Moving from information dissemination to community participation in forest landscapes

How development organizations in Asia and the Pacific are using participatory development communication approaches

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

RECOFTC
THE CENTER FOR PEOPLE AND FORESTS

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Acronyms

APFCN	Asia-Pacific Forest Communication Network
DENR	Department of Environment & Natural Resources, Government of the Philippines
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FPIC	free, prior and informed consent
IP	indigenous people
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KII	key informant interview
K2F	Kids to Forest Programme
NR	Nature Reserve
NTFP	non-timber forest products
NTFP-EP Asia	Non-Timber Forest Products - Exchange Programme for Asia
PDC	participatory development communication
PRA	participatory rural appraisal
PAR	participatory action research
RECOFTC	Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific
TOT	training of trainers
SFM	sustainable forest management
SPC	Pacific Community

Acknowledgments

Executive summary

Traditionally, in the context of environment and natural resources management, many communication efforts have focused on the dissemination of technical information to end-users who were expected to adopt them. Development practitioners were trying to 'push' their products on communities in order to receive community commitment to their development initiatives. Further, when planning communication strategies, many projects tend to take a very broad problem as a starting point (a declining forest, for example) and then move right into planning communication activities (for example, information sessions, awareness campaigns). The result is that the target is often missed and despite all the activities undertaken the problem remains unaddressed.

Participatory development communication (PDC) takes a different approach. It suggests a shift in focus from informing people with a view to changing their behaviours to facilitating exchanges between various stakeholders. These exchanges help the stakeholders to address a common problem or implement a joint development initiative.

PDC is a systematic process using participatory techniques and communication media (such as radio, newspapers, TV, social media) to empower communities to participate in the development process, enable them to take the lead on its activities and use the learning generated to improve their livelihoods. The purpose of PDC is to seek sustainable social change by engaging and empowering relevant stakeholders (FAO, 2014). At the heart of PDC and other participatory research and development approaches is people's meaningful participation and empowerment.

This paper offers a brief overview of the basic and practical steps involved in the PDC process to assist sustainable forest practitioners and communication officers to adopt a PDC approach in their work. The paper then reviews the PDC components of six case studies promoting sustainable forest management in Asia and the Pacific. Each project was conducted in 2015–16 and included a primary objective of influencing 'community awareness and attitudes' towards sustainable forest management.

While the case studies do not offer examples of the complete PDC approach, they highlight how sustainable forest management projects in the Asia-Pacific region are moving away from one-way information dissemination toward using two-way communication approaches and tools to promote community participation in forest decision-making.

1. Introduction

Policymakers, governments and international organizations are increasingly recognizing the urgent need for the forestry sector to improve communication capacities and activities across countries and regions. There is a growing appetite for a more strategic approach to strengthen the ability of forest-related organizations to communicate effectively. The 24th session of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission, held in China in 2011, recommended the establishment of a Forestry Communications Working Group, under the auspices of the Commission. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) responded with the creation of the Asia-Pacific Forestry Communication Network (APFCN). The group has conducted capacity development, training, experience-sharing events, and developed joint communication products with the objective to make foresters more effective in their communication.

This document reviews the PDC components and approaches of six case studies that included a primary objective of influencing 'community awareness and attitudes' towards sustainable forest management. The case studies were developed following a joint RECOFTC and FAO workshop on 12–15 May 2015 to improve the capacities of forestry communication officers from governments and NGOs to plan, develop and facilitate participatory development processes in building and implementing more effective communication strategies.

The purpose of this review is to inform and stimulate thinking on the range of possible ways PDC can be included in forest projects and to provide good practice guidelines for the communication components of projects in the field. This publication is aimed at communication officers, project officers and anyone from non-government organizations (NGOs), civil society, government, United Nations and academia working on forest communication programmes and projects in the Asia-Pacific region.

2. A participatory development communication framework

Guy Bessette[1]

Traditionally, in the context of environment and natural resources management, many communication efforts focused on the dissemination of technical packages towards the end-users who were expected to adopt them. Researchers or development agents wanted to 'push' their products or knowledge to communities to receive community commitment to their development initiatives. Not only did these practices have little impact, but they also ignored the need to address conflicts or policy gaps.

What is participatory development communication (PDC)?

PDC is a systematic process based on the one hand on participatory processes, and on the other hand on communication media (such as theatre, posters, radio, print media, video or TV, social media, traditional media) and interpersonal communication to empower communities to participate in the development process, enable them to take the lead of its activities and use the learning generated to act on development issues that concern them.

Participatory development communication takes a different approach. It suggests a shift in focus from informing people with a view to changing their behaviours or attitudes to facilitating exchanges between various stakeholders. These exchanges help the stakeholders to address a common problem or implement a joint development initiative.

This approach aims to address the fact that many failures in forest management have occurred because local people were marginalized from decision-making, and the benefits from forest use bypassed them in favour of outside interests. The result has been drastically declining natural forests, entrenched poverty and widespread, sometimes violent, conflict. Throughout the region, governments, civil society and the private sector are increasingly recognizing that the meaningful participation of local people is essential for sustainable forest management and for securing environmental services, such as biodiversity conservation and carbon storage.

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[1]   Guy Bessette is formerly a senior program specialist for the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and author of Involving the community: a guide to participatory development communication (Bessette, 2004) and People, land and water: participatory development communication for natural resource management. (Bessette, 2006).

The focus is not on information to be disseminated by experts to end-users. Rather, it is on horizontal communication processes that enable local communities to identify their development needs and the specific actions that could help to fulfil those needs, while establishing an ongoing dialogue with the other stakeholders involved (e.g. extension workers, researchers and decision-makers). The main objective is to ensure that the end-users learn together as they gather enough information and knowledge to carry out their own development initiatives, evaluate their actions and recognize the resulting benefits.

With participatory development communication, researchers and practitioners become facilitators in a process that involves local communities and other stakeholders in the resolution of a problem or the achievement of a common goal. For many natural resource management researchers and practitioners, this is a new role for which they have not been prepared.

The following framework proposes 18 steps in planning, implementing and evaluating the PDC process. This should not be seen as a fixed methodology and has to be adapted to each different context and situation. The different steps in the process should be seen rather as milestones in the process of using communication for facilitating people's meaningful participation and empowerment.

Components of a participatory development communication strategy

Best practices in natural resource management research and development point to situations in which community members, research or development team members and other stakeholders jointly identify research or development parameters and participate in the decision-making process. This process goes beyond community consultation and participation in activities that are identified and led by researchers or programme managers. In best case scenarios, the research or development process itself generates a situation of empowerment in which participants transform their view of reality and are able to take effective action.

Participatory development communication seeks to reinforce this process. It empowers local communities to discuss and address natural resource management practices and problems and to engage other stakeholders in building an improved policy environment.

The following 18 steps presented here can be grouped into three main phases. The first phase of the process consists of understanding the situation, establishing a relationship with the community and researching the issue on which the intervention will focus. The second phase consists of formulating and developing the communication strategy that will facilitate and accompany the development initiative. Lastly, phase three consists of validating the strategy with the community and organizing its implementation.

COMPONENTS OF A PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Phase 1
Understanding, relating, researching

1. Clarifying the mandate and the intervention

2. Developing a prior understanding of the local setting (situational analysis or preliminary research)

3. Establishing a relationship and negotiate a mandate with a local community

4. Setting the goal: Involving the community in the identification of a problem, its potential solutions, and the decision to carry out a concrete initiative

5. Identifying the key stakeholders concerned by the identified problem and initiative and learning from them: participatory communication appraisal, stakeholder analysis, SAGA analysis (social and gender analysis), KSAP analysis, analysis of communication resources, social network analysis

6. Identifying other stakeholders and possible partners concerned by the identified problem and initiative

Phase 2
Formulating and developing the strategy

7. Identifying and formulating communication objectives

8. Identifying key messages, content and topics

9. Selecting appropriate communication tools, and media

10. Facilitating partnerships and establishing agreements

11. Identifying the communication materials and activities to develop

12. Planning the pre-testing of materials

13. Planning participatory monitoring & evaluation

14. Planning the documentation

15. Defining participation modalities at each step of implementation, monitoring and evaluation

16. Planning the sharing and utilization of results

Phase 3
Validating and organizing

17. Validating the whole strategy with the community

18. Producing a communication plan to implement the strategy

Dr. Guy Bessette (2016)

Photographs: Winifredo Dagli, Juvy Leonarda Gopela, Ma. Stella C. Tirol. Ricarda B. Villar

Phase 1: Understanding the situation, establishing a relationship with the community and researching the issue on which the intervention will focus

Step 1. Clarifying the mandate and the intervention

Researchers and development agents do not come to work with a community in a void. They are employed by organizations that have their own objectives and visions. Often, the mandate is fixed and the intervention already set. For example, a researcher is sent to introduce a given technology, a development agent to help in better organizing the community, etc. In many occasions, the intervention has been defined through a development project that has its own objectives and time frame.

Taking this reality into account, and considering that participatory development communication calls for a community to set its own objectives, and is also a process that requires more time, it is important that the development organization clarifies the mandate and the intervention and ensures a margin of manoeuvrability to accommodate the community's objectives.

