JICA 2001-A New Approach to fisheries and marine environment

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SUMMARY: The fisheries of many developing small Island countries are declining as a result of overfishing, illegal fishing, urban pollution and coastal erosion. Coastal communities are heavily dependent on these resources as a source of food and income. Loss of natural resources has a dramatic impact on their livelihoods. Additionally, the role of women in many fishing communities has been marginalized or neglected even though they could make significant contributions to social and economic development. In the past, JICA has emphasized the importance of technical development in its ODA, however, self-reliance, empowerment, leadership and responsibility taken by fishing communities must also take into account the social, cultural and anthropological aspects of recipient countries. Developing effective countermeasure strategies to fishery declines through JICA ODA, requires a shift in emphasis from technology-centered development to human centered development. This can be achieved through; (1) training programs that develop skills to design practical and realistic countermeasure strategies, (2) training programs aimed to empower women in fishing communities and (3) greater integration between training and other components of JICA technical cooperation schemes to increase recipient country persons involvement at all stages of ODA. This paper describes two case studies of fisheries development and suggests that sustainability can only be achieved through extensive field experience, rigorous analysis of social, economic and cultural issues and full participation of recipient country nationals. The South Pacific case study could be a valuable model for other regions.

KEY WORDS: JICA, fisheries, ODA, training, gender, human centered development

1. INTRODUCTION

JICA works in cooperation with developing countries to train individuals who can make a valuable contribution to their countries' efforts in nation building. JICA's training approach is focused on maximizing the contribution individuals and groups can make to resolve the problems confronting sustainable development. This paper describes two examples of how training plays a critical step in the sustainable development pathway and how it prepares recipient country nationals to take leadership roles in technical cooperation programs. It also discusses the need for a shift in "technology centered development" to human centered development" to achieve success in sustainable development projects.

2. BACKGROUND

The JICA objectives for technical cooperation in the fisheries and marine environment sectors are that it be driven at the recipient country level to achieve;

- Practical, realistic and achievable approaches to develop countermeasure solutions to achieve sustainable utilization of natural resources
- Transparency, flexibility and participatory

approaches in natural resource management policy

To achieve this requires greater integration of the different components of JICA technical cooperation schemes. Moreover, only recently has JICA begun to recognize the importance of social and cultural aspects of development with the first socio-economic baseline study for fisheries development projects carried out in 1990¹. Gender has yet to be a mainstream issue in the fishery sector. In 1999, the fisheries sector human resource allocations resulted in; 372 persons receiving training, 242 experts dispatched, 322 persons participated in study teams and 56 volunteers dispatched to fisheries in developing countries by JICA.

2.1. HUMAN CENTERED DEVELOPMENT

Training in JICA is divided into group and individual programmes carried out in Japan or developing countries. Group training involves around ten persons in a set curriculum and includes multinational and country/region-specific courses. Individual training is for counterparts to JICA experts. Group Training implemented outside Japan is called "Third Country Training Programme" or TCTP and has advantages in that

the trainees share similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds and come from similar environments. Japan based training is utilized for training in which Japan is renowned for its capability such as the fisheries and marine environment sectors.

In the past, the JICA Kanagawa International Fisheries Training Centre (KIFTC) training emphasized improvement of fisheries technology and resource management. However, between 1998 and the present, KIFTC shifted its emphasis away from “technology centered development” to “human centered development” in recognition of the importance of leadership, ownership, self reliance and gender parity as fundamental elements needed to achieve success. This included the introduction of a new seminar training program focused on gender issues (2000), the introduction of problem solving skills, participatory project planning management² (PCM) and integration of training into other technical cooperation schemes.

2.1.1. CASE STUDY – SOUTH PACIFIC FISHERY RESOURCES

Development of the fishing industry in the Pacific Island States has been severely constrained by the small local population, the limited coastal reef fishery resources, a large number of small islands spread over an extensive area. Illegal fishing and overfishing together with environmental degradation caused by coastal zone development and cutting down of mangrove forests has depleted fishery resources. Traditionally, fish is a major component in the diets of South Pacific Islanders. Over exploitation of these resources affects coastal communities who have no alternative source of livelihood and can also affect food consumption patterns as fish becomes more scarce and is replaced by alternative food sources altering diets and placing increased reliance on imported products.

