Capacity Development for Poverty Reduction
Lessons learnt and Guidelines for Training in Rural Areas in Cambodia

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Training Guide

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Introduction

The Cambodian-German development projects Rural Development (RDP) and Food Security (FSNPSP) as well as InWent had taken the initiative to jointly develop a tailor made capacity development program on „Poverty Reduction Strategies for rural areas". A series of training sessions have been conducted in Kampot and Kampong Thom provinces through VBNK as a specialized training institution in order to strengthen the capacities of provincial decentralized structures. The experiences and lessons learnt with the capacity development process in Kampot and Kampong Thom have been evaluated at the occasion of the final evaluation of InWEnt's overall capacity development project "Institutionalising participatory methods in strategies to reduce rural poverty" (May 2006). First results with regard to outcome and impact of the capacity development process suggested that participants from the different departments have substantially improved their capacities and that with these improved capacities they can provide better support to poor families.

Based on these positive results the idea of reviewing the modules for further use in the context of building up local capacities with regard to poverty reduction in Cambodia and the region was developed. The review of modules and learning units lead to the compilation of this training guide. A draft version of this training guide was presented at the occasion of a national workshop on March 12 + 13, 2007 in Phnom Penh. Participants of this workshop acted as a sounding board. Based on feedback and suggestions for improvement from this workshop the final version of the training guide was elaborated.

The training guide is composed of four major parts:

Part A provides some insight into poverty reduction and participation in Cambodia. It explains the context in which capacitiy development for poverty reduction in rural areas is embedded. In order to highlight the utmost importance of participatory approaches in poverty reduction part A has 2 sub chapters, one on 'poverty reduction' and one on 'participation and poverty reduction'. Both subchapters provide concrete examples from the field for illustration purposes. A special emphasis is put on challenges for strengthening the application of participatory approaches and methods in poverty reduction. In this respect, the key role of capacity development is highlighted. Users can take this "bridge" to move to the next main chapter: Part B.

Part B is dedicated to the concept as well as the process of the Capacity Development for Poverty Reduction. The different steps in the process are reiterated from designing the project to its final evaluation. The users will gain insight into processes and experiences with which this training guide is underpinned.

Part C figures as the core of this training guide. It describes the 2 modules together with corresponding learning units, being the building blocks of the capacity development process. Each learning unit is presented according to a certain format. Modules and learning units are presented in a way that users feel invited to apply the training guide in a flexible and process-oriented manner. By no means part C should be read as if it can be put into practice in a blueprint manner. It has to be highlighted that each capacity development process requires its specific design according to the particular conditions under which poverty reduction efforts are undertaken.

Finally, **Part D** puts an emphasis on the overwhelming importance of learning transfer and impact assessment. It is argued that the benefits of capacity development should not be seen as quick and easy. They are only "harvested" if the learning transfer is successfully sustained through mentoring, coaching and institutionalized learning mechanisms.

Part A

Poverty Reduction and Participation in Cambodia

1. Poverty Reduction in Cambodia

1.1 Being poor in Cambodia: main features and dynamics

Although the poverty rate has fallen for about one percent each year for the last decade, a third of the population still live below the poverty line and one in five live below the food poverty line. Regional discrepancies make for areas where 70 % of the rural families live below the poverty line.

Being poor in Cambodia means to face a number of interlocking and mutually reinforcing problems, including lack of secure access to land, remoteness from markets and services, lack of productive assets and low levels of education. The latter is illustrated by an illiteracy rate of 26.4 percent. 45 percent of under-fives suffer malnutrition, and 66 percent of the population has no secure access to safe drinking water.

Being poor in rural areas, means to be particularly affected by power abuse and corruption of/by local and central authorities. Poor people suffer the most from physical insecurity and lack of access to justice. They are particularly helpless in the face of corruption. They depend more than others on public goods and are often not aware of what they have to pay for public services, allowing the corrupt to trade on their ignorance. Being poor in rural areas, means to face the particular challenge to articulate and to defend one's legitimate concerns and interests. In a hierarchical society, efforts to become organized, as expression of empowerment, can be viewed with suspicion and the poor may be afraid to speak out for fear of retribution.

The poorest of the poor live from day to day throughout the year on whatever they can earn, beg, borrow or hunt. They don't possess even a tiny peace of land to earn their living, even at a most modest level. This might apply to 5 to 10 % of the population in any community. The very poor have learnt from a lifetime of experiences that they are rarely listened to. Avoidance of public events and reluctance to voice an opinion can be considered characteristics of the very poor. They are often excluded from the social, cultural, religious and political activities of their community. They cannot, for example, afford to attend village weddings, traditional ceremonies or religious days, as these usually require monetary contributions. And they are often excluded from benefits from poverty reduction activities and projects. If access to land is a precondition for participating in development activity, for example, the door remains closed for the very poor[1].

1.2 Policies in favour of Poverty Reduction: From NPRS to NSDP

The Royal Government of Cambodia of Cambodia had its PRSP (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper) finalized by 2002, being labeled 'National Poverty Reduction Strategy' This NPRS was supposed to be elaborated through a participatory process. But it is significant for the actual quality of participation in this process that the translation of the document from English to Khmer was realized (too) late. Earlier draft versions of the strategy were thus only accessible for those being fluent in English. This fact reveals the strong role of the donors in elaborating the NPRS.

Lack of national ownership was corresponding to a lack of genuine participation of civil society organization in the preparation and formulation process of the NPRS. Forums for participation to take place were limited. There were 3 national workshops at different stages of the process. Regional workshops were only held in 3 out of 24 provinces. Participation was also hampered by the short timeframe provided for comments and the late distribution of materials.

The lack of ownership and participation in the Cambodian NPRS process is well recognized by the World Bank[2]. In 2005 the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) was elaborated to serve as Cambodia's new Poverty Reduction Strategy for 2006-2010[3]. It replaces previous strategies like the SEDP and the NPRS. It also incorporates long term targets already established in the Cambodia Millennium Goals. It thus provides for the first time one comprehensive policy framework for orienting all development efforts towards poverty reduction. The donors displayed more cooperation and coordination than in the previous national planning processes. There is more Government ownership in comparison to

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[1] See: Simmons, Mal/Bottomley, Ruth (2001): Working with the very poor. Reflections on the Krom Akphiwat Phum Experience. Phnom Penh.

[2] See: World Bank (2004): PRSP Country Study Cambodia, Operations Evaluation Department.

[3] See: Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board / Council for the Development of Cambodia: The National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2006 – 2010. Phnom Penh 2005.

the NPRS. Within Government, however, ownership is unevenly felt across ministries and weakly on sub-national levels.

The NSDP is organized sector wise, not ministry-wise, using the Rectangular Strategy framework. In some cases, more detailed goals and sub-goals for each sector have been developed and in others, such sectoral plans still need to be developed. The Agricultural Development Strategy has been finalised in the meantime[4]. Likewise, provinces, districts and communes will have to disaggregate the national goals and targets down to those relevant to their specific situation. They have to define detailed plans with measurable goals to address priority development needs.

Compared to the NPRS the NSDP puts a stronger emphasis on poverty reduction in rural areas. The NSDP is supposed to serve as the basis for the elaboration of Public Investment Programmes and respective annual budgets so that allocation and implementation are consistent with the national priorities set by the NSDP[5].

1.3   Working with the poorest households

The challenge for poverty reduction is to reach out to all the sections of those families living below the poverty line. In this context, it is particularly challenging to contribute to improving the livelihood of the poorest families. But there are innovative experiences to be learnt from.

1.3.1   Experiences of CBRDP/RDP with the most vulnerable household list

CBRDP/RDP has made a very valuable contribution to sensitizing the CC members on how to reach the poorest households so that they benefit from services. The tool used is the establishment of a Most Vulnerable Household List (MVHL)[6] comprising the following steps:

Community Based Rural Development Project at a glance

The overall goal of the Community Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP/RDP) in Kampong Thom and Kampot Provinces is to contribute to poverty alleviation and economic development while promoting democracy and decentralized development planning and management. The project is being implemented jointly by Germany (GTZ and DED, **RDP**) and by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, **CBRDP**) under the steering of the Ministry of Rural Development. Capacity development of public and private service providers, institution building, and the qualification of village and commune organisations to participate in decision-making are key strategies. The respect for human rights and good governance standards guide the activities of the programme. The programme's technical assistance has two major focuses: First, to facilitate self-help initiatives of villagers, and to qualify and empower traditional organisations, new community based organisations, and the Commune Councils to initiate and manage development activities on their own and to cooperate effectively with service providers. Secondly, the programme selects and qualifies government, NGO, and private sector partners that can most effectively develop and deliver needed services to the rural population.

- Commune level meeting with village representatives
- Establishing the draft lists for each village in the commune
- Submission of the draft lists to the villagers for comments
- Endorsement of the MVHL by the commune council
- Compilation and computerization of the lists by the Provincial Rural Development Committee
- Promotion of the use of the lists through district level workshops

The advantages of the MVHL as a self-managed poverty identification process are manifold:

- Ownership remains at village and commune level. The villagers use their local knowledge for identifying poor families in their community under the leadership of the Commune Council.
- Institutional sustainability in poverty identification and reduction through alignment to local planning processes and annual updates.
- Time-saving because it can be integrated into regular village/commune planning.

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[4] See: Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries: Agricultural Sector Strategic Development Plan 2006-2010. Phnom Penh 2006
   See: Pagnathun THENG, Ministry of Planning (2006): National Strategic Development Plan, 2006-2010 & Public Investment Program PIP). Presentation at the Forum on National Plans as Poverty Reduction Strategies in East Asia, 4-6 April 2006 in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

[5] See: Pagnathun THENG, Ministry of Planning (2006): National Strategic Development Plan, 2006-2010 & Public Investment Program PIP). Presentation at the Forum on National Plans as Poverty Reduction Strategies in East Asia, 4-6 April 2006 in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

[6] See: CBRDP/RDP: Identification of the poorest households at village/commune level. Most Vulnerable Household List (MVHL). Presentation made at the National Forum on Identification of Poor Households. 15th February 2005

Photo: Dialoguing women in Cambodia

▪ Acceptance through suitable criteria and increased awareness of poorest families within villages and communes; solidarity is strengthened and conflicts minimized.
▪ Cost efficiency by using existing decentralized structures and resources.

Following the introduction of the targeting procedure, MVHL in all villages in 6 districts in Kampot province and 8 districts in Kampong Thom Province were identified . Around 50.000 villagers, half of whom were women, participated in the village meetings to discuss the lists.

The poorest households have benefited because based on the list specific development measures respectively services have been better targeted:

▪ Priority access to health services in some Operational Health Districts in the two Provinces
▪ Priority access for scholarships
▪ Distribution of food through the red cross
▪ Free Family Book
▪ Exemption from local contributions for Commune Fund Projects

▪ Donation boxes put in the pagodas.
▪ specific agricultural programmes for groups of poor farmers in the villages
▪ support from the Most Vulnerable Family Fund Project for family business promotion of beneficiaries.

1.3.2 Experiences of Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Cambodia

LWF has put a strong emphasis on searching dialogue with the poorest families. Dialogue can only be expected if human relations are evolving. LWF has placed its staff at the grassroots level. The more than 250 Community Empowerment Facilitators (CEF) are expected to work directly with the community they are living in. Regarding the poorest of the poor the CEF effect personal visits in order to analyse jointly their situation, to develop a vision for changes and to make a household development plan. This plan included activities related to improved food security, income generation, literacy, access to basic health and disaster preparedness. CBO take responsibility for these activities to be implemented and they can rely on LWF to provide appropriate capacity development measures.

LWF Cambodia at a Glance

LWF began involvement in Cambodia in 1979 just after the Khmer Rouge Regime. During the 1980s, a period of international isolation imposed on Cambodia, only a few NGOs and some former socialist countries contributed to the massive reconstruction work. During this time LWF worked primarily in the agriculture and water supply sectors.

In 1995 LWF shifted its approach to community based activities in rural areas through the establishment of four Integrated Rural Development Projects (IRDP) in four different provinces.

In 2003-2005 focuses on empowerment activities to target groups through Integrated Rural Development through Empowerment Projects (IRDEP). LWF puts an emphasis on the rights based approach which means to support local people and their organizations in in doing advocacy as a means to claim for Government to bring its services to poor people.

A trademark of LWF Cambodia is its graduation policy. What was formerly called "Phasing out" is now called "graduation" - the community will "graduate" and take over entirely their own development process. The graduation process builds on self-identified criteria of where the community wants to be and what skills they need to acquire to be self-reliant.

see also http://www.lwfcam.org.kh

LWF supports the implementation of the poorest household plan through regular home visits and through the provision of training and linkages to social services. At the end of the year the poor household assesses their situation and prepares a new plan for the following year. Based on this self-assessment LWF continues its partnership for empowerment until confidence and capacity allow for eventually graduating of the household into full unassisted participation in community based organisations and institutions. With graduation LWF's support to the household comes to an end, and the household is effectively integrated into the community as an active participant.

Working with the poorest families in this manner is part and parcel of LWF's integrated rural development approach. Thus, LWF can provide support to development initiatives on the community level in all relevant sectors: agriculture, forestry, rural infrastructure, microfinance, health and education. LWF sees itself not only as a service provider but as a change agent in order to bring about empowerment of the poor people.

[7] See: LWF/InWEnt: Village Graduation Guideline, Second Edition 2006.

2. The role of participation in poverty reduction in Cambodia

Participatory approaches and methods play a major role in projects and programmes to reduce poverty in Cambodia, especially in rural areas. Methods from the Participatory Learning & Action - "Family" are widely used[8]. But the use of these methods being in the mainstream can not be seen as an indicator for participation to be institutionalised. Looking at institutionalisation requires to distinguish between different dimensions of participation[9] as well as different levels of action.

Process participation: Participation in work processes of projects and programmes

Process participation includes participatory planning, steering and evaluation of development cooperation programmes and projects. In this cycle, various government stakeholders, civil society and the private sector play their role. Participatory methods enable stakeholders to articulate and negotiate their interests. They can contribute their experiences and cultural values and thus feel responsible for the development cooperation programme/project and develop ownership for it.

Democratic participation: Citizens participate in decision-making and make their voices heard

Democratic participation occurs at different levels, e.g. elections on municipal respectively communal level. Beyond the participation in elections, democratic participation means to make constant claims to the elected bodies and representatives to deliver what they have been elected for. Democratic participation aims at a culture of dialogue, transparency and accountability under the umbrella of the rule of law. Chances for democratic participation are unevenly distributed among different stakeholders. Weaker stakeholders need empowerment for being able to fully participate as citizens.

