

# Newsletter

February 2017



Participants at the second Consultants for Change training in Malaysia. © INTRAC 2017

Welcome to our February newsletter.

In this issue INTRAC Training Manager Aline Filiot addresses key opportunities, challenges and initiatives for the training team in the new year, focusing on sustainable approaches. One of these is our upcoming one-day event on 'Reinventing Organisations', inspired by Frederick Laloux's [book](#) – read on to find out more and how you can join.

We are delighted to include a viewpoint by Linda Lönnqvist, a former INTRAC staff member currently working with civil society organisations (CSOs) in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico. Linda analyses the current situation of CSOs in the region with Research Associate at ECOSUR Dr Zamora and how initiatives, such as the [CASSA project](#), work in a vibrant but complex context.

We also bring you some details of our recent work, such as an evaluation for Kepa (the Finnish Service Centre for Development Cooperation) and a research study on Young Arab Voices, a project by the British Council and the Anna Lindh Foundation. To coincide with the second Consultants for Change training in Malaysia, INTRAC Principal Consultant Rick James explores what makes a good consultant in his latest blog 'Consulting with soul'.

Want to join the INTRAC team? We are looking for a dynamic and experienced Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) professional to help shape and develop INTRAC's portfolio of M&E consultancy, training and programme work for the future – all the details inside.

If you would you like to be our next guest newsletter contributor or blogger, [get in touch](#), we'd love to hear from you.

Happy reading!

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## A sustainable approach to training

Training often gets bad press for being short-term and ineffective. At INTRAC we think that training is a key component of capacity development but it is all about how you do it.

Here are some of the things that we think make our training sustainable and effective.

### Training that contributes to change

A training is an extraordinary space to take time for reflection, to take a step back; it is an eye opener. Good training is an opportunity for learning: it challenges our convictions, the state of our knowledge, our vision of the world, exposes us to others' perspectives, and this, in itself, is a change. But this is just the beginning of the learning adventure.

There are many obstacles, once the training is over, for individuals to apply their knowledge and for it to have an impact on work practices or on the organisation. It is necessary to activate other leverage to bring change at the organisational level.

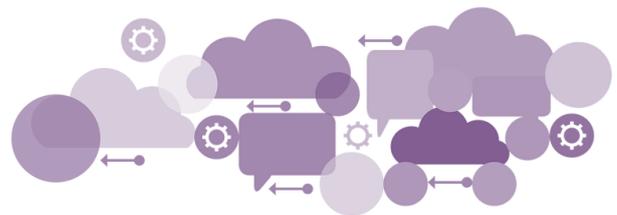
To contribute to sustainable change, training must be more than a quick-fix. Whether it is accompanying an individual on their learning journey through mentoring, or supporting change within the organisation, we assess the various stakeholders' needs, the context (the level at which a change is desired – whether individual knowledge or skills or impact at the organisational level), and we develop with you the best strategy to reach this objective.



### Training that stays with the organisation

Training is sometimes perceived as a failure by organisations, and it is quite often due to a lack of ownership of the training's contents and processes: once the trained staff leave the organisation, their knowledge and skills are lost. We encourage organisations to develop their own training materials and systems.

We support them with instructional design, course development, training and coaching of trainers, piloting, monitoring and evaluation, and implementation processes that will enable them to sustain the delivery of the training over time and despite staff turnover.



### Training that is made available where you are

In a world where we urgently need to reduce our carbon footprint, we believe that eLearning and a locally available supply of quality training are the two pillars of a sustainable approach.

- **Online courses – convenient and less harmful to the environment**

INTRAC started offering blended and online courses in 2011, and we will be further developing our portfolio in 2017-18. We are often confronted with reticence when it comes to enrolling in online training as it is frequently believed to be a cheap alternative to ‘real’ training.

But at INTRAC, we work long and hard to ensure our online offer is as good as our face-to-face training. Our eLearning platform and our collaborative approach allow participants to carry out group work, share their experiences and learn from others, as well as receive personalised feedback. Without adding to one’s carbon footprint!



- **Developing local trainers in your country and region**

Flying international trainers everywhere in the world is not sustainable on many levels. First off, as experienced as they are, these trainers will never have the same knowledge of the terrain, the same sensitivity, the same commitment to the communities affected, or the same possibility to follow up on the long-term support. Nor is this approach financially sustainable: airline travel and overhead costs are not mitigatable expenses. Unfortunately, while locally available quality training provision is crucial to strengthen civil society, few funding mechanisms are available to address this issue.