Tourism increases represents both a threat to coastal areas due to pollution and erosion but also an opportunity for coastal fishers to generate income through work such as ecotourism. Clearly, there are needs for an integrated approach to coastal resource management that takes into account the problems from a variety of sectors and involves a broad range of stakeholders in the development process.

2.1.2. INTEGRATED COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TRAINING PROGRAM.

The objectives of this training course are; “to improve the strategic planning policy and management capabilities of personnel in industry and government that are involved in development and use of coastal resources in insular countries”. It achieves these objectives by providing participants with analytical tools for problem solving

(PCM Method), case-based learning seminars on the problems of managing natural resources, comparison of coastal field sites, hands-on experience in sustainable development activities and workshops where participants propose action plans for development of a specific resource sector.

Participants are invited from coastal fisheries, forestry, environment and tourism sectors and requested to prepare an illustrated review of the problems and constraints to development of their specific industry sector. Through site visits to various poorly managed and well-conserved areas, moderated workshops are held to identify the causes and effects of different resource management policies and activities. Technical lectures and discussions with key personnel assist in laying a foundation of “which actions or inactions lead to sustainable or unsustainable development”. Through group discussions, the perspectives of different stakeholders are clarified and through problem solving workshop, the causes and effects of problems are confirmed and action plans for development are constructed.

In September 1999, 14 senior government officers from the island countries of the Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean and Caribbean Sea participated in the six-week training course visiting two distinct subtropical island groups; (1) The islands in Okinawa Prefecture, where in some areas the higher populations, urbanization, tourism and industrial development have had a significant impact on the natural environment resulting in a loss of habitat, land and water pollution, loss of biodiversity and coastal erosion. Secondly, they visited Chichi-jima in the Ogasawara group, located 1000 km south of Tokyo and characterized by volcanic topography, limited coral reefs, low population and sub-tropical climate. A strong sense of conservation and a precautionary approach to island development has resulted in an all out effort by islanders to protect the region's natural beauty.

Participants learned how to identify the core problems and the cause and effect relationships within and between industry sectors. The participants action plans identified declining coastal fish resources as one of the most significant problems due to a combination of overfishing, illegal fishing, loss of nursery areas, lack of community participation, ineffective control of fishing activities as well as degraded water quality resulting from pollution and urbanization. Solutions proposed by participants included improving awareness of community in conservation, participation of stakeholders in resource management and the need to supplement failing resources through aquaculture and resource enhancement programs.

2.1.3. JICA FOLLOW UP ACTIVITY

JICA's strategic development plan for fisheries in the

South Pacific has a long history but only recently have action plans generated through training been used as a precursor to follow-up activities. In March 2000 JICA carried out a project formulation study for fisheries development to Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and Vanuatu³ to follow up on the action plans prepared by participants. A mission was also dispatched February – August 2001 to carry out a project planning study that resulted in the Preparation of a South Pacific Technical Cooperation Project titled “Fisheries Co-management support program 2002-2007”⁴.

The involvement of participants in the problem identification stage of project planning and to provide them with the tools for analyzing and designing countermeasure programs using Project Cycle Management PCM tools was an extremely significant two-way learning experience. Not only did it allow participants to solve their own issues, it also provided a solid base from which JICA could launch follow-up missions. Clearly, the synergy generated from training had a significant impact on follow-up studies and created the conditions for local ownership of project ideas and greater participation in the development process. The elements of the new technical cooperation project include the conceptual ideas developed in the training program and create the conditions for local ownership and partnering as the projects come on stream in 2002 (Figure 1).

2.2. CASE STUDY – STRENGTHENING WOMENS ROLE AND EMPOWERMENT IN FISHING VILLAGES

Of the 1.3 billion people living in conditions of poverty throughout the world, 70% are women. Assistance for women, equitable participation in ODA and distribution of benefits derived from projects are key factors in sustainable development.