Step 2. Developing a prior understanding of the local setting

Researchers and practitioners should develop a prior understanding of the local setting before going to the field and conducting formal meetings with a given community. Without such prior knowledge, it is often very difficult to build a sound understanding of the situation, even by conducting participatory rural appraisal (PRA) activities.

Hence the identification of relevant sources of documentation and resource people and/or organizations that know the community very well should be the first step to be considered.

The following background information and secondary data will need to be collected and analysed:

- The different stakeholders involved with the project or the intervention
- The institutional and policy environment
- History of previous or on-going interventions with the same community
- Potential partners and available resources

In addition, when several communities are involved, the manner, order and time necessary in approaching them must also be considered. The schedule should take into consideration the working and seasonal calendars of the different communities. The difficulties of access to some communities, especially during the rainy season, should also be considered, since this will have a direct effect on the amount of time researchers and practitioners will have to work with the communities.

Facilitating communication and community participation first depends on a thorough understanding of the local setting in which the researcher or development practitioner wants to work. This also includes gathering information and knowledge related to the problem corresponding to the specific issue of the researcher or the development practitioner.

Any intervention happens in a temporal dimension. So, it is important for the researcher or the development practitioner to understand that their action is connected in a certain way with a given context of past and present development initiatives. Those initiatives may be past or present projects led by NGOs or international organizations, but they can also be local initiatives developed by community groups and organizations. The knowledge of these interventions and of the other actors involved in these will be very useful, not only to develop potential synergies but also to understand the attitudes of community members and other stakeholders toward the "new" initiative.

In particular, the following questions will need to be answered:

- What is the history of that local community?
- Who are the different groups composing it and what are the main characteristics of those groups and of the relations between them?
- What is its social, political and administrative organization? How does this local community relate to the different orders of authority at the local, regional and national level? What are the major power relations and existing or latent conflicts in the community?
- What are the main socio-economic activities?
- What is known about health and education issues in the community?
- What are the main development problems and the main development initiatives?

This general or situational analysis will lay the groundwork for the rest of the intervention.

Step 3. Establishing relationships and negotiating a mandate with a local community and other stakeholders

As soon as a researcher or development practitioner first contacts a local community to establish a working relationship, that person becomes a communication actor. The way in which s/he approaches the local community, understands and discusses the issues, and collects and shares the information involves methods of establishing communication with people. The way in which communication is established and nurtured affects how people feel involved in the issues and how they participate, or not, in the research or development initiatives at issue.

Within this framework, it is important to promote a multidirectional communication process, emphasizing participation and inclusivity. Many researchers and practitioners still perceive community members as beneficiaries and future end-users of research or development interventions' results.

Even if most people recognize that the one-way delivery of technologies to end-users simply has little impact, the shift in attitudes and practices is not easy. For this shift to happen, one must recognize that community members must be drivers in the research and development process. Therefore, approaching a community also means involving people and thinking in terms of stakeholder participation in the different phases of the research or development process. Building mutual trust and understanding is a major challenge at this stage and will continue to be so during the entire period of interaction between researchers or practitioners and the community. The development practitioner, in his-her capacity as communication actor, must be transparent regarding the mandate and the intervention, listen and cultivate trust with the community.

In a practical way, establishing a relationship may take some time. Before conducting a formal community meeting, the project team should contact the local authorities and have many non-formal exchanges with community members. In some cases, immersion might be indicated. Often identifying a community member who has the community's trust can guide the team.

Step 4. Setting the goal: Involving the community in the identification of a problem, its potential solutions, and the decision to carry out a concrete initiative

A traditional approach for many researchers and practitioners is to come to a community with a problem and possible solutions already identified. With participatory development communication, the researcher or development practitioner becomes a facilitator of a process that involves local communities and other stakeholders in identifying and addressing a problem to achieve a common goal.

To achieve this, it is necessary to move from the problem and solutions as seen from the point of view of the project or the organization that is sponsoring the intervention to the point of view of the community. How do they perceive the problem? What are their ideas of possible solutions?

Often, there is also a temptation to jump directly from the desired goal (for example, resolving a conflict) to an action (for example, an awareness campaign) without looking closely at the underlying causes of the problem (for example, the lack of an adequate quantity of a given natural resource for all local inhabitants). The process should bring people to:

a) identify a priority **problem**
b) understand its **causes**
c) identify possible **solutions**
d) decide what **action** to take
e) and identify the **role of communication** to support the action

It is useful to stress that this does not happen during the course of a single meeting with community representatives. Time is needed for this process to mature. During this phase, it is important to be attentive to the power relations in the community, which will affect the prioritization of problems. Sometimes, a development problem identified by a community can reflect the priority of an influential person, or group of people, of that community only (a chief, a religious leader, an opinion leader, a male-dominated group, etc.). It is fundamental at that level to ensure the process remains truly participatory and is not hijacked.

Understanding the causes of a problem often requires not only common local knowledge but also specialized knowledge. It can be someone from the community holding appropriate local knowledge, or an external specialist contributing with more technical knowledge. The recourse to a local or external specialist in discussing the causes and consequences of a given problem and in identifying its potential solutions is quite important. Many problems and questions related to natural resource management are so complex that a deficit in information at that level often leads to bad decisions. Increasing the accuracy of information in a discussion and facilitating its sharing and understanding is an important issue in the process of involving the community.

Once the development problem and its causes have been identified, the next step is for the community to see if there are some possible solutions or a set of actions to address the problem and decide if they can act on it. As noted earlier, there are some things that communities can do by themselves, with their own resources and then there are cases where other people must be involved, or where there are certain conditions that must first be assembled. Finally, there are things that local communities cannot control directly (policies and laws, for example) and which necessitate the implementation of a complex decision-making process. Again, in identifying possible solutions and actions, it is important to bear in mind the real constraints associated with this enterprise and to keep objectives realistic and achievable.

Different techniques that one can use include participant observation, informal contacts with community members, focus group discussions, key informant interviews, the problem tree, key informal interviews, PRA techniques and bringing in technical expertise.

Introduction to two techniques frequently used in participatory development communication: Key informant interviews and focus group discussions

Key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions are two examples of common techniques that can help facilitate meaningful participation of local people in a development initiative, so that local people are not marginalized from decision-making, and to prevent benefits from forest use bypassing local people in favour of outside interests. They are briefly described below.

Key informant interview

A key informant interview involves a one-on-one interview with individuals who are likely to be knowledgeable or have strong opinions about the issue on hand.

This technique is useful to collect data without having to organize a group discussion, to discuss sensitive topics or to limit the possible influence of other participants. Unlike other kinds of interviews or surveys, where the interviewer fills in answers to a questionnaire, it enables him/her to immediately process the answers given by the participant and orient the interview accordingly. KII is a probing technique which involves following up on specific points, by asking as many questions as necessary to get a good understanding of the issue.

The instrument used is a topic guide, which serves as the reference in probing the issues with the respondent. Questions are usually open-ended to enable the respondents to answer in different ways (FAO, 2014).

An important caveat to consider is that many community members approached in the process of collecting information, especially poor farmers, will not speak their mind in response to the questions they are being asked, but say what they think the researcher or development practitioner wants to hear. Hence validating the information and developing strategies adapted to specific groups are especially useful. For example, there may be more chances in getting reliable information through a KII with poor farmers if the KII is led by a farmer rather than by an outsider from the city.

Focus group discussion

Focus group discussion involves bringing together a group of stakeholders to talk about a specific topic. It takes advantage of group dynamics and allows respondents to be guided by a skilled facilitator to explore issues in depth (FAO, 2014).

Focus groups should include a small number of people (7–10). Participants should be selected according to their gender and age, occupation, representativeness, etc. In most cases, they should compose a homogenous group. For example, one must be careful not to have authorities or strong opinion leaders in the same group as women farmers.

The group interaction facilitated by such a focus group discussion generally stimulates richer responses and allows new and valuable thoughts to emerge. It demands a strong facilitator to manage the group discussion and give everyone a chance to speak.

The technique demands the production of a discussion guide, which is quite similar to the topic guide used in key informant interviews. The guide lists the questions that will structure the course of discussions. As with the KII technique, the facilitator will start with the questions but immediately process the answers given by the participants and orient the interview accordingly.

Example of a topic or discussion guide

Objective: to understand participants' perceptions of the key challenges of development in the forestry context and what communication can or cannot do.

1. What is your experience in working in development in the forestry context?
2. What are some of the key challenges you encounter in your work?
3. How do you try addressing these challenges?
4. What is your experience in using communication in this context?
5. What do you think communication can or cannot do?

Once the process has been concluded and a decision has been taken by the community on an initiative to address the problem and implement possible solutions, the next step is to identify what communication can do to support the initiative decided by the community.

It can be in terms of knowledge or information to share, skills that will be needed, attitudes to develop or practices to encourage.

Step 5. Identifying the key stakeholders concerned by the identified problem and initiative, and learning from them

At this stage, the research team or the development practitioner needs to identify the different community groups or categories of people concerned with the problem identified and a set of actions that the community will implement to address it. This entails:

• Identifying categories of key stakeholders
• Approaching each group in a specific way
• Deepening knowledge and understanding of each group

The main criterion is to identify the various categories of persons who are most affected by the problem or can contribute to its solution. Categories may be based on different factors such as age, gender, language, ethnicity or other specific social factors, livelihood or socio-professional categories (and periods of availability), income, educational level, localization, culture, values or religion, behaviour or common interests.

