

CAPACITY BUILDING OFFER: EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF SYSTEMS PROGRAMMING OCTOBER 19-23, 2026

Opportunities Unlimited, in partnership with the Mazi Group¹, wishes to announce its second program on *Effective Management of Systems Programming*.

1. WHAT IS IT: A program patterned after an Executive MBA Program and designed for development professionals tasked with creating “system change”, you will learn the best management principles/practices essential to deliver this outcome. Participants will engage, over a one-year period, in a combination of face-to-face and virtual activities to learn the building blocks of a systemic development approach and apply this to a subject of their choice with the guidance of an expert coach.

Participants from our previous batch are currently being coached on:

- Applying systems thinking for development of the creative industry in Morocco
- Developing a communications strategy to share systems change results among different stakeholders in Rwanda
- Better management of staff and partners to pursue system changes through public-private partnerships in Kenya
- Strengthening commercial viability of partners in Jordan by applying adaptive management practices
- Learning how to mentor new staff to understand and apply systems thinking in climate-vulnerable locations in India.

2. WHO ARE THE FACULTY AND COACHES: Harald Bekkers and Fouzia Nasreen are the core faculty of this program. A network of qualified coaches comprised of current and/or former systems development team leaders and organization management specialists (on MEL, HR, Financial Management and Procurement) is available to match each participant with their topic of interest.

All program faculty and coaches have a track record in delivering systemic development in diverse contexts. We do not theorize “systems” and “complexity” – we will help you navigate and manage for system change.

Harald Bekkers has 20+ years' experience leading systems programs, working on processes to adapt the approach in diverse contexts and integrating good monitoring practices, WEE/inclusion, SME finance.

Fouzia Nasreen has 20+ years' experience in leading and advising programs in weak markets and advising programs on inclusive systems analysis, portfolio management, strategy design and implementation.

3. WHO IS THIS PROGRAM FOR: The program targets development professionals (donors, practitioners, consultants, non-profits) with at least two years' experience in systems development working on:

- Creating systemic trade arrangements (combining ‘aid and trade’ outcomes)
- Market creation for SME finance
- Market systems development, especially in fragile and conflict-affected settings
- Monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptive management practices
- Specific topics that lend themselves to a systemic approach such as Women’s Economic Empowerment and inclusion, youth employment and climate adaptation and mitigation.



Scan to register interest

4. WHY THIS PROGRAM IS RELEVANT NOW: In today’s context of dramatic aid cuts, practitioners of systems programming are well-positioned to achieve their objectives and navigate the uncertain funding future:

- Consensus that systems thinking, its guiding principles and practices, is a cost-effective means to achieve and sustain development investments in economic and social sectors by leveraging the skills and resources of system actors.

¹ The Mazi Group (<https://www.mazi.group/home>) is a collaborative of experienced systems development professionals.

- The major constraint in managing systems change is time, not money. It takes time for motivated system actors to adopt innovate practices, build new relations and change norms and mindsets. innovate, adopt and adapt inclusive business and service models with the evidence necessary to
- Development organizations can play a critical catalytic role in accelerating system change process because they can establish effective working relationships with many different system actors.

5. WHAT IS THE LEARNING OBJECTIVE: In practice, systems development programs -- regardless of scale, scope and funding levels, will most likely fail if not managed properly through its different stages of learning what works, going to scale and exiting with a better functioning, more inclusive and resilient system in place. Managing such programs requires agility, adaptation and learning in-built in the DNA of the program, its staff and organization. As such, the learning objective of this immersive 12-month management capacity building program is to prepare working professionals to ensure that they can effectively lead/manage/be part of systems development programming. The program content is designed to enable its participants to zoom in on the management challenges and organizational implications of driving system outcomes in complex and messy systems. The core curriculum focuses on how-to:

- Set system boundaries for their relevance to wider systems change as the basis for engagement.
- Spot the right talent for agile systems learning.
- Organize, build and support high performing teams to advance a systems change strategy, implement/adapt interventions consistent with the shared values and objectives of the organization(s) involved.
- Make systems development relevant and influential in complex and messy circumstances by choosing the right partners and forming partnerships that put and keep local system actors in the driver's seat for as long as they exhibit the will/skill to drive systems change.
- Diagnose problems and re-align system and organization functions to improve performance.
- Earn and sustain the trust and confidence among all stakeholders that agile learning against a shared system vision can deliver the best results.

6. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES AND TIMELINE: The five-day face-to-face kick-off workshop will be held at the Serena Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya the week of October 19-23, 2026. Each participant will leave the workshop with a range of ideas designed to implement a performance enhancing organizational change initiative to manage a systems development program within their sponsoring organization. Post workshop, the program will sponsor individual coaching sessions to reinforce learning from the workshop and to guide the participant on an organizational change initiative. Month 13 is the official end of the program when participants who have successfully completed the program will attend an online ceremony to receive their certificates.

7. PRICE: The price for this 12-month program is **\$2,950** for forty-five (45) hours of instruction. The five-day residential workshop includes thirty-five (35) hours of instruction. This price includes lunch and two coffee breaks. Participants will pay for their travel, lodging and per-diem for their evening meal. The workshop administrator will assist with visas, transfers, and hotel booking. This price also includes ten (10) hours of post workshop coaching customized to the needs of each participant.

Participants can purchase additional coaching priced at **\$500/5 hour coaching module** across a range of specialized topics in the core curriculum: Intervention Design, Finding Partners, Contracting and Managing Partnerships, MRM, Human Resources, Financial Management and Procurement.

8. APPLICATION PROCESS: This program is open to applicants fluent in English with least two (2) years of experience in systems development programs either as a donor, implementer or consultant. Fill out the QR code (page 1) or [this link](#) to register your interest after which we will follow up and require each applicant to submit:

- A resume which showcases lessons from past experience, training and publications relevant to this program's learning objective of effective management of systems development.
- Response to a few questions to assess the candidate's readiness and motivation to apply learning.

9. INQUIRIES: Contact Fouzia Nasreen at fnasreen@opportunitiesunlimited.nl or Harald Bekkers at hbekkers@opportunitiesunlimited.nl

10. EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT: 10% up to 30 August 2026.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS FROM OUR PREVIOUS BATCH SAID...

“My main takeaway was that systems approaches towards high level impact can leverage pre-existing incentives, capacity, and intentions of partners already in the system - we’ve just got to connect the hotspots effectively. Bonus points if you like complex puzzles.”

*Nimrah Karim, Senior Manager, Technical Assistance, Strategy, and Impact,
Challenge Fund for Youth Employment, Karachi*

“One of my main takeaways was that early-stage leaders need to stay close to all parts of the work, not just the strategy or big-picture decisions. I feel the best part of this training is yet to come - the 20-hour mentorship with sector experts. I’m very excited to use this space to grow some concrete skills. I’m really glad I took the chance/risk to attend this training.”

*Deepa Manichan, Founder,
Kudraki Foundation, Mumbai*

“This wasn’t just another training; it pushed us to rethink our role in driving change.

My biggest takeaway: In systems programming, we are not the problem-solvers we are the #catalysts.

- We stimulate change.
- We connect the dots.
- We unlock opportunities.

But real, lasting impact only happens when market players take ownership of the process.”

*Lina Khawaja, Jordan Country Lead,
Challenge Fund for Youth Employment, Amman*

“One key takeaway for me was that effective implementation at scale requires leaders to step out of the box, think beyond short-term outputs and design systems that are adaptive, data-informed, and resilient. I am leaving this experience inspired to apply a more holistic, systems-driven mindset in my work—one that prioritizes efficiency, scalability, and long-term value.”

*Andrew Magunda, Uganda Country Lead,
Challenge Fund for Youth Employment, Kampala.*

“The course is patterned after an Executive MBA, with the week-long in-person training followed by online sessions and many hours of coaching from some of the best MSD minds globally. What a fun week it was! The trainers and participants were a brilliant, high-energy, and super experienced group.”

*Alexander Fernando, Head of Resource Mobilization & Partnerships
International Water Management Institute, Nairobi*