

Examples of Outcome and Impact Assessment by CBOs

Participatory Evaluation of Ancestral Domain Management

(Alma Monica A. de la Paz, January2011)

Experiences: Description for Practitioners

Context

((Sector, region, type of project, implementing NGO))

Sta. Cruz is a municipality in the province of Davao del Sur in the southern island of Mindanao in the Philippines.

Five tribal councils whose ancestral domain is part of Mt. Apo Natural Park had been implementing their ancestral domain management plans to improve the livelihoods of their people and their overall wellbeing. The traditional management systems of the indigenous group of the Bagobo Tagabawa had slowly been replaced by local government. Kapwa Upliftment Foundation Inc. assisted them to document their time immemorial ownership of their ancestral domain in 2005 and subsequently assisted in the formulation and implementation of their management plans in the areas of agroforestry, women's livelihood, health and sanitation and youth development.

The Bagobo Tagabawa ancestral domain covers more than 40,000 hectares and more than sixty percent of a natural park. The tribal leaders were faced with tremendous challenges in how to improve the lives of their people when government finally recognized their ownership over their ancestral domain.

Kapwa Upliftment Foundation Inc. provided various seminars on management, leadership, finance and access to planting materials and resources for constructing gravitational water systems. After working with more than five hundred members of the five tribal councils for five years Kapwa wanted the tribal councils to assess the degree to which they had improved the lives of their people by implementing their ancestral domain management plans.

Introduction of Tools

((A brief description of the tool and sources where to get a more detailed description.))

In a facilitated process Kapwa asked the tribal leaders if they would like to evaluate their own projects and how they would like to do this. Twelve volunteers were requested from each village so that there would be four evaluators each for the three areas to be evaluated:

- agroforestry,
- women and well being and
- governance.

In some communities there were more volunteers who wanted to participate in the process, so some barangays had more than twelve volunteer evaluators. On Kapwa's suggestion, women, youth and elders were included in mixed evaluator teams.

The leaders decided that they would participate in the evaluation of all the barangays. There would be at least three community evaluators from each barangay for each of the sector would have a representative from the four barangays.

The evaluators of each sector identified what they would evaluate and how they would conduct their evaluation. Only one day per community was allotted for the actual site visit. It was important that they manage their time carefully so they could visit some farms, backyard gardens, toilets and water system etc.

Note: A barangay is the smallest administrative division in the Philippines. Barangays are further sub-divided into Puroks and Sitios.

Then the evaluators of each barangay identified a team leader for each sector and an over-all team leader. Each barangay then stated when they wanted to be evaluated and arranged for when the evaluators would come, who would host them etc. They also scheduled when they would conduct their own internal assessment in preparation for the evaluators visit.

Note: In Sta. Cruz baseline data had been established prior to project intervention.

Procedure of Application

((How did it work exactly? Lists of indicators, data collection instruments, process of data collection etc. Possibly describe steps))

The tribal leaders informed the Kapwa facilitator that they wanted to assess the ways in which the different tribal councils had worked to improve the lives of their people. Each Tribal barangay was assisted in 2005 to formulate their ancestral domain management plans. Through a participatory data gathering and planning process a baseline of sorts had been established. The projects that the tribal council had chosen to implement after 2005 were based on what they identified as a priority and whether there was a leader or a group who was willing to undertake the activity on a self help basis. The projects that were implemented were similar in nature but the policies and procedures were unique to the particular group.

Step 1: Each of the tribal councils prepared a summary of what they had accomplished since their ancestral domain management plans were formulated in 2005. People were asked: What was the situation before, in 2005, and what was the situation today? What brought about the change? For the past three years each tribal council had conducted quarterly assessments of Plan vs Actual and annually all of the five tribal council leaders came together to compare notes on what they had accomplished. These activities had honed their skill in planning and implementing projects. The leaders received several leadership training seminars including problem analysis and strategic planning.

Step 2: Each of the sectors (governance; women and well being; agro-forestry) had been using a set of criteria/questions that had been used periodically over the past three years. A similar set of questions was adopted at the initial evaluation planning workshop. It was agreed that the set of questions that was formulated (for example: “Are tribal councils managing their ancestral domain?” “Have they mobilized support from local government?” etc.) at the initial evaluation planning workshop would be adopted. These were merely guidelines and the evaluators could revise these.

These questions were the same questions that each of the tribal councils also sought to answer prior to the evaluators’ visit. The tribal leaders had designated a member of their council for each sitio and under each sitio was a group/clan leader. This structure facilitated data gathering.

Note: “Sitio” is a settlement within a “Barangay”. The latter is the smallest unit in the political structure.

They then proceeded to document these on big paper (craft sheets) for presentation to the evaluators.

Step 3: The barangay being evaluated presented the data of their accomplishments to the evaluators. The evaluators reviewed the data and probed for veracity, accuracy and completeness. As the evaluators could not visit many farms and projects, the host chose what best reflected their accomplishments.

They also shared problems they had encountered and how they were able to address these and learn from them as well.