For example, in the case of forest management, concerned groups can include not only youth, women or workers from a logging company, but may also include a group of people who protect a sacred area of the forest, traditional pharmacologists, a group of people living on the edge of the forest and who "clean" the forest by collecting dead fuelwood, a group collecting wood for charcoal making, and so on.

Before identifying a communication objective(s), it is necessary to collect information on key elements from each identified group such as:

• Number of people in this category of stakeholders in the community
• Physical characteristics - age, gender, etc.
• Main occupation
• Gender characteristics in the community related to communication
• Ethnic and geographic background
• Language and habits of communication
• Socio-economic characteristics - income, education, literacy, etc.
• Season or time of the day when they are more available for communication activities
• Material setting for meetings
• Cultural characteristics - traditions, values, beliefs, etc.
• Knowledge, attitudes and behaviour, with respect to the development problem to be addressed through communication

While doing this work, other stakeholders may need to be identified who, although not directly affected, have the capacity to provide assistance in resolving the problem or in conducting the planned activities (or hindering efforts).

Learning from stakeholders

Social and gender analysis

In identifying the different groups, it is necessary to pay special attention to social and gender dimensions.

The socio-economic composition of a community determines how a community engages or not, and in what way, with each other. Power dynamics influence interests, needs, perceptions and engagement. It is important to qualify each group in relation to their power status in the community.

Another aspect of social analysis is the identification of various subgroups or networks of individuals and groups in the community who share social contacts, ideas and visions, resources and power. This is often referred to as a social network analysis.

Gender is also a key determinant. In every setting, the needs, social roles and responsibilities of women and men are different. The degree of access to resources and of participation in decision-making processes may also be different between women and men. The way they will view a common problem or potential solutions is also very different. The same is true for young people of each gender. There is often a sharp distinction between the roles and needs of girls and of older women, or between older men and young people's perceptions of the same problem. Consequently, their interests and needs are different, the way they see things are different, and their contributions to development are different.

It is important to distinguish between gender roles in each of the specific groups and not to build separate categories of "women" and "young people". Many researchers and development practitioners at this stage will have the tendency to identify groups such as farmers, foresters, fishermen, women, young people, etc. that is a mix of gender and socio-professional roles. Such categorization is not very productive as there are women and young people in each of these socio-professional categories and their roles, needs and perceptions are often different from those of men. Each specific group has its own characteristics and these must be considered in any communication action. In the same way, each group will be concerned with a given development problem in different ways.

Analysis of the communication context and resources

The local communication context also demands some attention, both in terms of existing communication patterns and local resources. For example, the following questions should be answered:

- What are the effective interpersonal channels of communication in use in the community?
- What views are expressed by opinion leaders or exchanged by people in specific places?
- What local associations and institutions do people use to exchange information and points of views?
- What modern and traditional media does the community use?
- What media and communication facilities exist in the community?

Knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices (KSAP)

Another key dimension of stakeholder analysis is to identify for each specific group the levels or awareness; main attitudes; local knowledge and knowledge gaps; existing practices and behaviours; beliefs, customs, religious and cultural characteristics, etc. in relation with the identified problem and set of actions. This part of the analysis is sometimes referred to as a KSAP analysis.

This information will help in defining the objective and learning content of the communication strategy. It will tell us what each stakeholder should know, or be able to do, or what attitude she/he would need to contribute to addressing the problem and set of actions identified at the beginning of the process. It will also help in understanding factors such as resistance to change and the influence of local customs, habits, and taboos in relation with the identified problem. And finally, it will provide a baseline that will be useful when monitoring and evaluating the intervention.

Identifying the local knowledge associated with natural resource management practices is also part of this analysis. It should be linked with two other issues - the validation of that knowledge and the identification of modern and scientific knowledge that could reinforce it. Specific local knowledge or practices may be well suited to certain contexts. In other contexts, it may be incomplete or have little real value. Sometimes, specific practices may have been appropriate for previous conditions, but these conditions may have changed. This emphasizes the importance of validating common local knowledge against scientific evidence through discussions with local experts or elders, as well as community members. It may also prove useful to blend modern knowledge with local practices to render the latter more effective or more suited to local needs.

This information on knowledge, skills, attitudes, practices, etc. will then be translated into communication needs for each category of stakeholder in relation to the identified problem and set of actions to address it. It will lead to the identification and formulation of the communication objectives and expressed in terms of knowledge/information, skills, attitudes and practices.

For example:

- Knowledge/information: forest management rules and existing laws
- Skills: training in tree nurseries
- Attitudes: developing an identity of custodian of the forest
- Practices: negotiating agreements with fuelwood or charcoal traders from the city

Step 6. Identifying other stakeholders (secondary stakeholders) and possible partners

The next step is to identify other stakeholders and possible partners concerned by the problem and implementation of the initiative. They can be district authorities, traders and neighbouring communities or NGOs or CBOs working in the area on similar problems, the local forestry extension department, or local schools, for example.

Their interests and needs need to be identified in terms of knowledge/information, skills, attitudes or practices, although in this case, it doesn't need to be as detailed as in the case of key stakeholders.

Phase 2: Formulating and developing the communication strategy

Step 7. Identifying and formulating communication objectives

Identifying communication objectives

When planning communication strategies, many projects tend to take a very broad problem as a starting point (a declining forest, for example) and then move right into planning communication activities (for example, information sessions, awareness campaigns). The result is that the target is often missed and despite all the activities undertaken the problem remains unaddressed.

To formulate the communication objectives, it is necessary to know what each category of stakeholders should be able to understand, do, or demonstrate as a result of the communication activities, in order to contribute to the development activities identified by the community to tackle a given problem.

From needs to objectives

Referring to the communication needs, identified through the KSAP analysis and other stakeholder analysis, it is necessary to identify the desired changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes and practices, as shown in the following template.

Table 1: Template for identifying communication objectives

Problem:

Initiative identified by the community:

Communication role:

Key stakeholders	Communication needs	Communication objectives

Formulating communication objectives

In formulating communication objectives, the team should also think about how to measure if objectives are being met or not after the communication activities. Some people advocate to use the **SMART** criteria - **S**imple, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime bound. It is not always possible to do so but the main idea is to try to be as simple and precise as possible.

Table 2: SMART criteria for formulating communication objectives

SMART principles	Description and examples
1. Simple	Reflects a single idea at a time; not more than one behavioural objective at a time.
Simple	By the end of one year, at least 50 per cent of community members are able to demonstrate at least two strategies for disaster risk management.
Not simple but Compound	By the end of one year, at least 50 per cent of community members are able to demonstrate at least two strategies for disaster risk management and provide leadership training for other members in the community.
2. Measurable	Observable, visible, uses an operative verb.
Measurable	By the end of one year, at least 40 per cent of women members occupy major positions in the local disaster risk management committee.
Not measurable	By the end of one year, women are empowered members in disaster risk management.
3. Attainable	Can be accomplished given existing resources (time, people, money).
Attainable	By the end of one year, at least 20 per cent of women members occupy major positions in the local disaster risk management committee.
Unattainable	By the end of one year, all major positions in the local disaster risk management committee are occupied by women members.
4. Realistic	Can be accomplished given the normal human capability and based on typical experiences.
Realistic	By the end of one year, local community women members are able to produce at least two radio programmes on women's roles in disaster risk management.
Unrealistic	By the end of one year, women members of the local community are able to produce five daily radio broadcasts on women's role in disaster risk management.
5. Time bound	Sets the time period by which the target behaviour should have been accomplished.
Time bound	By the end of one year, at least 20 per cent of women members occupy major positions in the local disaster risk management committee.
Open ended	Women members occupy major positions in the local disaster risk management committee.

Source: FAO, 2014

Steps 8–9. Identifying key messages, content and topics and selecting appropriate communication tools and media

As previously discussed, participatory development communication starts with a process involving the community in identifying a problem and a set of activities to address it and then identifying the role of communication media (such as theatre, traditional media, video, photo, radio, print media) in supporting this initiative.

The identification of the content, messages, activities and the selection of communication tools and media to deliver them must be planned **for each communication objective and each category of stakeholders.** This process aims to change the typical practice of development practitioners who say, "we're going to do a video, or a radio program, or a play" but without knowing clearly exactly what contribution it will make to the initiative.

In selecting the appropriate communication tools, the following questions need to be considered:

- Is the communication tool appropriate for the category of stakeholders?
- Can community members participate in the production of the tool or media content?
- Can the costs and conditions of use be provided (such as the time needed to prepare the materials or the technical environment in which they are to be used, e.g. availability of electricity, appropriate premises, accessibility to participants, etc.)?
- What capacity development is needed to facilitate their participation?
- What risks are there to the use of the tools? Whenever possible, the team should rely on the communication tools and media already in use in the local community.

