

Annex



Good Practices, Measurement of Skills, Statistical Tables



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ANNEX I

Good Practices in Skills Development: Selected Case Studies

This annex presents selected case studies of projects for skills development in rural areas-spacing. Twelve cases selected from Australia, Bangladesh, China, Ghana, India, Mozambique, South Sudan and Thailand are included. The good practices in their respective context are described and useful lessons are identified. The cases underscore constraints encountered and the approaches pursued in tackling these in the process of rural transformation and fighting poverty.

The issues highlighted in this report including the varying contexts, the different dimensions of rural transformation and poverty reduction, and applicable approaches and strategies in the diverse circumstances are illustrated by the cases. The cases do not necessarily represent “best practices” based on any comparative and international assessment. It is arguable if models that fit across countries at all exist. The cases are an opportunistic compilation drawn from knowledge and experience of the research team associated with the preparation of this report. This explains a higher weight given to the Chinese experiences.

The case studies presented here bring out the processes of running programmes on capabilities and skills development of people who were instrumental in initiating and implementing rural transformation. They also highlight certain lessons which the development community, especially those who are involved in rural transformation, can learn. Such lessons will be valuable in considering strategies and interventions for disadvantaged people and communities in developing countries.

The world is going through enormous economic and technological changes. These rapid and wide-ranging changes pose the threat that the poorer people will be left behind, leading to more income and wealth gaps between the

rich and the poor and also between the urban and the rural communities. The risk of social and political unrest arising from the imbalances and disparities is too real. The cases indicate ways of dealing with such challenges by enhancing the capabilities of the poorer communities.

A summary description of poverty reduction practices in China in the last two decades is presented first. This serves as a backdrop for specific cases in China. The case studies from China and elsewhere are listed below.

China

1. Poverty reduction practices in China;
2. The Sunshine Project: Skill training and support for people migrating from rural areas in search of jobs;
3. Different approaches for rural entrepreneurship development (Bamboo shoot farming in Deqing County, promoting enterprises and protecting cultural identity, and business promotion for self-employment);
4. Model of a multipurpose community learning centre in Yunnan; and
5. Higher agricultural education serving rural needs – Agricultural University of Hebei.

Cases included from other countries are:

6. Entrepreneurship development in Australia;
7. BRAC – a multipurpose rural development programme in Bangladesh;
8. Rural radio in Ghana;
9. Junior Farmers’ Field and Life School (JFFLS) in Mozambique;
10. Women’s entrepreneurship in India;
11. Rural skills development in South Sudan; and
12. A rural community shop in Thailand.

Case 1

Poverty Reduction Practices in China

China has experienced rapid economic development in the past three decades. However, the remote rural areas continue to face the challenges of unbalanced development and abject poverty. The rural-urban disparities in the socio-economic development form one of the alarming concerns of the development planners in the country. The focus of China's poverty alleviation strategy, therefore, remains primarily rural.

Poverty reduction has always been an important priority area in China's national development plans. Most national development policies are geared towards sharing widely the benefits of economic and social development equitably among all sections of the national people. Since the 1990s, the government has been implementing its Seven-Year Priority Poverty Reduction Programme (1994-2000), the Outline Plan for Poverty Reduction and Development of China's Rural Areas (2001-2010), and the Outline Plan for Development-Oriented Poverty Reduction for China's Rural Areas (2011-2020) and other poverty alleviation initiatives. The key strategies pursued through these plans are summarised below.

Development-Oriented Poverty Reduction with Social Protection – “Teaching Them to Fish Rather Than Giving Them Fish”

Some 600 counties, about 20 percent of the total, were selected as “key” counties to be included in the national poverty reduction programme. In these counties, the State Task Forces have launched pilot projects to integrate development-oriented poverty reduction policies with particular reference to moderate subsistence allowance for rural residents. These programmes are planned to enhance social harmony and stability, fairness and justice in rural areas together with an emphasis on widening the basic human rights. China has accomplished well ahead of MDGs' schedule of the United Nations of reducing the poverty-stricken population by more than half of its present number.

Rural transformation policies and programmes

Despite its laudable progress during the last four decades, its economy is still characterised as an agrarian economy with a large rural population of whom a significant number live in “absolute poverty”. The Chinese government followed the strategy of coordinating urban and rural economic and social development based on the principle of “industry nurturing agriculture”, especially since 2003.

The government enacted laws to abolish gradually the agriculture tax that had existed in the country for over 2,600 years. The government provided subsidies directly to farmers to buy hybrid seeds, agricultural machinery and tools and other agricultural supplies. Attempts have also been made to put in place a vigorous social security system for rural people. Basic services such as potable drinking water, electricity, roads and methane gas supply were made available and dilapidated rural housing were refurbished and renovated.

The government adopted measures to enhance overall agricultural productivity so as to ensure tangible benefits to farmers and increase their incomes. The national budget on agricultural recoded a noticeable increase from 214 billion yuan in 2003 to 858 billion yuan in 2010. Many of the measures to strengthen agriculture and increase farmers' income were first carried out in the impoverished rural areas.

Regional development plans and policies

In the last decades of the last millennium, the government implemented on a large-scale several development initiatives in the underdeveloped western region of the country. Projects for water conservancy, forestation and exploitation of mineral resources were successfully implemented. For instance, the government designed and implemented a series of regional projects for promoting economic and social development in Tibet and Tibetan-inhabited areas in Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu and Qinghai provinces, as well as in Xinjiang, Guangxi, Chongqing, Ningxia, Gansu, Inner Mongolia and Yunnan. These projects were fully in line with the national development-oriented poverty reduction programme.

Empowerment of the people

In view of helping the rural poor, the state followed an innovative approach, namely, the market-oriented approach. Attempts were made within this approach to ensure an improvement in local economic conditions, larger exploitation of local resources, and to develop both farm and non-farm production. The approach also paid due attention to issues and challenges related to sustainable development, resource conservation, ecological construction, and population growth.

Coordination, cooperation and self-reliance

Financial outlays from the Special Poverty Reduction Funds, transfer payments from the central government revenues, philanthropic donations by local communities and technical and financial assistance from the development partners have shown increasing trends since the inception of these projects. Poverty reduction initiatives, such as, participatory and integrated village development, availability of microcredit facilities, and contributions from local communities were also mobilised and utilised effectively. Efforts were made to bring into play the initiative, enthusiasm and creativity of the community. The local communities were encouraged and involved in the decision-making process and attempts were made to address and improve the backwardness of the rural poor.

Achievements of development-oriented poverty reduction

The problems with regard to the provision of a basic survival kit (food, clothing and shelter) for the rural poor were basically met by a chain of safety networks provided over the past two decades. The net outcome of these measures has been a phenomenal increase in the income of rural people from 865 yuan in 2000 to 1,274 yuan in 2010. During this period, 592 poor counties served by the national poverty reduction programme witnessed an increase in per capita net income of farmers from 1,276 yuan in 2001 to 3,273 yuan in 2010.

By the end of 2010, nearly 61 percent of rural households had access to tap water or quality potable water, 88 percent of the villages had approach roads, 98 percent had electricity and 93 percent were using telephones

(community public services). Further, the per capita housing space reached a level of 24.9 square meters with 88 percent of the rural households having access to sanitary facilities and latrines.

Social Security and Protection

Ensuring basic social security for the poverty-stricken population was a key strategy for steady progress towards solving the problem of adequate food and clothing for people. In 2007, the state decided to establish a rural subsistence allowance system covering all rural residents whose annual net household income was below the prescribed poverty line. The aim was to solve the problem of adequate food and clothing for the rural poor in a stable, lasting and effective way.

The state provided five guaranteed forms of support (food, clothing, housing, medical care and burial expenses) for old, weak, orphaned, widowed and disabled rural residents (five target groups) who were unable to work and had no family support. During the decade, the government gradually turned these five forms of support from a collective welfare system into a modern social security system financed by the state instead of by the rural communities themselves.

By the end of 2010, the system covered 25.3 million rural households comprising 52 million people. Also, a total amount of 44.5 billion yuan was spent on rural subsistence allowance, of which 26.9 billion yuan was provided by the central government.

Housing

Since 2008, the state has undertaken pilot projects to rebuild dilapidated houses in rural areas, aiming at ensuring basic housing safety for the rural poor. Over the past three years, the state has earmarked 11.7 billion yuan to help over 2 million poor farmers' households refurbish unsafe houses. In 2010, the programme covered all counties identified within the framework of this initiative.

Health care

The cooperatives of medical care system for rural residents

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provide quality medical and health care services to all. By the end of 2010, nearly 93 percent of rural households participated in this programme. Every township had a hospital, and most administrative villages had a clinic. Population and family planning work and the building of a public cultural service system were effectively strengthened. The programme also provided free of charge orientation training to medical students willing to serve rural areas. A comprehensive support and reward incentive scheme was instituted for those who practiced the national norms of family planning policy.

Priority groups and regions

The government carried out development-oriented poverty-relief work in some special areas facing typical poverty issues. This included: development of basic infrastructure in Donglan county, Bama county and Fengshan county in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region; pilot project for the prevention and control of Kaschin-Beck Disease in the Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous prefecture in Sichuan province; pilot project on ecology and environment in the rocky desert areas of Qinglong county in Guizhou province; pilot projects for enhancing the income-generation skills in the border areas of Akqi county in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and for the Blang ethnic group and the mountain tribes of the Yao ethnic group in Yunnan province; and for strengthening the capacities of rural people in post-quake prevention measures in the Wenchuan county of Sichuan Province and Yushu county of Qinghai province.

The state also accorded high priority to development-oriented poverty reduction schemes of ethnic minorities, particularly of women and the disabled. A special programme was launched for the people employed by the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps. Within this programme, the state rendered special support to 22 small ethnic groups, each with a population under 100,000 during 2005-2010. The state Programme for the Development of Chinese Women (2001-2010), was designed for alleviating women's poverty. Since 2009, the state has also implemented programmes of microcredit and sanctioned guaranteed loans to poor farmers. By the end of July 2011, the government invested a total of 41 billion yuan in such loans, including 26 billion yuan for women in rural areas. A

Programme for Disabled People in Rural Areas (2001-2010) was also implemented to ensure food security for disabled people.

Diversified Poverty Reduction Programmes

Poverty reduction programmes in the western regions, areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, border areas and destitute and impoverished areas followed diverse approaches.

Promoting poverty reduction with market-oriented approaches

Several innovative approaches were put in place within this government initiative to improve the living conditions of rural people. Major programmes include: socio-economic development of contiguous areas; poverty relief through science and technology; support to impoverished farmers; development of industrial bases, encouraging the use of modern advanced equipment and technologies in agricultural pursuits; and setting up of farmers' cooperatives in villages. Over the past decade, the state has helped impoverished areas develop potato cultivation, growing economic (timber) trees and fruits, plantation of commercial crops, etc.

Poverty reduction by entrepreneurship and innovation

The underlying premise of this programme is to study and examine the local conditions and relative advantage of each county with a view to scaling up advanced farming technologies in agricultural production. The government provided technical assistance and material support to local communities through grassroots level farming practices for which several demonstration models have been developed and designed. The state also provided large-scale training in rural areas, targeting primarily the youth and the middle-aged people, so as to build a cadre of trained and experienced trainers and technicians in each county in modern farming practices, breeding, animal husbandry, skilled craftsmanship, small-scale commercial entrepreneurship, and managers and practitioners of farmers' cooperatives.

Attention has also been given to strengthening technical

services for renewable energies and construction of rural energy supplies using methane, fuel-efficient stoves and small hydropower stations to replace the use of carbon fuels.

Harnessing science and technology

The farmers had an easy access to technical teams comprising experts and young and middle-aged technicians with practical experience from universities, colleges and research institutions in agricultural and farming techniques. Scientists were appointed as resident deputy heads of key counties for poverty reduction work and to help study and formulate poverty reduction plans, harnessing the benefits of science and technology in the development of local non-farm small-scale commercial enterprise in poverty-stricken areas. The state also launched technology entrepreneurship schemes in rural areas to encourage scientific and technological workers to form interest groups with farmers. These groups were encouraged to start businesses and develop the locally-tailored and relevant ICT services for rural entrepreneurship by using technology, information, and financial management techniques and practices essential for promoting local economic and social development.

Human capital formation

Compulsory education in rural areas has been strengthened, and the work to eliminate completely illiteracy among young and middle-aged people has made great headway. By the end of 2010, the counties recorded, on an average, a net enrolment ratio of the order of 97.7 percent of children 7-15 years, a ratio close to the national average. The adult literacy rate increased by 7 percent – from 81 percent in 2002 to over 88 percent in 2009. The average duration of schooling for the young and the middle-aged reached eight years.

Further, the state established funding mechanisms for compulsory education in rural areas and increased subsidies to students from poor families in impoverished areas. Funds were provided for classroom renovation projects for rural junior high schools in the central and western regions. School building safety projects and renovation and construction of dormitories, canteens and other ba-

sic infrastructural facilities in rural areas were supported throughout the country. Distance education for rural primary and secondary schools was introduced to share high quality educational resources with urban areas and among different regions.

Training of the labour force

Since 2004, the central government has expended three billion yuan for the "Dew programme", which focused on training labour force from poor rural families in technical skills and practical techniques leading to the creation of more and more gainful employment opportunities for rural people. By the year 2010, more than four million people received such training and 80 percent of them were deployed in non-farm jobs. A sample survey revealed that workers who had received training earned 300-400 yuan more per month than those who never participated in this programme. In 2010, a pilot project was launched to offer stipends directly to high-school graduates from poor families to pursue vocational education.

From 2001 to 2010, some 43 million students graduated from secondary vocational schools, a majority of them from rural or impoverished urban areas. Concerted efforts were made to improve its access to target groups and to manage effectively and efficiently the subsidy system for poor students in compulsory education, senior high school education and higher education to ease the financial burden of the poor families. Schools were built especially for the children of migrant families.

The state also strengthened the public cultural service networks in rural areas through a number of initiatives including the building of multi-purpose cultural centres in townships, projects for national cultural information resource sharing, village libraries, radio and TV access to villages, rural film shows and rural community libraries.

Green Development

The system of collective forest rights was reformed and reinforced to ensure ownership to farmers of cultivable land and forests. Various preferential activities were implemented for conserving forests as well as for promoting eco-tourism as means of increasing consistently farmers' incomes.

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The state made efforts to consolidate the achievements of the farmland-to-forest project, reinforcing the subsidy policy, and extending the deadline for such subsidies. A pastureland-to-grassland project was implemented by adopting measures such as sealing-off mountains and hills to promote a substantial increase in natural grassland growth and a total ban on grazing to protect the vegetation coverage of natural grasslands. Pilot projects were launched in Tibet Autonomous Region and other areas to subsidise people who protected grassland ecology. The Beijing and Tianjin sandstorm source control project was implemented by erecting green walls of vegetation and forests. Ecological-friendly industries were developed to realise the organic integration in all development initiatives in rural areas.

Comprehensive measures were taken to reverse the trend of desertification in Karst areas by restricting plantation of trees and pastures in the hilly areas, and by paying an increasing importance on developing herbivorous animal husbandry, constructing terraces on sloping land and building small hydraulic and water conservation projects.

Projects were undertaken at the headwaters of the Yangtze, Yellow and Lancang rivers to strengthen ecological protection in these areas through the conversion of farmland to pastures, migration for ecological protection purposes, prevention and control of rodent damage, precipitation enhancement and other measures. The state enhanced the ecological compensation system, and strengthened the protection of natural forests, restoration of marshy land, conservation of wild animals and plants, and construction of natural reserves to maintain biological diversity.

The efforts in the recent decades have brought ecological degradation under control. From 2002 to 2010, 149 million mu (10 million ha.) of farmland was restored to forest or pastures, and 226 million mu (15 million ha.) of commercial forest was planted. In these counties, the proportion of households with polluted drinking water sources decreased from 15.5 percent in 2002 to 5 percent in 2010, and those of the households having difficulties in securing domestic fuel decreased from 45 percent to 31 percent.

Social Involvement in Poverty Reduction

The state mobilised and organised all sectors of society to give various forms of support to poor areas in their development. Government departments, enterprises and civil society organisations extended special support in the pilot prone poor areas. Eastern and Western China jointly endeavoured to reduce poverty and help poor farmers increase their incomes.

