

The power of media for promoting gender equity in Ethiopia

Responding to the demand for monitoring the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action, the Government of Ethiopia and IIRR, with financial support from the Royal Netherlands Embassy, have pursued the Gender in Leadership and Decision Making (GLDM) project since 2000. As a capacity development organization, IIRR has established multiple partnerships with national and local government agencies, NGOs and local communities for raising gender awareness and promoting gender equity in Ethiopia. One key partner in this effort has been the Ethiopia News Agency (ENA), the oldest and the largest national media agency and an important source of news for various print and electronic media, with its 37 branches serving over 60 million people throughout the country.

In order to develop capacities of ENA staff for gender sensitivity and competencies for promoting gender equity in the media and to promote gender equity within ENA's organizational structures and operations, the IIRR team in Ethiopia has organized and conducted a series of workshops and training courses for ENA staff.

Over a three-year period, ENA has shown positive results by establishing a gender sensitive news reporting system. The number of women journalists in decision making positions has



Media at work to raise gender awareness.

increased; gender sensitivity of journalists and media professionals in their media activities has been improved; and the ENA has published a series of research reports on gender and Ethiopian media.

Ato Dereje Gebre Meskel, a regional news chief editor says, "We have a responsibility as journalists to transform our editorial products so that they reflect issues in a gender sensitive way. We have to use our power and influence to challenge the stereotypes. Since (participating in) the workshop, I have become more aware and vigilant in the type of news I edit. And more than anything, these workshops have stirred a wave of new consciousness and outlook among the staff".

Gender and leadership development project goes to Ethiopia's schools

Traditionally, Ethiopian cultural values place a great expectation on male teachers in leadership positions and boys doing well in school. To bring about a change in attitudes of men and women, and to create greater self-esteem among women and girls, three schools in Addis Ababa have participated in the IIRR Gender Leadership and Decision Making project.

For the first time in the history of Tesfa Kokeb School a gender policy has been developed; women teachers have chaired meetings, assumed management positions and coordinated administrative activities of key departments.

Abynesh Tegena, an 8th grade student at this school said, "In grade 7, the teacher sometimes used to ask (high ranking boys) to prepare questions for the rest of the class to discuss. And for those of us (high ranking) girls, we used to prepare the questions but never had the courage to stand in front of the class and guide our classmates. Also, the boys would never let us do it. After the (gender) club was formed and after various workshops on gender equality, we are now confident enough to do so".

Linking gender and integrated water resources management

While women's heavy workloads and the lives of families and communities have been intricately linked with their access to and use of water, most water resource management programs have not adequately reflected gender considerations. To bridge this gap, the Gender and Water Alliance (GWA), a network of development professionals and organizations, conducted a training of trainers workshop in 2003 for participants from Europe and several developing countries from Asia, Africa and Latin America.



In an attempt to further promote gender mainstreaming in integrated water resources management programs and to test GWA's training package, IIRR and the Professional Environmental Service of the Universiti Putra Malaysia (PES/UPM) were selected by GWA to organize and conduct a one-week training course in Selangor, Malaysia in February 2004.

The 15 participants - nine women and six men - from Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Laos, Philippines,

Thailand and Viet Nam included representative from a number of IIRR's current program partners, i.e., the Center for Governance & Development Studies (CGDS) of Yunnan University in China, the Camarines Sur State Agricultural College in the Bicol Region of the Philippines, and the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), IIRR's heritage partner.

Through the use of participatory training techniques, innovative tools and field visits, participants were able to develop skills and knowledge for integrating gender training into the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of integrated water resources management programs. In IIRR's continuing program development work in gender & development, this training course has added value to its participatory and integrated development approach. The participation of IIRR's program partners from China and the Philippines has contributed to further strengthening those partnerships while adding new partners including the PES/UPM in Malaysia.



Participants analyzing training methods to encourage open dialogue and communication

IIRR training programs for 2004

Asia

Rural Development Management	May 3 - 21	Philippines
Policy Development and Advocacy	May 24 - 29 (and June - July for optional on-line course)	Philippines
Designing Development Training Systematically	August 2 - 13	Philippines
Sustainable Approaches to Community Health	August 23 - September 10	Philippines
Participatory Approaches to Agricultural Extension	September 6 - 24	Philippines
Participatory Action Research for Community Based Natural Resource Management	September 13 - 28	Thailand
Gender Mainstreaming: From Programmatic to Organizational Transformation	October 4 - 15	Philippines
Community-based Integrated Watershed Management	November 8 - 26	Philippines

Latin America (Courses will be conducted in Spanish)

Participatory Learning and Action	July 19 - 27 and November 22 - 30	Ecuador
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Africa

Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation	May 3-14	Uganda
Local CBO/NGO Organizational Development and Capacity Building	August 2-13	Uganda
Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation	September 27 - October 8	Kenya
Farmer-led Extension	November 1-16	Kenya
Local CBO/NGO Organizational Development and Capacity Building	November 22 - December 3	Kenya

Training of learners - IIRR and partners develop new course to meet emerging needs in Asia

IIRR, in collaboration with the Regional Community Forestry Training Center (RECOFTC) in Thailand, and with support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada, developed and conducted the first international training course on Participatory Action Research (PAR) for Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) in December 2003. Participants from Bhutan, China, Indonesia, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines and Sri Lanka, representing NGOs, government ministries, universities and research institutes, attended the course at IIRR's Y.C. James Yen Center in the Philippines.