Table 3: Example of identifying objectives, key messages, content, activities, topics and selecting appropriate communication tools for two stakeholder groups – local authorities and community members

Stakeholders	Objectives	Messages, content, topic, activities	Media and communication tool
Local-traditional	To edict rules to e nsure the sustaianble management of the forest.	• Examples of rules • Training	• Poster • Leaflets • Photos
	To organize patrolling to ensure the respect of forest management rule.	• Community meeting • Demonstration	• Theatre
Active community members men and women	To understand and be able to apply forest management rules.	• Training	• Theatre
	To be able to read the rules and write a report.	• Literacy sessions • Example of a report	• Poster • Photos
	To be able to communicate rules to others.		• Radio • Poster • Theatre

Step 10. Facilitating partnerships and establishing agreements

Previously, in Step 6, the team identified other stakeholders and possible partners concerned by the problem and intervention initiative. In this step, it is time to select the stakeholders to work with and to formalize partnerships. This may also include other projects working in the area.

Often a research or development initiative is conducted with a local community without considering other initiatives that may be trying to engage the same community in other participatory processes. This situation leads to a lot of strain in the communities and can also result in an "overdose" of participation. Identifying other ongoing initiatives, developing a communication link with them and looking for opportunities for synergy or collaboration should be part of the methodology.

It is also the time to identify possible partners who could be involved in the communication activities. They could be a rural radio station, a theatre group, or local resource people or talents. By establishing contacts early in the communication strategy process, these groups will feel that they can play a useful role in designing the strategy instead of perceiving themselves as mere service providers.

Types of partnerships:

- community groups
- local authorities
- local technical services and specialized agencies (e.g. NGOs or research groups working in the area)
- local media (rural radio or press, theatre, traditional media)
- local resource persons or talents
- national and international partners when relevant

Step 11. Identifying and developing communication materials and activities

When producing materials and content, there are some considerations to keep in mind including the kind of utilization, the cultural appropriateness of the material, the production cost, and time considerations. Keep it as simple as possible. Similar considerations also apply to the communication activities that will be organized to use this material.

Step 12. Developing and pre-testing communication materials

Pre-testing is a way of improving ideas and material prototypes by submitting them to participating group representatives and obtaining their feedback before the final production stage (or checking whether materials already produced are appropriate to the group).

This will allow the team to gauge reactions, to revise the concepts and communication materials, or perhaps to amend the strategy, if it seems unlikely to produce the desired results.

It is necessary to ensure the concepts put forward in the communication materials are well understood by participants, are suitable and evokes the expected types of reactions. After pre-testing, it may be necessary to produce more realistic illustrations, simpler text or more explicit images, for example.

To ensure that the communication concepts and materials are well adapted to the different groups of participants, it is recommended to ask five or six representatives from each group to give their opinion on the following aspects:

Content

- Understanding the content
- Accuracy of information presented
- Credibility of the people expressing themselves through the material
- The kind of reactions induced by the content

Format

- Interest evoked
- Technical quality

Materials

- Reaction to formats used
- The technical environment necessary to use the material
- The useful life of the material

Feedback

- Usefulness of the material for evoking reactions and expression of viewpoints from participants.

To check the accuracy of the information presented, one or two experts should also be consulted. For pre-testing purposes, drafts or samples of the materials can be presented. In the case of films or videos, the concepts can be simply presented in the form of text, drawings and photographs.

Step 13. Planning participatory monitoring and evaluation

The development of a monitoring plan and an evaluation framework will help everyone involved in the activities to monitor what is being accomplished and facilitate its evaluation. The joint elaboration of such a plan by all stakeholders using simple methods such as brainstorming, observation and visualization can be very helpful. However, the most crucial consideration is the way in which researchers and practitioners approach the evaluation process together with the community members and the other development stakeholders so that the evaluation process becomes a learning experience for everyone involved.

Evaluation is defined as a judgment based on the information collected. There are two main reasons for conducting an evaluation:

- To find out if the intervention is on the right track or whether adjustments need to be made during the execution of the activity.
- To find out if the original objectives have been achieved and if the results have had an impact on the problem identified at the outset.

During implementation

Monitoring and evaluation assesses the progress and realization of activities and the participation in the activities. It allows the team to:

- Determine whether they are on the right track toward achieving the initial objectives.
- Identify any major difficulties encountered and corrective actions required.

At the end of the process

Evaluation allows the team to:

- Determine whether the objectives have been achieved and to what extent.
- Assess the degree to which activities have had the desired impact on the problem or the development initiative that needed addressing.
- Draw lessons from the experience, identify ways of improving performance, and make recommendations for future activities.

Step 14. Planning the documentation

Documenting the entire intervention will be helpful to share and apply the results of the initiative. The documentation should give an account of everything that has been accomplished, including how difficulties and problems encountered were resolved (or not). One way of doing this is to use a weekly logbook or a record of activities in which all events are documented, the observations made during the monitoring activities and any personal comments.

Step 15. Defining participation modalities at each step of implementation, monitoring and evaluation

At this stage, it is time to define participation modalities at each step of the initiative's implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This is important so that community members can continue their involvement in the process, knowing who will intervene, with whom and when.

Step 16. Planning the sharing and utilization of results

Knowledge sharing refers to making information available in different formats to different groups of users and asking for their feedback. It is one step ahead of a simple dissemination of brochures, reports, etc. This step introduces a new planning exercise which will require a timeline and budget.

Phase 3: Validating and organizing the strategy

Step 17. Validating the whole strategy with the community

Much of the development of the strategy has been a technical operation, mostly under the responsibility of the development agent or researcher in charge of the intervention together with the community. Community members probably have contributed at one point or another, but now is the time to validate the strategy with the entire community and have a green light for going forward.

Step 18. Producing a communication plan

Producing a communication plan requires identifying specific activities, responsibilities and tasks, establishing the timeline for the communication strategy and preparing the budget for each activity.

Table 4: Communication plan

Activity	Timeline	Location	Responsible person	Resource persons	Material requirements	Budget

More specifically, the plan will identify the following activities and roles in greater detail:

- The order and sequence of activities
- The timing and the duration, details of date, time and place
- The individuals responsible for each activity
- The partners and resource persons involved, other persons invited
- The material requirements
- Budget needs

The plan can be used for forecasting the activities before they are carried out, as well for monitoring the overall performance of the activities.

In conclusion

Participatory development communication is about involving communities in development projects or development research. It is a tool, not a recipe. As mentioned earlier, this framework should not be seen as a fixed methodology and has to be adapted to each different context and situation.

Another consideration to keep in mind is that communication is essential, but by itself it is insufficient if the material, human, and financial resources, as well as political conditions, needed to carry out the development initiative are not there. Likewise, such resources are insufficient if there is no communication to facilitate community participation and appropriation of their own development.

3. Case studies

The following six case studies illustrate the role of participatory development communication approaches to support community participation in development.

They were developed following a joint RECOFTC and FAO workshop on 12–15 May 2015 to improve the capacities of forestry communication and programme officers from government and NGOs to plan, develop and facilitate participatory development communication processes in building and implementing more effective communication strategies. The workshop brought together 27 participants (including 14 women) from Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, and included participants from government forest departments, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the European Forest Institute and FAO.

The case studies demonstrate ways of developing two-way context-appropriate communication tools with communities, that deliver complex information in an accessible way, as well as establishing communication between and within different categories of stakeholders (e.g. local communities, private sector, NGOs). The main communication tools used include events, posters, leaflets and community meetings. Each of the case studies highlight a particular step(s) of the PDC approach. Together, they offer realistic, on-the-ground examples of how PDC approaches can be used to enhance communication and empower local communities in decision-making to bring about better outcomes in sustainable forest management.

It is important to note that the case studies do not offer examples of the complete PDC project approach but rather they highlight how sustainable forest management projects in the Asia-Pacific region are moving away from one-way information dissemination toward using two-way communication approaches and tools to promote community participation in forest decision-making.

Table 5: Projects and case studies using PDC approaches

	Country	Case study
1	Fiji	Adapting to climate change and ensuring food security in Narikoso village as communities prepare for rising sea levels in Fiji
2	Indonesia	Grassroots Capacity Building for REDD+ in Asia: Developing interactive posters to facilitate community participation in learning about climate change in Indonesia
3	The Philippines	Sustainable Food Systems of the Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines: Establishing relationships in co-creating local innovations in indigenous people's sustainable food system
4	The Philippines	The Kids2Forests Programme in the Philippines: Empowering children to understand the value of forests in the Philippines
5	The Philippines	Using PDC approaches to engage young indigenous people to protect their interests and cultural heritage
6	Viet Nam	Participatory development communication for empowering ethnic women in sustainable forest management

Case study 1: Adapting to climate change and ensuring food security in Narikoso village as communities prepare for rising sea levels in Fiji

Maria Elder, Pacific Community (SPC)

Background

Sea levels around the world are rising and coastal communities, who make up the majority of Pacific Island populations, are experiencing increased coastal flooding, storm surges, greater landward penetration of sea water and the contamination of fresh water by sea water. Climate change is forcing many low-lying communities to consider relocation as their only viable, long-term option.

Narikoso, a coastal village on Ono Island in Kadavu Province with a population of 105 people, is one of the two villages in Fiji that has been forced to relocate due to sea level rise. Although a sea wall was constructed as a remedial measure, sea water has risen above the sea wall. Now the water level is literally at the doorsteps of homes closest to the sea shore. This situation is threatening the livelihoods of the community due to salt water spray and salt water intrusion.