Organisations, such as the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, the state key research institutions and universities provided technical and material support to targeted counties by sending professionals to these locations, helping them in investing funds for establishing self-owned businesses, infrastructure development, industrial operations, training of labour force, environment and ecological preservation and health care services as well as in disaster relief measures. 272 units and departments assisted 481 poverty-stricken counties from a total of about 600 such counties. From 2002 to 2010, over 3,600 professionals provided 9 billion yuan worth of direct aid, both in cash and in kind, mobilised 34 billion yuan to support development funds, and trained 1.7 million people of diverse occupational categories.

A policy towards twining arrangements between the more developed eastern provinces and municipalities with the impoverished regions of the west was established by the Chinese government for achieving the overall growth prosperity of rural people in these provinces. Since 1996, 15 relatively more developed eastern provinces and municipalities provided assistance in cash and kind and through exchange of trained personnel to 11 western provinces and autonomous regions.

From 2003 to 2010, some 2,600 professionals were sent from the eastern to the western provinces to hold temporary key positions, and in turn, 3,610 were sent from the western to the eastern provinces for the same purpose. About 4.4 billion yuan were provided and 5,684 enterprises were recommended by governments of the eastern region for cooperation resulting in 250 billion yuan of investments and 1.4 billion yuan in voluntary donations, in addition to the training of 226,000 technical personnel. Moreover, 4.7 million people from the poverty-stricken areas provided

labour services elsewhere, which helped them find gainful employment and improve their capacities.

The military forces were also mobilised to help develop infrastructure construction, including basic farmland development and irrigation works. NGOs, the private sector and the general public took an active part in the poverty reduction drive. In line with the actual conditions and specific requirements of the impoverished regions and people, these organisations helped in the process of developing infrastructure and a rural industrial base, education and public health-related activities, production, and living conditions and ecological protection by addressing the needs of rural areas. They also mobilised the local leaders to seek their full support and in mobilising rural people for active participation and involvement in development activities. The private enterprises were encouraged to fulfil their corporate and social responsibilities and generously contribute financially to overall development activities, and also to extending employment opportunities for rural people and setting up businesses and training centres.

International Cooperation

In the early 1990s, China began to make use of external assistance in its fight against poverty. Joint projects with the bilateral and multilateral international development partners such as the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNESCO, UNICEF, ILO, FAO, WHO, the Asian Development Bank, etc. were designed and implemented.

According to available information, by 2010, a total of 1.4 billion US dollars in foreign funds were spent on poverty reduction projects and programmes in China. About 110 internationally funded poverty reduction projects had been implemented so far.

Source: Contributed by Wang Qiang, Nanjing Normal University based on "New Progress in Development-oriented Poverty Reduction programme for Rural China", Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China (2011).



Case 2

The Sunshine Project: Tackling Rural-Urban Migration in China

Since the reform and opening-up in 1978, and later its entry to the World Trade Organisation in 2001, China has steadily developed a market economy, which has accelerated the growth of industrialisation and services in the urban areas. The new economic opportunities have attracted huge migration of people from rural areas looking for new livelihood and income opportunities.

Rural Labour Migration Challenges

Currently, there are 280 million surplus labourers in rural China with an estimated addition of 6 million each year. There were 114 million rural migrant labourers in 2003, accounting for around 20 percent of rural labourers. The migrant labourers mostly came from China's underdeveloped western and central provinces such as Sichuan, Anhui, He'nan, Gansu, who headed to urban areas in south-eastern coastal locations and metropolises like Beijing, Shanghai, as well as nearby township and county centres, small cities and provincial capitals. By 2020, it is estimated that another 100 to 150 million "surplus" rural labourers will join the rural labour migration.

The government has come to appreciate the importance of addressing the issues of transition and integration of rural migrant workers into the new employment market and social environment. One attempt in this respect is the "Sunshine Project" launched in 2004. This is a joint initiative, under the State Council leadership, of six ministries, namely, Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MOLSS), Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), Ministry of Construction (MOC) and Ministry of Finance (MOF). It is one of the major components of the government's "Training Plan for Nationwide Rural Migrant Workers (2003-2010)".

The project, planned as an action-research, involves social science researchers in designing, monitoring and evaluating the actions, which include skill training, practical education (in such areas as law and health awareness), network building, and social capital formation, executed in eight selected pilot sites.

Goals and Objectives of the Sunshine Project

The overall objective of the project is the integration of migrant workers into the urban social and economic fabric through concrete services including training in basic and life skills, vocational training, career prospects, family planning, and health and rights awareness. The main target group is young and female migrants confronting discrimination both as migrant workers and as women.

Project implementation

To reach its goals, the project has adopted the following implementation modalities:

- Selection of a single local agency as the main local partner in each pilot site to take charge of policy implementation;
- Forging a triangle partnership consisting of governmental agencies (officials), academic institutions (researchers) and NGOs/NPOs at both national and local levels;
- Publicising and promoting the project in a comprehensive way, utilising publications, print and non-print media, academic seminars, art events, etc.; and
- Preparing comprehensive draft policy papers/reports on the findings from the pilot sites for wider dissemination and follow-up both at national and local levels.

The project focused on 8 pilot sites throughout the country: Beijing, Shanghai, Dalian, Chengdu, Kunming, Diqing, Chifeng, and Zhuolu and an additional site in Mongolia. These sites have been selected to include sending, receiving and transitional areas in an effort to capture the full spectrum of challenges confronting migrants. In each pilot site, working partnerships are built between social scientists, NGOs (including local Women's Federations), and local authorities in order to promote and facilitate the provision of various training, counselling and health services for migrants.

The main actions of the project consisted of:

- Increasing migrants' awareness of legal issues, health, education and employment conditions;
- Developing a support network between young female

migrants for information sharing, social and psychological support, and collective action;

- Improving migrants' skills with concrete training based on their needs and interests;
- Developing awareness among inhabitants of "sending areas" about possible difficulties associated with migration; and
- Coordinating action with policy makers in order to improve the general situation of migrants.

Training activities

The project has thus far trained 1.5 million rural surplus labourers and successfully transferred 1.2 million people, women accounting for more than half.

Training of local officials and local partners in each pilot site is organised to facilitate participation of local agencies, establish networks within or between the project sites, and foster better understanding of the rural-urban migration issue. Annual national workshops for evaluating the projects' progress and follow-up action plans are organised with an active support and participation of municipalities, Ministry of Public Security, State Council, Labour Bureau, and the private sector.

The training programmes and activities focused primarily on creating awareness and competitiveness among rural migrant workers for seeking gainful employment opportunities; carrying out vocational training based on periodic industrial structural adjustments; developing new projects to improve their adaptation for semi-skilled jobs; organising self-employment training for the returnee workers for establishing self-owned small-scale enterprises; and conducting practical training for strengthening their ability to learn new agricultural technology.

The project also organised on-the-spot recruitment fairs and labour service consulting seminars for rural workers; offered employment track and effective maintenance services; organised working skills contests; fostered labour services intermediary organisations and agents; built a series of effective and influential labour services brands companies across the country, such as, Long Ge, Long Mei, Chuanmeizi, Chongqing Fuqiao, Mizhi Housekeeping, etc.,

which are agencies that facilitated recruitment of workers by urban employers.

In its training programmes and activities, the project relied heavily on three types of networks. First, the social network is nurtured among migrant labourers and stakeholders (families and friends of migrants). Second, the network of sending and receiving places is used for linking local government agencies and for forging a cooperative relationship between sending and receiving places. Finally, the nationwide working network is used for pooling the trainers.

In cooperation with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), UNESCO developed a method of training of trainers (TOT). The trainers include local partners, government officials, NGOs, and other civil society representatives. The TOT programme is designed to:

- Train local counterparts to understand the project's principles, strategies and methods;
- Involve more governmental agencies and other social actors, build a closer working network and publicise the project among them in pilot sites; and
- Strengthen the network among UNESCO, CASS and the eight pilot sites to share information and best practices.

Sunshine Project is financed mutually by central and local governments, with the local governments playing the major role; the central government subsidies went mostly to the western region and were rarely increased from 2008. From the initial implementation of Sunshine Project in 2004 till now, the central government had provided 5.4 billion yuan.

Monitoring and Supervision

The project is monitored and supervised by a team consisting of high-level experts and professionals in each thematic area. The major areas of monitoring and supervision of the project include the following:

- Project management and training;
- Administrative accountability;
- Training-based accreditation;

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- Bidding and publicity; and
- Project records (administrative and financial).

The members of the project team led by an associate professor and/or a professor supervised and assisted the technology-intensive and micro-processing enterprises owned by former rural migrant workers facing under-utilisation of capacity. The team also assisted in evaluating the rural education and training programmes and activities, particularly in vocational training schools.

Lessons Learned

During the 7 years from 2003 to 2010, 140 million rural labourers transferred to urban areas in China. The value-added of the manufacturing industry had also been increasing in these years where most rural migrant workers were employed. Evaluations carried out for the project reveal that the project has been successful in:

- Improving awareness of equality-based treatment of migrant workers;
- Improving vocational skills of trainees;
- Demonstrating a model of rural labour transfer;
- Establishing a series of labour services brands;
- Strengthening supports to new countryside construction; and
- Contributing to increase in rural household incomes.

However, there are certain areas where concerted efforts are still needed for further improvement. They include:

- Improving the quality and scope of general education services for rural workers;
- Support and commitment to Sunshine Project on the part of all concerned parties;
- Improving efficiency in various operational aspects of implementation;
- Effective participation of various stakeholders; and
- Timing and sequence of various activities in line with needs and opportunities in employment prospects and demands.

One of the weaknesses of the project is that the policies have yet to identify the “poorest” of the poor among rural migrant labourers. Class stratification has emerged among rural migrants in cities during nearly 20 years of rural labour migration. Many rural migrants have indeed integrated into urban societies and enjoy a high standard of living, while many others have not. Another weakness is that the policies have not paid sufficient attention to returnee migrant labourers, who can have both positive and negative impact on local rural development.

There are general policy issues which need to be critically examined in relation to the government effort to facilitate rural workers’ geographical and occupational mobility. Are all the possibilities of pro-poor policies even within an overall framework of liberalised markets being fully utilised? Are the governance and regulations of the agricultural markets fair to the rural producers and workers? Public intervention in agriculture has been of paramount importance. If the paraphernalia of subsidies of inputs are set aside, dictated by the imperatives of the market, are there still economically rational and socially valuable market interventions that the Chinese government can implement? How can public policies balance pro-poor and pro-market interventions with overall inclusive social and economic development as the paramount goal? In fact, if the objective of a policy is inclusion of migrant workers and small-scale farmers in dynamic markets, pro-poor policies that are not also pro-market are most likely to fail.

Source: Adapted from Li Xiaoxi: “Rural Migration in China: Operational Mechanism and Effects of China’s Sunshine Project”, School of Economics and Resource Management, Beijing Normal University.



Case 3

Approaches to Promoting Rural Entrepreneurship in China

3A. Combining Entrepreneurship and Cultural Identity: Longsheng County, Guangxi Province

Background

Longsheng multi-ethnic autonomous county is located in the north-east of Guangxi province. It is a mountainous area. Five major ethnic groups – Han, Zhuang, Yao, Miao and Dong – find their abode in this county. The county is predominantly agricultural. In 2010, the county's GDP was 31.9 billion yuan, with per capita GDP of 18,010 yuan, enjoying relatively a high annual growth rate of around 15 percent.

The landscape is full of idyllic scenery, dotted by distinct traditional residential architecture. Most houses are made of wood and their design and construction are based on meteorological principles and the ethnic traditions of the county. Building wooden houses rather than stone ones reflects a native concept of human-nature harmonisation.

More than one hundred annual festivals of various ethnic groups in the county are celebrated by the people. The county is known as the "hundred festivals county". The county is well-known for the Zhuang papermaking technology – a native craft, traditional folk dances and folk operas called Gui opera, Caidiao Opera and Dong Opera.

In 2011, the Longji Zhuang Eco-museum was founded. Three villages of the county were declared as the nature protection areas. These villages rely primarily on the terrace farming; the traditional Ganlan-styled residential architecture; flagstone roads; the special Bronze-drums symbolising the local song and dance culture; and the unique glutinous rice and rice wine representing the Zhuang food culture.

Rural Transformation and Learning Motivation

In recent years, Longsheng County has experimented a

selected number of approaches to boost income, develop the villages, and promote ethnic cultures through performing folk music and tourism. Keeping in view the rural festivals and the colourful ethnic folk culture, the county has built 15 "landscape villages" and 8 "classic villages" for showcasing the natural scenery. For promoting tourism in the county, it has recently built several hotels with exotic local cuisine and cultural programmes. Local handicraft products are readily available for sale in the village markets.

Women from minority ethnic groups integrate themselves in all development activities and with their counterpart men in the community through literacy programmes and participation in the rural and family economic development. The development of tourism has opened new and diverse avenues of income earning for women.

Strategy

In order to promote entrepreneurship while protecting and promoting the distinctive cultural heritage of the people, the county and village governments have established leading groups for cooperation between different departments. These leading groups are headed by the government officials from Women's Federation, Communist Youth League, Commission of Development and Reform, departments of agriculture, health, civil affairs and finance.

The county has also established a county community learning centre, a township adult technology school and hamlet community learning schools for various training activities for farmers.

Funding system

Each village provides at least 3,000 yuan and each town provides at least 5,000 yuan for development activities. This guarantees regular financial support to development activities. Further, the county mobilises donations from local residents for education and training funds for adult farmers in poor communities.

Working funds for the post-literacy training programme are utilised and distributed according to the distance from home to the community learning centre, education status, transportation facilities, adults' age and their other

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pertinent needs. Utilisation of funds is closely controlled and monitored by Education Bureau and schools. These funds are equally allocated for buying learning, payment of teachers' salaries and trainees who met the basic learning requirements.

Skills training content and methodology

A strong mechanism has been put in place to protect and promote local ethnic art, culture and dance and music. There are nearly 200 amateur performance teams and more than 4,000 village performers who are encouraged and supported to learn, practice and perform in cultural performances and events.

Ethnic crafts and skills training base

In 2010, ethnic embroidery technical training centres were established in Xiaozhai, Shijing, Gudong, Baimian, Pannai, Guangnan, Shijia and other townships. These centres focus on training and development of talents and skills of 400 people. Such initiatives have also developed and supported ethnic carving craftsmanship. The county has established a good working relationship with carving maestro Meng Huanchun who has guided and developed quality products of the "seven stars surrounding moon", a wood carving with a traditional mythological theme. This artefact has attracted orders from Europe, the United States and other countries.

Literacy and skills training

Longsheng county initiated multi-purpose schools to provide technology and skills training and literacy education for adults during holidays and in the evening. In addition, there are ten county and township level adult culture and technology schools, and 105 village level adult culture and technology schools, which have trained a large number of traditional workers and farmers.

Night schools provide both learning and training facilities to adult learners. Bilingual (local dialect and mandarin) teaching-learning methods are practiced in the schools whereas the training programmes are organised to develop learners' skills in embroidery, folk dance, tourism, English language and farming technology.

"Mothers' class", "grandmothers' class" and other classes for adults were conducted to promote the harmonious development of early childhood care education. Almost 10,000 parents attended the pilot training programme which accounted for 78 percent of the parents in the pilot area.

Training content

Examples of skills training content includes "household electrical appliances operation guide", "applied production technology", "daily practical skills", production of fertilisers and green pesticide, mobile phone (or computer) operation, biogas production and use, health care, hygiene, sanitation, and family planning. The learning contents are practical and demand driven.

Learning material

The county has revised and published 10,000 copies of learning materials (loose-leaflet materials) and developed learning modules on diverse themes affecting the day-to-day lives of ethnic minorities. Nearly 20,000 copies of teaching materials on vocational training have also been printed. The county designed several literacy training manuals and resource packs, especially the "literacy folk songs for farmers" and "applied rural technologies".

Challenges and Concluding Remarks

The number of young women and men who participated in cultural heritage activities is declining. Those who are involved in these activities are adult women. Many of them have no basic education and are reluctant to come forward and participate in various activities. The children, mostly with modern school education background, do not want to stay at home and exercise and engage themselves in supporting parents in agriculture-related work. Consequently, the sustainability of ethnic culture is at stake due to these challenges.

In addition, tourism development is mainly linked to market needs. There is a lack of specific programmes which tackle the issues of empowerment of women and economic aspects of the tourist industry holistically.

Decline of ethnic culture and traditional skills

Learning about and inculcating ethnic culture and skills through traditional educational methods and acquiring modern skills and knowledge need not only to be mutually complementary but also inclusive. But as more and more children intend to enrol in town schools which are located far from their families and villages, the family and community education which focuses primarily on transferring ethnic culture and skills from one generation to another is disappearing fast. Ethnic languages, skills and cultural traits and practices are becoming more and more unfamiliar to ethnic minority children.

