

Management Summary Learning report Zambia 2005 – Project formulation and implementation

In 2005 the project teams evaluated the project formulation and implementation phase of IICD's Roundtable process in Zambia. At the time of this report 15 projects were recorded with seven in formulation and eight in implementation. To get an insight of the projects in formulation and implementation, the project owners participated in the evaluation exercise. The collected data from questionnaires was entered onto the online evaluation tool and analysed by Travaillant Vers Une Economie Liberale (TEL), IICD's local Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) partner. Subsequently, the results were presented to the project partners during the Focus Group Meeting, convened in November 2005 in Lusaka, Zambia.

IICD's participatory, self-learning and continuous M&E system was introduced in Zambia in 2004. The process was started by focusing on the project formulation phase. The first Focus Group meeting's main theme was 'involving beneficiaries', whereas in early 2005 the capacity development programme was the topic of evaluation. This third meeting focused on the projects in formulation and in implementation. One remarkable conclusion is the high score on involving beneficiaries during the formulation phase.

Evaluation results

From the questionnaires different conclusions can be drawn. One remarkable result is the high score on involving beneficiaries during the formulation phase. Some other results raised questions and were therefore discussed. Here is a summary of the quantitative findings and the qualitative discussions.

Project team profiles

Critical analysis of the results gave a general indication that project team members are male, with tertiary education, earning an average income and residing in the capital. This corresponds to the general trend of the involvement of educated persons in the project teams. However, the gender imbalance is an issue that still needs to be addressed.

Ownership

The picture emerging from the partners' responses in the questionnaires is a good sense of ownership and commitment at the institutional level. All project team members from the projects in formulation indicated that the projects are formulated based on the organisations goals and objectives. The projects in implementation indicated

their institutions employed the available human and financial resources as well as other facilities to smoothly implement the projects.

Success during formulation phase

The success of the formulation phases was attributed to the fruitful Roundtable workshop, high involvement of beneficiaries and active participation project team members. The participants jointly concluded that beneficiaries' participation right from inception is vital in every project document or development process, so this high score is encouraging.

Collaboration during implementation phase

Looking at the results, a positive picture emerges regarding collaboration and interaction between projects and similar projects. Many project team members indicate there was not sufficient publicity in local media, which is quite worrying. It could be picked up as a learning point in terms of promoting the project and sharing the knowledge gained through the project.

IICD assistance

All project team members from the projects in implementation and formulation were satisfied with the assistance of IICD. Also the advice received from consultants (both local and international) is indicative of the positive impact of IICD's Roundtable process.

Innovation

The discussions gave a clear understanding of the level of innovation in the Zambia country programme. Ten out of twelve project owners saw their project as an improvement to existing types of ICT for development activities. Half of the project owners even indicated their project as being the first of its kind in the country. There was a general perception that the projects were rather innovative. This raised the questions as to whether the projects itself are innovative, and to what kind of innovation the partners are looking for?

The project owners indicated that innovation was better perceived as exiting services had been improved by introducing new ideas through the use of new technologies. The owners generally agreed that technological advancement is key to successful and beneficial innovation. According to the discussions, improvement on existing services has the following advantages:

- ✓ The project team works toward being a market leader in the offering of high-quality services which are appropriate by the market;



Project partners brainstorm about financial sustainability during Focus Group meeting in Zambia

- ✓ The project team gains high aspiration to be the best in the country or sector by providing the best from what other competitors are offering;
- ✓ It improves efficiency and effectiveness in projects since human resources have a rich base of experience. There are fewer incidences of trial and error in the implementation process;
- ✓ It increases the chances of success due to the many lessons learned from the already existing activities;
- ✓ It helps build on ownership and trust and thus makes the project more sustainable;
- ✓ It adds another dimension to what is already known thus improving the knowledge base for future reference;
- ✓ It allows for expansion and projects can draw benefits from reaching economies of scale.

Resource utilisation

During the implementation phase just over 50% of the project team members are highly satisfied with the internal resources. Why are the others less satisfied? Therefore, compiling quantitative data and analysing resource utilisation was identified as a theme for discussion. The aim was to enable the participants to explore effective and innovative ways of applying resources in order to maximise benefits.

From the discussions a number of strategic interventions and issues were identified:

- ✓ *Raising funds:* It was observed that only with a number of innovative ways of raising fund project can enhance sustainability. Such funds, when realised, ought to be retained and used to expand business. This should increase profits and turn over. Some of the proceeds could be directed at acquiring new technology and equipment. Donors and the private sector were also recognized as important sources for funds. The participants agreed that projects should attract them by presenting viable proposals.
- ✓ *Investing in human resources:* Human resources should be well remunerated to improve the quality of the project's services. The need for staff training was also highlighted as essential for improving efficiency. This enables projects to compete favourably in the market.
- ✓ *Improving work culture:* Work culture was identified as an important factor to raise productivity. The staff of

projects should be hard working and dedicated to their work. Often people do not consider time as a valuable resource in enhancing productivity. Time should be used effectively if projects are to make profits.

- ✓ *Prioritising expenditure:* To be cost effective means prioritising expenditure by considering only activities that are necessary for effective work. Alternative uses of resources should be explored before committing any available resources. Projects must have proven accounting systems to ensure that all resources are well accounted for.
- ✓ *Marketing of services:* Services and products offered to the market must be marketed in an effective manner. Staff should be knowledgeable and well vested on their services and products in order to explain them to the target group. Projects should create deliberate programmes to publicise the services and products being offered. This could be through brochures or establishing websites.
- ✓ *Outsourcing:* Projects using ICT could make extra income by providing services to other organisations which are not yet well vested with ICT.
- ✓ *Cooperation:* Networking provides an opportunity for ICT related projects to gain experiences and learn from others. Projects must develop good networking skills to attract potential partners, including donors. This could raise incomes and expand businesses.

What's next

Monitoring and Evaluation is meant for learning and creating ownership. Therefore the solutions identified during this third Focus Group meeting will serve as a starting point for projects to improve themselves. The next topic for evaluation in Zambia will be the end-users of the livelihood projects in formulation. It will be the first time impact analysis at the level of the end-users of the projects.

More information

For information about IICD and Monitoring & Evaluation, visit www.iicd.org/evaluation or contact us at information@iicd.org. The online M&E system can be viewed at <http://www.survey.iicd.org>.

The International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD) assists developing countries to realise locally owned sustainable development by harnessing the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs). IICD realises its mission through two strategic approaches. First, Country Programmes bring local organisations together and help them to formulate and execute ICT-supported development policies and projects. The approach aims to strengthen local institutional capacities to develop and manage Country Programmes, which are currently being implemented in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mali, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Second, Thematic Networking links local and international partners working in similar areas, connecting local knowledge with global knowledge and promoting South-South and South-North exchanges. Thematic Networking focuses on sectors and themes like education, health, governance, the environment, livelihood opportunities (especially agriculture), and training. These efforts are supported by various information and communication activities provided by IICD or its partners. IICD is an independent non-profit foundation, established by the Netherlands Ministry for Development Cooperation in 1997. Its core funders include the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (DGIS), the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

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