INTRAC has been piloting an innovative programme that meets this challenge. The [Consultants for Change](#) programme, implemented closely with the NAMA Foundation, is building a cadre of local consultants from five countries, combining face-to-face training and eLearning with long-term accompaniment through mentoring. These consultants will in-turn build the capacity of NAMA’s partners and others, ensuring continuity of the learning and bringing about sustainable change.

INTRAC hopes to develop a similar programme targeted specifically at trainers and is looking for partners and funds to do this. Investing in professional development programmes that can build the capacity of individuals and organisations in their own countries provides a vital resource for supporting civil society thinking and practice into the future.

We believe this is the way forward: a sustainable long-term approach to training. So if you are looking for learning that lasts, or a partner to develop and implement sustainable training approaches, please [get in touch](#).



Aline Filiot joined INTRAC in September 2016 as the Training Manager, overseeing INTRAC’s portfolio of open, in-house and online trainings. She has 17 years of field experience in training and international development acquired through various postings in Vietnam, Cambodia, the United States, Vanuatu and Rwanda.

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## Even the clowns are organised: exploring vibrant civil society action in San Cristóbal, Mexico

In San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas state, civil society in all its forms is everywhere. Even a tourist on a brief visit might notice the undercurrent of civic action: many of the spectacular hand-woven textiles in the shops come from income-generating projects for artisan women. The tea house is also a cinema screening political documentaries. Solidarity economy groups, visiting Via Campesina delegations, and women's self-defence networks meet in cafés. You might visit the Jtatik Samuel museum despite its policy of not paying commission to tour companies, and learn about Bishop Samuel Ruíz and his implementation of liberation theology. Even the clowns hold decision-making assemblies – in full clown getup. How did this active civil society cluster spring up here, and how is it doing?

I have gained some insight into local civil society as a member of a consumers' collective, and got to know Chiapanecan and Yucatan Peninsula-based civil society organisations (CSOs) through my work managing a learning community of CSOs who focus on food security and food sovereignty – a project known as CASSA. But to gain a wider overview of Chiapanecan civil society for this article I interviewed Dr Carla Zamora, Associate Researcher focusing on state-society relations at ECOSUR, a Mexican research centre. According to Dr Zamora, Bishop Samuel Ruíz and the Zapatista movement are two major wellsprings of the activist atmosphere of San Cristóbal.

Bishop Samuel of the Catholic Church and a group of associates made a concerted effort to empower indigenous communities over the 1960s to 1990s. His work is remembered with enormous affection and respect. His legacy includes the founding of several heavyweight non-governmental organisations (NGOs), among them [DESMI](#), practicing rural development and agroecology; and [FRAYBA](#), publicising and fighting human rights violations. Bishop Ruíz was also a negotiator for the other big CSO inspiration here: the Zapatistas.

The Zapatista movement rose to fame in 1994 when the EZLN, or Zapatista Army of National Liberation, came down from the mountains and dramatically occupied San Cristóbal. The Zapatistas stand for indigenous rights – “the land belongs to those who work it” – horizontal decision-making (their principles of leadership should be the new Commandments of development work), gender equality, autonomy from and resistance to the Mexican state. They produce and trade food, have their own educational system, basic healthcare, laws, constitution and communications, aiming for a long-term sustainable community<sup>1</sup>. The EZLN is not a CSO – Dr Zamora labels it a political-military institution – but Zapatista thinking and politics have attracted like-minded people to San Cristóbal and permeate the discourse of many locally-based CSOs.



A local maize defence poster: "Here we sell tortillas made with the good maize, free from GMOs". © Lönnqvist 2016.

In addition to organised civil society – an intense cluster of NGOs, cultural groups, social businesses, trade unions, consumers' and producers' cooperatives – there is more organic civil society here. The indigenous peoples have their own organising structures, often linked to religious ceremonies. Neighbourhood fiesta committees are another exuberant manifestation of civil society.

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<sup>1</sup> Presentation by Dr Peter Rosset, ECOSUR, 28.11.2016.

Not all local civil society is progressive and solidarity-minded. In her typology of CSOs Dr Zamora also lists charities, typically run by local elites and very adverse to structural change, that provide ad-hoc help to 'the deserving poor'. Within civil (or 'uncivil') society she also includes a form of clientelist community organising where negotiating resources for the struggle is indistinguishable from promising votes for favours, or blackmailing the state to give you money by threatening to occupy the highways.