To increase the community's resilience against the impacts of climate change, a USAID-funded project was managed and implemented by SPC from 2013 to 2015. The project - Vegetation and Land Cover Mapping and Improving Food Security for Building Resilience to a Changing Climate in Pacific Island Communities - is strengthening the food security of Narikoso villagers as they make the transition from their current village to the relocation site.

Men working on land clearing, ploughing and making plots, while ladies had potted seeds in the nursery

Using PDC to promote community participation

At the outset of the project, PDC approaches were used to develop relationships and trust between the communities, the project team and government officers involved in the project. The project sought to involve the community in the identification of a problem, potential solutions, and the decision to carry out a concrete initiative. The first step toward this was to establish relationships and negotiate a mandate with local community members in the early stages of the project by using a participatory communication process. Local community members comprised part of the research team to gather background information. Other research team members included SPC project staff and a multisectoral group of government officials from the Ministry of Fijian Affairs, and the Departments of Forest, Agriculture, and Mineral Resources. Together the team members assessed land use and crops, conducted geological surveys to determine the stability of the new village site and the safety of the existing site. Working together, the team used various research techniques including key informant interviews, discussion groups, field surveys, PRA and vulnerability assessments.

Young and old including school children help out in soil land preparation

Informal evening forums

Informal discussions were regularly held with small groups of people, including the village chairman and members of the village development committee, in private homes or gatherings, as a space where community members could share their stories of how the village has been affected by sea level rise, the impacts on their livelihoods, how they have been adapting to the changes, and their views of relocation and adaptation needs. These informal sessions were usually held in the evenings and proved to be an effective way to get genuine engagement with the people, key informants and with those community members that were reluctant to freely express their views during the more formal community meetings. The casual environment for the discussions created a space in which community members felt safe to share their views. It also helped to build trust and confidence of community members that were responsible for leading the development process.

Conducting key informant interviews

One-on-one or face-to-face interviews were conducted with key informants from the community including the village headman and chairman of the village development committee. These were conducted as informal sessions and were often done at the interviewee's home, or at times through telephone conversations. These interviews provided important qualitative information at a detailed level, especially on needs and adaptation interventions that were suitable for the communities, the governance structure and implications for the proposed food security interventions. These interviews were done at the beginning of the process to gather information and throughout the process to review the progress of activities.

Community meetings

Community meetings offered the best opportunity for discussing the impacts of climate change and adaptation interventions to strengthen food security. Community meetings were generally called by the village development committee and had a specified time, date, venue and agenda. Participating in the village meetings was an opportunity to make effective use of community infrastructure and demonstrated respect for community processes which led to more coordinated engagement on the needs and solutions. Often a multisectoral team including forestry, climate change and agriculture experts and the village headman or chairman of the village development committee facilitated the meetings, generating wide-ranging two-way discussions about food security issues and potential interventions such as agroforestry demonstration farms, vegetable gardens, animal husbandry and land use practices that are suited or that can be adapted by the community.

Awareness materials such as posters, PowerPoint presentations, videos and charts were used during the consultations and provided a basis for the discussions. These sessions helped ensure that many people could have their say and not just the loudest and most articulate attendees. For example, during the initial consultation process, women and men were grouped separately to allow women to speak about their needs and provide inputs for the project. Community meetings offered a way throughout the processes to engage many members of the community.

Village Development Committee

The Village Development Committee is made up of representatives from the community, land owners who can be men or women, who are appointed to oversee development in the village. This committee enabled community input into planning and decision-making. Members regularly met to discuss project issues.

Using land use capability, soils and forest inventory maps

Soil and land use maps were used to analyze and illustrate the distribution of soil types and land classes in the area. The soils, land use and forestry resource experts, with the guidance of community members, used spatial Geographic Information System (GIS) generated maps to hand draw the soil, land use boundaries, new village site and proposed sites for the food security project activities. The maps were also used to address questions posed by community members and to document and share some of their knowledge on soils, land use and forest resources. The land use maps provided guidance in identifying suitable sites for farming and land use activities based on the soils and land use capability classes.

Setting the project goals

Once the research was completed, the next step was setting the project goal. Local community members participated in the identification of the problem, potential solutions, planning and coordination of activities and the final decision to carry out this initiative. The project team members realized that understanding the causes of a problem required both local knowledge, as well as external specialized knowledge – in this case from specialists from outside the community. By assessing the research findings together, the team agreed that food security was a priority issue, based on sound information that included both local and external knowledge.

The team identified a set of actions that the community and external specialists would implement together to address the identified issue of food security. A multidisciplinary team of agriculture and forestry officers conducted trainings on forestry and agriculture including the management of livestock, and trees and crop diversification. Team members also began plans to establish crop nurseries, agroforestry demonstration farms and livestock (poultry) units. With funding from the USAID, SPC and the Ministry of Agriculture, they also conducted training on vegetable production with women from the community.
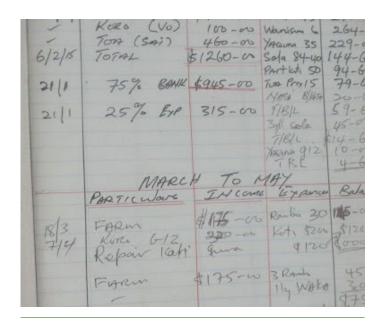
Project impact and lessons learned

As a result of the project, Narikoso villagers were able to diversify their farming systems and sell surplus crops, vegetables and chicken meat. Interview results showed that the crops, vegetables and livestock interventions have provided food for families and an income from surplus products.

The village demonstration farm is doing well. Baskets of food have been distributed to each family. The income from the sale of chickens provided by the project has been re-invested into more poultry livestock. Diets have been diversified with the addition of new sources of protein (eggs and chicken) as well as new produce. The village development committee, which oversees the project, has set up a bank account for profits from project activities. Seventy-five per cent of all earnings are put in a savings account to be reinvested while 25 per cent is used to cover village expenses. The funds have covered village expenses such as grass-cutting and subsidizing household electricity bills. Anecdotally, the village nurse noted a reduction in the number of malnutrition cases.

Community members cited teamwork as contributing to the success of the project. The village development committee also established subcommittees to supervise each activity. Chosen by both male and female members of the community, the leaders of the subcommittees work in partnership with their spouses to ensure continuity.

The Ministry of Agriculture has noted improvement in farming techniques with a more planned approach and understanding of land use types. Poultry farming was also a new activity and community members stressed the importance of hands-on experience and frequent follow-up from SPC and government contacts.

The women's group, which usually engaged in income generating activities such as mat weaving, now devote time to work unpaid in the crop nursery. Most of the chicken farmers are also women, as the work is more home-based. Overall, the participatory communication approach played a critical role in the community ownership of the project. Community members now have increased income security and food security, as well as an improved understanding on why nutrition is important. The community has now devised its own development plan, which includes a schedule for project activities and tasks addressing village priorities.

Narikoso Project finance ledger

Case study 2: Developing interactive posters to facilitate community participation in learning about climate change in Indonesia

Februanty Suyatiningsih, RECOFTC Indonesia country programme

Background

Indonesia faces many challenges in managing its forests in a sustainable manner. This is reflected in the country being one of the highest contributors of greenhouse gas emissions in the world. At the same time, the country is experiencing significant climate change impacts in recent years, posing serious risks for half of the country's population who live in rural areas and depend on the forests for their subsistence and livelihoods. A range of policies and strategies have been developed to mitigate the impacts of these crises, yet implementation on the ground remains a challenge. This is partly due to lack of engagement with local communities, as well as lack of significant capacity to mitigate and adapt to climate change in a sustainable manner.

In the project Grassroots Capacity Building for REDD+ in Asia, RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests has partnered with the Centre for Environment and Forestry Education and Training, CFET/ Pusdiklat SDM Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan, and three local non-governmental organizations, Forum Komunikasi Kehutanan Masyarakat (FKKM), Lembaga Alam Tropika Indonesia (LATIN) and Yayasan Komunitas Belajar Indonesia (YAKOBI), to use communication approaches to ensure that communities are confident to voice their views and take ownership of climate change initiatives.

Using PDC to develop and pre-test communication materials

The project's broad objective was to raise the community's awareness on climate change and its impacts; and enhance their capacities to protect the communities' needs while playing key roles in climate change intervention programmes.

Taking into consideration the customary context of the communities, the project identified key stakeholder groups with specific roles and influences within their communities. After consultations with community leaders and local partners, four community groups were identified to be trained as grassroots trainers - local women's groups, teachers, religious leaders and farmers in Berau district in East Kalimantan and Jember district in East Java.

The YAKOBI and LATIN project partners translated technical and complicated climate change concepts into training materials that were relevant, locally contextualized and in the local language. Instead of using PowerPoint presentations, the local partners used a range of interactive and creative participatory approaches, i.e. group discussions, role plays and puppet shows. These informal approaches were conducive for the grassroots trainers and community group members to explore and assess the situation within their communities.

