

Effective Management of Systems Programming

A 12-month capacity building program
from Opportunities Unlimited and the Mazi Group

Aid budgets are shrinking. The programs that deliver will be the best-managed ones.

Systems development programs rarely fail for lack of technical skills. They underperform when they are not managed properly through the stages of learning what works, going to scale, and exiting with a better functioning, more inclusive and resilient system in place.

Our program, patterned after an Executive MBA, builds your management capability. You spend five days face-to-face with the faculty and your peers in Nairobi and leave with an organizational change initiative for your own program, and a coach who helps you deliver it over the following year. This is our second cohort.

Dates	November 02–06, 2026
Location	Serena Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya
Format	5-day residential workshop, then 12 months of coaching
Price	US \$2,950 10% off registrations up to 13 September 2026
To apply	Use the link or scan the QR code https://forms.gle/EDA6w94MMqMGhXo69 

Who this is for

Development professionals working in donor agencies, implementing organizations, consultancies and non-profits, with at least two years' experience in:

- market systems development, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings
- systemic approaches to climate adaptation and mitigation
- market creation for SME finance
- systemic trade arrangements that combine aid and trade outcomes
- systemic approaches to Women's Economic Empowerment and youth employment
- monitoring, evaluation, learning and adaptive management

"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."

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

Enquiries: Harald Bekkers, hbekkers@opportunitiesunlimited.nl, or Fouzia Nasreen, fnasreen@opportunitiesunlimited.nl

"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 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."

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

Practitioners of systems programming leverage the skills and resources of system actors rather than substituting for them. The constraint is time and flexibility, not money, to facilitate innovation. What decides whether a program delivers under these conditions is how well it is managed.

Participants from our previous cohort are currently being coached on:

applying **systems thinking** to develop the creative industry in Morocco;

- sharing **system change results** with stakeholders in Rwanda;
- managing staff and partners to pursue system change through **public-private partnerships** in Kenya;
- strengthening the **commercial viability** of partners in Jordan; and
- **mentoring staff** to apply systems thinking in climate-vulnerable locations in India.

What you take away

- **A performance-enhancing organizational change initiative**, conceptualized during the workshop week and made ready to implement in your sponsoring organization.
- **Ten hours of one-to-one coaching** over the following year, matched to your topic.
- **Forty-five hours of instruction**, thirty-five of them during the residential week.
- **A certificate**, awarded at an online ceremony in month 13.

"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

The core curriculum focuses on how to:

- **Define the systems you seek to change and design a coherent system change strategy.**
- **Organize, build and support high performing teams** to advance a systems change strategy and ad a learning culture.
- **Choose the right partners**, and form partnerships that keep local system actors in the driver's seat for as long as they show the will and skill to drive system change.
- **Diagnose problems and re-align system** and organization functions to improve performance.
- **Earn and sustain the trust of all stakeholders** that agile learning against a shared system vision delivers the best results.

Who is teaching

Harald Bekkers has more than 20 years' experience leading systems programs, adapting the approach in diverse contexts, and integrating good monitoring practice, WEE and inclusion, and SME finance. <https://www.opportunitiesunlimited.nl/>

Fouzia Nasreen has more than 20 years' experience leading and advising programs in weak markets, on inclusive systems analysis, portfolio management, strategy design and implementation. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/fouzia-nasreen-44467924/>

"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'm really glad I took the chance to attend this training."

Deepa Manichan, Founder,
Kudraki Foundation, Mumbai

Behind the core faculty sits a network of coaches, made up of current and former systems development team leaders and organization management specialists in MEL, HR, financial management and procurement, so each participant can be matched to someone who knows their topic. Everyone teaching and coaching on this program has a track record of delivering systemic development in diverse contexts.

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

How to apply

The program is open to applicants who are fluent in English and have at least two years' experience in systems development programs, as a donor, implementer or consultant.

Scan the QR code on page 1 or use [this link](#) to apply. The form you to ask for a CV showing lessons from your past experience, training and publications, and short answers to a few questions about your readiness and motivation to apply the learning.

What it costs

US \$2,950 for the 12-month program.

- **Included:** 45 hours of instruction, 10 hours of customized post-workshop coaching, lunch and two coffee breaks during the workshop week.
- **Not included:** travel, lodging and evening meals. The workshop administrator will assist with visas, transfers and hotel booking.
- **Optional:** additional coaching at US \$500 per five-hour module, covering intervention design, finding partners, contracting and managing partnerships, MRM, human resources, financial management and procurement.
- **Early bird:** 10% off registrations made up to 13 September 2026.

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