In the project I manage, CASSA, the 24 participant CSOs represent all types: professional NGOs implementing government projects, cooperatives, social business, universities and community-based organisations. Some stand out: the 25-year commitment and use of Maya identity of Guardianes de Semillas; Hombre Sobre la Tierra's negotiation with local authorities to include local, agrototoxin-free produce in food aid parcels; KaKuxtal Much Meyaj's reinvigoration of local maize varieties through an annual seed exchange fair.

We deal with concrete problems facing the members: how to make your interventions stick after the end of a three-year project; how to process and market your organic produce; how to build trust with your fellow alliance members; and above all, how to make life in the countryside an attractive, viable option for young people.

What capacity building do local CSOs need? According to Dr Zamora, the main need is the perennial "how to get money to pay staff and buy a bus ticket". Within CASSA we support peer learning and trust-based networking. The skills, terminology and tools of fashionable NGO practice are well known among the most technically proficient CSOs, while others have the edge in grassroots organising, participatory decision-making and long-term impact. CASSA gives the less sophisticated organisations the chance to pick up good practice from their peers.

One vacuum I have noted in the region is in policy advocacy. For example, only one CASSA member organisation does advocacy, and there was little interest in developing it as a learning theme, even though food sovereignty is an intensely political issue. Dr Zamora shed light on why: according to her, a second key capacity gap for CSOs is how to understand and exercise your legal rights. The reasoning is that CSOs who deal with rights issues will run foul of criminal/political power sooner or later, and then it is invaluable to be able to hold your ground with legal arguments. We live in a kleptocratic client state, where you can try to use advocacy to change the law, but the letter of the law rarely applies. It says something about the commitment of CSOs that we continue working for rights, autonomy and dignity here, in defiance of a powerful status quo.



Members of CASSA's local knowledge working group at the Zapatista art festival CompArte. © CASSA 2016.



Linda Lönnqvist is based in Mexico and is managing the CASSA project, a partnership between the California-based Community Agroecology Network CAN and the research centre ECOSUR. Linda previously worked with INTRAC as Programme Manager of the Cypriot Civil Society Strengthening Programme and Programme Coordinator of the SMILING project in South Asia. She also ran INTRAC's NGO Research Programme .



## Our work

### Research study of Young Arab Voices in Jordan

In February and March 2017, Floresca Karanasou, INTRAC Principal Consultant for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), is undertaking a research study on Young Arab Voices (YAV), a project of the British Council and the Anna Lindh Foundation. The project provides “opportunities, tools and capacity building for the involvement of youth in running and managing effective debates” in the MENA region.

One of the project’s objectives is to promote inter-cultural dialogue, so the research is looking in particular at how YAV promotes cultural relations in Jordan. In other words, how it creates opportunities for young Jordanians to develop their understanding of other cultures (British and other Arab cultures). It also explores how YAV helps the young debaters to engage with people from different social or political contexts than their own within Jordan, and how it has changed the way they think and act. This research will also be the first opportunity to find out what Jordanian decision makers think of the project.

The project is now in its sixth year and it has already reached out to almost 43,000 young Jordanians and it has trained more than 3,740 in debating skills. Young Arab Voices has involved more than 100,000 young Arab people across the MENA region.



### Resource mobilisation webinars for the Union for International Cancer Control

INTRAC Trainer, Ajay Mehta, has been working with grantees of the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) to build organisational sustainability through resource mobilisation. Grantees from around the world took part in two online webinars to explore ideas around strategic fundraising, and approaches to diversifying resources. This was followed by a workshop at the World Cancer Congress where participants shared and discussed initial drafts of their organisation's fundraising action plans. Ajay's support was part of a series of organisation and project sustainability workshops and webinars that UICC organised for grantees. The series also included three webinars on monitoring and evaluation of advocacy, delivered by INTRAC Trainer, Sarah Rose.

## **Women's economic empowerment: longitudinal impact study for CARE International**

INTRAC is supporting the Women's Economic Empowerment Team at CARE International UK to conduct a longitudinal impact study of CARE's work to promote women's economic empowerment in four programme areas: savings-led financial inclusion; women's entrepreneurship; women and value chains; and dignified work.

The five-year (2016-20) study will involve in-depth, qualitative data collection in a range of countries, including Tanzania, Bangladesh and Rwanda. Focusing on a small sample of case studies, the team will explore how and to what extent changes in women's lives are shaped by their participation in CARE's programmes. INTRAC Principal Consultant Sarah Gillingham completed the first round of data collection in Tanzania in November 2016.