After several training of trainers (ToT) workshops and awareness raising events, the grassroots trainers suggested that a practical training tool be developed to support them in facilitating meetings with communities. The project team understood that for community members to be

willing to attend and be interested in the meetings, the materials had to be informal and the topic familiar and relevant to community members. It was important that the tool modules focus on the community's daily livelihood activities in forest landscapes. Modules were framed around the following concepts of forest management and climate change in local contexts:

- role of sustainable forest management (SFM) in climate change mitigation
- role of SFM for sustainable livelihoods
- role of community in SFM
- who should be involved in SFM and climate change mitigation

Posters were identified as the most suitable format for the tool as they are portable, do not require electricity and are suitable for illiterate members of the community.

The most challenging aspect was designing the content to ensure that it would be easily presented by the local grassroots trainers, and attractive and easily understood by local communities. To achieve this, RECOFTC and the local partners worked with an illustrator to customize each lesson module in cartoon format. The cartoon was also tailored to depict the local context and customs as much as possible including villagers' profiles, clothing, and surrounding landscapes.

A set of 12 flipchart posters was developed, which had pictorial descriptions on one side and questions and discussion points on the other side. The discussion points described concepts and listed questions for the audience, to help guide facilitators and trainers to start community discussions around climate change topics. This was specifically requested by the grassroots trainers during development to help give them confidence. Although the posters were developed primarily for grassroots facilitators and communities in Jember and Berau, the project expected this facilitation tool to be used throughout the country. Thus, the language of the poster was Bahasa Indonesia although each facilitator was free to present them in the local language relevant to her or his audience.

Moving to the next PDC step, the project team pre-tested the posters with the grassroots trainers for review and feedback in Jember. For each topic, the trainers provided feedback on relevance of the illustrations and clarity of the text, for example, some trainers requested removal of illustrations of people carrying logs and building houses in the forests as they could be misinterpreted as legal activities, especially within the buffer zone of national parks. Several trainers also assessed ease of use, flow of content and how long it would take to present the posters. They suggested that a similar workshop be organized for all facilitators to help familiarize themselves with the context and interpret the illustrations correctly.

The project team then revised the posters based on all feedback and comments shared during the pre-testing. Two-hundred and fifty posters were printed and disseminated to the project's local partners and grassroots facilitators.

Lessons learned

Pre-testing posters with grassroots facilitators was important to ensure ownership, familiarity and understanding of the content and confidence in presenting the posters to their community. The local partners and facilitators were proud of their involvement in the process of developing and producing the posters.

Communities also reported that they gained improved comprehension and understanding about climate change and were able to see the linkages between climate change and the impacts to their livelihoods, environment and long-term outlook.

The posters have received consistently positive feedback and have been used in several national and district workshops and events by government, partners and other NGOs in Indonesia. Facilitators and communities like the use of colourful, easy to follow and attractive pictorial explanations to deliver key messages. Other feedback highlights the design ingenuity of the flip-chart calendar format displaying both illustrations and explanations, making them a more functional facilitation tool.

Both local partners and grassroots facilitators intend to use the same PDC approaches for developing future learning tools. They are aware that such approaches require time and are more complex but they realize the past top-down approaches and practices are not in line with the project's aim of participation and implementation at the grassroots level. Working to improve the capacities of grassroots communities is also key to ensuring sustainable change.

Case study 3: Establishing relationships in co-creating local innovations in indigenous people's sustainable food systems in the Philippines

Winifredo B. Dagli, Eduardo F. Roquino, and Ma. Vicenta P. De Guzman

Background

In the Philippines, indigenous people's (IP) local knowledge on food is fast disappearing and is often poorly documented, despite its importance in ensuring diverse ecosystems that can cope with the changing local and global environment.

In 2015–2016, researchers from the University of the Philippines (Los Baños and Visayas-Tacloban College); University of Georgia (USA); the NGO PANLIPI; and partner communities in the Municipality of Kiangan, Province of Ifugao, worked together on the project Sustainable Food Systems of the Indigenous Peoples in the Philippines. The aims of the project were to:

Document Ifugao's indigenous and contemporary food knowledge and practices;
Develop a set of local and contextualized criteria of a sustainable food system through participatory approaches;
Design and plan for community innovations that can help address problems of food insecurity, poor nutrition, vulnerable livelihoods and environment, and erosion of Ifugao culture; and
Develop culturally appropriate learning resources and policy advocacy projects that will help sustain community innovations on IP sustainable food systems.

Overall, the project sought to contribute to an interdisciplinary framework on IP sustainable food systems, to provide guidance to duty bearers and non-government development organizations in helping to address livelihood and agricultural productivity, diet-related health concerns and cultural revival. Ultimately, the goal of the project aimed to empower IP communities and equip them with confidence and capacity to start their own projects that support and promote IP sustainable food knowledge and practices.

Action research participants from the village of Bolog are identifying their criteria for a sustainable indigenous people's food system

Using PDC to establish relationships and negotiate a mandate with the local community

To accomplish the project objectives, the project was divided into three parts: community preparation, participatory action research (PAR) and advocacy.

Community preparation involved selecting project sites; seeking free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) from partner communities; gathering of preliminary data through site visits; and conducting secondary data research. At the outset of the project, researchers sought to secure FPIC from partner communities in Ifugao. This was important, as in the past IP communities have often benefited less (or in some cases suffered) from ventures or partnerships with external counterparts.

The project team questioned the usual practice of gaining community access through government officials at the village and municipal levels, due to their understanding that local government officials have not always acted in the best interests of the indigenous communities, whether or not local government officials are indigenous peoples themselves.

They sought support from a close ally of indigenous communities, Evelyn S. Dunuan, lawyer, former commissioner for the National Commission for Indigenous Peoples and the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, and a native of Kiangan, Ifugao. She helped the team to be aware of assumptions about Ifugao food and understand indigenous food from a more holistic approach. Dunuan put the team in touch with local institutions, the Mayor of Kiangan, heads of different departments and agencies at the municipal hall, local historians, village chiefs, and community organization leaders.

Dunuan explained the traditional and unique governance structures in Ifugao. Since Ifugao customary laws were already assimilated into the formal governance structure of the country, there were two options in securing FPIC for the research project—either engage a people's organization as a research partner or work with local government officials. The project team did both options.

The project also met with the mayor and the Municipal Council of Kiangan, presenting the goals, intended outcomes, and methodology of the proposed research project. Suggestions were also made about narrowing down the geographic scope of the study. The mayor expressed his support for the research and hoped that research findings would be incorporated into the upcoming local development planning process. The meetings with the local chief executive and local policy making body were also crucial in getting local leaders' approval of the project as well as access to all chiefs of the 14 barangays[2] in Kiangan.

Following the meetings, it was agreed to brief the barangay chiefs to help decide which barangays will be the research study sites. During the initial stage, the barangays were clustered according to their geographic, ecological, and ethnological features. Four clusters were identified, namely the riverside barangays, the rice terraces/heritage sites barangays, modern agricultural barangays, and swidden farming barangays. Each cluster was represented by a focal barangay. The objectives of the project were presented to a majority of the barangay chiefs at a meeting that coincided with their week-long festivity, Gotad Ad Kiangan.

Despite some initial reservations, the barangay chiefs agreed on four focal barangays for the research study sites. There were concerns about loss of intellectual property rights (e.g. century-old rice wine technologies and heirloom recipes) and the term 'research' invoked among the participants the images of researchers hoarding knowledge, artifacts, and photographs. Others were more concerned that the project would be used by local politicians to push for self-serving interests.

All concerns and questions were answered in an open and clear manner, with the support of Dunuan speaking in the local language, Tuwali-Ifugao. Some participants had prior understanding of the IP food systems and helped to simplify concepts and relate the project to their experiences.

Participatory action research

The project used PDC and other participatory research and development approaches to promote the community's meaningful participation and empowerment, beginning with defining co-researcher roles for the partner communities.

The participatory action research (PAR) involved documenting traditional and contemporary food knowledge and establishing a set of criteria for developing an IP sustainable food system framework. Data was gathered by both project and community researchers in household, farm, and market visits, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and recipe trials. The data was then collectively analyzed and became the basis for the project proposals on community innovations. To prevent co-option by local barangay officials, the focal barangays were encouraged to form multisectoral working groups composed of elders/culture bearers, women, youth, farmers, and health workers who come from different sectors working on food systems-related issues. The working groups were reminded that local communities have the power to make decisions on development projects as the Philippine Constitution and the laws of the land provide ways on how communities can be part of local development planning processes. This session on participatory development and governance was a way of conscienticizing[3] the partner communities and make them more aware and critical of planning processes.

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[2] A barangay is the smallest administrative division in the Philippines and is the native Filipino term for a village, district or ward.

[3] Paulo Freire (2000) defined 'conscientization' as the process of "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality."

A member of the working group in Barangay Nagacadan, Kiangan, Ifugao, presents her group's project proposal titled 'Keeping the Tinawon Rice Alive: Enhancing Nagacadan Tinawon Rice Farmers' Capacity Towards Broadened Market Options' during the Stakeholders' Forum of the IP Food System Project on 30th March 2016 at the Ateneo de Manila University

Establishing a good working relationship with local communities enabled the working groups to contribute substantively to the action research process and its outcomes. As co-researchers, they improved the research design and instruments, working as active partners.

