APMAS Project: Some Reflections

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Introduction

- The Asian Project Management Support Programme (APMAS) Project was designed to improve the capacity of project managers to implement and effectively manage development programmes and the APMAS Gender Sensitive Management (APMAS-GSM) is a small grant from IFAD that strengthens the APMAS in ensuring gender mainstreaming in capacity-building activities for APMAS projects.

Expected Output of APMAS

The expected outputs of APMAS are:

- Enhanced capacity of project managers to implement and effectively manage gender sensitive, pro-poor rural development interventions;

- Enhanced capacity of sub-regional service providers to support project managers;

- Improved availability and sharing of pro-poor specific project management and implementation best practices to enhance impact;

- Strengthened commitment of national governments and relevant NGOs to results based management and participatory community driven development through increased awareness of benefits of improved rural development project management.

Recurring Project Management Issues

- **Rate of Disbursement**

- **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- **Exit Strategy**

- **Coherence between AWPB and Implementation**
- In 15-20% of projects......

Impacts of APMAS project

- All APMAS training materials were reviewed and revised by subject matter specialists to guarantee that they adequately take into consideration gender issues.

- In-country service providers in all countries with new competencies and techniques to transfer to country programmes, government and project staff for gender-sensitive management of support to pro-poor rural development projects.

- National implementing agency staff with new competencies, techniques and skills to design , supervise, and backstop gender sensitive pro-poor rural development projects.

- Materials produced by or used by the Project posted and shared electronically with IFAD regional network.

- Online discussions, accessible to projects from the country programmes.

Impacts of APMAS project on Capacity Building

- Project managers and field staff reported that workshops or capacity building activities enabled them to acquire new knowledge and skills – some cited the sharing sessions among participants during the workshops were extremely useful.

- Participants who attended the community-driven workshop mentioned that they learned how to facilitate better to obtain information from beneficiaries. This also helps to improve data collection in the project's management information system (MIS).

- IFAD/APMAS financial management workshops were very relevant to participants who learned how to complete the withdrawal guidelines, how to initiate project closure, and became familiar with IFAD procurement guidelines.

Impacts of APMAS project for Capacity Building (contd.)

- Participants in who attended capacity building activities in gender reported that they gained understanding and knowledge and were able to apply them in their work;

- Respondents who completed the evaluation survey questionnaire also reported that the capacity building experience in the APMAS programme met their needs;

- Primary stakeholders reported that tools introduced by APMAS for project management had been relevant;

- Capacity building activities were conducted in a participatory manner that encouraged peer and experimental learning;

Impacts of APMAS project

- Principles for Effective Training that was conducted in AIT were considered a very positive experience by the participants who attended;

- The Writeshop training on "Result-Based Management in IFAD Rural Development Context" were cited by participants as a good exercise because it brought people together to share experience that they could identify with and come up with solutions which they could apply in their work;

Impacts of APMAS project (contd.)

- APMAS reached a sizeable number of participants and projects in the targeted countries;

- More and regular coaching, mentoring, peer-learning and follow-ups are preferred methods of delivery in the APMAS programme;

- Local Service Providers expressed that their involvement with AIT was beneficial as they gained new experiences. Do we need to work with more specialised local service providers?

Some Feedbacks on the APMAS project Presentations

- We need to review the way we do annual outcome survey...
- Improving our performance measurement?
- We need a consensus on our tools (IFAD, APMAS, PMTs, etc.)?
- Mistargetting: People trained are not doers!
- Build a community of practice?
- How to ensure community ownership?

Some more Feedbacks....

- Language barrier prevented them from participating in e-discussions and online forums.

- Training materials to be made available in simple English or in the language of the participants and using appropriate examples from the IFAD projects/programmes e.g. livelihood, small agriculture production, rural development

- Participants would have preferred that the organizers would have been more flexible in the training schedule (and also in local language..).

Conclusion

- The challenge of any development project like APMAS is the ability to deliver capacity building activities in a timely and appropriate manner that can solve the needs of the participants;
- Knowledge management in the APMAS programme appeared basic with regards to making materials and tools available on the APMAS website.
- The demand driven nature of the APMAS appeared to have prevented AIT from taking a more pro-active approach to actually ascertaining the actual needs at country level.
- The diversity of the region's rural development contexts and priorities coupled with socio-cultural factors like language, customs, etc. would imply the need to find viable, appropriate and cost-effective mechanisms of delivering the required training activities which would address and respond adequately to the local expressed needs of the target beneficiaries.