservation organisation seeking to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, with extensive experience working on water security in Lake Naivasha.
THE PROCESS

GIZ IWaSP, Imarisha Naivasha, LANABWRUA, WRA, and WWF-Kenya had been cooperating with WRUAs in the Lake Naivasha Basin tackling water security challenges for a number of years.

In 2015, recognising that reliable and credible WRUAs are the linchpin for the successful management of water resources, capacity assessments of 12 WRUAs in the basin were conducted. From this analysis, and jointly with WIN and CESPAD, the partnership developed and conducted three training modules to counter the identified gaps in four pilot WRUAs in three areas:

1) Internal governance and integrity
2) Advocacy and lobbying
3) Communications

THE OUTCOMES

WRUAs are now better organised, more aware of their role and more visible among the community members. They are also more able to reach out to other stakeholders for support and collaboration, including the county government.

THE CHALLENGES

Working in such a multi-stakeholder approach was quite demanding for the partners, and came with a number of challenges that are common in diverse partnerships:

• Delays and drawn-out procedures: The rich consultative process and requirements for all parties to participate in all programme elements meant that decision-making was often slow.

• Difficulties in meeting everyone’s expectations: Partners were often required to compromise and work towards goals that may have differed from their initial conceptions.

• Overcoming ‘silo-thinking’ and building trust: Partners’ objectives and approaches did not always synergise, which made it difficult to kick-start joint activities during the inception phase.

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

It was with patience, constant communication, positive attitudes, and pragmatism that these challenges were overcome – and the rewards far outweighed the effort. In order to facilitate the coordination of activities, a joint work plan was designed. It set the basis to design activities building on each partner’s concrete expertise, previous work, and networks.

During the implementation phase, a representative from each organisation was present in every activity, with frequent meetings taking place throughout the process. This ensured all partners stayed informed, and could plan and evaluate all activities together. International partners were also kept informed via regular Skype meetings.

These efforts helped to build trust and to create a very committed and united team. It was the positive personal relationships among members that oiled the partnership wheels, and facilitated collaborative work in a less formal environment. **Example:** although the MoU was not signed until the end of the project – due to complicated procedures with some of the partners – this did not prevent the programme from running smoothly. In the future, however, MoUs should always be completed before programme commencement.

“All sectors are endowed differently in terms of capacities. The public sector gives directions by providing legal and policy development. Private sector provides financial resources and information access. CSOs are mostly resourceful when it comes to mobilization, advocacy and lobbying. All these sectors complement each other and share responsibilities.”

- Kamau Mbogo, Imarisha Naivasha CEO.
THE REWARDS OF WORKING TOGETHER

The unique benefits from collaborating with diverse skill sets, experiences, and expertise included:

- **Optimising resources**: Coordination allowed the partners to streamline their efforts – from sharing transport and event venues, to eliminating work overlap – reducing conflict, and saving both time and money.

- **Sharing knowledge**: Partners were able to build on each other’s experience and fill in knowledge gaps, ensuring an efficient and high-quality programme delivery.

- **Accessing networks**: Partners optimised their connections to gain support from external parties – including the county governments, the WRA Nairobi headquarters, the private sector, and other organisations – for using and promoting the approach.

- **Peer learning**: All partners participated in all the activities of the program, which helped their staff gain new skills and tools.

- **Increasing programme sustainability**: The combination of strong local knowledge, and national and international expertise, was key to achieving local and national anchoring of the programme. It allowed the capacity building activities to be adapted to local contexts, and helped ensure the initiative was embraced by the WRUAs and taken up by the WRA.

CONCLUSION

**Communication, trust, and commitment is key**

This partnership proved that working together requires, above all, continuous communication. None of the partners would have been able to reach comparable results on their own.

Each organisation brought their specific strengths: whether in mobilising WRUA members, conducting trainings, or with technical knowledge on a specific topic. The success of the WRUAs capacity building program, which is now being replicated in other areas of the country and by other sectors, would not have been possible without the distinct contributions, joint collaboration and commitment of all partners.

Umbrella WRUA members during an advocacy and lobbying training.
A multi-stakeholder partnership 2018

OTHER RESOURCES


• Guide for Managing Integrity in Water Stewardship Initiatives [CEO Water Mandate and WIN]: www.ceowatermandate.org/integrity

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

• Accompanying case study: WRUA fostering transparency, accountability & participation

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

WRA: info@wra.go.ke
LANABWRUA: umbrellawrua@gmail.com
GIZ IWaSP: andre.lammerding@giz.de
Imarisha Naivasha: imarishanaivasha@gmail.com
CESPAD: info@cespad.co.ke
WIN: info@win-s.org

PARTNERS & FUNDERS