SNV

Systems change in action: An introduction to SNV's experiences in adaptive programming in Tanzania

A system is a set of component parts that function and interact in some regular way, organised for a purpose. For example, like in your local council, school, bank, or sports association. When systems malfunction, they fail to deliver services that sustain life, human dignity, and security. Systems that do not work take away people's agency and freedom to pursue their own sustainable development. In these case studies, we underscore the importance of testing and iterating scalable solutions with diverse stakeholders, and brokering collective action to drive systems change. By applying these methods, our experience in Tanzania shows that more inclusive processes and results are produced.

This five-part systems change case study documents the experiences and lessons of the Institutions for Inclusive Development (I4ID) Programme. Implemented by Palladium, SNV in Tanzania, BBC Media Action, and ODI UK. The four-year programme was supported with UKAid and IrishAid funding, and ended in December 2020.

The programme contributed to overall systems change in Tanzania by:
- strengthening inclusivity and accountability practices in Tanzania's institutions to achieve long-term social progress and economic growth; and
- enabling the delivery of equitable services to benefit women, young people, people living in poverty, and vulnerable groups across Tanzania.

I4ID implementation validated our experience that a significant focus for systems change efforts is in the re-linking of relationships and connections. This means bringing together people who work on the same issue or problem – likely with the same goals – but who, often, do not (or would not) talk to each other.

A system is made up of several smaller systems or parts that shape its efficacy, effectiveness, sustainability, and transformative potential. To increase our impact, SNV systems change work focuses on four areas of engagement: (1) shifting norms, (2) kick-starting/shifting markets, (3) enabling government and others to develop and adopt new practices, and (4) leveraging (additional) financing.

The five case studies illustrate how SNV engages in the four focus areas to influence systems change, while addressing the following issues:

- critical systemic failures of urban waste management services;
- water utilities' constraints in expanding access to safe and affordable water, which disproportionately impact women and girls, and people living in low-income settlements;
- limited affordability and accessibility of menstrual health products for women and girls in urban and rural areas;
- lack of investment facilitation to optimise private sector investments at district and regional level, create jobs, and promote industrialisation and inclusive growth; and
- constrained business environment faced by local sunflower oil processors and sunflower smallholder farmers in some of the poorest regions of the country.

About I4ID

Institutions for Inclusive Development (I4ID) is a programme implemented by Palladium, SNV, BBC Media Action and ODI UK, funded by UKAid and IrishAid. Between 2017 and 2020, I4ID partners piloted new and innovative approaches to introduce inclusive growth approaches and better public services to benefit the largest number of people possible in Tanzanian society.

This five-part systems change case study was put together by staff from the I4ID team. Julie Adkins edited the studies with the editorial and design support of Anjani Abella and Chared Verschuur-Ballo (SNV).

SNV

SNV is a not-for-profit international development organisation that makes a lasting difference in the lives of people living in poverty by helping them raise incomes and access basic services. We focus on the Agriculture, Energy, and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) sectors and have a long-term, local presence in over 25 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Our team of more than 1,300 staff is the backbone of SNV.

Systems change case studies

SNV projects directly benefit millions of people. At the same time, our projects also drive systems change – strengthening institutions and kick-starting markets to help many more people work their way out of poverty, well beyond the scope of projects.

In this series, SNV documents and explores lessons on the way it achieves systems change, with special attention to four key parameters of success:

- leveraging finance,
- kick-starting/shifting markets,
- adoption of improved approaches by government and others,
- shifting values, norms and mindsets.

The growing number of case studies will cover a variety of geographic contexts, (sub-) sectors and development challenges.

Cover photo

Women drawing water from pump (SNV/Aidan Dockery).

For more information

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