

Cooperating with



If applied to the search for the most effective tools for development cooperation, the causal principle connecting “the current needs with future necessities”¹ is a key for unfolding the issue of sustainability when pursuing development. As a consequence, training appears to be one of the main strategies for the implementation of any cooperation process as it multiplies its benefits, strengthens its impacts and powers up its purposes. Training is also a tool that is defined in itself and operates not only for the goals of specific actions, but also for the broader reality of the national system where it is applied and encourages a gradual enrichment of the relations between donors, partners and beneficiary subjects. In this context Hydroaid represents an example of how vocational training and capacity building (the ensemble of actions aimed at strengthening technical, managerial and administrative skills) can play this role in the field of water resource management and environment protection.

For over a decade, Hydroaid had provided hundreds of technicians and managers of public utilities and companies from developing countries with training opportunities that, combined with traditional structural actions (works and equipment), contributed to raising the governance effectiveness and, in general, the environment protection over given territories. Training activities used to be considered an additional element in the realization of cooperation interventions; eventually they proved to be not only an added value to the achievement of the planned results, but often also an indispensable component for the planning, organization and implementation of projects connected to local water management systems.

More recently, new training options have emerged besides the traditional in loco education approach. The adoption of e-learning tools for distance learning management, for example, allow modern courses to reach a much higher number of recipients located in different areas of the world and has become a reference platform for cultural exchange, participation enhancement and dynamic interaction among students, trainers and tutors. According to Hydroaid experience, this training technique is particularly useful for developing and emerging countries: students from Africa, Asia and Latin America have successfully attended and completed several courses in this format. Starting from 2008 Hydroaid has been holding a distance learning program focused on topics of global concern and specially perceived in developing countries, including wastewater treatment and reuse; waste treatment, disposal, reuse and recycling; underground aquifer catchment and vulnerability; integrated water resource and waste management; water and environmental resources planning. The experience developed by Hydroaid is enriched by a process of research, update and critical comparison of different management and planning models for basic public services.

When considering the complexity of the challenges faced by the efforts aimed at sustainable development, especially in the field of natural resources, the ability of delivering vocational training through different approaches, chosen according to different needs, contents and strategies, is of uttermost importance.

This experience produced surprisingly good results in terms of learning quality and cost-effectiveness, and encourages us to proceed in this direction and to consolidate our commitment to fostering awareness and transferring know-hows on sustainable water resource management as a fundamental basis for environment protection as well as for life improvement.

¹ Bruntland Report, World Committee on Environment and Development (WCED), 1987.