The longitudinal impact study is designed to assess changes in women's roles as producers, workers, entrepreneurs and consumers; and the extent to which women are able to achieve increased access to and control over economic resources, assets and opportunities. As such, the study will explore: women's participation in household financial decision-making; their levels of financial inclusion as active users of informal and formal financial services; and long-term changes in social norms and economic structures that benefit women and men equally.

## **Evaluation of Kepa's role strengthening civil society**

INTRAC Consultant Cowan Coventry, along with Finnish consultant Veera Pensala, are conducting an evaluation of the Finnish Service Centre for Development Cooperation (Kepa)'s role in strengthening southern civil society.

The purpose of the evaluation is twofold: firstly, it will assess Kepa's work during the period 2010-16, and analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches used. Secondly, the evaluation will provide fresh ideas on how to best utilise Kepa's resources, assets and synergy with member organisations, for strengthening southern civil societies in the rapidly changing international context.

The information and recommendations of this evaluation will be used to inform Kepa's strategy process and its new programme for 2018-21.

Through key stakeholder interviews and a country visit to Tanzania the consultants will aim to answer the following questions:

1. What difference has Kepa made?
  - What are the expected and unexpected outcomes and impacts that could plausibly be traced to the contribution made by Kepa? Have they been sustainable?
2. Have Kepa been doing the right things in the right way?
  - Has Kepa's support been relevant in the contexts that it has worked? Has Kepa chosen the right partners and themes for its work in the particular contexts?
  - What have been Kepa's strengths and weaknesses in its approach and activities?
  - What functional practices or innovations have added value to the partners or member organisations and their southern partners?

In addition, Cowan and Veera will provide Kepa with a number of recommendations to improve its future work.

## Consultants for Change second training in Malaysia

The [Consultants for Change](#) (C4C) programme is well underway. The 37 participants attended the second training in Malaysia 6-10 February.

This second training focused on managing emotionally charged situations, collaborative planning and provided the consultants with a set of tools for catalysing change.

The training was led by INTRAC Principal Consultant Rick James and INTRAC Associate Bill Crooks, with support from C4C Programme Coordinator Nicole Titera.

The C4C programme aims to develop a cadre of quality development consultants – consultants who focus on the client's change, not the contract; ensure the client genuinely owns and drives the process; get to the heart of the matter, beyond just symptoms; and bring the best of themselves. We call them 'consultants with soul'.

INTRAC's approach to training is one that delivers courses that are innovative, participatory and tailored according to the participants' needs.

Read Rick James' latest blog to find out more: <https://www.intrac.org/consulting-with-soul/>



Tools for catalysing change at the C4C training. Image by participant Carolyn Kandusi via Twitter.

## We are recruiting!

### Principal Consultant – Thematic Lead Monitoring and Evaluation

This is an exciting opportunity for a dynamic and experienced Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) professional to help shape and develop INTRAC's portfolio of M&E consultancy, training and programme work for the future. The job will include helping to extend our network of M&E consultants, building our public profile on M&E and contributing to our influencing work on shaping how M&E is done in the sector.

M&E has been a **core theme** of our work for the past 25 years and we have a strong track record and profile in M&E in the sector, through our high quality work in consultancies, training and publications.

**Location:** Based in Central Oxford (some remote working may be considered)

**Reporting to:** Consultancies and Training Director

**Full/part time:** Full time; part-time may be considered.

**Application deadline:** This post will remain open until a suitable candidate is identified. Previous candidates need not re-apply.

For full job description and details on how to apply: <https://www.intrac.org/recruiting-principal-consultant-thematic-lead/>

Know someone who might be interested? Please pass this along!



## Upcoming events

### **Introduction to 'Reinventing Organizations'**

16 March 2017, Oxford

What will organisations of the future look like? Do we need to rethink how our organisations are on the inside if they are to contribute to real change on the outside? INTRAC is offering this one-day event, inspired by Frederick Laloux's book '[Reinventing Organizations](#)', to explore key ideas, practices and possibilities of this emerging organisational development movement.

### **Online advocacy and policy influencing**

6 March – 1 May, Oxford

This course will give you the knowledge and skills to influence policy and practice in your own context. In this course, you will have the opportunity to develop and troubleshoot the implementation of an advocacy strategy as well as build your knowledge and confidence.

### **Theory of change for planning and impact assessment**

13 – 17 March 2017, Oxford

This course introduces the elements of theory of change and offers the opportunity for participants to apply and experiment with the key ideas and processes using their own case studies, as well as illustrative examples presented by the course facilitator.

