

Moral aspects of capacity building as part of responsible innovation deserve a more central place in the development debate and research. This comes to the fore in the capacity to deal with project implementation and the attitudes and values involved in it. The authors first provide some clarifications on the concept of capacity, emphasizing the value laden meaning of the concept and relating it to responsible innovation. In development programs different value sets and attitudes are confronted with each other, leading to different capacities, often competing for priority. Two cases involving capacity building in technology are analyzed, one on the introduction of tropical greenhouses in Kenya and one on the renovation of a vocational school in Surinam. This shows the central meaning of learning processes and careful and intense cooperation with the owners of the change processes. These are important aspects of innovating in a responsible way. The authors propose a path dependent way forward, prioritizing different values and cultural traits (and related capacities) according to time, situation and need. With that objective in mind—in order to innovate responsibly—there is an important role for the (meta-)capacity to alternate between different values and capacities, finding the right rhythm and equilibrium between different modes of behavior and cooperation, thereby integrating different values into a comprehensive strategy for development.