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(2) Promotion of Farmers' Cooperative (FC) Development for Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) in China

<i>Hazard</i>	Drought/Flood
<i>Hazard Impact</i>	Increasing vulnerability of the Farming systems and Farmers' livelihoods
<i>Strategy</i>	Establishing FCs as local partners for CBDRM
<i>Agrovoc Terms</i>	drought; wheats; cotton; double-cropping; cultivars; training
<i>Categories</i>	Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction
<i>Global Farming System</i>	Wetland Rice Based

Synopsis

Community Based Disaster Risk Management is a participatory process empowering communities to properly plan for and act on disaster risk management DRM. In this context, Farmer Cooperatives¹⁰ (FCs) can play in key role as local partners.

FC development for CBDRM was promoted between 2007 and 2009 in 4 project pilot areas in Juye County which is regularly prone to flood and drought hazards. The concepts of CBDRM were introduced to FCs; their specific roles in a district wide DRM system were defined and tested, leading to the formulation and implementation thereafter of community action plans for DRM. The FCs proved successful in organizing villagers to participate in the construction, repairing and cleaning of drainage canals, implementing improved disaster-related land use patterns, and in contributing to the district level disaster risk management planning process; The FCs also supported the field testing and learning about new, more hazard resilient cultivation systems (wheat and cotton), in collaboration with a regional research institute; awareness was raised among villagers about the importance of self driven and continued DRM activities throughout the year.

Detailed description of the Technology

Introduction

Local associations or farmers groups, if appropriately trained and empowered, can play a key role in disaster risk management. In 2007, the National Law of Farmer's Cooperatives was adopted in China providing a sound institutional framework for establishment of FC at community level. However, the knowledge about the new law and its related concepts of self managed FCs are still very limited among farmers in Juye. A possible link between the functions of FCs and CBDRM was not anticipated in the law.

Objective

The objective of this practice was to include the concept of CBDRM in the overall context of FC development; thus establishing local capacities for DRM on a basis of self managed, broad based and legally recognized institutions interacting as partners with County level actors in the fight against increasing drought and flood risks in the region

Technical details

¹⁰ An important component of the FAO/Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) supported TCP "Strengthening the Disaster Preparedness in Agricultural Sector in China" (TCP/PRC/3105)

Establishment of Farmer Cooperatives in the context of CBDRM

The promotion of FC as partners in DRM was a 2 years process built around the following key pillars.

1. Baseline survey

In order to analyze the situation of farmer associations, a baseline survey was conducted to assess institutional and technical capacities within existing FCs; it also looked at the scope for and interest of FC members to introduce CBDRM as additional concept and objectives into the service portfolio of FCs. The baseline survey confirmed that informal farmer production associations had existed for years in all pilot villages but with very weak functions and outreach for facilitating collective actions. A new understanding of what FCs can be and what they can do had to be established.

2. Capacity building

Tailor-made training plans were developed for capacity building of FC leaders and members over the period of 2 years, with active facilitation from outside experts and local government. A series of community-level training activities were conducted thereafter with the local population, focusing on issues regarding farmer cooperatives establishment and management, services and tasks. Participation of women in the FC training was specifically addressed throughout the planning and development process. Training contents included detailed introduction of the National Law of Farmers' Cooperatives and practical guidelines for the establishment of an FC. The understanding of specific rules of service functions and economic gains of FCs was essential to gain members confidence on operating as a new type of FC. The understanding of potential roles of FCs in CBDRM included the following topics:

- Standard, registration procedure and criteria of FCs;
- Roles, functions, regulations, administrative management and financial management of FCs;
- Membership development of FCs;
- Responsibility and legal rights of FC leaders and members;
- Technology service system and mechanism of FCs;
- FC-based whole sale marketing and inputs purchase and further income earning activities; and other important issues, such as women's participation.
- The potential actions and services as well as responsibilities as partner for CBDRM, vis á vis their members and the county authorities.

Participatory methods proved useful tools to illustrate training subjects related to potential DRM functions of the FC; including the review of secondary data, historical profile and resource mapping, drafting of problem trees and interviews, seasonal calendars and Venn diagrams, among others.

Trainees, including village leaders and farmers, were encouraged to hold FC promotion and follow-up meetings to further encourage other farmers to join the FC in future development. Functions of FCs in CBDRM take a long process to be developed and institutionalized. It is important to encourage women to participate, not only in the capacity building training, but also in other organizational activities.

Linked to the training, the performance of effective, visible demonstrations of practical interventions for DRM, conducted through the FCs at the community level was key to enhance acceptance and support among FC members, and to gain reputation among the local authorities and village committees.

3. Formulation and implementation of FC Action Plans for CBDRM.

In the second year of the capacity building process FC Action plans for DRM were drafted together with FC members, leaders and women in particular. Key points of the Action Plan were visualized in a four-column matrix on pin boards, including the agreed schedule, major activities, current constraints, as well as responsible actors and stakeholders. Activities for FC involvement in CBDRM were given priority, such as rebuilding of the drainage system, land levelling, cleaning the canals and consolidation of small dams, among others.

The institutional support from the county or township government and village committee for the implementation of the plans is essential. They must be brought on board the planning process, either through participation at training and/or through regular information meetings. They are key actors for the monitoring of the plan's implementation and ensuring follow up. Implementation of selected priorities identified from the action plans initiated during the capacity building process in the second year.

Impacts and Results

All FCs initiated under the project have been formally registered as new Farmer's Cooperatives. The FC have played important roles in cleaning the village drainage canals, and soil rehabilitation. In one village the FC assisted in transforming lower land into fodder production fields for cattle breeding and for establishing partnership with a beef cattle development enterprise in Shanghai. The Capacity building process has also contributed to the enhancement of farmers' awareness regarding disaster risk management, especially prevention and mitigation.

Source of tested option

This practice has been successfully tested in the context of the FAO funded project Strengthening Disaster Preparedness of Agricultural Sector in China. The project was jointly implemented by the Agricultural Bureaus of Shandong Province and Juye County, FAO and the Centre for Integrated Agricultural Development (CIAD) of China Agricultural. The County Agricultural Bureau and CIAD led the capacity building training and field research process.

References and Further Reading

- *The role of local institutions in reducing vulnerability to recurrent natural disasters and sustainable livelihoods development in high risk areas: Vietnam case study.* ADPC funded by and jointly prepared with the FAO. 2003.
- China's Action for Disaster Prevention and Reduction (full text of the white paper) http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7066921.htm
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E-Resources

- Ministry of Agriculture P.R.C <http://www.agri.gov.cn/>
- The Ministry of Land and Resources P.R.C. <http://www.mlr.gov.cn/>

Sources

- 2008 Action Plan for Promotion of Farmers' Cooperative Development in Pilot Villages, implemented under the Project "Strengthening Disaster Preparedness of Agricultural Sector in China" TCP/PRC/3501, Centre for Integrated Agricultural Development, Beijing, 2008 Case Study.
- Project "Strengthening Disaster Preparedness of Agricultural Sector in China" TCP/PRC/3501, Report of Baseline Survey and Training Needs Assessment.

Picture 1: Meeting with village committee