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[8] See DWC (Development for Women and Children)/InWEnt (2004): Fieldbook for Participatory Learning and Action. Hanoi and Feldafing. Also consult the website of the International Institute for Environment and Development: www.iied.org/NR/agbioliv/pla_notes/index.html

[9] See results from German Development Cooperation Sector Project "Mainstreaming Participation" on www.gtz.de/participation

Process participation on its own falls short of allowing poor people to improve their living conditions on a sustainable basis. Only through democratic participation will they be able to influence local government decisions on pro poor development services to be provided. And in developing their democratic participation capacities the poor people will become empowered so that they can voice their claims and hold those accountable who are supposed to deliver.

Participation is far from being institutionalised regardless which level – going from the communal to the national – is focused. Even process participation is not yet at the stage of being successfully mainstreamed in Cambodia. Participatory methods are often applied but without exploring the full potential of process participation. And there is still a tendency to define pro poor development activities on behalf of the poor people instead of giving them the chance to express their needs, as a starting point for them to play an active role in designing pro poor development activities.

By and large, progress in the process of institutionalising participation is tangible. The reform on Decentralisation and deconcentration have been key processes in the past years improving substantially the conditions for democratic participation to happen.

The communal elections in 2002 have set the ground for commune councils to play their role as representatives of the local people. But as there is no tradition for participation in local governance, one could not expect that participation opportunities offered through elected decentralized structures on commune level were immediately seized. Learning democratic participation therefore must be seen as a long term process. This is also indicated by the relatively low voter turnout at the occasion of the communal elections on April 1, 2007.

Decentralization can contribute to overcoming corruption and financial mismanagement, but only if the elected members of the commune councils assume their functions in a transparent manner including accountability to their electorate. This requires a considerable effort in capacity building for the 12.000 commune council members in the whole country.

2.1 Good practices

Promoting democratic participation at the sub-communal level
For LWF promoting participation starts at the sub-communal level, i.e. the community respectively village level. LWF supports the development and the strengthening of appropriate organizational structures on the level of functional organizations as well as on the village level. Related to specific rural development activities functional organizations play an essential role, e.g. farmers field school or village banks, where members take responsibility for managing their organization through participatory planning, implementation and M&E. On the village level Village Development Committees (VDC) play a vital role in making sure that development activities are oriented towards common objectives and thus well coordinated. These common objectives are defined in the course of a participatory village development planning process. Both arenas provide precious opportunities for villagers to learn and practice not only process but also democratic participation.

There is evidence from LWF experiences that villagers respectively there organizations benefiting from LWF support are better prepared to assume citizen participation in the context of the commune councils. This is why LWF experiences suggest creating learning opportunities for participation within community based organizations. The more villagers have developed participation capacities within CBO the more they will be able to actively participate in communal affairs. It is significant that in LWF project areas councilors have been elected who previously had assumed major responsibilities in a VDC.

Capacity development for councilors
As the members of the communal administration often lack the capacities to assume their roles and functions as stipulated by the legal provisions for decentralization, LWF puts a special emphasis on capacity development for councilors. They are regularly invited to participate in capacity building activities which LWF organizes for their local partners. Councilors are also invited to participate in village development planning processes. Special workshops are organized in order to strengthen linkages between VDCs and commune councils. LWF is concerned about increasing the understanding of the councilors of participatory development. This is crucial when councilors decide about development projects being funded from the Commune/Sangkat Fund.

Buddhism for Development (BFD), with support from Konrad-Adenauer Foundation has paid special attention to the challenge which councilors face in controlling the work of the council administration. This is a real challenge because of the council administration being part of the old centralized system. A large number of the former chiefs of the commune administration are now acting as commune clerks. It is not evident that they easily accept the innovation of being controlled by the commune council. The members of the commune council therefore need substantial support to build the capacities for assuming their role properly. BFD has drawn the attention to the widespread perception of the communal government system to be one entity, i.e. the distinct role of the Commune Council in comparison to the role of the commune clerk is not always well understood by the local citizens. BFD has positive results in sensitizing councilors on this issue..

Participatory local development planning CBRDP/RDP has positive experiences in participatory local level development planning. This implies a participatory procedure for the elaboration of communal development plans. Substantial participation opportunities for poor people are offered in the course of the planning process. Often poor people participate through CBO (Community Based Organisations) or CSO (Civil Society Organisations). But these participation opportunities are not yet fully explored. There is still ample room for powerful stakeholders on the local level to put their interests at the forefront.

Networking among councillors
District forums have been initiated, with support from CBRDP/RDP as internal self-managed forums of Commune Councillors to serve the following purposes:

▌ to encourage councillors to share their experiences and learning from each other and to strengthen their understanding of their roles and the opportunities of local government in the framework of the Cambodian decentralisation reform
▌ to encourage councillors to develop ideas and strategies on how to deal with encountered problems, realize opportunities for mutual support, and identify opportunities for inter-commune cooperation
▌ to provide an avenue for councillors to explore benefits of inter-commune cooperation, as well as to express facts and perceptions hampering cooperation.
▌ to build a network of councillors within a district or province.

Starting with a pilot programme in 2 districts CBDP/RDP assured professional facilitation being crucial for the process to gain momentum. By participating in these meetings, councillors gained confidence to talk out in front of government staff and received hints and information from peers helping them to act and argue for their interests.

There is evidence on change in attitudes of the councillors, in particular in their appreciation of the desire and need to work together to identify common concerns and to collaborate to overcome these concerns. In order to support the district forums in

getting access to external facilitation services CBRDP/RDP is strengthening permanent facilitation capacities in the context of the so called District Facilitation Teams (staff of the Provincial Local Administration Unit (PLAU)).

CBRDP/RDP was closely collaborating with staff from PLAU and the Ministry of Interior on a regular basis. This cooperation arrangement facilitated the decision of the Department taken in December 2004 to adopt the district forum and include them into a national training program as a good practice for networking and cooperation of Commune Councils. In the meantime this process has triggered the establishment of Provincial Communc Councils.

Strengthening civil society organisations

RDP has good experiences with promoting grassroots civil society organizations. A prominent role in this regard is played by the so called Pagoda Coordination Committee (PaCoCo). The PaCoCo represents different village/pagoda associations within the same district. The pagoda committees, besides their cultural and spiritual functions, have an economic role to play through their cash and rice associations and rice banks being a traditional system of mutual aid and insurance. But increasingly they have taken initiatives for other community development activities.

The PaCoCo can voice the concerns of their members at the commune as well as on the district level. CBRDP/RDP has made a parallel effort in working with commune councils and district authorities to create openness for civil society participation.

The challenge is to further strengthen capacities within the PaCoCo in order to be able to seek opportunities for participation on district level. There are experiences, e.g. regarding the participation of PaCoCo members in district development planning, the so called district integration workshops, to build on[10].

2.2 Challenges

No sector can claim to achieve poverty reduction on its own. From a sectoral perspective it can always be argued that their contribution is essential, e.g. improved access to clean water or to basic health services. Although improved health and water and sanitation services are certainly essential in Poverty Reduction, they fall short of really reducing poverty if the poor lack, e.g., the economic means to sustain and eventually improve their livelihood. Com-

plementary efforts in different sectors, being implemented in a harmonised manner are therefore essential for poverty reduction to succeed. Following a multi sectoral approach in poverty reduction challenges the sector specialists because they have to overcome the narrow focus on their special area of activity so that they are ready for the joint venture of poverty reduction. They have to acknowledge that they need the cooperation with other specialists in order to succeed.

Making poverty reduction as a joint effort successful sound communication and coordination is crucial. The challenges for good communication and coordination are most relevant for team cooperation within a department. But they are as well relevant for the linkages between actors at different levels (District, Province, Nation) and for those actors being involved on the same level, i.e. different government agencies on provincial level. There is a shared responsibility for everybody working in an organisation to make his/her contribution to good communication and cooperation. However, the management should take the lead. If the managers do not communicate and coordinate properly they cannot expect from their teams to make their contribution as part of the shared responsibility.

If poverty reduction is a joint effort between different organisations (government agencies, NGO) the poor people will have to take an active role in order for them to assume responsibility for improving their livelihood. Bringing the idea of a joint venture to the interface between poor people and government services and NGO requires once again sound communication and cooperation capacities. Staff from government services and NGO faces the challenge of facilitating the poor people's empowerment process.

Even if participatory local governance has made some progress there are still major challenges to be faced. Local governments may not have adequate capacities or financial resources to satisfy the expectations of the electorate. In terms of support for pro poor development, parts of the electorate, being dissatisfied, might see NGOs with their development programmes as the more promising and reliable partners. Also, local governments might be prone to "elite capture" or to domination by certain stakeholders who are lobbying successfully. Reliable information on local government performance may not be easily accessible to citizens. And even if it is available, local constituents may not have the political or legal means to discipline local government officials for bad performance, or corruption.

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[10] See GTZ RDP Kampong Thom (2004): Input paper to the activities of the Civil Society Sub-Component. Lessons learnt and future strategies.

With the Commune Councils being still in the process of establishing themselves as democratic institutions, with the absence of elected bodies on district and provincial level and the grip of the major political parties on their members in the National Assembly and the Senate, civil society organizations are indispensable in advocating for more space for democratic participation. The pervasive reluctance by government officials to open up the legislative process to include civil society organisations represents the most difficult obstacle to overcome. The challenge for civil society organisations is to go beyond ritualised verbal or written confrontations in order to trigger positive changes in the political system.

Poor families have to use their precious resources very cautiously. If they cannot expect positive effects in terms of local economic development from investing into participation they will not seize participation opportunities even if being generously offered. Designing local economic development activities thus faces the challenge to take this into consideration in order to encourage the poor families to make use of participation opportunities and develop their participation capacities.

Poor people as part of the electorate have the right to hold their councilors accountable for what they have done in order to trigger benefits for the poor through communal development activities. The challenge is to find a proper balance between developing rules and regulations for the local governance system and the promotion of capacities of the different actor groups to make use of participation opportunities. Ideally, therefore the definition of rules and procedures for accountability would go hand in hand with the promotion of the citizen's capacities to claim this accountability from their councilors.

There is no blueprint approach for forums and structures where participation is supposed to take place. Institutional arrangements have to be developed through learning by doing approach. A crucial success factor and thus a challenge is to let the concerned actors take a proactive role in shaping the forums and structures with appropriate rules and regulations rather than just inviting them to a preconceived forum.

A non participatory management system makes it difficult to motivate members of the organization to promote participation in the context of the organization's core business. It is hard to imagine how somebody can effectively invite individuals and groups, outside the organization, to take opportunities for genuine participation if a similar invitation never comes from within the organization. The more internal participation opportunities an organization offers to its members the more probable it is for them to be convincing and credible promoters of participation.

Effective poverty reduction is not mainly a matter of additional technical skills. It is primarily a matter of soft skills, related to cooperation, communication and coordination. Organisations working in poverty reduction need to face the challenge to develop and strengthen these soft skills being indispensable for triggering the ownership without which poverty reduction efforts will not lead to a sustainable improvement of poor people's livelihoods. Capacity development therefore should go beyond the knowledge of pro poor policies and strategies. It should focus on skills and capacities to work with poor families in a participatory manner in order to facilitate the empowerment of these poor families to take more action for improving their living conditions.

But success in poverty reduction is also closely linked to the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the rural poor. For effective pro poor development to take place, some basic capacities must exist, which allow rural people to identify and analyse causes of their poverty and help them to realise activities to overcome it. Capacity development refers to approaches and methodologies to strengthen the abilities of individuals, communities and organisations to make proper use of resources, and to bring about required changes. The long term process of empowerment serves as a practical "learning laboratory" for enhancing these essential capacities. The aim is to enable and empower community members to gradually take over externally supported activities and become increasingly self-reliant in generating income and in managing their organisations.

Part B

Concept, methodology and process

1. The capacity development concept

1.1 A joint venture of different actors

The initiative to design a capacity development project on poverty reduction was jointly taken by the Cambodian-German development projects Rural Development (RDP) and Food Security (FNPSP) as well as InWEnt, Capacity Building International. The General Secretariat of the Council for Social Development in the Ministry of Planning was associated since the early stages of the initiative. The need for capacity development on poverty reduction was felt because in spite of the government's policy and strategies, the dissemination of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy to the decentralized levels was little advanced. Government departments and local authorities had a very limited understanding of the reasons for poverty and no appropriate strategies and practices to orient their programs towards poverty reduction. A mid-term review of the Community-Based Rural Development Project (CBRDP)/Rural Development Programme (RDP) conducted in 2004 also drew the attention to these bottlenecks for making poverty reduction really work and deliver.

The capacity development project being entitled „Capacity Development on Poverty Reduction Strategies for Rural Areas" wanted to conduct a series of training sessions in Kampot and Kampong Thom provinces through a specialized training institution in order to strengthen the capacity of provincial decentralized structures to carry out their activities with a stronger poverty focus. The main objective was to create a critical mass of capacities, within the CBRDP/RDP implementing organizations, to work in a participatory manner in poverty reduction. In defining its target group the project actually focused on the partner organizations of CBRDP/RDP and FSNPSP in those two provinces. About 300 participants from different Departments – District and Provincial level -, local authorities and NGOs were targeted.

The project deliberately opted for covering the whole staff of the above mentioned organizations to be trained. Alternatively, selected staff members would have been trained bringing the total number of trainees substantially down but at the risk of a limited impact. It is too challenging for selected participants to come back to their organizations and take care of the others' capacities being developed through follow up in house trainings.

The project had defined for itself the following learning objectives being attributed to three main chapters:

1. Understanding and perceiving poverty and pro poor policies
- To understand how poverty is perceived by different stakeholders and to define concepts and dimensions of poverty.
- To understand the concept of vulnerable family list establishment, using of the list and sensitizing of NGO, Government departments and commune councils on targeting their projects towards the real needs of the poor people.
- To familiarise participants with the implication of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy
- To demonstrate the complementarities of different sectoral efforts for effective poverty reduction

2. Working with participatory methods in poverty reduction
- To build participants' capacities to develop strategies of poverty reduction with the poor through the application of participatory methods
- To improve on methods and strategies to enhance participation of the poor in concrete poverty reduction efforts
- To understand the challenges for working with the poor in a participatory manner
- To experience the importance of communication and coordination

3. Learning transfer
- To understand the action learning cycle
- To plan properly for individual action for strengthening the poverty focus

In designing the capacity development process the project favored a **modular approach**[11], i.e. the training process went through three stages: Module 1 -> practice period of several months -> Module 2 (see sub chapter 1.2 for more details).