Changes in agricultural production technology and practices are posing great challenges to the preservation of traditional agricultural techniques, crops and the cultural legacy associated with these. The unique farming techniques and related ethnic folk activities can make a useful contribution in the preservation of the complex agricultural ecosystem, forest protection, water sources conservation, and adaptation of traditional rice-farming and agriculture processing. These can be nurtured and kept alive if they are utilised in a complementary and inclusive way or are firmly integrated within the framework of the local agricultural production system and other development programmes.

Special disadvantage of ethnic communities

The ethnic groups without a written language, attempting to preserve their heritage, have encountered the fiercest challenges. Not many people can sing the songs; little modern life content has been added into the songs; and the native youngsters rarely want to learn the songs. Special efforts, resources and policy commitment are needed so as to ensure that the precious heritage of the small communities is not lost.

Source: Contributed by Lan Jian, National Institute of Educational Sciences, Beijing.

3B. Start Your Business and Improve Your Livelihood: Reviving Enterprises in Post-Earthquake Sichuan (2008)

Background

Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) Programme, initiated by the International Labour Organisation, has been implemented in many countries including China. The essence of the programme is to improve the living conditions of vulnerable groups and help them get decent jobs by providing job opportunities, occupational skills training and training on self-employment. The programme has made a great contribution to the reconstruction after the earthquake occurred on May 12, 2008 in Sichuan Province in China. It has greatly accelerated the rural transformation, promoted the economic growth of rural areas, improved the rural economic structure and enhanced the living conditions of rural population in the project communities.

Goals and Content of the Programme

The overall aim of the Emergency Start and Improve Your Business (E-SIYB) Programme was to provide targeted assistance to re-establishing destroyed small businesses and setting up new ones for those who lost their jobs, which eventually made a contribution to the reconstruction of some of the most destroyed cities and townships in the earthquake. The programme supported three groups of people, including unemployed workers who lost wage employment and had strong willingness to start businesses; farmers who lost land and other assets of agriculture and had strong willingness to start non-farm income generating activities or family businesses; and small business owners who lost their businesses but were willing to start again. The E-SIYB Programme, a short-term emergency assistance project, was implemented from July 2008 to September 30, 2009.

During the implementation process, the self-employment training system was established in six cities and townships, through which a number of people received training on management and training methods. These trainees now constitute a cadre of qualified managers and trainers, providing self-employment training and technical assistance to more and more people.

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Key activities and outcomes

The programme focuses on entrepreneurship education and training of E-SIYB. It is complemented by small grants or small loans, short-term vocational training and comprehensive technical support for building a supportive environment and for starting a business. This was aimed at the targeted beneficiaries to recover or start small businesses and to realise employment and livelihood restoration in the process of reconstruction in post-disaster areas.

The training activities also demonstrated that with the progress of post-disaster restoration and reconstruction work, the large number of infrastructure and house reconstruction also stimulated entrepreneurial opportunities in architecture, building material, transportation and other industries. Meanwhile, the gradual recovery of urban and rural residents' daily consumption promoted business opportunities of commerce, industry and the service sector.

Policy Commitment, Public Participation and Initial Assessment

The programme was set up at policy level with provincial and municipal authorities. This was followed by communication and decision at local community, county, town, municipality, village and employment service stations. A series of promoting activities were organised through media, flyers, brochures, briefings and seminars organised by related industries and associations.

The programme adopted two ways to evaluate the damage and loss situation of the affected enterprises:

- The local employment service bureau and employment service station of county/village level visited households who owned small businesses, collected information about damage and destruction and determined the potential participants for the training programme; and
- E-IYB and E-SYB trainee registration cards were used to specially collect destruction information of small businesses, understand the learning needs of the trainees, which helped to design the curricula to ensure the training quality.

The three requirements for the selection of trainees were:

- They have to be affected farmers and unemployed workers because of earthquake;
- They must have willingness to start a business; and
- They must have basic literacy and numeracy skills.

E-SIYB Teachers – guaranteeing quality of trainer

The core task of E-SIYB programme was to provide IYB or SYB training to affected small enterprises and affected people who wanted to start their own businesses in disaster areas. Therefore, it was crucial to have a team of qualified teachers both in terms of number and quality. According to SIYB standard, each class could only have 20 students. To ensure the availability of the required number of teachers, the programme conducted two ten-day IYB teacher training courses in October 2008 and January 2009 respectively in six cities and counties which produced 40 new IYB teachers.

Organising teacher improvement

In the class, trainee teachers learned to use new technology, new methods and new teaching materials. The training materials specifically designed from a gender perspective, "Gender and Entrepreneur Together-GET-AHEAD", were also used. These were adapted for local use aiming at developing of female entrepreneurs in rural areas. These SYB teachers became the backbone of the local training institutions that would provide their services in the long run in the disaster affected areas.

Adjusting and revising training materials

Training material of "improve your business (IYB)" was adjusted to meet the needs of E-IYB. To help small construction enterprises to get the contracts for local reconstruction and other projects, the programme relied on ILO modules: "start and improve your construction business (SIYCB)". The GET-AHEAD materials, keeping the gender perspective in view, were also adapted for local use.

E-IYB and E-SYB training

The programme held 64 E-IYB courses in the pilot cities and counties. A total of 1,280 small business entrepreneurs attended the training classes. Training organisations and teachers carefully selected trainees in accordance to their skills needs and developed the teaching plan and demonstration lessons. In the teaching-learning process, participatory methods were utilised to fully motivate trainees. The programme also organised six emergency Improve Your Construction Business (E-IYCB) training courses for 120 small construction entrepreneurs.

E-SYB training courses were held to provide classroom-based training in remote rural areas with limited facilities. Teachers built classrooms in difficult hilly areas. The programme furnished short-term skills training for enterprises that had specific skills needs, for instance, restaurant cooking and vegetables and mushroom planting, beauty parlour, souvenir production, eco-tourism, Chinese New Year greeting cards, embroidery, rattan craft, handicraft, computer and mobile phone repair, etc. The E-SYB programme became a life-saver for the families and a source of encouragement for people in the earthquake affected areas.

Green business options courses

The programme used "Green Business Option (GBO)" training module of ILO for starting green businesses. The aim was to help trainees discover green business opportunities in the post-disaster reconstruction process. During the training, the trainees had more than 60 green enterprises ideas, including turning the waste into useful resources, development of organic farming, handicrafts production, improving methane facilities and post-disaster waste treatment and so on. GBO programme raised the environment protection awareness of rural residents and infused among them the concept of sustainable development.

Access to financial assistance

The programme gave attention to assisting trainees to get capital funds. As a follow up of training, teachers assisted trainees by informing them about the local reconstruction plan, microfinance programmes and credit plans through telephone communication, home visits,

and group consultancies. More than one third of the trainees applied and received funds from the organisers.

Each small-scale business enterprise received trainers at least twice for consulting services. Teachers regularly visited trainees' enterprises in person and reviewed their business outcomes. They also provided consultations on auditing financial accounts, cost control and price setting of their products.

Surveying market opportunities for vulnerable groups and rural women

The programme attached special importance to assisting businesses for rural entrepreneurs, especially business opportunities for rural vulnerable groups. The programme deployed experts to conduct market research and undertake skills needs surveys using the ILO "TREE" method. The following business skills development areas were strengthened:

Business Opportunities in Selected Areas	
City/County	The selected businesses
Pengzhou	Organic chicken, pig breeding, hand-made souvenirs, mushroom cultivation, eco-tourism
Dujiangyan	Livestock farming, pollution-free vegetables, eco-tourism, fish farming
Mianzhu	Chinese new year painting production, embroidery, handicrafts, traditional pastry production
Shifang	Processing of organic pickles, organic pig farming, aquaculture, catering
Anxian	Konjac planting and processing, bamboo crafts, silk processing, traditional pastry production
Jiangyou	Energy-saving lamp production, stone sales, mop production, rabbit skin and leather processing

The leaders and members of cooperatives had an easy access to E-SIYB training and microcredit facilities to organise and start group entrepreneurial activities. Experts evaluated and selected 21 cooperatives and 114 entrepreneurs for the E-SIYB grants with a total sum of US\$ 100,000.

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Key Features and Lessons

The programme attached great importance to local conditions of the disaster affected areas and the business potentials of local people. It utilised available local resources and markets and identified ways and means for starting new businesses or re-establishing the ones destroyed by the earthquake.

- The concept of “decent work” of ILO was applied, focusing on helping vulnerable groups such as rural women and disabled people to seek gainful employment and protect the local environment;
- The programme carried out comprehensive market surveys, learning and skills training needs assessment surveys, reviewed market potential and highlighted several opportunities for starting and/or re-establishing small-scale enterprises;
- An easy and quick access to funding was ensured in each pilot village, town and city; and
- The content of the training programme corresponded with the reality of the post-disaster areas and the training methods were highly effective and demand driven. The training built and strengthened their capacities to undertake new business ventures and instilled in them tremendous confidence and self-esteem.

The programme provided an example of effective and positive response to post-disaster crisis. It also demonstrated effective ways and means to promote rural transformation, develop the rural economy, and improve the livelihood of rural people through skills training.

Source: Compiled by Jing Ming based on reports of Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, People's Republic of China; ILO and DFID, U.K.

3C. Integrating Agriculture, Science, Technology and Education to Improve Agricultural Productivity in Deqing County

Background

The integration of Agriculture, Science, Technology and Education sectors (Nong Ke Jiao Jie He) for increasing agricultural production and community development has

been the national strategy for rural transformation in China since the 1990's. The underlying goal of this strategy is to mobilise human, financial and material resources offered by agriculture, science, technology and education for modernising agriculture and to improve the living conditions of rural poor.

Deqing County is located in the northern part of Zhejiang province. More than one third land surface of the county is surrounded by mountainous and hilly areas. Agriculture activities comprise forestry, fisheries and animal husbandry. The pilot project made significant strides and resulted in augmenting the per capita income in the county to 13,575 yuan in 2010, 2.8 times higher than a decade ago.

Cultivation of high quality bamboo shoots is the main source of income of people. As a traditional exotic food, it has thousands of years of history, but it has hardly yielded much profit to local cultivators. The preliminary research undertaken by the Wukang community learning centre revealed that delays in harvesting bamboo shoots in the county as the main reason of meagre economic returns to cultivators. Another problem was decay and erosion of land fertility.

A Strong Coordination Mechanism

In order to address these issues, the county administration developed an Inter-sectoral Working Group comprising senior officials from the departments of education, science and technology and finance, and the local association was set up to plan, implement and administer this pilot project. The community learning centres served as the training bases for executing the project.

The skill training under the framework of inter-sectoral coordination relied primarily on local needs. In its implementation strategy, an outcome-oriented approach was taken to plan and implement education and training activities of CLCs. Within this approach, attempts were made to select the right programme, promote relevant technology, and develop a pool of trained technicians and experts for each group of farmers and cultivators in line with the main features and physical and material resources of the county.

Experimentation and Trial to Develop and Adapt Technology

The local adult schools and programme coordinators established specialised production cooperatives which carried out experimentation on planting and growing the bamboo shoot. The teachers of Wu Kangcheng CLC maintained direct contact and liaison with cooperatives members, kept daily records of forest's temperature, utilised modern techniques to control the adverse effects of temperature and humidity during the crop season, and recorded and analysed the outcomes of these measures. They analysed the impact of chemical fertilisers on productivity. Efforts were also made in marketing the products.

In order to win the trust of farmers, practical demonstration lessons were organised by the CLC technicians. The CLC selected motivated and enterprising households to serve as demonstration farms. The centre provided technical guidance to 27 selected demonstration households, supervised their progress, examined and analysed problems and suggested concrete remedial measures.

Lessons Learned

The experience of Deqing county showed that a mechanism for cooperation and coordination is the key for enhancing the agricultural productivity. The county/township level government played a major role in inter-sectoral cooperation and coordination.

Technicians of the Wukang CLC maintained a close working relation with universities and research institutions and periodically invited experts and technical staff for field visits and organised seminars for knowledge and experience sharing.

Each county/township CLC was encouraged to develop locally-tailored training programmes based on the principle of "learning by doing".

Source: Contributed by Lan Jian, National Institute of Educational Sciences, Beijing.



Case 4

Multi-Purpose Community Learning Centre in Yunnan

Background

Given the diverse rural contexts, education for rural transformation has to be linked to the specific skills needs of the rural community. A multi-sectoral educational approach that integrates formal, non-formal and informal education is necessary. Community learning centres (CLCs), as a bottom-up approach, which emphasises empowerment at the grassroots level, have become popular both in foreign aid programmes and in national initiatives. As one of the poorest and agriculture-based provinces of China, its development is vital for improving the socio-economic condition of its people and in particular its rural folk. Its high ethnic diversity implies diverse learning needs.

A participatory learning approach based on strong CLC-community partnership guides the activities of the CLC. The approach is geared towards harnessing maximum opportunities and benefits from the limited resource endowments of the province. This case study shows how an education model that is flexible in delivery modes becomes a vehicle of rural transformation. The study also examines and highlights the operational aspects of planning and implementation.

The concept

In China, CLCs are established:

- To eliminate illiteracy and provide continuing post-literacy facilities;
- To disseminate information on the use of agriculture-related science and technology so as to upgrade technical competencies of rural people, particularly the rural women, for enhancing the quality of labour force and agricultural productivity;
- To improve the socio-economic conditions by increasing incomes of community members;
- To empower through knowledge and skills the most disadvantaged and vulnerable population groups, such

as, women, out-of-school youth, ethnic minorities, etc.;

- To provide life-long learning opportunities, serving as a permanent training institution for rural people and enhancing their ability to participate in sustainable development; and
- To preserve and promote local culture.

In addition to literacy, general basic education and skill training activities, CLCs also provide courses on legal rights, healthy life, disease prevention, sanitation and hygiene, and general improvement of the quality of life of rural people.

Profile of Yunnan

Yunnan has the highest number of ethnic groups among all provinces and autonomous regions in China. Twenty-five minority groups account for one-third of the population of Yunnan. It is also one of the poorest provinces of the country. In 2002, per capita GDP of Yunnan was US\$ 627, and rural per capita income was US\$ 195. Of the total population, 74% live in rural areas and 33% of the rural people live below the national poverty line (around 0.31 US\$ per day). Tobacco, animal products, minerals and tourism are the main sources of income of majority of its inhabitants. The province is mainly agrarian.

As one of the poorest provinces with diversity ethnic groups, Yunnan has attracted foreign aid in development projects, such as those supported by UNDP. The 11th National Development Plan (2006-2010) accords special status to Yunnan's economic development.

Besides universal 9-year-compulsory education, various non-formal programmes are organised for increasing income and empowering the marginalised rural poor and ethnic minorities in the province.

The Case: Community Learning Centre in Yunnan

The programme to establish CLCs was launched in 2001 in Liushao county and Lianhe county (both minority inhabited areas) of Yunnan province. CLC in Yunnan province comprise four major components: a training centre, a library,

a development centre and a cultural activity centre. CLCs rely on the principles of participatory-learning and maintain close links between educational activities and community development.

The operational framework of CLCs was designed by a research group of Yunnan Normal University. A unique local-tailored model has been developed according to education and socio-economic development needs of Liushao and Lianhe counties. Local primary schools and community committees were directly involved in establishing the CLC with the support of local government and technical guidance from higher education institutions. The aim was to address the learning needs of teachers, students, parents and villagers of the county. The four components of CLCs, noted above, represent different and somewhat independent functions of a CLC; but they share the same goal, i.e. to improve overall quality of the local human resources, facilitate economic growth, and preserve and promote minority cultural heritage in the area.

