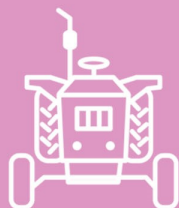


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Supporting Smallholder
Farmers in Asia and Pacific
Islands Region through
Strengthened Agricultural
Advisory Services
(SAAS Project)

BEST PRACTICE NOTES



PARTICIPATORY APPROACH: HEART OF CHARM2 PROJECT

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5 Key Points

1. Challenges and constraints

- Establishing rapport with the community
- Time management
- Project prioritization

2. Objective

The participatory approach aims to empower community members by involving them in the whole process of project implementation

3. Methodology

- Identification of beneficiaries
- Addressing specific needs and priorities Participatory Project Investment Plan
- Other preparations

4. Highlight of result

- 169 Project Investment Plan (PIP) was implemented
- Six out of 37 Municipal Local Government Units integrated the PIPs in their municipalities

5. Highlight recommendation

Formation of People's Organization

Introduction

- The Cordillera region is the center of agriculture in the north of the Philippines. However, agricultural programs that are implemented in this region employ a top-to-bottom approach with little to no involvement from the communities.
- As such, the programs were unsustainable due to the lack of ownership the community had over the projects. Moreover, some of the projects did not address their actual needs.
- To address this issue, a participatory approach was implemented during the Second Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resources Management Project (CHARMP 2) in the Cordillera Administrative Region in the Philippines.
- It aimed to involve the communities in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of projects to ensure its sustainability and the empowerment of the partner communities. These partner communities were the provinces of Abra, Apayao, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, and Mountain Province.
- A total of 37 municipalities and 170 barangays (villages) that are in highland areas, with high rates of poverty, were selected for this program. They also have received little to no development project assistance in the last three years.
- Most of the 190,000 target beneficiaries are indigenous peoples from different ethnolinguistic groups whose main source of livelihood is agriculture.
- They were organized into 283 People's Organizations (POs) which handled projects on reforestation (148 groups); Agroforestry (162 groups); irrigators' association (36 groups); and the Barangay Water System Association/BAWASA (41 groups). There was also 644 Livelihood Interest Groups formed for the implementation of the Livelihood Assistance Fund.

Methodology

A. Social Preparation and Partnership Establishment

1. Identification of beneficiaries

The beneficiaries were organized to join the POs per barangay. The POs were registered to the Cooperative Development Authority, Department of Labor and Employment, or the Securities and Exchange Commission with the help of the community mobilization officers (CMO).

2. Addressing specific needs and priorities

All the stakeholders, including the People's Organizations were involved in the identification of needs and priorities of the communities, while the CMOs determined the efficiency of the project planning.

3. Participatory Project Investment Plan

The dialogues among all the stakeholders were documented through the Participatory Project Investment Plan (PPIP). The identified topics were reforestation, livelihood, barangay water system, and irrigation.

4. Other preparations

The CMOs provided the POs with hands-on training on leadership, gender sensitivity, practical bookkeeping and accounting, values formation, and organizational development. While the local government units (LGUs) and other stakeholders were given training on capacity-building and project implementation enhancing.

B. Participatory Project Investment Planning

The Participatory Investment Plan (PIP) is a collection of the community's data and planned projects which was organized by the different stakeholders attended. Majority (60-70%) of the attendees were women. The PIP is composed of the following:

1. Barangay Profile

Contains demographic data, socio-economic, and cultural information of the community

2. Project Development Framework

The results of the situation analysis in the community was integrated in the framework along with the mission, vision, goals, objectives, targets, and strategies that were created by the stakeholders.

3. Priority Project Investment Plan

Different needs per sector were identified and prioritized by the community based on the PIP. The annual investment plan in the PIP was also reviewed and assessed every year by the community.

Key Findings

- Of the 170 PIPs, 169 were formally implemented in the communities and the Barangay LGUs.
- Six out of the 37 Municipal LGUs have integrated their PIPs in their Municipal Development and Investment Plans.
- These results show that the participation of POs allow for the exercise of leadership and capacity-building of community members. It allows an organized and objective approach in identifying and addressing issues within their communities.
- The program proved to be sustainable due to the cooperation between area-based CMOs and existing indigenous organizations
- However, there are some challenges in the program such as building of rapport, cooperation from the community members, and proper negotiation skills with the LGUs.

Recommendations and Conclusions

- The benefits include the formation of the POs and their registration with accrediting agencies.
- The community members were also empowered from the hands-on training they received.
- With the participatory approach, the issues in the community were identified which resulted to projects on Rural Infrastructure, Livelihood, Agroforestry and Reforestation.
- In conclusion, a participatory approach is essential in making a community program sustainable and relevant. It involved various stakeholders, especially the direct beneficiaries, in the entire process of the project implementation.

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