Step 4: Evaluators’ visit: After presentation to the evaluators and some preliminary discussion they then proceeded on field visits. In some sites, the evaluators went all together and in others the evaluators split up into three groups.

After the site visits, they then gave feedback and recommendations. The evaluators also gave “grades” although no unified interpretation was made prior to the visit. The evaluated community also gave feedback on how they found the evaluators; whether the questions helped them gain other insights and whether they agreed with their recommendations.

The evaluators of the first barangays went back to their own barangay and recommended some changes in the reports that they were to present to their evaluators based on what they experienced in the evaluation they conducted. Many of these were to come up with more specific information. For example regarding the yield of abaca, a fibre plant similar to banana, the trunk of which is sold: instead of just saying “increased yield of abaca”, they said: “state of abaca: from 700 gram (0.7 kilogram) per trunk, the yield is now from 0.9 to 1 kilogram per trunk.”

Step 5: After all the field barangay evaluations were completed, all the evaluators met again, this time to summarize all the findings and recommendations on the three components of governance, women and well being and agro-forestry.

The revised barangay accomplishment reports written in craft paper were put up for general viewing.

Step 6: Next steps: The tribal council leaders formulated new plans incorporating learnings and insights from their experiences over the past five years and from the participatory evaluation.

Step 7: A final workshop with the evaluators from the five barangays with a number of guests was held. Participants to this final evaluation synthesis were asked: What did they think about this process? Guests were invited to learn from the community.

The evaluation took about two months to complete.

Changes Observed

((What outcome/impact have been observed - positive/negative, intended/unintended))

The Participatory Evaluation of Ancestral Domain Management produced a long list of activities but more importantly the changes they have seen in their families and communities as well as their ancestral domain. In the farms they reported increased yields and increased crop density enabling them to significantly increase and diversify productive assets. They reported improved erosion control and soil fertility. At the household level, the couples reported greater collaboration and planning between husband and wife about farm, family and their future. They reported greater awareness of the importance of good planning and prevention of disease at the farm and household level.

The leaders reported that through the development efforts they had considerably increased their leadership competence:

- Kapwa approach of working through the tribal councils’ priorities. When a leader identified a problem, Kapwa provided training seminars and field trips and then asked them to draw up plans that they implemented.
- When they met problems in implementation they analyzed what went wrong and re-planned. They owned up to their shortcomings and applied the rules that they had formulated even when at times it was the leaders themselves who were in the wrong.
- As a result, the leaders’ skill and credibility with their community members increased tremendously. And in instances when the collective good became at risk because of a few tribal members, leaders learned the importance of stepping in and completing the tasks that these few did not complete.

- Leaders understood accountability when they became aware of what it meant to lead and be responsible for a position. If he/she could not be a leader and serve his or her community then he/she should not accept the position.
- Leaders appreciated the importance of participatory processes and why it was important to talk things over and truly come up with cooperative agreements.

People had learned a lot through the development project:

- Women had learned about their rights under the law. Women who used to hide a black eye now walked in public saying, "I am not the one who should be embarrassed because in fact my husband may be apprehended for beating me up."
- Women and men became partners in developing their farms, families and communities.
- People began to understand that development is a choice they make. As one leader said, "We just didn't think we could really be managers because we have very little formal education. But Kapwa has shown us that we can achieve anything we believe in just so long as we are willing to work hard until we achieve it."

Key challenges that were named by people: "What we still need to overcome"

- "We know that development is our right and we need to really ask our government to support our priorities and we should not stop until we meet our needs. We know that when we stop, we fail."
- "We should reach the other members of our community so that everyone can be part of development."
- "Tribal councils need to earn their own income so they can pursue other activities that they find important such as revival of traditional festivals. "
- "We need to send our children to school so they have more choices about the kind of life they can have."

Added Value of the Tools

((How did people think of the tools, how did they make use of them? This part is mainly descriptive.))

The people reflected on the process of evaluation and said that they had always been evaluated by others but never have they been evaluators before. They felt honoured to be a community evaluator. The process of internal assessment enabled the tribal councils to realize how much they had accomplished and at the same time identify the areas that needed further work. The assessment enabled the tribal leaders to see the spread effects of their adoption of other technologies resulting in impacts beyond the direct participants of the five year project.

The opportunity to visit the four other tribal communities enables them to see other challenges and other effective strategies that they had not applied.

The insights gained encouraged them to continue to be vigilant in transforming their communities by regularly and consistently assessing their performance vis a vis what they planned. They also realized that although they had helped many, there were still many members in their community that had not been assisted: for example no access to potable water, sanitation, family planning and agricultural extension.

Reflections for leaders and experienced M&E persons

Background

((What is the background to the application of the tools? What factors played a role in making it a success (or – partial – failure)? What did the facilitators aim at? What did they achieve?))

Kapwa Upliftment Foundation Inc. was founded in 1979 to uplift the lives of the poor and to nurture service to others. Kapwa is registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission as a non stock, nonprofit corporation. It has a seven member policy Board of Trustees who support the foundation and an Executive Director who manages the day to day affairs of the organization.