To upgrade living standards, women need to generate additional income. This could be achieved through; fish processing, utilization of discards, collection of shellfish and seaweed, small-scale aquaculture, marketing and resource management. However, women also take responsibility for family and community activities such as child education, nutritional improvement and family planning. Therefore care needs to be taken so as to not impose too great a burden on women. This could be achieved by;

- Providing education in child care, sanitation and nutrition
- Developing facilities to ease domestic chores, e.g. collecting of household water and fuel
- Improving methods for food preparation and cooking
- Improving technologies and methods for field labor work

- Making women direct beneficiaries of training and extension services related to their economic and social needs and interests
- Ensuring equal legal rights to property and assets
- Ensuring that women have equitable access to credit
- Developing income generating enterprises
- Including women at all stages of project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- Encouraging women to participate in cooperative enterprises, community activities and decision making

2.2.1. STRENGTHENING WOMEN'S ROLE AND EMPOWERMENT IN FISHING VILLAGES TRAINING PROGRAM

This course is designed to strengthen capacity building for woman in fishing villages by applying gender responsive project management methodologies to planning implementation, and evaluation of projects. The course consisted of classroom-based seminars and workshops with field trips to Okinawa and Kagoshima Prefectures. Participants discussed (1) Income generation activities from fish processing and women's aquaculture, (2) How to manage and conserve coastal resources and (3) How to improve the living conditions of fishing villages. PCM to identify cause and effect of problems and preparing action plans for resolving the core issues.

Eight participants from government organizations and NGO's in the Philippines, Laos, Cambodia, China, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Nepal and Thailand participated in the November 2000 training program.

Although each participant was able to prepare an action plan for their particular fishery community based on analysis of their specific problems, the group did not benefit greatly from field visits and opportunities to observe role of women in Japanese fishing communities. Some of the factors participants noted were the lack of activity in the Japan coastal fishery, the aging fishery population and lack of change in fisher's income. Even though women members of Japan Fishery Cooperative Associations number 117000 and are instrumental in promoting fishery activities, it was concluded that Japan might not be a good model for achieving women's empowerment in developing country communities.

3. DISCUSSION

Sustainable livelihoods in tropical small islands are gravely threatened by declines in resource productivity associated with overfishing, coral mining, agricultural run off, deforestation and pollution. Sustainability can only be achieved through responsible resource utilization practices and effort diversification to decrease excessive pressures on resources. Aquaculture and tourism are

possible effort reduction strategies. Since fishing, aquaculture and tourism depend on the aquatic environment, an integrated approach to conservation and responsible utilization is required. The cross-sectoral approach to development was the basis of site visits to Okinawa and Ogasawara. Based on participant's own experiences and action plans, the cross-sectoral approach appears to be appropriate for small island development. However, it should be noted that the while the approach may be new, the data needed to justify this strategy is the result of lessons learned from the experiences collected over a relatively long time frame in the region (Figure 1).

The introduction of gender issues into JICA training is a new approach for KIFTC and the fisheries sector. However, the use of Japanese fishing villages as a viable and equitable model was constrained by problems inherent in the role women play in Japanese fisheries. The origins of these problems may be related to the lack of a gender perspective in Japanese fishing village development. For example, in the Agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors, Japanese women comprise nearly 71% of "unpaid family workers," and hold a disproportionately low number of management positions⁵. The lack of gender parity in the Japanese fisheries sector is an opportunity for two-way learning, in the sense that Japanese women in fishing villages, academics and others participating in the training can learn from the shared experiences of participants. This may result in significant improvements in the role of women in Japanese fisheries. Taking into consideration the views of participants and situation of the women's groups in Japan, JICA considers that its role in gender training should be modified as follows;

1. Emphasis should be placed in organizing seminars to assist the exchange of experiences and views of participants
2. Continued use of problem solving workshops to identify the cause and effects problems and development of realistic countermeasure plans
3. Greater emphasis on two-way learning, where Japanese women associations can benefit from participation in the training as a potential mechanism for improving the situation in Japan.
4. Constraints due to lack of data and field experience must be overcome by "in country" surveys such as Laos and the Philippines and site surveys with ex participants to collaboratively explore new gender projects and training opportunities such as TCTP.

Regarding training methodology, there are three key issues. Firstly, the introduction of practical problem solving workshops, project formulation skills (PCM) and the preparation of countermeasure action plans created a greater understanding of the causes, effects and inter relationships of a broad range of problems affecting

sustainable development. Secondly, the concept of bringing ideas to Japan, analyzing them as a core element

Figure 1 Activities that led to development of the 2002 – 2007 S. Pacific Co-management support program.

of training and designing draft action plans to be developed back in the home country were viewed as critical steps in the development spiral. In this sense JICA is the catalyst rather than the owner of ideas. Thirdly, the continued involvement of participants, JICA staff and lecturers in follow-up activities (Project formulation study – Project planning study missions) were noted by participants as true partnering and created a greater sense of involvement and team play in the development process.

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