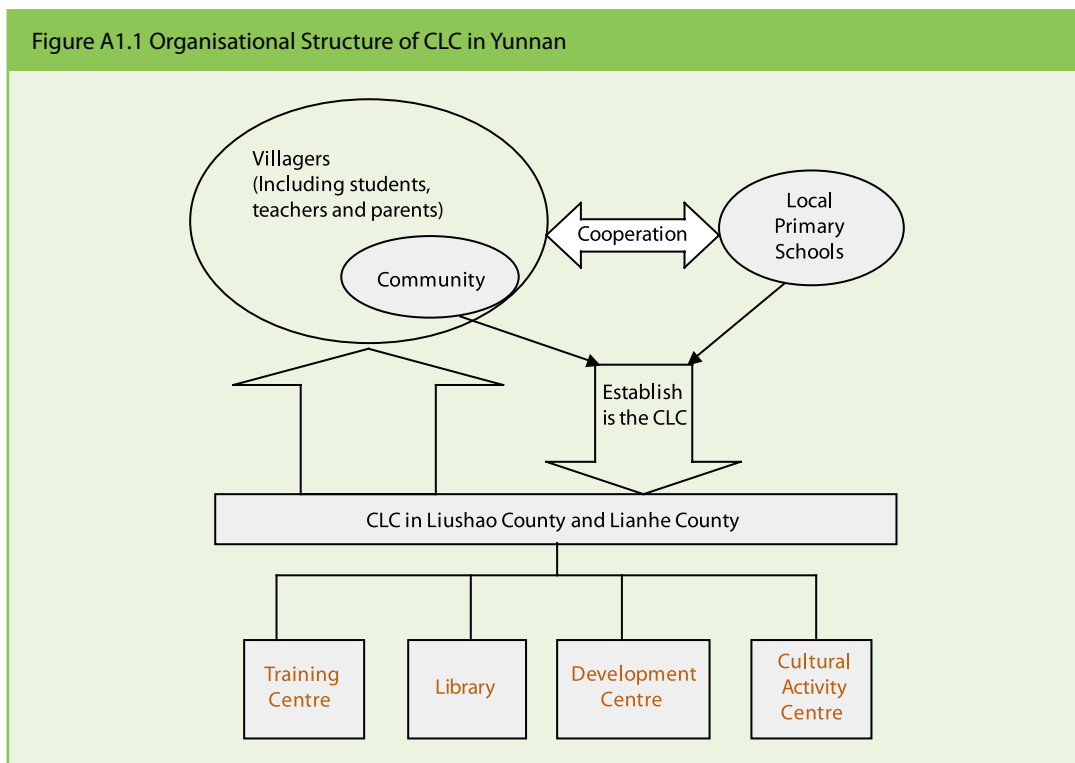
The training centre provides three kinds of education and training:

- Training for rural teachers;

- Courses for community members (including literacy and basic life skills); and
- Training in modern agro-technology.

The library was set up in 2005 in order to enrich the knowledge and spiritual development of local people. The development centre offers the demonstrable opportunity to trainees to deploy the acquired knowledge through CLC into practice and help trainees undertake income-generating activities. Training programmes in the use of modern agro-technology and field visits are also organised by the development centre.

The cultural activity centre of the CLC is its unique feature. Being located in an area of ethnic minorities, preserving and promoting local culture and traditions are seen as one of the key functions of the CLCs. By adding knowledge of traditional culture in the learning content and holding various traditional cultural activities, trainees are encouraged to learn and develop and be proud of their ethnic identity. The organisational structure including the four components and how they interact with each other and promote the objectives of the CLC in Liushao and Lianhe counties are shown in below.



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The CLC represents a bottom-up model, where learners from the local community are closely involved in establishing the centre and in implementing its activities. The emphasis is on empowering people to help themselves through learning and development activities including skill development, income-generation and well-rounded development of human resources.

Since their establishment in 2005, about 1,500 people directly benefited from training provided by the centres. Recently, CLCs have also set up potato growing laboratories. Numerous cultural activities were held to enhance appreciation and respect for ethnic cultural identity and tradition.

Planning and management process is decentralised and is highly flexible. A participatory approach is applied in all decision-making process.

Concluding Remarks

The CLC appears to be an appropriate institutional model to offer NFE programmes to meet the diverse learning and skill development needs of rural people, mobilising local resources and involving local people. As the case study shows, flexible and responsive education and training can be provided by the CLC to serve specific learning needs and promote the broader goal of empowerment of people. Research and technological development concerning agriculture was adapted in accordance to local needs and conditions; cooperation and coordination among education institutions and labour market enterprises was given attention to improve the relevance of education and training activities. The development strategy promoted by central government is thus successfully implemented at the local level through coordination and cooperation among various bodies involved in rural development.

The CLC in Yunnan illustrates the effort to link research and planning with market needs in order to achieve a balanced and integrated agricultural education geared to real life conditions. The connection between higher educational institutions and the local community in order to adapt and respond to variability in local geographical conditions is evident in the activities of the CLC. The potato growing centre, the related research and their contribution to promoting the potato growing industry in Liushao and Lianhe

counties is an example of the linkages between research, training, market and community organisations.

If investment in education in general is justified, investment in rural education is even more so. Many countries still continue with an urban bias in the allocation of resources. While the majority of the population including the most disadvantage groups lives in rural areas, imbalances in resource allocation further aggravate disparities between urban and rural populations and result in unplanned development of the country.

For the knowledge society, education can no longer be a time-bound endeavour, but rather a continuous activity throughout one's life. In the same vein, education for rural development has to provide opportunities for the disadvantaged groups to cope with the changing reality and exercise choices to improve their lives. The CLC can be the institutional vehicle for making education a continuing activity. It can thus be a flexible and permanent mechanism for transforming, renewing and upgrading skills and capacities. The merits and potentials of such non-formal and life-long learning should be deeply explored and seriously promoted for the benefit of rural people. Nevertheless, it has to be kept in view that education is not a magic bullet; there has to be cooperation, coordination and linkages among complementary and supportive educational and non-educational components of the total development effort, as CLCs in Yunnan illustrate.

Source: Contributed by Zhang, Wen (2010). Adapted from presentation made at the Dujiangyan International Forum, Chengdu, China, 6-8 August, 2011.

Source: Wang L. (2008) Practical Exploration on Constructing Community Learning centres Based on Schools in Rural Ethnic Areas – A Case Study of Liushao and Lianhe Towns in Xundian County, Yunnan Province. Educational Research, No.12, pp.91-94.

Case 5

Higher Education in Rural Transformation – Agricultural University of Hebei in the Taihang Mountain

The Agricultural University of Hebei (AUH) had been involved in the advocacy of an education and development model “Combining Theory with Practice” in the context of rural China. Known as the Taihang Mountain Model “Road to Prosperity”, it has attempted to harness the potential of education, science and technology in reconstructing the rural economy and reclaiming the ecological environment of the mountainous areas of Hebei Province.

The Taihang Mountain Model

Taihang Mountain is the largest mountain area in Hebei, China. Changing its poor underdeveloped status and its ecological environment is of great strategic significance for Hebei Province.

Since 1979, the experts from AUH have been conducting research and analysing the characteristics of the mountainous regions. The research led to the overall guiding principles: priority to transforming poverty before transforming the mountain; eradicating ignorance before eradicating poverty; and transforming the intellect and mind-set before addressing poverty.

An experiment was initiated in combining demonstration and extension services, building into it the use of technology to address rural poverty along with education and preventive preparedness against natural calamities. The AUH professors and staff provides advisory services to farmers, for instance, on growing strawberries in simple locally made green houses, growing persimmon trees in the mountain, raising rabbits, and improving crop production. Since its inception, there have been noticeable increases in agricultural productivity and incomes, and awareness raising for the protection of the local environment.

Planning and implementation

AUH with active participation and involvement of communities launched diverse income-generating projects aimed at opening up several areas of production and development at the county level. Objectives of these projects were:

- To enhance farmers’ knowledge of science and technology to improve farming practices in order to increase agricultural productivity and income;
- To develop local industries and rural entrepreneurship to create more and more employment opportunities; and
- To reverse the condition of deteriorating natural environment of the county.

The Task Force for the projects comprised faculty experts, students, and personnel from provincial and local departments and bureaus.

A wide variety of methods and materials were used in the implementation of the education and capacity building work. Farmers’ night schools, winter schools, technical consultations, experimental bases and demonstration labs, inputs service stations, the science and technology market, and model households were some of the mechanisms of dissemination knowledge and changing practices and improving skills. Learning technologies comprised of bulletin boards, blackboards, posters, leaflets, radio and TV broadcasts, technology prescriptions handouts, slide shows, video films as well as scientific exhibitions and cultural programmes.

Project activities

Based on the comprehensive analysis of experts and following a holistic approach, various activities were carried out. Experimental bases were set up which served as demonstration sites aimed at disseminating knowledge about agricultural technologies.

A system of extension and training for dissemination and application of agricultural technology on farmers’ fields and at homes was put in place. This was accomplished by various activities, such as:

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- Compilation of practical technologies based on field research;
- Training of farmers to adopt technologies that required less and less manual labour without adversely affecting agricultural productivity;
- Organising technical consultation with farmers; professional technical societies for specialised interests (e.g. Fuji Apple Development Society);
- Establishment of the scientific and technology market of AUH linking university with farmers for mutual benefit;
- Selecting poor counties (10 out of 39 in the province) to set up experimental villages to implement the "prosperous village" project to carry out poverty alleviation strategies;
- Linking up with and bringing in the services of national projects that focused on rural education reform, agricultural technology extension and poverty alleviation;
- Training farmers to become leading members of an extension workforce under the Green Certificate programme of the Ministry of Agriculture; and
- Setting up the Beigu Farming School in Anping County with AUH technical support which trained 16,000 farmers in advanced techniques, 240 of whom were appointed as farmer technicians by the County government.

Human resources were mobilised with AUH guiding the effort in forming scientific and technical extension teams. Vocational students in the counties joined farmer technicians in providing skill training and advice to farmers. Every year in over 20 departments of AUH about 500 specialists and researchers, and over 1,100 students stayed in rural areas and assisted farmers.

AUH supported information dissemination, availability of resource materials and cost-effective marketing of inputs. For instance, AUH set up strong marketing networks for Chinese cabbage seed in Gaoyi county. AUH contributed 6,000 books and reference materials and other teaching equipment to Yongnian county Professional School and to Beigu Farming School. Farmers were organised into various technical associations to bring into play their initiative to learn and use science and technology and knowledge

about marketing their products. These measures included: Mushroom Association in Tang county, Chicken Association in Lai Yuan county, Red Fuji Apple Association in Shunping county, Watermelon Association, Peach Association, Vegetable Association, Maize Association, and so on.

Empowering villages through education, science and technology: the Chaichang village

AUH participated in the project of Empowering Villages through Education, Science and Technology initiated by the Chinese Association of Agriculture. Chaichang village was selected as the first pilot village of the project in 1995, where action research and theoretical analyses were undertaken.

By 1999, AUH had extended its programmes into 9 villages in 3 pilot counties where about 800 AUH professors had offered about 600 various technical courses for about 80,000 trainees, distributed 60,000 copies of training materials, donated 10,000 scientific and technical books and periodicals. As a result, more than 100 latest techniques identified by AUH research projects were introduced to the farmers, which made a great contribution to the socio-economic growth of communities in these villages and counties.

Growing fruits in Shunping and Mancheng counties

Shunping county is one of the poorest areas in Hebei province situated on the eastside of Taihang mountain. AUH identified the county as a favourable location for growing Red Fuji apple. Through research and development over 10 years practical techniques were packaged and extended to farmers in Shunping. Red Fuji apple from Shunping has become a well-known brand across China and abroad.

The fertile soil and climate of Mancheng county is suitable for growing strawberries. However the yield was low due to poor varieties, mono-planting and backward farming techniques. AUH Department of Horticulture experimented several local and foreign varieties of strawberries. Seed plots were set up to provide a stable source of planting materials for successive production seasons. High yielding pest disease resistant varieties of apple plantation were identified and farmers were motivated to use these varieties at larger scale. With technology support, off-season growing of strawberries in greenhouses was also introduced.

Organising farmers' association in Tangxian county

AUH approach to extension work is described as a collaborative process, i.e., university experts bring relevant technical knowledge; local government personnel coordinates, model households are selected as the core units for developing and adapting the techniques and later demonstrating these to others, and all other farmers are encouraged to join various associations based on their interest in order to benefit from the techniques.

AUH organised more than 10 farmers' technical associations, which have facilitated farmers' access to modern practices and brought them economic benefits. The establishment of these associations played an important role in the development of the rural economy.

Group contacts to facilitate coordination in Dingxing county

AUH organised the technical contact groups of "Synthetic Agriculture" in Dingxing county to offer technical assistance in the use of science and technology in farming. The group was set up through the following procedure:

- A leading group composed of personnel from the prefecture, the county and the university was set up;
- The university established a consultative group with professors and specialists in relevant disciplines;
- A service network with the local government departments of finance, banking, supply and marketing, materials and oil supply, and town service stations was formed to support the work of the Contact Group;
- Working through the Contact Group, AUH extended education outside the university by training the staff from middle schools and vocational schools as active technology carriers to rural areas; and
- Based on investigation and knowledge of the area, the university constructed an overall "system model" of rural development with a five year time horizon which included plans for agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, fishery and rural enterprise. The model also included model sub-systems for crops planting, fruit processing, animal husbandry and rural enterprises.

The Contact Group approach greatly facilitated cooperation and coordination among departments and agencies

in the county for the benefit of rural people. The output of grains, cotton, edible oil, meat, fruit and vegetables increased remarkably.

Scientific and technical market at AUH

AUH set up the General Developing Company of High Technology in 1988. It also established a market street as a bridge between the university and rural areas. The market was intended to bring together and demonstrate modern farming methods and advanced farming technology.

The AUH farmers' technical market has a number of special features, for example, shops selling high yield varieties of crops and varieties of hybrid corn. The market also has expert clinics set up to give farmers free consultation and to respond to farmers' queries about crops and livestock pests and disease control. The AUH market has earned enough popularity to extend its business to 24 provinces.

The technical market has also become the demonstration site for students in pursuing studies in agriculture and farming. The market has also become a source of income for the university, earning for it over 100 million yuan annually.

Sustainable development in Qian Nanyu village

Qian Nanyu village is a case where engineering and partnership of university experts and village people protected disaster-prone plains and mountains and promoted sustainable development of the rural economy. In the aftermath of a devastating flood in Xingtai City in Hebei province in 1963, researchers from AUH investigated and designed a plan to help people recover from the effects of the flood.

Qian Nanyu Village in Jiangshui Town was taken as a pilot site. The whole village was flooded. Aftermath the devastating flood, fertility of cultivable land was adversely affected and the hillsides used for farming were badly damaged. The villagers were at the verge of migrating to nearby villages, cities and towns for survival. The AUH devised a plan to transform soil to raise the level of some of the flooded land and make the plots ready for planting a crop. Plans were made to protect the slopes of the hill and tame the river gradually. The village people, strongly motivated to

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protect their native village, were mobilised to carry out the whole construction process. The combined effort of the university experts and village people solved the problems of flood, drought, poor soil and erosion which had been a scourge for the area for a long time.

Concluding Remarks

Combining theory with practice in the Taihang Mountain Model of development has proven to be of mutual benefit to university students and teachers and the people of rural communities.

The AUH experienced innovative and successful endeavours regarding the role of higher education institutions in knowledge transfer and skills development within the framework of extension services provided by the institutions of higher learning but rarely exploited by policy makers.

- An agricultural university should be located in the rural area and must have close interaction with rural communities;
- Universities need to commit themselves to the cause of rural transformation and clearly identify as their mission and goal to make a significant contribution to rural transformation. A strong and effective partnership with rural communities, contributing to their overall well-being, should be an important element of the academic, research and service roles of institutions of higher education, especially those concerned with agricultural development;
- Governments at different levels should commit themselves to support universities' rural development programmes. Government commitment, financially and administratively, has proven to be a very important ingredient for universities to be successfully involved in rural and regional development programmes;
- Communities need to be drawn pro-actively into universities' rural development programmes. An approach of partnership and meaningful participation of the main stakeholders is essential for sustainable outcomes;
- AUH has powerfully demonstrated that the farmers realised and understood the value and potential of technology, and the relevance and logic of eliminating

ignorance. They recognised that a strong commitment is necessary to practise scientific methods. The institutions of higher education need to capitalise on this positive reality and nurture it; and

- Recognising the diversity of conditions and adapting to local contexts, responding to and learning from local realities, are essential conditions for success for universities in playing their role in rural transformation.

The rural and mountainous areas in Hebei remained isolated for a long time. The isolation led to low levels educational attainment, higher rates of adult illiteracy as well as adherence to conservative and traditional attitudes taboos. Farmers, therefore, were inclined to stick to the traditional methods of farming and resisted strongly to changes until they noticed concrete and tangible results.

The university, government and community have to work in unison to provide information and knowledge, enhance skills and capabilities of people, and create conditions and incentives to promote rural transformation. Governments have special responsibilities for financial and administrative support and for putting in place relevant strategies and policies. The benefits and opportunities offered by the modern digital communication and information technology yet to be exploited and harnessed. All these efforts contribute to the establishment of a learning society and empower the rural poor.

