

“Strengthening Organization Capacity for Community Participation in Dong Lien”

A Community-based Workshop Sponsored by Thai Nguyen University Centre for Poverty Reduction, Dong Lien, 27-29 July 2000

Nora’s Preliminary Ideas:

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Tentative Overall Objective:

To help develop the community's organizational culture or "mindset" through which the community residents, government officials, and university academics could learn new things about themselves and their communities, and to use these findings or information in developing appropriate action plans.

Tentative Specific Objectives:

1. to create a venue for discourse aimed at sharing different interpretations of history, social issues and differences (gender, ethnicity, class, etc.), poverty, decision-making processes, and institutions that deal with poverty (informal/formal);
2. to create a common vision or set of goals for the community's future and what will happen if this future is not addressed creatively;
3. to search for action plans to reach their desired goals, and to prioritise collectively among action issues, using techniques that engage the participants in creative thinking and collective activity.
4. to link planning to community action groups, and specific actions.

Initial Ideas:

Baseline Info Needed:

- Household Mapping (Need to obtain cadastral maps, verify location of households for analyzing the household surveys/commune profiles, and carrying out basic GIS analysis in the future).
- Basic Land Use (To encourage discussion about land use choices and household resources (what they are, where they are, why these and not others, and who has access to, responsibility for, and control over these resources, etc.). Can be used to focus on specific sectors and/or explore changes to land use following socio-economic change, government policies, etc. Use as follow-up to earlier data-gathering efforts (e.g. mapping, transects, HH interviews, etc.).
- Community History (Need local timelines. Can be focused to examine food security issues, impacts of government policies, as well as different gender and ethnic perspectives).
- Wealth Ranking (Need non-income based exercise to understand the wider dimensions of poverty, local categories for social differentiation, etc. Can be combined with basic necessities survey and other tools that allow for local categories to emerge in process rather than being imposed by researcher).

Range of Participatory Tools for Analyzing Social Relationships

- Activities Resources Benefits Analysis (To obtain detailed information about livelihood strategies of households. Starting point for more detailed focus-group discussions on other topics, e.g.: relationship of household to larger community, town, region, etc.; transparency within household financial management; gender differences and inequalities in work, benefits, and resource control and access.
- Gendered Division of Labor
- Gendered Resource Mapping
- Understanding Participation (For use in relation to other tools (e.g. social/gender analysis, community histories, program monitoring and evaluation). Focus on nested or sliding scales of access, control, and management.
- Problem Solving: Tress, Ranking, and Assessment (Assorted Tools for: 1) Identifying problems, causes, and consequences; 2) Pair-wise Ranking (Divide group by gender and/or other relevant divisions for exploring priorities); 3) Assessing options- Opportunities and Solutions
- Social Network Mapping (To track economic, social and cultural ties within a community, to determine which families (if any) are excluded from these networks, and to better understand ties between sub-groups (e.g. ethnic, religious, class, extended families, etc.) and between adjacent communities; To understand “Social Capital” and other forms of mutual assistance).
- Organization Capacity or Group Definition (To assess basis of group identity, resources and limits of a social group, impact of outsider's on a group, etc. Can be used with “traditional,” state-sponsored, and NGO-related community organizations).
- Institutional Diagramming and Analysis (To understand roles of local organizations and the perceptions people have about them).
- Who Decides? (To determine who makes decisions at the household, organizational, community level and on what criteria (gender, status, age, or other markers of identity). Also useful for understanding the decision-making process itself, as well as the relative degree of transparency and fairness in the process).

Designing Participatory Assessments and Evaluations

- Assessing and Planning Rural Sustainability (see IUCN.pdf paper)
- Building Bridges between communities and institutions
- Participatory Self-Evaluations
- Managing Change over Time
- Developing Quantitative and Qualitative Indicators
- Designing a Participatory Evaluation

- Developing Indicators for Measuring and Assessing Primary Stakeholder Participation

Other Possible Background Topics

- What is Community Development?
- What is Capacity Building?

Tools for Analyzing Project Planning (Checklists?)

Tentative Schedule:

Note: Ideally, this schedule should be extended for at least 4 days! Give me feedback on whether we could realistically do this in 3!

Day 1:

A.M. Introduction of participants -- "icebreakers"
Setting common objectives and expectation for the workshop

Exercise 1: Understanding the Community History of Dong Lien

Objective: to assist the community in developing and writing its own social history by making a historical time line in order to understand the nature of past crisis situations and their impact on poverty, food security and livelihood in Dong Lien, i.e. their causes and effects, how different groups of people (women, men, ethnic minorities) dealt with the crises, high points and low points in community spirit and cooperation during and after crisis -- why?

Coffee Break

Exercise 2: Institutional Diagramming and Analysis

Objective: to assist the community in capturing local understandings of similarities and differences in the way different institutions (state, NGOs, TNU-CPR) discuss and address poverty issues

P.M.

Exercise 3: Understanding Participation

Objective: to assist the community in capturing local understandings of participation, decision-making, and community organizational capacity for participation, gender, etc.

Coffee Break

Exercise 4: Who Decides in Dong Lien?

Objective: to understand the local decision-making processes in the community -- who decides what and when under what conditions -- to explore the nexus between participation, gender, ethnicity and decision-making.

* * *Solidarity Night Activity

Day 2:

A.M. Exercise 5: Wealth Ranking, and Social Network Mapping

Objective: to help the community understand how wealth, poverty and prosperity are linked to richness and density of social networks

Coffee Break

Exercise 6: Gendered Division of Labour and Resource Mapping

Objective: to help the community understand the linkage between the gender division of labour, household and food security, and livelihood issues in the community

P.M.

Exercise 7: Community Problem Identification and Ranking

Objective: to help the community identify their common or shared problems and ranked them according to urgency or priority.

* * *Solidarity Night Activity

Day 3:

A.M. Exercise 8: Strengthening Organizational Capacity Through Guided Self-Assessment

Objective: to help the community do a guided self-assessment of its organizational strengths and capacities -- what capacities already exist in the community? capacities to do what for whom and why? -- and to help develop quantitative and qualitative indicators for assessing these capacities and how they develop overtime.

P.M. Exercise 9: Developing an Action Plan on Strengthening Organizational Capacity for Community Participation

Objective: to assist the community in developing an action plan to strengthen capacities that are weak, and to develop new or emerging capacities that have been identified

* * *Solidarity and Closing Night Activity