The project team acted as facilitators by asking probing questions on how the working groups could reflect collectively on food, diet, and the problems brought by changing food systems. The information jointly gathered was organized in a coherent and more meaningful way (e.g. developing typologies, criteria, categories). The working groups identified concrete project ideas and proposals that could address specific food systems-related problems, and presented these proposals to prospective donors and partner agencies in a Stakeholders' Forum held in Manila.

At the forum the project team and co-researchers from the four communities shared research findings with the academic and development community to continue the conversation on the role of indigenous knowledge food systems and practices.

Lessons learned

Through using the PDC approach, the project was able to facilitate a process where indigenous people identified innovative ideas and practices, grounded in their own history, environment, and cultural systems, which could be further developed into community innovation projects to address specific food systems-related problems.

Participatory communication also served as a catalyst in redefining and strengthening relationships between community partners and technical researchers and enabled a more integrative and holistic view of indigenous food systems. It became the means to gradually shift the centre of power from local elites to a multisectoral group of community members.The project thus enabled all groups of people, especially the poor and vulnerable, to participate in decision-making, create opportunities, and share the benefits of development.

Case study 4: Empowering children to understand the value of forests in the Philippines - the Kids to Forests Programme

Janet Martires, Kids to Forest Programme

Background

In the Philippines, the term 'forestry' is more associated with a collegiate course or 'trees' than the many benefits and opportunities a forest can provide. Primary and high school textbooks mention little about forests. Teachers are generally neither trained on forestry nor exposed to real forest conditions and rely mostly on outdated textbooks. School forest activities mainly consist of mandatory tree planting outings. There is little information given before every tree planting activity on why it is important and often seedlings do not survive. Although there is strong general awareness of the environment in the country, for children this is mainly focused on home and school-based waste segregation and reducing the use of plastic.

The Philippine-based NGO Yakap Kalikasan runs the Kids to Forest Programme (K2F) which introduces practical knowledge about forests and the general environment to school and out-of-school children, with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). The programme began in 2010 when Yakap Kalikasan reached out to schools in Laguna province. Initially, the School Caravan programme was developed and trialed using interactive and fun classroom-based methodologies in selected primary schools. Developed with environment experts from other NGOs, the trial aimed to "sense the social environment" whereby the interactive methodologies were tested in the context of the typically structured, curriculum-based program and activities of schools in the Philippines.

In the succeeding years, FAO granted funds to Yasap Kalikasan to scale-up the programme to become the Kids to Forest Programme, more popularly known as K2F. The first years of K2F raised the awareness of children on the multiple values of forest. The lessons led to the mobilization of children (called K2F Earth Ambassadors), schools and communities to promote the values of forestry to the general public with the following main activities:

1. Using child-friendly interactive educational exercises, K2F Earth Ambassadors, with teachers and parents, experience forest conditions, in collaboration with forest-dependent enterprises, government bodies and private institutions with forestry-related initiatives.
2. Organization of awareness raising and publicity activities including the mobilization of children and youth as ambassadors on the importance of forests and its benefits.
3. Convene an Inter-regional Kids and Youth Forestry Summit to discuss forestry matters and agree on contributions of youth to sustaining forests.
4. Develop government and private K2F facilitators in other regions of the country in order to institutionalize the K2F strategy in building awareness and mobilizing children in support of sustainable forests.

Using PDC to promote active participation

The key criteria in selecting participants in K2F are: (a) schools and communities located near a forest or headwaters or in urban areas; (b) families who are heavily dependent on forest resources (such as but not limited to charcoal makers, farmers and fuelwood gatherers); and (c) schools and communities that are seldom reached by environment campaigns or programmes.

The K2F programme incorporated PDC approaches to promote active participation, recognizing that the current approaches used by primary and secondary schools –one-way delivery of information and technologies (e.g. tree planting)– seems to have had limited impact on children's understanding of the value of forests.

Yakap Kalikasan carried out a situational analysis in a pilot trial with The Learning Place, a private elementary school in Los Banos, Laguna. A project development specialist designed an interactive session for kids, including a game, art work, a short video and a Filipino song about the negative impact of human activities on the environment. Following the session, a brief evaluation was conducted with the teachers, school principal, parents and students and demonstrated that the children enjoyed the activities, learnt basic messages and remained actively engaged throughout the two-hour session.

Further pilot research was also done on the most effective ways to conduct forest-awareness activities with students in the forest. In 2011, three groups of school children and out-of-school youth, accompanied by their science teachers and parent-teacher association officers, took part in a pilot activity that brought them to a forest where they were able to see, play, walk around,

do artwork and sleep in a forest camp with a forest family. Following the activity, the facilitators conducted an evaluation of the activities and the topics covered in the trial. The evaluation results were then used to improve the programme, process, methods and topics to enhance the K2F approaches.

In each activity, children identified what they can do to promote forest sustainability in their area. They typically worked in teams to write or draw their responses and presented them in plenary using skits/role plays, commitment-setting or storytelling.

Combining the forest visits with follow-through activities such as the Kiddie Forestry Forum, artwork sessions, K2F theme song competition and concert, radio and television, and presentations in local and internationally led programmes increased children's awareness about forests. They were able to connect forests with climate change and other environmental issues such as unclean water in rivers and lakes, landslides and flooding. They were also able to reflect on what they can contribute to maintaining forests.

Furthermore, the programme organizers sought to identify and include key stakeholders, for example, the children of forest users such as charcoal makers, foresters and forest extension workers were specifically included. Charcoal-making was identified as one of the priority issues by the Department of Environment & Natural Resources (DENR) that is contributing to forest denudation and water issues. DENR and other agencies such as the Department of Education, local universities offering forest-related courses and Local Government Units (LGUs) were also involved in working groups that planned and implemented the K2F programme.

Lessons learned

Participatory development communication approaches were used in the development and implementation stages of the K2F programme. These approaches included involving children and youth in identifying a problem and the activities to address it, along with the role they can play in supporting these initiatives.

As a result, many actions were taken by the Kiddie Earth Ambassadors collectively and individually. For example, four youth decided to enroll in the University of the Philippines-Los Banos Forestry Bachelor's degree programme. An elementary student (Yvanna) encouraged her whole family to celebrate special holidays and weekends by going mountain hiking and tree planting. A charcoal maker's son (Daryll) encouraged his parents to shift from charcoal making to organic livestock raising, saying that "trees have more uses than when they are cut and turned into charcoal". He mobilized school officials to help him gather planting materials and labour so they could grow a school mini-forest.

Students were also involved in communicating the issue beyond their families and communities. One student wrote a story about forests and won awards in several journalism competitions. A BS education student used the K2F strategy as the main topic in the course's special forum on environmental advocacy. Twenty students and teachers sung the theme song of the 2016 Asia-Pacific Forestry Week and did a catwalk with the theme 'K2F, Walking for Forest'. Other students shared their experiences in the K2F programme with the public through a radio program and television show. These efforts garnered public praise by Congressman Rodel Batocabe, Lower House Chairperson of the Committee on Climate Change, who helped interview the kids on the radio segment and commented that "these are the kind of children we should develop in this age, children who are aware of what's happening around them and who know how they can be a solution to environmental concerns".

Teachers also encouraged their students to perform environmental awareness activities in school programmes. One teacher introduced the K2F strategy to a local chapter of the Boy Scouts of the Philippines which in turn planned to adapt the K2F strategy. Currently, the K2F facilitators from DENR and local government units continue to use the strategy in their information campaigns.

Case study 5: Using participatory development communication approaches to engage indigenous youth to protect their cultural heritage in the Philippines

Earl Paulo Diaz, Non-Timber Forest Products-Exchange Programme for Asia (NTFP-EP Asia)

Background

Indigenous peoples constitute almost 15 per cent of the population of the Philippines and live in 65 of the country's 78 provinces. The lives of forest-based indigenous communities are threatened by external environmental factors such as the destruction of forest habitat, land conversion, climate change and demographic trends such as migration, urbanization and the cultural challenges of modernization. Land, including trees, plants, rivers and mountains, are often inseparable to indigenous peoples and, because of this attachment, most indigenous groups do not allow the sale of their lands. Often, external environmental factors deflect the importance of indigenous cultural systems and modern forest management systems can pose difficulties or conflict with local indigenous forest management knowledge.

The gap between IP elderly and youth is widening, making intergenerational transfer of indigenous knowledge, systems, and practices more challenging. According to IP elders, IP tribal and community life can only continue if their youth are rooted in their culture, indigenous knowledge and ancestral domain. They must grow up with a clear sense of identity, committed to meeting the challenges and issues that face the tribe, able to assert their self-determination and conscious of being inheritors of a heritage for coming generations.

However, these goals are difficult to achieve as the modern education system facilitates the assimilation of indigenous youth into mainstream society, alienating them from their own communities, heritage, culture and history. Elders have observed that the youth do not often share the spirit of the tribe, nor look upon its membership as a source of dignity.

To help address these issues, NTFP-EP and its partners worked to facilitate two-way communication among IP youth to help change self-identification and priorities towards community development, cultural preservation and forest management. The project will provide a platform for youth to share experiences, and create a network of indigenous youth champions of forest management and indigenous self-identification.