Source: Contributed by Wang, Li based on Wang, Li (2005), A Comparative Study on the Role of Universities in Rural Development – Agricultural University of Hebei and Charles Darwin University, Northern Territory, Australia. Ph.D. thesis, Charles Darwin University, Australia.

Case 6

Skills for Rural Entrepreneurs in Australia

Background

This story about entrepreneurship development in Australia is written in a question and answer mode. The entrepreneur in this story is Tahn and his business is Tahn's Spraying Services (TSS). The context for the development and transformation from employee to entrepreneur is a small rural town, Picton in the state of New South Wales, Australia which is a small service centre for a larger farming community that has mixed fruit growing, tourism enterprises, family accommodation enterprises, dairy farming, bee keeping, mixed farming, and a small shopping service centre. This town is situated just off a major Freeway which joins up a number of much bigger centres. The business was established to cater to the small rural town and to expand into the much larger market centres located within close proximity.

Rather than writing the case as a descriptive account of the development of a rural enterprise, this case study is written as a training device for entrepreneurship promotion in a rural setting.

As an example of identifying the salient features of entrepreneurship, two people, the trainer/community facilitator, and the trainee/rural worker could role-play the scenarios in the question and answer (Q&A) exchange, either on a one to one basis, or in front of a community group. This approach will enable the "apprentice entrepreneur" to gain valuable knowledge and the skills needed in his or her quest to become an entrepreneur.

In a second stage, the trainee/rural worker can identify a particular business he or she wishes to develop and use the same critical questions to determine the skills they will need to start up and develop a particular business enterprise. The trainer/community facilitator interviewer asks questions to the potential entrepreneur and the entrepreneur gives answers from his or her perspective. The questionnaire elicits content from which skills development issues and training can be identified for successful transformation from a rural employee to a rural employer.

The Q&A format helps the learner to understand and identify the nature and character of skills required for rural entrepreneurs and to develop the content and process of skills formation. This learning stage is followed by a skill deduction exercise. This is an iterative process and all the necessary skills for a particular business are not necessarily identified in one stage. It is necessary to reflect on the answers and further consider the skill needs and skills development issues, activities and processes, which may be indicated by the answers, as illustrated by the Q&A below.

Q&A for an entrepreneurship development exercise

Q: What was your motivation to start your own business?

A: I decided to start my own business because I am a hard and focused worker and I always gave 110 percent to any employer that employed me. I felt, however, that most employers did not appreciate the time and effort that I put into my work for them. So I thought I would be better off using this drive and focus in my own business. That way I would have complete control over my own future. I would also be able to provide a better future for my family in these rapidly changing and unstable times.

Lessons learned: A focus and drive to succeed are needed to develop entrepreneurship, transforming lifestyle and work skill.

Q: Did your parents understand what your business was about?

A: Yes, but they were concerned about how I was going to be able to build the business and create an income out of it. My parents come from non-business backgrounds and no one had owned and operated a business before; so I was heading into new territory. While I could get help and advice on certain issues, I had to research and develop myself a lot of the information about running and conducting a business.

Lessons learned: Research skills have to be identified and applied to know the market; lifelong learning, and computer and e-net skills are important in this context.

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Q: Any negative comments about starting your own business? Did people say just get a normal job or keep working for wages?

A: Many people at first sight told me that I was silly starting my own business because of the risk. They told me I would be better off and better able to provide for my family if I had a secure job. But the idea of a secure job made me feel insecure. For example, if I needed more money how could I find it in a job, if there was no paid overtime etc. In rural environments nothing is secure. I felt that in a management consulting style business like TSS I could earn money without actually doing the physical fieldwork all the time, once I had the contracts in from the hired professional experts. I could have money coming in while I was on holidays with my family, which would never be possible as an employee.

Lessons learned: It is Important to identify business and personal life spaces and have a realistic belief in oneself/persistence.

Q: After you began your business was there any doubts about this decision?

A: No. There was never a point when I thought I should get a job as an employee, but there certainly were times when I was not sure I had done the right thing in starting my own business. In the early days business debt levels seemed overwhelming and unserviceable, but I kept pushing forward, knowing that as my business grew a lot of these early issues would become much easier. The more time I spent in my own business, the more the thought of ever working for someone else again seemed impossible. I had to secure credit that was manageable not only in repayments but also in stress levels that I could live with.

Lessons learned: Overcoming anxiety/stress, belief in the business, establishing realistic credit facilities are important skills for an entrepreneur.

Q: What goals did you set for yourself and business?

A: I imagined it to be much bigger than where it is now. I will always imagine any business I own in the future to be bigger and succeed more than what it is at the present

time. Without this imagination the business would never grow.

Lessons learned: How to build a brand name is a critical success skill, as is, belief in one's self judgments.

Q: Did you have formal training for this business?

A: Many years ago, I had a feeling that my future would be in running my own business and that the rural environment was being transformed. I had decided to take courses in business studies at a Technical and Further Education College. This then led to being employed by a firm to develop and build up a number of small businesses for sale to potential buyers. This was extremely hard due to the fact that no one had ever seen a business of this nature in the rural urban fringe areas. There was a large amount of work put in by me to build up the brand name and the services that the company provided. This for me was a great learning experience as it let me develop a large number of business skills with minimal or no risk for myself. I was an employee for a larger company. It was not only formal theoretical training, but also the practical implementation and experience. And it didn't end there. I was learning all the time as products and techniques changed.

Lessons learned: Learning, formal/informal, practical/theoretical, on/off the job in an apprenticeship model are critical components of successful business.

Q: In your business model you developed a partnership. Was this a difficult decision to take, for example, to give ownership of 50 percent of the business to someone else?

A: The thought of giving up half the company to someone else seemed hard, but as there was only one of me there is only so much one can achieve. So once that decision was made, it freed up a large amount of time for me to concentrate on building the business rather than just running it. Also the partner brought new skills to the business that I did not have. With the partnership, the company has gone ahead in leaps and bounds. Its client base now covers residential homes, city, industrial landscapes, corporate bodies, gated residential communities, a life style company, larger urban blocks and a rural urban fringe, farming properties, school and council playing fields, etc.

Lessons learned: Time management, networking, and financing are essential developmental skills in developing a business.

Q: How did you raise the capital for your business?

A: I had no money to start things up. This is often the case when you are young and living in a rural area. I borrowed the start-up money from my parents. In the first few years I also had to sell some of my possessions to help fund the business until I could build up the client base. Because of this I decided that I would create any future businesses with minimal debt or debt I could manage realistically. Now because we are a contracting firm most of our contractors carry their own debt and all we need is small amounts of money as we start-up new clients. As the work gets completed we pay contractors and then we get paid. So there is only limited exposure to debt. The capital equipment that the business owns basically is used for back-up work should a contractor default or get behind a specific deadline for the contract to be completed.

Lessons learned: Developing contingency plans, consolidating debt strategies, preparing quotations, and writing contracts are all basic entrepreneurial skills.

Q: Has your business focus changed since you began it?

A: The core of the business still is the same, but over the years we have developed the company and the way it operates into a much larger business. When we first started, we did a lot of physical work ourselves to build up a significant cash flow, so that we could develop the company without debt. It also enabled us to understand the needs of the business and get to know the client base. This has done us extremely well as now we have no debt and we are able to grow the business with no debt and pay the partners a return.

Lessons learned: Policy development, assessing options, debt management, and setting long term planning goals are skill requirements.

Q: What strategies did you adopt to expand your business?

A: There was never a formal business plan in place, but

there were ethical guidelines that we decided to operate the business on. Over the years we modified the guidelines to suit the growing demands of the business. We knew that there was a large market for our business. We were not new to the industry; we were just modifying the way we conducted business and the scale of it.

Lessons learned: Adaptation and expanding the business and developing flexible plan outlines are needed.

Q: Initially did you raise the money for the business from internal sources or venture capital or banks?

A: We did not approach a venture capitalist or banks. We raised the capital from our private resources. This is not to say that we will not seek venture funds or credit lines from the banks in the future, but the only reason we would do this is if we saw opportunities to take over other businesses in the future that would make that decision worthwhile. We are always looking for new ways to expand the company.

Lessons learned: Raising operating capital/finance, securing capital, identifying lines of credit and other varieties of credit must be sourced.

Q: Was there a big gap in time between thinking about starting your business and actually doing it?

A: It took about six months from the initial concept before the first day of business. This was because we had to make sure we had all our ideas set in the way we were going to conduct our business and how we were going to target our clients.

Lessons learned: Policy and concept development, planning and scoping skills are essential skill components for successful entrepreneurs.

Q: Where did your customers come from originally?

A: The large majority of our customers are from communities where there is interest to develop and maintain the community and its assets. Businesses like ours are paid to maintain the community assets – from the lawns and gardens to pool complexes, cleaning and other form of building

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maintenance, weeding, irrigation development and so on. We also look after maintenance of wealthy private estates as well as farms in the rural urban fringes.

Lessons learned: Adaptation and expanding the business, building a data base and identifying potential market share are part of the skill base for success.

Q: Were there many difficulties in starting up the business?

A: There were no real crisis moments during the start-up phase. There were certainly many, many sleepless nights and a large amount of hours put in to the start-up and also the continuous running and development of the business. Although decisions were made and policies put in place to reduce the amount of hours that I put into the business, there are still the odd sleepless night and 100-hour weeks put in to continue growing the business.

Lessons learned: There is a need for both strategic and tactical planning and crisis management skill.

Q: What stresses did you encounter in the business?

A: Running a business is stressful. I don't think there is ever a time when it is not so, but when you are starting a business from scratch there is a lot more stress due to the fact that you are stepping into uncharted waters and you really don't know what the future has in store for you and your company.

There are also a number of other thoughts that run through your head when starting up – for example, will it succeed, where will it take us, how long, etc.? There are also the general day-to-day stresses of running a business, e.g., customer problems, contractor problems, sourcing new work and paying the bills as they become due, etc.

Lessons learned: Importance of time management, developing contingency plans, and confidence in communication with people.

Q: Did your business face problems when it expanded?

A: It is always difficult to adjust to any form of expansion whether it is rapid or not, because new policies have to be

put in place to protect the business as it grows. But with rapid expansion you have to adapt and introduce policies extremely quickly, which makes it very difficult.

Lessons learned: Adaptation and expanding the business must be always on the agenda for success.

Q: So the people you have working with you are very important?

A: The people in any business are the key to the success of the business. This is why we only employ the services of experts and quality trades people and business owners to work for us. We think that this is the reason for our continued success.

Lessons learned: Staff selection and recruitment skills are critical for success in business.

Q: When you look back, what comes to mind about your business efforts?

A: Looking back, I hope the best moments are still to come and that as we continue to expand our brand we will see more and more of these moments. In regards to the worst moments, there is no particular one that stands out. It is probably more those weeks and months when you felt you couldn't possibly fit another task in, but you had no choice if you wanted to succeed. You do need to find that bit of extra time and the strength to push forward, because you know that if you do, the rewards are only around the corner.

Lessons learned: Focus and drive to succeed and the development of time management skill are very important skills to have or learn.

Q: What are critical factors for a business to succeed?

A: In my view a business needs a great product/service that is needed and wanted by the community. Then you need the right people to sell it to them and carry out what needs to be done. I guess in my opinion the keys are great people, great product and great delivery to the market place.

Lessons learned: Staff recruitment and selection and being able to identify and target the market are vital skills for the entrepreneur.

Q: What qualities are needed for business success?

A: The ability to work under a large amount of pressure and still stay calm and focused; to be able to adapt to changing markets; and be focused on what the customer needs and wants, because without the customer there is no business.

Lessons learned: Being able to build customer loyalty is an essential prerequisite skill for success.

Q: What are your plans for the next 5 years phase?

A: Over the next five years I plan to expand my existing business. I plan to offer much more services and expand our contractor network. We plan to introduce membership fees to be able to practice as one of our contractors. This has been one of our goals since the beginning, but it was not realistic until now. We are now able to do so because now we are able to provide constant work to all our contractors.

TSS plans to expand into other parts of the rural areas over the next five years as well as adding Pest Management services for residential and commercial properties in rural and rural urban development zones. I'm also working on starting up an import/export business. This will be used to provide products for my companies at much lower cost than at present.

Lessons learned: Goal setting, implementing plans and cost reduction strategies are essential skills.

Q: What advice would you give to people thinking of starting their own business within a rural transformation zone?

A: The first piece of advice is that they must be prepared to put in the hours of hard work to make the company succeed. Secondly, make sure you have researched the market place as to the product or service that they want; because if you don't, all the hard work will result in failure.

Make sure you have done a business plan even if it is simple with a few points outlined, e.g. – Product/service to be sold? What is the target market? What is the cost of the finished product/service? What will you charge (costs and profits)? What other costs are involved (insurances, taxes, factory rental etc.)? What is the profit going to be and how long will it take to get to a breakeven point and start turning a profit?

When you are looking to finance your project, be sure that you don't leave yourself short. For example, within six months of turning your first profit after 2-3 years of hard work, you would not want to have it all taken away because at the last moment you ran out of money. If you believe that it will work and you are passionate about it, just go for your research before you jump in.

Potential skills identified from the interview

The following list of skills for successful entrepreneurship has been deduced from the interview question and answers. A selection of them could be used to identify a training package for entrepreneurs starting up a new business as part of transformation within rural economies. The skills necessary for entrepreneurship in this case study are generalisable to any business. The trainer and the trainee should re-read the paragraphs above and try and deduce an expanded set of skills and to see if there are any general principles of entrepreneurialism that could be identified that might apply to their own business. A training package including support material, such as videos, hand out sheets, role play, interview schedules, showing the skills in action and how to develop the skills should be developed for each particular small business.

On re-reading the content base of the interview the deduced skill base for entrepreneurial activity for rural transformation through education and training is listed below. Of course the budding entrepreneur will have some of the skills listed below. The deficits can then be quickly identified by the trainer and various short term developmental units of study can be developed to help the learner overcome any shortages in the skill base.

- Research skill to know the market;
- Networking skill with people (staff, customers, suppliers, officials);

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- Ethical and legal skill;
- Developing synergy for expansion and planning;
- Focus skill (drive to succeed);
- Identifying business and personal life spaces skill;
- Realistic belief in oneself/ persistence skill;
- Overcoming anxiety/ stress;
- Learning – formal/informal, practical/theoretical, on/ off the job;
- Building the brand name;
- Time management skill;
- Developing contingency plans;
- Consolidating debt strategies;
- Developing concepts and project proposals;
- Raising operating capital/financial skill;
- Risk management skill;
- Policy and concept developments skill;
- Adaptation and expanding the business skill;
- Staff selection and recruitment;
- Building customer loyalty;

- Strategic and tactical planning skill;
- Human relations/development skill;
- Goal setting skill; and
- Implementing plans.

The Q&A, as a case study, shows an approach to diagnosing and analysing what is possible and what is needed to succeed in changing from an employee to running your own business. This transformation from employed to a small rural business entrepreneur does not happen by chance. It is a conscious effort to transform ones life and life style. To do this requires a range of skills. Some of the skills are innate to the individual. Others need to be learned. The list above indicates the scope and nature of the skills and capabilities necessary for starting a successful enterprise in an urban-rural fringe community. The training content, method and process have to be adapted to the specific contexts and the needs and personal circumstances of the would-be entrepreneur.

Source: Cavanagh, Darol M. (2012): "Rural Transformation: Skills for Entrepreneurs", Australia.



Case 7

Rural Transformation through Human Development: BRAC in Bangladesh

Introduction

BRAC (previously known as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) was founded in Bangladesh in 1972, just after the war of liberation of Bangladesh. In the course of its evolution it has established itself as a pioneer in recognising and tackling the many different realities of poverty. Over the years, BRAC has given priority to enhancing the capacities of those who are disadvantaged, powerless and outside the reach of many development programmes. In Bangladesh, BRAC works to combat poverty in over 70,000 villages and 2,000 urban slums, reaching three quarters of the communities in the country with a package of services, support and capacity-building, BRAC employs more than 150,000 people, – programme organisers, development managers, teachers, health staff, paraprofessionals and entrepreneurs – reaching the doorsteps of poor families.

In the last 10 years, BRAC has become an international organisation. In response to demands from other developing countries, BRAC has taken its experience and programmes to Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan in Asia and Sierra Leone, Uganda, Tanzania, Liberia and South Sudan in Africa. BRAC thus has become a significant actor in south-to-south development cooperation.