At a glance

The Food Security and Nutrition Policy Support Project

The Food Security and Nutrition Policy Support Project (FSNPSP) started in November 2002, building on the experiences of the Integrated Food Security Project in Kampot Province. The project followed a comprehensive conception of food and nutrition security, comprising aspects of food production and availability, access to food, and use and utilization of food including care and health aspects. The project pursued a step-by-step advisory approach to assist the respective governmental organizations, NGOs and international organizations, in sectoral, methodological and communicative aspects. The project focused its interventions on capacity building, policy advice, dissemination of best practices/knowledge management and networking and the food security information system.

The Ministry of Planning (MoP) was the political partner agency of the project. This arrangement was in line with the coordinating role of the MoP concerning the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (NPRS) and the Cambodian Nutrition Investment Plan (CNIP). Intensive networking and support structures were established with relevant sector ministries, NGOs and international organizations. Project implementation lasted until 12/2005.

The Community Based Rural Development Programme

The overall goal of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) in Kampong Thom and Kampot Provinces is to contribute to poverty alleviation and economic development while promoting democracy and decentralized development planning and management. The project is being implemented together with The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the World Food Programme of the United Nations (WFP), the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the German Development Service (DED). Human resource development, institution building, and the qualification of village and commune organisations to participate in decision-making are key strategies. The respect for human rights and good governance standards guide the activities of the programme. The programme's technical assistance has two major focuses: First, to facilitate self-help initiatives of villagers, and to qualify and empower traditional organisations, new community based organisations, and the Commune Councils to initiate and manage development activities on their own and to cooperate effectively with service providers. Secondly, the programme selects and qualifies government, NGO, and private sector partners that can most effectively develop and deliver needed services to the rural population.

InWEnt – Capacity Building International

Capacity Building International, Germany (InWEnt) is an organisation for human resources development, further training and dialogue. InWEnt uses this instrument to make an integral yet specific contribution to structure-building for sustainable development within the framework of international cooperation. This dimension of programme-oriented capacity building invests in a very specific manner in human potential. The political mandate focuses on the practice-oriented training of mangers and specialists.

InWEnt's "Institutionalisation of participatory methods in strategies to reduce rural poverty"-project (January 2003 to December 2005) aimed to reduce poverty in rural areas of Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos by improving participation opportunities for poor stakeholders in political and economic decision making processes and by institutionalising participatory procedures in rural organisations.

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[11] There are actually two different understandings of ‚modular’: a singular training event may comprise different modules, or each training event equalises one module so that several modules imply a training process being stretched over a longer period.

The project put an emphasis on cross sectoral learning in forming mixed groups, i.e. with participants from different sectors. However, for module 2 the groups were more sector-homogenous because of the focus on facilitation and communication (see sub chapter 1.3 for more details).

The project deliberately refrained from defining the content and methodology of both modules all together. This had the advantage of developing module 2 based on the experiences from module 1.

The implementation of the training project comprised the following steps:

- Inventory on training programmes, curricula, materials in the area of poverty reduction
- Training needs assessment
- Developing and testing the curriculum for module 1
- Rolling out the module 1 training sessions
- Evaluation of module 1
- Developing and testing the curriculum for module 2
- Rolling out the module 2 training sessions
- Evaluation of the whole training process
- National workshop to discuss and exchange experiences regarding training on poverty reduction
- Conduct training on a larger scale in Cambodia

The partners agreed to select a local training institution to conduct the training sessions. As a result of a tender process VBNK presented itself as the most competent training institution. VBNK formed a training team taking responsibility for the whole process. InWEnt's "Institutionalisation of participatory methods in strategies to reduce rural poverty"-project provided the financial resources for VBNK to design and conduct the training process. The VBNK training team was also backed up by an InWEnt-consultant who supported the team in developing and testing the curriculum as well as in evaluating the outcome of the training process.

The partners agreed to create a structure in order to steer the design and implementation process. This role was given to the Training Coordination Team (TCT). Apart from the VBNK training team the TCT was composed of representatives of CBRDP/RDP, FSNPSP and MoP. During developing and testing the curriculum for module 1 as well as for module 2, the TCT played a strong role in order to make sure that the concerns of the different partners would be taken into consideration. The TCT also held regular meetings during the rolling out phases of both modules and it played a crucial role in the evaluation of module 1 (2005) and in the evaluation of the whole training process (2006).

The actual process in implementing the capacity development project is presented in the following chapter.

1.2 The modular approach

The advantages of the project's three stage modular approach, in comparison to the "one-shot-event" type of design, are manifold:

- Enhanced learning transfer
- Constructive "push" to the mentors
- Participants already familiar with active learning approach

The learning transfer is enhanced because module 2 provides opportunities to reflect on the practice period and thereby addresses bottlenecks in learning transfer. Participants thus have a better chance for effective learning transfer.

Module 2 can give a constructive "push" to the mentors (see sub chapter 1.4) for playing their role appropriately. It is too challenging to expect mentors to play their role in a sound manner if the training is delivered in the "one-shot-event" mode.

Participants are already familiar with the active learning approach when they start module 2 which will have a positive effect on the learning intensity. Working with the experiences from the practice period during module 2 strengthens the orientation to real-life problem solving.

1.3 Encouraging cross sectoral learning

The training process could have been given either a sectoral or a cross-sectoral focus. The former would have implied to work with a homogenous group of, e.g. agricultural staff to put poverty reduction in the context of agricultural development and vice versa. The latter would mean to bring the sector specialists together in a mixed group thus putting the emphasis on poverty reduction as a joint venture of different sectors. This focus made communication and coordination to be high up on the agenda. This actually reflects the PRSP approach putting a strong emphasis on a multi-sectoral orientation. Working together effectively in a multi-sectoral approach necessarily implies a cross sectoral learning process.

The training project actually opted for a mixed approach: while the module 1 training sessions where conducted with cross-sectoral groups the module 2 training sessions were more designed for sector specific groups. This was due to the focus of

Cross sectoral learning: Sector specialists have been brought together in a mixed group thus putting the emphasis on poverty reduction as a joint venture of different sectors.

module 2 on facilitation. It was therefore agreed to take into consideration different levels of facilitation capacities, e.g. between agricultural and community development staff. However, in the actual organization of the training sessions it turned out that for practical reasons some of the training sessions actually brought together mixed groups.

1.4 Mentors and trainees

It would not be realistic to expect participants to manage their learning transfer, i.e. between module 1 and 2 and after module 2, on their own. Without support from their superiors and their colleagues the prospects for effective learning transfer are dull. Support from colleagues is more probable because of everybody being exposed to the training. But the superiors could only occasionally participate. It was therefore crucial to involve them as early as possible in the training process. In doing so one had to bear to mind that mentoring in the sense of accompanying the learning transfer of staff members within the mentor's organisational unit is a fairly new concept. It could thus not be expected that the managers and superiors of those participating in the training workshop picked up the concept of mentoring easily.

The role managers and superios were expected to play was that of a mentor. A mentor accompanies a trainee during the whole process of learning transfer. The mentor should encourage the ex-trainee in implementing what he/she has learnt. But the mentor's role also is to remind the ex-trainee of following up on his/her learning transfer, if necessary. A good mentor enhances reflection among his/her staff about the effectiveness of the learning transfer and how it can be eventually strengthened. Seeing the mentor as part of his/her organisation his role also includes to secure support from higher levels – his/her superiors! – for the learning transfer to become fruitful and dynamic. And the mentor is of course involved when the (intermediary) evaluation of the learning transfers' impact is put on the agenda.

Meetings with the mentors were held prior to the module 1 and the module 2 training sessions. The mentors were also closely associated to the evaluation of module 1 as well as the evaluation of the whole training process.

2. The methodology

2.1 Active learning

In designing the training process an active learning approach was adopted. There are six qualities of an active learning approach to be highlighted:

1

Opportunities for group participation
Group participation has advantages in any active training programme. Group activity engages participants in the learning process and makes them working partners with the trainer.

2

Balance between affective, behavioural and cognitive learning
Active training involves a three-pronged approach: fostering attitudes, developing and practising skills, and promoting understanding of concepts and models behind the subject matters.

3

Utilisation of participants' expertise
Each participant in an active training programme brings relevant experiences to the classroom. Some of these experiences will be directly applicable; others may involve analogies from previous jobs or situations. You can build into your design many opportunities for participants to learn from each other.

4

Moderate level of content
In designing training programmes, the tendency too often is to cover the waterfront by throwing in everything possible about a given subject matter. Active training programmes concentrate on the critical learning areas – those elements that provide the essential basis on which to build later.

5

Real-life problem solving
Active training designs emphasise real world. Opportunities are set up for participants to utilise the course content to address and help solve actual problems that they are currently experiencing. It also includes action learning in a real-life situation, e.g. through field work. So, application is not just something that happens after training; it is a major focus during training. Participants learn best when they get to work on their own material, cases and examples. This goes together with utilising other convincing, illustrative cases provided they are well selected.

6

Opening the door through re-entry planning
The success of an active training programme is really measured by the degree to which what has been learnt is transferred to the job. An active training programme design ends with considering the next steps that participants will take and the obstacles that they will face as they implement new ideas and skills. Ideally, the active training programme encompasses several modules so that there is more than just one re-entry planning.

2.2 Broad range of methods and tools

Making use of broad range of methods is one of the crucial features of an active learning approach. Participants get bored when being activated through one or two methods only. If always the same type of group work is done again and again a counterproductive routine will become virulent. Varying methods also help to activate not only the cognitive but also the emotional level of participants. A special set of methods being labelled 'energisers' are also an indispensable element in an active training programme's toolbox. The right energiser at the right moment can effectively remove blocks to effective learning and thereby refreshing everybody's drive and attention. Finding a good balance between content- and process-focus is also a matter of varying methods being at hand. Working on a specific content with unproductive group dynamics will not help to reach the learning objectives.

2.3 Learning in the field

It is part of an active learning approach to provide an opportunity for participants to go through a short action learning cycle during a training session. Action learning implies a systematic learning process. Learning is intentional and not casual. Action learning requires to plan an action, to realise it and then reflect on the action in terms of process and results against the background of what has been planned. At the end of the action learning cycle lessons learnt are drawn to allow improvement for future action. Regular action learning cycles are the precondition for gradually improving on a certain type of activity respectively on a certain practice or eventually going for radical innovation.

It is possible to design such a short action learning cycle as indoor event. But it is much more effective to take the action learning cycle to the field. For a training course on poverty reduction this means to look for an opportunity of dialogue with poor people themselves. Learning in the field gives trainees the chance to apply their improved capacities in a real life situation. They have the privilege to do that in a workshop situation where more time for preparation as well as for reflection and feedback is given com-

pared to the working context. Of course, for the poor people to work with, it is real life. They cannot afford to be used as guinea-pigs. A training should therefore be conducted either as in-house training, i.e. in organisation working directly with poor people, or in cooperation with an organisation being experienced in participatory poverty reduction and interested in creating good learning situations in the field.

The challenge is to put the poor villagers in a position where they feel comfortable to share their experiences. This has implications for the location, the timing of the meeting but especially for the tools to be used. A broad range of tools from the PLA tool box is accessible.

Groups going for such a field work should not comprise more than 6 members. The learning situation to be created in the field should be well planned. It should be specified among the group members who play which role during the feedback session, e.g. who is facilitating and who is observing. After implementing the innovative facilitation work it is crucial to reserve sufficient time for reflection and feedback.

3. The capacity development process

3.1 Designing and testing the curriculum

For designing both modules a similar process was adopted consisting of elaborating content and methodology of a module to be then tested in the field. Rolling out the training sessions was therefore based on the lessons learnt from the pilot training workshop. But rolling out the training workshop was also conceived as a constant learning process in order to improve step by step on how to actually conduct the training. In this subchapter the process of designing and testing the curriculum is briefly reiterated.

Designing module 1 was based on a training needs assessment. It was conducted in Kampot province. Discussions were held with staff from community development at one occasion and with staff working in agriculture at another occasion. The participants at those meetings were asked to form groups in order to analyse their experiences in poverty reduction. They were requested to work out what difficulties they face in this regard and what they think could be done to overcome these difficulties. The results from the working groups were presented and discussed in plenary in order to highlight the training needs being indicated by the working group results.

As a first step in the curriculum development the results from the training needs assessment were analysed in terms of relevant topics to deal with for training on poverty reduction. As a precious input the TCT and the VBNK team validated the results from the inventory on experiences in training on poverty reduction in Cambodia.

From an overview on relevant topics for the training the entire team proceeded to designing the pilot training session for module 1. In order to achieve that objective the team had given itself the task to write a script for the pilot training session. It was agreed that there was no need to start from scratch regarding poverty reduction and participation as the participants were expected to have practical experiences to build on.

Elaborating the script for the pilot training workshop took most of the time dedicated to the curriculum development. This was due to the indispensable reflection on different methodological options to be taken into consideration for the different learning units in the pilot training workshop.

All the members of the TCT participated in the pilot training workshop. This included for some of the TCT members to take an active part in the training and facilitation process, in close consultation, of course, with the VBNK team. The role of the InWEnt-consultant did not go beyond observing the process and providing feedback at the reflection team sessions being organised at the end of each day.

The reflection focused on critically reviewing process and results of the pilot training workshop. Based on the realised programme concrete possibilities for improvement were elaborated step by step regarding both levels: content and methodology.

Between April and September 2005 8 training sessions were conducted for module 1, 5 in Kampong Thom Province and 3 in Kampot Province for a total of 238 participants (157 in Kampong Thom Province and 81 in Kampot Province)

Before starting the design of module 2 it was indispensable to evaluate the outcome of the module 1 training sessions. The evaluation was at the same time the opportunities for assessing the training needs for module 2. This evaluation comprised two half day workshops: one with a sample of former participants (21) from both provinces and one with a group of mentors (5), also from both provinces. Both analyzed to what extent the learning transfer was effective, i.e. what actually had happened in strengthen the poverty focus in the different activities carried out.

It became evident that participants have increased their understanding of the multidimensional concept for reducing poverty, enabling them to increase their commitment to working with the

Pilot training workshop in Kampong Thom: the inner voice exercise

poor and especially to exploring need priorities of poor families. Working better with the Most Vulnerable Family List was given as one example in this regard. The participants also shared their experience of improved relationships with different stakeholders and with the poor themselves which in turn made them feel that their intervention was more effective.

However, they still face a number of difficulties in coping with the demands of the poor for immediate assistance. They therefore suggested making self help promotion and facilitation one of the major topics of module 2. They also shared their experience that some stakeholders are reluctant to compromise on their positions for the sake of better coordination and cooperation. They therefore suggested making facilitation in terms of how to bring about better cooperation and coordination one of the topics of module 2.

The mentors stressed that from their observation staff members having participated in the module 1 training workshop are more motivated to work with poor families. They would have preferred to be involved as a mentor right from the beginning. It was agreed that for module 2 the mentors should be involved at an earlier stage.

