

Participatory Result and Impact Monitoring and Evaluation (PRIME); a new Approach and the Experiences of the Kalimantan Upland Farming Systems Development (KUF) Project in Indonesia

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Abstract

A new approach of Impact Monitoring and Evaluation was carried out by the Kalimantan Upland Farming Systems Development (KUF) Project in Indonesia. After some definitions about this participatory concept there will be presented the PRIME concept that was developed by the KUF project. This concept was adapted to the local circumstances and implemented in the year 1999 by a series of workshops conducted during a field phase. Some of the results of the field phase and the following consolidation workshop of PRIME are shown and discussed exemplary.

Keywords: Participatory Result and Impact Monitoring and Evaluation, practical experience in project work, agricultural sector

1 Background

In development projects all over the world the keywords Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) are well known and used in the project process since several years. In the past the M&E concept mainly serves the purposes to control resources, personnel, and finances. Furthermore for a legitimisation towards donors and superior offices. Mainly project external experts were involved in evaluation. The reason for M&E was mostly the accountability and to determine if funding should continue.

The concepts and approach to M&E has changed together with the development paradigm. The shift of the development paradigm towards equity and poverty alleviation which called for orientation towards social development projects also necessitated changes in procedures and approaches to impact assessment. Development as a 'process', needed alternate approaches to evaluation (*Durga, P.O., 1998*). The new approach of M&E is not only done to check if a process is in line with the project plan. It also checks if the assumptions and the original project plan are in line with what the situation requires and stakeholders want at present.

2 Definitions

Consequently the approach of Impact Monitoring and Evaluation (IM&E) changed towards “... a collaborative problem-solving process that involves all levels of users- local community members, government and community officials, project and program staff- in shared decision making” (*Narayan-Parker, 1993*). This conception is what can be called Impact Monitoring and Evaluation, but can also be used for activity monitoring, result monitoring or monitoring of assumptions.

Apart from participation the term impact in this conception is very important. Impact is a long term change in attitudes, behaviour, skills and capabilities of the target group. A change in their economic, social, cultural, ecological and institutional situation achieved through a sequence of effects resulting from different activities initiated by a project or program. They may be intended or unintended and may be discernible during the project/program period or visible only after completion of the project implementation (*Durga, P.O., 1998*). Hence impact is beyond the control of project activities, it is what a project wishes to influence and change.

To make measurements in Impact Monitoring and Evaluation possible indicators are needed. Indicators describe what the project results, purpose, goals and assumptions exactly mean and how to recognise them, when they have been achieved. Indicators give information on the level of achievement and the projects criteria for success. The consequence is; each project has to draw up its own indicators, depending on the activities, results, purposes and goals that each project has or would like to reach.

3 Methods

Under this theoretical background it should be mentioned clearly that: “There is no universal procedure- monitoring must be adapted to local circumstances” (*Herwig, K., et al., 1998*). The PRIME (Participatory Result and Impact Monitoring and Evaluation) concept that was developed by the KUF project is also an adapted concept at the local circumstances and the project topics in the current situation of Indonesia.

3.1 Project Description

The Kalimantan Upland Farming Systems Development Project (KUF) is an Indonesian project implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and supported by Germany through GTZ. The project implementation started in May 1991 and is presently in its third phase, that will end in April 2000. The project working areas are three Provinces of Kalimantan; namely West, South and East Kalimantan where pilot districts are located. For the third project phase the overall goal is defined as: farm households in upland areas in Kalimantan manage their farming in a sustainable and more productive way and are oriented towards agri-business. The project purpose is: agriculture development in upland areas is conducted more effectively by government institutions and community based organisations and is supported by the private sector.

Anticipated project outputs are:

- Output 1: Refining integrated and participatory methods for information generation and for agricultural planning.
- Output 2: Compiling and utilising information KITs (location-specific information) on improved and sustainable agricultural technologies.
- Output 3: Enabling agricultural extension centres to implement a farming systems-based and demand driven extension approach.
- Output 4: Qualifying partner organisations to utilise self-help development concepts to promote commercially oriented farmer groups.

3.2 PRIME Concept Development and Implementation

The PRIME concept was developed in its first stage during a one week workshop in 1997. The main idea introduced was to work out “activity – results – effects – impact” chains. The guiding question in establishing impact chains was: what were the expected **results** from the *planned activities*; what would be further anticipated medium-term causes or **effects** induced by the results and lastly, what would be the expected long-term consequences, or **impact**. During the workshop impact chains were developed for all project activities, however, not yet specified in quantity and quality by indicators.

For determining indicators field data had to be collected and discussed with the various stakeholders over the following half a year’s time in a second stage. In 1998 project staff got together again. They reviewed and refined the impact chains and completed them with indicators. During the following months the indicators were monitored and compiled in an annual project report.

A particular event was organised in April 1999 in a third stage when through the facilitation of external moderators a series of workshops was organised in which hundreds of stakeholders were involved to assess project achievements in a highly participatory way. Their assessment was based on comparing the achievement of indicators versus plan (“realisation”). A format for a matrix (see below) was developed giving room for further explanations concerning “supporting factors”, “constraints”, “conclusions”, “recommendations” and “lessons learned”. Indicators were grouped into three categories: result indicators under project outputs, medium-term indicators under project purpose and long-term indicators under project goal level. In order to insure visualisation the matrix was copied on large sheets of paper (2m x 1m) and stakeholders were facilitated to write their ideas on metaplan cards (20cm x 10cm) . Two months after this field event main findings were discussed and conclusions drawn up in a consolidation workshop which included main important partners on project implementing and decision making level.