Vision, Mission and Values

BRAC's vision is to create a world free from all forms of exploitation and discrimination where everyone has the opportunity to realise their potential. Its mission is to empower people and communities in situations of poverty, illiteracy, disease and social injustice. Its interventions aim to achieve large scale, positive changes through economic and social programmes that enable men and women to realise their potential. Learning from own extensive experience over four decades, BRAC has developed certain values that guide its work. The four "core values" which BRAC relies on are listed as: Innovation, Integrity, Inclusiveness, and Effectiveness.

Major Programmes

BRAC takes pride in calling itself and being a "learning organisation". It has tried to listen to the people in designing and developing practical and meaningful programmes to address the problems of poverty and powerlessness. It has, for example, learned that poverty is not a one-dimensional issue of income only, but a very complex phenomenon with many facets. Poverty has been understood as "lack of access to resources" – lack of access to capital, land, rights, health, education, capacity and capabilities, government resources and services and many other resources. This understanding compelled BRAC to become a multi-faceted and comprehensive development organisation focusing on human resource development among the disadvantaged people. The major programmes representing the understanding of the complex web of causes and consequences of poverty and disadvantage are briefly explained in this case study.

Bangladesh is a country of 150 million, more than thirty percent of whom are in the category of the poor below the poverty line. However, a larger proportion, more than forty percent of the population, are regarded as poor who lack a steady income and sustained livelihoods. There are many reasons for such poverty, but dense population, lack of resources and capabilities are the major ones.

Microfinance

The poor are a diverse group with diverse livelihoods, needs and potentials, which change over time due to lifecycle, new opportunities and external shocks. This varied and dynamic reality of the poor peoples' lives forms the basis of BRAC's conceptualisation and designs of its development programmes, in which microfinance is a core element. Microcredit, or microfinance, is banking the unbankables, bringing credit, savings and other essential financial services within the reach of millions of poor people. They are too poor to be served by regular banks, in most cases because they are unable to offer a collateral. Banks, conventionally, are for people with money, not for people without.

BRAC delivers its microfinance through its branch offices and multitude of programme organisers and programme

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assistants at the grassroots. Each village has a village organisation (VO), which is formed with the poor in the village as members. Each VO has around 40 members, most of them are women. The VO is divided into small groups of 5 each who are responsible for taking, utilising and paying back the microfinance. The loan size may be between \$100 and \$5,000. If the graduates of BRAC required loans of higher amounts, they may avail themselves that opportunity from the BRAC Bank which was founded in 2001 to cater to needs of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

The micro loans are usually provided for one year, payable in weekly instalments. Although the individual is responsible for these loans, the group remains the overall guarantor and the "moral and supportive collateral". Therefore, the group pressure is used when there are problems in getting repayments.

A highly organised and efficient management system has been developed and fine tuned over the years to implement the microfinance programmes. The loans are primarily provided for non-agricultural, non-farm activities, such as poultry, fisheries, livestock, horticulture, small business, cottage industries etc. However, there are activities also in agriculture. BRAC is also contributing in developing high yielding varieties of rice and making those available through the microfinance programmes and technical assistance to the rural farmers. Capacity building through training is a vital input from BRAC to enhance the effectiveness of cultivation and productivity of land and labour.

BRAC's microfinance has so far covered approximately 9 million women in Bangladesh, disbursing on an average US\$ 2 billion annually. It is an enormous management challenge for BRAC and therefore BRAC has emphasised staff and managers' training on a continuing basis.

Health

Healthcare services are another area of service provision that BRAC has undertaken for villagers. The objective of this service is to provide quality services to the poor keeping in mind the practicality, needs and the constraints in the country. The services include but are not limited to water and sanitation, immunisation, oral rehydration, family planning, health education, and basic curative care

through small clinics. Through its network of area offices and health staff, BRAC is covering the poor in almost all the villages, numbering more than 70,000 villages. The country has 85,000 villages.

One of the most effective programmes is the "Village Health Volunteers" programme. In a village of an average population of 2,000 people in 300 to 400 households, a health volunteer is trained by BRAC on ten basic diseases. This volunteer takes care of the health needs of the villagers around her home. Typically a woman, she has some basic medicines which she sells to the villagers. However, no antibiotics are provided to the Health Volunteer. She usually takes care of 300 households around her home. She is also linked up with the union (regional division) or district and sub-district health facilities, so that she can refer difficult cases to a higher level.

BRAC learned this approach and adapted it from the older Chinese experience of "barefoot doctors". While China has moved beyond this approach, Bangladesh still finds it relevant as a mechanism for providing basic healthcare to the villagers. A whole human infrastructure has been built by BRAC from the village level, with an effective linkage with the BRAC Training and Learning division and its rural centres.

Education

From the very inception of BRAC in early 1970's, the organisation has placed emphasis on education: initially for the adults in the poorer communities, then for children. In the 1970s BRAC implemented a "Functional Education" programme for the adult members of BRAC in the villages. The purpose of the programme was to build social awareness among the poor, combining this with basic literacy and numeracy. In the 1980s, responding to demand from the grassroots for children's primary education, since the children of the poor were mostly not served by the inadequate public system, BRAC designed and tried out a "second chance" non-formal primary education programme. The BRAC education activities evolved into two mutually complementary parts (i) social awareness through the social development programmes (see below) and (ii) the second chance Non-formal Primary Education programme for the disadvantaged children.

BRAC probed into the realities of the educational services for children from poor families and found: (i) the main dropouts from the regular primary schools were the poor children, girls first; (ii) the way the schools functioned, a parent wanting to educate her children, either had to have money for private tuition or be highly literate herself. Neither of these conditions applied to the poor families. BRAC designed and experimented with a programme to address these obstacles. The non-formal model that emerged was distinctive with the following features:

- One-class, one-teacher school of four years duration compressing five years of primary cycle with ensured contact hours with the slightly older children than in a regular school;
- Small class size (33 children in each), which met for 3 hours, six days a week at hours decided by parents;
- A school within a village, so that the distance was not much and girls could comfortably attend; mothers meet once a month with teachers to discuss children's progress;
- Intensive two-week hands-on initial training of teachers on active learning, participatory methods, and commitment to the poor followed by monthly refresher and intensive supervision. The teacher typically is a married woman from the village with secondary education;
- Co-curricular activities, e.g. singing, dancing, art work, exercises, games, social programmes etc. that makes learning joyful;
- Intensive management and supervision. Supervisor and quality assurance specialists visited schools regularly with specific quality criteria and improvement agenda;
- A development unit prepared, tested and updated learner friendly materials and teacher's guides;
- Intensive monitoring and management information system that provided monitoring data actually used in managing the system; and
- The classroom is a purposefully renovated rented room from the village; with all learning materials and teacher's salary paid by BRAC, parents have no cash cost.

In 1985, BRAC started with 22 pilot non-formal schools, but with very little dropout, better learning performance than

formal school, and close community-school contact, the BRAC school became a runaway success.

A one-year preschool programme was added in 1997 which prepared children to attend the regular primary school. Over the years the number of schools varied depending on available donor support (since parents were charged no fee). On an average 1.5 million children were served in primary and pre-school programmes annually in recent years. In 2011, BRAC ran more than 55,000 schools of which 35,000 were 4-year primary schools and over 20,000 were one-year pre-schools.

The government has also recognised the value of the programme. BRAC primary school completers participate in the national primary school completion examination. With over 99 percent success in the examination, the large majority of the students have moved on to the secondary school at grade six.

Social development

Moving away from a conventional adult literacy approach, BRAC has looked at education and empowerment in a broader perspective. BRAC's social development programme focuses on legal and human rights, and awareness raising, including legal literacy and support.

It was observed that the poor in the village faced many social and legal problems, including, those related to marriage, divorce, land ownership, and inheritance. In the "Para (Neighbourhood) Legal programme", a woman in the village was trained on the legal issues regarding laws on the above issues. She would then train a class of 20 village women on the legal provisions and remedies on these vital social issues. Participants of the course shared the cost of the para-legal teachers' remuneration. Booklets in simple language and flip charts were prepared on citizen's rights and legal recourse. There is now one BRAC-trained woman serving as a paralegal teacher in almost every village in Bangladesh. In addition to this programme, BRAC also established linkages with supportive lawyers at the rural level to give pro-bono support to the poor villagers should the need arise.

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Training and Capacity Building

From the beginning, BRAC has paid particular attention to training and capacity building of the people as well as its own workers. It has established training programmes and rural training centres all over the country. The aim is two-fold: (i) to build the capabilities, skills and capacities of the poor; (ii) to continually train the staff and managers of BRAC to build their capabilities, skills and capacities to face the changing management challenges.

BRAC now has established 24 training centres all over the country for its rural and urban staff, and also its village members, each with the residential capacity to train 100 participants at a time. The villagers are trained in both human relations and occupational skills. Human relations skills are taught in the fields of management, leadership, accounting, and communications. Occupational skills include technical skills in agriculture, poultry and livestock, fisheries, sericulture, and small business management. Once the poor get training, they are supported by the microfinance programme to take on economic activities.

Over the years, the BRAC Training Division (now named Learning Division) has played a big role in building the skills of the poor villagers in taking up activities in social and economic fields, which has helped them in dealing with solutions regarding social and economic poverty.

In the last ten years, BRAC has also embarked on building national leadership and management and technical skills of the younger generation. With this end in view, the BRAC University was founded in 2001. It now has more than 5,000 students studying at undergraduate and graduate levels management, architecture, literature, law, economics, education, bio-technology, mathematics, physics and other subjects. Graduate schools in public health, education, governance studies, and development studies have been established. BRAC University has earned a reputation as one of the top private universities among 50 in Bangladesh.

BRAC organisation, management and programmes demonstrate that it has given primacy to human resource development. Skills and leadership development has been imparted successfully for people at all levels. The approach

has been to build the skills and capabilities of both the participants at the grassroots and at the organisational levels. The approach has been based on research, people's views on their needs and aspirations, long-term thinking, planning and strategising and focused on human capacity enhancement.

Rural Transformation Lessons and Looking Ahead

The experience of BRAC for over forty years in the field of poverty alleviation and rural development has taught BRAC and the development community useful lessons. Some key ones are listed below:

- Human resource development is absolutely necessary for poverty alleviation, rural development, and overall development of a country;
- Programmes should be developed with “ears and eyes open” to the people who will be affected by the programmes. The poor themselves can be the best teachers;
- Training is vital for implementing and scaling up programmes. Training of trainers and teachers can make a skills development programme more effective;
- Leadership at the top and down the line is required for successful implementation of any programme;
- Education should be taken as a broader concept. For the poor, all facets of education are required, e.g., literacy, numeracy, accounting, legal and human rights, leadership, management, communication and occupational skills. Skills development is absolutely necessary for ultimately solving the poverty problems;
- “Small is beautiful, but big is necessary”. To solve gigantic problems of the poor, small programmes may not have the full effectiveness. The need is to solve big problems with big interventions. That is why scaling-up of programmes is the challenge;
- The poor, especially women, have inherent talent and capacity. The need is to nurture and expand those inherent capacities through making opportunities available. Programmes should be built on the already existing human strength;
- Developing a down-to-earth management system is

necessary to make a programme effective and successful;

- Microfinance is not a panacea for development, human resource development is more critical; and
- Mindsets of both the elites and the poor in a society have to change from a feudalistic one to a developmental and supportive one.

Living up to its reputation as a learning organisation, BRAC has looked at its successes and constraints, has attempted to draw the lessons from its remarkable record, as it looks to the challenges of the future. The Executive Director of BRAC, in a new year's "reflections" at the beginning of the Chinese Year of the Ascending Dragon (2012), affirmed: "We must focus on our core values – innovation, inclusiveness, integrity and effectiveness – to make BRAC larger and stronger". He also underscored some new goals, on which BRAC must concentrate and which indicate the scope and depth of BRAC's engagement:

- Developing a model for comprehensive health insurance for members of village organisations and up-scaling the maternal health programme;
- Developing computer based learning materials for all classes for difficult school subjects and place them in the website for open access in the public school system; as well as initiating a model of quality secondary schools in rural areas;
- Strengthening Village Organisations for awareness raising in social development in selected districts including munga (food shortage) affected north-west region of Bangladesh;
- Providing financial education and training on skill development for more active involvement of women in income generating activities;
- New initiatives to reach tenant farmers with credit and extension, and experiments with models of micro-insurance against external shocks;
- Establishment of bio-gas factories for recycling wastes;
- Developing an ICT based agricultural extension model and early warning system for agriculture;
- Reducing the cost of serving the ultra-poor households through engaging the village elites in asset transfer;

- Piloting an integrated programme in the Haors (underwater and flood-prone low land) in the Sylhet region;
- Developing an integrated programme for the adolescents and the youth in rural areas and urban slums; and
- Developing a results based framework for integrating gender in specific programmes and raising significantly the regular and fulltime staff ratio for women in BRAC from the current 20 percent (Internal memo on 31 December, 2011).

Concluding Comments

BRAC has, over the last forty years, become a comprehensive development organisation addressing the problems of poverty from multidimensional perspectives. In all its endeavours the main focus has been developing the capabilities, skills and capacities of the poor. It has always based its interventions on interacting with and learning from the community and the workers; then initiating programmes which addressed both the felt needs and the emerging needs of the poor.

To achieve its goals and objectives, BRAC has built an organisation which has imbibed a culture of empathy with the poor, discipline, innovation and scaling up of tested solutions. BRAC has taken the phrase "small is beautiful, but big is necessary" as a motto. It continues to operate on the premise that to solve multi-faceted poverty problems affecting large proportions of the population, it is not enough to initiate small "hot-house" programmes. It is essential to scale-up tested approaches in order to make a significant contribution to solving major problems.

Source: Adapted from contribution by Salehuddin Ahmed, International Poverty Reduction centre in China (IPRCC), Beijing, 2012.

Case 8

Rural Radio in Agricultural Extension: Ghana

Background

Diverse traditional channels of communication and dissemination of information are used in Sub-Saharan African countries. Common channels include the market place, town crier, traditional leaders, village square, drama, music, local churches, and village meetings. In all rural areas, there are "markets" which operate on certain fixed days. People, gathering to buy and sell, also share information and gossip and feedbacks are received. The town crier goes around with a metal gong to draw the attention of members of the community to vital information.

The traditional channels of communication and information have obvious limitations in scope and coverage of audience. As a complement to the traditional channels, the Government of Ghana set up Simli Community FM Radio station (FM station) for minority communities in the north of the country in the early 1980s.

The Simli Community Radio project encouraged active participation of the audience in the making and scheduling of programmes. It employed members of the community both as station staff, such as radio presenters, correspondents and programme facilitators or animators, and as resources for providing programme material and content.

Programme Design and Content

The broadcast content of Simli Radio was of two types: technical information and business knowledge and news. Technical information related to the cropping practices and the related activities, including agro-environment analysis, land preparation, nursery, irrigation and fertilisation, crop protection, harvesting, post harvest handling and product processing. Business information and news related to economical aspects of agriculture, including capital, finance, and market information and movement in market prices.

Experience at Simli Radio showed that the most popular

programmes were those which helped provide farmers with income-earning opportunities. This frequently involved discussion and tips on combining traditional crops with a supplementary activity that did not require high levels of investment or risk-taking since farmers did not have to give up existing activities.

One core programme approach was to present topics in a dramatised form. The programmes were produced in a magazine format, featuring dramatic episodes and topical talk and discussion, interspersed with jingles and traditional music. An hour-long script was prepared by a team of expert writers and copies were distributed to the radio producers as well as to extension workers and NGO representatives who were all involved in producing the programme.

Well-known scepticism of the wary farmer is played up in the script to air various points of view about farming methods and conservation techniques such as using organic fertilisers or green manures, reducing bush burning, controlling chemical inputs for cash crops and issues about migration to the city. Extension officers and the educated farmer are challenged by ordinary farmers as to why they should change their current practices. The local extension service, NGO personnel and local farmers engaged in discussions after the drama is broadcasted to build on the themes and explain to listeners who they should contact for more information.

Programme Evaluation

Simli undertook periodic impact evaluations of its programme activities in order to:

- Identify target communities where farmers follow radio broadcasts in their local language;
- Assess the general level of knowledge about soil and water conservation (SWC) methods prior to the broadcast;
- Discover what level of knowledge or understanding of SWC had been gained from the radio programme immediately after the broadcast; and
- Gauge the extent to which farmers enjoyed the programme format and felt the information was readily accessible.

Impact evaluation revealed that rural farmers, in general, liked the radio programme. The parts they enjoyed most were the drama and the group discussion among the presenter, extension agents, NGO representative and the invited farmers. Understanding of soil and water conservation practices, agro-forestry and organic manures improved in the area since the radio programme began.