Based on the results of the evaluation workshop the focal point of module 2 was defined. At that occasion the main objective of the training project was reemphasized: capacity development should go beyond the knowledge of pro poor policies and strategies. It should focus on skills and capacities to work with poor families in a participatory manner in order to facilitate the empowerment of these poor families to take more action for improving their living conditions. This requires good facilitation capacities. Facilitation in working with poor farmers thus became the focal point of module 2.

Designing and testing the curriculum for module 2 comprised very similar steps to the process relative to module 1. For the pilot training workshop the logistical bottleneck had to be faced to conduct the training workshop in Kampot in 2 days – without learning in the field session - instead of 3 days. In applying the lessons learnt from the pilot training workshop for rolling out the training sessions this particular feature had to be bearded in mind. Therefore a second pilot training workshop was conducted in Kampong Thom province, going for 3 days and including a learning in the field session.

The module training sessions were conducted between December 2005 and April 2006 for a total of 206 participants (141 in Kampong Thom Province and 65 in Kampot Province). Unfortunately, it did not work out 100% that all the participants of the module 1 training sessions also attended the module 2 training sessions.

3.2 Evaluating outcome and impact

The overall training process was evaluated a few months after completion of module 2 training sessions. The process comprised mini-workshops with selected ex trainees and mentors in both provinces (Kampong Thom and Kampot) followed by an internal working session with the TCT and CBRDP/RDP management.

For the Mini workshops with selected ex trainees and mentors the methodological option of separation of perspectives was adopted, i.e. 2 separate workshops took place. With more time it would have been exciting to have a joint working session with the ex trainees and the mentors. The selection of the ex trainees followed a

purposive sample with an emphasis put on balance between participants from different departments and gender balance. Ideally there would have been a balance between the different training groups, but because of the timing of the evaluation the participation of ex trainees from the earlier module 2 training workshops was privileged.

the mentors shared his observation that his staff is now in a better position to work with agencies being reluctant in applying the MFHL. It should be stressed that there is apparently a positive linkage between the poverty reduction training project and the introduction of the MVHL as a major strategy to work with the poor and the very poor within GTZ/RDP.

The **mini workshops** were guided by the following questions, with a self understanding, slight modification for the discussion with the mentors:

1. What did you learn from module 2?
2. What did you learn from module 2 and module 1?
3. What did you put into practice?
    3.1 What went well and why?
    3.2 What did not go well and why?
4. What support did you get from your supervisor?

The mini workshop was held in a joint discussion and reflection format.

The feedback from the ex trainees and the mentors was, altogether, very valuable for assessing the outcome. However, a plausible relation between the trainings and the outcome could not always be established. This is mainly due to the difficult distinction between what the ex trainees have learnt during the training workshops (module 1 + 2) and what they have learnt on the job. Taking the work with Most Family Vulnerable Family List as an example, it is evident that the capacities of the ex trainees were also strengthened through other activities being not part of the training project.

In appraising the results of the training project one has to take into consideration that CBRDP since mid 2004 was asked to direct activities more towards the poor. The implementation of the training project therefore coincided well with a constructive pressure within CBRDP to work (more) with the poor.

The evaluation provided substantial evidence about the newly acquired capacities being effectively used by the former trainees in working with the poor. One of the main areas with practical implications in this respect was the identification of poor households through the Most Vulnerable Household List (MVFL). This tool was already introduced in CBRDP/RDP before the training project started. Working with the MVHL proved to be a very practical field for the application of what the ex trainees had learnt. Establishing the MVHL and diffusing the list to relevant organisations requires facilitation and communication skills which have been enhanced, especially by module 2 training sessions. To illustrate this, one of

Working with the poor is a particular challenge for agriculture staff as they are accustomed to focus on farmers having their own land. Now, they are challenged to work with poor families who only have a little plot to make their own home garden. The feedback from agriculture staff and also from the mentors provides evidence that the readiness to work with poor farmers has been improved as well as the ways and means to do this. What agriculture staff can offer in terms of support is now more targeted to poor farmers than in the past. One of the mentors in Kampong Thom gave the example of the need's assessment of the poor being done better than the year before.

It should also be highlighted that the staff of the different organisations encourages poor families and their organisations to a greater extent to take opportunities for participation, e.g. in the context of village networks or, via the village networks, in commune council meetings.

By and large, there has been sufficient support from the mentors for the ex trainees to implement what they have learnt. Ex trainees mentioned motivation and backstopping as major elements of support. One of the forms of support being highlighted was the facilitation of communication with higher levels. However, the mentors very much have to rely on their staff members raising the issues, e.g. of difficult communication with poor people, because of their very limited possibilities to be with their staff in the field.

The ex trainees and the mentors also shared what they have experienced in terms of difficulties and limitations. One of the burn-

ing issues seems to be the harmonisation of the planning of staff activities with the priorities and the working calendars of the poor. If a meeting is scheduled and the targeted poor people do not show up because of them setting other priorities, some staff would take that as an indication that the poor people are not interested. The challenge in scheduling meetings is to adopt the time table to the working calendar of the poor people. Lack of resources to support activities with the poor was stressed as another difficulty and limitation. The equity fund being newly introduced in Kampong Thom province finances health services at the Referral Hospital to poor people, thus provides a great support to families in need.

The results from these evaluation workshops were assessed against the background of the overall learning objectives (see sub chapter 1.1). As a similar exercise had been done after evaluating module 1, it was now possible to already assess the progress in capacity development from module 1 to module 2:

Evaluation of results of module 1 + 2 training sessions

Learning objectives	Degree of achievement after completion of module 1 trainings	Evidence/feedback after the training	Degree of achievement after completion of module 2 trainings
To understand how poverty is perceived by different stakeholders and to define concepts and dimensions of poverty.	~ 80 %	More confidence and commitment to work for poverty reduction	~ 95 % [13]
To understand the concept of vulnerable family list establishment, using of the list and sensitizing of NGO, Government departments and commune councils on targeting their projects towards the real needs of the poor people.	~ 90 %	▪ More commitment to work with MVFL ▪ More efforts to cooperate with other stakeholders	~ 95 %
To familiarise participants with the implication of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy	100 %	Follow up needed on concrete role and tasks in implementing the NPRS	100 %
To demonstrate the complementarities of different sectoral efforts for effective poverty reduction.	~ 50 %	Good understanding but follow up needed.	~ 75 %
To build participants' capacities to develop strategies of poverty reduction with the poor through the application of participatory methods	~ 60 %	For example: change the focus in using the budget for activities benefiting to the poor in community based organisations.	~ 75 %
To improve on methods and strategies to enhance participation of the poor in concrete poverty reduction efforts.	~ 60 %	Community Development staff used participatory methods before training: ▪ Improved quality after training ▪ Follow up needed for other sectors	~ 80 %

[13] The % is based on a qualitative assessment. It does not refer to quantifiable indicators. The figures therefore indicate trends and differences between the outcome after module 1 and after module 2.

Learning objectives	Degree of achievement after completion of module 1 trainings	Evidence/feedback after the training	Degree of achievement after completion of module 2 trainings
To understand the challenges for working with the poor in a participatory manner.	~ 60 %	▪ Agriculture staff: new ways of working with the landless. ▪ Better understanding of what it means to work with the very poorest.	~ 85 %
To experience the importance of communication and coordination.	~ 80 %	Transfer for community development staff: 80 %, less for other sectors	~ 95 %
To understand the action learning cycle	~ 60 %	Participants use action learning cycle in their work.	~ 65 %
To plan properly for individual action for strengthening the poverty focus	~ 20 %	▪ Participants did not plan for very concrete activities. ▪ Participants did not have a clear understanding of their plans of operations.	~ 30 %

The overall positive results can be interpreted as the expected positive outcome of adopting the modular approach. In this context, it is very significant what one of the mentors gave as feedback: there is a change of attitude of his staff because they have realised that working with the poor is not only the task of Community Development. Understanding the challenges to work with the very poor also has shown a considerable improvement. There are clear indications that the learning in the field sessions, being part of module 2, contributed considerably to the positive outcome.

Action planning as the final step in each training session did not prove to be as useful as intended. By and large, it was too difficult for the participants to work with the action planning format. An alternative would be to invite the mentors for a post training debriefing session. This would require involving the mentors more actively at an early stage. This clearly has come out as a lesson learnt.

The timing of the evaluation was sub optimal because the time span after completion of module 2 was relatively short. The evaluation therefore has to be categorised more as an outcome rather than an impact evaluation. For designing similar training processes in other contexts this should be taken into consideration.

Due to time constraints, the evaluation process fell short of providing direct feedback from the beneficiaries, i.e. those poor families eventually benefiting from the improved capacities of staff members of CBRDP/RDP partner organisations. However, it should be mentioned that the CBRDP/RDP is planning to conduct a series of small impact studies this year and a larger survey in 2007. These surveys will look at poverty reduction and the related training project as one puzzle piece. For similar training processes in the future it is recommended to plan for feedback to be provided by the beneficiaries themselves.

Part C

Modules and learning units

In this chapter the interested trainer will find a menu of learning units to be put together in different training modules. Following the experiences of the Capacity Development for Poverty Reduction, the learning units presented here are put together in 2 modules. However, this is only one option. We would of course not recommend having it all together in one module. But attributing the learning units to one or the other module is not prescriptive at all.

Ideally, the training process should comprise three stages, i.e. three modules. The advantage lies in having two phases of learning by doing, between module 1 and 2 as well as between module 2 and 3. With two phases the learning transfer can be better enhanced compared to only one learning by doing phase. Project managers might argue that going for a three stage training process, with a 4 to 6 months learning by doing phase in between the training modules, would stretch the process over a too long period.

The way the learning units are being attributed to the modules suggests a certain sequence. But one could think of other possibilities of sequencing the learning units. It all depends on the context, the type of participants and the specific objectives of a training process in which way and with which proportions different learning units are combined respectively sequenced.

We would still recommend paying sufficient attention to facilitation and communication skills (see module 2). Good policies and strategies for poverty reduction are essential. But putting them into practice needs sound interaction and communication with the poor. Our experience suggests that things go often wrong on that level. Each learning unit (LU) is structured as follows:

- Objectives
- Content
- Guiding questions
- Process and methodology
- Background information
- Duration

The objectives describe what the participants should have learnt as they have accomplished the respective LU. According to the specific training context the objectives might need specification.

The content gives indications about the major topics to be dealt with. It does not go beyond briefly describing them. According to the training context, trainers might feel the need for adding other specific topics. Describing the major topics only briefly is done on purpose, because the different topics need elaboration through a participatory process rather than being presented by the trainers through lecturing. Therefore, we suggest guiding questions as a means to enhance exploration and reflection among the participants.

'Methodology and process' describes briefly the specific tools and methods to be used. We assume that standard tools and methods like group work and visualisation do not need further explanation. Trainers should tap on their own resources and experiences thus eventually opting for other tools and methods to be used. Tools are only presented once. A tool therefore is not further explained if it has figured in one of the previous learning units. But a reference is given.

The process part of this sub chapter encompasses a possible scenario of how to conduct the learning unit. Only major steps are outlined thus providing hints for the trainers in working out their scenarios for the training process they are involved in.

The way the learning units are being attributed to the modules suggests a certain sequence. It all depends on the context, the type of participants and the specific objectives of a training process in which way and with which proportions different learning units are combined respectively sequenced.

'Background information' provides hints for texts respectively documents to be made use of for conducting the learning unit. This does not include recommendations for further reading being presented under 'references' as one of the final chapters of this manual.

The indications we give regarding the duration refer to a group of 20 to 30 participants. The trainers acting in a specific training situation need to assess the capacities of their participants when making the specific time schedule.

We presume that trainers are familiar with how to conduct the introductory session on the first day as well as the final session including evaluation and feedback.

Modules and learning units (LU) at a glance

	Module 1	Module 2
LU 1	Understanding poverty and the needs of the poor	Evaluation of learning transfer (module 1 -> module 2)
LU 2	Poverty reduction as a multi-dimensional strategy	Facilitating trust building and empowerment of the poor (first part)
LU 3	Participation as a key strategy for poverty reduction	Effective communication
LU 4	Searching feedback from villagers (real life experience)	Facilitating trust building and empowerment of the poor (second part)
LU 5	Action planning for strengthening the poverty focus	Applying improved facilitation skills in the field (real life experience)
LU6		Action planning for learning implementation

Learning Unit 1: Understanding poverty and the needs of the poor

Objectives

> Based on the participants' working situation the concepts of poverty are defined.

> Participants have understood how poverty is perceived by different stakeholders

> Participants have analysed their own practices and perceptions in assessing the causes of poverty.

> Participants have understood the concept of the Most Vulnerable Household List (MVHL) and how it is put

> into practice

Content

Defining poverty

Poverty means that people lack basic economic, human, political, social and protective capabilities. The capabilities needed for individual or family well-being are:

- Economic capabilities mean the ability to earn an income, to consume and to have secure access to productive physical resources.
- Human capabilities are based on health, education, nutrition, clean water and shelter.
- Political capabilities include human rights, a voice and influence over public policies and political priorities.
- Social capabilities concern the ability to participate as a valued member of a community.
- Protective capabilities enable people to withstand economic and external shocks.

Interactive and dynamic concept of poverty

Dynamic concepts of poverty are needed because people may move in and out of poverty. Today's poor are only partly the same people as yesterdays or tomorrows. Some are chronically poor or inherit their poverty from their parents. Others are in temporary or transient poverty.

Gender inequality

Female poverty is more prevalent and typically more severe than male poverty. Women and girls in poor households get less than their fair share of private consumption and public services. They suffer violence by men on a large scale.

Reaching the most vulnerable families

In the Cambodian context, poverty reduction faces the challenge to reach really poor and vulnerable families being frequently prevented from being heard and thus excluded from development benefits. The Germany assisted CBRDP/RDP therefore has developed, in collaboration with provincial partners in Kampot and Kampong Thom Provinces, the so called Most Vulnerable Household List (MVHL)[14], as a time-saving and cost-efficient procedure of self-managed poverty identification at village level. This process sets the stage for communal development activities being more effectively directed to the needs of the most poor and vulnerable families.

Guiding questions

- What are the differences in stakeholders' perspectives on the root causes of poverty?
- How do the poor themselves perceive poverty?
- What makes the difference between poor and very poor people?
- What are enhancing and hampering factors in reducing poverty and how can they be sustained respectively overcome?
- How can the most vulnerable families be identified so that they will benefit more from development in order to improve their livelihoods?

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[14] See: German supported CBRDP: Identification of poor households: Most Vulnerable Household List (MVHL). A village based list devised under the leadership of the Commune Council. Phnom Penh 2004.