Projects assist communities living in deforested areas to access tenure and technology to address the twin problems of poverty and environmental degradation.

In 1994 Kapwa Upliftment Foundation Inc. was chosen by its NGO peers to become one of seven NGO members of the Protected Area Management Board of Mt. Apo Natural Park. It chairs the Tenure committee and works to help disseminate information on the different laws to promote co-management and to help address the needs of indigenous tribal and migrant communities living inside the park while protecting and conserving the rich biodiversity and headwaters of the watersheds.

Kapwa is advocating that national and local government policies recognize the realities of widespread occupancy and land use changes inside Mt. Apo Natural Park. Kapwa promotes active dialogue among affected communities to define rights, responsibilities and tenure arrangements for indigenous peoples and migrants in a protected area that is also the ancestral domain of three major ethnic groups.

Kapwa has been assisting the Bagobo Tagabawa tribal communities to gain recognition of their ancestral domain and to implement their Ancestral Domain Sustainable Development Plans. It aims to reduce poverty and improve the natural resource base on which the people rely for their livelihoods by developing the human resources of the communities to be able to address social, political, economic, environmental, cultural and peace-building needs for the development of the communities. It promotes the integration of participatory local governance and ancestral domain management in a protected area.

Benefit of the Tools

((What is the added value of the tools? What did people learn? Did they change their practice? What did the NGO learn? Has it adapted its practice since? This part is more analytical.))

The whole process evaluated several aspects although the general tools were to compare what the situation was in 2005 and what it was now. In the internal assessments the tribal leaders wanted to report a lot more than what had been planned and as they saw what others had included in their reports they wanted to add even more information. Coming up with the data, for example on beneficiaries and yields, was easier to document than it was to articulate or document the changes they knew they had undergone. Through the evaluation they found themselves leading the change they want and although they know they will make mistakes they know that if they stop and analyze they can better understand and become more aware of how to become successful and achieve meaningful outcomes. They can re-plan and achieve even more.

The concluding workshop enabled the guests invited to see how much had been accomplished based on plans that the community had formulated. It showed how the leaders persevered in raising resources from several government and non government

entities to reach many members of their communities. It showed how collective action enabled them to reach to almost all the groups/clans in their communities. It showed who were progressing and who still needed to be assisted even more. The inter area process allowed leaders from the five communities to compare and analyze how they could become even more effective themselves. The area visits showed different approaches that had been taken to address similar problems. Kapwa heard from the leaders what training seminars touched them; challenged and inspired them to serve. It re-affirms Kapwa's belief that people change when they are made aware that they can change what they want to change.

Lessons Learned

((What have we learned about the tools? What can be drawn as a general lesson for participatory M&E? What advice to give for people who want to apply the same tool?))

This could also refer to the 4 purposes of impact assessment.))

This participatory evaluation process was first used by Kapwa in 2009 with 8 tribal communities who also evaluated their ancestral domain management. The eight tribal communities were also asked to compare what it was like before and now and to state what had brought about the changes. They decided to evaluate only one community each and drew lots to determine who would evaluate who.

The results of the evaluation from the eight communities were difficult to summarize as the stories that came out were many and varied. Kapwa tried to delimit the aspects to be evaluated into the three sectors: governance, agroforestry, women and well being and facilitated a workshop to come up with a more structured and unified set of guidelines. Still the stories that they came to tell were very many and varied and made documentation challenging. We heard them attribute changes as influences from activities that Kapwa had facilitated. We heard many unintended effects (mostly positive) even from many we did not seek to influence such as youth projects that prior to the project conducted activities simply because they had a budget and not because they understood why they were youth leaders.

Kapwa wanted the tribal leaders to be able to integrate their plans with government and influence development planning. Perhaps many aspects of community life showed improvements even at the aspiration level as they began to think more programmatically rather than mere projects. They realized that the change that they want to bring about is the result of complex factors and took place over many, many years. If they want to transform barren mountains they start with how people think.

Purposes of Impact Assessment

((Rating is not on the tool itself. It is about the experience with the tool described in this example.))

The four purposes of impact assessment on a range: 1 (very little use) to 5 (very useful):

Purpose	Level	Rating	Reason for rating
Learning from experience	CBO, NGO	4	High learning effect, but only maybe once a year
Steering by NGO	NGO	3	Important information, but needs a group exercise, no automatic information to NGO management, and cannot be done very frequently
Empowerment of beneficiaries	CBO	5	Groups become aware and activated and gain confidence to set goals and assess their progress
Upward accountability	NGO	4	Validated information, but needs skills to aggregate. Acceptable for accountability only if the views of beneficiaries are accepted as sources of information.

Alma Monica A. de la Paz is Managing Director of Kapwa Upliftment Foundation.

References:

This description was written in the context of NGO-IDEAs:

www.ngo-ideas.net.

The four purposes of impact assessment are drawn from VENRO's, the German NGO umbrella body's, position paper "Quality before Proof":

<http://www.venro.org/628.html>