Community Participation Approach Phase II

Study period from December 2006 to July 2008

Summary of the Evaluation

Background and Objectives of the Evaluation

In addressing the human security aspect of international cooperation, JICA has been emphasizing the importance of reaching people directly through its projects. In this context, JICA has been applying community participatory approach to various project implementation. From this context, the NGO-JICA Evaluation Subcommittee undertook the Thematic Evaluation of Community Participation from FY2005 to FY2006 (hereinafter "Phase 1") and presented lessons learned which would make participatory approach more effectively in future projects. By using the criteria established in Phase 1, the Thematic Evaluation of Community Participation Phase 2, breaks down the types of participation, and analyzes and examines which type of participation will be (was) targeted by the project and how the degree of participation will be evaluated.

The Framework for Evaluation

1. Projects selected for the study
Two JICA and NGO projects that have applied participatory approaches were selected, and the study was conducted both in Japan and overseas (parentheses indicate the cooperation period*).
- Ghana, Rural Health Improvement Project [JICA] (December 2003 - December 2006)
- Ghana, Livelihoods and Rights for Sustainable Forest Resource Management [NGO] (July 2004 - October 2008)
- Panama, Proyecto de Conservación de la Cuenca Hidrográfica del Canal de Panamá [JICA] (October 2000 - September 2005)
- Honduras, Project for Strengthening of Health Service in Trojes [NGO] (April 2001 - Present)

2. Evaluation framework
In addition to the eight criteria proposed in Phase 1, this evaluation additionally set a hypothesis that there are difference in types of people's participation, each of which brings a certain outcome according to the project objective. The study tried to establish an evaluation framework by comparing how the participation was defined at the planning phase and how they have changed over the course of the project.

■Eight Criteria for Community-Initiated Development	
■Management	■Initiative
■Community resources	■Learning / vision
■Diversity in participation	■Communication
■Decision-making / leadership	■Collaboration with outsiders

Evaluation Results

Establishment of new evaluation framework

1. Types of peoples' participation
The types of peoples' participation are divided into the following three categories:
- "Passive" participation: people are mobilized and led under control of the external agent to participate in the activities.
- "Cooperative/Functional" participation: people in the community gradually recognize the benefits of project activities and begin to establish cooperative relationships with the external agent and fulfill a particular function in given tasks.
- "Autonomous" participation: activities are initiated and led by people in the community themselves.

2. Evaluation by types of participation
The evaluation confirmed what type of participation among the above mentioned four types was set as a goal at the project formulation phase. It analyzed the level of participation that actually took place, and compared it with the target type of participation.

* Written period is what was confirmed at the time this evaluation study took place.

3. Establishment of new viewpoints

To examine the level of peoples' participation, the study applied the "eight important criteria for the effective implementation of community participatory project" proposed in Phase 1. However, when these eight criteria were initially applied to the examination of four projects, some problems and limitations were identified in relation to their validity as evaluation indicators. Thus, a new evaluation framework was established, bearing in mind the following two points:

1) Since the eight criteria were not categorized to address the different actors (target people or groups to be evaluated) participating in each project, they should be furthermore categorized into "organizational", "individual", and "community/society" participation; and

2) Since the eight criteria include both the "external" (action or behavior-oriented) and "internal" (psychologically-oriented) perspectives, the respective perspectives should be reorganized.

In addition, in order to convert these qualitative definitions into quantitative information and identify them in indicators for measurement, a matrix has been prepared.

4. Other recommendations and lessons learned on evaluation framework

● The evaluation needs to include information beyond the views/indicators at actor level (e.g., actions and involvement of community stakeholders and outsiders).

● It is necessary to evaluate the impact of outsiders' and stakeholders' involvement on the level of peoples' participation per process.

● Common understanding and definitions of basic words used in the project and evaluation are needed.

● The process (preparation→problem analysis and planning→implementation→sustainability) should be revised and elaborated depending on the nature of each project.

Lessons Learned from the Case Studies

Four case studies were analyzed according to the evaluation framework set. The Panama project was introduced as a case study which shows successful achievement of "autonomous" participation. The study focused on the external agent's approach per process, and examined the factors that contributed to "autonomous" participation. As a result, the following lessons were learned:

● Special attention must be paid not only to community and organization leaders, but also to community authorities. Their power structure and capacities need to be understood to develop an appropriate plan for leadership training.

● Awareness-raising efforts (to increase peoples' awareness that they play the principal role of the activities) must be conducted not only during the initial phase of activities but continuously throughout the subsequent phases.

● Continuous effort of consideration by the Japanese experts and project staff to the people's needs brought about changes in people's minds as well as behavior. The establishment of such mutual trust increased peoples'

commitment to the activities and contributed to the achievement of the "autonomous" participation.

● Diverse participation implies a group consisting of different ethnic / tribal groups, religions, occupations, education and gender, but some projects focus on specific groups of people, such as women, children, minority/ethnic groups, etc. Thus when examining the aspect of "diverse participation," it is also necessary to check whether any members were not intentionally excluded.

● From the middle stage of the project, it is important to gradually and intentionally decrease the direct support, so that the project shall shift to the stage of providing indirect support through a farmers' association. Thus, the clear phase-out strategy largely contributed to the autonomy of farmers groups.

● In one case study, a facilitator residing outside the target community contributed to build up the activity's initiative. Selection of qualified and superior facilitators is extremely important.

Workshop with the health volunteers (Honduras)

Interview of farmers' groups (Panama)