Photo: Discussion group in the world café

Methodology and process

Inner voice exercise

This exercise helps participants to get a feeling of what it means to be poor. The different factors contributing to poverty are symbolised through actors. The linkages between different factors contributing to poverty become touchable.

World café

Mixed Groups sit on different tables in a coffeeshop-like setting. Those sitting at a table discuss around questions suggested by the trainers. There are different discussion rounds focusing either on the same or on different questions. One person at each table is chosen as the host while the others might change the table. Those who change are ambassadors sharing discussion results from the previous at their "new" table. The host takes care of ideas being visualised with the ambassadors adding on, including transfer of information and experiences from one group to another.

Suggested steps for the training process

Participants start with the inner voice exercise in order to make everybody feel what it means to be poor. After a short feedback session, capitalising on the inner voice exercise in bringing participants into the world café setting will be the next step:

▌ First round of discussions focusing on the following question: what are the root causes of poverty and how do different stakeholders perceive poverty?

▌ Second round of discussions focusing on the following question: What are enhancing and hampering factors in reducing poverty and how can they be sustained respectively overcome?

Conclusions from the exercise are drawn in a plenary session.

Presuming that participants come from different organisations with different sectoral backgrounds participants form groups accordingly to work on the following questions:

▌ What do you do in your daily work to find out about the causes of poverty and the needs of the poor?

▌ What do you assess as strong points?

▌ What do you assess as weak points?

▌ What do you suggest to improve on the weak points?

After presenting and discussing the group work results in a plenary session the MVHL is introduced as one tool to better identify those families being mostly affected by poverty. Eventually, the trainers make a short input on the MVHL and relevant experiences in working with the MVHL.

Background information

Working with the very poor: reflections on the Krom Akphiwat Phum Exercise
Brochure on Most Vulnerable Household List

Duration

4 – 5 hours

Learning Unit 2: Poverty reduction as a multi dimensional strategy

Objectives

› Participants are familiarised with the implications of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy as well as the National Strategic Development Plan.

› Participants have understood the underlying principles and concepts of poverty reduction strategies.

› Participants have understood the complementarities of different sectoral efforts for effective poverty reduction in their working situation.

› Participants have developed their capacities in orienting their work towards poverty reduction.

Content

Poverty reduction strategies on different levels
The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) have been introduced since 1999 by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The PRSP are intended to ensure that debt relief provided to highly indebted poor countries truly helps to reduce poverty. In this strategy paper, governments have to outline their poverty reduction goals and plans for attaining them.

The focus of PRSP according to the World Bank is "to identify in a participatory manner the poverty reduction outcomes which a country wishes to achieve and the key public actions, institutional reforms, programmes and projects which are needed to achieve the desired outcomes."

The underlying principles of PRSP are:
▪ Country-driven: with governments leading the process and broad-based participation in the adoption and monitoring of the resulting strategy.
▪ Results-oriented: identifying desired outcomes and planning the way towards them.
▪ Comprehensive: taking account of the multi-dimensional nature of poverty.

▪ Long-term in approach: Recognising the complexity of the changes needed.
▪ Based on participation: between governments and other actors in civil society, the private sector and the donor community. Finding ways to engage the voices of the poor is crucial for a sound PRSP process.

Cambodia has a full PRSP since December 2002. There are different views on the quality of the process leading to this PRSP being labelled NPRS. Though workshops played a big role in the participation exercise, they most notably prepared the ground for World Bank, UNDP and ADB whose influence on the process was considerable. Most observers therefore have perceived participation within the NPRS as a donor driven process. Considerable tensions between World Bank (that promoted the NPRS) and ADB (that promoted the Socio Economic Development Plan) hampered the process. Participation within the process was organised more at national level and did so far not much involve the province and commune level. The poor themselves in fact had little chances to make their voices heard. Participation was also hampered by the delay in making relevant documents also available in Khmer.

While the implementation of the NPRS was ongoing the RGC agreed with the Donor Community on merging the National Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Socio Economic Development Plan to become the National Strategic Development Plan (2006-2010)[15].

Harmonisation of different sectoral activities in poverty reduction
No sector can claim to achieve poverty reduction on its own. From a sectoral perspective it can always be argued that their contribution is essential, e.g. improved access to clean water or to basic health services. Although improved health and water and sanitation services are certainly essential in Poverty Reduction, they fall short of really reducing poverty if the poor lack, e.g., the economic means to sustain and eventually improve their livelihood. Complementary efforts in different sectors, being implemented in a harmonised manner are therefore essential for poverty reduction to succeed.

Cross cutting issues
Beyond the sectoral perspective different cross cutting issues have to be addressed. A sound Poverty reduction strategy requires policy action in the following areas:
▪ Pro-poor economic growth
▪ Empowerment, rights and pro-poor governance
▪ Basis social services for human development
▪ Human security for reducing vulnerability and managing shocks
▪ Mainstreaming gender and enhancing gender equality
▪ Mainstreaming environmental sustainability and using sustainable livelihood approaches

Enhancing and hampering factors in making poverty reduction work
Effective poverty reduction requires complementary efforts on different levels (commune, district, province, and nation). None of the levels can claim to be the most decisive for Poverty Reduction. Of course, poverty reduction matters for the poor if they really benefit from better services on commune level together with opportunities for citizen participation being offered to them. But national policies have to be conducive as well: if poor people are chased from their land because of land concessions the improved services on commune level will not really matter.

Effective Poverty reduction needs to anticipate the enhancing and hampering factors in order to strategise, as a next step, on how the enhancing factors can be strengthened and how the hampering factors can be overcome. On a general level the former might encompass political commitment, participatory local governance, coordination and harmonisation of development activities, and the latter the lack of these very factors. Participants will come up with specific factors as they bring in their experiences. By and large, the enhancing factors should be stronger than the hampering factors in order to make Poverty reduction moving forward. But there is evidence of quite a number of settings where the hampering factors take the lead.

Guiding questions

▪ How to harmonise different efforts in Poverty reduction?
▪ How to sustain enhancing and how to overcome hampering factors in Poverty reduction?
▪ What relevance does the NPRS/NSDP have in participants' working context?
▪ How to involve different stakeholders in elaborating and implementing NPRS/NSDP?

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[15] See: Cambodian Rehabilitation and Development Board / Council for the Development of Cambodia: The National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2006 – 2010. Phnom Penh 2005.

Methodology and Process

Gallery walk/information market

The gallery walk/information market is a technique of stimulating the exchange of information among many persons simultaneously within a limited period of time. The method is based on the idea of a free market: buying and selling. The participants who exhibit their boards "sell" their information to other members of the group who function as "buyers". The setting reminds of a gallery where the "buyers" walk from one picture to the other. The "buyers" seize the information on the boards and raise questions and issues to be discussed with the "sellers". Roles are changed after the first time slot to give the chance to the "sellers" to become the "buyers".

Theatre / Role Play

This tool encourages participants' creative thinking for presenting topics and ideas. It allows understanding perspectives of other stakeholders by slipping into their shoes during a theatre/role play performance. Participants prepare in groups for their performance. The performance dramatises the results of the group work related to a particular topic. Even if the reality cannot be transferred one by one to the training room, role plays and theatre performances turn out too be much more realistic than one might expect.
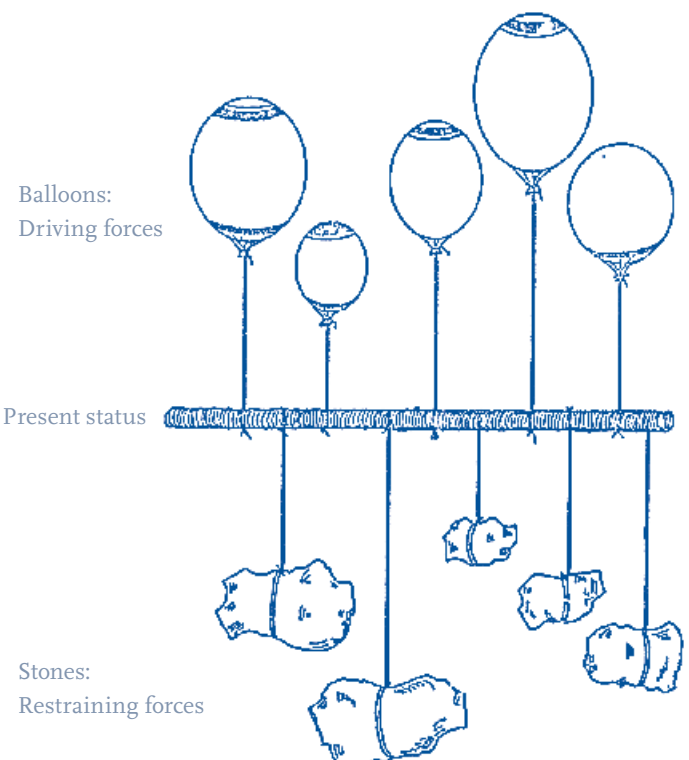

Force Field analysis

The force field analysis is a very useful tool for strategizing on how to enhance poverty reduction. It looks at poverty reduction as a field of driving and restraining forces. So, helping factors are seen as driving and obstacles as restraining forces. It illustrates poverty reduction as a dynamic process, where often certain stakeholders are acting as driving or restraining forces. The force field analysis allows identifying the intensity of driving and restraining forces for making poverty reduction happen, i.e. to reach a particular desired state. Without having a clear idea of these forces it would be hazardous to strive for effective poverty reduction.

If the driving and restraining forces are of equal importance the status quo can only be changed if either the driving forces are enhanced or the restraining forces are weakened. But in trying to enhance the driving forces the restraining forces might also get stronger. The most promising option therefore is to weaken the restraining forces.

Balloons:
Driving forces

Present status

Stones:
Restraining forces

Suggested steps for the training process

Participants form groups according to the organization they work in to discuss the following questions:

- What are your experiences in Poverty Reduction (Poverty reduction)?
- Where have you been successful in Poverty reduction and why (indicators!)?
- Where you have you encountered difficulties in Poverty reduction and why?

The answers are visualized in the form of a drawing and text.

- The exchange on the findings is done in an information market with gallery walk. A participants' "task force" writes up and ranks the major difficulties.
- Complementary mixed groups then work on how to overcome the major difficulties. They can utilize the Force Field Analysis. Driving and restraining forces are visualized through a role play/theatre performance.
- The attention of participants is then drawn to the level of national policies to reduce poverty, i.e. NPRS and NSDP. Facilitators introduce this session in order to help participants to get from the experience level to the macro level of the overall framework for poverty reduction on the national level. NPRS and NSDP are briefly presented, if possible with film and brochure. Participants assess the relevance of NPRS and NSDP for their work.

Background information

- Power Point presentation on NPRS and NSDP
- Film on NPRS
- Brochure on NPRS
- Brochure on NSDP

Duration:

4 hours

Learning Unit 3: Participation as a key strategy for poverty reduction

Objectives

› Participants have understood the challenges of working with the poor in a participatory manner.

› Participants have understood the implications of participatory poverty reduction for designing pro-

grammes and activities.

› Participants have improved on their capacities to enhance participation of the poor in concrete poverty

reduction efforts.

Content

Principles of participatory development

People first: At the heart of a participatory strategy are the rural people. Any initiative to promote participation starts with the needs, expectations and ideas as expressed by the members of local communities, groups and families.

Everybody takes part: A participatory strategy involves the whole community, women and men, rich and poor, official authorities and informal groups, private entrepreneurs, local and external public institutions. Their involvement is encouraged at every stage: during situation analysis, in defining objectives, in designing a strategy, in the implementation, and finally in the continuous monitoring and evaluation activities.

People's knowledge and skills form the basis on which to build: A participatory approach is based on local capacities and resources. This helps to reduce dependence on external sources of finance and knowledge, and it stimulates the expansion of local capabilities. Participation is to do with developing people's capacities to help themselves, and this can best be achieved by building on and strengthening their existing knowledge and expertise.

Empowering women: Participatory development aims at reducing inequalities between men and women. Often, there are social and cultural barriers hindering direct women's participation in development programmes. Participatory methods provide the means so that the voices of women can be heard and considered like the voices of men.

Consensus building: Where participatory exchange of ideas, planning and decision-making works effectively, it ensures broad and fair representation of all interest groups. Then, there will be opportunities to build consensus, manage conflicts and foster new links between groups and individuals at local level, and between local groups and external institutions.

Flexibility in implementation: The participatory approach is not a "blue print" approach; it cannot be applied rigidly in the same order to all places and all circumstances.

Ensuring ownership by local people: The more local people feel that the endeavours to promote participatory processes are in line with their objectives, the more a sense of ownership will develop among them. Delegating decision-making powers and financial resources from higher levels of governance to local levels will stimulate the capacities for self management at community and communal level.

Three dimensions of participation

Three dimensions of participation are to be distinguished:

Process participation: participation in work processes of projects and programmes.	Democratic participation: citizens participate in decision-making and make their voices heard.	Institutionalised participation: institutionalisation of rules, laws and procedures.
Process participation includes participatory planning, steering and evaluation of development cooperation programmes and projects. In this cycle, various government stakeholders, civil society and the private sector play their role. Participatory methods enable stakeholders to articulate and negotiate their interests. They can contribute their experiences and cultural values and thus feel responsible for the development cooperation programme/project and develop ownership for it.	Democratic participation occurs at different levels, e.g. elections on municipal respectively communal level. Beyond the participation in elections, democratic participation means to make constant claims to the elected bodies and representatives to deliver what they have been elected for. Democratic participation aims at a culture of dialogue, transparency and accountability under the umbrella of the rule of law. Chances for democratic participation are unevenly distributed among different stakeholders. Weaker stakeholders need empowerment for being able to fully participate as citizens.	In order to make participation reliable and sustainable rules, norms and procedures are needed as a security belt. Institutionalising participation goes beyond government institutions and related reforms. It encompasses the interplay between, government, civil society and the private sector for anchoring different forms of participation.

Participation and empowerment

Participatory processes are empowering because they provide people with an opportunity for expression and action, and to realise their potential. Such processes reduce feelings of powerlessness and helplessness. Empowered people on the local level will claim accountability and transparency so that intervening agencies (NGO, government) become more transparent and accountable to the community. But such processes will also ensure that different sections of the community start becoming more accountable to each other.

Empowerment is more than a state of mind, a set of team behaviours, or organisational policies. It cannot exist unless individual attitudes and mind sets, team behaviours and organisational values all support it. Many attempts to create organisational empowerment fail because they only create change on one of these features. Empowerment also means to support the poor in getting better access to basic services, like health, education, water and sanitation.