The course was developed in recognition of the increasing need to explore new capacity development approaches and learning opportunities for CBNRM professionals and organizations. Reflecting on this issue recently, a Filipino villager said, *'They (CBNRM professionals) should (also) learn from mistakes and (from) our experiences.'*

As a follow-up to the course, the participants have agreed to document their experiences in applying PAR principles to their ongoing CBNRM activities in their home countries. IIRR will disseminate these documented experiences among organizations working with CBNRM throughout Asia.

IIRR and RECOFTC will offer the international course on an annual basis, rotating the training base each year between the Philippines and Thailand. The next international course in September 2004 will be held in Bangkok. The first customized PAR for CBNRM course will be conducted by IIRR and RECOFTC next month at the request of the Government of Bhutan.



Course participants involved in a role play exercise as researchers, development workers and farmers.

A learning alliance initiative to promote farmer participatory research

Over the past decade, IIRR and a number of national and international NGOs have individually and collectively promoted farmer research and tested approaches to farmer-led extension in the Andean zone of Ecuador.

With contributions from farmers, peoples' organizations, NGOs and members of the academic community, IIRR produced a manual of agro-ecological practices for farmers in 1995. Since then, farmer promoters trained by IIRR have conducted dozens of training sessions with men and women in their villages, and farmer facilitators have traveled to other communities to promote innovative approaches to organic and diversified farming. Trained farmers have conducted farmer-based research and experiments to improve farming practices and to increase food production and income. Farmer groups have established farmers' schools (*chakra kamaks*) and Farmer Research Committees known as CIALs in their local communities.

By collaborating with partner agencies and sharing information and lessons with one another, a number of local, national and

international NGOs including IIRR have been able to learn from one another and to expand the number of farmer schools and CIALs in the Andean zone of Ecuador.

Recognizing the added value of partnerships and networking, World Neighbors, the Instituto Nacional Autonomo de Investigaciones Agropecuarias (INIAP), the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) and IIRR have now formed a learning alliance to explore, share and disseminate good practices in farmer participatory research and approaches to farmer schools and farmer research committees in Ecuador and neighboring countries such as Peru, Bolivia and Colombia. Through discussions, knowledge fairs and meetings with farmers as well as a web-based learning platform, the learning alliance plans to foster innovations in farming practices, develop and test new approaches and further develop methods of farmer participatory research on a more sustainable basis.

IIRR-SIPA Columbia University Partnership for Research and Learning

Following a recent review of projects in Ecuador, the IIRR team in Latin America was pleased to note that the microfinance project completed in 2000 was still going strong. The number of borrowers had increased from a few hundred to 8,000 and the financial resource base of the cooperative had increased considerably. The IIRR team felt the need to conduct a study of the project as a concrete example of building sustainability in IIRR-assisted projects and to apply lessons from the project to further strengthen and expand the Institute's program in the region.

To conduct a review, IIRR has forged a research partnership with the School for International and Public Affairs (SIPA) at Columbia University, as part of its Economic and Political Development (EPD) program during the spring semester of 2003-2004. For a team of six graduate students participating in the EPD workshop on microfinance who are expected "to

act as consultants to international development projects", the opportunity to study the IIRR-assisted microfinance project has been exciting and challenging.

The objectives of the research project are to (1) conduct a review of microfinance literature; (2) conduct a survey of current microfinance projects in rural Ecuador in order to gain insights into the local contexts in which they operate; (3) document a brief history of the microfinance project and analyze lessons learned from the project; and (4) recommend an appropriate project design and methodology for expanding microfinance for the benefit of the rural poor in Ecuador.

The IIRR team has participated actively in the development of the research project and plans to use its findings for formulating a strategy for scaling up the project in Ecuador and other countries in the Andean zone as part of its medium-term plan.

Learning from what works and communicating what we learn

How are Ecuadorian farmers increasing their food security and family income through participatory research, farmer schools and micro-loans? How is a teacher in a rural school in the Philippines contributing to a malnourished child's education while ensuring that she has lunch each day? How are gender-clubs raising gender awareness among boys and girls while creating greater self-esteem among girls in schools of Ethiopia? How can IIRR best capture practical solutions to local problems of poverty together with local communities? How do we communicate applicable lessons from a village in Ethiopia with one in the Andean region of Ecuador, and more widely with the international development community?

To answer questions such as these, IIRR organized a workshop on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) in Karen, Kenya in February 2004, with financial support from the Ford Foundation. Regional colleagues from Africa, Asia and Latin America, came together with the IIRR Chair of the Board, President and Director of the U.S. Office, to review what works – and what does not – and why.

The team collectively identified problems and challenges in planning, monitoring and evaluating projects and programs and

discussed guidelines and methods of analysis and reporting on its field projects, training courses, and writeshops. The workshop provided an opportunity for IIRR to reflect on project results and significant changes in the lives of our community partners - the rural poor - and to challenge staff teams to clarify roles, responsibilities and coordinating mechanisms for communicating results and stories from our field work.

While IIRR recognizes the challenges of effective planning, monitoring and evaluation, the team has made a commitment to making its PME work more participatory, action-oriented, and with a focus on learning.

IIRR website: www.iirr.org

IIRR is a global development organization. The headquarters and the Regional Center for Asia are in the Philippines. The African regional center is in Nairobi, Kenya, and the Latin American regional center is in Quito, Ecuador. The annual report of IIRR is available upon request. Contributions may be sent to the U.S. office of IIRR and are tax deductible for U.S. taxpayers to the full extent allowed by law.

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