Bush burning was recognised as a negative practice by almost all the respondents, even before the programme was transmitted. The broadcast, however, increased the farmers' resolve to reduce this practice on their own farms and in the immediate environment.

Briefly speaking, the radio programme was well received by the target audience, and the format in which it was presented was popular and easily understood. Drama, which formed a large part of the programme, contributed to its popularity. It was evident that almost any type of information and advice can be prepared for radio transmission.

Lessons Learned

The experience of agricultural extension at Simli Radio has shown that the most popular programmes were those that helped farmers to take advantage of a direct income-earning opportunity. Rural radio has developed over the years into a well-established tool for both community empowerment and improving the information and communication capacity of remote rural populations.

Timing, sustainability and continuity of programmes must be taken into consideration in using rural radio as an ex-

ension and communication tool to serve rural communities. For example, the programme would have a cumulative effect if continued over several cultivation seasons. The broadcasts should be timed to coincide with the start of the farming season and repeated at regular intervals, until harvest time.

Establishment of rural radio networks requires attention to creating three enabling conditions: First, a legal framework has to be set out providing for the authority to operate independent broadcasting at the local level. Secondly, a cross-sectoral budgetary planning has to be undertaken to mobilise necessary resources and attract donor funding. National strategies that allow for the combined development impact of rural radio across a range of sectors such as health, education and agricultural extension could help to ensure the longer-term sustainability of local broadcasting through stable and longer-term funding. Finally, the coordination of technological development and building the information network needs to retain local autonomy whilst ensuring that the potential of the technology available is harnessed.

Digital satellite radio receivers, for example, are at present expensive to be used individually by farmers but could be employed strategically by the rural radio networks and extension services to maximise information sharing. With a national strategy, the state-run information networks could be complemented effectively by community-based, participatory communication through rural radio.

Source: Adapted from Robert Chapman, Roger Blench, et al. (2003): "Rural Radio in Agricultural Extension: The Example of Vernacular Radio Programmes on Soil and Water Conservation in Ghana", Agricultural Research & Extension Network, Network Paper No. 127, January 2003.



Case 9

Junior Farm Field and Life Skills Schools (JFFLS) in Mozambique

Background

The goal of the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools is to increase short and long term food security and well-being of children in households made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. In JFFLS, the children, mainly between 12-17 years old, attend a one-year programme, which follows the cycle of the farming season. The model for the young people has been adapted from a similar Farmer Field School (FFS) promoted and supported by FAO.

In Mozambique, the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) expanded from a pilot project in 2003 working with 100 children in four Community Based Organisations (CBOs) to a full-fledged and diversified programme by 2007 benefiting 840 children per year. The direct beneficiaries of this pilot project are children. Their families, caretakers and communities also benefit indirectly from this project.

By the mid 2000s, over 325,000 children in Mozambique lost one or both parents to AIDS. As AIDS claimed more lives, children were left orphaned, vulnerable and risked malnutrition, disease, abuse and sexual exploitation. In response to the orphan crisis, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Food Programme (WFP) set up Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) in Mozambique.

Main Features of the Project

All aspects of farming are taught, from land preparation to harvesting in the school. Normally the children would have learned from their parents, but AIDS disrupted that cycle. Agricultural extension workers and teachers in the school use an innovative integrated curriculum to show the children how to experiment with traditional and new techniques on crops grown in small learning fields.

Children are encouraged to use what limited resources they have. Courses in nutrition and medicinal plants help them stay as healthy as possible. Children are motivated to develop into confident young adults. Lessons in singing and dancing, as well as agriculture, help keep cultural traditions alive. Teaching children through dance and music stimulates participation and helps them concentrate better.

Skilled facilitators hold theatre and discussion groups to tackle sensitive, difficult yet potentially life-saving issues, like HIV prevention and gender equality under the careful guidance of skilled facilitators.

Children not only learn better farming practices, they also learn what they have to do in their lives – diseases, how to cope, better nutrition, good foods for HIV-positive persons. So they all have this knowledge and they transmit the knowledge at home.

No one can learn on an empty stomach; so nutritious energy-giving meals provided by WFP are a vital element of the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools. Rice, beans, and fish are supplemented at harvest time with vegetables from the fields, giving children a sense of achievement, as they begin to feed themselves.

Evaluation

The Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools began in Mozambique with four pilot schools in 2003, but expanded fast with remarkable results.

An evaluation carried out in 2005 showed that the JFFLS (known locally as "Celeiro da Vida" – Granaries for Life) had an important impact on the empowerment of the beneficiaries and for increased and sustainable food production. Local schools hosting JFFLS activities were expected to include JFFLS activities in the 20% of the school term devoted for the "local curriculum". A major impact of the activities in Mozambique was improved diet. The production of vegetables in the JFFLS learning fields improved the food diet of the children who sometimes were not accustomed to eating vitamin rich vegetables. For instance, a community around a JFFLS in Mozambique reported improved nutrition because of the introduction of new vegetables for home consumption (lettuce and green peppers).

JFFLS have transformed the agricultural sector and hence the life of rural people in the communities where they operate. With the new knowledge, farmers now plant in rows, and a small patch of land yields a reasonable amount of production. JFFLS experience affirmed that knowledge, livelihood skills, gender-equal attitudes, and the confidence to make a living are vital if the next generation is to escape the cycle of poverty and HIV/AIDS-infection.

Lessons Learned

The following question and answers highlights the impact of the project.

Q: Why are these additional activities for orphans and vulnerable children necessary?

A: At the end of 2005, there were 24.5 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa living with HIV and AIDS. This has left 12 million children in the region without one or both parents. By 2010 over 18 million children will have lost one or both parents as a consequence of the HIV epidemic. Millions more will be made vulnerable even before they become orphans. Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) help fill knowledge and skills gaps left by the premature death of parents.

Lessons learned: Need to make the project demand-driven.

Q: What is the difference between the JFFLS and attaching social workers to children, or creating a school garden?

A: The difference lies in philosophy and approach. A JFFLS is a living classroom and a school without walls. Through an integrated curriculum of agriculture and life skills, JFFLS aim to empower children, build their self-esteem and foster gender equal attitudes. JFFLS promote livelihood approaches which are more than the traditional psycho-social support that is usually institutional, and can be costly and hand-out oriented.

Lessons learned: Importance of integrated curriculum of agriculture and life skills; promotion of livelihood skills and cost-effectiveness.

Q: Do the JFFLS replace conventional schooling?

A: No. JFFLS are meant to complement the existing schooling and social structures, not replace them. JFFLS target the most vulnerable children both in and out of school. The curriculum follows the crop cycle of one year, and usually classes are held two or three times a week. In areas where most children attend school, JFFLS take place on weekends or after school. In Mozambique, where the most vulnerable children are not attending school, most of the JFFLS are attached to a conventional school in an effort to encourage children to attend regular schooling.

Lessons learned: Ensure making vulnerable children both in and out-of-school direct beneficiary; programme timing; mainstreaming out-of-school children and youth.

Q: How are the facilitators at the JFFLS paid?

A: For sustainability reasons, the JFFLS have a voluntary character and except for a small incentive, no payment is involved. In some cases, community facilitators run the programme, and they receive a small monthly cash stipend amounting to US\$ 8.50 and like the children who attend, they are given a take-home ration by WFP. Teachers and agricultural extension workers facilitate the programme in Mozambique, and as food provided by WFP is cooked on site, the children and facilitators, as well as all the children in attached schools, benefit from nutritious meals each day.

Lessons learned: Importance of active community participation and involvement; teachers and extension workers main facilitators.

Q: Is this part of a wider plan for the problem of orphans and vulnerable children in Africa?

A: Yes. JFFLS are part of the United Nations and Partners' Alliance that aims to strengthen the livelihoods of orphans and vulnerable children through social protection interventions in the region. Through this process, the United Nations and its partners identify promising initiatives and build an evidence base for bringing successful initiatives to full scale. Countries in the region have government policies and plans of action for orphans and vulnerable

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children, but in practice they are often inadequate and implementation and delivery face significant challenges. This process helps identify promising activities for the target group that governments can adopt, support, and bring to scale to help more children in need.

Lessons learned: Attention to programme sustainability; development of partners support.

Q: What are the roles of the United Nations agencies?

A: FAO is the lead agency and is responsible for the quality of the activity. FAO oversees provision of agricultural skills, seeds, tools, and agricultural inputs. The World Food Programme provides food rations for the children, their families, and linked institutions. UNICEF is tasked with promoting life skills, and educating children on nutrition, sanitation and HIV/AIDS prevention issues. UNFPA is involved in most countries to provide support on sexual and reproductive health and gender issues. In addition, the Peace Corps and non-governmental organisations are key partners in this activity.

Lessons learned: Mobilising donors' support and commitment.

Concluding Comments

Overall, the JFFLS are successful examples of skills training

and agricultural extension services for young rural residents. The pilots started in a number of countries in east and southern Africa; it is now a programme that runs in nine countries.

Farmer field schools, the model after which the junior version has been designed, consist of groups of people with a common interest, who get together on a regular basis to study the "how and why" of a particular topic. The farmer field school is particularly suited and specifically developed for field-based learning, where hands-on management skills and conceptual understanding (based on non-formal adult education principles) is required. The popularity of JFFLS programme relies on the responsiveness to needs of farmers, trainers and organisers who facilitate farmer field schools. The key to success, apart from the relevance of the learning objectives, are the JFFLS trainer/facilitators, who must have skills in managing participatory, discovery-based learning as well as technical knowledge to guide the groups' learning and action.

The gender and development service of FAO has put considerable effort into adapting the approach in the area of health, particularly in HIV/AIDS programmes and in work with young children.

Source: FAO Emergency and Rehabilitation Programme in Southern Africa, Regional Interagency Coordination Support Office (RIACSO), <http://www.fao.org/reliefoperations>



Case 10

Training to Empower Women Entrepreneurs in Pune, India

Background

The Indian Institute of Education (IIE), Pune, India, which is one of the ten member institutes of the APPEAL Research and Training Consortium (ARTC) of UNESCO in the Asia Pacific Region, has emphasised innovative approaches to non-formal education for sustainable development. IIE has been engaged over the last quarter of a century in experimenting with innovative ideas for the development of tailor-made skills for empowering women and other oppressed people particularly in rural areas as part of its overall poverty alleviation strategy through both formal and non-formal modes.

One of the projects initiated by IIE provides vocational education on the principle of learning by doing, emphasising knowledge and practice of science and technology (Vigyan Ashram). Another is an action research project for education and development of rural women with a view to empowering them to become agents of rural transformation (CEDRW).

The Vigyan Ashram

The Vigyan Ashram near the village of Pabal in Maharashtra State has developed a system capable of educating and empowering school dropouts through training in basic science and technology at affordable cost and in an acceptable time frame (The word vigyan means "science" and ashram denotes a "place of simple living and high thinking"). The experimental activity of IIE started in 1983. In 1985, it was approved by the Board of Secondary Education, Maharashtra, as a rural technology course and is still implemented in schools as a part of the secondary technical stream. A similar course is also conducted exclusively for non-formal learners on a full-time basis at the ashram.

The main areas covered in this programme include: skill training in the areas of agriculture, animal husbandry, food processing, food preservation, soil science, sewing and knitting, electrical assembly, and equipment maintenance.

It also emphasises ability to take appropriate management decisions, to quantify and document, and to do simple accounting, quality measurement and quality analysis. Attention is given to developing individual self-confidence and self-respect.

The ashram offers a course titled Introduction to Basic Technology exclusively for non-formal education students. This course lasts one year. At present, schools in 15 villages also offer this course. In addition, there is the course in rural technology, which lasts almost a year (300 days) and is open to 20 students aged 17-25. This course consists of four themes, with related topics and skills, as indicated in the table below.

The students are divided into four groups, one for each of the course themes. They are rotated through all four themes for the duration of the course. Each student is required to undertake a project related to each of the themes. In addition, all students receive training in financial management skills such as estimating a budget, maintaining accounts, managing stock, and analysing costs.

The Vigyan Ashram provides vocational and technical education to NFE learners directly at the grassroots level. It makes the course content locally relevant by emphasising the dignity of all labour and the cultivation of both the head and the hand. Vigyan Ashram also intends to move into the area of information communication technology by developing and applying computer software applicable for rural development programmes. Adaptation and use of various software have already been tried out.

Centre for Education and Development of Rural Women (CEDRW)

In 1993, Indian Institute of Education's (IIE) priorities – action research, social and economic development, improvement of the status of women – led to the establishment of the Centre for Education and Development of Rural Women (CEDRW) in the village of Shivapur, about 25 kilometres south-east of Pune in Maharashtra State. The centre focuses on education and empowerment of rural women and girls, viewing them as both participants in development and subjects of development.

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Course on "Introduction to Basic Technology"			
Theme	Topic	Resource Centre	Skills Development
Living (Human and Society)	Home	Food Lab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing preservative food products, e.g. jam, pickles, biscuits • Sewing and knitting
	Health	Rural Lab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide first-aid • Conduct pathological tests • Home remedies for common ailments • Oral rehydration therapy
Living Plants	Agriculture	3 acre Plot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planting and growing vegetables crops • Use of pesticides • Irrigation
	Animals		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poultry and cattle raising • Artificial insemination • Diagnosing pregnancy
Non-living Materials	Engineering	Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurement • Soldering and welding • Carpentry tools • Tractor repair • Building, and dams construction • Prepare energy devices; pressure stoves and bio-gas stoves
Non-living (Non-Material)	Energy and Environment	Water Resource Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of energy (diesel) • Install water pipeline, hand pump, etc.
		Electrical Lab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make electric circuits

A significant feature of the project is that it adopts an ethnological research approach combining the ideas of Paulo Freire about critical consciousness and Gandhian principles of education for the rural masses. Freire argued that oppressed people had to reflect on their existing social condition and take action to bring about required changes. The Gandhian principles urge modification of the Anglo-Saxon model of education to include active participation by learners themselves.

CEDRW's current activities include women's savings and credit groups, vocational programmes for dropout girls and for women 15-45 years of age, camps promoting health, nutrition and personality development, and the training of local farmers and artisans through farmers clubs.

The Centre

CEDRW, which became functional in 1994, occupies one hectare of land outside the village of Shivapur. The infrastructure is simple and designed to be in harmony with the rural setting. It consists of a workshop, administrative office, lecture-cum-dining hall, agro-exhibition hall and a

pre-school or child recreation centre. Apart from this, hostel facilities for 40 trainees, two self-contained guestrooms for visiting faculty, quarters for two academic staff and a residence for support staff are available.

One third of the ground is for the building and the remainder is used for tree plantation and experimental plots for various kinds of horticulture, including the cultivation of flowers, vegetables and medicinal plants.

The Centre has the following objectives:

- To develop a new system of rural education and vocational training that will empower women to become agents of rural transformation; and
- To evolve integrated activities for women's personal development and women's educational development; and overall socio-economic change in the villages for sustainable development.

For achieving these broad objectives the centre emphasises that:

- Education and skill development that go beyond formal schooling has a major role to play in the process of development. This education, which is a lifelong process, is required to preserve human dignity and stimulate creativity among individuals;
- The process of development must be given a holistic perspective and hence the community as a whole must be involved in this process; and
- Women's development cannot be considered in isolation from the development of men.

Mode of Participation

During informal meetings and discussions, community members initially identify the local problems faced by the community. The identified problems are prioritised according to the needs of the community. Subsequently, local representatives or animators are chosen from the community in order to establish linkages between the institute and the community. With the assistance of the animators and the community, and in consultation with the research team, an intervention or strategy is selected to tackle the problems. After implementation, the community itself evaluates the intervention on the basis of its success.

Adult vocational course

CEDRW, in response to the demand from many villagers, developed a vocational education programme for school dropout girls and women aged 15 to 45 years. The programme was introduced in 1997 and is presently being conducted at the Centre with assistance from the Department of Education of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The minimum qualification for the course is literacy and numeracy skills equivalent to Grade 3. At present, 34 students are attending the course, which lasts 6 months.

The course focuses on developing skills related to the use of modern farming and agricultural production skills, sewing, tailoring, embroidery, hand and machine knitting, and the preparation of items such as bags, purses and coverlets. In addition, there are lectures and discussions on topics related to social legislation, women's rights, work ethics, budget and accounts maintenance, marketing skills, personal health and hygiene, family education, environmental health and labour law.