Local level planning for pro poor development

It is crucial for participation of the poor to articulate their concerns for better services in the development planning process. In the Cambodian context, the Communal Development Plan (CDP)[16] plays a key role in this regard. Its elaboration can be broken down to 11 steps being presented here at a glimpse:

(1) Identification of priorities by citizens
(2) Identification of development visions (short term and long term)
(3) Assessment of available resources for development and recurrent expenditure items
(4) Consolidation of proposals for Commune Council approval
(5) Budget proposal incorporated in the Communal Development Plan
(6) Public information and hearing conducted
(7) Public hearing results considered and incorporated
(8) Plan approved by the Commune Council and submitted for acceptance
(9) Negotiations at the District Integration Workshop
(10) Communal Development Plan and Communal Investment Plan accepted and implementation initiated
(11) Performance control and feedback to council

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[16] See: Soren Villadsen, Nordic Consulting group: Commune Development Plan and Commune Investment Plan: Facilitation of Revision of Process and Content. Phnom Penh, December 2006.

Guiding questions

- How much do the poor and the poorest participate in poverty reduction efforts?
- To what extent does the LPP address the needs of the poor?
- To what extent does the LPP address the needs of the poorest?
- What are external factors hindering participation and benefits for the poor?
- What are external factors hindering participation and benefits for the poorest?

Methodology and process

Case studies

Photo: In small working groups participants select and discuss their own cases and experiences

Floor level exercise:

Photo: Presenting working group results during the floor level exercise on enhancing participation in the Local Planning Process

In a working group setting participants suggest their own cases on what they have experienced in enhancing participation of the poor and the poorest in their work. The other group members should act as "consultants" in order to support the case study presenter to analyse his/her experience so that lessons learnt can be drawn, not only for the case study presenter but for the group as a whole. Ideally participants have been asked to prepare a case study prior to the training.

The floor level exercise is a strong tool to visualise complex structures and processes going beyond the "carrying capacity" of a pin board. It does not only make processes and structures better visible but it also enhances participation in the training process as participants need to stand and walk around during the exercise. Robert Chambers labels it "democracy of the ground".

Suggested steps for the training process

▌ Participants form working groups cross cutting the different organisational settings in which participants work. A volunteer presents his/her experience in promoting participatory development. He/she becomes the resource person. The other group members act as "consultants". Lessons learnt are visualised in order to serve as input for the floor level exercise.

▌ The stages in the local level planning process are exposed on the floor. Results from working groups are added to the picture on the floor. The floor level exercise helps to visualise a complex process thus facilitating reflection on how to improve the participation of the poor and the poorest. Concrete proposals are visualised so that it becomes evident where in the process potentials are seen to improve the participation of the poor and the poorest.

▌ Drawing the attention to participants' abilities to work in a participatory manner, they visualise which participatory methods they have applied and how they assess their capacities in doing so. Participants agree on participatory methods they would like to know more about. Facilitators provide input in a flexible manner including stimulation of exchange of experiences among participants.

Background information

The 11 steps in the LPP.

Duration

5-6 hours

Learning Unit 4: Searching feedback from villagers (real life experience)

Objectives

> Participants have designed and implemented a participatory feedback session in the field.

> Participants have improved on their action learning capacities.

Content

Action learning cycle

Participants will have the opportunity to go through a short action learning cycle. Based on the results of the previous LU participants will seek feedback from poor villagers on how they experienced participation in the process and how they perceive the benefits of participation. This requires a setting where participatory Poverty reduction activities have been carried out. The training session should therefore be conducted in cooperation with an organisation being experienced in participatory Poverty reduction and interested in creating good learning situations in the field.

The challenge is to put the poor villagers in a position where they feel comfortable to share their experiences. This has implications for the location, the timing of the meeting but especially for the tools to be used. A broad range of tools from the PLA tool box is accessible.

Groups going for such a field work should not comprise more than 6 members. It should be avoided that poor families participating feel being utilised for others to be trained. The feedback situation to be created in the community should be well planned. It should be specified among the group members who play which role during the feedback session, e.g. who is facilitating and who is observing. After implementing the innovative facilitation work it is crucial to reserve sufficient time for reflection and feedback.

Photo: Searching feedback from villagers: It should be avoided that poor families participating feel being utilised for others to be trained.

Guiding questions

- What makes a situation conducive for poor villagers to share their experiences with outsiders?
- How do the poor families with whom the work is done in the field assess the usefulness of participation?
- What are the ingredients of a good learning situation so that the action learning cycle will trigger tangible benefits?

Methodology and process

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME)

PME wants to enhance participation of beneficiaries and stakeholders in monitoring and evaluation of projects and programmes. PME gives stakeholders an active role in assessing projects respectively specific activities. It thus promotes systematic learning from experiences among beneficiaries and stakeholders. PME employs the whole range of participatory tools being used for PLA. PME puts a special emphasis on providing opportunities for self expression of those stakeholders who can not make them easily heard.

Action learning

Action learning implies a systematic learning process. Learning is intentional and not casual. Action learning requires to plan an action, to realise it and then reflect on the action in terms of process and results against the background of what has been planned. At the end of the action learning cycle lessons learnt are drawn to allow improvement for future action. Regular action learning cycles are the precondition for gradually improving on a certain type of activity respectively on a certain practice or eventually going for radical innovation.

Suggested steps for the training process

- Participants form groups to meet different groups of poor villagers in the field. Eventually, they will discuss different activities under the umbrella of participatory Poverty reduction. The groups make a plan for how they will conduct the feedback session in the community. Tools to be used have to be selected. Tasks have to be assigned so that everybody in the group knows what to do.
- The groups go to the field and conduct different feedback sessions. They meet afterwards to reflect on the process and the results of their action.
- A final session brings all the groups together for exchanging experiences and on drawing the lessons from the short action learning cycle.

Background information

Handout on the action learning cycle

Duration

1,5 days

Learning Unit 5: Action planning for strengthening the poverty focus

Objectives

› Participants have experienced the importance of communication and coordination.

› Participants have capitalized on lessons learnt from the training workshop.

› Participants have planned properly for individual action for strengthening the poverty focus.

Content

Challenges for good communication and coordination

As Poverty reduction is a joint effort communication and coordination is crucial. The challenges for good communication and coordination are most relevant for team cooperation within a department. But they are as well relevant for the linkages between actors at different levels (district, province, Nation) and for those actors being involved on the same level. There is a shared responsibility for everybody working in an organisation to make his/her contribution to good communication and cooperation. However, the management should take the lead. If the managers do not communicate and coordinate properly they cannot expect from their teams to make their contribution as part of the shared responsibility.

Action learning

Participants will experience the challenges of good communication and coordination when they go back to their work after having completed module 1. The time period between module 1 and module 2 gives the participants an opportunity to implement what they have learnt in the course of module 1. Ideally, they organise themselves in a way that in implementing what they have learnt they choose the action learning mode. This means to sit and reflect regularly – in the team but also individually – on the experiences in implementing the learning points from the training workshop. The better the action learning mode will work the better participants can share during module 2 what they have done differently.

Action planning

In order to make maximum use of the practice period between module 1 and 2 action planning is most important. The action planning needs to be articulated with existing plans and programmes within the participants' organisations. It does not make sense to make a completely separate action plan being of little relevance once the training is finished. The action planning therefore deliberately needs to take into consideration how the action planned fits into what existing plans and programmes prescribe. The action planning format should be well adapted to the participants' capacities. By and large, it is recommended to make it a very simple working document which the participants can easily handle.

Another crucial aspect is related to the support participants need from their superiors in implementing their action plan. Without their support an action plan being even well articulated with existing plans and programmes has little chance of success. It is therefore indispensable for the superiors to play a mentoring role. They therefore need to be involved right from the beginning of the training process. For the practice period as the learning by doing phase it is essential to get the commitment from the mentors to monitor the implementation of the action plans.

Guiding questions

■ What can you do in order to increase participation of the poor?
■ What are the tasks/actions in your operational plan that relate to poverty reduction?
■ What do you want to achieve with these tasks?
■ Can you identify any specific indicators of success with regard to implementation of these tasks?
■ What are necessary activities that you are going to implement so that you can achieve your objective?
■ Who will help you in implementing this plan?

Methodology and process

Throwing balls exercise

This exercise provides an experience not only on the cognitive but also on the emotional dimension of what good communication means. Participants stand in circles of about 10 people. They just have a ball of mashed paper and somebody starts throwing the ball to somebody else in the group. With focused attention one can participate when the ball will come to you. But if you are distracted by what so ever you will miss the ball at several occasions. Reflection time on the experiences during the exercise is very important.

Action planning

Action planning helps the participant to draw his/her conclusions from the training process and to make his/her choice for what they want to do differently when getting back to work. Action planning can be done in a team or individually. In a team it makes only sense if the team will be in the position to implement the action plan jointly. The individual action planning stresses the responsibility of each and every trainee for learning transfer. However, it will often require consultations at the working place before an individually designed action plan can be put into practice. Action planning should be based on a format being as simple as possible with concrete, focused questions. According to participants' capacities it might be a bit more sophisticated. It will allow the participants to plan as concrete as possible and reasonable.

Photo: Action Planning stresses the responsibility of the trainee for learning transfer.

Suggested steps for the training process

■ Participants will be sensitized for good communication and coordination through the throwing balls exercise.
■ The action planning format is introduced by the trainers. Participants working in the same organisation will consult on action priorities before going for the individual action planning exercise.
■ The individual action plans will be presented in two parallel sessions. The mentors should participate in these sessions.

Background information

Format: Action to strengthen poverty focus based on operation plan.

Duration

4-5 hours

Learning Unit 1: Evaluation of learning transfer (module 1 -> module 2)

Objectives

❯ Participants haves assessed their achievements in implementing the learning points from module 1.

❯ Participants have assessed the quality of their action learning during the practice period

(individual and team).

❯ Participants have reflected on the utility and the pertinence of their ASPF.

Content

One of the advantages of the modular approach is to go into module 2 – or 3, or 4 – and start immediately on exchanging and reflecting practical experiences in working for participatory Poverty reduction. Each participant had a couple of months to implement his/her learning points from module 1, i.e. the previous module. And everybody had the opportunity to find his/her action learning mode. There are experiences to share with positive and critical features. Both serve as food for thought for which a training workshop is the ideal forum. All the participants have been asked in advance to prepare a concise report on the implementation of learning points from module 1.

Reflecting on practical experiences includes to take a hindsight look at the usefulness of module 1 as well as the pertinence of one's ASPF-plan.

Guiding questions

▮ What did you implement from what you have learnt in the module 1 training workshop?
▮ What went well?
▮ What did not go well?
▮ How and by whom have you been supported?
▮ What difficulties did you face in implementation? And what did you do to overcome them?

Methodology and process

Pair wise exchange of experiences
Each participant looks for a partner to sit together for analysing experiences. The partner should not be from the same organisation. Both present their experiences. The presenter can rely on good questions of his/her partner helping him/her to analyse and reflect the experiences at hand.

Merging groups
Merging groups are ideal for brainstorming sessions where ideas need to be synthesized. After some time of working in a pairing – eventually individual reflection will be the first step -, 2 pairings merge to become a quartet. They make themselves familiar with what they have discussed in the pairing and then they continue the discussion as a group of 4. The quartets merge to become an octet. The same procedure continues and, depending on the size of the big group, another merger may take place.

Suggested steps for the training process

▌ Provided the ASPF had been prepared individually, participants form pairings to exchange on experiences in implementing their ASPF based on participants' reports.
▌ Two 2 pairings merge to continue the exchange of experiences as a quartet. The quartets bring conclusions and lessons learnt to the plenary discussion.
▌ Relevant issues and topics needing further deliberation in the course of module 2 are highlighted. Modifications for the action planning at the end of module 2 are clarified.

Background information

ASPFs elaborated at the end of module 1 training session
Reports on implementation of learning points from module 1

Duration

2 hours

Learning Unit 2:
Facilitating trust building and empowerment of the poor (1st part)

Objectives

> Participants are able to assess their facilitation capacities in working with the poor.

> Participants have identified different ways in how poor people learn.

> Participants develop their facilitation skills in a learning by doing approach.

> Participants have analysed their contribution to trust building and empowerment of the poor.

Content

Features and facets of facilitation

Good and effective facilitation rely on good and effective facilitators. They must be able to stimulate effective communication and learning. They must be able to create good dynamics in a group so that the group takes responsibility for achieving sound results. In order to do this a good facilitator needs the following competences:
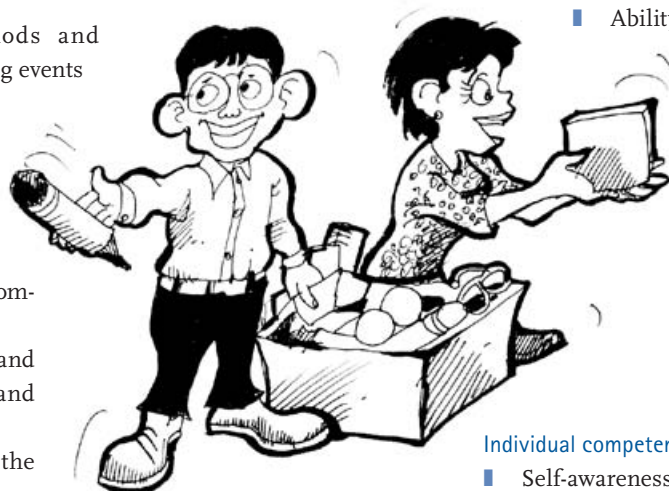
Methodological competence
- Sufficient knowledge of group dynamics and on managing conflicts in a group
- Flexibility in changing methods and sequences of meetings and learning events

Technical competence
- Good knowledge on the theory of communication and learning
- Profound knowledge on the tools and techniques for communication and learning
- Sound knowledge on the topic of the discussion

Social competence
- Patience and good listening skills
- Ability to create an atmosphere of confidence among the group
- Ability to sense the group's mood

Individual competence
- Self-awareness and self-critical reflection
- Eagerness to acquire new knowledge and skill

Photo: Poor people often do not easily trust a development agent introducing his/her participatory approach. Therefore, open communication is cruicial.

Adult Learning approach[17]

Adults are voluntary learners. They perform best when they have decided to attend the training for a particular reason. They have a right to know why a topic or session is important to them. Adults have usually come with an intention to learn. If this motivation is not supported, they will switch off or stop coming.

Adults have experience and can help each other to learn. Encourage the sharing of that experience and your sessions will become more effective. Adults learn best in an atmosphere of active involvement and participation.

Adults learn best when it is clear that the context of the training is close to their own tasks or jobs. Adults are best taught with a real-world-approach.

