Geographical Experiences – Indonesia

Transforming the Transforming Structures and Processes

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- Why a different approach was needed
  - Concepts
  - Progress
  - Issues
  - Lessons

- Why a different approach was needed
  - Rice-based green revolution ‘one crop, one message’ approaches left significant rural poverty in areas where support for more complex and diverse livelihood strategies were needed.
  - Poverty assessments cited the potential contribution of livestock to broader-based smallholder agriculture and poverty reduction.
  - Previous interventions focussed on the production and productivity of livestock themselves, rather than the people who keep livestock and the support and services those people need to maximise the contribution of livestock-keeping to sustainable livelihoods.
  - Some success in the early 90’s in moving away from ‘technical’ projects – for example introduction of farmer-participatory planning and decentralised management of livestock services. But this was in the context of donor-financed pilot-projects – more had to be done to secure fundamental changes to the way business was carried out throughout the government institution if more people-focused approaches to development were to become de rigueur.
  - DELIVERI1 is a DFID-funded project that aims to do that. While not explicit in project design, DELIVERI shares characteristics of an ‘SL Approach’ – notably in terms of addressing the Transforming Structures and Processes that determine the behaviour and performance of the institutions that in turn govern people’s access to livelihood assets.

1 Decentralisation of Livestock Services in Eastern Indonesia
 Concepts

- The project is not in itself holistic - it is sectoral. It represents a bite-sized entry point – the national livestock services. However, it recognises the holistic nature of people’s demands within a livelihoods context and is demonstrating how development interventions can respond to them. The intention is that it is catalytic in terms of spread beyond its own entry-point to other aspects of rural livelihoods.

- The basis of the project is that it is the institutional ‘rules of the game’ that need to be developed if sustainable improvements to poor people’s access to, for example, natural, financial and social capital is to be achieved. The results would be seen as an enhanced ability among target groups to influence the behaviour of the institutions that affect them, and as institutions that are more responsive to the needs and opportunities of diverse livelihood strategies.

- The project is therefore radically different from most of what has gone before it in Indonesia, in that it has nothing to give away, provides no subsidies, and develops no infrastructure.

- While the project works on a pilot basis at community level, it aims to achieve macro-level institutional reform (changes to the national ‘rules of the game’) and thus potentially impact on a large population. Macro-micro links are a critical feature of project design.

- Project design recognises that widespread institutional reform will only occur if a large constituency of policy-makers and managers understand, and are convinced of, the merits of alternative ways of doing business.

- The ‘SL approach’ lessons to be learnt from DELIVERI relate to the micro-macro linkages and processes of effecting institutional reform at macro-level - i.e. transforming the transforming structures and processes.

 Progress

- Readily established programmes at community level in pilot locations, focusing on participation, decentralisation, and plurality of service delivery systems. The communities the project is working with perceive an improvement in the quality and relevance of, and access to, services, and local government service providers seem enthused about new ways of working. However, this is not the focus of the project at Purpose level.

- Slow progress initially at institutional (‘rules of the game’) (= Purpose) level. Difficulty in pitching high enough, and in conceptualising what ‘micro-macro linkages’ meant in practice. Difficulty in analysing what the higher-level institutional issues were that affect the sustainability of proven micro-level reforms.

- Now (three years into the project) there is widespread support amongst central / senior management about the new ways of doing things. Much enthusiasm to “replicate” the approaches – including beyond the entry-point (livestock) sector.

- However, while ‘replication’ may be an indicator of perceived appropriateness, there is still a need to work on embedding or mainstreaming the approaches into the institutional ‘rules of the game’. This is yet to be achieved.
Issues

- Where does it / should it stop? The organisation within which the project is working also has responsibilities not necessarily related to poverty reduction.
  - Impact on the non-poor may derive from, or be necessary to achieve, impact on the poor.
  - Once into changing the ‘rules of the game’ within a sector institution the avenues that could be explored are unlimited. DELIVER! has for example now been asked to address privatisation of state-owned enterprises in the sector – a long way from its original departure point of institutionalising participatory approaches at village level.

- ‘Paradigm Paralysis’: All three parties to the project exhibited some degree of paradigm paralysis in conceptualising the project:
  - Many within the government organisation within which the project is placed could not see the relevance, or purpose, of such a ‘non-physical’ project – to the extent that it verged on collapse through their non-engagement in its early stages.
  - From a contractual perspective, the contractors had difficulties coming to terms with the demands of a flexible process project and its objectives of reforming structures and processes – rather than delivering products that are more tangible. Likewise seeing the importance of the contribution of livestock keeping to livelihoods, as opposed to the importance of livestock per se, was a concept with which few of the staff were initially either familiar or comfortable.
  - The DFID spending department (as a whole) found it difficult to place the project into context. Despite its higher-level objectives, its ‘livestock’ label placed it into a ‘NR’ compartment – which in turn put it into the margins of the Country Strategy.
    (Remember that this was all happening in the absence of an ‘SL Framework’.)

- ‘Replication’ or ‘Mainstreaming’: appreciation of the benefits of the micro-level impact of pilot interventions has spawned requests for assistance with ‘replicating’ the models:
  - There is some concern that the (desired) ‘marketing’ of approaches has popularised possibly incomplete models that are not yet proven;
  - Project-supported ‘replication’ does not necessarily imply success in ‘changing the rules of the game’ at the level of the ‘Transforming Structures and Processes’. It is more important to work on ‘mainstreaming’ the new approaches than ‘replicating’ them.

- Crossings institutional boundaries and scaling up: While working within a technical line ministry has helped develop the micro-macro links within its particular sphere of influence, addressing structures and processes beyond its own constituency is more problematic – particularly in the current state of institutional flux that Indonesia now finds itself in.

- Measuring change in the Transforming Structures and Processes: Difficult. Identify what is ‘wrong’ with the institution, determine what the ‘rules of the game’ are that cause the institution to be ‘wrong’, and monitor the shift in those ‘rules’.
• **Lessons**

  - **Right time and place:** fundamental change in the political environment legitimised what would otherwise have been unacceptable concepts. Project ideas were given credence at macro-level because of the proven popularity of its micro-level interventions – and because of a long-standing partnership that achieved ‘foot in the door’ presence at policy level.

  - **A technical line ministry as the micro-macro link.** Although the thrust of the project is to recognise diversity of livelihood strategies and an holistic approach to development interventions, the vehicle for the all-important micro-macro linkage is a technical line ministry. This provided the mandate and support to work at all levels of the sectoral entry point, and the channel for lessons learnt at a decentralised level to feed into policy debate centrally. However, it also requires a credible presence, and something to offer, at that central level – which may mean getting involved in programmes not directly linked to a poverty agenda.

  - **Role of marketing:** the importance of winning hearts and minds, and the need to invest in that process, was acknowledged – ‘commercial’ marketing techniques have been used with some success. (Or is there a danger of artificial acceptance of concepts that are not in fact well enough understood?)

  - **Role of internal champions:** Identification and investment in internal champions allowed the project time and space to develop its messages in the absence of handouts or tangible signs of impact.

  - **Implications for TA skills, experience and contracts:** The approach requires a new set of skills, and a new way of working. It emphasises the importance of social and institutional skills being applied in an area where only ‘technical’ skills are traditionally to be found, and of contracts providing for flexibility of inputs as the process develops.