Promoting the use of two-way communication tools by IP youth

This project sought to avoid the typical practice of development practitioners who say "we're going to do a video, or a radio program, or a play" but without knowing clearly exactly what contribution it will make to the initiative. Instead, the project considered the following questions:

- What are the appropriate communication tools for the stakeholders?
- Can community members participate in the production of tools or media content?
- What capacity development is needed to facilitate their participation?

One main activity of the project was a youth festival organized by NTFP-EP on 1–3 June, 2016, in Montalban, Rizal. The central theme of the youth festival was 'Our Culture, Our Forest, Our Life'. The festival sought to enable sharing and expression of cultural heritage by IP youth with special attention to the preservation of culture using different forms of media including newsletter production, cooking, community theatre and videography. Twenty-seven IP youth from the provinces of Rizal, Quezon, Tarlac, Palawan and Bukidnon, representing the Agta-Dumagat-Remontado, Aeta, Pala'wan, and the Higaonon peoples participated in the festival.
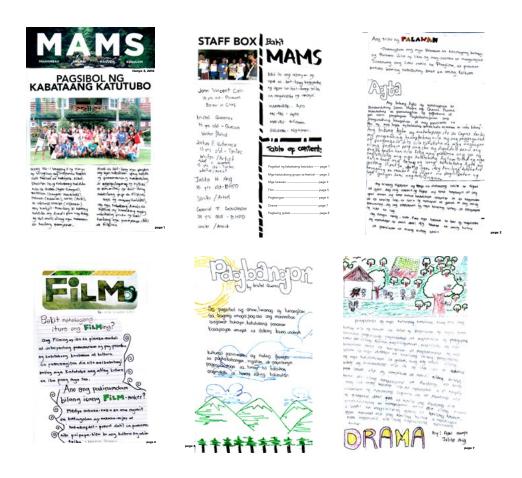
The festival comprised of a series of workshops where participants learned new two-way communication techniques and skills. Marcelino, an Agta-Dumagat-Remontado elder from Quezon, facilitated the session on community theatre. He has been the lead trainer for a youth theatre group that has given various award-winning performances both locally and internationally. Lorna, an Agta-Dumagat-Remontado elder from Rizal, also trained a smaller group for a declamation piece which spoke about aspirations and dreams of an IP youth from Rizal.

Serafin, an Agta-Dumagat-Remontado elder from Quezon, facilitated a forest foods session. He emphasized the importance of traditional recipes in the IP community. Each youth group from the different indigenous groups brought traditional ingredients and prepared food for the community sharing night.

Acclaimed videographer Butch Maddul has worked in the media industry for more than two decades. He facilitated the participatory filmmaking session and provided basic training on interviewing skills, videography, and editing. As a final output, a video documentary was put together using the clips taken by the youth participants.

Earl Diaz, NTFP-EP Asia's Communication and Knowledge Management Officer, coordinated the participatory session on the production of a newsletter describing the basic techniques of print production and delegating the editorial and curatorial components of the newsletter to the participants.

Lessons learned

The project incorporated participatory development communication approaches to build the capacities of IP youth to participate in the production of communication tools, using different media, to enable sharing and expression of their cultural heritage.

Following the festival, participants expressed interest to stay involved in IP youth networks. For example, Kristel, an Agta-Dumagat-Remontad youth, shared a poem she wrote about mornings as a sign of hope and an expression of indigenous identity; and Toto, a Pala'wan youth, spoke about the importance of sustaining the youth's interests in their own culture by forming an official IP youth organization from Pala'wan. Other IP youth participants also expressed their interest in organizing local festivals to encourage more youth members to actively promote their identity as indigenous peoples, preserving what's left of their culture and utilizing it to adapt to the changing times.

Case study 6: Using participatory development communication approaches for empowering ethnic women in sustainable forest management in Viet Nam

Nguyen Duc To Luu, People and Nature Reconciliation (PanNature)

Like in many countries, women's roles in Viet Nam's rural communities is dictated by their tradition of child rearing and household management. Despite their daily interaction with the forests for their families' subsistence and livelihoods, rural women often have little influence or role in their community's forest management programmes. Their lack of skills and knowledge often render them powerless in decision-making processes within their communities.

Viet Nam's current regulations prohibit any forest product extraction in protected areas, limiting the non-timber forest product (NTFP) livelihoods for local communities. Lack of proper outreach and awareness raising on relevant regulations and alternatives for livelihoods pose serious challenges for rural women in particular, and communities in general, especially for those with very limited resources of their own. This is especially the case for communities who live around Xuan Nha Nature Reserve (NR) in Son La province of Viet Nam, home for Thai, Muong and H'Mong ethnic groups who have no legal rights to access forest resources inside the protected area. Such restrictions put stress on the women and community members to be able to support their families.

Realizing that ethnic women in Xuan Nha NR can play a key role in addressing this issue, an NGO, PanNature, developed a project to improve the role of ethnic women in forest management and promote fair access to forest resources in Xuan Nha Nature Reserve. The project worked with two women's unions (WU) in Xuan Nha and Chieng Xuan communities that placed the women as key drivers to advocate for sustainable management of their community's forest resources. The project, using participatory approaches, aimed to enhance knowledge and capacities of the women to enable them to influence and take a lead in exploring alternative livelihood opportunities for their families and communities.

Using PDC to help ethnic women's unions to assess capacity needs

Almost half of the ethnic women in Xuan Nha and Chieng Xuan communities have never had formal education and are illiterate. However, by enhancing their capacity and knowledge, women's confidence to influence and contribute towards their families' decisions and communities may be strengthened.

Using the PDC approach, the project's first step was to conduct a needs assessment and consultation with local women to assess their capacity and involvement in community forest management, particularly their use of NTFPs. The self-assessment was conducted through focus group discussions and qualitative interviews with WU representatives, where they scored their levels of capacity and participation in forest management. The results showed the women ranked low in most aspects of management such as financial planning and meeting skills including presentation skills, asking questions, providing feedback and organizing meetings. Their lack of confidence resulted in them being underrepresented in forest management planning processes, leading to decisions that put them at a disadvantage.

Identifying these areas for improvements, the women from the two WUs requested the project to support them in a capacity building programme that focused on (i) sustainable development of NTFPs, (ii) improving participation in forest management and (iii) better community communication strategies. It was agreed that the programme would be delivered through a series of trainings and women-led events that would ultimately enable the women to share information with their communities and improve collaboration with Xuan Nha Nature Reserve authorities.

Exercise on equity: how to divide a collected forest fruit in a equitable way

In responding to their needs on NTFP production, the project offered two training courses that helped the women to identify potential forest products for market development. Through drawings and discussions, the participants identified types and parts of plants, sustainable methods of collection, sustainable yields, collection periods and sites. The women chose to focus on and explore the potential of three products - bamboo, forest vegetables and wild honey.

Although most participants had little education, their vast knowledge and familiarity with forests resources enabled them, for example, to develop a chain supply scheme for bamboo weaving production by identifying the source of the bamboo, how and where to procure them, weaving production and target consumer groups for the final products.

The WU members also wanted to be more involved in community forest management to be able to negotiate their rights and access to the forest resources. Using participatory communication approaches and tools, the women discussed issues related to the forest management regulations. They learned about the different categories of forests, how the mapping system worked and discussed past experiences where conflicts have occurred. Similarly, using role plays, the women explored the different types of stakeholders involved in forest management. More importantly the women were introduced to concepts of equity and benefit sharing which helped them to understand the different needs and situations that should be considered when managing forest resources. Through the training, the women improved their understanding of the importance of inclusive and balanced management and protection of forest resources.

A woman presenting group discussion on sustainable bamboo harvest during the training

Lessons learned

Post-training, the women became more confident to undertake more proactive roles within their communities for forest management and protection. For example, the WUs approached the Xuan Nha NR Management Board and held two dialogue seminars to discuss access to and extraction of NTFPs from the nature reserve. Both the WUs and the management board agreed to have more women's participation in the villages' forest management groups. They also agreed to collaborate on activities related to forest protection such as volunteering as members of forest patrol groups, raising awareness and disseminating information on illegal forest activities in their communities.

In terms of personal empowerment, these women had influenced the power balance within their family circle. As they became involved in the project activities, they gained more confidence to take important responsibilities within their families and to advocate for equal opportunities in education and work, e.g. travelling to other districts to attend a training without their husbands.

They also wanted to share their new knowledge of the potential of NTFPs to their families and communities and organized a small trade fair of forest products that were harvested and produced by two communities. A wide range of NTFPs were exhibited including forest vegetables, weaved bamboo and rattans, wild honey, dried and salted bamboo shoots and traditional herbal medicines. The WU members were able to practice marketing their NTFPs and communicate effectively with their communities on the potential of forests resources and why they should manage it sustainably.

The women also organized cultural activities to gain more attention from other community members and ethnic groups. They organized a cooking competition between different districts to cook traditional meals using ingredients from the local forests. A cultural performance was also part of the activities and featured traditional dances and costume shows of different ethnic groups, gaining interest from neighboring communities and local media.

By using the PDC approach, the project could strategically identify key stakeholders and empower them to design and implement solutions. The project demonstrated that any intervention program could apply to any stakeholder group regardless of their social status and capacity levels. More importantly, contextualizing the strategies to respond to the stakeholders' unique needs and situation is key to ensuring sustainable and lasting changes.

Cooking competition during the cultural event

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