Trust building -> motivation -> empowerment

Poor people have experienced power in different ways. They have been denied access to development resources by powerful groups. They are excluded from certain social activities because they lack resources. Against the background of these experiences they will not easily trust a development agent introducing his/her participatory approach. The poor people have their checks and balances in order to find out if a person with his/her organisational background is trustworthy or not. Poor people cannot afford being trapped by powerful people. Good communication therefore is crucial. Open communication is not yet possible. Poor people will not directly express their lack of trust, but they will behave accordingly.

Their behaviour needs to be properly interpreted. A good facilitator takes this opportunity to make the communication process more open thus helping the poor people to speak out why they still hesitate to commit themselves to joint action.

Even if there is some trust building up to allow for joint action it may still happen that doubts arise about the trustworthiness of the development agent and his/her organisation. Such issues need to be addressed in order to build up a good relationship. This will also imply to look at trustworthiness from both angles. The development agent may have doubts about the commitment of the poor people for joint action. This also needs to be addressed.

Guiding questions

▪ What are the skills you need as a good facilitator to work with the poor?
▪ What is your understanding of empowerment of the poor?
▪ How do you assess your contribution, as agricultural staff, to the empowerment of the poor?
▪ What makes it easy to contribute?
▪ What makes it difficult to contribute?

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[17] See: International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) (Jules Pretty et al.): Participatory Learning & Action. A Trainer's guide. London 1995, especially chapter 1.

Methodology and process

Testing facilitation skills through simulation

Participants form groups with each group being composed of farmers, facilitators and observers. They design a scene of about 15 minutes to be performed. Reflection will start with the perception of the "farmers" and "facilitators" and will give the opportunity for the observers to bring in their perspective as a second step. Even in a classroom setting the performance is fairly realistic, i.e. participants really demonstrate their strong and weak points in facilitation.

Simulation of a meeting with poor farmers

Wheel of skills

Photo: A participant making the self assessment of his facilitation capacities

Participants brainstorm on what they think are the essential skills of a good facilitator. The skills are written on cards and distributed all around the wheel drawn on a pin board. The number of spokes relates to the number of skills identified. For each compartment the level of skills is differentiated, like basic, medium, advanced. 3 categories would be a minimum. Eventually, 5 or more categories, as a matter of differentiation, can be defined. Each participant makes his/her assessment individually and puts his/her dots accordingly. The picture is interpreted in highlighting the skills for which the participants, by and large, already have a good level but also highlighting the skills for which improvement is needed.

Guiding the blind

Photo: "Guiding the blind": scene from a trust building exercise

In this trust building exercise pairings are formed, one being the guide and the other being the "blind". Roles in the pairing change after a certain time. Reflection focuses on feelings and good practices to build trust. In drawing lessons learnt from the exercise the risk of seeing the poor as the "blind" and the facilitators as those to guide should be made very clear.

Combining content related group discussion with a facilitation exercise

Groups are formed to discuss about the understanding of empowerment and about how the participants think they can contribute to empowerment through their work. Before starting the discussion the group selects a facilitator and 1 or 2 observers. The facilitator is guiding the discussion while the observers should refrain from any contribution to the discussion. In presenting the results of group work in the plenary session it is important to follow a two pronged approach: presenting and discussing the results relating to the content and then reflecting on how the group experienced the facilitation. This will include giving the floor to the observers to share their observations.

Suggested steps for the training process

▌ Participants form groups to design their simulation of a situation where facilitation is practiced. Make sure that the groups do not all choose the same situation. All groups perform in the plenary and receive feedback from their observers as well as from the audience.

▌ Participants make an appraisal of their facilitation capacities by using the wheel of skills. The wheel serves at clarifying what capacities and abilities a good facilitator needs. The final picture is cross-checked with the lessons learnt from the simulations.

▌ Participants do the guiding the blind exercise in order to experience the challenges of trust building.

▌ Participants form groups to discuss about trust building and empowerment:
  - What is your understanding of empowerment of the poor?
  - How do you assess your contribution to the empowerment of the poor?
  - What makes it easy to contribute?
  - What makes it difficult to contribute?

▌ The groups will choose their facilitator plus one or two observers. Presentations and reflection in the plenary are on 2 levels: content = empowerment and process = facilitation.

Background information

▌ Basic document on Lutheran World Service Cambodia approach for empowerment of the poor

Duration:

5-6 hours

Photo: Simulation of a meeting with poor farmers

Learning Unit 3: Effective communication

Objectives

› Participants have reflected on their communication behaviour

› Participants have gained new insights in how to communicate more effectively.

Content

Four components in communication
We refer here to the communication model of Schulz von Thun. In communication one makes the distinction between sender and receiver. So, if this most simple setting of communication between two individuals is focused there are always 4 components to be distinguished:

Factual information (what I want to provide as information): this relates to all sort of information being communicated. The receiver will check this information according to relevance, sufficiency and credibility.

Self manifestation (what I want to disclose about myself): it is unavoidable to disclose something about oneself. It therefore has an intentional and a non-intentional facet. What is disclosed may relate to temper, mood or any features of one's personality.

Relationship message (what I want to tell about the relationship). The sender cannot avoid showing how he/she feels about the relationship. Non-verbal communication becomes very important from this perspective.

Appeal (what I want to achieve): communication is a vehicle for expectations. The receiver will try to detect what the sender is expecting. He will not presume that the sender is giving factual information without any purpose.

What makes communication so tricky is that sender and receiver don't put the same emphasis on each of the 4 components. So, the receiver might react on a non-intentional relationship message and the sender will be surprised, why the factual information – where he/she puts the emphasis – was not well understood, from his/her point of view. This is how it can happen that 2 individuals try to communicate but are actually at cross purposes.
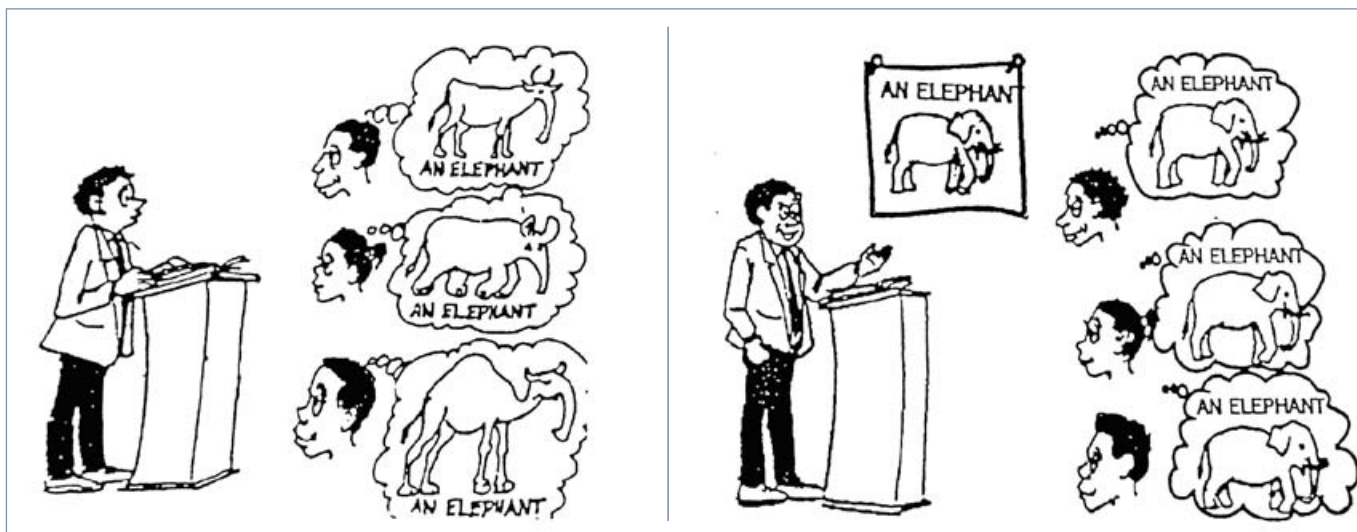
The more the sender and receiver are aware of these communication components and the related mechanisms the more they will be able to avoid distorted communication. It requires the ability to see the communication situation with the eyes of the communication partner. Non-effective communication can thus be detected at an early stage and both look for the causes why things went wrong.

These mechanisms are also valid for communication in a group. But the communication process gets more complex. And with group dynamics coming into play, it may be even more difficult to detect the communication pitfalls than for the pairing.

What is needed for good communication?[18]
▪ A good relationship
▪ Openness and trust
▪ Shared perceptions or a willingness and ability to check them out
▪ An ability to send all the messages being sent, not just the words

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[18] See LWF/InWEnt: Training Manual: Facilitation skills for people empowerment. Phnom Penh 2004, especially topic 8.

Perception cannot be objective. Simple perception traps can show, how easy it is to mislead the senses or disagree about something which actually should be the same for everybody - as we usually expect it from the clear message of a visible picture or so-called objective facts - but is not.

Blocks to communication

Although most people understand that good communication is needed in organisations, it often does not happen. That is because things get in the way – these things can be referred to as blocks stopping the message getting across. The sender may think that they have effectively sent his/her message, but the receiver has not understood it. It is important to know about the blocks so that they can be recognised when they occur and ways found to remove them.

Below are some of the reasons that have been identified as blocks to good communication:
- Language, including using jargon that the receiver does not know
- Status and hierarchy
- Hidden interpersonal conflicts
- Cultural differences
- Political pressure
- Contradictory expectations

Some tips for good communication
- Making good eye contact.
- Good body language – your body can show how well you listen.
- Listen with your heart; look at it from the point of view of the other person who is talking until he/she is finished.
- Nod your head, or say you understand.

- Clarify – if necessary – by repeating what the other has said in another way.
- Ask questions to probe deeper and understand better.
- Bring up problems and discuss them.
- Ask for problem solutions so that they emerge from the group.
- If some action has to taken, agree on who will do it, when it will be done and when you will meet again.

Guiding questions

- How to become more sensitive in communication?
- How to reflect on one's own communication style?
- How to understand communication styles of others?
- How to bring effective communication into facilitation?

Photos: Group exercise – What do participants see in special pictures offering different images according to how it is looked at.

Methodology and process

Perception exercise: multi facetted pictures

Groups are formed to find out what they see in special pictures offering different images according to how it is looked at. Participants exchange on their different perceptions. They realize that perceptions on the apparently same thing can be very different. They learn to acknowledge that different perceptions of the same reality need to be well communicated. They realize that different perceptions are enriching in the sense that they present a more facetted picture of reality.

Playing a sketch

Small groups of participants play a scene or sketch, starting from their idea or from a proposal from the trainers. The sketch should illustrate features of major topics discussed in the course of the training process. Ideally, the sketch illustrates capacities and abilities the participants want to improve on. The others in the plenary give their interpretation of the sketch against the background of what has been discussed on the respective topic.
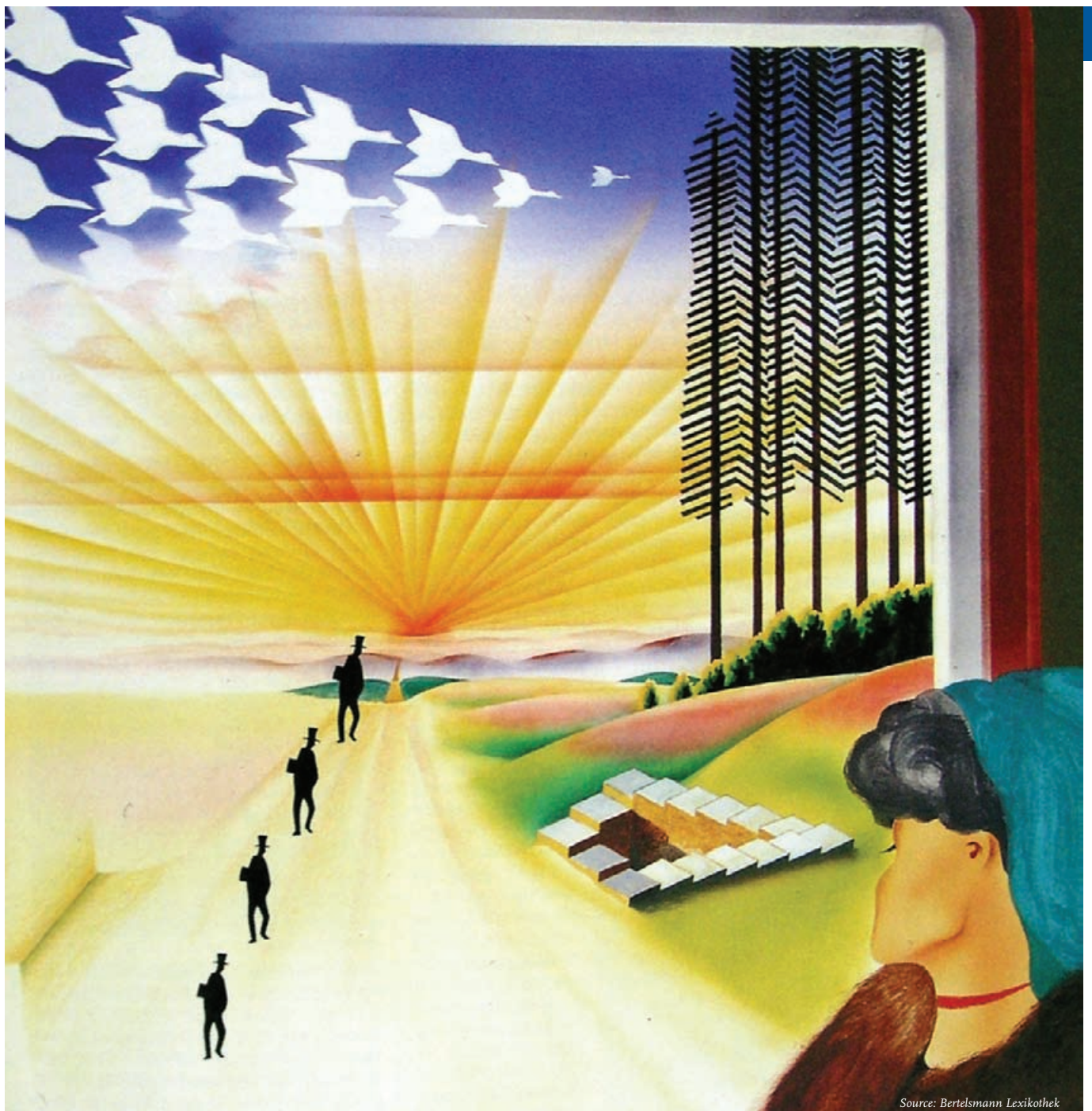
Suggested steps for the training process

- Participants form groups to test their perception skills while using multi facetted pictures. Groups share their experiences and reflect on the importance of sound perception for good communication.
- The four components of communication are presented as a visualised lecturette. Participants get the chance to apply the model of the four components of communication through designing sketches in groups. The sketches are performed in the plenary with sufficient time for feedback and reflection.
- Finally lessons learnt are drawn for reflecting on and changing one's own communication behaviour.