Self-help (savings and credit) groups

Another major achievement of the CEDRW is the formation of savings and credit groups for women, which have now spread to 17 villages. The success of these groups has led to the formation of a consortium, where two members, the chairman and treasurer of each group, meet occasionally to review the work and provide guidance to others. It is interesting to note that the success of the women's groups has motivated the men to form their own.

Health education camps

These camps were arranged especially for women who experience health problems. Simultaneously, there were attempts to make the community aware of the requirements of basic personal as well as environmental health and hygiene. For this purpose, doctors at the Primary Health Centre as well as private physicians offered their assistance. Later on, the villagers themselves requested information related to vision and oral hygiene, areas that posed special problems in the village. Village women, who volunteered and worked in teams, were responsible for convening the health education camp for these topics.

Child Recreation Centre

In 1997 the CEDRW set up this centre to show that the parents and the community play a major role in the integrated development of children during the pre-school stage. In addition to preschool activities for young children (i.e., storytelling, games), the Centre also has a training programme for rural women to serve as pre-school staff members. Parents are actively involved through regular parent meetings.

Farmers club

This club, established by villagers in Shivapur and nearby communities, arranges meetings with visiting experts in order to keep up with advances in agricultural technology, especially as related to the cultivation of rice, a major crop in the area.

Lessons Learned

The activities described above and their results show that the interventions made by the CEDRW have been successful

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in mobilising the rural community, especially in regard to education and women's development. The series of camps that were conducted in response to the demand of the village women are sufficient proof of the growing awareness in the community. Furthermore, researchers observed that the women also participated actively at Centre meetings by expressing their views on certain issues raised.

The case study demonstrates the success of using innovative, unconventional methods to reach populations mostly excluded from formal schooling. This success rests largely on two factors. First, the programmes feature non-standardised, locally developed curricula that correspond to the priorities and life circumstances of both children and adult learners. Second, innovations in programme content and delivery occur directly in response to the needs of the local community. Instead of directives from government authorities, demand as expressed by local community members largely determines the input of the education and training programmes.

The activities show the need to contextualise and decentralise education and training, especially in the rural areas. There should be rural development centres established at the grassroots level to facilitate decentralisation and to make the education activities relevant for sustainable development. Similarly, adequate funding is needed for materials development at the local level, especially in regard to the preparation of appropriate science materials.

Finally, this innovative project illustrates the importance of reaching out to those who have previously been neglected or under-served. Whether they are ethnic minorities in remote parts or rural women and girls in conservative India, the marginal sections of society deserve the same opportunities for education and social betterment that others in more favourable circumstances already receive.

Source: <http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/INFE/p34-51.pdf>



Case 11

Forging through Adversity: The Minority Blacksmiths in Dar- fur, South Sudan

Background

The blacksmiths of El-Fashir are among the most socially excluded minority castes in Darfur, South Sudan. Only a few generations ago they were still congregating at the outskirts of towns and villages, practicing their trade in an isolated, subsistence manner. In addition to existing on Darfur's marginalised social periphery, the blacksmiths faced the added vulnerabilities of drought, famine, armed conflict, and displacement.

With the support of Practical Action, a project of the British NGO Oxfam, the El-Fashir blacksmiths cooperative now produces agricultural implements and tools. These are sold across Darfur and nearby states through institutional contracts with international agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and through local markets.

Cultivating an Appropriate Technology

A year after the 1984-1985 famine in western Sudan, the British NGO Oxfam began a seed distribution programme in Darfur to enhance agricultural production. Oxfam became aware that there was a lack of appropriate agricultural tools for small farm holders in North Darfur. The traditional hand hoe was especially a time and energy consuming constraint to expanding agricultural yields. Oxfam explored the feasibility of furthering the development of appropriate animal traction ploughs in Darfur.

While Practical Action of Oxfam began providing blacksmiths with the material and the necessary training in metal working to enhance their skills, the Kebkabiya charity (set-up by Oxfam to assist war-affected people in South Sudan) provided for the costs of labour and took responsibility for the distribution of the ploughs on credit. From the mid-to-late 1990s, under the guidance of Practical Action, blacksmiths began to train other blacksmiths in numerous villages across North Darfur and expanded direct sales of ploughs to farmers with noticeably higher profit margins.

The Business Model

The El-Fashir blacksmiths cooperative creates numerous forms of value through its operations and direct and indirect relationships with other stakeholders. The cooperative model provides members with a culturally relevant collective structure through which they can gain economies of scale in both inputs and production.

The cooperative currently (c. 2010) has 73 members. They own and operate 75 workshops. These are all located in a metalworking area of the market where they produce, sell and store their work. This is also the area where the cooperative office is located and collective storage of supplies and finished products can be found. As blacksmithing was associated with low-castes and thus an unattractive livelihoods option, the cooperative members are now the only practitioners of their trade in the market and surrounding area.

Each workshop is generally operated by two individuals, usually a combination of members, employees or apprentices. Workshops specialise in particular tools, including a diversity of hand-tools, animal drawn ploughs, and traditional knives and handicrafts. Inputs such as metal and charcoal are either purchased through the markets with cash or through barter; or – if available – they are purchased from the cooperative supply via cash or on credit.

The cooperative model provides strength to individual members, allowing them to gain economies of scale through jointly sourcing inputs and selling their production. The cooperative collects the completed tools from its members for large contracts and reimburses members for their work, most often when contracts are fulfilled and funds received. Reimbursement is determined by taking into consideration a fixed price for labour per tool created, with the variable costs of metal, charcoal, and the contract.

In order to overcome the constraint of knowledge and skills, the cooperative members are upgrading their education and the education of their children. Management, production, and work related training takes place with the assistance of Practical Action. The workshops also offer apprenticeships. From 1988 to the mid-1990s, Practical Action trained approximately 200 blacksmiths in different villages

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of North Darfur, mostly in Kebkabiya and Dar es Salaam areas. In order to sustain the production of ploughs, the capacities and skills of the blacksmiths were strengthened with training and material support.

As the blacksmiths cooperatives grow and change, Practical Action initially takes on the burden of responsibilities associated with new operating dynamics of the cooperative and the dealings with international agencies and donors. Eventually, the cooperative itself is expected to strengthen its capacity to be self-reliant.

Impact and Outcome

The cooperative business model has created an economically attractive option for blacksmiths to practice their trade through individual workshops and retail spaces and collective contracts.

The diversity of tools – especially ploughs – produced by the cooperative and sold through local markets or distributed by NGOs contributed to the ability of farmers to harvest a wider variety of crops.

The El-Fashir blacksmiths cooperative has also created positive economic results for the wider Darfur community. Economic benefits are injected into the local economy through investment, spending, incomes, and creation of employment. Products distributed by members or merchants throughout local markets in Darfur contribute to the incomes of those retailers. This aids in the stimulation of local markets and especially agricultural-related economic development.

Through their activity and partnerships the blacksmiths have realised tremendous social improvements. From suffering extreme marginalisation in the past, they are becoming increasingly accepted by the society at large due to their economic success, visible interactions with international agencies, and the attribution and recognition that they are a key driver of agricultural improvements in Darfur through their work. Some of the current generation of blacksmiths are among the first who are able to afford to send their children to secondary schools and universities.

Their improved economic and social status also directly benefits the women pottery-makers of the same group who benefit by creating pottery used for storing foodstuffs and water. These products are sold through local markets.

Lessons Learned

The experiences of the blacksmiths cooperative and Practical Action highlight a number of important themes for strengthening enterprise capacity at social, economic, and political margins.

A flexible and dynamic partnership which change and evolve based on capacity strengthening needs and objectives as well as political, social and environmental contexts are required. Adoption of culturally and environmentally-appropriate technologies deeply embedded within existing social values is extremely important.

The case demonstrates the importance of a clear step-by-step approach to development, where the beneficiary-partner slowly takes ownership and control over key business functions when prepared to do so.

Finally, the joint formulation of broad development objectives, beyond economic indicators, with partners is crucial. For these objectives to be meaningful, they must be created by those who have a deep cultural and social understanding and commitment to the beneficiary-partner and wider communities in which they live and work.

The blacksmiths of El-Fashir have demonstrated strength and capacity to grow and change. Meeting the challenges of growth and the desires of the future generations will continue to be both difficult and rewarding for the blacksmiths. Moving toward greater self-reliance and sustainable socio-economic development for the blacksmiths cooperative beyond the present special relationship with Practical Action will be just as challenging and critical.

Source: Samer Abdelnour (2011): "Forging through Adversity: The Minority Blacksmiths of North Darfur, Sudan", United Nations Development Programme, New York, USA.

Case 12

NFE for Sustainable Development: Community Shop in Rural Thailand

Background

An innovative approach to non-formal adult education (NFE) in Thailand is community retail shop linked with the community learning centre (CLC) as the setting for learning and an instrument for improving community's economic life. It is a joint effort of government agencies and non-government organisations. In this case, the Department of Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce, guided the sub-district administrative organisations (SDAOs) in setting up the shops. The Department of Non-formal Education (DNFE) collaborated with the SDAOs in supporting the education activities.

The NFE approach was tried out in communities in U-Thong District, Suphanburi Province. This district, about 100 kilometres from Bangkok, is typical of central Thailand in terms of geographical, economic and social conditions. Farmers constitute most of the population in the province. A large number of the working age population, who have not gone to formal secondary schools, are interested in continuing their post-primary education at non-formal education centres. Many of them work in small or medium sized agricultural processing factories.

The people of Suphanburi have an edge over others in matters of communication. The roads and other infrastructure in this province are better than in other provinces of central Thailand. The provincial government is keen to improve education services at the community level.

The major target groups for the project were young adults and community leaders including housewife groups, farming leaders and community learning centre (CLC) facilitators. The DNFE delegated its Centre for Educational Technology (CET) the task of co-ordinating with the Suphanburi NFE Centre. The U-Thong District Non-formal Education Service Centre (UDNFESC) was selected as the location for the trial. UDNFESC in turn chose Don Kaa and Ban Kong Community Learning Centres as sites for the project.

The two places were selected because of the suitability of their locations, buildings and surroundings, as judged by the representatives of the Department of Internal Trade from Bangkok as well as its branch representatives in Suphanburi. The shops were large enough to store consumer goods and were readily accessible to customers.

Objectives

The objective of this project was to develop knowledge and skills in the management of small community shops, enabling community members to understand principles of trade and improve their economic situation. The members pooled their resources. They acquired knowledge related to running a retail shop. They were trained in accountancy and stock keeping. The products in the community shop were of good quality and sold at reasonable prices. It protected its customers from being cheated by unscrupulous merchants.

Operational Model and Learning Innovations

A Shop Executive Board consisted of (i) a member of the sub-district administrative organisation (SDAO); (ii) the administrator from the District NFE Service Centre (DNFESC); and (iii) an official from the provincial Internal Trade Department. The Administrative Work Section is headed by the chairperson of the NFE learners group for the particular year. This section is responsible for overall management of the shop, especially in regard to ordering and stocking goods.

An Academic Work Section is chaired by the CLC facilitator. This section is responsible for receiving and disbursing money, checking the store accounts, pricing, serving as intermediary in buying and selling, encouraging people to patronise the store, and rotating learners through the various posts (manager, clerk, etc.) so that everyone had some experience of the different jobs. The shop manager is a registered NFE learner approved by the CLC facilitator.

Each CLC offered a variety of NFE activities. These include vocational skills training, informal learning from radio programmes and videos, supplementary tutoring for basic education, and quality of life (QL) activities. The latter have become important in all NFE programmes and at all levels.

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These activities enable learners to build self-respect and to work with others as a group. They include (i) religious and cultural activities, (ii) social and community development activities, and (iii) activities that promote NFE, such as literacy campaigns.

The Community Shop Project, involving co-operation between the DNFE and the Department of Internal Trade, provided learners at CLCs with an opportunity to participate in QL activities related to operating small retail shops for the benefit of the local community. Participation in the project was an option available to any CLC learner who wished to acquire the skills needed in running a small shop. They received training in the basic principles of shop operations, which included management and basic accounting. In addition, the CLC gave them information on drug addiction and ways to prevent it. The learners were assigned work in the shop according to their interests and aptitudes. They received skill training and accumulated credits for NFE course based on the time spent and experience gathered in different activities.

Initial project planning

The officials from the Department of Internal Trade and the Department of Non-Formal Education at both provincial and local levels worked together in devising the operational model for the project. They also helped prepare the communities to be involved in the project working with the community leaders and the NFE learners.

The responsible staff from the central offices of DNFE and DIT prepared documents containing information on shop administration, management and methods of accounting. Then they arranged a meeting for the board members of the shops, the CLC facilitators and the NFE learners explaining everything they needed to know about the community shop and how to make them a success.

The DIT of the Ministry of Commerce made available a sum of 30,000 baht support fund to each community shop through the provincial office. The executive board had to choose wholesalers and obtain goods from the distributors in the province. Then they bought the goods for 30,000 baht in a single purchase. Once the goods were delivered, they were inventoried and put on the shelves

for sale. When the shelves were full, the shop was open for business.

Supervision and follow-up

The administrators from central and provincial levels, together with the officials involved locally, supervised and followed up on the activities of the shops, once every two weeks, at the inception stage. They gave advice, helped solve problems and followed up on events generally. DNFE also produced a television film, "Learning Outside the Fences". The two community shops provided the setting. This film highlighted NFE innovations for sustainable development with a view to strengthening local communities.

When officials in course of supervision learned of problems encountered in the operations of the shops related to understanding of procedures and rules, DNFE contacted DIT and organised specific training to solve the problems. Resource persons from the central and provincial offices were called to offer day-long sessions, which took place at the U-Thong District NFE Service Centre.

A Study of the Community Shop Operations

The case study approach was used by DNFE to examine operations and learn lessons at the two experimental sites, Don Kaa CLC and Ban Kong CLC in U-Thong District, Suphanburi. The study focused on (i) the shop operations involving the co-operation and participation of community members, particularly community leaders, NFE learners and members (shareholders) of the shops; (ii) the knowledge and skills acquired by NFE learners who worked in the shops; and (iii) community success in conducting business-oriented activities.

Ban Kong CLC

It was found that the participants received co-operation and assistance from community leaders and the agencies concerned in this case. A large number of NFE learners joined the project. The community shop functioned continuously. Each day two or three NFE learners worked at the store. It was open every day. It sold quality goods at reasonable price to village housewives according to their demand.

The Ban Kong CLC encouraged the NFE learners to take up the community shop activity as their quality of life (QL) subject in the NFE curriculum. They gained knowledge and skills related to managing a shop, doing accounts, serving customers, locating and stocking goods, and other related tasks. They could take it up as a future vocation. Additionally they had the convenience of buying things at cheap and fair prices, and received small sums as a dividend from their shareholding.

Don Kaa CLC

The enterprise in Don Kaa was considered less successful than the one in Ban Kong. There was less cooperation amongst its members. The selection of the location was inappropriate. It turned out that an already existing privately owned shop sold similar goods at cheaper prices. In the matter of administration, the advisory board members as well as the officials concerned were lacking in commitment and enthusiasm. This resulted in difficulties in dealing with community leaders and solving problems related to procedures and rules in requesting assistance from the DIT. The CLC learners involved in the community shop became discouraged.

Lessons Learned

The case study of the community shops regarded as a Quality of Life (QL) activity according to the NFE curriculum showed that success depended on the following factors:

- Active participation of community members: Active involvement of community leaders such as the kamnan (sub-district chief), phu yai baan (village chief), the head of the village housewives group, and other respected persons and NFE learners in the community in the executive board of the shop was vitally important to foster a sense of belonging of the community and ensure the ongoing operation of the enterprise;
- The joint pooling of resources from members: Community members who invested in the enterprise benefited in the form of a periodic dividend. Thus they are encouraged to buy goods from their own shop creating a chain reaction benefiting the consumers and causing the shop to thrive.
- Support from district administration and government services: This includes assistance from education agencies such as the district NFE service centre as well as help from the SDAO, the Sub-district Agricultural Technology Transfer Centre and community development groups. The varying outcomes from the two shops illustrated the difference in this respect; and
- Attention to the Thai cultural norms of community cooperation: Working as a single team, the executive board members and the NFE learners made the community shop a success. When problems were encountered, they helped one another to solve them, invoking cultural norms of community cooperation. In addition, the project helped the learners to acquire responsible work habits. They had to take on the duties of manager, accountant, and clerk during the shop operations. These work place discipline and habits were also valuable for future community development efforts.

Source: "The Community Store Project: Thailand", Innovations in Non-Formal Education, Department of Non-Formal Education, Ministry of Education, Thailand.