### **Advanced monitoring and evaluation**

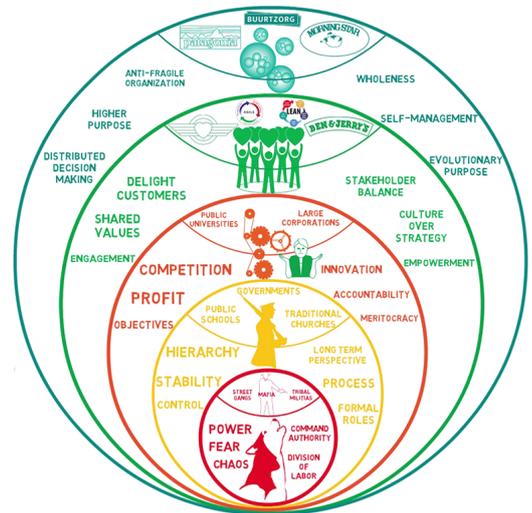
22 – 26 May, Oxford

This course builds on participants' understanding and skills of how to develop sustainable and cost-effective monitoring and evaluation processes and practices within their own projects, programmes and organisations.

### **Facilitation anywhere**

Online session: week 30 May 2017, face-to-face: 6 – 8 June 2017, Oxford

Think about the last good meeting, workshop or event you attended: what made it good, left you inspired, full of ideas, eager to follow up on connections? This training course will provide you with an opportunity to think about and practice designing and facilitating gatherings of people in ways that bring all of their talents into the room.



© Rod Collins, [Optimity Advisors](#), 2016.



## Publications and blogs



### Development in Practice, Issue 27

The first [Development in Practice issue](#) of 2017 is now out – with articles on sanitation, child rights, partnerships, social development, gender empowerment, microfinance, and many more.

This issue's free access article looks at the growing interest in integrated development across sectors and target populations. Read '[A case for integrated development: pathways to improve child well-being](#)' now!

### Accountability frameworks: strengthening trust in NGOs?

Amidst high profile scandals reported in the mainstream media, civil society actors are facing stringent reporting regulations and fundraising oversight across the world; but do accountability frameworks help to build trust in NGOs? Our latest guest blog by Erla Thrandardottir (City University London) and Vincent Charles Keating (University of Southern Denmark) explores this question.

Read the blog here: <https://www.intrac.org/accountability-frameworks-strengthening-undermining-trust-ngos/>

### Listening, power and inclusion: languages in development NGOs



In November 2016, INTRAC, the University of Reading and the University of Portsmouth hosted a workshop on the theme of languages and cultural knowledge in development NGOs. The workshop provided an opportunity for representatives from a range of UK-based NGOs and agencies to: hear examples of issues organisations have faced around languages and power relations; reflect on their own experiences; and consider what the development sector can learn from the examples for current practice and to influence policy.

In case you missed it, you can read a brief report which summarises key discussions [here](#).

### Praxis Series Paper 2 available in Arabic

Thanks to the British Council Jordan, our latest Praxis Series Paper 'She Parliamentarian. A campaign for women MPs in Jordan' by Rod MacLeod is now available in Arabic.

Download your free copy from our resource centre: <https://www.intrac.org/resources/praxis-series-paper-no-2-parliamentarian-campaign-women-mps-jordan/>

## Meet the team

### Max Wilder, Consultancies Assistant

Max joined INTRAC in January 2017 as Consultancies Assistant, where he provides essential administrative and logistical assistance to the consultancy team. Prior to this, he worked for a Scottish NGO called YES!Tanzania, monitoring and evaluating their 'Community Sport and Sexual Health Programme' in Arusha, Tanzania.



### Charles Buxton, Senior Capacity Building Specialist, Central Asia



Charles Buxton joined INTRAC at the beginning of November 2001 and is based in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan as Programme Manager for the Central Asia region. From 1996 to 2001, Charlie worked for Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) in London as a regional programme manager covering Central Europe, the former Soviet Union and East Asia.

Before joining VSO, Charles worked for 14 years in voluntary sector and community development in East London, where he is still involved in a community centre for Bangladeshi groups.

Learn more about our team: <https://www.intrac.org/who-we-are/meet-the-team/> and our work in Central Asia: <https://www.intrac.org/where-we-work/central-asia-russia/>

## News from Routledge: don't miss the Economics in Development research collection



This Economics in Development collection aims to highlight recent and diverse research from across the Routledge Development Studies portfolio, with particular emphasis on the following topical areas:

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- Growth & Innovation
- Inequality & Poverty
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