Background information

Special pictures for perception exercise.
Hand out on the 4 components in communication.

Duration

2 hours

Source: Bertelsmann Lexikothek

Illusion – Old or Young

Do you see an old or a young woman?
Do you see an old woman or a young one? Both are there! If you are having trouble picking each out, try focusing on the old woman's nose, or the young woman's chin; they are the same.

Learning Unit 4:
Facilitating trust building and empowerment of the poor (2nd part)

Objectives

> Participants have explored ways and means to better contribute to the empowerment of the poor.

> Participants have tested their improved capacities in facilitating processes to empower the poor.

Content

Facilitation and empowerment of the poor
Improved facilitation capacities are not an end in itself. They are to put the participants in the position to better contribute to the empowerment of the poor. Presuming that participants work at the interface between their organisation and the poor people, they can make a substantial contribution in this direction if they facilitate properly the communication between their organisations and the poor people.

Participants need to be sensible with regard to the experiences of the poor with power. These experiences will strongly influence their readiness to go for opportunities for empowerment. For understanding the concept of power it is useful to make the distinction between power over, power to, power with and power within (see box)

Participants need to reflect on how they can improve on their communication and facilitation practices. In doing this the organisational context has to be properly analysed. Organisations with a strong technical = sectoral mandate tend to be less capacitated in terms of communication and facilitation. But they need to develop those capacities in order to avoid failure in successfully carrying out their specific activities.

> **Four categories of power**
>
> Power over... ❯ meaning the power of an upper over a lower, usually with negative connotations such as restrictive control, penalising and denial of access.
>
> Power to... ❯ meaning effective choice, the capability to decide on actions and do them.
>
> Power with... ❯ meaning collective power where people, typically lowers, together exercise power through organisation, solidarity and acting together.
>
> Power within... ❯ meaning personal self-confidence .

Better cooperation between different organisations may also help. The agricultural department, for example, could cooperate with the CD department in order to make it a joint venture that poor people feel empowered in the way they are supported in their agricultural and gardening activities.

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[18] See LWF/InWEnt: Training Manual: Facilitation skills for people empowerment. Phnom Penh 2004, especially topic 8.

Photo: In small groups participants discuss their understanding of empowerment and how they could contribute to it through their work.

Helping and hampering factors

When participants think about how they can improve on their facilitation capacities they should take into consideration what helping factors can push them and what hampering factors might stand in their way. It is useful to anticipate these factors so that from the beginning the former can be enhanced and the latter be overcome. Talking about the helping factors also draws the attention to the fact that participants will inevitably need support from their colleagues and superiors if they want to succeed.

Monitoring the empowerment process

The empowerment process of the poor people needs to be monitored. They will certainly do it themselves, but it is crucial for the (ex)-participants to find out regularly to what extent their improved facilitation practices actually contribute to the empowerment of the poor people. It requires feedback from the poor people themselves about if they really feel empowered. Good communication and facilitation is again required to get such a valid feedback. This feedback, provided it is honest and substantial, becomes a most precious resource for the (ex)-participants and their teams so that they can improve on their practices in contributing to the poor people's empowerment.

Guiding questions

❚ How to strengthen the orientation and practice towards empowerment of the poor in the participants' working context?
❚ What are the pushing factors in this regard and what can be done to sustain these factors?
❚ What are the hampering factors in this regard and what can be done to overcome these factors?
❚ How can the process of empowerment of the poor be effectively monitored?

Methodology and process

Suggested steps for the training process

❚ Groups are formed to discuss about their understanding of empowerment and about how the participants think they can contribute to empowerment through their work. 'Working in the same sector' should be the main criterion for group composition. The group work will be guided by the following questions:
- How do you want to improve your contribution to empowerment of the poor?
- What can help you to do that?
- What can be in your way in doing that?
❚ Before starting the discussion the group selects a facilitator and 1 or 2 observers. The facilitator is guiding the discussion while the observers should refrain from any contribution to the discussion.
❚ In presenting the results of group work in the plenary session it is important to follow a two pronged approach: presenting and discussing the results relating to the content and then reflecting on how the group experienced the facilitation. This will include giving the floor to the observers to share their observations.
❚ The groups prepare a presentation of their findings and choose one improvement to be role played in the plenary session. There should be sufficient time for reflection and feedback, including how the group experienced the facilitation exercise.
❚ Lessons learnt will be drawn on what the participants – and their organizations – can contribute to the empowerment of the poor.

Duration

2-3 hours

Learning Unit 5:
Applying improved facilitation skills in the field (real life experience)

Objectives

› Participants have designed and implemented a working situation with poor people

› Participants have tested their improved capacities in facilitating processes to empower the poor

Content

Action learning

Participants will have the opportunity to go through a short action learning cycle. They can build on their experiences from M1. Participants will get a chance they normally do not have in their working context. They can apply their improved facilitation capacities in a real life situation. They have the privilege to do that in a workshop situation where more time for preparation as well as for reflection and feedback is given compared to the working context. Of course, for the poor people to work with, it is real life. They cannot afford to be used as guinea-pigs. A training should therefore be conducted either as in-house training or in cooperation with an organisation being experienced in participatory Poverty reduction and interested in creating good learning situations in the field.

The challenge is to put the poor villagers in a position where they feel comfortable to share their views and concerns. This has implications for the location, the timing of the meeting but especially for the tools to be used. A broad range of tools from the PLA tool box is accessible.

Groups going for such a field work should not comprise more than 6 members. Otherwise the group as such will become a dominating factor being counterproductive for good communication. The learning situation to be created in the community should be well planned. It should be specified among the group members who will play which role during the working session in the field, e.g. who is facilitating and who is observing. After implementing the facilitation work it is crucial to reserve sufficient time for reflection and feedback.

Guiding questions

▌ What makes the activity being selected innovative in terms of contributing more effectively to empowering the poor?

▌ How do the poor families with whom the work is done in the field assess the usefulness of the activity?

▌ What are suitable mechanisms to create good learning situations in participants' working context?

Photo: Learning in the field: a facilitation experience

Methodology and process

Suggested steps for the training process

▌ Participants form groups to prepare the field work. Each group should select a different activity for their working session in the field, e.g. appraisal, planning, monitoring. It depends on the actual context of the training process, for examples: would it make sense to go for a participatory needs assessment to community A?

▌ The groups make their plan, i.e. the different steps and methods in conducting the session. They decide in advance who to play which role during the implementation of the activity, e.g. who is facilitating and who is observing.

▌ The field work is scheduled in a way that enough time is left in the late afternoon for the groups to meet and reflect and capitalise on their experiences.

▌ In a final plenary session the groups exchange their learning points. Lessons learnt are drawn in view of the action planning to follow in the course of the final LU.

Duration

1,5 days

Learning Unit 6: Action planning for learning implementation

Objectives

› Participants have capitalized on lessons learnt from the training workshop.

› Participants have planned properly for individual action for contributing to the empowerment of the poor.

Content

Action learning

Participants have experienced action learning in the practice period between module 1 and module 2. Ideally, they organise themselves in a way that in implementing what they have learnt after module 2 they choose the action learning mode This means to sit and reflect regularly – in the team but also individually – on the experiences in implementing the learning points from the training workshops (M1 + M2). Depending on the design of the training programme they may have the chance to come back for M3.

Action planning

Action planning has already been experienced at the occasion of the previous module. The focus of this final action planning is on learning implementation. The challenge for this action planning is still to make sure that the plan is well articulated with existing plans and programmes within the participants' organisations. Regardless, if the action planning is done after M1, M2 or M3 it deliberately needs to take into consideration how the action planned fits into what existing plans and programmes prescribe.

Ideally, the mentors play their role since the beginning of the training process. There role continues to be of importance as long as the (ex)-participants are in the process of transferring what they have learnt, be it covered by their action plan or not.

Guiding questions

▮ What have you learnt from the previous modules and what do you want to implement?
▮ What can you do in order to enhance the empowerment of the poor?
▮ What are the tasks/actions in your operational plan that relate to poverty reduction?
▮ What do you want to achieve with these tasks?
▮ Can you identify any specific indicators of success with regard to implementation of these tasks?
▮ What are necessary activities that you are going to implement so that you can achieve your objective?

MY PLAN OF ACTION

Activities	Objective	Implement	Time	Resources	Support org'n
1. VDCs' workshop strategy to promote participation	To increase self-confidence and self management	- CDO - TO - CDWs	Dec 2004	Budget Resource person	PDRD LAWs
2. Conduct PRA trng. to CDWs	To improve capacity of CDWs on PRA	- CDO - TO	Oct 2004	Budget Resource person	LWS
3. Carry out PRA to new villages	To gather info and analyze village situations To improve Planning	- CDO - CDWs - Villagers	Nov 2004	Budget Material Resource person Transpo	VDC Village Authority

Methodology and process

Suggested steps for the training process

▮ The modified action planning format = learning implementation plan is introduced by the trainers.

▮ Participants working in the same organisation will consult on action priorities before going for the individual action planning exercise.

▮ The individual action plans will be presented in two parallel sessions. The mentors should participate in these sessions.

Background information

Format: Action to contribute to the empowerment of the poor
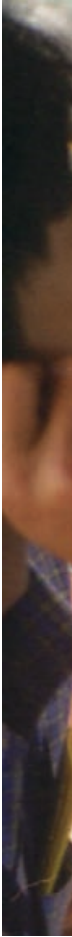
Duration

4-5 hours

Part D

Learning transfer and how to make it sustainable

Effective and sustainable learning transfer is the key factor for indicating to what extent a training process has been successful. This implies to design the training process in a way to enhance the post training learning transfer. Action planning for learning implementation is one of the appropriate tools to be used in this respect. But this action plan is only the very first step for learning transfer. The learning transfer needs to be supported through internal backstopping. And in order to assess if the learning transfer is successful the impact at the level of the ultimate beneficiaries, i.e. the poor people, has to be analysed. Presuming that staff members of government agencies and NGO have been trained only the feedback from the ultimate beneficiaries can tell if the learning transfer has been successful.

1. Continuous internal backstopping

In presenting the module and learning units in Chapter C a special emphasis has been put on the role of the mentors. It is essential for them to continue playing their role in the post training phase of learning implementation. If the ex-trainees feel that they are well supported in implementing their action plan they will be encouraged to carry on. The mentors therefore have to provide constructive backstopping on a continuous basis. This will include to support one's staff members, having participated in the training process, in reflecting on their experiences in transferring what they had learnt. Proper backstopping will also focus on the linkage between individual and team learning process. A mentor therefore might suggest to discuss the experience of one of his/her staff members with the whole team in order to also enhance their learning process.

In playing their role as internal back stoppers the mentors need to get, from time to time, reassurance from their top management about the importance of this role to play. What the ex-trainee gets in terms of support from his/her mentor, being at the same time his/her superior, the mentor needs to get from his/her superior as well. If participatory poverty reduction is of less actual importance on the top management's agenda the mentor's commitment for playing the role of an internal back stopper most probably will fade away.

Ideally the mentors participate in the training workshops as being the cornerstone of the capacity development process. Depending on the duration of the different modules, this might not be realistic. Partial participation of the mentors should be taken into consideration as a sort of compromise. If a supervisor=mentor excludes being in the position to participate at any moment actively in the training workshops doubts may be justified about his/her ability to play effectively the mentor's role.

Playing the role of internal back stopper should not be the exclusive task of the ex-trainees' superiors. Foreign advisors (e.g. GTZ, DED) may also play that role. They can draw the attention of their partner organisation on the state of learning transfer. They can also advise the mentors on how best they can support the learning transfer of their staff members.

If resources can be made available the backstopping function can also be taken care of by an external facilitator. This can be eventually the trainer(s) having conducted the training process.

Getting feedback from the ultimate beneficiaries is a most precious source of learning.

2. Impact assessment at beneficiary level

If staff members of government organisations and NGO are trained in order to develop and strengthen their capacities for participatory poverty reduction the question is at the end of the day if the beneficiaries of the pro poor development activities feel the difference. Have they perceived a different behaviour of the ex-trainees in terms of acting in a more participatory manner? Was there more than participatory processes, i.e. did the beneficiaries, the poor families, touch any tangible benefits? And were these benefits more in line with the poor families' needs, in comparison to what they experienced prior to the training process? There are a lot more questions to be added. They will come up as soon as a participatory impact survey will be designed.

Getting feedback from the ultimate beneficiaries is a most precious source of learning. It tells something about the learning culture of a development organisation to what extent they are really eager to learn from this source. Provided a good feedback atmosphere is created at the occasion of a participatory impact survey the feedback can be critical and quite disturbing at the first instance. But if eventually, despite best intentions, the poor people do not feel the difference – or not to the extent the ex-trainees had hoped for – it is better to face reality and to critically review one's practices in working with the poor people.

Ideally, the impact survey focuses exclusively on what the post training learning transfer has triggered as benefits for the beneficiaries. But this is not very realistic. So, the focus of an impact survey often will be broader which means to pay special attention to the plausible relation to be established between the feedback from the poor people and the activities carried out as a matter of post training learning transfer.

List of references and hints for further reading

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World Bank (2006): Cambodia Halving Poverty by 2015? Poverty assessment 2006. Report Number 35213-KH

Useful resources on the internet

German Development Cooperation Sector Project "Mainstreaming Participation" on www.gtz.de/participation

Institute for Development Studies www.ids.ac.uk/ids/particip/index.html

International Institute for Environment and Development www.iied.org/NR/agbioliv/pla_notes/

International Institute for Rural Reconstruction www.iirr.org

InWEnt Capacity Building International www.inwent.org

Lutheran World Federation Cambodia www.lwfcam.org.kh

Mekong River Commission www.mekonginfo.org

Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action www.rcpla.org

Wageningen Agricultural University http://portals.wi.wur.nl/ppme

World Bank www.worldbank.org/poverty

World Bank www.worldbank.org/participation

List of abbreviations

BFD	Buddhism For Development
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CBRDP	Community Based Rural Development Project
CC	Comunce Council
CDP	Communal Development Plan
CEF	Community Empowerment Facilitators
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FSNPSP	Food Security and Nutrition Policy Support Project
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
InWEnt	Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung gGmbH - Capacity Building International
IRDEP	Integrated Rural Development and Empowerment Project
LPP	Local Planning Process
LU	Learning Unit
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MVHL	Most Vulnerable Household List
MoP	Ministry of Planning
NPRS	National Poverty Reduction Strategy
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
PaCoCo	Pagoda Coordination Committee
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
PLAU	Provincial Local Administration Unit
PME	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RDP	Rural Development Programme
TCT	Training Coordination Team
VDC	Village Development Committee