4 Results

The first stage was the development of the impact chain, concerning result, purpose and impact level. An exemplary impact chain is shown below (see table 1).

Table 1: Example of an Impact Chain

0 Activities	<p>According to project plan of operation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop new extension methods and skills • To conduct training courses • To support the introduction of new methods and skills
1 Direct results (short-term outcomes)	<p>Project outputs (under project control)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manuals on new extension methods and skills are available • No. of training courses conducted • No. of people trained • No. of extension centres supported in applying new methods and skills
2 Effects (medium-term outcomes)	<p>Project purpose (use of project outputs, change of way of acting)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local organisations adopt and apply new methods and skills • Extension workers change their behaviour and apply new skills
3 Impact (medium to long-term outcomes)	<p>Project goal (change of ways of acting of performance of institutions and organisations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension service delivery to farmers is oriented towards the needs of farmers and requirements of local conditions

For the field teams matrices were drawn up, which were based on the indicators that belongs to the result, purpose or goal level. For each indicator the realisation, quality, supporting factors, obstacle factors, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned were the basis for the discussions in the workshops (see table 2).

Table 2: Matrix drawn up for Field Discussions

Indicators for:	Realisation	Quality	Supporting Factors	Constraints	Conclusions	Recommendations	Lessons learned
Result							
Purpose							
Goal							

The detailed results of PRIME will not be presented here, because of too much information. There will be some results/recommendations shown exemplarily. The **conclusions from the field phase** were, for example:

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Session: Participatory Knowledge and Technology Development

It is felt that the 79 indicators for 4 outputs are too many to achieve in the existing time period. Indicators are very detailed, and are open to a wide range of interpretations. Indicators are weighted differently, in terms of reflecting the desired changes (results).

During field visits in South Kalimantan, it was clearly evident that farmer groups receiving routine support from NGO staff were more stable, dynamic and further developed. But NGO staff still need to do much more if the farmer groups are to be expected to be able to develop by themselves. It is very likely that farmer groups will cease if the support does not continue.

Out of the several contributions and impacts that were revised in the consolidation workshop, following some examples.

As one of the **obstacles** in project implementation there was found that the philosophy of participatory extension is still difficult to implement because the Indonesian apparatus has been running a top down system of extension for so long and extension programs are still linked with top down projects.

One of the **direct results** a benefit of being involved in the KUF project. For example a change in knowledge, attitude and skills of the extension workers, like: they are more skilled in facilitating group development and monitoring field schools.

Another **direct result monitored by the participants** is that new methods of managing extension service have been used to revitalise this service. These new methods have also spread and are being used in other regions, because they are felt to be beneficial.

The **unintentional impacts** were mostly influenced by the Indonesian economical crisis and the consequences (Indonesia was severely hit by the Asian crisis in 1997). As a result of the crisis, the Indonesian government set up an emergency agricultural program in 1998. KUF was partly involved in the implementation of this program in South Kalimantan, this was an unintentional positive impact.

Only one **negative impact** came to light during discussions in the region, this was about the use of the fertiliser rock phosphate, which was supported in output 2. Even though farmers felt that using rock phosphate was beneficial, they could not get hold of it in the market. The supply could not be guaranteed, because rock phosphate is an imported product. Due to the economic crisis the imported commodities get more expensive, this was also the case with rock phosphate.

From the **development impacts** only one should be presented here, this is related to gender aspects. Attention has been given to gender related issues, which have long been integrated into the KUF project. Concrete activities to integrate gender perspectives were carried out in outputs 2 and 4. Sometimes it is felt that understanding of gender perspective is still lacking and remains at the stage of women in development, this means (i.e.) the number of women involved in the project (body counting). Participants in PRIME were aware that gender needs more attention. It is proposed that during the remainder of the project, gender perspective should be introduced into all project instruments, not just some.

Concerning future updating of plans, PRIME participants agreed to focus on the remainder of the project period up to April 2000 and a possible post project period. For the remainder project period, it was agreed that outputs, purpose and goals should remain the same. Concerning post project activities, more focus would be placed on efforts to ensure that the process of dissemination and handing over goes ahead smoothly.

5 Discussion

A M&E concept generally should check if the assumptions and the original project plan are in line with what the situation requires at present. It can be said that the development instruments produced by KUF are focused on participation and empowering farmer groups. These elements are similar to the sense of democratisation and the political change in Indonesia. This means the aspirations of the stakeholders are in line with the original project plan and that the plan still make sense. But it seems that this correspondence between project plan and actual situation is due to the political change in Indonesia. Without these changes the instruments developed by KUF may be not of so much interest for the counterparts or related institutions. Before the political changes the Indonesian government was more working with top-down approaches, not with bottom-up instruments, like participation and empowering farmer groups.

One of the problems was concerning the indicators. The participants mentioned in the field phase, that the indicators were too detailed and too many (79 indicators) as basis for the discussions. But this is not very surprising, because the elaboration of the indicators was mostly done by the GTZ project staff and the KUF counterparts were not so much involved. For further action in the field of PRIME there should be revised indicators used as basis for debates.

The PRIME activities also brought out concrete results up to the level of recommended action for the KUF management. Also for a potential post project phase, concrete activities were planned during the consolidation workshop. So it can be concluded there were very constructive and project related outcomes of the PRIME activities. Now it should be observed if these recommendations from the PRIME activities are really taken into consideration for the further project planning. If the PRIME results are not taken into consideration there will be no impact for the project out of these activities.

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